THE INDEPENDENT

Canadian company Vitality Air sells out of air as smog levels worsen

by Loulla-Mae Eleftheriou-Smith, 15 December, 2015

1. China's pollution problems continue, but a Canadian company has used the crisis to make some money. The firm is selling bottles of fresh mountain air to people for up to $28 each.
2. China declared a red alert in Beijing in December 2015 because of its dangerous pollution levels. This caused the capital to shut down schools and construction sites for a period of time, and the authorities tried to take a percentage of the city's cars off the road. They also told people to stay indoors.
3. Shanghai also saw its own smog problem reach its highest level since January 2015. Schools were asked to ban outdoor activities and factory work was restricted.
4. But sales of Vitality Air - bottles of fresh mountain air from Banff and Lake Louise, Canada - have increased dramatically in China. A single bottle of the company's "premium oxygen" costs $27.99 while a bottle of its Banff air costs up to $23.99.
5. Harrison Wang, Vitality Air's China representative, said that as soon as the bottles went on sale in Taobao, a Chinese website similar to eBay for online shopping, they "sold out almost instantly".
6. The company started marketing the product in China less than two months ago, but now that the first shipment of 500 bottles is sold out, another of 700 bottles is on its way.
7. Mr Wang said the company sees pollution as an issue in China "and we want to give people the opportunity to inject a little bit of fresh air into their daily lives".
8. Vitality Air says it can help with "hangovers, alertness and working out," and it markets itself as "your solution to pollution".
9. But Vitality Air is not the only business that is exploiting China's pollution problem – a restaurant in Zhangjiagang city recently started charging patrons for fresh air, after owners bought air filtration machines for the establishment and added an extra charge to people's bills for the operation costs.

4

Answers the questions below.

1. What problem is Vitality Air exploiting?
2. Why did China declare a red alert in 2015?
3. What limitations were there in Shanghai?
4. What happened when Vitality Air products went on sale on a Chinese website?
5. What are the benefits of Vitality Air?
6. How are restaurants exploiting China's pollution problem?

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