

## Public warned of H7N9 avian flu after nine deaths

Chinese disease control experts said that the public should stay on alert for H7N9 avian flu, which has caused at least nine deaths this year.

H7N9 has entered its peak season and direct contact with live poultry remains the main source of infection, said a statement by Zhejiang provincial disease control and prevention center Tuesday.

Genetic analysis showed that there had been no mutations of the virus, but since late Autumn last year the epidemic had been reported in a wide range of areas, it said.

The virus was more active in 2016 than in the same seasons in previous years. A total of 44 cases were reported last year in Zhejiang, causing two deaths.

H7N9 is a bird flu strain first reported to have infected humans in March 2013 in China. It is most likely to strike in winter and spring.

At least nine people died from the virus since the start of this year, according to disease control centers in Henan, Guangdong and Hunan provinces.

On Tuesday, health authorities in Henan province announced two deaths from the virus, respectively on Jan. 23 and 24. Both patients had worked at restaurants prior to the infections.

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## Green Party announces anti-nuclear Copeland by-election candidate



24 January 2017

The Green Party has selected Jack Lenox as its Copeland by-election candidate, opposing nuclear power and instead offering a safe energy future with increased investment in renewables.

The announcement from the Greens comes just one day after Labour said its candidate, Gillian Troughton, has been “quite clear of her support for the nuclear industry, no ifs and no buts”. [1]

Jack will also be campaigning for Britain to maintain a close relationship with Europe and to stop the creeping marketisation of the NHS, as well as vowing action to protect West Cumbrian homes from flooding.

Jack has lived in Copeland for four years and works as a software engineer. An active member of the community, Jack performs with and serves on the committee of the Keswick Amateur Operatic Society. In 2015, he helped organise the first web conference in Cumbria, bringing industry experts from across the world to Keswick.

Jack said:

“I’m delighted the Green Party has selected me to contest this by-election. Copeland has borne the brunt of Government funding cuts and healthcare is facing stark challenges – West Cumberland Hospital’s maternity and A&E departments are under threat. The constituency will also suffer if Theresa May rips the UK out of the single market and turns our country into a corporate tax haven.

“Copeland comprises some of the most deprived parts of the UK, it suffered severe flooding during the storms of last winter, and its constituents are forced to deal with continuous price hikes and cutbacks to public transport services. On top of all this, an ill-conceived new nuclear power plant is due to be built at Sellafield, the site of the UK’s worst ever nuclear disaster.

“The Green Party is the only party with truly progressive solutions to the issues Copeland faces. It’s a privilege and an honour to represent the Greens as a beacon of hope during this turbulent period in British politics.”

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“Jack is giving people in Copeland the chance to vote for a candidate who opposes nuclear power, believes in Britain having a close relationship with Europe and fights for a truly public NHS. No other party is able to offer voters this clarity on the big issues facing the area. In a time of divisive politics and high levels of distrust, Jack will make an excellent Green Party candidate and we’re proud to have him.”

#### Notes:

1. <https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/2687914/labours-by-election-fight-to-hold-constituency-dominated-by-sellafield-nuclear-power-station-is-being-bankrolled-by-an-anti-nuclear-energy-firm/>

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## [Xi pushes poverty alleviation](#)



Chinese President Xi Jinping talks with villagers and local cadre at the home of villager Xu Haicheng in Desheng Village, Xiaoertai Township of Zhangbei County in north China's Hebei Province, on Jan. 24, 2017. Xi Tuesday pushed for increased efforts on poverty alleviation during an inspection tour to the city of Zhangjiakou. [Photo/Xinhua]

President Xi Jinping Tuesday pushed for increased efforts on poverty alleviation.

He stressed the importance of precision in the battle against poverty, saying that poverty alleviation should focus on targeted people and industries, and use the right tools to produce results.

Xi made the remarks during a tour of the city of Zhangjiakou in northern China's Hebei Province, where he inspected an impoverished village, visiting and chatting with poor families, discussing how they could shake off poverty.

"Fighting poverty is the fundamental task in building an all-round moderately

prosperous society,” Xi said.

He called for more efforts to help the poor develop industries that could grow in a sustainable manner, set up sustainable mechanisms for poverty alleviation, and create ways for them to achieve prosperity.

Poverty relief is high on China’s 2016-2020 agenda, and the government has vowed to lift everybody out of poverty by 2020. By the end of 2015, China still had 55.75 million people living in poverty.

Since the start of the reform and opening-up in 1978, China’s economic boom has helped lift more than 700 million people out of poverty.

“Poverty alleviation is getting more and more difficult as it progresses to the end,” Xi said.



