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Wan Buyan from Hunan University of Science and Technology was awarded a prize for a multi-purpose drilling system that he helped develop. The system gives China the ability to drill more than 50 meters into the seabed at a depth of more than 3,000 meters, a significant achievement.

According to Wan, another drilling system project has been approved by the Ministry of Science and Technology, which could be used in future detection for storage and formation of combustible ice.

"The news that China has succeeded in collecting samples of combustible ice in the South China Sea has given us great encouragement," Wan said. "The new project could start as early as next month."

Currently the most advanced drilling rig can go about 200 meters into the seabed, but Wan said the new project could reach about 230 meters under the seafloor.

The success of his current drilling system has laid a solid foundation for future development, and Wan said that the new project could be used in the exploration and development of many other resources in addition to combustible ice.

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No space for ambiguity in the nature of cross-Strait relations

There is no space for ambiguity in the nature of cross-Strait relations, a Chinese mainland spokesperson said Friday.

Major changes have occurred to cross-Strait situation in the past year, resulting in increasing tensions in cross-Strait relations, the loss of past achievements in peaceful development of cross-Strait relations and damages to the interests of compatriots on both sides of the Taiwan Strait, due to Taiwan authorities' refusal to accept the 1992 Consensus, which embodies the one-China principle, said An Fengshan, spokesperson for the Taiwan Affairs Office of the State Council.

By refusing to endorse the 1992 Consensus, the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) has undermined the common political foundation for the peaceful development of cross-Strait relations.

If the political foundation is damaged, cross-Strait relations will return to the old path of uncertainty and turmoil, An said.

The fact that the Chinese mainland and Taiwan belong to one China shall not be changed, the principle of one China that is universally upheld by the international community shall not be challenged, he said.

“We will unswervingly stick to the one-China principle and uphold the 1992 Consensus. We will not tolerate any attempt to separate Taiwan from China,” An said.

Chinese people on both sides of the Strait should stand shoulder-to-shoulder to safeguard the foundation of cross-Strait relations, contain “Taiwan independence” forces and endeavor to realize the great revival of the Chinese nation, An said.

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Former NE China official sentenced to 14 years for graft

Su Hongzhang, former senior official in northeast China's Liaoning Province, was sentenced to 14 years in prison by a court in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province on Friday for taking and offering bribes.

Su, formerly a member of the Standing Committee of the Communist Party of China (CPC) Liaoning Provincial Committee and head of the committee's commission for political and legal affairs, was also fined 2 million yuan (around US\$290,000), and his illicit gains will be turned over to the state treasury, the Intermediate People's Court said in a statement.

Su was found to have accepted bribes worth 19.97 million yuan, in return for favor in legal cases, business and promotions, while holding a series of offices in Liaoning between 2004 and 2016.

The court said that Su had offered bribes of 1.1 million yuan to others in exchange for his own promotion in Liaoning from 2010 to 2011.

Su was given relatively lenient treatment in return for cooperating with investigators, handing over the proceeds of his crimes, and surrendering most of his illicit gains.