

## SOME EARTH SCIENCE INSTITUTIONS OF CHINA

As a part of the 30th IGC at Beijing visits to the following Earth Science Institutions were arranged by the organisers.

### *The Institute of Geology*

The Institute of Geology, Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences (CAGS) affiliated to the Ministry of Geology and Mineral Resources (MGMR), is a national research centre for fundamental geology and its application. Founded in 1956, the institute has now become one of the leading geoscientific research organizations in China manned by 215 scientific personnel of high academic and research achievements. The institute is engaged in a wide range of basic geoscientific studies, among which tectonics, metamorphic geology, deep-geology, stratigraphic palaeontology, isotope geology and geo-cartography assume importance. The institute is well-equipped with advanced analytical instruments. Exhibition hall of Geosciences is attached to the Institute and displays variety of fossils and rock specimens for the public.

### *Institute of Mineral Deposits*

As national research centre of mineral resources, the Institute of Mineral Deposits was founded in 1956. Over the past 40 years since its founding, the Institute has taken charge of and conducted a great many research projects on well-known mineral deposits, metallogenic provinces and belts, some mineral resources that are specific to or extraordinarily abundant in China (such as W, Sn, Mo and REE) and some that are particularly scarce in China (such as Fe, Cu, Au, Ag, potash salt and diamond). The institute has used, summarized and developed a large number of metallogenic theories, done an excellent job in the application of new techniques and methods and obtained good results in mineral exploration. More importantly the Institute has built up and trained a number of experts who have extensive theoretical knowledge coupled with rich professional experience.

### *Institute of Geomechanics*

The Institute grew out of the Division of Geomorphics created in 1956 by late Prof. Li Siguang (J.S. Lee), the outstanding geologist. The Institute consists of four research centres: Geomechanics Centre, Geostress and Regional Crustal Stability Centre, Ore-field Structures and Metallogenic Prognosis Centre; Quaternary Geology and Environmental Geology Centre and five Divisions: Division of Geology of Energy Resources, Division on Non-metallic Mineral Resources and Mineral Material, Palaeomagnetic Experimental Station, Central Laboratory, and Division of Library and Scientific Archives and Information. The Laboratory of Geomechanics is well equipped with advanced instruments. The Institute is authorized to award doctorate and masters degrees in structural geology (including geomechanics).

The Institute mainly concentrates its researches on the formation, development, and evolution of structural systems and structural types as well as their compounding, global tectonic features and geodynamics, continental structures and its dynamics, mountain and

basin coupling and their thermal history, tectonic simulation and inversion of paleotectonic stress field, measurement of present tectonic stresses and monitoring and surveying of displacement of rock mass, assessment of regional crustal and key engineering works stability, geology of energy resources (oil and gas, geothermal), orefield structures, tectonic-petrogenesis and tectonic-metallogenesis, prediction of occurrence of mineral resources, Quaternary geology and Quaternary glaciology as well as Quaternary geological environment and climate, paleomagnetism (structural, rock, environmental), application of micro-organisms in ore beneficiation, and agricultural geology.

### ***Institute of Rock and Mineral Analysis***

The Institute of Rock and Mineral Analysis (IRMA) attached to MGMR is a national research centre of geoanalysis. It has 156 staff members and is well equipped with modern instruments. The principal functions of the IRMA is to develop new analytical techniques and methods for the basic research on geosciences, to prepare various standard reference materials, to undertake routine and check analysis, to provide technological consultation services, and to develop international academic exchange and technological cooperation.

In the IUGS meeting it was decided that the 31st IGC would take place at Sao Paulo, Brazil, in the year 2000.

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### **‘KAMINI’ COMMISSIONED**

As reported in *Nature* (Vol.384, No.6605, 14 November 1996, p.100), India's efforts to utilise its vast thorium resources for power generation received a boost with the commissioning of *Kamini* ("Kalpakkam mini")—a research reactor fuelled entirely by U-233 produced from thorium. The Department of Atomic Energy authorities described the event as "a small but significant step" in the long term goal of exploiting India's thorium resources. It is estimated that 400,000 tonnes of thorium is available from the black (beach) sands of India representing an energy equivalent of 500 billion tonnes of coal that could take care of our power requirement for centuries.