

CHINA TO BUILD MOON STATION IN 'ABOUT 10 YEARS'

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

Models of the lunar rover Yutu-2, or Jade Rabbit 2, and the moon lander for Chang'e 4 lunar probe are seen at an exhibition in Changsha, Hunan province, China, April 23, 2019 | Photo Credit: [REUTERS](#)

Beijing plans to send a manned mission to the moon and to build a research station there within the next decade, state media reported Wednesday, citing a top space official.

China aims to achieve space superpower status and took a major step towards that goal when it became the first nation to land a rover on the far side of the moon in January.

It now plans to build a scientific research station on the moon's south pole within the next 10 years, China National Space Administration head Zhang Kejian said during a speech marking "Space Day", the official Xinhua news agency reported.

He also added that Beijing plans to launch a Mars probe by 2020 and confirmed that a fourth lunar probe, the Chang'e-5, will be launched by the end of the year.

Originally scheduled to collect moon samples in the second half of 2017, the Chang'e-5 was delayed after its planned carrier, the powerful Long March 5 Y2 rocket, failed during a separate launch in July 2017.

China on Wednesday also announced its Long March-5B rocket will make its maiden flight in the first half of 2020, carrying the core parts of a planned space station.

The Tiangong — or "Heavenly Palace" — will go into orbit in 2022, the China Manned Space Engineering Office said.

It is set to replace the International Space Station — a collaboration between the United States, Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan — which is due to be retired in 2024.

Beijing last week also said it would launch an asteroid exploration mission and invited collaborators to place their experiments on the probe.

The current Chang'e-4 moon lander carried equipment from Germany, the Netherlands and Sweden.

China now spends more on its civil and military space programmes than do Russia and Japan, and is second only to the United States. Although opaque, its 2017 budget was estimated at \$8.4 billion by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development.

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The strain produces ethanol by fermenting rice and wheat straw

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