

## Tibet's airport able to accommodate large planes

Konggar Airport in Tibet, one of the highest-altitude airports in China, was able to accommodate a Tibet Airlines wide-body Airbus 330 aircraft overnight for the first time, the airline announced Wednesday.

The 3,600-meter-high airport in Lhasa was able to accommodate the plane after the airline's technicians solved the problem of re-starting the aircraft's engine in a low air pressure environment after an overnight stay.

A new oxygen diffusion device has been designed to increase air supply during the engine ignition process, the airline said.

High-altitude airports (over 2,438 meters above sea levels) pose safety issues for pilots as low air pressure affects flight performance. All five airports in Tibet are classified as such.

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## Chinese scientists build soft robotic fish

Chinese scientists from eastern China's Zhejiang Province have created a soft robotic fish with no motor and a fast speed.

"The robot is expected to be used underwater to record the temperature and salinity of the sea and detect pollutants," said Li Tiefeng, an associate professor at Zhejiang University.

The 9.3-centimeter-long fish weighs 90 grams and has an electric controller at the core, fins made of silicone, and a silicone body and tail. All components are transparent except for a small battery pack and two electromagnets.

"The soft and transparent body will make it easy for the robot to sneak through narrow reefs without being damaged or detected by other sea creatures," he said.

Instead of being powered by traditional rigid motors, the fish is built with artificial muscle, stimuli-responsive polymers that can bend or stretch under a cyclic voltage provided by the embedded lithium battery.

"Soft artificial muscle can respond quickly to electricity, meaning faster fin flapping and greater speed," Li said.

At top speed, the robot can swim six centimeters per second, beating the previous record for soft untethered underwater robots by three centimeters per second.

With a tethered exterior power supply, the fish can swim up to 14 centimeters per second, about the same speed as similar-sized fish.

“The materials used in the robot are common, cheap and environment friendly, with the potential to be produced on a large scale in China,” Li said. “Our next step is to improve the efficiency of the artificial muscle and develop key techniques for mass production.”

The findings were published in the academic journal Scientific Advances earlier this month.

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## China publicizes online pornography cases

Chinese authorities on Wednesday publicized eight cases showing their success in cracking down on online pornography.

The National Office Against Pornographic and Illegal Publications in 2017 launched a new round of a nationwide campaign against the production, sale and distribution of illegal publications and online pornography that could affect juveniles.

The campaign has specially targeted online streaming and the use of instant messaging and cloud storage services to spread pornography, and many criminal suspects were caught and punished.

In one case, Beijing police in January found a company used its app platform to perform obscene live shows, gaining a large sum of illegal earnings. The platform was shut down and the company had its license suspended by the police.

In another case in east China's Zhejiang Province, the local police found some people using cloud storage services to distribute erotic videos. Two suspects were later apprehended, along with more than 10,000 illegal videos. They were found to have grossed illegal gains of more than 100,000 yuan (14,500 U.S.dollars). Endi

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# Nation's first Antarctic airfield may see building begin by 2018

Progress continues on China's first airfield in Antarctica, with site selection and a survey completed and plans set for construction to begin as early as year's end, according to a senior scientist.

The airfield, near China's Zhongshan Station, will be able to handle fixed-wing aircraft. Specialists from the nation's 33rd Antarctic expedition recently surveyed a 3-square-kilometer area selected for the airfield, said Sun Bo, deputy director of the Polar Research Institute of China under the State Oceanic Administration.

Sun spoke at a news conference after the welcoming ceremony in Shanghai for the 33rd Antarctic expedition, which ended a 161-day mission and returned to its base in Shanghai on Tuesday morning.

The 328-member expedition conducted a great amount of scientific research and experiments at and around the country's four Antarctic stations—Changcheng, Zhongshan, Taishan and Kunlun—according to the institute. It added that the Xuelong icebreaker and Haiyang 6 scientific survey ship, the two vessels carrying the expedition team, also conducted oceanographic and geological research.

Sun said the construction of the planned airfield will be carried out by the 34th Antarctic expedition, which is set to arrive in Antarctica around the end of this year, adding that the infrastructure project will go through an international environmental protection review.

"At first the airfield will have only one runway, so the construction will be easy—we will only need to flatten the selected area and maintain it. Fixed-wing aircraft will need to be equipped with a pair of runners so they can land," he told China Daily.

"Next, we plan to build some runways in the same area. They will be flatter than the first runway and will be capable of accommodating large fixed-wing planes that are not equipped with runners," Sun said.

The airfield will greatly facilitate the nation's Antarctic explorations, Sun said.

There are about 40 airstrips in service in Antarctica with the United States, Australia and Italy being the major operators.

During the 33rd expedition, Chinese scientists used the Xueying 601, the only fixed-wing aircraft used by China for Antarctic research, to perform airborne remote sensing and telemetry operations, which means China is now able to conduct aerial surveys in Antarctica, Sun said.

In another development, Lin Shanqing, deputy head of State Oceanic

Administration, said at the news conference that the 33rd expedition completed a survey of possible sites of China's fifth Antarctic station near the Ross Sea, a bay in Antarctica. He said experts inspected and examined five locations before deciding.

Preparation for the new station has been completed and construction will start as soon as 2018, Lin said.

The Ross Sea is believed to be the least altered marine ecosystem on Earth, making it a living laboratory that may provide insights about Antarctica's history.

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## Playing up Taiwan suspect will harm cross-Straits relations

Any attempt to play up the case of a Taiwan resident under investigation will further harm the "already severe" relations between the mainland and Taiwan, an official said Wednesday.



An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, speaks at a press conference on April 12, 2017. [Photo/Taiwan.cn]

Lee Ming-che is being investigated for suspected activities "endangering national security," An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council, said at a press conference.

The mainland-based Association for Relations Across the Taiwan Straits has

entrusted a Taiwan-based NGO to inform Lee's wife of the case and pass letters from him to his family, according to An.

"Some outside groups in Taiwan have taken the case to attack the mainland, make trouble, and interfere with the investigation," An said. "They will not have a way to attain their goals."

"The investigation is being conducted in accordance with the law and the suspect's legal rights will be protected," An said, warning that attempts to interfere with the case will only complicate matters and harm Lee's rights.