

In Brief: China, Russia to launch joint Mars mission

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China and Russia reportedly are planning a joint mission to Mars that is planned to return samples to Earth as well as landing on one of the planet's moons.

Ye Peijian, a scientist Chinese Research Institute of Space Technology, made the announcement last week in Beijing during a forum on China's space technology development.

Ye said Russia will launch the spacecraft in 2009 and it will carry China-made survey equipment, Xinhua, China's official news agency, reported.

Sun Laiyan, administrator of the China National Space Administration, says China's deep space exploration during the next five years will focus on lunar and Mars exploration.

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