

Press center for annual political sessions opens

The press center for the upcoming annual legislative and political consultative sessions opened Monday.

More than 3,000 reporters from home and abroad have registered to cover the sessions, including an increased number of foreign reporters, according to the press center.

The National People's Congress, China's top legislature, and the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, the top political advisory body, will convene their annual sessions on March 5 and March 3, respectively.

Located in the Media Center Hotel in downtown Beijing, the press center will hold a number of press conferences with leading officials in various fields, and respond to public concerns.

As 2017 is a crucial year for the country's 13th Five-Year Plan (2016-2020), hot topics will include macro-economic development, supply-side structural reform, the RMB exchange rate and China's stock and real estate markets.

Wing-Loong II UAS conducts maiden flight

A Wing-Loong II, the new reconnaissance and strike multi-role endurance Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), is on static display at the 2016 China Int'l Airshow in Zhuhai on Nov. 2, 2016. [File photo by Chen Boyuan / China.org.cn]

China's home-developed Wing-Loong II, the new reconnaissance and strike multi-role endurance Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS), successfully completed its maiden flight Monday.

With a more than 20 meter wingspan, the yellow Wing-Loong II No.01 made its appearance on the runway of a highland airfield in western China at noon Monday, before conducting a 31-minute flight.

"Its flight marks China's new generation reconnaissance and strike UAS. Following the United States, China becomes another country capable of developing such new generation large reconnaissance and strike UAS," said Li Yidong, chief designer of the Wing-Loong UAS series.

The Wing-Loong UAS series were developed by Chengdu Aircraft Design and Research Institute (CADI) of the state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China.

Li said it showed that China had the capability to deliver new generation reconnaissance and strike UAS products to foreign military customers.

In fact, the Wing-Loong II has already won the biggest overseas purchase order in the history of Chinese UAS foreign military sales, even before its maiden flight.

The Wing-Loong II is a medium-altitude, long-endurance, multi-role UAS integrated with both reconnaissance and strike capabilities.

It is composed of the Wing-Loong II unmanned aircraft, GCS, mission payload and a ground support system.

Its unmanned aircraft is 11 meters in length, 4.1 meters in height, and 20.5 meters in wingspan. The maximum flying altitude of the aircraft is 9km, with a flying speed reaching up to 340km per hour.

It has a maximum take-off weight of 4.2 tonnes, with an external carriage weight of 480kg, and can fly for 20 hours in a persistent mission cruise.

Li said that the Wing-Loong II could perform reconnaissance, surveillance and ground strike missions.

"It can rapidly identify then strike against time-critical and fleeting targets. The capability is not possessed by previous unmanned aircraft, even manned aircraft," Li said. "Taking a look at the UAS in same class around the world, the Wing-Loong II is equivalent to the U.S. MQ-9 Reaper, and ranks in the first level on the UAS list."

With a system extension, it can also perform intelligence collection, electronic warfare, search and rescue missions, and has several uses, including military, anti-terrorism, peace keeping, border patrol operations and civilian use.

[CPC punishes officials for poor leadership](#)

The discipline watchdog of the Communist Party of China (CPC) exposed six cases involving officials who were held accountable for their poor leadership.

The officials were punished for poor fulfillment of their main responsibilities in strict Party governance and ineffective supervision of

disciplinary violation by their subordinates, according to a circular published on the website of the CPC Central Commission for Discipline Inspection (CCDI) on Sunday.

The cases involved gambling, poor investigation in handling public complaints, the illegal general election of a village-level Party committee and lavish wedding banquets, in provinces of Hunan, Hubei, Shandong, Shanxi, Guangdong and Liaoning, it said.

In July 2016, the CCDI issued a regulation to hold CPC officials accountable for poor leadership, targeting leaders of Party committees and discipline inspection committees at all levels.

The circular urged Party committees at all levels to comprehensively deepen strict Party governance and make good use of the accountability mechanism in Party building.

Discipline inspection committees at all levels should perform the duties of supervision, and officials who fail to perform their duty should be held accountable.

China inspectors find widespread pollution control violations

The environmental authority has uncovered 140 problems during an air pollution inspection of 18 cities in north China's Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei (BTH) region and nearby areas.

Inspectors were despatched on an unannounced check of 363 government agencies and businesses, the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) said Monday in an online statement.

Many local authorities need to elaborate on and improve their pollution response plans, the MEP said.

In Huairou District, Beijing, enterprises were found to be operating despite being ordered to halt or reduce production when air quality worsens. Only two companies in Suning County, Cangzhou City, north China's Hebei Province, are subject to the restrictive measure.

The cities of Tianjin, Hengshui, Taiyuan and Dezhou were also criticized for "inadequate efforts."

The MEP also named and shamed enterprises that violated official policies.

Fengshi Metallurgy Material Co., in Dengfeng City, central China's Henan Province, falsified emission data to meet requirements. Zhuyou New Wall

Material Co. in Suning blocked the door of its boiler room, hoping to fool inspectors.

China has started to intensify the fight against air pollution as cities suffered from more smoggy days in January, with northern areas the worst affected.

The share of days with good air quality in BTH was a mere 36.2 percent last month, a year-on-year drop of 19.6 percentage points.

Former China Resources chairman stands trial

Song Lin, former chairman of state-owned China Resources Group, stood trial on charges of embezzlement and bribery on Monday in South China's Guangzhou City.

The trial was handled by Guangzhou Municipal Intermediate People's Court. The procuratorate accused Song of embezzling over 9.74 million yuan (1.42 million U.S. dollars) from 2004 to 2013.

The accused is also alleged to have accepted 23.36 million yuan from 2005 to 2012 in return for helping other companies or individuals to secure project cooperation, promotion and other issues.

Song pled guilty to all charges.

Over 80 lawmakers, journalists and citizens attended the open trial.

The verdict will be announced at a later date.