

## Automotive vehicles major source for air pollution

Automotive vehicles have emerged as a major source of China's air pollution, according to a report released by the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) on Saturday.

China had 295 million automotive vehicles on its roads as of the end of last year, emitting pollutants weighing about 44.725 million tonnes, down 1.3 percent year on year, the report showed.

Analysis of air pollutants of 15 major Chinese cities showed that local mobile emitters, a category that includes vehicles, contributed to about 13.5 percent to 41 percent of total fine particle concentration, according to Liu Bingjiang, a senior official with MEP.

The MEP will enhance supervision on the production, use and elimination of automotive vehicles to reduce air pollution, Liu added.

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## Air, water quality continues to improve in Beijing

Air pollutant density was lowered in Beijing while its surface water environment also improved in 2016, according to a report released by Beijing Municipal Environment Protection Bureau Friday.

The city's drinking water reserves were expanded to over 1,300 square kilometers. The discharge of two key water pollutants, chemical oxygen demand (COD) and ammonia nitrogen, were reduced by 7.7 and 8.1 percent respectively, the report said.

More sewage treatment plants and water recycling facilities were put into operation last year, bringing its sewage treatment capacity to 6.72 million cubic meters per day, said Qiao Shufang, director of the bureau's environmental monitoring department.

The average density of PM2.5, airborne particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, was 73 micrograms per cubic meter last year, down 9.9 percent year on year.

Densities of other air pollutants including sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, PM10, carbon monoxide and ozone all saw year-on-year decreases, said the report.

In 2016, Beijing had 198 days with good air quality, an increase of 12 days from 2015. The number of “heavy air pollution” days stood at 39, seven days fewer than that of 2015.

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## [First China-designed experiment flies to space station](#)

SpaceX on Saturday launched a shipment of supplies for the astronauts living at the International Space Station, carrying for the first time an experiment independently designed by China.

The SpaceX Dragon cargo spacecraft lifted off on the company’s Falcon 9 rocket at 5:07 p.m. EDT (2107 GMT) from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

About 10 minutes later, SpaceX successfully landed the rocket’s first stage at the company’s Landing Zone 1, just south of the launch site at Cape Canaveral Air Force Station, as part of its effort to develop fully reusable rockets.

On this trip, the Dragon will deliver almost 6,000 pounds (2,700 kg) of supplies, including solar panels, tools for Earth-observation and equipment to study neutron stars. If all goes well, it will arrive at the space station on Monday.

### **Chinese experiment**

Among the cargo is a 3.5-kilogram device from the Beijing Institute of Technology that sought to answer questions like “Does the space radiation and microgravity cause mutations among antibody-encoding genes and how does it happen?”

The Chinese payload was first reported in 2015, when an agreement was reached with NanoRacks, a Houston-based company that offers services for the commercial utilization of the space station.

Under the agreement, NanoRacks will deliver the device to the U.S. side of the space station and astronauts there will conduct studies using the device in about two weeks, data from which will be sent back to the Chinese researchers.

There is a U.S. law in place, known as the Wolf amendment, that bans cooperation between the U.S. space agency NASA and Chinese government entities, but this deal is purely commercial and therefore considered legal.

NASA spokesperson Kathryn Hambleton confirmed to Xinhua that there is a Chinese experiment that is launched on this mission, known as SpaceX CRS-11.

"NASA complied with all legal requirements to notify the Congress of this activity, and all of the ISS partners approved the inclusion of the experiment," Hambleton said in an email.

"This is not the first Chinese experiment on the International Space Station (ISS)," the spokesperson said. "Chinese scientists have been investigators and co-investigators on international experiments conducted on the ISS, including for the Alpha Magnetic Spectrometer investigation on ISS."

### **Good step**

However, Professor Deng Yulin, who led the Chinese research, said that this is the first time an ISS experiment has been independently designed and fabricated in China.

"This cooperation does not violate any laws and regulations, including the Wolf amendment. We do it in an open and visible way," Deng told Xinhua. "This is a new model of cooperation that we can follow in the future."

"We think it's really an important research and they have done a great job," Mary Murphy, senior internal payloads manager of NanoRacks, told Xinhua, calling the cooperation between the two "a good example."

Leroy Chiao, a former Chinese-American NASA astronaut and ISS commander, highlighted the significance of the Chinese project.

"I think this is a good step forward," Chiao said. "I have always believed that cooperation is the best way forward for both the U.S. and China, particularly using civil space exploration as an avenue."

Joan Johnson-Freese, a space policy analyst at the U.S. Naval War College, said that it evidences the growing importance of commercial space.

"Space is no longer just the purview of government activity," Johnson-Freese said. "Space is developing as an area of commercial activity, much like cars and computers, which is a big change from the past."

SpaceX CRS-11 was the 11th of up to 20 missions to the space station that the California-based company will fly for NASA. It also marked the first time that SpaceX has launched a spaceship that has been used on a previous mission to the space station.

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## [Labour launches manifesto with and for disabled people](#)

Labour has launched its manifesto with and for disabled people.

The manifesto was produced following Labour’s Disability Equality Roadshow, involving extensive consultation with disabled people and their carers across the country.

Over the last seven years, disabled people – including people with physical or mental impairments and long-term health conditions – have borne the brunt of the Conservatives cuts, which has seen the number of disabled people living in poverty rise to 4.2 million.

Labour will

reverse the cuts to disability support, transform our social security system from one that demonises disabled people to one that is supportive and enabling, scrap the punitive sanctions regime and replace ineffective, degrading assessments. The manifesto sets out Labour's plan to tackle the barriers facing disabled people and to build a society in which everyone has the same opportunities and choices.

**Jeremy Corbyn, leader of the Labour Party, said:**

"Last night at the BBC Question Time Leaders' Special, an audience member gave a harrowing account of her traumatic and degrading experience undergoing the Work Capability Assessment. Like many others, I was incredibly moved by the film *I, Daniel Blake*, which tells the story of those who have been demonised and dehumanised by the Conservative's devastating cuts and a social security system which punishes, rather than supports, disabled people.

"Labour will ensure that disabled people and people with mental health conditions have access to the support they need and will work with disabled people to build an inclusive society, where no one is held back from fulfilling their potential and realising their aspirations."

**Launching the manifesto in Manchester today, Debbie Abrahams, Labour's Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary, said:**

"We are proud of the manifesto that we have developed with, and for, disabled people. For seven long years, disabled people have borne the brunt of the Conservatives' austerity cuts and been pushed further into poverty. Our comprehensive and costed policies set out in this manifesto, will ensure that disabled people are properly supported to live full and independent lives.

"Enough is enough, only a Labour government, offering a real alternative, will work in partnership with disabled people to ensure no one in our society is held back."

Notes to editors:

Please find a link to our disability manifesto here:

<http://www.labour.org.uk/page/-/manifesto-for-disabled-people.PDF>