Chinese President Xi Jinping (C) walks with grassroots cadre at the home of villager Xu Haicheng in Desheng Village, Xiaoertai Township of Zhangbei County in north China’s Hebei Province, on Jan. 24, 2017. Xi Tuesday pushed for increased efforts on poverty alleviation during an inspection tour to the city of Zhangjiakou.[Photo/Xinhua]

He stressed the importance of making sure every poor family had a program for increasing income and every poor person had a way of casting off poverty.

The president pointed to relocation as an important supplementary approach in fighting poverty and highlighted the role of ecological compensation, which would not only help improve the ecological environment but also boost incomes.

Stressing the importance of education in poverty alleviation, Xi said, "Making sure children of impoverished families enjoy access to high-quality education is a fundamental solution to poverty."

During the tour, Xi also inspected a dairy company in Zhangjiakou, where he urged for more efforts to create a globally competitive dairy industry with safe, high-quality products.

He said that the most rigorous standards, the strictest regulation, the harshest punishment and the most serious mechanism of accountability should be adopted to ensure food safety.

Xi also listened to local officials briefing on the local economy at a meeting, where he said cutting excessive production capacity in the iron and steel sector was crucial for Hebei, a major steel producing province, to improve its industrial structure and create new growth engines.

Xi called for efforts to ensure outdated production capacity was eliminated and "zombie enterprises" phased out.

During the tour, Xi also urged for efforts to make the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games a "remarkable, extraordinary, excellent" event.

The Zhangjiakou site of the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympic Games is the best natural ski area in northern China.

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## Student numbers plummet under SNP

24 Jan 2017



Figures out today have revealed that there are 150,000 fewer students in further education in Scotland since the SNP came to power.

The Scottish Funding Council revealed that there were 227,258 college students in 2015/16, compared to 379,223 in 2007.

Part time courses have almost halved from 398,606 to 185,133 between 2007 and 2016, a decrease of 54 per cent.

The figures continue a trend that has seen college places slashed as a result of the SNP's dramatic cuts to college funding in recent years.

**Scottish Conservative shadow education secretary Liz Smith said:**

"Colleges play a pivotal role in our education system, so it's deeply concerning that student numbers have dropped to this level.



“Each year colleges help prepare thousands of people for the world of work by giving them the skills they need to get on in life, yet the SNP have chosen to implement huge cuts to the sector.

“Even places in part-time courses have dropped by over half, which will be a huge blow to those trying to balance work and study.

“The SNP’s record on education since they came to power is shameful, and they need to reverse their draconian cuts to college funding as soon as possible.

“Scotland’s colleges are among the best in Britain at equipping our youth with the necessary skills to succeed, and we have to support them.”

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The report from the Scottish Funding Council is available here:

<http://www.sfc.ac.uk/communications/Statisticalpublications/2017/SFCST032017.aspx> The figures are in table B, figures 1, 4 & 11

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## **News story: Iconic Sea King XZ593 gifted to Falkland Islands Museum and National Trust**

Sea King XZ593 has been gifted to the Falkland Islands Museum and National Trust (FIMNT) by the Ministry of Defence. The helicopter was officially handed over to Mr Richard Cockwell OBE on behalf of FIMNT, by Commander of British Forces South Atlantic Islands, Commodore Darren Bone RN.

The Sea King helicopter was transported from Mount Pleasant Complex (MPC) to Stanley Airport via Chinook, a task that required specific expertise from the UK. The 35 mile trip took the helicopters along the length of Stanley Harbour, passing the Historic Dockyard and Museum, Victory Green and the Lady Liz shipwreck.

Upon arrival at Stanley Airport, the Sea King was formally presented to the trustees of the FIMNT, along with the aircrafts logbook and a framed photograph. Afterwards visitors at the airport were invited to explore inside the Sea King and Chinook helicopters.

Commodore Bone RN said:

For over a generation, the Sea King has been a reassuring sight across the Falkland Islands. It has gone to the rescue of Islanders, military personnel and numerous fishermen and sailors.

Commodore Bone added:

The Sea King has been a demonstrable link between the British Forces South Atlantic Islands and the Islanders and reflects the close cooperation and interaction that continues between the 2 communities. It is fitting that this aircraft should stay in the Falkland Islands.

Over its 38 years of service, XZ593 clocked up more than 17,400 flying hours. It operated across the United Kingdom and routinely deployed to the Falkland Islands, where Sea Kings had provided military search and rescue cover since 1983. In March 2016, this aircraft conducted the very last Sea King rescue, recovering an injured sailor from a fishing vessel.