

## **Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region to roll out 6 measures to fight smog**

Beijing is gulfed by heavy smog. [Photo/Xinhua]

The Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region will take six new measures to continue combating smog in 2017, said Zhao Yingmin, vice minister of environmental protection.

The concentration of PM2.5 – fine particulate matter that is hazardous to human health – decreased by 7.8 percent in the region in 2016, with Beijing reducing 9.9 percent, Tianjin 1.4 percent and Hebei 9.1 percent. But the region still needs to beef up efforts in improving its air quality, especially in winter, Zhao said.

The region will adopt the following six measures in 2017. First, a total of 28 “route” cities, or cities near the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region that can impact the air, should meet the requirement of reducing their steel capacity ahead of schedule, and the small yet heavily polluting plants scattered around the region should be closed down by the end of October. Second, the region will promote clean heating in winter, build “coal-free zones,” close down small coal-fired boilers, and make coal consumption in the 28 “route” cities realize a negative growth. Third, the region will enhance its comprehensive work in fighting industrial air pollution, with key industries meeting emission caps and the region taking the lead in issuing pollutant discharge permits. Fourth, while cement and casting industries in the region continue to halt production in winter, cities such as Shijiazhuang, Tangshan, Handan and Anyang will also slash half of their steel capacity during winter heating seasons. Fifth, car emissions will be controlled. Sixth, dust at construction sites should be reduced in 2017.

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## **China encourages private sector participation in weapons development**

The equipment development department under the Central Military Commission Friday released a document on boosting military-civilian integration in weapons development.

The document introduced a set of measures to liberalize and regulate the weapons sector, including slashing restrictions on the types of arms that private firms are allowed to develop and piloting commercial services for

military procurement in the aerospace industry.

Enterprises producing substandard products, violating confidentiality policies or in poor operation should be ineligible in weapons development, the document said.

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## China revises law to boost Red Cross credibility

China's top legislature Friday passed a revised law to boost the transparency and credibility of the country's Red Cross societies.

The legislation was adopted after a third reading at the bimonthly session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), which runs Wednesday to Friday.

Red Cross societies in China are now required to give feedback to donors on the use of their donations, and staff who fail to do so could face civil and criminal charges.

"The revision primarily focuses on strengthening supervision on Red Cross societies and standardizing their activities," Guo Linmao, an official with the Legislative Affairs Commission of the NPC Standing Committee, told a press conference Friday afternoon.

A previous clause giving Red Cross societies power to "rectify" illegal activities by their subordinate societies and staff was deleted from the new draft.

After several scandals, China's Red Cross has grappled with trust issues in recent years.

Revision work for the law began in 2016.

The first reading of the draft suggested that independent third-party agencies should audit donations and that an information disclosure system should be put into place.

The societies should also establish a system for financial management, internal control, public auditing as well as supervision of funds and assets.

The second draft expanded Red Cross societies' duties in stem cell and organ donation.

The Red Cross Society of China established an organ donation administration center in 2012, becoming involved in organ donations at every stage from donor registration to organ distribution.

The third reading specified that Red Cross societies could participate in and promote blood, body and organ donations, and could carry out work related to stem cell donations.

It stated that leading supervisors at all Red Cross societies must be chosen through a democratic process.

The revision will safeguard and regulate Red Cross societies in performing their duties and boost its credibility, according to Zhang Mingqi, a vice chairman of the Law Committee of the NPC.

The law will come into force May 8, 2017.

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## [Green light for China's first high security bio lab](#)

China's first high level biosafety laboratory has been accredited and will be fully operational soon, the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) said Friday.

The certificate was issued by the China National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment, according to the CAS.

The lab in Wuhan, capital city of central China's Hubei Province, will be used to study class four pathogens (P4) – the most virulent viruses that pose a high risk of aerosol transmission.

P4 is the highest biosafety level.

The lab in Wuhan will help China prevent and control outbreaks of infectious diseases and aid research and development of antiviral drugs and vaccines, said Zhang Yaping, vice president of the CAS.

All the air from the lab will go through two advanced filters before being discharged, while solid and liquid waste will also be properly processed, according to the CAS.

The Wuhan lab has undergone a trial operation since its construction was completed at the end of 2014. Some of the core research team have been trained in France and the United States.