

# [Fire at factory in northwest Iran-ILNA](#)

Author:

Reuters

ID:

1595167830332405900

Sun, 2020-07-19 12:24

A fire broke out at a cellophane factory in northwest Iran on Sunday, the ILNA news agency reported, posting video of thick black smoke rising from the site.

The fire was in the town of Sheikh Hassan in East Azerbaijan province.

There have been several fires and explosions at military, industrial and nuclear sites in Iran since late June.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran](#)

[ILNA](#)

[fire](#)

Iran halts execution of 3 convicted over November protestsIran sends downed Ukrainian plane's black box to France

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# Japan rocket carrying UAE Mars probe ready for Monday launch

Author:

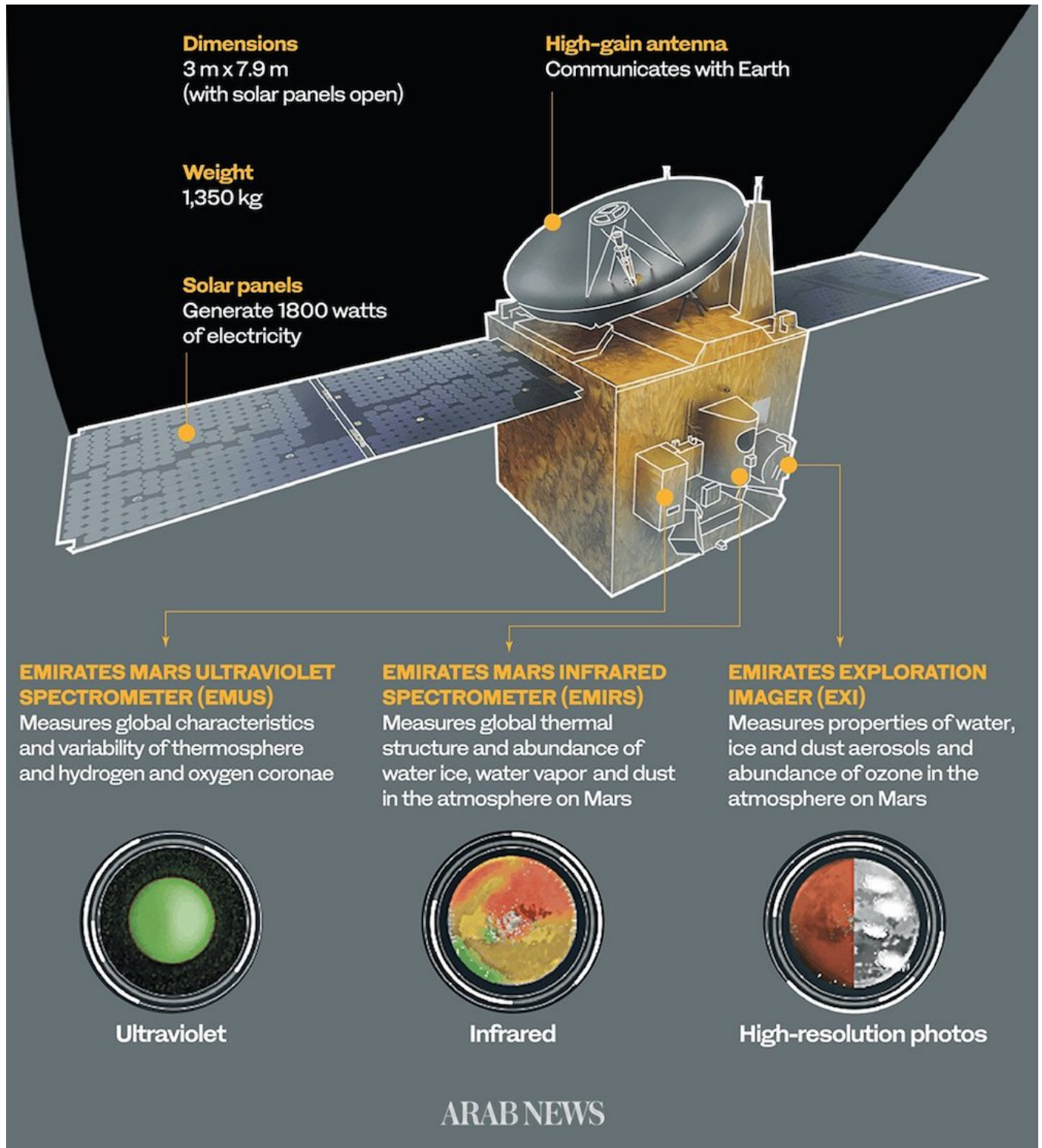
By MARI YAMAGUCHI | AP

ID:

