

Work report reveals Shanxi remains on task



Senior officials focus on achieving five-year targets

By YUAN SHENGGAO

High-quality development, economic transformation, energy revolution, ecological protection and promoting opening-up remain the key missions of Shanxi, a senior official said at a recent congress.

Lin Wu, Party secretary of Shanxi, made the remarks while delivering his work report on behalf of the Shanxi Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China at the 12th Shanxi CPC Congress, which was held in Taiyuan from Oct 25-29.

At the congress, Lin was again elected as the Party secretary of the standing committee of the 12th Shanxi CPC Committee. Lan Fo'an and Shang Liguang were elected as deputy Party secretaries and the standing committee includes nine newly elected members.

Lin said Shanxi's targets over the next five years include becoming a demonstration zone for the nation's transformation in resources development; a pilot region in the country's energy revolution; and an important experimental zone for ecological protection and high-quality development in the Yellow River drainage region.

Other targets that the Shanxi government has set include becoming an advanced manufacturing base in China's central regions; a new hub for opening-up in China's inland regions; and a renowned tourist destination with



The newly elected members of the standing committee of the 12th Shanxi CPC Committee pose for a photo during the 12th Shanxi CPC Congress. LI LIANJUN / FOR CHINA DAILY

international influence, according to the Party chief.

The official said Shanxi is expected to transform its resources development industry by 2030 and achieve basic modernization by 2035.

"Now that the blueprints are in place, the crucial thing is how to implement them," Lin said.

After attending the congress or watching the congress on TV or online, Party and government officials at various levels in Shanxi said they will map out their own plans to implement the targets for the next five years and beyond.

Wu Bin, Party secretary of Quwo and head of the county's government, said economic transformation will be the key task for the following years.

"The transformation should highlight the upgrade of traditional industries and be driven by strategically emerging industries," Wu said.

The county will utilize the latest technologies to improve the efficiency of traditional industries like steel and coking, pushing them toward high-quality growth featuring smart operations, higher added

value and lower emissions.

The county will also foster emerging industries such as new materials, advanced manufacturing and industrial services, according to Wu, adding that the Quwo Economic and Technological Development Zone will be a major destination for such industries.

Lei Jiankun, Party secretary of Yangquan, said the application of intelligent and digital technologies will be crucial for the high-quality growth of the city as well as the entire province.

In recent years, Shanxi has used

the latest digital technologies to promote the smart operations of its coal mines, greatly contributing to improving efficiency and safety.

In Yangquan, Lei said smart technologies are being used to improve city governance and urban management and offer more convenience to residents.

"Our aim is to build Yangquan into an intelligent city that features e-government administration, smart traffic, smart medical care and smart communities," Lei said.

In terms of developing a new hub for opening-up in China's inland

regions, Shanxi has launched direct China-Europe freight train services to link to European and Central Asian countries.

On Sept 25, a freight train loaded with containers of various goods departed from Zhongding Logistics Park in the Shanxi provincial capital of Taiyuan, on its way to Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia. This was the 500th freight train since the service was launched in 2017.

"We have seen a steady increase in the number of China-Europe freight trains departing from Taiyuan over the past four years," said Zhou Yong, deputy general manager of Shanxi Jinou Logistics, the operator of the service.

According to Zhou, the number of trains was 10 in 2017 and it increased to 50 in 2018, 107 in 2019 and 185 in 2020. "And the Sept 25 departure was also the 148th freight train for this year."

A more recent move for promoting opening-up is the expansion of Taiyuan Wusu International Airport.

The airport was among China's busiest airports in 2019, serving about 108,000 plane landings and takeoffs, according to Liu Cheng, chief engineer for the airport expansion project.

"To meet the increasing number of passengers and growing volume of cargo transportation, we kick-started the airport's third-phase expansion project on Oct 18," Liu said.

The project will include a new terminal building — T3 — with a total floor space of 400,000 square meters and a parking apron that can accommodate 127 aircraft, as well as other facilities.

