

New diplomatic vehicle regulation increases oversight

China is beefing up efforts to better manage diplomatic vehicles with the recent release of a new regulation.

The regulation, jointly promulgated last month by the Foreign Ministry and other several ministries, will for the first time control the total number of such vehicles, Foreign Ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a news briefing on Friday.

Applications for these vehicles will be approved individually and the owners are required to buy third-party liability insurance for an insured amount of at least 1 million yuan (\$147,000), the regulation says.

The number of diplomatic vehicles has surged amid China's opening-up, which has drawn a growing number of diplomats and larger staffs at international organizations, Geng said.

Under the regulation, new license plates will replace the old by May 1, Geng said. On Monday, the Laotian embassy received the first new plates. Previously, diplomatic license plates had the Chinese character for ambassador followed by numbers. Now the order is reversed, and the character is white instead of the former red.

The regulation allows ambassadors to register two such vehicles for private use. Other diplomats may register only one. Administrative and technical staff at diplomatic missions can register only one vehicle per household within the first six months of their terms of office in China.

Seven situations are listed in the regulation that would deprive the vehicle of diplomatic status. For example, a diplomatic vehicle loaned to someone who is not a diplomat forfeits its immunity privileges.

In addition, traffic violations will no longer be condoned as the ministries will closely oversee the purchase, use and traffic law compliance of these vehicles, Geng said.

The new regulation comes against the background of the long struggle to ease traffic jams in Beijing, where one-fifth of the more than 4 million vehicles in the city are restricted from the roads between rush hours on work days, said Sun Lijun, a professor of transportation at Tongji University in Shanghai.

Moreover, the recurrent smog in northern China has government promoting policies that limit emissions and help to improve air quality, he added.

The Government is failing to provide British businesses with the much needed certainty they need – Rebecca Long-Bailey

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Business Secretary, commenting on reports of a proposed takeover of Unilever by Kraft, said:

“The Government is failing to provide British businesses with the much needed certainty they need.

“With Sterling depreciating against the Dollar and the Euro since last summer, unwelcome takeover bids aimed at buying UK business assets could well increase.

“This makes the need for a proper industrial strategy all the more important. At the moment all we are getting from this failing Tory Government is more of the same, mismanagement and uncertainty.”

Chinese oncologists research cancer genes

One hundred and fifty-two oncologists from across China formed a working group on Friday to identify genetic faults that can increase the risk of cancer.

The group plans to set up a national database of patients who might have developed cancer because of faulty genes.

They will then compile the country's first clinical guidelines on hereditary cancer and assess the effectiveness of targeted cancer therapies designed to destroy certain types of the faulty genes.

Beijing Cancer Hospital President Ji Jiafu said breast, ovarian and gastric cancer patients tend to have strong family history of the disease, but more research needs to be done.

He said people with faulty genes are more likely to develop cancer at a younger age and do not necessarily show early signs of illness. The

identification of these genes may help people born with higher cancer risks detect cell mutation at an earlier stage.

Early intervention is vital in curing certain types of cancer, most notably glandular and breast cancer, and is helpful in improving quality of life for patients with most other types of cancer.

Latest statistics from national tumor register center shows that 271 in every 100,000 people develop cancer in China. In 2013 alone, 2.2 million Chinese died of cancer. Lung, liver and gastric cancer were the top three killers.

More than half of Beijing's household waste to produce energy

Beijing municipal government has set a goal of converting 57 percent of the city's household waste into energy.

This waste-to-energy conversion will be carried out at six garbage treatment plants to be opened this year, according to Beijing Municipal Commission of Urban Management.

Commission director Sun Xinjun said Friday that the commission's priority this year is to encourage residents to create less waste, improve waste sorting and boost waste-to-energy conversion.

The most common conversion process generates electricity or heat directly through combustion, while some also use industrial processing to produce combustible fuels like methane and ethanol. This supplies energy and reduces carbon emissions.

With 21.7 million permanent residents, Beijing's massive amount of household waste has a profound impact on the environment. Beijing aims to raise its garbage treatment capacity to 30,000 tonnes a day by 2020 – 24,000 tonnes being incinerated while the rest will undergo biological treatment. No untreated waste will be buried.

Lin Jinwen, another official with the commission, said Beijing will reduce waste sorting bins from three categories to two. One will be labeled "kitchen waste" with the other for the rest of household waste. The bins labeled "recyclable" will no longer be displayed to avoid confusion.

Lin said the city will distribute guidebooks and host training to help the public sort their daily garbage. As the campaign starts, there will even be helpers assigned to stand by community trash bins to help confused residents.

Waste sorting bins will spread from residential communities to companies,

government offices, shopping malls and other public venues in the next few years.

Gill Furniss and Rebecca Long-Bailey comments on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day

Gill

Furniss MP, Labour's Shadow Business Minister, commenting on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, said:

“Fuel poverty

affects four million households in the UK. This has a detrimental effect on people's lives – both physically and mentally. Cold homes impact young people's ability to study and socialise, and casts a shadow over vulnerable older people who don't want to admit they are struggling to heat their homes.

“There are

also huge financial implications for our NHS. It is estimated that suffering from cold-related ill health costs the NHS £1.36 billion each year, and if the issue is not addressed properly, in the next 15 years £22 billion will have to be spent by the NHS to tackle ill-health related to cold homes.

“We welcome

the Government's shift in focus towards fuel poverty; however, there is no significant funding to back these announcements. There has been a shocking decline in funding available for energy efficiency measures and some of the most vulnerable fuel poor households are receiving no help at all.

“In my own

constituency of Sheffield, Brightside, and Hillsborough there are 7,241 households in fuel poverty. Whilst there have been fantastic local initiatives

to help those in need, these efforts are hindered by a lack of Government support.

“As we

mark Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, we know that Theresa May's government has slashed energy efficiency incentives, while offering meagre funding to support households in fuel poverty.

“The Labour

Party has made a commitment to end fuel poverty by making energy efficiency an

infrastructure priority and promising to insulate 4 million homes, as well as providing support for those struggling with their energy bills so that nobody has to live in a cold, damp home.''

Rebecca Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, said:

"I am calling upon The Government to make support and investment into the industry surrounding home and premises insulation a key infrastructure priority.

"This makes clear moral sense in terms of ensuring that individuals, families and businesses have access to one of our most basic human needs: warmth. Aside from this however there is a clear economic case too.

"The return on investing in energy efficiency is even better than HS2, creating money for the taxpayer with £1.27 returned for every £1 spent, saves money for the NHS and will create tens of thousands of jobs in SMEs spread across the country. The fact the Conservatives are slashing investment in this area beggars belief."