

## Winter weather conditions could lead to worsening smog



Heavy smog hits Beijing. [Photo/China.org.cn]

Winter weather conditions that prevent air pollutants from dispersing in Beijing could be affected by climate change and lead to longer and more frequent periods of smog, scientists have found.

Conducive weather conditions are a key contributor to severe haze, when PM2.5 – fine particulate matter measuring 2.5 microns or less in diameter – harms health and causes economic disruption, according to the Qingdao National Laboratory for Marine Science and Technology.

As global warming causes large-scale circulation changes, the frequency and duration of such weather will increase by 50 percent and 80 percent respectively between 2050 and 2099 compared with last century, a study has found.

The lab's findings were published online recently by Nature Climate Change, an international science journal.

“Although it is believed that haze is caused by pollutants from exhaust fumes and industrial emissions, the impact from weather conditions shouldn't be dismissed,” said Cai Wenju, the lead author of the report.

Cai said the conducive weather conditions include weaker surface winds in the north and mid-troposphere winds in the northwest, and a stronger thermal stability in the lower atmosphere.

"These conditions are disadvantageous for driving away haze, and instead cause it to accumulate," Cai added.

The report states the predicted increase in frequency and duration is consistent with atmospheric changes brought about by global warming, such as to Arctic winds, weaker East Asian winter monsoons and faster warming of the lower troposphere.

The Qingdao laboratory is also carrying out major scientific projects, including "Transparent Ocean", in support of the accurate prediction of the marine environment and climate change.

"Haze management is a common responsibility of all countries worldwide," said Pan Kehou, secretary-general of the lab's academic committee. The lab "will take responsibility in leading and promoting international cooperation on energy saving and emissions reduction with scientific research institutions from other countries and regions, and in contributing to a better environment and development of ecological civilization".

Last month, the United States-based journal Science Advances published a study on China's haze.

The study said extreme haze in winter would likely occur at a higher frequency in China as a result of the changing boreal cryosphere, such as Arctic sea ice loss in the preceding autumn and extensive boreal snowfall in early winter, posing challenges for mitigating winter haze.

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## [China's workplace safety improves in Q1](#)

China's workplace accidents and related deaths dropped in the first quarter of 2017 as the government stepped up work safety inspections, official data showed Wednesday.

The number of workplace accidents around China plunged 26.3 percent year on year to 10,131 in the first three months, while the death toll in those accidents dropped 16.6 percent to 7,196, according to a report unveiled at a press conference of the State Administration of Work Safety.

Spokesperson Su Jie said at the press conference that the country has stepped up special work safety inspections around major holidays and in important industries since the beginning of this year.

In the first quarter, authorities ordered 1,092 companies to suspend production or business for rectification, up 22.1 percent from a year ago. A total of 246 companies were shut down, up 138.8 percent year on year.

Of those accidents, 7 were categorized as major accidents, compared with 6 major accidents in the same period last year.

A major accident in China refers to one in which either more than 10 people are killed, more than 50 are injured, or the direct economic loss exceeds 50 million yuan (7.3 million U.S. dollars).

In the second quarter, the country will continue to screen for safety hazards to control the occurrence of major accidents, Su said.

Campaigns will be launched to ensure work safety in major industries, including the mining, chemical, construction and transportation fields, she said.

Efforts should also be made to improve emergency response to floods by coordinating efforts of different departments and timely release forecasts and warnings, according to Su.

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## [China to launch first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1](#)

China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 is scheduled for launch at 7:41 p.m. Thursday from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's Hainan Province, the office of China's manned space program said Wednesday.

The cargo spacecraft will be carried into orbit by a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket, the office said.

Fuelled by liquid oxygen and kerosene, the medium-sized rocket is able to carry cargo spacecraft and man-made satellites. It made its maiden flight June 2016.

Tianzhou-1 is the first cargo ship independently developed by the country. It is expected to operate in orbit at an altitude of 380 kilometers before docking with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab, it said.

The cargo spacecraft will also carry out space experiments, including one on non-Newtonian gravitation, before falling back to earth.

The launch of Tianzhou-1 will mark a crucial step for China in building a space station by 2020.

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# Make the money central to the election

The Prime Minister rightly said we need to take back control of our money.

One of the important things the government can do in this election is to say Goodbye to the austerity economics of the EU budget rules and Mr Osborne's tenure. One of the pleasures of Brexit, a positive for voters of all persuasions, will be the ability to spend the net contributions we currently send to Brussels. Once we are out we can offer tax cuts and more spending with no rise in borrowing. Spending the money at home will help our economy and put more of our people to work here, instead of having to send the money abroad and run a larger balance of payments deficit.

We could remove VAT on domestic fuel, tampons and green products. We could spend more on the NHS, training more UK people as nurses and doctors. We could spend more in our schools and do more to promote better roads and public transport.

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## China to monitor water pollution spending

China unveiled new measures Wednesday to prevent misuse of water pollution funds.

A performance rating framework will be set up to assess whether the money is spent wisely and whether the anti-pollution project is well managed, according to a statement jointly released by the Ministry of Environmental Protection and the Ministry of Finance.

After a comprehensive review on their performance, fund users will be graded on a four-tier rating system, and local authorities will reward the good, and punish the bad, the statement said.

The detailed guideline came as authorities try to rein in the misuse of environmental funds. China's top auditor has found that 17.6 billion yuan (about 2.56 billion U.S. dollars) of fiscal funds for pollution control and resource management in 2016 were not used effectively.

A total of 397 water protection projects had failed to achieve the desired effect, and some environment funds were not distributed in accordance with special protection plans, according to the National Audit Office.