

## Bad traffic slows return journeys



Traffic slows to a crawl on the Liuzhou-Nanning Expressway in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region on Thursday as the highway is overwhelmed with travelers returning home. [Photo/Xinhua]

Traffic slowed to a crawl on major highways on Thursday as tens of millions of people returned home after the Spring Festival holiday.

According to China Central Television, about 94.2 million people were expected to travel on Thursday.

Traffic was slow on several major highways, including Beijing-Hong Kong-Macao Expressway and Shanghai-Chongqing Expressway, according to the Ministry of Transport, with traffic jams in some sections extending for dozens of kilometers.

In Henan and Hunan provinces, some highways were partly closed due to snow or smog.

According to the ministry, the rush of traffic into major urban areas, including the Yangtze River Delta, Pearl River Delta and Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, was expected to last past 10 pm.

About 1.5 million vehicles were expected on highways in Central China's Hubei province on Thursday as many parts of the province experienced light rain.

Chen Ying, who was heading to Hubei's capital Wuhan from the province's Enshi Tujia and Miao autonomous prefecture, encountered a traffic jam after passing Yichang city.

"I don't know whether it was because of the weather or there was an accident

ahead, but the traffic was terrible,” the 53-year-old said.

She said the traffic was so slow that some people even got out of their cars and did some exercise, and many service zones were so packed that it was hard to find somewhere to park.

The 340 kilometers from Yichang to Wuhan, which usually takes about four hours, took Chen nine hours. “At its worst, we moved only about 5 km in 80 minutes,” she said.

China Railway Corp was expected to log 11.5 million trips on Thursday, 11.3 percent more the last day of Spring Festival in 2016. The company had to add 819 temporary trains to meet the high demand.

About 8.48 million people left Beijing during Spring Festival – 39 percent of the city’s population – according to the Beijing Municipal Commission of Transport. Now, their return is putting stress on the capital’s transportation system.

Almost 1,700 flights were expected in Beijing on Thursday. According to the commission, 224 trains a day arrived at Beijing South Railway Station during the Spring Festival holiday.

The commission said it has taken various measures to help travelers get back home using the capital’s public transport system. From Feb 1 to 4, 1,000 taxis will be dispatched to Beijing South Railway Station and the operation of the subway’s Line 4 will also be extended.

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## [Nation plays bigger role in global health](#)

From exporting low-cost, effective vaccines to sending doctors to combat outbreaks of disease, China is increasingly benefiting the world with its enhanced medical capacities and expertise, according to an international health expert.

Seth Berkley, CEO of the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, said Chinese vaccines are “significantly cheaper” than those made by many other countries.

The Chinese-made vaccine for Japanese encephalitis, for example, is up to 95 percent less expensive than those produced in the West, he said.

Transmitted by mosquitoes, Japanese encephalitis is the leading cause of viral encephalitis in Asia and the Western Pacific.

With an average price of 42 cents a dose, the live attenuated vaccine made by

the Chengdu Institute of Biological Products is providing lifesaving protection to millions of children in low-income countries, including Laos, Nepal and Cambodia, under the alliance's program, Berkley said.

The alliance has committed to using 27.7 million doses of the vaccine. In light of this, Berkley hailed China's efforts to move on from being an alliance recipient of vaccines to being a key supplier.

The nation's Japanese encephalitis vaccine became available on the global market after the World Health Organization endorsed China's vaccine regulatory body in 2011. Two years later, the product became the first prequalified Chinese vaccine to be licensed for use on children.

"We're seeing huge potential for China to supply the global public vaccine market via WHO prequalification, including for emergency outbreaks such as yellow fever and Ebola," Margaret Chan, director-general of the WHO, said last month.

During the Ebola outbreaks, China sent 1,200 medical workers to affected regions. Chinese experts also trained more than 13,000 local medics to treat patients in nine countries in Africa.

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## **Chinese make a record 6.15m trips overseas during holiday**



A record 6.15 million trips were made by Chinese mainland tourists to overseas destinations during the seven-day Spring Festival holiday. [Photo/China.org.cn]

A record 6.15 million trips were made by Chinese mainland tourists to overseas destinations during the seven-day Spring Festival holiday, which ended on Thursday, according to the China National Tourism Administration.

That is an increase of 7 percent compared with last year's Spring Festival. About 374,000 trips were organized by travel agencies, a 2.5 percent increase.

The administration also reported growth from individual and high-end travelers and said that in addition to first-tier and coastal cities, inland cities—such as those in the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region—became important source markets for China's out-bound tourism industry.

With many Chinese now traveling abroad for Spring Festival, their choice of destinations has expanded along with their growing interest in exotic cultures and services.

