

《我国首艘国产航母今日正式下水》

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China officially launched its second -- and the first domestically developed -- aircraft carrier on Wednesday morning in Dalian, Liaoning province.

The ship is the largest and most sophisticated surface vessel China has ever built.



China officially launches its second -- and the first domestically developed -- aircraft carrier on Apr 26, 2017, in Dalian, Liaoning province. [Photo/CCTV]

General Fan Changlong, vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission, took part in the launch ceremony at a

shipyard in the northeastern coastal city. Fan's presence indicates the significance Chinese leaders attach to the colossal ship because only the most important equipment for the PLA would have top-level officers at the public debut ceremony.

The new carrier's name and hull code remain unknown as the Navy usually makes public such information when a ship is commissioned.

Currently, the PLA Navy operates a sole aircraft carrier, CNS Liaoning, which was originally a Soviet-era vessel and received an extensive refit at the same shipyard in Dalian, where the new carrier is being constructed, before going into service in September 2012.

The new carrier has been designed in China, according to a news release published by the military after the ceremony.

In the next phase, the carrier will start the outfitting process, the news release said. During the outfitting stage, engineers and workers will complete the installation of the ship's power plant, engines, interior equipment and systems as well as weapons.

Beside China, six countries operate a total of 16 aircraft carriers. The United States is the largest operator as it now runs 10 Nimitz-class nuclear-powered carriers with each having a full-load displacement of about 100,000 tons.