

China launches historic mission to retrieve samples from far side of the moon

WENCHANG, China, May 3 (Reuters) - China on Friday launched an uncrewed spacecraft on a nearly two-month mission to retrieve rocks and soil from the far side of the moon, the first country to make such an ambitious attempt.

The Long March-5, China's largest rocket, blasted off at 5:27 p.m. Beijing time (0927 GMT) from Wenchang Space Launch Center on the southern island of Hainan with the more than 8 metric ton Chang'e-6 probe.

Chang'e-6 is tasked with landing in the South Pole-Aitken Basin on the far side of the moon, which perpetually faces away from the Earth, after which it will retrieve and return samples.

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