

Thunderstorms to hit central, southeast China

Thunderstorms and heavy rains are forecast to hit parts of central and southeast China in the next 24 hours, the national observatory warned Saturday.

From Saturday evening to Sunday evening, parts of Hubei, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi, Zhejiang and Fujian provinces will be lashed by thunderstorms, wild winds or hailstones, according to the National Meteorological Center (NMC).

The center issued a blue alert, the lowest in a four-tier warning system, for severe convective weather for the above-mentioned regions, predicting precipitation of 20 to 40 millimeters per hour, or even 50 millimeters per hour, in some areas.

The NMC cautioned that local governments should take emergency measures against thunderstorms, strong wind and potential disasters, including mountain floods and landslides.

China has a four-tier color-coded weather warning system, with red representing the most severe warning, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

Getting on with the job this week

From new funding to support veterans to reducing energy bills, we've been getting on with the job.

Statement by the Spokesperson on the Parliamentary elections in The Gambia

On 6 April, the people of The Gambia elected their representatives to the National Assembly in the first elections after the peaceful change of leadership in January. For the first time, the EU deployed a fully-fledged European Union Election Observation Mission (EOM) to the Gambia, headed by Chief Observer MEP Miroslav Poche.

In its preliminary statement, issued today, the EOM concluded that the elections were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, commending the electoral authorities for delivering a well-administered process. Furthermore, the EOM highlighted that, during a free and open campaign, the electorate had been offered a wide variety of views, well covered by the media.

The EU observers will remain in the country until completion of the electoral process and will issue a final report with recommendations which could assist in further strengthening the Gambian electoral framework.

The election results give a strong mandate to President Barrow and his government to pursue his reform agenda of fostering democracy, peace, reconciliation, the respect of human rights and the rule of law.

The EU stands ready to enhance the bilateral relations with The Gambia, in this new chapter.

Press release: PM call with Prime Minister of Sweden following Stockholm attack: 8 April 2017

The Prime Minister called Prime Minister Löfven of Sweden today, to express her condolences and those of the British people for the terrible attack that took place in Stockholm yesterday.

She was clear that the UK stands firmly by Sweden's side, and they agreed on the importance of working together to tackle these threats, which we all continue to face.

Beijing to launch medical reform



A pharmacy [File photo: Chinanews.com]

Beijing is to officially launch medical reforms on Saturday, separating hospital services from drug sales.

The overall price of drugs is expected to fall as the reform requires all public medical institutions in Beijing to do away with the 15 percent markup on drug prices.

All the cost of 435 medical services can be reimbursed from the medical insurance, except those otherwise provided by the state.

The reform also requires hospitals to bring in medical affairs fees to replace registration, diagnosis and treatment fees.

The director of Beijing Municipal Commission of Health and Family Planning, Fang Laiying, outlined the new mechanism.

“The medical affairs fee is a kind of compensation for the cost of medical activities at a hospital. The medical affairs service fees vary. For example, the starting fee is 20 yuan for a community hospital, with a patient paying 1 yuan and medical insurance paying the rest. For Class III hospitals, the starting fee is 50 yuan, with a patient to pay 10 yuan and their medical insurance to pay the rest,” said Fang.

Fang added that the move aims to give Class III hospitals more strength to treat difficult and complicated cases.

The reforms will be implemented among more than 3,600 hospitals.

It is part of the country’s efforts to end the practice of hospitals supplementing their income through drug sales, while guaranteeing that medical personnel get recognition for the value of their skills and services.