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Manned moon, Mars missions among plans

As planners for manned space missions move steadily toward the goal of placing Chinese astronauts on the moon, they have also started setting their sights on a much farther destination — Mars.

Scientists have been making preparations for the country's manned lunar missions, including the establishment of a manned scientific outpost, according to the nation's leading space contractor, China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp.

The company said the ultimate goal of China's lunar expeditions is to lay the scientific and technological foundations for manned missions to Mars.

"The next steps in (China's) manned space programs will be manned exploration of the moon," the State-owned space conglomerate quoted manned space program officials as saying in a statement sent to China Daily. "(We will) set up bases on the moon to conduct scientific operations, expand a habitable place for mankind and gain experience and expertise for deep-space expeditions beyond the moon. The long-term goal is to send humans to Mars."

It is the first time that China's space industry has publicly unveiled a plan for manned missions to the red planet.

Pang Zhihao, a space technology researcher in Beijing, said it is very meaningful for mankind to reach Mars, adding that some Chinese scientists have proposed a manned Mars mission before 2050.

"Sending astronauts there will give man better opportunities to look for traces of life on Mars. This is important because in our solar system, Mars resembles Earth the most, so research into the possibility of the existence of life there will enable us to better understand the origin and evolution of life on our mother planet."



However, scientists and engineers must overcome a great many difficulties to send a manned mission to Mars, he said.

"First of all, Mars is very far from Earth — the closest distance is 55 million kilometers, which means a round trip will take more than 500 days," the researcher said. "Second, putting a manned rocket into the Earth-Mars transfer trajectory will require it to be able to fly at the escape velocity, or 11.2 km per second."

Other factors that should be taken into consideration include disturbances in communication between a Mars-bound spacecraft and Earth, sources of energy to sustain operations on Mars and astronauts' health risks caused by a lengthy stay on Mars.



(From China Daily)



Police find 41 migrants alive in truck in northern Greece

ATHENS - Greek police found 41 migrants, mostly Afghans, hiding in a refrigerated truck at a motorway in northern Greece on Monday, officials said.

The discovery came 10 days after 39 bodies, all believed to be Vietnamese migrants, were discovered in the back of a refrigerated truck near London. Two people have been charged in Britain and eight in Vietnam over the deaths.

The refrigeration system in the truck where the migrants were found in northern Greece had not been turned on, and none of the migrants was injured, though some asked for medical assistance, a Greek police official said.

Police had stopped the truck near the city of Xanthi for a routine check, arresting the driver and taking him and the migrants to a nearby police station for identification.

Greece is currently struggling with the biggest resurgence in arrivals of migrants and refugees since 2015, when more than a million crossed into Europe from Turkey via Greece.

Most of them are reaching Greek Aegean islands close to the Turkish coast via boats but a large number also come overland, using a river border crossing with Turkey.

Road accidents, mainly in northern Greece, involving migrants trying to cross into other countries have become more frequent in recent years. Police have arrested dozens of people believed to be involved in human trafficking so far in 2019.

About 34,000 asylum seekers and refugees are being held in overcrowded camps on the Aegean islands under conditions which human rights groups have slammed as appalling.

The conservative government that came to power in July has vowed to move up to 20,000 off the islands and deport 10,000 people who do not qualify for asylum by the end of 2020.

(From China Daily)

Do not, for one repulse, give up the purpose that you resolved to effect.

--- William Shakespeare