

Beat: Technology

Hope Probe Ready for Launch from Japan's Tanegashima Space Centre

Emirates Mars Mission

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USPA NEWS - The UAE Space Agency and the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center announced the safe transfer of the Mars Hope spacecraft to its launch site at Tanegashima Space Centre. The transfer was conducted in an 83-hour operation brought forward from its scheduled May shipment date because of the travel and movement restrictions imposed by international efforts to contain the impact of Covid-19. The Emirates Mars Mission, dubbed The Hope Probe is the first interplanetary exploration undertaken by an Arab nation.

"We're on track for our July launch now," said EMM Mission lead Omran Sharaf. "Mitigation planning and early action, along with the support of our partners and the Japanese Government saved the day" "the whole operation was basically a race against the clock and Covid-19 to ensure we managed to have the spacecraft at Tanegashima ready for its July/August launch window to Mars." A team of engineers travelled to Tanegashima two weeks prior to the probe's early transfer in order to go through quarantine in time to meet the arriving shipment. A second team of engineers accompanied the spacecraft, is now in quarantine and scheduled to be ready for final tests and preparation of the spacecraft to launch on a Mitsubishi MH2A rocket.

The transfer operation saw an Antonov 124 heavy lifter carry the spacecraft in a specialised temperature and atmosphere-controlled container from Maktoum International Airport in The Emirates to Chubu Centrair International Airport at Nagoya, Japan. The spacecraft was then loaded onto a sea freighter, carried to Tanegashima's Shimama Seaport and then transferred by night to the launch site.

The Emirates Mars Mission was conceived to disrupt and accelerate the development of the UAE's space sector, education and science community. Led by MBRSC under the supervision of the UAE Space Agency, the mission will send the Mars Hope probe to orbit Mars in February 2021. Hope aims to build the first full picture of Mars' climate throughout the Martian year.

EMM and the Hope probe are the culmination of a knowledge transfer and development effort started in 2006, which has seen Emirati engineers working with partners around the world to develop the UAE's spacecraft design, engineering and manufacturing capabilities. The spacecraft was named as a symbol of hope for all Arab youth.

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