

world

Myanmar Reuters journalists lose appeal against 7-year sentence

AFP | Yangon, Myanmar

Two Reuters journalists jailed for seven years while investigating atrocities committed against the Rohingya in Myanmar had their appeal dismissed yesterday, dismaying colleagues and tearful family members who had held slim hopes they would walk free.

Reporters Wa Lone, 32, and Kyaw Soe Oo, 28, were arrested in Yangon in December 2017 and later jailed for violating the state secrets act, a charge Reuters said was trumped up to muzzle their reporting.

Chinese children given expired polio vaccines

AFP | Shanghai

At least 145 children were administered expired polio vaccines in eastern China, state media reported, despite the government promising to prevent such lapses in the industry following a major scandal last year.

Three county-level health officials in Jiangsu province have been dismissed since the case came to light earlier this week -- the latest to raise public health concerns -- according to an announcement by the Jinhu county government.

The local government has since found 145 children received the vaccines between December 11 and January 7, CCTV said.



Nun Marie-Theo Manaud poses runs in front of St Peter's basilica at the Vatican

China's rover prepares for rough ride on moon

The Chang'e-4 probe made the world's first soft landing on the moon's 'dark side' on January 3, a major step in China's ambitions to become a space superpower

AFP | Beijing

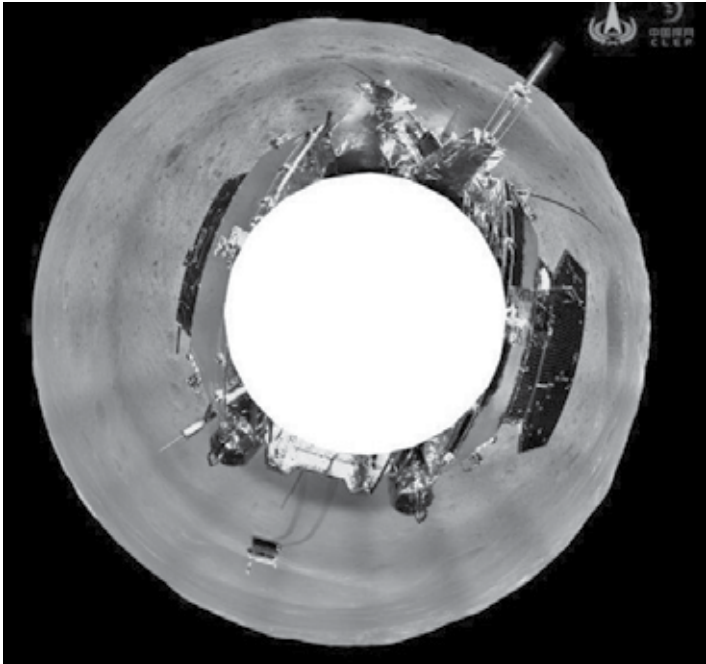
China yesterday hailed its historic mission to the far side of the moon as a "complete success" so far but said new challenges await its rover as it explores rugged terrain.

The Chang'e-4 probe -- named after a moon goddess -- made the world's first soft landing on the moon's "dark side" on January 3, a major step in China's ambitions to become a space superpower.

A rover dubbed Yutu-2 -- or Jade Rabbit, the name of the moon goddess's pet -- successfully separated from the lander and drove onto the moon's surface about eight hours after landing.

The mission sent the first panoramic image of its landing site yesterday, showing the grey moonscape it is exploring and the track marks left by the rover in the lunar soil.

"From the panorama, we can see the probe is surrounded by



360 degree panoramic image made by China's Chang'e-4 lunar probe on the far side of the moon

lots of small craters," said Li Chunlai, commander-in-chief of the ground application system for the Chang'e-4 mission, according to the official Xinhua

news agency.

Chang'e-4 landed in the Von Karman Crater within the South Pole-Aitken Basin. The basin is the largest and deepest impact



The deepest region on the moon, with a depth of 9,100 meters (5.7 miles), is about 700 kilometres (435 miles) to the south of the probe

crater in the solar system.

