

# China's Jade Rabbit moon rover 'alive but struggling'

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A photo of the Jade Rabbit moon rover taken by the Chang'e-3 probe lander on December 15, 2013

China's troubled Jade Rabbit moon rover is still alive after more than five months on the moon but is heading for an icy death, state media reported on Wednesday.

The rover launched in December can still send data back to Earth, Xinhua news agency cited Li Benzhen, deputy commander-in-chief of China's lunar programme, as saying.

But it is unable to move after its wheels broke down, the report said, and is suffering from chills after [solar panels](#) for [thermal insulation](#) during freezing lunar nights stopped working.

"With each lunar night, the functionality of Yutu is yet again weakened," Li said, using the Chinese name for Jade Rabbit.

The rover turns dormant and stops sending signals during the lunar night—two-week periods when the part of the moon's surface on which it is sited rotates away from the sun and temperatures turn extremely cold.

The Jade Rabbit is named after the pet of a mythical goddess of the moon in Chinese mythology, and was deployed on the [lunar surface](#) on December 15.

But it experienced a "mechanical control abnormality" on January 25, leading to fears in China it might never revive. To the country's relief, it started sending signals again in mid-February.

China sees the space programme as a symbol of its rising global stature and technological advancement, as well as of the Communist Party's success in reversing the fortunes of the once-impoverished nation.

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