

# China plans to finish fifth Antarctic station by 2022

China plans to finish its fifth station in the Antarctic in next five years, said Yang Huigen, director of the Polar Research Institute of China, Tuesday.

Icebreaker Xuelong will leave Shanghai Wednesday to begin the country's 34th Antarctic expedition.

One key objective of this expedition, made up of 334 members, is to start construction of a new year-round research station on Inexpressible Island in Terra Nova Bay of the Ross Sea.

The new base will fill in the blank left in China's antarctic research since the Great Wall and Zhongshan stations cover different directions, one towards the Atlantic and the other towards the Indian Ocean, Yang said.

The Ross Sea, facing the South Pacific includes the largest ice shelf in the continent and is regarded as the least disturbed marine ecosystem, with a rich marine fauna.

China also has the Taishan and Kunlun stations, two summer stations, in the Antarctic inland ice sheet.

"It took us five years to choose the site," Yang said, adding that the Inexpressible Island, though having tough weather conditions and rough landscape, has three freshwater lakes.

The new base will have facilities for emergency rescue and fill the working, living and medical needs of staff all year round.

It will be equipped with satellite communication, electricity, water supply, heating and transportation including small planes and helicopters.

During the upcoming expedition, scientists and engineers will start building a temporary dock and shelters, unload machinery and survey the surrounding landscape and waters, Yang said.

A habitat of Adelie Penguins is located north of the chosen site, useful for environmental impact studies.