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INDIGENOUSLY
MANUFACTURED
SATELLITE TO BE
LAUNCHED ON
SPACE X ROCKET
LATER THIS YEAR

MBZ-Sat: Region's most powerful Earth observation satellite revealed

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

The Mohammad Bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) yesterday revealed the first look of the fully assembled, one-tonne MBZ-Sat, the region's most powerful Earth observation satellite that will be launched on a SpaceX rocket in the second half of this year.

MBRSC unveiled the advanced imaging satellite, named after President His Highness Shaikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during a media tour of its premises.

The commercial satellite will monitor environmental changes, water quality and assist in agricultural development.

"We expect it to be launched in the second half of the year on a Falcon-9 rideshare mission from the US. Based on the scheduling and our discussions with SpaceX, we will announce the date shortly," said Salem Humaid Al Marri, Director-General of MBRSC.

UAE's biggest telescope

The UAE's fourth Earth observation satellite, MBZ-Sat is designed to be three times more powerful than its predecessor KhalifaSat. It will have the UAE's biggest telescope, with an advanced high-resolution camera that will take images from 500km above Earth.

Announcing that the satellite has been fully assembled, Al Marri said: "We've been working on it since 2020. We've done a lot of development and



We've been working on it since 2020. We've done a lot of work to reach this point today. We have done the manufacturing and the subsystem testing."

Salem Humaid Al Marri
| Director-General of MBRSC

500km

distance above Earth from where MBZ-Sat's camera will capture high-resolution images



Watch: First look of UAE's fully assembled 1-tonne MBZ-Sat satellite



Virendra Saklani/Gulf News

■ The fully assembled MBZ-Sat was revealed to the media for the first time yesterday. It has been designed, developed, tested and assembled at MBRSC, with over 150 Emiratis working on it.

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Final integration

Amer Mohammad Al Sayegh, project manager, MBZ-Sat, said: "We have reached 50 per cent of the final integration and we are hoping that by the middle of this year, the whole satellite will be ready for launch."

MBRSC has actively engaged with regional companies in the

effort to build a local hub for space-related manufacturers, and has partnered with local companies to manufacture and supply MBZ-SAT components.

During the media tour, MBRSC also showcased a gigantic replica of the SpaceX Falcon-9 rocket that was recently moved to its premises.

Al Marri said the 43-metre tall Falcon 9 booster replica was gifted to the MBRSC by SpaceX and the US Pavilion

at Expo 2020 Dubai which first displayed the model during the global fair.

Plans for amphitheatre

Al Marri also announced plans to build an amphitheatre near the replica. "We get a lot of visits from school children who come here. The amphitheatre will hold around 400 people and they can have sessions with astronauts and different people from our team," he added.

LUNAR MISSION

UAE to alter landing site of Rashid Rover 2

DUBAI

BY SAJILA SASEENDRAN
Senior Reporter

The UAE will alter the landing site of its second mission to the Moon's surface, Rashid Rover 2, a senior official revealed yesterday.

Adnan Al Rais, project manager of the Emirates Lunar Mission at MBRSC, said: "We're working on a feasibility study to select the entity that could provide the lander to deliver Rashid Rover 2 to the Moon's surface," he said.

The entities include Japanese company iSpace, which built the Hakuto-R Mission 1 lander that carried Rashid Rover 1. The lander attempted a soft landing on the Moon on April 26, 2023.

The landing site of Rashid Rover 1 on the southeastern outer edge of Mare Frigoris in the far lunar north, was chosen to maintain its flexibility during operations.

Though he did not elaborate on the new landing site, Al Rais said MBRSC will incorporate additional science as it continues the scientific experiments assigned to Rashid Rover 1.