

Antarctic capacity will be boosted



Research vessel and icebreaker Xuelong (Snow Dragon) on a mission in Antarctic on Dec 5, 2016. [Photo/CCTV]

China published its first white paper on its Antarctic explorations on Monday, pledging to boost its capabilities in the exploration and study of the continent.

The paper says China will build a new permanent station and advanced icebreakers, develop aerial capability for survey and transportation, and design scientific apparatuses for the Antarctic environment. However, it does not elaborate on schedules and details.

The white paper, China's Antarctic Programs, was produced by the State Oceanic Administration and released in Beijing on Monday, a day ahead of the 40th Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting, being held in the capital from Tuesday to June 1.

About 400 delegates from 42 countries and 10 international organizations planned to take part in the meeting, which is an annual decision-making session established under the Antarctic Treaty. It will be China's first time to be host.

Vice-Premier Zhang Gaoli will attend the meeting's opening on Tuesday and will address the group, Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a news conference last week.

The main topics are to include the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty system, climate change's impacts, tourism, and special protection and

management regions, Hua said.

China signed the Antarctic Treaty in 1983 and became a consultative member two years later. It sent its first Antarctic expedition in 1984 and set up its first permanent station the next year. It now maintains four Antarctic stations—Changcheng, Zhongshan, Taishan and Kunlun, and has sent 33 expeditions.

Chinese scientists have chosen a site for China's fifth Antarctic station, which will be near the Ross Sea, in the Southern Ocean, Lin Shanqing, deputy head of the State Oceanic Administration, said in April. He said that experts had inspected five locations including Inexpressible Island and the Brown Peninsula during the 33rd Antarctic expedition, which concluded in April.

Preparation work for the new station has been completed and construction will start as soon as 2018, Lin said.

China has also finished the site selection and survey for its first airfield in Antarctica, and construction is planned to start as early as the end of this year.

The airfield will be able to handle fixed-wing aircraft. At first there will be only one runway and fixed-wing aircraft will need to be equipped with a pair of runners to land, said Sun Bo, deputy director of the administration's Polar Research Institute of China. Other planned runways in the same area will be flatter and thus capable of handling large airplanes not equipped with runners.

[New rules cause hassles for fliers](#)



Check-in desks at Terminal 2 of Beijing Capital International Airport [File Photo]

Several airports have started requiring Chinese passengers to present their ID cards to board domestic flights despite the fact they made the bookings with passports, causing confusion among fliers.

The new security rule had been introduced without notice at several airports by Monday afternoon.

According to customer service employees at airports that have adopted the rule, including Shanghai Hongqiao and Guangzhou Baiyun international airports, the practice started on May 8 and is a result of new guidelines from the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

China Daily reporters contacted 29 airports in the four municipalities as well as 24 provincial and regional capitals on Monday. Customer service employees at 13 airports said Chinese passengers must present ID cards to fly domestically, even as a stopover on an international flight that was booked with a passport.

Details of the guidelines remain unknown, and the CAAC declined to comment.

The change has affected many passengers, including those who earlier traveled abroad with only a passport yet found they had to wait up to several hours for a temporary travel permit before they were allowed to transfer onto a domestic flight.

Chinese people who work and study abroad are among those affected.

“Many students, including me, usually leave our Chinese ID cards at home

because they are no use in the U.S. and we can board domestic flights in China with our passports,” said Li Ye, 21, who is studying in New York.

“Many of my friends have decided to fly directly or stop over in foreign cities to bypass the new rule,” she said.

Customer service employees at Shanghai Pudong and Beijing capital international airports said Chinese passengers could still travel on domestic flights with passports, as they had not received any orders to the contrary.

“We strongly suggest people carry their ID cards if they plan to travel with their passports because the new rule may come into effect soon,” a security officer at Shanghai Pudong International Airport said on Monday.

[China stresses law enforcement on solid waste management](#)



Zhang Dejiang (3rd L), chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (NPC), presides over a meeting on monitoring the implementation of a solid waste control law in Beijing, capital of China, May 22, 2017. [Xinhua]

At a Monday meeting, China’s top legislature emphasized monitoring the implementation of a solid waste control law.

Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), presided over the meeting.

The solid waste control law is important to the country's environmental protection to improve national health, protect the environment and promote sustainable development, said Zhang.

He underlined the need for the government to strongly punish any violation of the law.

The NPC Standing Committee will dispatch teams to monitor the implementation of the law between May and August.

Zhang said the NPC should intensify publicity and education on the solid waste control law and elevate public awareness of solid waste management.

The NPC will also launch a nationwide survey on the implementation of the solid waste control law on the websites of the NPC, Xinhua News Agency and People's Daily.

[Submersible Jiaolong to carry journalist into Mariana Trench](#)

Jiaolong, China's manned submersible, will conduct a dive in the Mariana Trench on Tuesday, with a Xinhua News Agency journalist on board.

Its mother ship Xiangyanghong 09 set sail for the Yap and Mariana trenches, with Jiaolong and 96 scientists aboard on May 16, the beginning of the third stage of China's 38th oceanic expedition.

The ship arrived at the Mariana area Monday and started testing temperature, salinity and depth for Tuesday's dive, the first of the expedition's third stage.

Ten dives are planned for the third stage. The first is expected to reach a depth of 4,800 meters and last about nine hours.

According to Tang Jialing, chief crew member for Tuesday's operation, the dive will take place at the steeper northern slope of the Mariana's "Challenger Deep" and Jiaolong will navigate underwater for two or three kilometers.

In addition to allowing the crew to observe the seabed closely, the mission will also make videos and photograph the seafloor.

With its two mechanical arms, Jiaolong will collect samples of sea water, sediment, deep-sea life and rocks depending on the circumstances.

The mission will study the mineralogy and geochemistry of sediment and rocks in the area to raise understanding of geological activities. Research will include deep-sea microbes and other life forms, according to Tang.

After Tuesday's dive, the following four dives in the trench will reach depths of up to 6,700 meters.

According to Wu Changbin, commander of the expedition's third stage, Jiaolong will survey the abyssopelagic zone to learn more about that adaptive mechanism in extreme environments of marine life.

The 38th oceanic scientific expedition started on Feb. 6. Jiaolong made dives in the northwestern Indian Ocean and the South China Sea in the mission's first two stages.

Named after a mythical dragon, Jiaolong reached a maximum depth of 7,062 meters in the Mariana Trench in June 2012.

[New technology allows shoppers to pay with their faces](#)

Chinese shoppers will soon be able to free up their hands, thanks to new technology that enables consumers to pay with their faces.

"We have finished an experiment for facial recognition payment and it will be used in the near future," said Chen Jidong on Monday, who is in charge of biometric identification technology at Ant Financial, the affiliate financial service of Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba.

Alipay is now testing the technology. According to a video demonstrating the facial recognition payment system, shoppers can complete payment in just two steps: facial scanning and entering the last four digits of their mobile phone numbers.

While many viewers marvelled at the technology, some web users were worried about security.

Chen told Xinhua that Alipay will ask users to blink, smile, shake their heads or make other movements while using the service to differentiate real people from photos or videos.

Chen said that user authorization will be required to use facial recognition payment, but didn't give an exact date for when the service will debut.

Facial recognition payment was listed among 10 breakthrough technologies by the MIT Technology Review earlier this year.

In 2015, Alipay started using a face-detection system for customer log in. The technology has also been used by other Internet companies such as Baidu and Tencent.