

Family legacy

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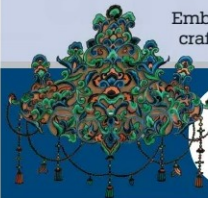
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Braking maneuver puts satellite in lunar orbit

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China's Queqiao 2 relay satellite entered a lunar orbit after successfully braking near the moon, the nation's space administration announced on Monday.

The satellite carried out a braking operation at 12:46 am about 440 kilometers above the lunar surface, and entered a lunar orbit 19 minutes later, the China National Space Administration said in a statement.

It will further adjust its altitude and inclination to enter an elliptical orbit that revolves around the moon about every 24 hours, and will conduct communication tests with the Chang'e 4 lander on the lunar surface, as well as the soon-to-be-launched Chang'e 6 probe, the administration said.

It said the near-moon brake maneuver was the most vital orbit adjustment of the mission, as the satellite needed to lower its speed by just the right amount to be captured by lunar gravity and begin to orbit the moon.

It added that the connected Tiandu 1 and Tiandu 2 experimental satellites also conducted a near-moon brake maneuver and entered a lunar orbit. They will soon carry out a planned separation.

Launched on Wednesday by a Long March 8 carrier rocket from Wenchang, Hainan province, Queqiao 2 is set to become the second relay satellite above the moon. It is primarily tasked with relaying signals and data during the upcoming Chang'e 6 robotic mission, and will also serve the provisional Chang'e 7 and 8 missions in the long term.