Those traveling to Japan, for example, where “shopping spree” became a catchword in 2015, now prefer a physical checkup or experiencing Japanese culture.

Meng Fanhai, owner of a tourism agency in Tokyo, said his agency arranged more than 200 physical checkups and medical treatments in 2016, up 50 percent from the year before and accounting for about one-third of his agency’s business from Chinese tourists.

Li Xuejing, the agency’s marketing manager, said Chinese tourists are increasingly willing to experience local culture and characteristic services, including staying in private homes, appreciating bonsai and watching monkeys in hot springs.

Yang Min, a partner of a tourism agency specializing in receiving Chinese tourists in Kenya, said the country was unfamiliar to most Chinese in 2005. However, since 2010, more Chinese tourists have chosen the African country as a destination to experience its biodiversity.

A Chinese tourist surnamed Guo, who was vacationing on an island in the Philippines, said she now pays more attention to relaxation and enjoyment during the holidays instead of shopping or choosing gifts for relatives.

“When I book a hotel, I will take into consideration the massage, the spa and other special services ... to enjoy myself,” she said.

Another choice is Britain. Though the devaluation of the pound is a factor, Britain’s rich history and famous education tradition have caught the eye of Chinese.

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## [Rising demand for face masks transforms Shandong village](#)

Every cloud has a silver lining – even clouds of smog, as factory owners in an eastern Chinese village have discovered.

Dadian, just north of Jiaozhou, Shandong province, is home to 300 factories churning out those thin, ubiquitous face masks that can be seen on anyone from nurses to shop assistants to subway commuters.

Concern over air pollution has helped fuel a multibillion-yuan industry for manufacturers and suppliers of raw materials, with orders for face masks

skyrocketing when the National Meteorological Center issues red or orange alerts for smog.

“We can make 20,000 face masks a day, but our orders are often double our capacity,” said Gao Jian, a factory boss in Dadian.

The demand has seen this once remote, impoverished village become a busy manufacturing base in just over a decade. Its factories produce over 1 billion masks a year, generating annual revenue of 1.1 billion yuan (\$160 million).

The village supplies 80 percent of China’s standard face masks and also ships its products to the United States and Japan.

“We have a complete industry chain from raw materials to textile processing to distribution,” said Jiang Xiubin, head of the Dadian Face Mask Manufacturers Association.

Business was tough in the 1990s, he said, with traders having to travel 36 hours by train to promote their masks in Lanzhou, Gansu province. However, in 2000, Beijing was hit by a sandstorm, leading to surge in demand for the village’s products.

Sales soared again in 2003 when the nation was hit by SARS. Dadian had just 23 workshops at the time, and laborers had to work around the clock to meet orders. That year, the local industry made 20 million yuan.

Since then, business has continued to flourish, with the peak season being August, when some parts of the country are regularly affected by sandstorms and smog.

However, the village’s face masks have come under scrutiny after false claims by advertisers that they can protect against air pollution.

Dadian’s factories have never claimed their masks are effective against hazardous PM2.5 particles, and even state as much on their packaging, Jiang said. Yet he added that it was hard to prevent retailers from spreading misinformation to boost sales.

Although Jiang was unwilling to link the village’s rapid development with environmental issues, he conceded that the face mask industry has “benefited a lot” from pollution.

“Before I opened my factory, my family’s annual income was about 40,000 yuan. In 2013, I made 90,000 yuan from making 300,000 masks,” he said. “But if it came down to it, I’d prefer to live in a better natural environment than make more money in smog.”

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# 1 rescued, 5 dead in Wenzhou homes collapse



A worker carries fireworks to put on display at a temporary sales outlet in Beijing's Chaoyang district on Monday.[China Daily]

One survivor was rescued and five were found dead after a residential building collapsed in Wenzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, local authorities said Thursday night.

Part of a five-storey residential building in Dahui village of Wencheng County collapsed at about 8 a.m. Thursday, burying nine people from two families.

A 63-year-old woman was pulled out from the debris at about 10:40 p.m. and rushed to hospital for emergency treatment.

Rescuers located the woman after she made a phone call to her family under the rubble at 7 p.m..

Three were still buried under the rubble but rescuers found no signs of life.

With the help of eight cranes and excavators, more than 400 paramilitary officers, fire fighters, township officials and medical workers were carrying out rescue operation.

"The scene is quite chaotic, as if the place was leveled by an earthquake," a rescuer told Xinhua by telephone. "We have to work very carefully because the wreckages of the ruined building are joined to homes still standing."

One of the adjacent homes, he said, was already damaged with a big hole in

its outer wall.

A total of 58 people living nearby were evacuated to safe places.

Local authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the building collapse.