

Infectious diseases kill 18,000 Chinese in 2016

Infectious diseases killed 18,237 people on the Chinese mainland in 2016, according to official data revealed Thursday.

In 2016, there were more than 6.9 million cases of infectious diseases reported on the mainland, according to the National Health and Family Planning Commission.

Of that total, one case of pestilence and 27 of cholera, both Class A infectious diseases, were reported but did not lead to fatalities.

More than 2.9 million cases were classified as Class B infectious diseases, which resulted in 17,968 deaths. HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, rabies, hepatitis, and human infection of H7N9 avian influenza accounted for 98.8 percent of deaths in this category.

Category C diseases were responsible for more than 3.9 million cases and 269 deaths. Foot and mouth disease, infectious diarrhea, and influenza were the most prevalent in this category, accounting for 98.5 percent of deaths.

No new runways is still the only option, reveals new report on Heathrow expansion



23 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: "Today's report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet."

The Government is still not able to demonstrate that it can mitigate the destructive environmental impacts of a new runway at Heathrow, according to a [report published today](#) by the Environmental Audit Committee.

The report on Heathrow expansion reveals the Government is still failing to take into account major concerns about the air pollution, carbon emissions and noise pollution effects of expansion.

Responding to the findings Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, argued that the

report was further proof that 'Heathrow expansion is an unnecessary environmental disaster in waiting'.

Mr Taylor, a vocal anti-airport expansion activist who has written about the [legal difficulties](#) a third runway will face, said:

"Today's report is an important reminder that campaigners have been right all along; Heathrow expansion is still a climate-wrecking decision that is bad for the British people and the planet."

"The report reveals that the Government has paid little consideration to the triple threat of unacceptable environmental risks the prospect of a new runway brings with it, from air pollution to carbon emissions and noise pollution."

"A new runway will breach legal air pollution limits and further worsen an air quality crisis that the Government is already [failing to tackle](#). And there is still no answer forthcoming on any plan to reduce current levels of air pollution which are responsible for the unnecessary [deaths of 50,000 people in Britain](#) every year."

"Expansion will bust Britain's carbon budgets and make a mockery of Theresa May's legal-binding commitments under the Paris Agreement. Astonishingly, the Government's response appears to be its willingness to water down already dangerously-lax limits on aviation emissions, despite the recommendations of its own advisors."

"Thousands of local residents will be appalled to read today's report only to discover that not only will a third runway ensure the air they breathe is about to get more toxic but the Government has no plans to tackle the cacophony of noise pollution that expansion promises."

"There are no two ways about it; expansion is a disastrous decision for the people of the South East, London, Britain, and the planet. Britain's 'airport capacity crisis' is, and always has been, a dangerous myth driven by corporate greed, not by actual need. Not only is all but one airport in the UK operating under capacity, sponsoring the exponential growth of an aviation industry that is a [top-ten global polluter](#) is wholly incompatible with Britain's Paris climate agreement commitments."

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News story: PM call with Prime Minister Turnbull of Australia: 23 February 2017

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Theresa May spoke to Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull about stability in the Middle East, Brexit and a free trade agreement.

A Downing Street spokesperson said:

The Prime Minister spoke to Prime Minister Turnbull of Australia this morning.

They discussed our co-operation in the campaign to defeat Daesh, and agreed on the importance of creating the conditions for long-term stability in Iraq. Prime Minister May was clear we need to see a political transition in Syria, away from President Assad.

They agreed on the need to tackle Iran's destabilising influence in the Middle East, and the importance of the nuclear deal and ensuring it is rigorously policed and enforced.

On Brexit, Prime Minister Turnbull reiterated Australia's commitment to maintaining a close partnership with the UK as we leave the EU. Both Prime Ministers said they looked forward to holding preliminary conversations on a comprehensive bilateral free trade agreement in due course.

They ended the call by looking forward to seeing each other at the [G20 meeting in Hamburg](#) in July.

China to step up property tax

legislation: official

China will move more swiftly in legislating a long-discussed property tax law, an official said on Thursday.

"It is a major task in China's tax reform determined by policymakers, and the lawmaking process will be accelerated," Lu Kehua, vice minister of housing and urban-rural development, said when answering questions on progress on the tax law during a press conference.

Related government agencies and legislators are carrying out work according to the plan, Lu added.

China has pushed forward the work for years, but progress has remained slow. A trial property tax has been introduced in Chongqing and Shanghai.

The law will fill the gap in taxing home ownership, as China's current housing tax mechanism mainly taxes development and property sales.

Press release: Rare Georgian barometer at risk of leaving the UK

A rare Georgian barometer is at risk of being exported from the UK unless a buyer can be found to match the asking price of £160,000.

Culture Minister Matt Hancock has placed a temporary export bar on the George III mahogany wheel barometer to provide an opportunity to keep it in the country.

The piece is one of a small number of its design known to have been made by the renowned Whitehurst family of clockmakers, from Derby. It is one of only nine of this type known to exist, none of which are known to be in a UK public collection.

During the reign of King George III natural philosophy had become increasingly popular, with scientific instruments finding their way into the homes of the elite classes. The ornate decoration of this instrument indicates that it was intended for this purpose.

The possible association of the barometer with John Whitehurst makes this item of particular interest. As a clockmaker, instrument maker and natural philosopher he was a member of the Lunar Society, became Stamper of Money Weights at the Mint, was painted by Joseph Wright and was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society.

Minister of State for Digital and Culture Matt Hancock said:

This beautiful barometer is more than just an instrument – it also gives us a glimpse into the 18th century home and the increased interest in natural philosophy at the time.

As a rare and important item associated with a significant regional workshop, this fine piece offers an intriguing possibility for further study. I very much hope that we can keep it in the UK for this purpose.

The decision to defer the export licence follows a recommendation by the Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest (RCEWA), administered by [The Arts Council](#).

RCEWA member Christopher Rowell said:

The scientifically sophisticated design of this rare Whitehurst barometer is matched by the high quality of the carved mahogany case.

No other Whitehurst barometer of this model is in a British public collection and its retention in this country is therefore highly desirable.

The RCEWA made its recommendation on the grounds of the barometer's outstanding significance to the study of the Whitehurst family's work.

The decision on the export licence application for the barometer will be deferred until 22 April 2017. This may be extended until 22 July 2017 if a serious intention to raise funds to purchase it is made at the recommended price of £160,000 (plus VAT of £2,000).

Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the barometer should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.

Images of the barometer can be downloaded via our [Flickr page](#)

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Notes to editors

1.Details of the barometer are as follows: Wheel barometer. Dial, silvered, signed 'Whitehurst Derby' with 3-inch scale for 29-31 inches of mercury subdivided into hundredths and inscribed for changeable, rain, fair. Case:

mahogany, carved with leaves, column (housing the tube) with acanthus leaves at base, and urn finial. Made by Whitehurst of Derby, c. 1770-1780 H 43", W 14", D 2.25"

2.The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by The Arts Council, which advises the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.

3.The Arts Council champions, develops and invests in artistic and cultural experiences that enrich people's lives. It supports a range of activities across the arts, museums and libraries – from theatre to digital art, reading to dance, music to literature, and crafts to collections.

www.artscouncil.org.uk.