



MONDAY

SEPTEMBER 22, 2025
RABI AL AWWAL 30, 1447

GULF NEWS

gulfnews.com



Scan the QR code for updates and latest news on gulfnews.com

Rashid Rover 2 undergoing critical thermal vacuum tests

Advanced imaging technology secured from France for 2026 mission to the Moon

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Chief Reporter

The UAE is edging closer to making history as the second nation to land on the Moon's far side, with Rashid Rover 2 undergoing critical thermal vacuum tests in France and securing advanced imaging technology for its 2026 mission.

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai has strengthened its strategic partnership with the French space agency, CNES, as preparations intensify for the Emirates Lunar Mission's second attempt to reach the lunar surface.

The collaboration was formalised through a memorandum of understanding signed by Salem Humaid AlMarri, director-general of MBRSC, and Lionel Suchet, executive vice-president of CNES, during the World Space Business Week held in Paris recently.

Under the new agreement, CNES will provide two cameras and a CASPEX module, proven in previous space missions, to be installed on Rashid Rover 2. These cameras will equip the rover to deliver

AGREEMENT WITH FIREFLY AEROSPACE

Rashid Rover 2 is set to make the UAE only the second country in history to attempt a landing on the Moon's far side. Under a strategic agreement with Firefly Aerospace, Rashid Rover 2 will be deployed to the far side of the Moon on the US company's Blue Ghost lander stacked on the Elytra Dark orbital vehicle.



The rover will join Blue Ghost Mission 2, in 2026, which will be Firefly Aerospace's second lunar mission, alongside payloads from Australia, the European Space Agency and Nasa.

The Rashid Rover 2, the UAE's second mission to the Moon's surface, will demonstrate lunar surface mobility on the far side of the Moon and utilise various materials on its wheels to evaluate their durability when exposed to lunar dust.

high-resolution imagery to support scientific objectives on the lunar surface.

The collaboration also extends to image processing, with specialists supporting efforts to ensure the highest quality of data, which will be critical to advancing lunar research.

CNES recently hosted the Rashid Rover 2 teams in Toulouse, where the rover underwent thermal vacuum (TVAC) testing to simulate lunar environmental conditions. These tests ensure that the spacecraft and its subsystems can operate effectively in the extreme temperatures and vacuum of the Moon.

MBRSC has set out a series

of ambitious scientific objectives for Rashid Rover 2, which will demonstrate mobility on the far side of the Moon. One of the key experiments will focus on material adhesion, where the rover's wheels will be fitted with different materials to test their resistance to lunar dust. The results will help inform the development of technologies vital for future missions, including space-suits, surface habitats, and other infrastructure.

Rashid Rover 2 will also be equipped with other advanced scientific instruments to study the lunar plasma environment, geology, and thermal conditions.