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China Launches Shenzhou-23 Crewed Space Mission

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China successfully launched the Shenzhou-23 crewed spacecraft carrying three astronauts to the Tiangong Space Station as part of its ambitious plan to land humans on the Moon by 2030. The mission was launched using a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China.

Key Highlights:

Mission Name: Shenzhou-23

Country: China

Launch Vehicle: Long March-2F rocket

Launch Site: Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center

Destination: Tiangong Space Station

Crew Members: 3 astronauts

Space Agency: China Manned Space Agency (CMSA)

Astronauts on Board

ZhYangzh– Mission Commander

Zhang Zhiyuan – Pilot

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Lai Ka-ying (Li Jiaying) – Payload Specialist and the first astronaut from Hong Kong.

Major Significance of the Mission:

One astronaut will remain in space for one full year, marking China's first year-long human space mission.

The mission is considered a crucial step toward China's target of a crewed Moon landing by 2030.

Shenzhou-23 astronauts will conduct:

Scientific experiments

Space medicine studies

Technology testing for long-duration space missions.

About Tiangong Space Station:

Tiangong means "Heavenly Palace."

It is China's permanently operated modular space station in Low Earth Orbit (LEO).

Core module name: Tianhe.

China started building Tiangong in 2021 after being excluded from the International Space Station (ISS) programme.

Additional Key Facts:

China aims to establish a permanent lunar research base by 2035 in cooperation with Russia.

China became the first country to bring back samples from the far side of the Moon in 2024 through robotic missions.

The Shenzhou programme is part of the China Manned Space Program.

"Shenzhou" means "Divine Vessel."