

## Panda dies after being released into the wild

Hesheng, a captive-bred panda, died in September 2016, two months after being released into the wild in southwest China's Sichuan Province, Chengdu Research Base for Giant Panda Breeding announced Friday.

The male panda, born in 2013, had undergone training at Liziping Nature Reserve from March 2016 and was released into the wild in July.

On Sept. 11, Hesheng was spotted safe and well some 3.5 km away from where he was released. Just weeks later, however, on Sept. 27, his GPS collar sent an alarm, prompting an overnight search for Hesheng.

When researchers found his limp body they noticed injuries on his right shoulder, right ear and right hind limb. An autopsy confirmed Hesheng died of septicemia due to a bacterial infection after being attacked by unknown animals.

Giant pandas are among the world's most vulnerable and rare animals, with a known population of only 1,600, mostly in China.

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## PLA's THAAD opposition 'more than words'



Senior Colonel Wu Qian, spokesperson of China's Ministry of National Defense (MOD), responds to media questions at a routine press conference on March 30, 2017. [Photo by Chen Boyuan/China.org.cn]

The Chinese military once again expressed its firm opposition to the deployment of the THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense) system in South Korea, stressing its opposition "will never be just in words."

Senior Colonel Wu Qian, Ministry of National Defense (MOD) spokesperson, speaking at a routine press conference on March 30, said China was serious about opposing THAAD.

"The deployment of THAAD will never make South Korea any safer. The Chinese military's opposition against THAAD will never be just in words," he insisted.

The MOD's strong stance came after two THAAD launchers, along with support equipment, were delivered to a U.S. base in South Korea, according to South Korea's Yonhap News Agency. Analysts said that THAAD might be fully operational in April.

Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye, recently impeached on corruption charges, agreed to the THAAD deployment on the grounds of the nuclear threat from North Korea.

Sr. Col. Wu refuted this. He said that China opposes any country jeopardizing another state's safety, as well as regional stability, under the pretext of the ballistic missile threat from North Korea.

Apart from China, Russia also opposes THAAD, believing it disturbs the regional strategic equilibrium. On March 28, Chinese and Russia military

delegates held their second meeting on joint anti-ballistic missile issues in Geneva on the sidelines of the Conference on Disarmament.

Their first meeting was held last November during the 7th Xiangshan Forum in Beijing. Soon afterwards, they conducted a joint computerized anti-ballistic missile (ABM) test.

As to whether the next such test would involve a live firing, the MOD spokesperson responded only vaguely.

“The THAAD system deployed by the United States and South Korea far exceeds the defense needs of South Korea,” he said, citing a memo issued after the Geneva meeting. “We oppose any country deploying the military facilities whose capacities are beyond their own defense requirements.”

Recent American reports speculated that North Korea might conduct its sixth nuclear test shortly. Hence, both the United States and South Korea stepped up their vigilance, and were keen on knowing whether the PLA would strengthen its border defenses with North Korea in case of such a nuclear test.

The MOD spokesperson declined to respond to a “hypothetical question,” but emphasized that the Chinese military maintained normal combat readiness and training.

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## [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.

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## [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.

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## [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.