Beat: Health

China;s moon rover springs back to life after being declared lost

-, 13.02.2014, 03:57 Time

USPA News - Jade Rabbit, China`s first moon rover, unexpectedly sprung back to life on Thursday, just hours after state-run media said the rover had been declared lost after experiencing mechanical issues in late January. "Hi, anyone there?" the rover said at 8:49 a.m. local time on Thursday through its account on China`s social networking website Sina Weibo.

It came just hours after the state-run China News Service (ECNS) said the rover had been declared lost after it failed to awaken from its dormancy. Pei Zhaoyu, a spokesman for China`s lunar probe program, also confirmed that Jade Rabbit had come back to life. He said the rover had returned to its normal signal reception on Thursday morning, although experts were still working to determine what had caused the problems and whether they were resolved. "The rover stands a chance of being saved now that it is still alive," Pei told the state-run Xinhua news agency. The Jade Rabbit, which is in China known as Yutu, first experienced problems on January 25 and was since unable to function properly. The problems began just as the rover was shutting down for the lunar night, which lasts more than two weeks on Earth and brings surface temperatures down to -180 degrees Celsius (-292 degrees Fahrenheit). The rover landed in the Sinus Iridum region of the moon on December 14 aboard the unmanned Chang`e-3 spacecraft, marking China`s first soft landing on an extraterrestrial body and the world`s first soft landing of a space probe on the moon in nearly four decades. It also made China the third country after the United States and the Soviet Union to soft-land on the moon. The series of Chang`e probes are named after a mythical Chinese moon goddess and Yutu refers to her pet. The first spacecraft was launched in October 2007 and maintained a 16-month lunar orbit, more than the expected one-year duration of the probe. The second probe was launched in October 2010 to take high-resolution photographs of Sinus Iridum and collected data for last year`s lunar landing.

Article online:
https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-1892/chinas-moon-rover-springs-back-to-life-after-being-declared-lost.html

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Official Federal Reg. No. 7442619