

China launches domestically made mega dredger

China's largest cutter-suction dredger is due to be launched on Friday in the city of Qidong, Jiangsu Province, reports China Youth Daily.

China's largest cutter-suction dredger, the Tiankun, was due to be launched on November 3, 2017. [File Photo: VCG]

The Tiankun, which is 140-meter-long and 27.8-meter-wide, can dredge to a depth of 35 meters, and carry its load for 15-thousand meters.

The dredger was designed by the China State Shipbuilding Corporation, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Guangzhou Wenchong Shipyard as well as the China Merchants Industry, and was built by Shanghai Zhenhua Heavy Industries.

Tiankun is larger and has greater capability than the Tianjing, formerly the largest cutter-suction dredger in Asia, which was built with imported parts.

Wang Jian, President Assistant at the China Communications Construction Tianjin Dredging Group, says Tiankun represents a landmark as China's first independently developed heavy-duty self-propelled cutter-suction dredger, over which China has completely independent intellectual property rights.

Tiankun leads the field of similar boats in the world in terms of distance of delivery and in many other respects.

Its advanced systems allow automated dredging and monitoring. It can also carry out dredging and reclamation work at ports, in coastal waters, in addition to deep-sea operations.

It will be put into service in the first half of 2018.

Whose job is it to teach kids – teachers or parents?

A recent letter from a Zhejiang primary school has prompted heated debate on social media.

The row centers on the extent to which parents should get involved in their children's education.

The letter from the school was titled, 'Allowing parents to bid farewell to

homework checking,' a phenomenon particularly popular in Chinese. "Checking homework is the basic responsibility of each teacher, while parents have their own business to worry about," the letter goes on.

Naturally all parents want the best for their child. China's one-child policy, which has only recently been relaxed in the last few years, made educating your only child even more of an obsession.

Teachers too want children to succeed. That's their job after all.

Recent years have seen the growth in what's sometimes called 'Parental Homework,' where teachers have encouraged mothers and fathers to correct homework on their behalf, and guide their children's study, piling yet more concern on already busy parents.

A recent survey of 2001 parents (71.5% of which had young children or were parents of primary school students) showed that 81.8% were lumbered with 'parental homework.' A call for an end to checking and signing off on children's homework was supported by 79.3% of those questioned.

The practice of signing their names in exercise books as a way to prove that they had joined in their children's study process, surfaced in the last 10 years. The original intention was to create more opportunities for parents to interact with their children. However, simply signing their names soon expanded into the expectation that they had to correct the homework instead of the teachers.

However, if the onus of teaching children is shifted back onto schools, what then should be the role of parents? According to the survey, the majority believe the main responsibility of parents is to shape their child's personality and character. Teachers, they believe, should stick to teaching, and rely less on parents.

Some are concerned however that a move away from the 'parental homework' phenomenon, might mean parents being 'absent' from their child's education.

Professor Tang from Suzhou University said, schools can't shirk their duties regardless of how closely they co-operate with parents. Parents should act as watch-dogs. People should avoid extremes and find a balance.

[China sharpens up in cutting-edge science](#)

China has surpassed the United Kingdom and now ranks second, behind the United States, in its innovative cutting-edge science capabilities, according to a new index released on Thursday.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences and Clarivate Analytics, a global analytic firm, published a new index measuring the world's top 20 most innovative countries' research capabilities across 143 of the hottest and emerging fields of science in 10 major categories.

The index is based on a country's contribution to a specific field and the number of citations its science papers have in their fields. The US leads the index with a score of 281.1, China is runner-up with 118.8 points, followed by the United Kingdom at 96.9, and Germany at 91.

The academy and Clarivate also published the annual Research Fronts 2017 report – the fourth of its kind – detailing how each country is performing in the categories and providing insights into global research and trends in scientific development.

Frontier sciences refer to the most groundbreaking hypotheses, methods and data that have not been widely tested or accepted. It is a testimony to a country's investment and capabilities in basic science research.

