

China, United States prepare for Summer Games

BEIJING (AP) — Half of Beijing's drivers left their cars at home and took public transportation instead on Monday, the first workday under new restrictions meant to clear this city's notoriously polluted skies before next month's Olympics.

Under a two-month plan that started Sunday, half of the capital's 3.3 million cars will be removed from city streets on alternate days, depending on whether the license plate ends in an odd or even number.

Those caught driving on days they shouldn't will be fined \$14, a pricey penalty even for China's capital.

Drivers with even-numbered plates were forced Monday to take public transportation, where crowds remained surprisingly manageable. That's likely because employers have been asked to stagger work schedules, and public institutions will open an hour later than normal.

"It seems that the subway isn't as busy as I expected. There are fans and air conditioning, so you don't feel very hot," said Chen Songde, who normally drives to work in Beijing.

Traffic still snaked along main thoroughfares and highways Monday, but it moved at a steady pace.

"Before we would be at a dead standstill," said a taxi driver who would give only his surname, Zhang, as he steered around cars. "Now it's better."

It could be several days before the impact of the cleanup plan, which also includes cutbacks on construction and factory closures, is noticeable. The government has not made public a specific target

“It can be easily felt that traffic is less heavy now and the number of vehicles on the road is clearly smaller.”

Sun Weide
Beijing Olympics spokesman

for vehicle emission levels, one of the city's biggest sources of pollution, or said how it will measure air quality.

Experts say the plan could still go wrong because unpredictable winds could blow pollution into Beijing from other provinces or the lack of wind — common in August — could enable local pollution to build up.

However, Sun Weide, spokesman for the Beijing Olympics organizing committee, was optimistic.

"It can be easily felt that traffic is less heavy now and the number of vehicles on the road is clearly smaller," Sun said. "The weather has been good since yesterday."

Two new subway lines and an airport rail link were opened over the weekend, with the projected number of passengers on the three routes expected to reach 1.1 million daily during the Olympics.

In all, eight lines will transport up to 5 million people daily during the Olympics, the company that runs the Beijing subway said Monday.

Besides the traffic plan, chemical plants, power stations and foundries had to cut emissions by 30 percent beginning Sunday. Dusty, noisy construction in the

capital was to stop entirely.

On many days, Beijing's skyline can barely be seen because of a thick, gray-brown haze that hangs over the city.

Already, many competitors in the Aug. 8-24 games are choosing to train away from Beijing, and International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge has said that outdoor endurance events lasting more than an hour will be postponed if air quality is poor.

The world's greatest distance runner, Haile Gebrselassie of Ethiopia, has bowed out of the marathon event because the city's pollution irritates his breathing.

Some 300,000 heavily polluting vehicles — aging industrial trucks, many of which operate only at night — were banned beginning July 1.

The government has also improved public transportation options for the estimated 4 million extra people who will be off the roads because of the traffic plan, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

The city plans to add up to 3,000 more buses by the time the games start, raising the daily capacity for passengers from 12.5 million to 15 million, Xinhua said.

Shanghai tightens security

SHANGHAI, China (AP) — China's largest city and the host of a dozen Olympic soccer matches started tightening security over the weekend at airports and train stations, according to reports in state-run media Monday.

Surveillance systems also are being installed on Shanghai's subway trains, a report said.

The measures go along with increased security in Beijing, where the Olympic Games will begin Aug. 8. The Chinese government is worried about foreign terrorist plots as well as political protests from domestic critics such as Uighurs in the restive western province of Xinjiang and Tibetans.

Also on Monday, the state-run China Daily newspaper cited the Olympics security chief Ma Zhenchuan as saying that a radical Islamic group based in China's predominantly Muslim Xinjiang region "poses a real threat to the Beijing Olympics."

Bags at Shanghai's Pudong and Hongqiao airports were being searched at entrances to terminals for explosive, flammable, biochemical or radioactive materials, the Shanghai Daily newspaper reported.

The newspaper said passengers at Shanghai South Railway Station will go through a luggage check before entering the station, and only passengers will be allowed on the platforms.

Work to install surveillance systems on every subway train has started, but it's not clear how long it will take, Shao Weizhong, a deputy manager of Shanghai Metro Operation Co., told Shanghai Daily.

Shanghai will host nine men's soccer matches and three women's matches, and more than 440,000 tickets have been sold so far, Vice Mayor Zhao Wen told the state-run Xinhua News Agency in a report Sunday.

