



Scientists Plan Bold Return After Submarine Disappearance

Description

A robotic submarine named Ran, which explored under Antarctica's glaciers, has been lost, but its findings are changing how scientists understand ice melt. A new submarine, Ran II, is in development to continue its work in this challenging area of Earth science.

Ran was an autonomous underwater vehicle run by the University of Gothenburg. It disappeared in January 2024 during an important mission. With help from a donation by the Voice of the Ocean Foundation and insurance funds, the more advanced Ran II will be delivered in the winter of 2026/2027.

Over six years, Ran revealed data from places unreachable by humans or ships. It provided vital images of the Thwaites Glacier and showed how ice melts. Anna Wåhlin, a professor of oceanography, stated that Ran allowed researchers to see the glacier's underside.

Ran's most impressive journey was under the Dotson Ice Shelf, where it travelled over 1,000 kilometres in darkness and mapped the ice's base. Its discoveries showed a complex landscape, challenging previous views of a smooth ice base. This information is crucial because thinning ice shelves can speed up glaciers, affecting global sea levels.

Despite its risks, including being out of contact for over 24 hours, Ran completed over 40 successful missions before its disappearance. Ran II aims to improve on these methods, enhancing navigation and decision-making during missions, and continuing to explore the unknown regions beneath the ice.

Vocabulary List:

1. **autonomous** //ɔ:'tɒnəməs// (adjective): working without a person controlling it
2. **submarine** //,sʌbmə'ri:n// (noun): a vehicle that travels under the water
3. **revealed** //ri'vi:ld// (verb): showed information that was not known before
4. **underside** //ˈʌndər,saɪd// (noun): the lower surface or bottom of something
5. **thinning** //ˈθɪnɪŋ// (adjective): becoming less thick or smaller in amount
6. **navigation** //,nævə'geɪʃən// (noun): finding and following a safe route or direction

Comprehension Questions



Multiple Choice

1. What is the name of the robotic submarine that was lost?

- Option: Ran
- Option: Ran II
- Option: Thwaites
- Option: Dotson

2. Who operated the autonomous underwater vehicle Ran?

- Option: University of Gothenburg
- Option: Voice of the Ocean Foundation
- Option: NASA
- Option: MIT

3. In what year did Ran disappear during its mission?

- Option: 2022
- Option: 2023
- Option: 2024
- Option: 2025

4. When is the advanced Ran II expected to be delivered?

- Option: 2025
- Option: 2026
- Option: 2026/2027
- Option: 2027

5. How far did Ran travel under the Dotson Ice Shelf?

- Option: 500 kilometres
- Option: 750 kilometres
- Option: 1,000 kilometres
- Option: 1,500 kilometres

6. Which glacier's underside did Ran reveal vital images of?

- Option: Thwaites Glacier
- Option: Dotson Glacier
- Option: Antarctic Glacier
- Option: Greenland Glacier



True-False

7. Ran provided data from places that are easily accessible by humans or ships.
8. Ran completed over 40 successful missions before disappearing.
9. The discoveries made by Ran confirmed the previous views of a smooth ice base.
10. Ran II will aim to improve navigation and decision-making during missions.
11. Ran was not an autonomous underwater vehicle.
12. The information provided by Ran is crucial for understanding global sea levels.

Gap-Fill

13. Ran disappeared during an important mission in _____ 2024.
14. The advanced Ran II will be delivered in the winter of _____ 2026/2027.
15. Ran allowed researchers to see the glacier's _____ underside.
16. Ran's discoveries showed a _____ landscape under the ice.
17. Ran completed over _____ successful missions before its disappearance.
18. Despite its risks, Ran was _____ out of contact for over 24 hours.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Ran 2. University of Gothenburg 3. 2024 4. 2026/2027 5. 1,000 kilometres 6. Thwaites Glacier

True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. True 11. False 12. True

Gap-Fill: 13. January 14. 2026 15. under 16. complex 17. 40 18. occasionally

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