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NATION | P4
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THE VIEWS | P10
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BUSINESS | P6
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TABLOID | P6-7
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Rashid Rover completes a month in space en route to lunar rendezvous

MBRSC team in Dubai prepares for entry, descent and landing phase of the craft

DUBAI
Gulf News Report

UAE's moon-bound Rashid Rover has now spent a month in space and travelled around 1.34 million kilometres, following its successful launch in December 2022 from Cape Canaveral Space Force Station in Florida.

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) yesterday said the lunar rover – designed and built by Emiratis – is on track for its mission.

"The Emirates Lunar Mission (ELM) team has completed 220 minutes of communication with the world's most compact rover. The team has completed all scheduled health assessment and maintenance checks of the rover and its onboard subsystems and instruments. For two weeks after the launch, the rover was powered on for 10 minutes daily, and the team on Earth is now communicating with it once every week," MBRSC said.

During the ongoing four-month cruise phase, the ELM team will communicate with the Rashid Rover for another 150 minutes. The ELM team also noted that the Rashid Rover's subsystems had been activated 17 times since launch. The subsystems were powered on for one hour the first time, followed by 10 minutes of daily activation over the subsequent two weeks. Currently, the rover's subsystems are being powered on once every week for 10 minutes.

The team is now preparing for the entry, descent, and landing (EDL) phase and surface operations. They will conduct 12 simulated mission rehearsals organised at the MBRSC ground station for surface operations before the rover's lunar landing by end-April.

The rehearsals will allow the engineering team to prepare their programmes for execution post the lunar landing while enabling different subsystem teams to sync their work.

The following navigation stage for the HAKUTO-R Mission 1 lunar lander that holds the Rashid Rover includes planned deep space orbital control manoeuvres and successfully targeting the first lunar orbit insertion.

During its mission, Rashid Rover will conduct numerous scientific tests on the surface of the Moon that will contribute to making qualitative developments in the fields of science, communication technologies, and robotics. The impact of these developments will extend beyond the space sector and into various vital sectors in the national and global economy.

■ Rashid Rover is well on track for its mission, Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre updated.