

# Northwest China hit by sandstorm as Beijing is smothered in smog

26 November 2018



Visibility went below 100 metres (328 feet) in parts of Zhangye City in Gansu province

A northwest Chinese city was engulfed by a massive sandstorm that sparked rural fires, forced traffic to slow down and prompted residents to cover their faces, according to state media.

Video from state broadcaster CCTV showed a grey wall of sand hitting Zhangye City in Gansu province on Sunday, casting a yellow fog across the [city](#).

Images from official news agency Xinhua showed residents covering their faces in scarves as they went about their daily lives.

Visibility went below 100 metres (328 feet) in parts of the city and police were deployed to ensure safety along the expressways, CCTV said.

Vehicles were made to slow down and police in high visibility vests were seen directing traffic.

Winds also sparked fires in [rural areas](#) when heating kindle was blown onto haystacks.

Authorities in the city also put out an advisory warning of dry weather and a risk of fire, telling residents to "take precautions".

Such storms regularly occur in the dry season, when winds blow loose, dry soil and sand into [urban areas](#) from the Gobi desert, coating cities in a layer of yellow grime.

While the northwest faced a sandstorm, Beijing was on Monday shrouded in a thick smog that prompted many to wear protective face masks.



The sandstorm is seen rolling into Zhangye in China's northwestern Gansu province

Levels of small particulate matter, known as PM 2.5, hovered around 360 in the afternoon, according to air quality monitoring website [aqicn.org](#), or nearly 15 times the World Health Organization's recommended daily maximum exposure.

According to Xinhua, a [sandstorm](#) is also forecast to be hitting Beijing from the northwest.

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APA citation: Northwest China hit by sandstorm as Beijing is smothered in smog (2018, November 26) retrieved 15 November 2019 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-11-northwest-china-sandstorm-beijing-smothered.html>

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