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UAE's lunar rover tested in the desert

RASHID ROVER, THE 'SMALLEST AND LIGHTEST' MOON EXPLORER, PUT THROUGH ITS PACES BY DAY AND NIGHT



Rashid Rover is expected to shoot off for the moon between August and November.

DUBAI
BY ANGEL TESORERO
Senior Reporter

The Emirates Lunar Mission (ELM) team has taken the UAE-made Rashid Rover for a spin in the Dubai desert to check if all systems are working well, as part of preparations for the lunar mission's launch later this year.

The Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) said the tests covered communications as well as mobility systems.

In a 30-second video clip tweeted yesterday by Government of Dubai Media Office, the moon rover, named after the late Shaikh Rashid Bin Saeed Al Maktoum, and said to be the smallest and lightest rover to be deployed on the surface of the moon, is seen navigating the desert during daytime and at night.

"The Rashid Rover was tested in the desert by the Emirates Lunar Mission team in preparation for the first Arab mission to the Moon's surface. The rover will study the lunar soil in an unexplored area during its mission," the tweet said.

Capabilities

Rashid Rover can climb over an obstacle up to 10cm tall and descend a 20-degree slope. Its mission is to better understand how lunar dust and rocks vary across the moon. It will capture multiple images and send those back to the control room in Dubai. The ELM team will then test new technologies in material science, robotics, mobility, navigation and communications, which are specially designed to survive and function in the harsh lunar environment.

Hamad Al Marzooqi, the pro-



Rashid Rover can climb over an obstacle up to 10cm tall and descend a 20-degree slope.

The Emirati moon rover will be delivered to the lunar surface by Japanese lander Hakuto-R, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that will lift off from Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA.

ject manager of ELM at the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC), earlier confirmed to Gulf News that Rashid Rover will shoot off for the moon between August and November.

The Emirati moon rover will be delivered to the lunar surface by Japanese lander Hakuto-R, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket that will lift off from Kennedy Space Centre in Florida, USA. The journey from Earth to the lunar surface will take around three months.

The primary landing site will



Watch: Emirates Lunar Mission tests Rashid Rover in Dubai desert

be Lacus Somniorum, a basaltic plain – formed by flows of basaltic lava – located in the northeastern part of the moon's near side. There are also three other sites that will serve as back-up.

First for Arab world

The Emirates Lunar Mission will be the first moon landing for the Arab world and for Japan. If successful, the UAE and Japan will together become the fourth entity to land on the lunar surface, after the United States, former Soviet Union and China.

Al Marzooqi said: "Rashid Rover has a unique mission to explore a new area on the moon that has not been explored before. It will generate a huge amount of very useful scientific data to understand the geography and physical properties of the lunar surface."