Mock mission to Mars 'arrives'

on the surface of Mars and the third 240-di the 180 days for good measure, meaning that the

cross between a tiny Big Brother house and the set for Blake's 7, the mock spacecraft was built in the 1970s as part of the Soviet space programme. It contains a ng capsule divided up into six small cabins as well as a kitchen, lavatory and communal living room. A second capsule is earmarked for medical and psychological ceriments, while a third capsule houses a gym and sed for the house area where the men can grow fresh vegetables to supplement their standard space rations. The capsules are justified simulators the only used for the house area where the men can grow fresh vegetables to supplement their standard space rations. The capsules must be word inside it at all times. Another capsule is a mock-up of what selece the surface of Mars looks like in order to give crew members ance to practice spacewalks. People who have seen it say it actually looks like a giant sandpit.

e spacewalks will be undertaken wearing real spacesuits. Only three of the six crew members will get to conduct spacewalks which will always be carried out in pare ne wen will be tasked with various simulated geological experiments and will have to drill beneath the surface to collect rock samples. They will also have to coordin air work with a space vehicle similar to the kind that extracted rock samples from the Moon. For this part of the experiment they will be managed by the real mission ntrol centre in Moscow, which deals with the real-life International Space Station.

sia's Institute of Biomedical Problems with the participation of the European Space Agency (Esa).

aree of the men are Russians, two are Europeans (French and Columbian/Italian), and one is Chinese. Most of the men had either medical or engineering ackgrounds. Successful applicants had to meet strict criteria including having knowledge of both English and Russian. Organisers say women were not deliberately cluded but that they wanted to avoid the possibility of sexual tension/competition. A previous but shorter experiment at the same institute was marred when a Russ smonaut was accused of trying to forcibly kiss a female crew member.