

Charter flights to Sansha make trips easier



Passengers get off a charter flight at Yongxing Airport in Sansha city of south China's Hainan province on Thursday, January 26, 2017. [Photo: hineews.cn]

A charter flight linking China's southernmost cities of Haikou and Sansha is taking Chinese home to their loved ones in Sansha for the upcoming Chinese lunar New Year.

"Eventually I can see my daughter during Spring Festival," said Li Chang'an who arrived at Yongxing Airport, Sansha, Thursday morning, together with 112 other passengers.

He came to Haikou from his home in central China's Henan Province to catch the flight to Sansha. His daughter is a civil servant at Sansha's industry and commerce bureau.

The charter flights started five weeks ago from Haikou, capital of Hainan, to Yongxing Island, one of the Xisha Islands and the administrative base.

Li could have joined his daughter last Spring Festival by sea but never made it, fearful of a voyage of more than 10 hours.

An air ticket to Sansha might be the best gift that Jin Honglian has ever received. Wife of a soldier stationed in Sansha, Jin previously had to lay in bed for more than 10 hours because of seasickness when she visited her husband. With the charter flight, her trip is much shorter and more

comfortable.

"I'm planning to spend more time here with my husband," said Jin, who also enjoyed a discount for military families.

Sansha City was officially established in 2012 to administer the Xisha, Zhongsha and Nansha Islands, and their surrounding waters in the South China Sea.

The daily charter flight has carried more than 3,300 passengers since Dec. 22.

China pledges enhanced livelihood for people in difficulties

Chinese government has pledged enhanced efforts to ensure the basic livelihoods for people in difficulties.

A circular issued by the General Office of the State Council and published on Thursday said the work to guarantee basic livelihoods for people in difficulties matters to fairness, morality and harmony in society, noting that there should be no decline or weakening in help.

The circular called for intensified efforts to identify people of such groups and streamline policies for assisting those affected by natural disasters.

The document said housing problems should be solved by the end of this year for those who were resettled in temporary residences last year due to floods and other disasters.

Also, program will be launched to help rural residents who are caught in difficulties by serious illnesses.

The assistance efforts for those who are in extreme need, disabled people, left-behind children, orphans and vagrants will also be strengthened, according to the circular.

Snowfall disrupts Spring Festival

travel in NE China

Snow disrupted the trips of Spring Festival travellers in northeast China on Thursday, causing multiple accidents and temporary closure of an airport and expressways.

Two people were killed and three injured in collisions which damaged more than 40 vehicles on a section of the expressway linking Harbin, capital of Heilongjiang, to Suihua City on Thursday, due to sudden snowfall, local government sources said.

At least 74 inbound and outbound flights were delayed at the Longjia international airport in Changchun, capital of Jilin, due to the snowy weather.

Thirty-two flights were forced to land in alternate airports. The airport started a red alert and closed for about three hours before reopening at 6 p.m. Thursday.

Most expressways in Jilin and 13 expressways in Liaoning imposed traffic control measures. Some flights were delayed at the Taoxian airport in Shenyang, capital of Liaoning.

Spring Festival, or the Lunar New Year, is the most important occasion for Chinese, who have a weeklong holiday period, placing a tremendous strain on railways, airports and expressways.

This year's Spring Festival falls on Saturday. About 3 billion trips are expected to be made during "chunyun," the travel rush that lasts this year from Jan. 13 to Feb. 21, the National Development and Reform Commission said.

Chinese leaders extend Spring Festival greetings

President Xi Jinping, on behalf of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council, extended Spring Festival greetings to all Chinese Thursday at a reception in Beijing.



The Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council hold a reception for the Spring Festival in Beijing, capital of China, Jan. 26, 2017. The Spring Festival, or the Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28 this year. (Xinhua/Zhang Duo)

Xi, also general secretary of the CPC Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, delivered a speech at the gathering at the Great Hall of the People, greeting all Chinese in the mainland, Hong Kong, Macao, Taiwan and at abroad.

Li Keqiang, Zhang Dejiang, Yu Zhengsheng, Liu Yunshan, Wang Qishan and Zhang Gaoli were also present.

This year's Spring Festival, or Chinese Lunar New Year, falls on Jan. 28.

[9 Chinese think tanks among world's best](#)

A report released on Wednesday shows that the number of Chinese think tanks has grown rapidly in the world during the past year.



Wang Huiyao, president of CCG, delivers a speech at the release of 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report in Beijing, on Jan 25, 2016. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Nine Chinese think tanks were included among the world's top think tanks in the 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report, published by the think tank and civil societies program at the Lauder Institute of University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP).

Selected from a list of 175 top think tanks in the world, these nine think tanks are China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations; Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; China Institute of International Studies; Development Research Center of the State Council; Shanghai Institute for International Studies; Institute of International and Strategic Studies Peking University; Unirule Institute of Economics; Center for China and Globalization; and Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, with China Institute of Contemporary International Relations ranking the highest at 33.

The report shows the United States at the top with the largest number of think tanks, at 1,835, while China holds the second place with 435, followed by UK, 288, and India, 280.

The 2016 study was subdivided into 52 lists based on such categories as region, area of research and special achievement, in which 41 Chinese think tanks were selected with 18 of them also outstanding in the Top Think Tanks in China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

"It's very meaningful that a number of Chinese think tanks are influencing the world," said Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization. "More think tanks are needed to help our government in making decisions accurately and scientifically. Meanwhile, think tanks serve more

like a 'soft power', which can also help enhance our country's international stature," he said.

According to the report, three Chinese think tanks have made their mark Think Tanks to Watch. They are Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance, Unirule Institute of Economics, and Center for China and Globalization.

Another four are among the Best New Think Tanks, including Alibaba think tank, 21st Silk Road Collaborative Center, Qianhai Institute for Innovative Research, and Center for Eco-Financial Studies, with Alibaba think tank ranking the highest at 23.

Referred to as "think tanks' think tank", TTCSP manages and supports a global network of close to 7,000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives.

"Since 2006, our ranking process has been refined and streamlined, and the number and scope of the institutions and individuals involved has steadily grown." said James McGann, director of the TTCSP.

The 2016 report shows continued expansion of think tanks in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Besides, there is increasing diversity among think tanks in these regions with independent, political party affiliated, and corporate and business sector think tanks that are being created with greater frequency.