

Russian, Chinese spacemen walk on "Mars" second time



A photo taken on Feb. 18 from a monitor at the Korolev Space Mission Control Center outside Moscow shows volunteers of the Mars-500 experiment, Wang Yue, a Chinese volunteer and Alexander Smolejevsky of Russia, taking a mock walk on Mars. (Xinhua/AFP Photo)

MOSCOW, Feb. 18 (Xinhua) -- Two participants in a simulated mission to Mars have begun a second "landing" on the "Martian" surface, Russia's Mission Control Center announced Friday.

Wang Yue, a Chinese volunteer participating in the exercise, conducted the landing with his Russian colleague Alexander Smolejevsky, said the center, located outside of Moscow.

"Russian Alexander Smolejevsky and Chinese Wang Yue have been participating in the simulation of the second landing on the Red Planet surface. They have worked at the simulating module for about an hour," the center said.

The center said the participants were outfitted in Russian-made space suits and operated a Mars exploration rover to collect rock samples.

Wang Yue, 27, an instructor at the China Astronaut Research and Training Center, was selected last year as one of the six crew members for the Mars-500 international experiment in Moscow, which aims to test the human physical and psychological strains on a 500-day journey to Mars.

After 257 days of "flight" in locked capsules, two crew members, Russian physiologist Alexander Smolejevskiy and Italian engineer Diego Urbina, conducted a walk on a mock-up of Mars on Monday.

The two volunteers planted the flags of Russia, China, and the European Space Agency (ESA) and took soil samples in their walk.

The spacecraft simulator was built at the Institute of Biomedical Problems in Moscow. The simulator comprises a landing module, an research module, a residential segment, a storage, a greenhouse, along with a separate module imitating the surface of Mars with a volume of 1,200 cubic meters.