
China Confirms Launch of Manned Space Mission in 2016

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Presenting the space agenda for the year, the aerospace corporation said this year will witness the launch of the Shenzhou XI manned spacecraft as well as the Tiangong 2 space laboratory.

China has so far sent 10 astronauts - eight men and two women - in its five manned missions to space, the first of which took place in 2003 and the most recent one in 2013.

The last two missions involved placing into orbit China's first space laboratory Tiangong 1, which will now be replaced by the second version, as part of its program to establish a permanent space station from 2018 onwards.

A record 20 space missions will be conducted in the year 2016, underlined the corporation, including two that will also serve to test-fly the indigenous Long March 5 and Long March 7 rockets.

The missions will also involve launching new satellites for Beidou navigation system, which China seeks to develop in response to the U.S. GPS, as well as for the Gaofen high-definition earth observation system.
