

Pollution inspectors sharply criticize Tianjin, Anhui, Shanxi



About 10,000 polluting companies were ordered to suspend production or shut down by the end of June. [File Photo]

Environmental inspectors sent by the central government uncovered severe problems in Tianjin and the provinces of Anhui and Shanxi during a monthlong review and said slack leadership has led to environmental degradation in some areas.

The inspectors transferred 11,527 pollution-related cases to the provincial-level governments, following the highest-level environmental inspection since late April.

The governments are required to submit improvement plans within 30 days and make them public.

In the three provincial-level areas, 1,686 government officials had been held accountable for pollution as of the end of June. Officials from Shanxi were the most numerous—more than 1,000. Another 136 were detained, according to Ministry of Environmental Protection statements on Saturday and Sunday.

About 10,000 polluting companies were ordered to suspend production or shut down by the end of June, the ministry said. Of those, about half (4,331) were from Tianjin. Environmental authorities have issued fines totaling 1.25 billion yuan (\$185 million).

The common thread in these cases was that leadership was weak and officials failed to give sufficient attention to pollution control.

Tianjin received an unusually harsh evaluation.

“There is a clear gap in Tianjin in meeting the requirements from the central government to match its position as a municipality and meet the expectations of the public,” inspectors said on Saturday.

Some leaders did not insist on adherence to tough measures on air pollution, and air quality actually worsened in some periods. Likewise, the bureaus responsible for agriculture and urban greening did not work together, but evaded their duty to build a garbage processing plant, said Jiang Jufeng, head of the inspection team.

In Shanxi, inspectors also found that insufficient attention had been paid by provincial and city leaders, as the concentration of major airborne pollutants increased in 2016 and continued to worsen this year.

Leaders in Lyuliang, Shanxi Province, were summoned to talk with the ministry twice because of severe pollution. But they did not pay sufficient attention, and measures to correct problems lagged behind schedule, said Yang Song, the team leader in Shanxi.

For example, 966 small coal-fired boilers in the city, which should have been phased out by the end of 2014, were still in operation at the end of 2016, hurting air quality.

In addition, six coal mines continued to operate illegally inside a natural protection zone in Jinzhong.

In Anhui, inspectors found that the provincial water resources bureau did not supervise drains, and that wastewater contained excessive pollutants. Also, officials in Hefei’s Binhu New District allowed construction waste to pile up and harm wetland, they said.

In some places in the three areas, half the sewage was discharged without treatment.

[Typhoon Haitang makes landfall in Taiwan](#)

Typhoon Haitang made landfall at 4:40 p.m. Sunday in Pingtung county in Taiwan, the island’s weather agency said.

The center of Haitang was located at northwest of Eluanbi after its landfall and moving in a north-northwesterly direction. The storm’s periphery has entered southern and southeastern Taiwan, posing threat to the areas south of Nantou and Chiayi, as well as Hualien and Taitung in eastern Taiwan.

Residents in Kaohsiung, Pingtung, Nantou, Chiayi, Tainan and Taitung were

advised to stay vigilant against downpours and strong winds.

Extreme torrential rain Sunday and Monday in Kaohsiung and Pingtung was forecast while torrential rain in Chiayi, Tainan and Taitung were anticipated. Possible geological disasters were also warned of by the weather authorities.

Haitang is the second typhoon following Nesat to hit Taiwan this weekend. It is the first time in 50 years that dual tropical storms struck the island almost simultaneously.

Typhoon Nesat, which made landfall Saturday evening in Taiwan's Yilan county, brought rain in many parts of the island, causing damage.

[International Army Games events kicked off in China](#)



Photo taken on July 30, 2017 shows the opening ceremony of the International Army Games 2017 in Korla of northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region. (Xinhua/Hu Huhu)

Six events of the International Army Games 2017 were kicked off at three sites in China Sunday.

Video footage showing Chinese President Xi Jinping's congratulations to the general open ceremony of the Games in Russia Saturday was broadcast at the

opening ceremonies held in Korla of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, Changchun of Jilin Province and Guangshui of Hubei Province.

The International Army Games 2017, which last from July 29 to Aug. 12, consist of 28 events to be held in Russia, China, Azerbaijan, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

Chinese Army, Navy and Air Force will also take part in eight events in Russia and Kazakhstan.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's congratulatory video at Saturday's general opening ceremony was also played at the opening ceremonies in China Sunday.

China encourages university student enlistment with subsidies

China allocated 1.63 billion yuan (US\$242.3 million) of financial aid to encourage university students to join the army in 2016, according to the Ministry of Education (MOE) Sunday.

A total of 124,100 university students ranging from undergraduates, postgraduates to doctoral students received funding last year for enlistment in the armed forces, while 8,117 ex-servicemen were also subsidized with 44.6 million yuan of funding to pursue their higher education degrees.

China has formed a comprehensive education aid system to encourage more university students to join the army, and those veterans can also be financially supported if they are willing to go to college, the MOE said.

The annual subsidy for each undergraduate will not exceed 8,000 yuan, and the sum for masters or doctoral students can reach up to 12,000 per capita each year, said the MOE.

The students' university name roll will be maintained during the period of enlistment, and they can resume their study after leaving the army, according to the MOE.

Guangdong police arrest 230 pyramid

scheme members

A total of 230 members of Shanxinhui, a Shenzhen-based company suspected of organizing and leading a pyramid scheme, have been arrested in southern China's Guangdong Province, police said Sunday.

Of the 230 members, 142 have been detained to face criminal charges. Fifty-five companies involved in the case have been investigated, the public security department of Guangdong province said in a statement.

Beijing police have also detained 63 people after members of the pyramid scheme gathered in the capital city Monday. Four others were put under non-criminal detention.

Chinese police have previously investigated Shanxinhui for allegedly manipulating people into taking part in pyramid selling and cheating them out of huge amounts of property under the guise of helping the poor.

Zhang Tianming, legal representative of the company, and other suspects have been put under coercive measures, which may include summons by force, bail, residential surveillance, detention or arrest.