

China-made large amphibious aircraft to fly in May



An amphibious aircraft AG600 is displayed for the 11th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, south China's Guangdong Province, Nov.1, 2016. [Photo by Chen Boyuan/China.org.cn]

China's large amphibious aircraft AG600 will embark on its maiden flight in May from the southern Chinese city of Zhuhai, according to the Aviation Industry Corp. of China (AVIC) Thursday.

The AG600, designed to be the world's largest amphibious aircraft, will conduct a full resonance test before its maiden flight over land in late May and on water in the second half of 2017, said AVIC.

The 37-meter AG600, with a wingspan of 38.8 meters, has a maximum take-off weight of 53.5 tonnes. It can collect 12 tonnes of water in 20 seconds, and transport up to 370 tonnes of water on a single tank of fuel.

With excellent maneuverability and a relatively wide search scope range, the AG600 will be very useful for marine resource exploitation, marine environmental monitoring, resource detection and transportation.

Beijing outlines its urban overall plan for 2016 to 2030

President Xi Jinping visits the construction site of Beijing's new airport in southern Beijing on Feb. 24. [Photo/Xinhua]

The draft of the urban overall plan of Beijing for 2016 to 2030 has been completed under the guidance of Beijing authorities.

The plan is expected to treat and heal the megacity ailments of Beijing. It aims to limit the population at 23 million in 2020 and keep it at that level for the long term. Besides the restriction on population growth, the city also plans to shrink the land area for rural and urban construction to 2,760 square kilometers by 2030 while expanding its ecological control area.

More trees will be planted around Beijing. According to the draft, the forest coverage rate in Beijing will reach over 45 percent by 2030 and the "green space" of the city's parks will be remarkably increased, with the area of "green space" for each citizen standing at 16.8 square meters in 2030.

The plan will stipulate an 80-percent green travel rate by 2030, with a minimum rate of 12.6 percent on bicycles. In 2020, the total length of the metro system in Beijing will reach 1,000 kilometers according to the plan.

It also requires the hospital bed-to-municipal population ratio to rise to 7-to-1,000 and has set a bottom number of 180,000 beds in nursing homes across the city by 2030.

The plan aims to cut the concentration of hazardous fine particle matter PM2.5 to 56 micrograms per cubic meter in 2020 and 35 micrograms per cubic meter in 2030, which means their quality can meet the national standard by 2030.

People can make a reservation online on the Beijing Municipal Planning and Land Resources Management Committee website using an ID card or passport, and to pay a visit to the planning exhibition. It will be available from March 29 to April 27.

Compulsory Tai Chi for top Chinese university



Students play Tai Chi Chuan at school. [File Photo]

The ancient Chinese martial art of Tai Chi Chuan has been a must-take class in Xi'an Jiaotong University, one of the most prestigious universities in China, for almost 20 years. Students there have been required to take the class before receiving their degree since 1998.

The news of Tsinghua University linking swimming ability with bachelor's degrees has made waves on Chinese social media recently. But Tsinghua is not the first or the only university in China that sets up special compulsory courses.

Apart from Tsinghua, several other Chinese universities, including Peking University, Xiamen University and Sun Yat-sen University, have at least once made swimming a prerequisite for graduation.

However, some of them have changed it to optional due to an increased number of students and the shortage of swimming space.

While listing swimming as a required course may lead to campus swimming pool overload, Tai Chi Chuan class is convenient to promote, because it requires limited teacher and special resources.

Prof. Wang Yunbing, director of Xi'an Jiaotong University's sports center, said, "Tai Chi Chuan is not only a sports exercise to help keep fit, but also a tradition embodying ancient philosophical ideas. Moreover, students can practice it with little space".

"The once-a-week class teaches the basics of Tai Chi Chuan, namely, the simplified 24 forms. Most of the students are interested in learning them. When the test approaches, we practice the movements all around the campus,"

said a senior student surnamed Tang from the university's foreign language school.

Located in northwest China's Shaanxi Province, Xi'an Jiaotong University is a comprehensive university which traces back to 1896.

