

Simulated Mars mission crew conducts third walk on "Red Planet"



Two participants of a simulated mission to Mars had conducted their third mock-up walk on the " surface" of the "Red Planet," as part of the Mars-500 project. (Xinhua/Reuters)

MOSCOW, Feb. 22 (Xinhua) -- Two participants of a simulated mission to Mars had conducted their third mock-up walk on the " surface" of the "Red Planet," as part of the Mars-500 project, Russia's Institute of Biomedical Problems said on Tuesday.

According to the institute, Russian Alexander Smolejevsky and Italian Diego Urbina completed the walk 15 minutes ahead of schedule.

"The two participants fulfilled all the tasks due for the third spacewalk and returned to the landing module," a spokesman from the institute was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

He said Smolejevsky and Urbina had cut off two pieces of rock and took soil samples with a drill and a hammer, and practiced first aid during their walk.

Chinese participant Wang Yue had been waiting for them in the descent module simulator, the spokesman said.

According to the spokesman, the descent module will "lift off" on Wednesday carrying Smolejevsky, Urbina and Wang to the "Martian orbit" and "dock" with an inter-planetary ship with the second trio of the Mars-500 participants.

The six participants have been living in the isolated " spacecraft" since last June. The first mock-up walk was conducted by Smolejevsky and Urbina on Feb. 14, and the second by Smolejevsky and Wang on Feb. 18.