

# China says manned space station possible around 2020

October 27 2010

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The Long March 2F rocket carrying a Shenzhou VI blasts off at Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center, in China's northwestern province of Gansu, 2005. China said that it planned to complete a manned space station around 2020, as the Asian nation pushes ahead with its ambitious space exploration programme.

China said Wednesday that it planned to complete a manned space station around 2020, as the Asian nation pushes ahead with its ambitious space exploration programme.

China's Manned Space Engineering Project announced in a statement that it expected to launch a space laboratory before 2016 to study key technology involved in a space station, such as living conditions for astronauts.

The country would then develop and launch a core cabin and a second laboratory module around 2020, which would be assembled in orbit into a space station, it added.

The station would study technologies involved in long-term manned space flights, the statement said.

China had already announced plans to launch two unmanned modules next year, which are expected to undergo the nation's first space docking -- an essential step towards building the space station.

These steps are all part of the nation's ambitious [space exploration](#) programme, which experts say it wants to put on a par with those of the United States and Russia.

China sees the programme as a symbol of its global stature, growing technical expertise, and the Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the formerly poverty-stricken nation.

The nation became only the third in the world to put a man in space independently -- after the United States and Russia -- when Yang Liwei piloted the one-man Shenzhou-5 [space mission](#) in 2003.

And in September 2008, the Shenzhou-7, piloted by three astronauts, carried out China's first [space walk](#).

China has also made strides in [lunar exploration](#), aiming to become the second country to put a man on the moon.

It launched its second lunar probe on October 1, hopes to bring a [moon rock](#) sample back to Earth in 2017, and has planned a [manned mission](#) to the moon for around 2020, according to state media.

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