

[China to improve rehabilitation services for disabled](#)

China will step up efforts to prevent the occurrence of disabilities and improve rehabilitation services for the country's 85 million disabled people, according to a regulation issued by the State Council.

The regulation, signed by Premier Li Keqiang, specifies the responsibilities of governments at various levels and assigns them the leading role in disability prevention and improving rehabilitation services for the disabled.

The government promised financial and material support to institutions that work with the disabled, it said, adding medical service for the disabled, particularly children under six, poor people with disabilities and the severely disabled, must be improved.

It called for a better system to collect and share information on the disabled.

Disability prevention should be incorporated into sectors such as disease prevention and control, maternal and child health care, as well as transportation and work safety, it noted.

Vulnerable regions, population groups, industries and organizations should be given priority in disability prevention, according to the regulation.

The regulation comes into force on July 1, 2017.

[Hepatitis A strikes 15 students, water pollution suspected](#)

Fifteen students at a central China school have been diagnosed with hepatitis A, and investigators suspect water pollution is to blame, the local government said Monday.

The patients are all 12th graders at No. 4 High School of Qiyang County in Yongzhou City of Hunan Province, the county government said in a statement.

It said the first case was reported on Feb. 17 and the latest was diagnosed on Sunday. All patients are being treated at the People's Hospital in Qiyang County.

A joint investigation has been launched by disease control and prevention authorities at county, city and provincial levels. Investigators found the

students had drunk water from a well on campus, and suspected contaminated well water was to blame for their illness.

But the exact cause has yet to be confirmed, the county government said.

School authorities confirmed all 12th graders had resumed classes in mid-February, at least a week before the spring semester began, to cram for the college entrance exam scheduled for early June. As tap water supply was cut during the winter break, well water was temporarily used.

School authorities had organized health checks for every student and teacher who drank from the well, and vaccinated the other 12th graders against the virus.

The school has more than 4,000 students, ranging from 7th to 12th grade. About 1,200 are in 12th grade and all of them are boarders.

The county government is watching the situation closely as the hepatitis A virus can be latent for 15 to 45 days.

[North China city criticized for worsening air quality](#)

China's top environmental watchdog has criticized authorities of Shijiazhuang, capital city of Hebei Province, which neighbors Beijing, for worsening air quality and insufficient efforts in environmental protection.

The air quality in Shijiazhuang has worsened sharply since October 2016 and most pollution indicators deteriorated in January and February of this year, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said Monday after a recent inspection team to the city led by Chen Jining, minister of environmental protection.

In January this year, PM2.5 density in Shijiazhuang surged 51.5 percent from a year earlier to 200 micrograms per cubic meter, the MEP said in a statement.

Chen attributed the situation largely to lax environmental efforts of local governments, especially those at the county and township levels, inefficient management, a cluster of highly polluting enterprises and poor implementation of response measures to tackle severe pollution.

Chen urged more efforts in locating the source of pollutants, reducing pollutant emission, strengthening supervision over key enterprises, pressing ahead with industrial upgrading and improving efficiency of environmental protection.

Chinese cities suffered from more days of air pollution in January, with Shijiazhuang being the worst polluted among the nation's 74 major cities, the MEP said last week.

China is intensifying efforts to fight pollution and environmental degradation after decades of growth left the country saddled with problems such as smog and contaminated soil.

Old town agrees to improve services



Lijiang Old Town [File photo]

The Old Town of Lijiang, a national 5-A scenic spot in Southwest China's Yunnan province, posted a statement on its official micro blog on Saturday afternoon, saying it was willing to accept punishment by the China National Tourism Administration and work to resolve issues with the services it provides.

"We apologize for our insufficient work. We are open to tourists' criticism and suggestions, and will make things right," said the government of Gucheng district, where the town is located, in the post.

The post came after the National Tourism Administration issued warnings to three 5-A scenic spots on Saturday morning, including the Old Town of Lijiang, demanding rectification of issues within six months.

The other two scenic spots are Jingpo Lake in Mudanjiang city, Heilongjiang province, and Laohutan Ocean Park in Dalian, Liaoning province.

Peng Decheng, director of the administration's Planning and Finance Department, said the number of tourist complaints about Lijiang has remained high, with frequent incidents relating to tourists' personal safety or property.

“Local residents have had serious conflicts with tourists,” Peng said. “The scenic spot has failed to maintain quality equipment and services.”

In recent years, there have been many reports of tourists being overcharged or being forced to shop in Lijiang.

This year alone, there have already been at least three incidents involving tourists being beaten in Lijiang. In one incident, a female tourist lost her purse and was disfigured after being beaten by a dozen people at a restaurant.

These high-profile incidents have attracted widespread public attention and put the town, well-known for its long history and as home to several ethnic groups, at the center of controversy.

Zheng Yi, mayor of Lijiang, said in a Government Work Report during the ongoing Lijiang People’s Congress that Lijiang has gained a bad reputation for insufficient supervision and administration, as well as unsatisfactory services and public security.

Zheng requested that relevant departments shoulder responsibility and make efforts to solve the issues.

Liu Jian, a 31-year-old Beijing resident who traveled to the old town in September 2015, said: “I was lucky compared with some tourists who were beaten, as I was only overcharged there. But the experiences were enough to leave me with a bad impression.

“I’m glad to hear that the old town will start to rectify its issues and I hope it will be reformed.”

24 detained over Nanchang hotel fire that killed 10



Emergency workers treat a victim after arriving at the scene of a fire at a hotel in Nanchang, Jiangxi province, on Saturday. [Photo provided to China Daily]

24 people have been detained by the police in Nanchang, Jiangxi Province in connection with a hotel fire on Saturday, which killed 10 people.

14 others were injured in the blaze and have been hospitalized, with three still in critical conditions.

The fire affected 1,500 square metres of the first two floors of the building, which also housed a karaoke bar which was under renovation.

An initial investigation has suggested that the fire may have been caused by the cutting of renovation materials.

Of those arrested, two are said to be contractors of the construction project, along with 14 construction workers, seven shareholders and one porter from the karaoke bar. Eight other suspects are still being sought.