
China successfully launches first Mars mission

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WENCHANG, Hainan, July 23 (Xinhua) -- China launched a Mars probe on Thursday, aiming to complete orbiting, landing and roving in one mission, and taking the first step in its planetary exploration of the solar system.

A Long March-5 rocket, China's largest launch vehicle, carrying the spacecraft with a mass of about 5 tonnes, soared into the sky from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site on the coast of southern China's island province of Hainan at 12:41 p.m. (Beijing Time).

About 36 minutes later, the spacecraft, including an orbiter and a rover, was sent into the Earth-Mars transfer orbit, embarking on an almost seven-month journey to the red planet, according to the China National Space Administration (CNSA).

China's first Mars mission is named Tianwen-1, which means Questions to Heaven and comes from a poem written by Qu Yuan (about 340-278 BC), one of the greatest poets of ancient China. The name signifies the Chinese nation's perseverance in pursuing truth and science and exploring nature and the universe, said the CNSA.
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