

Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region to suffer from ozone pollution



Beijing, Tianjin, and parts of Hebei Province will suffer from moderate to heavy levels of air pollution on May 18 and 19, with O₃ as the primary pollutant. [File Photo/Xinhua]

Heavy air pollution, including high ground level ozone (O₃) levels, is likely to hit Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei and some of its neighboring areas in the coming days, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said Thursday.

Beijing, Tianjin, and parts of Hebei Province will suffer from moderate to heavy levels of air pollution on May 18 and 19, with O₃ as the primary pollutant, the MEP said in an online statement.

Days of high temperatures have contributed to the formation of O₃, a pollutant that can be harmful when reaching a certain density.

According to the National Meteorological Center, the country's northern region is likely to see temperatures above 35 degrees Celsius on May 19.

China has been imposing controls on air pollution in Beijing and nearby regions this year to combat heavy smog, caused mainly by fine particulate matter PM_{2.5}.

The density of O₃ tends to rise as PM_{2.5} falls, according to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, as less particulate matter creates a favorable environment for the formation of O₃.

China has simultaneously rolled out measures to control the levels of PM2.5 and O₃, while further research will be targeted on O₃ formation mechanisms to better contain the pollutant.

A weak cold front is expected from May 20 to 23, improving air quality in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, although some areas will still face moderate levels of pollution made up primarily of O₃ and PM₁₀, MEP said.

4 killed in Taiwan nursing home fire

At least four were killed and 50 were hospitalized after a nursing home caught fire in Taiwan early Friday, local media reported.

About 150 people were at the nursing center when the fire broke out, some 50 have been sent to the hospital, with 24 suffering from smoke inhalation, according to local police.

Preliminary investigation showed the fire broke out on the second floor of the Nanmen Nursing Home at about 5 a.m. in Hengchun Township, southern Taiwan's Pingtung County. Firefighters had put off the fire soon after arrival.

The Nanmen nursing home was established in 2004, offering health care services to the senior and patients that require home care.

Further investigation continues.

Mainland warns any attempts to establish 'two Chinas'

Any attempts to establish "two Chinas," "one China, one Taiwan," or "Taiwan independence" is doomed to fail, a spokesperson from the Chinese mainland said Thursday.

An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, made the remarks in response to the name change of a Taiwan organization responsible for handling ties with Japan.

A ceremony was held in Taiwan Wednesday announcing the change of name from the Association of East Asian Relations to Taiwan-Japan Relations Association.

An said the Foreign Ministry has already made its stance clear on this issue.

"I want to stress that any attempts to create disturbances in the international arena or establish 'two Chinas,' 'one China, one Taiwan,' or 'Taiwan independence' will be in vain and doomed to fail," An said.

Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying on Wednesday denounced the name change of the Taiwan organization, urging Japan to abide by the one-China policy and not to disturb China-Japan ties.

[China collects combustible ice in S. China Sea](#)



File photo of South China Sea. [Photo/Xinhua]

China has succeeded in collecting samples of combustible ice in the South China Sea, a major breakthrough that may lead to a global energy revolution, Minister of Land and Resources Jiang Daming said Thursday.

This is China's first success in mining flammable ice at sea, after nearly two decades of research and exploration, the minister said at a trial mining site in the Shenhu area of the South China Sea Thursday.

China found flammable ice, a kind of natural gas hydrate, in the South China Sea in 2007.

International scientific circles have predicted that natural gas hydrate is the best replacement for oil and natural gas.

Braille test paper to be available for college English test



Braille test papers will be provided in the national English test for college students, after a girl sued the top education body. [File Photo]

Braille test papers will be provided in the national English test for college students, after a girl sued the top education body.

The examination authority of the Ministry of Education said on Tuesday that the Braille test papers will be available in the CET-4, or College English Test Band 4, which is scheduled next month.

The move came after a high-profile lawsuit brought against the authorities by a visually impaired girl. The plaintiff is a senior year student at Changchun University in Northeast China's Jilin Province.

Last September, the girl sent an application to the local education authority asking for the provision of Braille test papers in the CET-4, a test she wants to take to apply for a master's degree program for psychology. Her request was not approved.

In March, she sent another request to the local education authority to provide Braille test papers and also asked the MOE to disclose accommodation policies for students with limited vision, but did not receive replies.

On May 10, Luo brought a lawsuit against the MOE, demanding the ministry to disclose policies that help visually impaired students appearing for CET-4 test.

An insider from the examination authority of the MOE said measures have been taken to help disabled students in recent years. For example, in December 2016, 18 visually impaired students were allowed to use large-character papers in CET-4 and CET-6.

According to a law revised in 2008, national exams should provide Braille test papers, electronic test papers and professional aids to people who are visually impaired. Regulations that took effect on May 1 also state that a disabled person has the right to apply for reasonable accommodation in national exams, and exam centers as well as schools should provide support as requested.

In 2014, Braille test papers became available for the gaokao, or national college entrance examination, opening up more majors to people with limited vision. The next year, eight students sat for the test.