5.3-magnitude quake jolts Taiwan sea area

A 5.3-magnitude earthquake hit the sea area of Taiwan at about 9:57 a.m. Sunday Beijing Time, according to the measurement of the China Earthquake Networks Center (CENC).

The epicenter was monitored at 21.68 degrees north latitude and 121.54 degrees east longitude.

World's closest glacier to a city continues to shrink

Glacier No. 1 in the Tianshan Mountains in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region [Goly7.com file photo]

The world's closest glacier to a city shrank quickly in the past year and may completely vanish in half a century, according to a Chinese scientist Saturday.

In the last 12 months, the east and west stretches of Glacier No. 1 in the Tianshan Mountains in northwest China, shrank by about 7.2 and 6.3 meters, respectively, according to a recent survey by researchers with the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS).

Glacier No.1 is approximately 130 km from Urumqi, capital of Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region.

“There has been a remarkable increase of polluting dust on Glacier No.1 in recent years,” said Li Zhongqin, head of CAS Tianshan Mountains Glacier Observation Station.

He said that the dust could come from mining, vehicles on a nearby national highway nearby or soil degradation due to overgrazing.

“Given climate change, if no measures are taken, the shrinking will accelerate and the glacier may disappear in 50 years,” he said. “If protection is strengthened, it could last for 70 to 90 years.”

Death toll from Inner Mongolia road accident rises to 12

An unregistered car crashed with a bus on a section of a national road in Arun Banner, Hulun Buir City. [Photo/Sina Weibo]

Death toll from the car-bus collision in north China’s Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region has risen to 12, said local authorities on Sunday.

Three people who were seriously injured died in hospital on the early morning of Sunday, confirmed the regional administration of work safety.

The accident happened at about 5:20 p.m. when an unregistered car crashed with a bus on a section of a national road in Arun Banner, Hulun Buir City.

Nine people were found dead at the scene. Thirteen others were injured, including four in critical condition.

A team formed by the public security, transportation, health and civil affairs authorities is taking care of the relatives.

Cause of the accident is under investigation.

Jiaolong retrieves seamount sample in S. China Sea

Jiaolong, China’s manned submersible, retrieved a basalt sample from the Zhenbei Seamount in the South China Sea. [Photo/Xinhua]

Jiaolong, China’s manned submersible on Saturday retrieved a basalt sample from the Zhenbei Seamount in the South China Sea which scientists say could shed light on the formation and evolution of seamounts in the area.

Jiaolong stayed underwater for nine and a half hours in its third dive in the second stage of China’s 38th ocean scientific expedition, which will last

until May 13.

The maximum depth of the dive was 2,930 meters beneath the sea surface.

Aside from the five-kilogram basalt sample, it also brought back samples of sediments and seawater near the seabed as well as biosamples, in addition to high-definition photos and video footages.

“It is not easy (to acquire such a basalt sample). This valuable ‘rock’ will lay the foundation for our study of formation and evolvement of seamounts in the South China Sea during the Cenozoic period,” said Shi Xuefa, a researcher with the State Oceanic Administration.

“It is very important for the study of the region’s structural evolution,” Shi said.

Jiaolong has already completed two dives in the South China Sea on Wednesday and Thursday. A fourth dive has been planned on Sunday. The 38th oceanic scientific expedition started on Feb. 6. Jiaolong completed a dive in the northwestern Indian Ocean earlier this year in the mission’s first stage. It will also conduct surveys in the Yap Trench and the Mariana Trench in the third stage.

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

China-made large amphibious aircraft finishes first glide test

An amphibious aircraft AG600 is displayed for the 11th China International Aviation and Aerospace Exhibition in Zhuhai, South China's Guangdong province, Oct 30, 2016. [Photo/Xinhua]

China's large amphibious aircraft AG600 on Saturday successfully conducted its first glide test in the southern Chinese city of Zhuhai as it is preparing for its maiden flight.

Other tests and check-ups are under way, according to the China Aviation Industry General Aircraft Co., Ltd.

Designed to be the world's largest amphibious aircraft, the 37-meter AG600, with a wingspan of 38.8 meters, has a maximum take-off weight of 53.5 tonnes. It can collect 12 tonnes of water in 20 seconds, and transport up to 370 tonnes of water on a single tank of fuel.

With excellent maneuverability and a relatively wide search scope range, the AG600 will be mainly used for maritime rescue, forest fire fighting, marine environment monitoring and protection.

Aviation Industry Corp. of China said in March that AG600 would embark on its maiden flight over land in late May and on water in the second half of 2017.

The aircraft developer has received orders for 17 AG600s.