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Russian Antarctic Expedition Halts Research Due to Lack of Funds

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The only research being carried out in the Antarctic as part of the expedition this year is a meteorite project by the Ural Federal University, Kolunin said.

Russia's state-funded Antarctic expedition has had to halt its research due to a lack of funding, the TASS news agency reported Wednesday, citing one of the scientists involved in the expedition.

"It's not yet clear how long the research will be suspended for," Ruslan Kolunin told TASS. He said that work on drilling a borehole in the ancient Lake Vostok has also been suspended. "The borehole is frozen at the moment, no work is under way there right now," he was cited as saying.

The only research being carried out in the Antarctic as part of the expedition this year is a meteorite project by the Ural Federal University, Kolunin said. "That is financed by sponsors and the university, though," he added.

Earlier this year, the expedition's head Valery Lukin said that scientists wouldn't be able to

continue researching Lake Vostok during the next season, which lasts from December 2015 to February 2016, due to decreased funding, TASS reported.

The expedition, Lukin said, is financed directly from the federal budget. In 2015 it was allocated 1.18 billion rubles ($18 million), but in 2016 that will decrease to 1.061 billion rubles ($16 million), which he said was not enough to continue work at the lake.

Lake Vostok lies buried beneath a 3,769-meter layer of ice. Locating it and accessing its relict waters is considered one of the main discoveries of the expedition so far, the report said.

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