

Earth Hour 2017: UN joins iconic landmarks 'going dark' to support protecting the planet

25 March 2017 – The United Nations this evening dimmed the lights at its iconic Headquarters complex in New York and other facilities around the world in observance of the tenth annual 'Earth Hour,' global event to put the spotlight on the issues facing the planet and to inspire millions across the world to live more sustainably.

In a video message, UN Secretary-General António Guterres, said: "Climate change continues to imperil lives and livelihoods around the world. Last year was again the hottest on record. The landmark Paris Agreement gives us an unprecedented opportunity to limit global temperature rise, promote clean energy for all and create a sustainable future."

Governments and businesses must step up. So must individuals. Building a sustainable tomorrow depends today on everyone, said the UN chief, asking the world to join him in turning off their lights on today at 8:30 p.m. local time.

"From the darkness, we can create a sustainable and inclusive world for all," he said.

Organized by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Earth Hour encourages individuals, companies, organizations and Governments to switch off their lights for one hour at 8:30 p.m., local time worldwide, to focus attention on people-driven solutions to protecting the planet and building a bright, sustainable future.

First launched in 2007 in Australia, Earth Hour has become an annual event, mobilizing hundreds of millions of individuals to participate and growing to become the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment.

According to the WWF, the UN family will join the thousands of homes, offices, skylines and monuments that will go dark on Earth Hour's tenth anniversary to put the spotlight on the issues facing the planet, and to inspire millions across the world to live more sustainably.

Hundreds of landmarks from New York to Uganda and Sweden to Malaysia are confirmed and will be turning off on the night of Earth Hour, including iconic sites such as the Eiffel Tower, Taipei 101, the Empire State Building and the Acropolis.

To inspire more people to act, this year the Earth Hour movement is also inviting supporters to show their commitment to the cause on their Facebook timelines, in parallel to the lights out rolling across skylines.

People around the world can log onto earthhour.org/climateaction to donate five Facebook posts to Earth Hour and encourage their friends to be a part of local climate efforts. They can also use a new Facebook profile picture frame available on www.facebook.com/earthhour to celebrate Earth Hour on their own personal landmark – their Facebook page.

Ministry of Road Transport & Highways to host Grand Finale of 36 hour Smart India Hackathon, 2017 in Nagpur

The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways is hosting the 'Smart India Hackathon, 2017- Grand Finale' on 1st & 2nd April, 2017 simultaneously at Nagpur and 25 other different nodal centers across India. Launched on 9th November, 2016 in New Delhi by the Ministry of Human Resource

Returnees lower income expectations

Chinese students returning from overseas studies have lowered their expectations of income amid fierce competition, a report has found.

Published on Friday by overseas recruitment company Lockin China, the report said overseas returnees "are becoming more rational" in their income expectations as an estimated 660,000 returnees are going to join a record high 7.95 million domestic college graduates in the job market this year.

According to the report, which surveyed 150,000 Chinese overseas students and professionals as well as thousands of Chinese enterprises, nearly 64 percent of overseas returnee respondents said their expected annual income ranges from 70,000 (\$10,170) to 120,000 yuan.

More than 27 percent of them expect more than 120,000 yuan, "which is much higher than the average level of the market".

Compared with last year when 23 percent of those surveyed expected an annual income of more than 150,000 yuan, this year the group with such an expectation has decreased to only 10.4 percent of respondents.

"There have been a great number of people returning from overseas, and the number is still on the rise. This makes overseas returnees more rational in their income expectations," said Ge Wei, a manager with Lockin.

The report said there has been an “obvious” increase of returnees since 2005 and it was “a turning point” in 2015 when the country saw more than half of those who left to study abroad come back. About 450,000 returnees came back to China in 2015.

The tightened immigration policies in foreign countries, especially in the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia, are one of the major reasons for the increase of returnees, according to the report. Another major reason is the “global economic recession”, it said.

While 63.2 percent of returnees chose the tightened policy as one of the reasons to return, more than 54 percent chose China’s rapid economic growth.

Ge also said returnees don’t have many advantages when competing with their domestic peers for jobs. On average, they could make only about 500 yuan more a month than their peers who study at home.

It’s partly because it is difficult for them to show their advantages in interviews, she said, adding that many domestic graduates gain interview skills through training, but there is no such training in foreign universities.

But usually the returnees show their advantages after working for several years and see more possibilities for promotion and salary increases, she added.

Overseas students now start looking for jobs earlier, the report found.

More than 32 percent of overseas students started applying for domestic jobs six months before graduation.

The proportion of those who seek job opportunities only after returning to China has decreased from 64 percent in 2016 to 44.5 percent in 2017, according to the report.

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HK recalls frozen meat imported from Brazilian plants

China's Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) decided to recall all the frozen and chilled meat and poultry imported from the 21 Brazilian plants that are under investigation for a massive meat adulteration scheme, the food safety authority said Friday.

The Center for Food Safety (CFS) of Hong Kong's Food and Environmental Hygiene Department made the decision "in view of a notification from the Brazilian authorities today that the country will extend its scope of export ban to the 21 plants which are under investigation," it said.

According to information gathered by the CFS so far, among the 21 plants, six of them were involved in the import licenses issued by the CFS in the past six weeks. The CFS will liaise with local importers to follow up on the recall, it said.

The Brazilian police uncovered last week a massive meat adulteration scheme involving some of the country's largest meat producers. According to the police, the adulterated meat was sold in the domestic market as well as exported. The Brazilian authorities later imposed an export ban on 21 plants.

The CFS announce Tuesday an import ban on all the frozen and chilled meat and poultry from Brazil as a "precautionary measure."

It said Friday that the temporary import suspension will be maintained. Once the Brazilian authorities provide more detailed information, the CFS will conduct further risk assessment and suitably review its follow-up actions, including narrowing the scope of the import ban.

As for meat and poultry that has been shipped from Brazil prior to the import ban but has not yet arrived in Hong Kong, the CFS will also make special arrangements, marking and sealing the products upon their arrival for proper handling after the completion of the relevant investigation.

Ko Wing-man, secretary for food and health of the Hong Kong SAR government, said Friday that the recall is with an immediate effect, calling on meat importers and dealers in Hong Kong to cooperate with the CFS to reassure consumers.

"We are keeping in close contact with the Consulate General of Brazil in Hong Kong," Ko said, adding that once the Brazilian authorities confirm the scandal only involves the 21 plants, the scope of Hong Kong's import ban could be narrowed down.