"The completion of the project will make Taiyuan one of the hubs of civil aviation in China," Liu said.

Guo Yanjie contributed to this story.

Branding strategy aimed at promoting local products

By YUAN SHENGGAO

North China's Shanxi province is implementing a new branding strategy to promote its locally produced specialty products.

One of the initiatives of the strategy is the release of a collective brand group called "Shanxi Quality Goods."

The initiative is a branding system involving an appraisal procedure according to the European Union's market standards and the Shanxi Quality Goods label is awarded to a product after it passes the assessment, according to local officials.

According to Guo Xin'an, an official at the Shanxi Market Regulation Bureau, the provincial market regulating authorities and a third-party certifying organization will select some 200 top local brands with self-developed intellectual property rights and high market penetration rates, out of a pool of more than 200,000 local brands.

"Certification is key to the selection of Shanxi Quality Goods," Guo said. "For this purpose, we have established the Shanxi Federation for the Promotion of Local Brands as the certifying organization for the collective branding initiative."



Shanxi's renowned retail group Meet All promotes its products at a food show. LI SHU / FOR CHINA DAILY

"As the Shanxi Quality Goods are appraised and certified according to EU standards, one of the strictest market access standards in the world, it's no exaggeration to say that such a label is the passport for these selected goods to enter international markets," Guo said.

The official noted that what brands can enter the Shanxi Quality Goods list will be decided by the market instead of the government.

"Despite the fact that the federation was established with the support of the government, the

federation is operated according to market rules," Guo said. "It has appraisal boards consisting of experts and consumer and business representatives and it appraises and certifies products according to their quality, customer recognition and market potential."

Wei Hulin, president of the School of Business Administration at Shanxi University of Finance and Economics, is an expert in branding. He said the Shanxi Quality Goods initiative can effectively help local enterprises improve their product

quality and competitiveness.

"The use of EU standards in certifying products poses an extremely high requirement of product quality for candidates," Wei said. "It's highly challenging for enterprises, but if they want to enter the list, they must make their best efforts to overcome the challenges."

He noted that such efforts include heavy investment in the research and development of products, an unshakable emphasis on quality control and innovative ways of marketing.

Shanxi-based retail group Meet All, for instance, has launched innovative ways of marketing, including developing sub-brands tailored to various groups of consumers.

Wei said that these efforts will be rewarding for any enterprise that strives for a place on the list.

"If they have made the efforts, they will see their product popularity increase along with the improvement of quality, regardless of whether they are certified or not," Wei said. "As more companies endeavor to win a place on the list, this initiative will eventually boost the overall quality level of Shanxi-made products."

Li Shu contributed to this story.



Chunyang Palace in Taiyuan features a layout combining temple buildings and gardens. PENG KE'ER / FOR CHINA DAILY

Taiyuan's Taoist temple Chunyang Palace one of many historic sites

By YUAN SHENGGAO

The Shanxi provincial capital of Taiyuan is a city with so many ancient structures that even a casual stroll on the streets can lead visitors to something pleasantly unexpected: an old residence, a garden or a monument, for instance, with great historical and cultural values.

One such site is a Taoist temple called Chunyang Palace, nestled near the busy commercial district of Wuyi Square.

The temple, which is also called Lyuzu Temple, was first built during the Yuan Dynasty (1271-1368) to worship Liu Chunyang, or Lyu Dongbin, one of the prominent figures in the religion of Taoism.

Massive renovations took place during the Ming (1368-1644) and Qing (1644-1911) dynasties, so most of the structures in the temple are remnants from the two periods.

Small as it is, Chunyang Palace is regularly praised by tourists and researchers for its ingenious layout. It is a five-courtyard complex combining temple buildings and gardens.

Lyuzu Hall is the main hall of Chunyang Palace. It is located between the second and third courtyards. The architecture style of the courtyards is unique as it is composed of classical gardening elements such as halls, pavilions, rockeries and corridors, which are rarely seen in

other Chinese temples.

