

Beijing detains 18 after suburban apartment fire

Beijing police have detained 18 people in relation to the fire in an apartment that killed 19 people on Saturday.



A fire broke out at a three-story apartment at Xinjian Village of Daxing District, Beijing, on Nov. 18, 2017. [Photo/Xinhua]

A fire broke out Saturday night at a three-story apartment at Xinjian Village of Daxing District at the southern suburb of the city. A total of 19 people died. Among the victims, eight were under 18 years old, He Rui, deputy chief of Daxing District, said at a press briefing late on Monday.

Eight people were taken to hospital. Seven of them are out of danger and one remains in a critical condition, he said.

Preliminary investigation showed there was a 5,000-square-meter refrigeration facility under construction at the basement of the apartment. Fire-fighters suspect the fire might have started there.

The 18 detainees include seven who managed the apartment block, seven electricity workers, and four construction workers at the refrigeration facility. None of the 11 workers holds qualifications as required by the authority, police said.

More than 400 people lived in the apartment block and all have been relocated, He said.

The district government has set up medical, legal and family teams to deal with affairs arising from the deadly fire. They contacted 95 family members of the victims.

Police are investigating other suspects.

Beijing has ordered a 40-day city-wide safety check. Local officials are urged to check every village and every courtyard for safety risks.

Second tuberculosis outbreak reported in central China

Eight students from a vocational school have been diagnosed with tuberculosis in Taojiang County, central China's Hunan Province, the second outbreak reported in the county.

Authorities with the provincial health and family planning commission said Monday the first infection case was found in the vocational secondary school on Oct. 12.

As of Sunday, a total of eight cases had been reported in the school, said an official with the commission.

All of the infected have been quarantined for treatment.

This is the second tuberculosis outbreak in Taojiang County. Last week, 29 students in the county's No.4 middle school were diagnosed with tuberculosis, along with five other suspected cases at the school.

Three of the infected cases have recovered, according to the commission.

Xinjiang to make free high school universal

All children in the Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region will have access to 15 years of free education from next month, People's Daily reported on Monday.

The northwestern region will make free high school education universal from Dec 1, benefiting 857,200 students, according to the report, citing an implementation plan released by the regional government.

Xinjiang already offers free preschool, primary and junior middle school, but until now only children in Kashgar, Hotan, Aksu and the Kezilesu Kirgiz autonomous prefecture had access to free high school, after support from the central government.

The report said the region had invested 2.58 billion yuan (\$388 million) to promote the implementation plan, to guarantee every child has access to a qualified education.

Shanghai hospital banks breast milk

Premature babies at a Shanghai pediatric hospital's neonatal intensive care unit will no longer be fed infant formula. Instead, they'll get breast milk from their own mothers or donated by others.



A nurse feeds a newborn baby at Children's Hospital of Fudan University in Shanghai earlier this month. [Provided to China Daily]

The Children's Hospital of Fudan University has established, for the first time in the city, a breast milk bank especially for newborns in the ICU.

During trials in recent months, 25 mothers donated more than 200,000 milliliters of breast milk to the bank, benefiting 32 premature infants, the hospital said.

"Premature babies in intensive care are either those born with very low weight or serious conditions. They are especially vulnerable," said Cao Yun, director of the hospital's neonatal ICU.

"Currently we only call on mothers whose children are also in the ICU to donate spare milk, as the ingredients of breast milk vary and the breast milk of premature babies' mothers is different from that of full-term babies' mothers," she said.

Previously it was common practice for all premature babies to be fed with infant formula either for convenience or because their mothers were not able to secrete enough milk. But breast milk is extremely important for premature newborns, especially the most vulnerable ones, Cao said.

"Breast milk is the best food and sometimes a lifesaving medicine for such babies, who haven't developed fully in their mothers' wombs," Cao said.

"The incidence of acute necrotizing enterocolitis – an inflammation of the small intestine – is high among preterm newborns, especially those with a birth weight of less than 1.5 kilograms, and the condition is fatal in some cases. Breast milk can reduce it significantly."

The antibodies and active tissue present in breast milk elevate babies' immunity and protect them from infection and other complications, Cao said. It also helps with the development of their visual and nervous systems.

Since 2011, the hospital has been educating parents whose babies are in intensive care about the importance of breast milk and encouraging mothers of hospitalized infants to bring their own breast milk to the hospital.

"We have found that babies fed with breast milk have higher survival rates, lower infection rates and are discharged from the hospital earlier," Cao said.

Huang Guoying, president of the hospital, said the establishment of the milk bank was inspired by a visit to pediatric hospitals in Canada three years ago.

"They had mature milk banks for babies in intensive care," Huang said. "If the babies are fed with infant formula, their parents need to sign an informed consent document. But if they are fed with milk from the breast milk bank, they can drink it freely."

Yuan Li, whose premature baby stayed in the neonatal ICU for two months and was discharged earlier this month, donated more than 20 bags of breast milk to the bank.

"I have enough milk, and I am grateful that I can give some to other babies who are in need of it," she said.

Cao said the breast milk bank was first designed to satisfy the needs of newborns in intensive care – sometimes more than 200 at a time. The hospital plans to extend the service to other babies, such as those who have undergone surgery, to promote recovery.

Lack of drone rules raises concerns

A political adviser in Shanghai has pointed out the lack of detailed regulations on the civilian use of drones, as the rising number of devices with high-resolution cameras raises concerns about privacy infringement.

Ma Chi, a member of the Shanghai Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, raised the issue during the committee's bimonthly meeting on Nov 2.

Ma was struck by the number of people flying drones near his workplace, the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, where he is a cultural policy researcher.

"They fly the drones about three floors off the ground, and room interiors can be seen clearly on the remote control screens," Ma said. "They are unaware of this infringement of privacy and say they are just having fun."

Drones with high-resolution cameras are becoming more affordable – a popular model costs about 3,000 to 4,000 yuan (\$450 to \$600) – and can be purchased online.

While the exact number of drone users is hard to confirm, a report by the Civil Aviation Administration of China said there were 10,255 certified drone pilots in 2016.

According to a training center affiliated with DJI, the country's largest drone manufacturer, its 74 branches trained 6,500 drone operators in the past year alone.

Trained drone pilots often engage in tasks related to aerial photography, agriculture and surveying, but for most amateurs the main purpose is taking photos.

"There are potential privacy issues related to drones since they are widely used for photography," Ma said. "And there are no particular regulations dealing with it."

Since June, incidents of drones interrupting civil aviation have prompted the introduction of regulations requiring drone producers to incorporate geofencing – use of global positioning or radio frequency identification to define a geographic boundary – in their products, along with real-name

registration of drones that weigh more than 250 grams.

But current regulations regarding the use of drones are either too vague or too complicated for users to follow, Ma said. "Real-name registration does not mean one can fly one's drone at liberty," he said.

Qu Weibing, a guide for a Shanghai travel agency, bought a mini drone in July that required him to register the device online.

He said it was easy and took only a few minutes to fill out the form. But he was stopped by police when he tried to fly the drone in August in Yunnan province.

"They said I needed to apply for a flying permit at a local police station, or I would face a fine," Qu said.

Though Qu said privacy infringement had not occurred to him, he said he does enjoy using the drone to take bird's-eye pictures of scenery.

Qu is open to stricter rules.

"If a set of detailed and easy-to-follow regulations and instructions regarding the use of drones is available, I'll be more than happy to follow it," he said.