

CHINA LAUNCHES NEW ROCKET, SPACECRAFT

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

New horizons:The 'Long March-5B' rocket blasting off from the Wenchang Space Centre in Hainan on Tuesday. APTu Haichao

China on Tuesday successfully launched a new rocket and prototype spacecraft, state media said, in a major test of the country's ambitions to operate a permanent space station and send astronauts to the Moon.

'The Long March 5B' rocket took off from the Wenchang launch site in the southern island of Hainan and eight minutes later an unmanned prototype spaceship successfully separated and entered its planned orbit, according to the Xinhua news agency. A test version of a cargo return capsule also separated from the rocket, Xinhua added.

The spaceship will one day transport astronauts to a space station that China plans to complete by 2022 — and eventually to the Moon. It will have capacity for a crew of six.

Return on Friday

The spaceship and capsule are slated to return to a landing site by Friday after completing their test flights, Ji Qiming of the China Manned Space Agency told a press conference. Leader of the command headquarters for the flight mission Zhang Xueyu said the launch had "strengthened confidence and determination" for the next stages of China's space programme.

The United States is so far the only country to have successfully sent humans to the Moon. But Beijing has made huge strides in its effort to catch up, sending astronauts into space, satellites into orbit and a rover to the far side of the Moon.

The successful maiden flight of the 54-metre Long March 5B — which has a take-off mass of about 849 tonnes — should reassure China, following failures of the 7A model in March and 3B model in April. "The new spaceship will give China an advantage in the area of human spaceflight over Japan and Europe," said Chen Lan, an independent analyst at GoTaikonauts.com. Assembly of the Tiangong space station is expected to begin this year and finish in 2022.

China plans to send an astronaut to the Moon in about a decade and then build a base there.

Subscribe to The Hindu digital to get unlimited access to Today's paper

Already have an account ? [Sign in](#)

Find mobile-friendly version of articles from the day's newspaper in one easy-to-read list.

Enjoy reading as many articles as you wish without any limitations.

A select list of articles that match your interests and tastes.

Move smoothly between articles as our pages load instantly.

A one-stop-shop for seeing the latest updates, and managing your preferences.

We brief you on the latest and most important developments, three times a day.

*Our Digital Subscription plans do not currently include the e-paper ,crossword, iPhone, iPad mobile applications and print. Our plans enhance your reading experience.

To continue enjoying The Hindu, You can turn off your ad blocker or Subscribe to The Hindu.

[Sign up for a 30 day free trial.](#)

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com