

China's Arctic expeditions increase to once a year

China will double the frequency of Arctic expeditions to once a year from this year, the State Oceanic Administration (SOA) announced Tuesday.



Shi Xing'an (2nd R, rear), a member of the Chinese scientific expedition team, is welcomed by his son upon his return in Shanghai, east China, Oct. 10, 2017. China's ice breaker, the Xuelong (Snow Dragon) returned to base in Shanghai Tuesday after 83 days on the Arctic rim, completing its eighth Arctic expedition. (Xinhua/Fang Zhe)

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Rapid changes in the Arctic have an influence on climate, ecology, social and economic development in China, Lin Shanqing, deputy director of the SOA, said at a press conference when explaining why the country will increase the Arctic research.

Arctic shipping routes which have been opened by thawing in the region, are significant to China as the economy depends heavily on maritime transport, Lin said.

The routes are the shortest maritime trade connecting northeast Asia with Europe and North America.

"Our polar explorations will help understanding, use and protection of the Arctic," Lin said. "Melting ice in the Arctic, the most vulnerable area to

climate change, has been far beyond expectations. Our knowledge is far from sufficient.”