

China issues highest weather alert as temperatures plunge

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Authorities renewed an orange alert—the highest in the country's three-tier system—warning that [average temperatures](#) could fall by six to 12 degrees Celsius by Friday in the south, where they are currently around zero degrees C (32 degrees Fahrenheit).

In some areas, temperatures could plunge by more than 20 degrees C, the National Meteorological Center (NMC) said on social media.

State news agency Xinhua said the NMC had "called on [local governments](#) to take precautions against the [cold weather](#), advised the public to keep warm, and called for necessary measures to protect crops and aquatic products".

In Beijing, where temperatures hovered around freezing on Wednesday, residents awoke to find the capital blanketed in white following overnight snowfall.

Traffic slowed to a crawl on the city's highways, while snow-dusted pavements proved treacherous for commuters and cyclists.

Municipal authorities said up to 4.1 centimeters (1.6 inches) of snow had fallen in some suburban areas and issued a warning over icy roads.



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"It is recommended that residents... stagger their travel, use public buses and subways, drive their own cars slowly and pay attention to safety," the city government said in an online statement Tuesday evening.

Braving the cold temperatures in the capital's historic Forbidden City, visitors—some in traditional costumes—marveled at the picturesque snowfall.

"I am very happy to be here. This snow scene and the dragon lanterns give me a sense of prosperity," Long Yan, a 55-year-old tourist from

southwestern Sichuan province, told AFP.

"Auspicious snow signifies a bountiful year. This [snow](#) is a beautiful omen," she said.

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