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## **Problematic metro cables to be replaced**

The contractors of Chengdu subway projects promised on Wednesday to replace all the electric cables used in the city's subway lines which were provided by a company failing to meet standards, according to the subway's official Weibo account.

The two contractors, China Railway Group and Power Construction Corporation of China, said the replacements will be made regardless of whether tests show the cables used in Chengdu subway lines meet the standards or not.

A planned cooperation with the electric cable company on Chengdu subway Line 2 will be canceled, said the announcement.

Eight people at Shaanxi Aokai Cable Corporation, based in Xi'an city in Shaanxi province, have been detained for providing substandard electric cables for Xi'an subway Line 3. The company has been shut down.

An online tip-off revealed last week that the electric cables provided by the company for Xi'an subway Line 3 were problematic, and questioned the process by which the company won the bid.

A subsequent investigation showed that all of the five samples of the low-voltage cables from Xi'an subway Line 3 failed to meet set standards.

The Xi'an metro company said at a news conference on Monday that it will replace all the substandard cables.

Wang Zhiwei, a legal representative from the company, knelt down and apologized to the public after the investigation result was published.

A joint probe examined the Xi'an subway Line 3 project's data and documents, and looked into the supervision work carried out by administrative bodies and law enforcement departments, said Yang Xin, head of the commission for discipline inspection in Xi'an, the city's top anti-graft authority.

The police have impounded the rest of the cable stock at Aokai and have taken samples for testing, Yang said.

Established in late 2012, the company was a private firm producing items such

as electric cables, control cables and cables for rail transportation.

Xi'an subway Line 3 was put into use in November last year and carried 345,000 passengers on the first day of operation.

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## [China reports highest sea level in 30 years](#)

A report released Wednesday by China's State Oceanic Administration warned that sea levels monitored last year reached the highest level since 1980.

The average sea level along the Chinese coast in 2016 was 38 mm higher than that of 2015 and 82 mm higher than the average level between 1993 and 2011, the report said.

Over the period from 1980 to 2016, sea level readings at China's coastal regions rose at an average rate of 3.2 mm per year, according to the report.

The report ascribed this situation to influences of climate change as well as El Nino and La Nina events.

Sun Shuxian, vice director of the administration warned that higher sea level may result in aggravated risks of storm tides, floods, coastal erosion, salt tides and seawater encroachment.

Another report released by the administration on Wednesday stated that the marine environment in waters under China's jurisdiction was "basically stable" in 2016.

However, it also noted some "outstanding problems" such as offshore pollution, an unhealthy marine ecosystem and environmental risks such as reoccurrence of red tides.

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## [China pledges crackdown on IPR violations, counterfeits](#)

China's cabinet, the State Council, has recently issued a guideline on intensifying crackdown on counterfeiting and Intellectual Property Right (IPR) infringements.

Fighting counterfeiting and IPR violations will help ensure implementation of China's IPR strategy, protect market order and improve the business environment, the guideline says.

The document requires a better market supervision system and demands improvements to the law, regulations and standards with appropriate information technology utilized in supervision.

The document mandates cooperation among regions and government agencies, along with international collaboration, to handle problems in production, circulation and sales.

E-commerce platforms must strengthen scrutiny of business operators.

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## New superbug could be epidemic, scientists find

Chinese scientists have discovered a new drug-resistant strain of bacteria that can spread stealthily and has epidemic potential.

The superbug is a strain of *Salmonella typhimurium* whose plasmid – mobile DNA that can be easily copied and shared between bacteria – contains the MCR1.6 gene, a newly discovered variant of the drug-resistant MCR1 gene.

"This is the first time the MCR1.6 gene has been found in *Salmonella*, a common foodborne pathogen, and from a healthy carrier," said Kan Biao, deputy director of the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention's National Institute for Communicable Disease Control and Prevention.

MCR1 and its variants could help bacteria resist polymyxins – a last-resort class of antibiotics that includes colistin, the most potent, but toxic, antibiotic – according to studies by the institute, the results of which were published this month by *Antimicrobial Agents and Chemotherapy*, a journal produced by the American Society for Microbiology.

Bacterial infections caused by the MCR1 gene and its variants are treatable with other antibiotics, "but often at the cost of killing good bacteria and breaking the body's microflora balance", Kan said.

Kan's team first discovered the MCR1.6 gene in a 2014 fecal sample of a 46-year-old woman from the Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region.

"The situation is alarming because healthy individuals may have been unknowingly spreading this superbacteria for years. *Salmonella* is one of the major micro pathogens of food poisoning and can cause diarrhea and vomiting. A drug-resistant version could pose a serious threat to public health."

Kan added that the superbug has the possibility of becoming an epidemic, similar to the typhoid outbreak in the early 20th century, when a healthy female carrier, Mary Mallon, is believed to have infected two dozen people with typhoid fever while displaying no symptoms.

Since its discovery in 2015, the MCR1 gene has spread to more than 30 countries, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, India and Malaysia, according to Kan.

"The MCR1.6 gene or other MCR1 gene variants might begin to appear in other countries," he warned. "A conservative estimate of more than 3 million Chinese suffer from Salmonella-related illnesses each year, with children and the elderly most at risk."

Salmonella outbreaks also occur in the US on a regular basis, with the last major outbreak in late November, according to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To tackle the superbug issue, governments should strictly regulate the use of antibiotics in livestock farming, educate the public on antibiotic uses, strengthen surveillance of resistant bacteria, and promote research and development of new antibiotics, Kan said.

For the general public, "something as simple as washing your hands, cooking food properly and strictly following a doctor's prescription for antibiotics can greatly reduce the chance of catching a serious infection", he added.