The craters close to the rover -- including one that was 20 meters wide (65 feet) with a depth of about four meters (13 feet) -- will pose great challenges when planning its route, Li said.

The China National Space Administration (CNSA) said the initial stage of the mission was a "complete success" after the lander and the rover sent back images via the Queqiao relay satellite that beams data back

to Earth.

The mission would now "progress to the scientific exploration stage," the space agency said in a statement.

Older surface

The Chang'e-4 probe is equipped with instruments developed by scientists from Sweden, Germany and China to study the lunar environment, cosmic radiation and the interaction between solar wind and the moon's surface, Zhang Hongbo, chief designer of the ground application system, told state broadcaster CCTV.

Chang'e-4 is the second Chinese probe to land on the moon, following the first Yutu rover mission to its Earth-facing side in 2013.

A video of the latest mission's landing -- produced using more than 4,700 pictures taken by a camera on the probe -- showed a "thicker layer of dust" offering "strong evidence" that its landing area is much older than the site where China's previous rover landed, Li said.

India plans manned space mission by December 2021

Space agency chief Kailasavadivoo Sivan says India will send its first manned mission to space by December 2021

At \$1.4 billion, India's manned space programme would be one of the cheapest in the world

AFP | Bangalore, India

India will send its first manned mission into space by December 2021, the head of the country's space agency said yesterday.

The three-person mission would make the Asian giant the fourth country after Russia, the United States and China to put people in space.

"We are planning to have the first unmanned mission by December 2020, the second by July 2021, and the manned mission by December 2021," Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chairman Kailasavadivoo Sivan said in Bangalore.

Plans for a manned mission were first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last year, and his government has since approved around \$1.4 billion to provide technology and infrastructure.

The sum would make it one of the cheapest manned space programmes in the world.



Indian space scientist Kailasavadivoo Sivan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), gestures while addressing a press conference

Modi, up for re-election this year, has hailed the national space programme as a prestige project and said that both men and women could be selected for the mission.

India has already invested heavily in its space programme in the past decade.

New Delhi is competing with other international players for a greater share of the satellite

market, and hopes its low-cost space programme will give it an edge.

It sent an orbiter to Mars in 2013 which is still operational and last year launched a record 104 satellites in one blast-off.



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KAILASAVADIVOO SIVAN

Nuns on the run: Vatican Athletics gets Olympic blessing

AFP | Vatican City

The newly-formed Vatican Athletics team, which is aiming to compete in international competitions, including the Olympics, was officially launched on Thursday after reaching a bilateral agreement with the Italian Olympic Committee (CONI).

So far there are 60 members of Vatican Athletics -- the first Sports Association constituted in the Holy See -- which includes nuns, priests, Swiss Guards and

other workers.

Monsignor Melchor José Sánchez de Toca y Alameda, president of Vatican Athletics, said at the launch that the Olympic Games were "the dream but not in the short term".

"The dream that we have often had is to see the Holy See flag among the delegations at the opening of the Olympic Games," he said.

But in the immediate future Vatican Athletics would like to be present at smaller competi-

60

Holy See employees have joined the Vatican's athletics team including nuns, priests, Swiss Guards and other workers

tions such as the Mediterranean Games.

Italian Olympic Commit-

tee (CONI) president Giovanni Malago praised the latest initiative at the Holy See which already has football and cricket teams.

"It will be necessary to affiliate with other federations," he told Vatican News.

"I'm sure this will happen, today we have started a courageous and winning start up."

The CONI agreement allows the team to take part in national and internationally sanctioned events and to have access to Italian national coaching and

medical facilities.

Team members wearing navy track suits with the Holy See's crossed keys seal were present at the launch.

The youngest athlete is a 19-year-old Swiss guard, and the oldest a 62-year-old professor of the Vatican Apostolic Library.

Two young Muslim asylum-seekers Jallow Buba, a 20-year-old Gambian, and Anzou Cissé, a 19-year-old Senegalese, have also been registered as honorary members.