

First Mars simulation base to be built in Northwest China

China's first Mars simulation base will be built in Northwest China's Qinghai Province, China News Service reported on Tuesday.

Located in Dachaidan Hongya region of Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan autonomous prefecture, a hinter land of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, the base will be established in Qaidam Basin. The area's landform, natural landscape and climate condition resemble closely to those of Mars, said Wang Jingzhai, the prefecture's deputy Party chief.

Spread over 95,000 square kilometers of desert, the area has China's largest Yadan landform, or dry areas with wind erosion landscape. It also has other elements, such as mountain, prairie, Gobi desert, river and lake.

Adjacent to many tourist attractions along the Hexi Corridor, a part of the Silk Road in Gansu Province, the Mars simulation base will be turned into a cultural and tourist experience base that combine elements of "science, science fiction, nature, ecology and culture", said Liu Xiaoqun, director of lunar and deep space exploration general department, Chinese Academy of Sciences.

The base will comprise two functional areas – "Mars community" and "Mars campsite" – which will be connected by road but invisible to each other, Liu said.

As the only one of its kind in China, the base has filled the gap in science practice education base that combines the fields of space, astronomy, geology, meteorology and new energy, Liu said.