

Square dancers in Beijing may face punishment for public disturbance

Starting next month, square dancers in Beijing could risk legal repercussions if they are deemed to be disturbing the peace, Chinanews.com reported.

Beijing's newly revised regulation on the national fitness program stipulates that fitness activities should not disturb the public order, and violators will be subject to penalties or even criminal prosecution at the hands of public security departments.

With public square dancing becoming increasingly popular among Chinese citizens, and especially among senior citizens, disputes between dancers and residents have been on the rise, as the dancing is usually accompanied by loud music.

Places including Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region and the cities of Xi'an and Nachong have already formulated regulations controlling fitness activities in public places. These regulations, however, do not designate specific departments to oversee square dancing.

Beijing's new regulation demonstrates the government's commitment to solving the problems caused by square dancing, and is a good example of resolving disputes through law, the report noted.

Deadly fire was 'human error'

A fatal blaze at a foot massage parlor in eastern China was caused by an electrical fault in a steam room, China's top work safety watchdog said on Wednesday.

Flames engulfed Zuxintang Foot Massage in Tiantai, Zhejiang province, at 5:26 pm on Feb 5, killing 18 people and injuring 18 others.

A preliminary investigation showed the fire started after the steam room's heating system malfunctioned, causing rising temperatures that ignited some flammable objects, according to the State Administration of Work Safety.

"It was an accident caused by human error," Su Jie, a spokeswoman for the watchdog, said at a news conference on Wednesday.

The management of the parlor—which occupied the first and second floors of a six-story building in a downtown community—and the relevant local government department should take the blame, Su said.

However, she added that an investigation into the case is ongoing.

Police in Tiantai detained four people in connection with the incident on Feb 7, local media reported.

At the news conference on Wednesday, the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety also provided an update on its investigation into an explosion at Zubao Coal Mine in Lianyuan, Hunan province, on Feb 14 that killed six people and left four others missing.

Yang Fu, deputy director of the agency, said the authorities are looking into whether the mine covered up the death of a miner in the accident, which happened when 29 people were underground.

He said rescuers are trying to find the missing workers and that local authorities have formed a work group to investigate the cause of the blast.

“Investigators have found traces of a coal dust explosion in the shaft after entering the mine several times,” Yang said, adding that the watchdog will punish those responsible if any cover-up is discovered. Police have detained a manager at the mine, surnamed Liu, who is suspected of covering up the miner’s death, Xinhua News Agency reported.

Three officials are also under investigation, including two vice-mayors of Lianyuan and the local production safety chief, according to the report.

Site service

Some technical work is being undertaken which might affect service over the next couple of days I am told.

Business rates

I have been lobbying the government along with other MPs to do more to alleviate high business rate increases hitting some firms in our areas under the revaluation proposals. The government has offered substantial rate relief to many small businesses, but there remain numerous businesses that will experience rises in their rates bills at a time when they can ill afford the extra money.

Today the Communities and Local Government Secretary announced that he is working on a scheme with the Chancellor to offer more help, which will be

welcome.

[China to start anti-graft inspections in universities](#)

China will send anti-corruption inspectors to centrally-administrated universities, discipline authority of the Communist Party of China (CPC) announced Wednesday.

The new inspections will scrutinize Party committees of 29 universities, including Peking University, Tsinghua University, Beijing Normal University and Nanjing University, according to a statement released after a Wednesday meeting before the launch of the 12th round of inspections.

Inspection teams will re-examine the work of Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region as well as provinces of Jilin, Yunnan and Shaanxi.

The new round of inspections will also cover the Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs, State Council Leading Group Office of Poverty Alleviation and Development, China Railway Corporation and China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation.

Attending the meeting, Wang Qishan, who heads an inspection leadership group of the CPC Central Committee, called for better problem-finding inspections.

The meeting urged inspectors to not only listen to what the Party officials say, but also watch what they do during inspections, and stressed that judgements should be made on the basis of people's comments on the work of Party committees.

Inspections should focus on rules implementation and discipline in elections and official selection to ensure a clean political environment, the statement said.

More flexible measures should be introduced in the inspection mechanism to expose and prevent corruption within discipline authorities, it added.