

Beijing bans shared bikes in military areas

Shared bikes will be banned from military areas in Beijing starting Thursday, a military officer said Wednesday.

The off-limits zones include restricted military areas and hospitals, residential areas, and sanitariums administrated by the military in Beijing.

“Bike sharing has brought new problems to the management of military areas, such as illegal parking and entering and exiting without approval,” said the officer with the training management department of the Central Military Commission.

“The army’s image would be tainted once misuse like bike refitting or damage is found in military areas,” the officer said.

Shared bikes are being moved away from military zones, and inspections will be carried out by the department.

The Ministry of Transport on Monday released draft rules requiring local governments to strengthen oversight of the sector.

Bike-sharing services took off in Chinese cities in the past two years. They allows riders to hire bikes for about one yuan (about 15 U.S. cents) per hour via a mobile app, and drop them off for the next user.

The service has reduced traffic congestion and cut auto emissions, but haphazardly parked bikes often block sidewalks, causing complaints.

There were 18.9 million users of shared bicycles nationwide at the end of 2016. The number is expected to hit 50 million by the end of this year, according to the China E-Commerce Research Center.

Unisex restroom slow to gain popularity



The first unisex public restroom in Shanghai [Photo/ThePaper.cn]

Shanghai's first unisex public restroom, designed to help reduce waiting times for women, is failing to woo users, especially females.

The restroom's automatic tally device showed that only about 100 people a day have used it since it opened in November, a rate far lower than other public restrooms in the city.

That could partly be a result of its secluded location – a green space in the city's Pudong New Area that is far from bustling streets or residential areas. Most users are migrant laborers working nearby, with only about 10 percent of its users female.

There have also been complaints that some male users smoke in the restroom, which is forbidden.

"Most of the users are male workers at nearby construction sites, and I have totally different hygienic habits from them," said Zhang Xia, a female who regularly uses the toilet. "Sometimes it's really uncomfortable to use the toilet."

Another user, who only agreed to disclose her surname Jiang, said, "It's really embarrassing and I would like to use other washrooms, even though it's a 5 to 10 minute walk from work."

She added that people smoking in the facility or failing to flush it sometimes made her feel sick.

With 10 unisex cubicles, the public restroom has a separate men-only area featuring four urinals, and another space allocated for people with disabilities and users with children.

“I think it’s fine,” said Wang Lian, who used the restroom for the first time on Friday. “It can reduce waiting times for females who often take longer to use the toilets, and the LED screen at the top of each cubicle clearly shows whether it is vacant or occupied.”

Zhang Hui, a male working at a nearby construction site, said that the higher and stronger partitions between cubicles ensure a more private space.

“However, there is no clear sign indicating the restroom is a unisex one. I felt really confused when I used it for the first time,” he added.

Gu Chunming, who cleans the restroom, said the environment and facility of the unisex restroom is much better than most of the other public restrooms in Shanghai, despite her annoyance about some users’ bad habits.

“Smoking is the biggest problem,” she said. “Warnings are posted at the entrance, but it still can’t be stopped.”

Authorities have said that they will evaluate the response to the restroom before deciding whether to build more in the city.

Taiwan rules in favor of same-sex marriage



An outdoor concert in favor of same-sex marriage was held in Taipei in 2016. [Photo/ETtoday.net]

A top Taiwan court ruled in favor of same-sex marriage on Wednesday, a

landmark ruling that paves the way for Taiwan to become the first place in Asia to legalize same-sex unions.

The court said Taiwan's current Civil Code provision, which does not allow two persons of the same sex to marry, is in violation of both the people's freedom of marriage and the people's right to equality as guaranteed by its Constitution.

The court rules that the authorities concerned shall complete the amendment of relevant laws in accordance with the ruling within two years. If the amendment of relevant laws is not completed within the two-year time frame, then two persons of the same sex may apply for marriage registration.

The case was brought by gay rights activist Chi Chia-wei after the Taipei city government rejected his and his long-time partner's application to marry in 2013.

[China's first Hualong One nuclear project taking shape](#)

China's first pilot nuclear power project using Hualong One technology, a domestically-developed third generation reactor design, will soon take shape with its containment dome expected to be installed within the next two days.

Yu Peigen, deputy general manager of China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC), told a press conference Wednesday that its No. 5 unit in Fuqing, southeast China's Fujian Province, was ready for the dome installation, slated for Thursday or Friday.

A hemispherical dome, 340 tonnes in weight and 16.8 meters in diameter, will be installed by crane on the reactor featuring Hualong One design, according to Yang Ming, a member of the project management.

Yang said the exact date would depend on weather conditions.

"The installation, if successful, will mark the completion of the construction work of the pilot and the beginning of the assembling stage," Yu said.

Started in May 2015, the pilot should take about 62 months to finish. Yu said the equipment manufacturing and construction work was on schedule, and he was confident that the project would be completed on time.

The Hualong One reactor was jointly designed by two nuclear power giants, China General Nuclear Power Group and CNNC, and passed inspection by a national panel in August 2014.

The government has since approved the use of Hualong One technology to build two reactors in Fujian Province, one being the No. 5 unit.

2 Chinese arrested for flying drones over confidential target

Police in a central Chinese city said Wednesday that two men had been arrested for flying a drone that captured images of a confidential target.

Police said the men worked for a small film company. They flew the drone to film the skyline of Wuhan, capital of Hubei Province, on May 18, but had not been authorized.

Police were tipped off by an employee who noticed the drone hovering above his office. Police arrested the two men on the spot and found detailed high-definition images of a confidential nature.

The men were ordered to be detained for ten days, with their memory card confiscated. Police said they would temporarily keep the drone.

Police are launching a city-wide inspection on drone use.

Reckless drone-flying caught the nation's attention this year, with flights repeatedly disrupted at airports across southwest China.

This prompted the government to require civilian drones weighing more than 250 grams to be registered under real names starting June 1.