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[Marine Technology] Taiwan-built Ocean Research Vessel Officially Launched
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The China Post (2012/08/11) “Ocean Research V,” a domestically designed and built research vessel, was officially launched in Kaohsiung on August 10 and will begin operations from January next year, the Taiwan Ocean Research Institute said in the southern city.

The ship can improve domestic ocean research and development of related industries, and assist in the implementation of the country's policy of “seeking prosperity from the ocean,” said Vice President Den-yih WU at the inauguration ceremony of the vessel, which is being operated by the institute.

Taiwan is surrounded by sea and the country's “blue territory,” including its exclusive economic zones, is approximately five times the size of the country's land area, WU said.

“Ocean Research V” is one of the largest research vessels to have been designed and built domestically that can engage in comprehensive and systematic ocean surveys, National Science Council Minister Cyrus CHU said.

Findings from the vessel's crucial economic and research missions will be uploaded to Taiwan's National Oceanographic Database for public reference, CHU added.

Research has found signs that large quantities of methane hydrate are stored in Taiwan's southwestern sea zone, and if the natural gas can be tapped successfully, it can provide Taiwan with an energy source for the next 50-100 years, CHU explained.

The vessel is equipped with many advanced scientific devices, including a sonar system and multi-channel seismic detection system that can map large areas of the sea floor, analyze strata structures and provide a basis for investigating oceanic land, the institute said. For probing rock beneath the seabed and detecting natural gas, the ship is equipped with a remote-controlled vehicle that can operate 3,000 meters underwater and take samples with a drill, the institute added. In the future, the Central Weather Bureau will be commissioning the vessel to help maintain underwater cables of Taiwan's earthquake monitoring system near Yilan County's Toucheng, the bureau said.

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