

China's new spaceship to rival the best in the world



Shenzhou XI manned spacecraft blasts off from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in Northwest China on Oct 17, 2016. [Photo by Feng Yongbin/chinadaily.com.cn]

China is making a new-generation manned spaceship which rivals that of world-leading space powers, a space mission expert said.

“Among the next generation of manned spaceships some foreign countries are developing, only the Orion spacecraft of the US can carry out a moon landing mission,” Zhang Bainan, a spaceship engineer with China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, told Science and Technology Daily on Tuesday.

China is working on a new manned spaceship that can fly both in low earth orbit, as well as a moon landing mission, Zhang said. He added that the spacecraft is recoverable and has a larger capacity than the new-generation manned spaceship of foreign countries, which can carry six people in low earth orbit and three to four in a moon landing mission.

As a late-starter in manned space flight, China has made significant advances and its newest spacecraft is set to match the capabilities of other world leaders in space exploration, Zhang said.

Last year, the re-entry module of the new spacecraft was put to the test aboard a Long March-7 rocket.

China first launched a man into space in 2003, 42 years after the former Soviet Union carried out the maiden manned space flight.

The country is projected to build a space station in 2020 and make a manned moon landing in 2030.