[Next big scientific discovery could be made in China](#)



James D. Watson, Nobel laureate for physiology or medicine, talks with China.org.cn. [Photo/China.org.cn]

The next big scientific discovery could be made in China if the country could create a more pro-science environment, according to a visiting American Nobel laureate.

China has many outstanding scientists doing very good work, however, real breakthroughs will only be made if the country can strengthen its universities and research institutes and allow more space for regions to compete with each other, James D. Watson told China.org.cn in an exclusive interview in Beijing on March 29.

"Given the wealth and all the devotion from society, China could be the No.1 or No.2 science nation in the world within the next 50 years if it can spend money wisely, create good institutions and encourage individual science projects."

The 88-year-old Nobel Prize-winning biologist, credited with the co-discovery of the double-helix structure of DNA, is visiting China on a 10-day trip during which he will talk with the country's scientists and college students, visit science institutions and attend an international meeting on precision medicine in Shenzhen.

The greatest strength for the world's most populous nation on which it can draw is its people, said Dr. Watson who is also the principal science consultant with the CheerLand Investment Group.

He also stressed the importance of building a stable structure that puts the best people in the top position.

Scientific strength in the United States comes from competition among states, because central planning is not always the best way to make good decisions. He said that suggesting money expenditure in R&D should be decentralized so that individual regions could have some real power to engage in competition which is the key to driving innovation.

The most important purpose for Watson's China trip is to promote the launch of "The Watson Bioscience Center", with an emphasis on cancer treatment.

By launching a world-class center on precision medicine, China now has an opportunity to make strides in the field and make cancer treatment widely available and affordable, he stressed.

War on graft a top priority

Prosecutors will keep up their pressure in the fight against corruption this year amid ongoing reform, a senior anti-graft official from the top procuratorate said.

Corruption in elections, environmental protection, food and drug safety and production safety will remain the primary targets, said Lu Xi, director of the General Bureau Against Corruption and Bribery of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

Job-related crimes by officials in financial sectors such as banking, securities and futures markets, as well as other graft issues that might hinder the development of reforms, also will get special attention from the graft-busters, Lu said in an exclusive interview.

Prosecutors also will monitor key poverty relief programs and funds to help safeguard a clean environment, she said.

"This is a very crucial year for combating corruption, and prosecutors nationwide will continue to take a zero-tolerance attitude toward

corruption," she said.

Lu said this year marks the last year before the next key Party congress, and the idea that "the anti-corruption campaign could end in the last year" must be wiped out.

China has carried out a sweeping anti-graft campaign since 2012, when the new leadership was elected at the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China. The 19th Party congress is scheduled in the second half of 2017.

Last year, prosecutors nationwide investigated 47,650 corrupt officials, including 21 at or above ministerial level, according to the annual work report by the top procuratorate released earlier this month.

Lu said anti-graft prosecutors also will adapt to the new requirements of the supervision system reform this year.

China is piloting a reform program to set up a new supervisory commission by integrating separate anti-corruption authorities. The program is being tested in Beijing and Shanxi and Zhejiang provinces, and if it functions well, such reforms will be expanded across the country.

Cao Jianming, procurator-general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, said earlier this month that the top procuratorate will guide its local branches in pilot areas to transfer relevant duties and personnel to supervisory commissions this year and establish a coordination mechanism between the two sides.

Another challenge that many prosecutors face now is the higher threshold for filing a corruption case, which keeps some cases from moving forward, Lu said.

The amended Criminal Law, which took effect in November 2015, lifted the criminal threshold for graft cases from 5,000 yuan (US\$726) to 30,000 yuan (US\$4,352).

The change also contributed to a decrease of corruption cases prosecutors handled last year nationwide, according to Hong Daode, a law professor from China University of Political Science and Law.

The annual work report of the top procuratorate shows that prosecutors last year handled 35,397 graft cases, down 13 percent from a year earlier.

"Under the new situation, prosecuting departments will strive to adapt to the new standards and take effective measures to maintain high pressure against graft," Lu said