

China arrests 34 in illegal gun trading case

Police in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region have arrested 34 suspects in connection with illegal gun manufacturing and trading, according to regional police.

Police in Ordos city seized 41 hunting rifles, 175 semi-finished guns and a large number of bullets.

In March, police from Ordos City Public Security Bureau found a parcel containing suspected gun parts when inspecting the postal sector, leading to the arrest of a gun buyer surnamed Zhang.

Police continued their investigation and destroyed a gun manufacturing site in Yulin city, Shaanxi Province. A suspect surnamed Xie and his son were arrested and a set of gun making equipment and several guns were seized.

Police recently arrested another 24 gun purchasers in Shaanxi and areas of Inner Mongolia in connection with the case.

China bans the manufacturing and sale of guns, with members of the general public not allowed to own them.

Anyone found guilty of owning a gun can face up to seven years in prison.

China to tighten environmental data fraud prevention and control

Chinese environment authorities will establish a system to prevent and punish environmental data fraud, according to an official.

Since environmental monitoring is an important part of technical support in environment management, the ministry will give administrative penalties to people involved in environmental data fraud and transfer them to judicial organs for investigation if necessary, said the official with the Ministry of Environmental Protection.

Xi'an Intermediate People's Court in northwest China's Shaanxi Province Friday sentenced seven people, including the heads of two environmental protection branches, to imprisonments of over one year for falsifying air quality monitoring data.

The court said they interfered in the data collection of air quality, and

used cotton to fill sampling instruments to lower pollution data, in February and March 2016.

20 injured as Chinese flight hits turbulence in SW China

At least 20 people on a China Eastern Airlines flight were injured after it hit turbulence Sunday morning before arriving at Kunming in southwest China's Yunnan Province.

Flight MU744, departing from Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris, was about to land in Kunming Changshui International Airport when it was hit by turbulence, the China Eastern Airlines said via its Weibo account.

The injured were taken to the First People's Hospital of Yunnan Province and Yan'an Hospital Affiliated to Kunming Medical University, after the flight landed around 9 a.m, an hour later than scheduled, local authorities said.

The injured, including four with severe injuries, suffered from bone fractures, scalp lacerations, soft tissue injuries and other light wounds, due to baggage falling or crushing on overhead bins, according to the hospitals.

None of the injured are in critical condition.

The local authority is still checking the overall number of injured and their personal information.

China warns of geological disasters in the south

Meteorological authorities on Saturday warned of possible geological disasters in southern China as heavy rain is expected in the region.

The National Meteorological Center (NMC) and the Ministry of Land and Resources warned of high risks of geological disasters including flash floods in parts of Fujian, Guangdong, Guizhou, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces from Saturday to Sunday evening.

The NMC revoked a blue alert for a rainstorm on Saturday afternoon, but the

forecast of heavy rain in Fujian, Guangdong, Hainan, Taiwan and Yunnan will continue.

People affected by the rain should take precautions against possible mountain torrents, mud-rock flows and landslides, the NMC warned.

China has a four-tier color-coded warning system for severe weather, with red being the most serious, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

Over the past years, China has suffered some large-scale natural disasters, from extreme weather to geological events, causing huge losses of life and property.

China starts 2nd scientific expedition to Tibet plateau

China on Saturday began its second scientific expedition to the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau to study changes in climate, biodiversity and environment over the past decades.

The last expedition of similar scale was conducted in the 1970s.



Tibet plateau

This time, the expedition will last five to 10 years and the first stop will

be Serling Tso, a 2,391-square-kilometer lake that was confirmed to have replaced the Buddhist holy lake Namtso as Tibet's largest in 2014.

In the coming month, Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) will take more than 100 scientists to the lake area and the origin of the Yangtze, China's longest river. They will be divided into four groups and make a comprehensive survey of the plateau glaciers, climate change, biodiversity and ecological changes, said Yao Tandong, an academician with the CAS.

"Great changes have taken place in the plateau's resources and environment since the first scientific expedition," said Yao, director of the CAS Institute of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau Research. "We need further research to find out ways to cope with these changes."

China's first comprehensive scientific expedition to the Tibet plateau began in the 1970s and covered more than 50 disciplines including geologic structure, prehistoric life, geophysics, climate, zoology and botany.

"The scientists reported major discoveries and filled many gaps in plateau research," said Yao.

The new round of research, he said, will focus on changes.

Zhu Liping, a CAS researcher leading the lake observation team, said the surface of Serling Tso Lake, for example, had expanded 40 percent between 1976 and 2009.

Since 1990, water in the plateau's 1,000 lakes has increased by 100 billion cubic meters.

"The volume is equal to three times the water in Three Gorges Dam," Zhu said. Study will measure the impact on the ecology and its potential link to flooding and drought in the low-lying eastern monsoon region.

Zhu said data will be collected by scientists using automatic boats for the first time and a topographic map will be drawn.

"The plateau climate is becoming warmer and more humid," said Xu Baiqing, who leads another team to the glaciers. The team will drill ice cores at three major plateau glacier groups. Buried in the cold interiors of glaciers, ice cores contain well-preserved and detailed records of climate change in a century.

The impact of climatic changes would be assessed and proposals for conservation and rational development of resources formulated.

On the archaeological front, scientists will look for evidence that can prove an earlier archaeological discovery of a Paleolithic ruins in the Serling Tso suggesting that humans might have been lived on this part of the world since some 30,000 years ago.

Archaeologists will try to answer why humans came to this plateau, where did they come from, and how did they adapt to high altitude living, according to

team leader Deng Tao, deputy director of Institute of Vertebrate Paleontology and Paleoanthropology, under CAS.

A fourth team will research the biological diversity on the plateau and draw up a habitat map for preservation and tourism purposes.

A national park might be set up in Serling Tso.

The expedition will also take scientists to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and a pass linking to south Asia.