Ma, the Olympics security chief, said investigations have found that the East Turkestan Islamic Movement, or ETIM, has been plotting terror attacks on games venues. "It's not imaginary," he was quoted as saying in the English-language China Daily.

Radicals among Xinjiang's indigenous Turkic Uighur people have been fighting Chinese rule for decades. Earlier this month, Chinese authorities said they had detained 82 suspected Islamic terrorists and separatists in the first half of the year across Xinjiang.

Most experts say the actual threat to the Beijing Games from terrorism is low, although the event has become a magnet for critics of the government, ranging from free-speech advocates to activists over Tibet and Sudan's troubled Darfur region. China has prepared an anti-terror force of nearly 100,000 commandos, police and troops for the Olympics.

President sends off American Olympians

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Bush gave U.S. Olympians a rousing White House send-off to next month's games in Beijing, urging them Monday to "compete swifter, higher and stronger" but also be mindful they will be "ambassadors of liberty" to the people of China and elsewhere.

Bush is attending the opening ceremonies and the first few days of the Aug. 8-24 games. Standing in the Rose Garden with about two dozen athletes who will compete in the Beijing Olympics and

the corresponding Paralympics there in September, Bush said he is "fired up" to watch some of the competition.

"I can't wait to salute our athletes, and I can't wait to share in the joy of your triumphs," he said.

Human rights groups had urged Bush to boycott the opening ceremonies to oppose China's crackdown on protesters in Tibet. The Bush administration argues that the Olympics are a sporting event not to be politicized, and that the

president will raise human and religious rights with Chinese officials in the appropriate context.

But while talking to the athletes about their responsibilities in Beijing, Bush had a subtle message for China itself.

"You will convey our nation's most cherished values," the president said. "As ambassadors of liberty, you will represent America's love for freedom and our regard for human rights and human dignity ... to other athletes and to the people of China."

Athletic success helps Jayhawks

LAWRENCE, (AP) — The national championship in basketball and a trip to the Orange Bowl for the football team has led to financial success off the field at the University of Kansas.

Kansas Athletics will get a \$29 million deposit for its construction account as part of the proceeds from the sale of \$32.8 million in athletic revenue bonds by the Kansas Development Finance Authority.

The bonds, which went on the market earlier this month, were sold out within a day, mostly by individual investors.

Typically, institutional investors like retirement funds and regional insurance companies purchase more than half of these types of offerings. That group bought less than 30 percent of the bonds, which were offered in \$5,000 increments, this time around.

"There were five buyers for every one bond that we had," said

Jim MacMurray, the finance authority's vice president for finances. "Our actual retail orders were over \$40 million, but we could fill \$30 million of those."

Proceeds from the bond sale will serve as a series of loan to Kansas Athletics Inc., which will use the revenue to fund a remodeling project to Allen Fieldhouse that will give the basketball teams a new practice facility and redone locker rooms.

The money also will be used for construction projects at the Horejsi Family Athletic Center and the Wagnon Student Athlete Center/Parrott Athletic Center.

The bonds will eventually be paid off by donations and department revenues. Kansas Athletics has already secured \$4 million in donations to go toward the bonds, which were fueled in part by the Jayhawks' success on the basketball court and football field.

"It's fair to see it was worth

at least \$10 million, and possibly even \$15 million of retail sales," said Steve Weatherford, the finance authority's president. "We were very fortunate. There have been a good number of (bond) issues that don't have the support that we go, and they had to pull them off the market."

The success of the bonds comes at a time when the markets are highly volatile, though it's no surprise to Sean Williams, a descendent of the founders of the Williams Fund, which funds Kansas Athletics' fundraising operation.

"Right now, people are looking for solid investments, and what better investment is there than the KU athletics department," said Williams, a Lawrence real estate agent. "It's certainly had stupendous growth and performance. If I was a betting man, I'd say they were moving forward."

••• CARRIERS WANTED •••

The Colby Free Press is looking for Carriers!

Offering a **\$25 Sign-on Bonus!!**
(Bonus will be received after 3 months)

A great job for students, moms, or retired people wanting a little "fresh air."



For more information call the Colby Free Press office:
785-462-3963 or stop in at 155 W. 5th Street

The 900 pound Gorilla

is waiting to work for you!

He is biggest and most effective advertising medium in the Tri-State Region

He works for you in
The Country Advocate

Reaching 18,200 households with nearly 57,300 readers across northwest Kansas, eastern Colorado and southwest Nebraska, the Gorilla packs a punch!

GIVE HIM A TRY!