Last year, China surpassed the UK for the first time in the number of world-leading frontier science fields, with China having 30, compared to the UK's 14.

"This year, China has become the second most innovative country in frontier science, leading the second division of innovative countries, including the UK and Germany," said Pan Jiaofeng, president of the academy's Institutes of Science and Development.

Bai Chunli, president of the academy, said China's scientific development has "entered a new era, with emphasis on making breakthroughs in basic science research".

This year, China leads the world in 25 of 143 topics in frontier natural and social science. China's best-performing subjects are chemistry, material sciences, mathematics, computer sciences and engineering.

The US ranks first with 86 fields. The UK and Germany each have five, taking third and fourth place respectively.

Of the 10 major scientific categories, the US leads in eight, ranging from physics to biology. China leads in two – material science and computer engineering – according to the report.

In the environmental science category, China climbed one place to second thanks to its pivotal role in researching the formation mechanism for smog, said Leng Fuhai, a researcher at the Institutes of Science and Development.

China produced 662 science papers, including 22 highly influential "core research papers", in the past five years, Leng said. Both the number of papers and core research papers are more than triple the amount of the runner-up, the United States.

New rules laid out for tour guides

A series of rules released by China's top tourism authority on Thursday clarified improper behavior and detailed punishments for tour guides who run amok, industry insiders said.



A guide shows a group of tourists around the Palace Museum in Beijing in October. [Photo/China Daily]

New rules from the China National Tourism Administration prohibit guides from steering their clients to illegal or immoral activities, such as gambling, drugs or sex.

Guides are also prohibited from forcing clients to shop at businesses during a tour, or to charge extra money against a client's wishes, through intimidation, restricting a person's freedom or using physical force.

Those who violate the rules will have their licenses revoked, and income generated through such misbehavior will be confiscated. In addition, violators will be fined between 2,000 and 20,000 yuan (\$300 to \$3,000).

The administration said the quality of tour guides and the services they provide are key to the way the industry is perceived in China and abroad. Through the rules, which will take effect on Jan 1, the administration hopes to ensure healthy development of the domestic tourism market.

Wang Fude, a professor of tourism administration at Beijing International Studies University, said the new rules act as a supplement to existing tourism law.

“They elaborate tour guides’ obligations and responsibilities and will be very helpful for the national tourism administration in strengthening its governance of this group of professionals,” Wang said.

Liu Simin, vice-president of tourism at the Beijing-based China Society for Future Studies, said the new rules are a detailed and updated version of a series of regulations issued in 2001.

The 2001 regulations listed some prohibited behaviors, and guides who were found in violation would have points deducted from their annual scores.

Guide services start with 10 points each year. Points are required to maintain a license, so if all 10 are lost, the guide service is shut down.

“The new rules describe situations beyond what were in the 2001 regulations, and cover circumstances in which a tour guide would be in violation – and punishments are laid out in detail,” Liu said, noting that some of the examples reflect situations that have been reported domestically in recent years.

In 2015 and 2016, many media reports appeared about misbehaving tour guides at popular destinations.

Forced shopping, verbal abuse of clients and even abandoning clients halfway through a tour were among the misdeeds.

“Against that backdrop, the new rules are more informative and accurate than the 2001 regulations,” Liu said. “They tell the guides which specific behaviors they should avoid.”

3,317 fugitives abroad captured in China’s ‘Fox Hunt’

Chinese police caught 3,317 fugitives from over 120 countries and regions in the past five years, according to the Ministry of Public Security (MPS).

The Fox Hunt campaign targets suspects who have fled overseas to avoid answering for their alleged economic crimes.

Inter-agency cooperation and the use of new technology boosted the efficiency in tracking those who have changed identities or gone through cosmetic surgery, the MPS said Thursday.

During the past five years, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy and other countries or regions had extradited 16 suspects on China's requests, in addition to 17 suspects who voluntarily returned to China.