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Xi lauds progress in space missions

President meets scientists involved in development of Chang'e 5 lunar program

By ZHAO LEI

zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping encouraged Chinese space industry workers on Monday to strive for successes in the nation's future lunar explorations and carry out interplanetary expeditions with a methodical approach.

Xi, who is also general secretary of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and chairman of the Central Military Commission, urged space industry workers to take advantage of China's unique resource-mobilization system, which is characterized by its ability to mobilize all available resources to overcome difficulties and achieve its goals, when they make plans for, and conduct, future space programs.

He also asked them to foster more innovation and growth in the country's space science, technology and application sectors, and strengthen international cooperation to make bigger contributions to the well-being of mankind.

The president made the remarks on Monday morning as he visited an exhibition at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing about the Chang'e 5 lunar mission, China's most sophisticated and challenging space adventure, which brought back the world's first lunar samples in more than 40 years.

Xi listened to a report made by Zhang Kejian, director of the China National Space Administration, about lunar samples, project developments, scientific findings, international cooperation and future plans. He also inspected a sample of lunar soil obtained by the Chang'e 5 mission.



A sample of lunar soil obtained by the Chang'e 5 mission.

Xi called Chang'e 5 success the latest accomplishment made by the nation's resource-mobilization system and a significant landmark in the country's development as a world-class space power.

Before visiting the exhibition, the president met representatives of space officials, planners, scientists, engineers and technicians who worked on Chang'e 5.

Premier Li Keqiang and other top leaders also took part in the two events.

The most significant event in China's space endeavors, and also one of the world's most notable space activities, the Chang'e 5 robotic mission was launched on Nov 24 at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's Hainan province and successfully landed on the moon on Dec 1, becoming the world's third spacecraft to touch down on the lunar surface since the mid-1970s after its two predecessors — Chang'e 3 and 4.

The landmark mission brought about 1,731 grams of lunar rocks and soil back to Earth on Dec 17, achieving a historic accomplishment about 44 years after the last lunar substances were brought back from the moon.

The 23-day mission was China's



President Xi Jinping meets representatives of space scientists and engineers who participated in the research and development of the Chang'e 5 lunar mission at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on Monday. Xi also visited an exhibition about the Chang'e 5 lunar mission. PHOTOS BY WANG YE / XINHUA

first space journey that retrieved lunar samples, and made China the third country to achieve this feat, after the United States and the former Soviet Union.

The samples were delivered by the space administration to the National Astronomical Observatories in late December. Chang'e 5's orbit is now flying

toward Lagrange Point 1, which is located between the Earth and the sun and is an ideal position for monitoring solar activities, to conduct extended scientific operations.

Nation to support virus fight in Egypt, Kyrgyzstan

By XU WEI

xuwei@chinadaily.com.cn

President Xi Jinping pledged on Monday China's support for Egypt and Kyrgyzstan in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, saying that the country stands ready to deepen vaccine cooperation with both nations.

Xi made the remarks in phone conversations with his Egyptian counterpart Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi and his Kyrgyz counterpart Saadyr Japarov.

In his talk with Sisi, Xi said China has always placed Egypt in an important position in its diplomatic agenda, and the country remains a trustworthy friend and partner of Egypt.

China stands ready to consolidate political mutual trust with Egypt, and offer steadfast support and step up coordination on regional and international affairs and jointly uphold multilateralism and international fairness and justice, he said.

He expressed China's willingness to support international solidarity against the pandemic and promote the fostering of a global community of health for all.

While speaking with Japarov, Xi stressed the need for both nations to promote the stable growth of bilateral pragmatic cooperation and the high-quality building of the Belt and Road, saying that the two sides should deepen cooperation in trade, connectivity and agriculture.

Sisi and Japarov both expressed firm support for China's principled position on issues concerning Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Taiwan.

Sisi said Egypt firmly supports China's endeavors to safeguard its national sovereignty, security and unity.

Japarov said Kyrgyzstan welcomes more Chinese investment.

Lift rocket prepares to launch core capsule

By ZHAO LEI
zhao lei@chinanews.com.cn

The Long March 5B heavy-lift carrier rocket tasked with launching the core capsule of China's space station arrived at the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province on Monday, the China Manned Space Agency said.

The rocket will now be assembled and then undergo ground tests with the capsule at the coastal launch complex, the agency said in a brief statement, without elaborating.

According to information previously published by the agency, the mission is scheduled to take place in coming months.

The capsule, named Tianhe, or Harmony of Heavens, will be 16.6 meters long and have a diameter of 4.2 meters. It will be central to the space station's operations, given that astronauts will live there and control the entire station from inside.

The capsule will have three parts -- a life-support and control section, a resources section, and a connecting section.

China's most sophisticated space endeavor, the multimodule space station, named Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace, will have three main components -- a core capsule attached to two space laboratories -- with a combined weight of more than 90 metric tons.

The station is expected to become fully operational next year and is set to operate for about 15 years, program planners have said.

After the core capsule is launched, astronauts on the Shenzhou XII and XIII missions and two cargo ships will be launched within a few months to prepare the module for docking with other parts of the station.

Tiangong's two space labs will then be launched in separate Long March 5B missions, and two more manned missions and two robotic cargo flights will be made to continue construction of the station.