

## MBRSC Teams Up with Japan's ispace on Emirates Lunar Mission

- *Emirates Lunar Mission's 'Rashid' rover to go to the Moon on ispace's Mission 1 in 2022<sup>1</sup>*
- *ispace to provide payload delivery, and communication and power services for the rover*
- *Agreement further strengthens UAE-Japan collaboration in space exploration*

**Dubai, UAE, 14 April 2021:** The Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) has signed a contract with Japan's ispace, inc. (ispace), under which the latter will provide payload delivery services for the ambitious Emirates Lunar Mission. Under this agreement, ispace becomes a key strategic and implementation partner to MBRSC on the Emirates Lunar Mission, the first of its kind from the Arab world.

The 'Rashid' rover will be transported to the Moon on ispace's lunar lander during the company's 'Mission 1' in 2022<sup>2</sup> as part of its commercial programme known as 'HAKUTO-R'. Under the terms of the agreement, the Japanese lunar exploration company will deliver the Emirates Lunar Mission's 'Rashid' rover to the Moon, provide wired communication and power during the cruise phase, and engage in wireless communication on the lunar surface.

The project is a key part of the UAE's space exploration strategy, which is centred around building new knowledge capabilities, inspiring future generations to pursue space science and research, and fostering global collaboration. Upon the execution of the mission, the UAE and Japan, together, are anticipated to be the next two nations to successfully put a spacecraft on the lunar surface, following the United States, Russia and China.

After a thorough consideration of competing lunar payload delivery service providers, MBRSC selected ispace based on the company's technological credibility. This cooperation with ispace is yet another exemplification of MBRSC's unique ability to tap into the best of the global space value chain through strategic collaborations with key partners.

**H.E. Yousuf Hamad AlShaibani, Director-General, MBRSC, said:** "MBRSC's commitment towards space research and development has garnered the attention of the world through our various projects. We are now leveraging our advanced scientific and technological hub by partnering with international entities that will aid in creating a new space economy landscape in the country. Our mission through

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<sup>1</sup> Planned launch schedule as of April 2021.

<sup>2</sup> Planned launch schedule as of April 2021.

scientific endeavours such as the Emirates Lunar Mission is to keep the UAE flag flying high and be at the forefront of countries contributing to scientific achievements that will change the future for humanity.”

**Adnan AlRais, Mars 2117 Programme Manager and Senior Director Remote Sensing Department, MBRSC, said:** “Our association with Japan’s ispace is in line with the MBRSC’s ambitious vision of growing a vibrant and sustainable space ecosystem through collaborations and partnerships. The Emirates Lunar Mission represents a milestone in the UAE’s space sector as the mission will contribute towards providing valuable data and information relating to the Moon that will serve the global scientific community as well as test capabilities that would be crucial for manned missions to Mars.”

**Takeshi Hakamada, Founder & CEO, ispace, said:** “We are honoured that MBRSC has entrusted ispace’s lunar payload transportation service to play a key role in carrying out this historic moment for the UAE. The world will be watching as our commercial lander carries the ‘Rashid’ rover to the Moon. We’re pleased to advance collaboration between the UAE and Japan in space exploration, as well as to inspire more collaborations for lunar exploration between the public and commercial sector around the world.”

**Dr. John Walker, Chief Rover Architect, ispace, said:** “As the frequency and volume of small rovers traversing the lunar landscape is expected to increase in the coming years, we’re pleased to bring MBRSC’s ‘Rashid’ rover to the Moon to kickstart the next phase of lunar surface exploration.”

As governments and companies around the world set their sights on the Moon, fostering public-private partnerships such as this can further lunar science, drive forward new innovations, and foster the growth of the burgeoning commercial lunar exploration market. Through such endeavours, the global economic sphere can be expanded, while also ensuring a sustainable future for humanity.

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#### **About MBRSC:**

The Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre, founded in 2006, is home to the UAE National Space Programme. The Centre builds and operates earth observation satellites, offering imaging and data analysis services to clients around the world. It has launched the DubaiSat-1, DubaiSat-2 and the KhalifaSat, which was developed in the UAE by a team of highly qualified Emirati engineers. The Centre also launched the Emirates Mars Mission “Hope Probe”, which became the first Arab interplanetary

mission to reach the Martian orbit on 9 February 2021. The Hope Probe will gather key scientific data about Mars' atmosphere. Recently, the Centre announced the launch of the Emirates Lunar Mission, the first Emirati and Arab mission to explore the Moon and plans to develop MBZ-SAT, the most advanced commercial satellite in the region in the field of high-resolution satellite imagery. Furthermore, MBRSC is hosting the 72nd edition of the International Astronautical Congress (IAC) 2021, the world's premier space event, in Dubai. The UAE is the first Arab nation to host the IAC since its establishment in 1950. The Centre is also responsible for the UAE Astronaut Programme, which saw the launch of Hazzaa AlMansoori, the first Emirati Astronaut, to the International Space Station on a scientific mission on 25th September 2019, and the development of the Mars 2117 Programme to build a human colony on Mars.

**About ispace, inc. (<https://ispace-inc.com/>)**

ispace is a lunar exploration company with over 130 staff and offices in Japan, Europe and the United States. Founded in 2010, ispace managed Team HAKUTO, one of the 5 finalists in the Google Lunar XPRIZE competition. The company is building a small commercial lunar lander, which aims to provide a high-frequency, low-cost delivery service to the Moon, as well as a lunar rover for surface exploration. Aspiring to be a gateway for the private sector to bring their business to the Moon, ispace has also launched a lunar data business concept to support companies with lunar market entry. ispace is part of a team led by Draper, which was selected by NASA to compete in its Commercial Lunar Payload Services (CLPS) Program, and ispace Europe was selected by ESA to be part of the Science Team for PROSPECT, a program which seeks to extract water on the Moon.

**About HAKUTO-R (<https://ispace-inc.com/hakuto-r/>)**

HAKUTO-R is a multinational commercial lunar exploration program operated by ispace. It includes ispace's first two lunar missions: Mission 1, a soft lunar landing planned to launch in 2022<sup>3</sup>, and Mission 2, a lunar landing and deployment of a rover planned to launch in 2023<sup>4</sup>. For both missions, the HAKUTO-R lander is planned to launch on SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket. The program aspires to lay the groundwork for high-frequency lunar transportation. Corporate Partners of HAKUTO-R include Japan Airlines, Suzuki Motors, Citizen Watch, Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance, NGK Spark Plug, Takasago Thermal Engineering, Sumitomo Corporation, and Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation and SMBC Nikko Securities Inc. Media Partners for HAKUTO-R include TBS, Asahi Shimbun, and Shogakukan.

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<sup>3</sup> Planned launch schedule as of April 2021.

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