

ENVIRONMENTAL CHINA

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OPINION

[Air pollution is bigger killer in China than smoking, says new Greenpeace study](#) (South China Morning Post, 02/04/2015) Air pollution kills more people than smoking in many cities on the mainland, a new study by Greenpeace and Peking University has found. Tiny smog-inducing pollutants, known as PM2.5, led to about 257,000 premature deaths across the mainland's 31 municipalities and provincial capitals in 2013, according to the study - an average of about 90 in every 100,000 deaths.

[China Tries a New Tactic to Combat Pollution: Transparency](#) (New Yorker, 02/06/2015) Beijingers who care to know how much poison they're inhaling are familiar with the Air Quality Index, which measures smog levels at different locations around the city and applies labels like "good," "unhealthy," and "hazardous." Another handy tool might be called the Wang Anshun Index, after the mayor of Beijing.

[China's New Environment Minister Has Work Cut Out For Him](#) (China File, 02/11/2015) The elevation of the president of China's most prestigious university to the job of government minister was unexpected. It is rare to bring in an academic without a government background. But given the tarnished reputation of a ministry that is widely viewed as having failed, the move makes sense.

[Wind blows in pollution from the north](#) (Shanghai Daily, 02/13/2015) SHANGHAI yesterday suffered one of its worst days of the year so far with choking smog taking air quality readings into the "severely polluted" range. Residents woke to find nearby buildings hidden behind a grey mist with the sun struggling to break through the haze. The city's environmental monitoring center said dirty air blown in from northern China was to blame.

RESEARCH AND CIVIL SOCIETY

[Hope for village blighted by development](#) (Shanghai Daily, 02/02/2015) IN Qinfen, a rural village in the northeast of the Pudong New Area, fetid air, sewage-tainted creeks and contaminated groundwater are jeopardizing the health of its roughly 6,000 residents. It wasn't always that way in this corner of Heqing Town. A few decades back, this was a bucolic setting.

[Snog in smog?](#) (Global Times, 02/02/2015) Gray days may increase one's desire to find a partner, but it may also increase the risk for rejection. With air pollution in central and eastern China confining city dwellers to gloomy indoor activities, China's lonely hearts have been seeking out feasible and effective ways to sustain a romance in the haze.

[China Focus: China eyes sustainable, strong agriculture](#) (Global Post, 02/03/2015) Despite old land and unfavorable weather, farmer Xu Jianmin managed to double his harvest in central China last year, in some cases increasing the value of produce 10 fold. The 40-year-old farmer amassed a sprawling 3,300 mu (220 hectares) of farmland in Henan Province, a region that produces one-tenth of the country's total grain output, after working with locals to transfer land use contracts.

[Chimney phobia transforming a city](#) (Shanghai Daily, 02/02/2015) Zhuzhou in central China's Hunan, Province, one of the nation's 10 most polluted cities a decade ago, has been transformed, according to its mayor. One of the first cities to embrace heavy industry after the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, Zhuzhou was home to cement and chemical plants along with other heavy polluting, high energy consumption works.

[Pollution in India and China Indian winter](#) (Economist, 02/07/2015) NATIONAL monuments skulk in the smog. Pedestrians and traffic policemen mask their mouths in a vain attempt to keep out the fetid vapours. Children choke in their schoolrooms. Two years ago such scenes would have been set in Beijing, then suffering an "airpocalypse"—alarming levels of airborne pollution which focused public attention on China's dismal environmental record and forced the government to do more about it.

[Which Countries Create the Most Ocean Trash?](#) (Wall Street Journal, 02/12/2015) China and Indonesia are likely the top sources of plastic reaching the oceans, accounting for more than a third of the plastic bottles, bags and other detritus washed out to sea, an international research team of environmental scientists reported Thursday. Marine biologists and ocean activists have grown alarmed about the seaborne plastic that fouls shorelines and clogs currents from the Arctic to the South Pacific.

[China's first lawsuit for environmental damage goes to court](#) (Asia News, 02/12/2015) A lawsuit has been filed in Fujian against four mining executives accused of clearing a mountaintop to extract granite. Amended anti-pollution legislation now allows NGOs to file complaints in favour of the environment. Activists are satisfied but several problems remain, first of all, how to determine which complaints can be accepted and which should be rejected.

[In China, legal fight to save forest tests toughened anti-pollution law](#) (Japan Times, 02/12/2015) A lawsuit filed against four Chinese mining executives accused of destroying a stretch of forest is shaping up as a test of China's strengthened environmental law and the ability of green groups to make companies more accountable for their actions.

CORPORATE SECTOR

[Tougher environmental law pressures China steel mills](#) (Business Times, 02/04/2015) Chinese steel mills, already struggling with weakening demand, are facing higher costs and the risk of punishment as a result of tougher environmental legislation that came into effect this year, industry officials said on Wednesday. Nearly three-quarters of China's steel enterprises do not meet environmental standards, and they are under heavy pressure to upgrade, according to estimates by the China Iron and Steel Association (CISA).

[US\\$16b to be spent on anti-pollution projects](#) (Shanghai Daily, 02/05/2015) SHANGHAI will spend 100 billion yuan (US\$16.13 billion) in the next three years on more than 200 projects in an effort to rid the city of pollution, authorities said yesterday. The funds will be spent on 220 projects in eight areas of concern, namely, water, air, soil, waste, industry, agriculture, ecology and circular economy, said Zhang Quan, director of the Shanghai Environmental Protection Bureau.

[Survey of Foreign Companies in China Finds Pollution a Growing Problem](#) (New York Times, 02/11/2015) Foreign companies in China are struggling with growing issues, including a perception that their businesses are less welcome than before. Such problems have been building in the past year, and they were underscored in survey results released on Wednesday by the American Chamber of Commerce in China, which also found for the first time in the survey's 17-year history that most companies were having greater troubles recruiting executives because of air pollution.

[Pollution, unclear regulations major hurdles for US firms in China](#) (Eco-business, 02/13/2015) Chronic air pollution and unclear regulations are the major obstacles for most of the United States-based companies operating in China, a survey said on Wednesday. Of the 477 companies that participated in the annual business climate survey conducted by the American Chamber of Commerce in China, 53 percent said that they experienced difficulties in hiring senior executives to work in China because of the country's chronic air pollution.

[Fading Embers in China's Coal Industry](#) (Diplomat, 02/14/2015) Of all the indicators released about China's 2014 economic performance, some of which are surprisingly positive, China's coal mining industry stands out as one of the worst performing sectors of the year, with a decline in industrial profits of 46.2 percent. The coal mining industry faced falling prices and excess capacity in 2014, after a four-year run, from 2009 to 2012, of above-average prices. The industry's malaise became highly visible in the media last year as several shadow banking loans to coal mining companies faced potential default in 2014.

GOVERNMENT

[China slates environment ministry after graft probe](#) (Reuters, 02/10/2015) China's main anti-graft body reprimanded the environment ministry on Tuesday for a series of problems, including interference by ministry officials and their relatives in environmental impact assessments. Environmental degradation is one of China's most serious issues and a very sensitive one too, with thousands of protests every year sparked by concern about pollution, particularly from factories.

[China must cut pollution by half before environment improves: official](#) (Reuters, 02/13/2015) China needs to slash emission levels by as much as half before any obvious improvements are made to its environment, a senior government official said on Friday, underscoring the challenges facing the country after three decades of breakneck growth. Zhai Qing, China's deputy minister of environmental protection, told a briefing that pollutants had been cut by just "a few percentage points" since 2006 and had to drop much further if any progress is to be made.