

Environment

IAEA holds int'l conference on challenges facing water resources

China's water quality improvements 'imbalanced' in first quarter: Xinhua

SHANGHAI, May 19, (Agencies): Pollution increased in some of China's major lakes, rivers and reservoirs in the first quarter even though the country's overall water quality improved, the official Xinhua news agency said on Saturday, citing the environment ministry. Improvements were "imbalanced" and some regions fared far worse than others, it said, with cities in the provinces of Shanxi, Liaoning and Hubei

singled out for failing to control pollution discharges. China measures water quality according to six grades, with the highest three grades suitable for human consumption and the lowest "below grade V" level considered "without function" and unfit even for agricultural and industrial use. China is committed to reducing the amount of "below grade V" water to

5% of total sampled sites by 2020, and to eliminate it completely in the industrialised Yangtze river delta and Bohai Bay regions. The proportion stood at 6.7% in 2018, down 0.6 percentage points from 2017. But the Ministry of Ecology and Environment said one site in the city of Yichang in Hubei deteriorated so much in the first quarter of this year that it had been reclassified as "below grade V", and the province had

also recorded five "below grade V" water samples in the city of Jingmen. Urban infrastructure construction was still lagging in the Yangtze river delta region, it noted, and the sewage pipe network was still not sufficient to handle vast amounts of urban waste, with much of it dumped directly into rivers. Excessive fertiliser use is also posing problems in southwest Yunnan

province, where phosphorus and nitrogen run-offs are driving up pollution at Fuxian, one of China's biggest freshwater lakes, Xinhua said, citing a ministry official. **Also:** VIENNA: The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) will organize an international conference on Monday in Vienna on challenges facing water re-

sources. The conference is expected to discuss recent scientific developments in theoretical hydrology to understand global water movement and the impact of current challenges. It brings together more than 220 international experts in hydrology where they will review, over a period of five days, the latest contributions of isotopic analysis and geochemical tools to hydrological processes.

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