Lyuzu Hall also features a huge wall painting called *Eight Immortals Crossing the Sea*, which portrays a household Taoist legend in China. Lyu Dongbin was one of the eight immortals after his deification.

Another unique characteristic of the temple is the pavilion-styled hall in the rear courtyard, which can be accessed through an arched gate. It sits on a broad, square foundation featuring eight cave rooms. Cave rooms are the common dwellings on the Loess Plateau, which covers Shanxi and Shaanxi provinces, as well as the neighboring regions.

The hall is connected to its surrounding buildings with bridges, and researchers said such a design is very popular in southern China's classical gardens but uncommon in temples.

Today's Chunyang Palace also serves as a museum. On display in the temple are stone carving works created during various historical periods including the Han (206 BC-AD 220), Wei (220-265) and Tang (618-907) dynasties.

One of the most precious exhibits are the Han Dynasty stone-carving works unearthed in Shanxi's Lishi county. Portraying life from some 2,000 years ago, the works are deemed as highly valuable by history and art researchers.

Peng Ke'er contributed to this story.

Integration of culture and tourism crucial for growth

By YUAN SHENGGAO

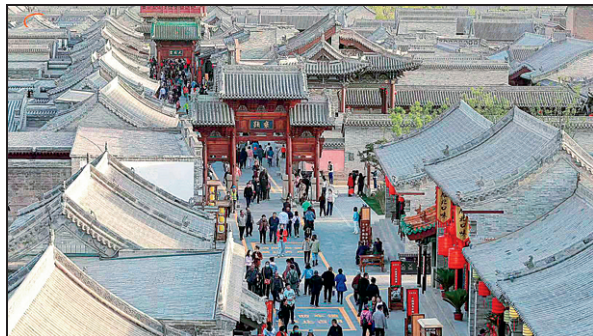
In his work report at the 12th Congress of the Shanxi Provincial Committee of the Communist Party of China, Lin Wu, Party secretary of Shanxi, said one of the local development targets is to become a renowned tourist destination with international influence.

To realize that goal, the integration of tourism with cultural resources is crucial, according to Shanxi officials and residents.

Tourism is a sector with great development potential and is expected by local governments to be an important industry in Shanxi's high-quality and green development, officials said.

According to the Shanxi Department of Culture and Tourism, the province received more than 30 million visits during the first eight months of this year, growing 46.8 percent from the same period last year.

One example of tourism increase promoted by the province's integration with cultural resources is the newly opened Bell Tower Street in the provincial capital of Taiyuan.



The tourist attraction of Old Taiyuan County Seat is an example of integrating tourism with culture. HAN SHUANGXI / FOR CHINA DAILY

Bell Tower Street, which used to be a booming commercial district in Taiyuan but had been silent for decades, was reopened to tourists at the end of September after renovations started in April 2020.

On Oct 1, the site welcomed more than 150,000 visitors. Visitors included Taiyuan residents wanting a nostalgic experience of their childhood as well as tourists from the rest

of the country who wanted to explore the historical and cultural charm of Taiyuan.

The province has already made great efforts to promote the integration of tourism and culture over the past years.

One of the important initiatives launched by the government of Shanxi to boost cultural tourism is the release of three tourism routes

along the three landmark attractions — the Yellow River, the Great Wall and the Taihang Mountains, which represent Shanxi's cultural and natural wonders.

To promote tourism development, Shanxi is building three major sightseeing highways to link most of the destinations along the three routes, which have already made and will continue to make travel much easier.

Shanxi boasts rich cultural resources for its tourism development. Its number of historical monuments and ancient buildings ranks first in China. Its iconic cultural tourism sites also include the Yungang Grottoes in Datong, the Buddhist holy land of Wutai Mountains in Xinzhou and Jinci Temple in Taiyuan.

Shanxi has witnessed steady growth in its tourism industry during recent years.

During the 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-20), the province realized a total tourism revenue of 2.73 trillion yuan (\$426.9 billion), with an average annual increase of 24 percent.

Wang Pei contributed to this story.