

Environmental inspectors expose pollution problems

China's environmental inspectors found that nearly two-thirds of the more than 32,000 enterprises they checked have violated environmental rules.

The findings came after three months of inspections across 28 cities in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and other nearby areas, which resulted in the discovery of problems including excessive emissions and insufficient pollution control equipment, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said Friday.

The inspectors, who are on a year-long on-site investigation to discover the sources of air pollution in the region, exposed 6,662 companies with unauthorized locations, lacking relevant certificates, or failing to meet emission standards.

The teams also found nearly 2,000 companies have been operating without any pollutant treatment facilities, while another 1,732 companies have pollutant treatment facilities that have been malfunctioning.

MEP official Tian Weiyong said the ministry will urge local authorities to further investigate these firms and rectify the problems.

The MEP will also send inspectors to recheck these companies, ensuring the problems be rectified, he said.

The inspections are part of China's campaign to fight pollution and environmental degradation as decades of growth have left the country saddled with smog and contaminated soil.

China started the inspections amid widespread concerns about smog in its northern region.

Tian said such inspections have helped control air pollution in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region and other nearby areas.

Macao former chief prosecutor sentenced to 21 years in prison

Macao's former chief prosecutor Ho Chio Meng was found guilty for more than over 1,000 charges and sentenced to 21 years in prison, the special administrative region (SAR)'s Court of Final Appeal said in its final

judgment on Friday.

The judges agreed that the accused had violated so many laws in a long period of time, which makes his cases very rare and severe.

As a top official of the public prosecutions office of the Macao SAR, Ho had carried out legal practice for many years but he abused the power in his position and ignored law and discipline.

The former chief prosecutor was brought to trial in December 2016 in Court of Final Appeal on charges such as fraud and abuse of power.

His cases involved about 76 million patacas (about 9.5 million U.S. dollars).

China's CH-5 drone completes trial flight

The mass-production model of China's unmanned aerial vehicle CH-5, or "Rainbow 5", completed its trial flight in north China's Hebei Province Friday.

Introduced at an international airshow in the southern Chinese city of Zhuhai last year, the CH-5 can conduct reconnaissance, surveillance, patrol, target positioning and strike missions, according to its developer.

"We've made several modifications after its debut, and its comprehensive functions are among the world's best," said Shi Wen, chief engineer of the Rainbow drone project at the China Academy of Aerospace Aerodynamics.

The CH-5 has a wingspan of 21 meters and is capable of carrying up to 1,000 kg of equipment. It can stay in the air for 60 hours with a range of more than 10,000 kilometers, Shi said.

The CH-5 can also be used for civilian purposes such as resource surveying, marine environmental protection, disaster survey, marine law enforcement and emergency responses, Shi said.

"We will conduct more trial flights and might add fine changes to meet needs of various customers. We believe it will be a success in domestic and international markets," he added.

75,000 people relocated in rain-ravaged NE China county

Over 7,500 houses have collapsed or suffered damage and 75,000 residents have been relocated since rainstorms starting hitting Yongji County in northeast China's Jilin Province on Thursday.

Torrential rain started to fall in Yongji at around 9 a.m. Thursday, with the average precipitation reaching 175.4 millimeters from Thursday to Friday noon, when the rain decreased, local disaster-relief headquarters said Friday.

Rain-triggered floods damaged cropland and several transportation routes in the county, with many services, including power, gas and water supply suspended in much of the county.

A total of 75,000 people were evacuated and 260,000 people were affected.

The local government has formed 14 disaster-relief teams to relocate the victims and disinfect disaster areas to prevent disease.

HK high court disqualifies 4 legislators over invalid oaths

The High Court of China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) on Friday disqualified legislators Law Kwun-Chung, Leung Kwok-hung, Lau Siu-lai and Yiu Chung-yim from office for their invalid oaths.

The court ruled that the oaths the four took on Oct. 12, 2016 at a swearing-in ceremony of the new Legislative Council (LegCo) were unlawful and of no effect.

The disqualification is effective from Oct. 12, 2016, according to the court.

On Oct. 12, 2016, Lau deliberately took her oath in a slow-paced manner, while Law, Leung and Yiu read out extra words that are not included in the LegCo oath according to the Oaths and Declarations Ordinance of Hong Kong, or read the oath in an abnormal tone.

The Department of Justice of Hong Kong SAR government submitted an application for a judicial review to the High Court on Dec. 2, 2016, requesting the court to rule whether the four LegCo members' oaths comply with the Hong Kong Basic Law and whether they are still qualified to serve.