

China dives further into deep sea

The deep blue sea still remains an abyss of mystery after years of exploration by scientists worldwide. But adventurers never pause before the great unknowns, and the Chinese are no exception.

China is making progress in becoming a maritime global power, pushing forward technology and research on all fronts.

Deep-sea observation

China is setting up a submarine observation network, the first national science and technology infrastructure project in the maritime field.

The network will be completed within five years at a cost of more than 2.1 billion yuan (about 310 million U.S. dollars).

The cable-based network will study the bed of the East China Sea and the South China Sea to collect data to be analyzed in Shanghai.

The network will emphasize on observation of the environment and marine disasters.

Deep-sea diving

The Chinese have long dreamed of going up to the sky and down into the ocean on the backs of dragons.

On Friday China's manned submersible Jiaolong will have its 150th dive, in the Yap Trench.

Named after a mythical water dragon, Jiaolong completed its first dive in 2009 and reached a maximum depth of 7,062 meters in the Mariana Trench in June 2012.

"Hailong 2" and "Qianlong 1," both unmanned submersibles, were deployed at the National Deep Sea Center in Qingdao in February.

The three types of subs are all domestically-made and each has its own specialty.

"Hailong 2", which needs a wire to link to the support ship, can work at a maximum depth of 3,500 meters. Wireless "Qianlong 1" can operate at a depth of 6,000 meters.

Deep-sea drilling

A four-month drilling expedition in the South China Sea as part of the International Ocean Discovery Program (IODP) is drawing to an end.

Among the 66 scientists from 13 countries on the drilling ship JOIDES Resolution, 26 are from Chinese universities and research institutions.

Since joining the IODP in 1998, China has played a major role in two previous expeditions to the South China Sea in 1999 and 2014. Scientists collected samples for the study of climate change and basin formation.

China will organize an international expedition and set up a new research center for deep-sea sediment core research between 2018 and 2020, then build a new-generation ocean drilling vessel.