

Beijing sees decrease in PM2.5 density in April



Beijing witnessed a 22.1-percent year-on-year drop in PM2.5 density, an indicator of air pollution, in April. [Photo by Chen Boyuan/China.org.cn]

Beijing witnessed a 22.1-percent year-on-year drop in PM2.5 density, an indicator of air pollution, in April, the capital city's environment authority said Wednesday.

The average density of PM2.5, airborne particles smaller than 2.5 microns in diameter, was 53 micrograms per cubic meters in April, the lowest level during the same period over the past five years, according to the Beijing Municipal Environment Protection Bureau.

Beijing recorded 22 days with good air quality in April.

The bureau attributed the improvement to air pollution control measures and favorable weather conditions.

In April, the bureau issued fines totalling more than 10 million yuan (1.45 million U.S. dollars) on air pollution violations such as open fires, outdoor barbecues and construction dust.

Students take on historic team in Dundee's University Challenge



As part of the University of Dundee's 50th Anniversary celebrations, Dundee's historic University Challenge champions from the 1980s will return to campus to take on the students set to represent the University in next years' television series.

The 1983 side became the second only Scottish team to win the competition, a record that hasn't been added to since. They will once again flex their mental muscles when they return to campus for the University's 50th Anniversary celebrations this Saturday, 20th May.



Three of the 1983 team, James A. Smith (Economics and Politics), Graeme Davidson (Law) and Peter Burt (Zoology) will be joined by Tom McGhee (English) a member of the Dundee team who finished runners up in 1978. see photo (left). Donald Kennedy, the fourth member of the 1983 team now lives in Australia and is unable to join his old colleagues.

They will face the newly formed student team of 2017 – Ian Bertram (Medicine), Mason Mcilreavy (Medicine), Iain Brodie (Philosophy, Psychology and Film student) and Rory McDowell (History) and reserve Greg Armstrong (Medicine).

Rory said, "It will be wonderful to take on the team that are technically the reigning Scottish Champions! However, if you look at Dundee's rankings in the University league tables since the 1980s, we have been on the up – so I say out with the old and in with the new."

The showdown takes place between 3.45pm – 5pm in the Dalhousie Building and will be chaired by Fordyce Davidson, Academic Director of International College Dundee and Professor of Mathematics at the University.

Professor Davidson said, "As a Dundee graduate who turns 50 in the same year as the University, it will be a great honour to see the old boys pitched against the students – the majority of whom were not even born when the competitors won in 1983.

"It begs the question, are the young genuinely smarter than their predecessors? We will find out on the 20th May. Perhaps beating the champions could set the new generation on their way to Paxman."

To book your seat click [here](#).

[Liberal Democrats launch manifesto to change Britain's future](#)

The Liberal Democrats will launch their manifesto for a brighter future on Wednesday. Change Britain's Future is a plan for a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy.

Nothing is more important to our children's future than Brexit. A bad Brexit deal, with Britain outside the single market, will wreck the future for our children, our economy and our schools and hospitals. That's why at the heart of the manifesto is a commitment to give the people the final say on the Brexit deal in a referendum.

In advance of the publication of their manifesto, the Liberal Democrats are unveiling a raft of policies to give our children and young people a brighter future. These include:

- Helping people buy their first home for the same cost as renting, with a new model of 'Rent to Own' homes
- Restoring housing benefit for young people
- Creating a discounted bus pass for 16-21 year olds, giving a 66% discount
- Introducing votes at 16 for elections and referendums across the UK

As well as:

- Investing almost £7bn in our schools and colleges
- Doubling the number of businesses that take apprenticeships
- Tripling the early years pupil premium
- Extending free school meals to all primary school students

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said: "Imagine a brighter future. You don't have to accept Theresa May and Nigel Farage's extreme version of Brexit that will wreck the future for you, your family, your schools and hospitals.

"In the biggest fight for the future of our country in a generation, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has let you down by voting with Theresa May on Brexit – not against her.

"The Liberal Democrats want you to have a choice over your future. You should have your say on the Brexit deal in a referendum. And if you don't like the deal you should be able to reject it and choose to remain in Europe.

"We want to give all our children a brighter future in a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy. Not Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain.

"A vote for the Liberal Democrats can change Britain's future."

[First H7N9 case reported in north China province](#)

North China's Shanxi Province reported its first H7N9 case of the year on Tuesday evening.

A 66-year-old woman surnamed Zhang from Datong City tested positive by the city's center for disease and prevention (CDC), the Shanxi provincial CDC and the Chinese CDC in the past three days.

She is now in the hospital and described as in "serious but stable condition," said the Shanxi provincial health and family planning commission.

Experts from the Chinese CDC and the provincial CDC were sent to Datong to help with treatment of the patient as well as investigation and prevention work for the disease.

So far those who had contact with Zhang didn't show any symptoms of infection.

Nationwide, a total of 96 people were reportedly infected by the H7N9 virus in March, leaving 47 dead, according to the national health and family planning commission.

[Labour goes for the full Corbyn](#)

Labour's Manifesto was even more socialist than the leaked version. Nationalised water companies were added to the purchase list, alongside a nationalised Post Office, new nationalised regional banks, regional public sector energy companies, the gradual renationalisation of the Grid and

nationalised train companies. This large programme of changing ownership is not costed.

The Manifesto aims to raise £48.6bn in tax and to spend it on other items. Companies would face a big tax hike on their profits, new taxes on highly paid employees, taxes on buying assets and derivatives. The better off would face a 45% tax charge at £80,000 a year and a 50% tax charge at £123,000. Public debt would be likely to go up much more rapidly than under current government plans to pay for investment, nationalisation, and any shortfall in revenues.

The problem with the arithmetic is it assumes very rich people and companies will stay and pay. It assumes rich people with flexibility will still work and invest as hard, and that companies will still build up more profitable business in the UK when other countries offer them a lower tax background to expand. Given the strong growth in corporation tax receipts seen in recent years in the UK as the rate has been lowered, it is dubious to think there would be further major growth in revenues if the rate were raised so much. Given the good growth in the amount paid, and the increase in the proportion of income tax paid by the better off with a reduction in the top rate from 50% to 45%, it is again questionable that Labour's plan would work on Income tax either.

There are even bigger numbers on capital account. A £25bn a year investment programme is specified, though much of this is projects already underway out of budgets already secured. Presumably on top of that is the wish to set up a National Investment Bank which in turn would be able to lend £250bn for suitable projects. The taxpayer would be standing behind the bank and the projects if they miscarried.

Labour say they "accept the referendum result" and say they will get on with legislating to get the UK out of the EU. They wish, however, to negotiate their way back into the customs union and many other features of the current EU scheme. They would guarantee the rights of all EU citizens in the UK before the EU made a similar reassurance for UK citizens living in the rest of the EU. They are silent in the Manifesto over UK payments to the EU, though elsewhere they have implied they think the UK does have to pay some bills the EU dreams up that have no legal base in the Treaties. None of this makes for a strong negotiating position designed to give both the UK and the rest of the EU a good Brexit. It is in the interests of both sides that we have a good future relationship. The UK being firm as well as friendly is crucial to delivering such an outcome.

Published and promoted by Fraser Mc Farland on behalf of John Redwood, both at 30 Rose Street Wokingham RG40 1XU