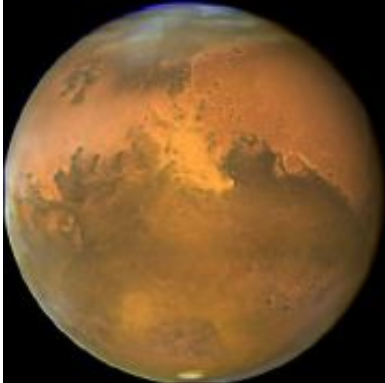


China and Russia aiming for Mars

May 23 2007



China and Russia aim to send an unmanned spacecraft to Mars in 28 months, it was reported Tuesday.

Shanghai Space Administration sources told the Xinhua news agency that China is collaborating with Russia to launch the probe in October 2009. It is expected a Russian rocket will be used to lift a Chinese-built satellite and a Russian exploration vehicle into space.

After a 10-month journey, their mission will be to survey Mars, the so-called Red Planet, with the Chinese satellite and take soil samples of Phobos, the larger of Mars' two moons, with the Russian exploration vehicle called Phobos-Grunt.

"We hope to explore the spatial environment there, secrets behind

disappearance of water, and the features of evolution," said Chen Changya, a researcher at the Shanghai Institute of Satellite Engineering.

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