

China to launch 2nd heavy-lift carrier rocket

China is scheduled to launch the Long March-5 Y2, the country's second heavy-lift carrier rocket, from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in southern China's Hainan Province Sunday, the State Administration of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence said Saturday.

Propellant for the rocket, which will send the Shijian-18 communication satellite into orbit, began to be pumped in on Saturday afternoon, it said.

After arriving at the launch base in early May, the rocket has been assembled and tested there.

The launch will be the last drill for the Long March-5 series before it carries the Chang'e-5 lunar probe into space in the latter half of this year, according to the administration.

Media are allowed to live broadcast the launch, the administration said.

The Long March-5 made its maiden flight in November 2016 in Wenchang. It can carry a payload of 25 tonnes into low Earth orbit and 14 tonnes in geostationary orbit, over two times the capacity of current carrier rockets.

China has scheduled eight launches of Long March-5 in the coming years for the nation's lunar probe, manned space station and Mars probe missions.