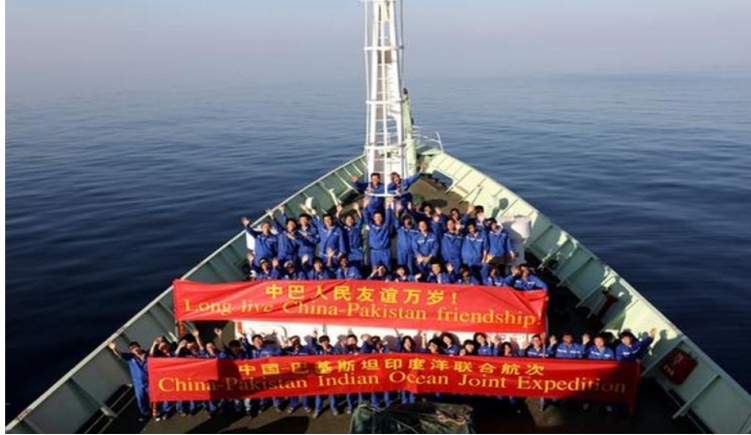


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China-Pakistan oceanographic expedition completes

NEWS, PAKISTAN-CHINA
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Karachi - A 44-member strong team comprising Chinese and Pakistani scientists completed their oceanographic expedition to Makran and returned to Karachi on Saturday after spending almost three weeks in the offshore waters, carrying out detailed geophysical, geological and oceanographic surveys and collecting samples for research.

It was the first China-Pakistan joint oceanographic expedition. It is expected to promote cooperation on marine science and technology that would help protect coastal and marine ecosystems.

Seven members of Pakistani team were from the National Institute of Oceanography (NIO) and one from the Pakistan navy.

The Chinese side led by Prof Jian Lin, Deputy Director General, South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO) comprised 35 scientists that came to Karachi onboard a research vessel named Shiyan 3.

"This is a major breakthrough in the advancement of oceanographic research in the Arabian Sea. The water body has a number of unique features that make it an interesting place to undertake scientific research and improve our understanding of seismicity due to the interaction of three tectonic plates just southwest of Karachi," Dr Asif Inam heading NIO told Dawn.

The other main area of interest for the team, according to him, was to assess the potential of gas hydrates along the Makran coast and to see how this expedition would benefit people of Pakistan in strengthening disaster management and country's socio-economic development.

Replying to a question about how the expedition was planned, Dr Inam said that discussions for collaboration between the NIO and the SCSIO had begun early last year and it was commendable that during this short time this tremendous task of arranging a joint expedition was made possible.

"The NIO scientists had participated in the Chinese expedition to Antarctica and the Chinese expedition to Southern Indian Ocean. But, this was the first time the two countries conducted geological, geophysical and oceanographic surveys in the Arabian Sea," he said, adding that the study site was the area in front of Pasni.

Experts in the expedition included Dr Min Xu, Dr Fan Zhang, Dr Hongfeng Yang, Dr Gang Li, Imran Hasany, Waseem Haider, Sanobar Kahkashan, Dr Noor Kalhoro, Khalid Mahmood, Anwar Zeb, Uzair Lodhi and Asad-Ullah Memon.

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