1595158277761736900

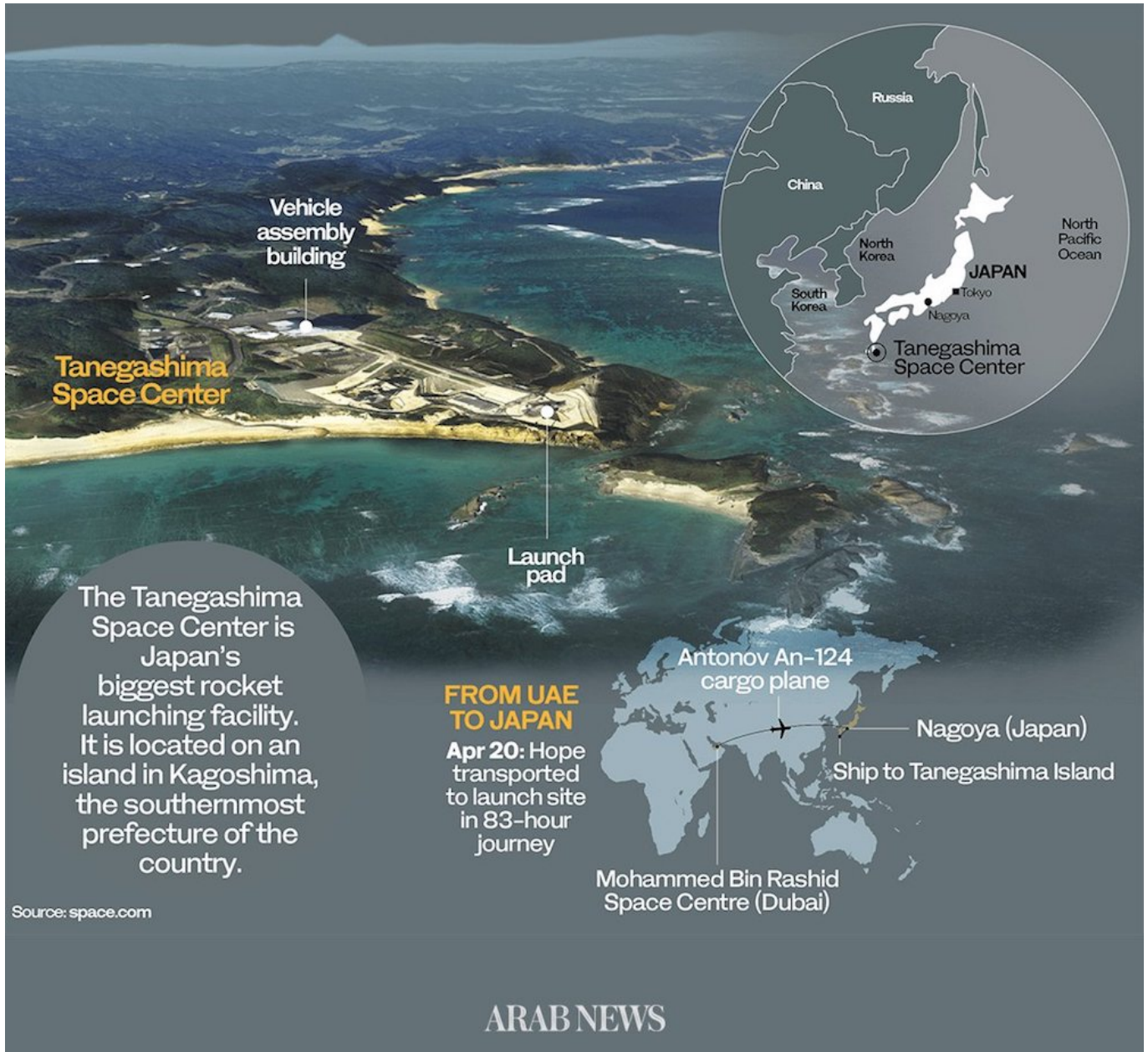
Sun, 2020-07-19 11:13

TOKYO: A Japanese H-IIA rocket carrying a United Arab Emirates Mars spacecraft has been placed on the launch pad for Monday's scheduled liftoff for the Arab world's first interplanetary mission, officials said Sunday. The launch of the orbiter – named Amal, or Hope – from Tanegashima Space Center on a small southern Japanese island was initially scheduled for this past Wednesday, but was delayed due to bad weather in the region.



Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, the provider of the H-IIA rocket, announced Sunday that the launch would proceed at 6:58 a.m. Monday (2158 GMT Sunday). The preparation has been completed, and the rocket is now on the launch pad, Mitsubishi said.

Hope is expected to reach Mars in February 2021, the year the UAE celebrates 50 years since its formation. A successful Hope mission would be a major step for the oil-dependent economy, which is seeking a future in space.



Two other Mars missions are planned in the coming days by the US and China. Japan has its own Martian moon mission planned for 2024. Hope will carry instruments to study the upper atmosphere and monitor climate change on Mars. It is scheduled to circle the red planet for at least two years. The UAE says it will provide a complete view of the Martian atmosphere during different seasons for the first time.

The Hope Probe is ready to launch into space in a few hours..

Watch the launch LIVE: <https://t.co/A0mQfe2Awh>

20th July

01:58:14 AM (UAE Time)

19th July 2020

09:58:14 PM GMT [#HopeMarsMission](https://twitter.com/ZU7T1FtT55) [pic.twitter.com/ZU7T1FtT55](https://twitter.com/ZU7T1FtT55)

– Hope Mars Mission (@HopeMarsMission) [July 19, 2020](https://twitter.com/HopeMarsMission/status/1282111111111111111)

A newcomer in space development, the UAE has so far successfully launched

three observation satellites, but has not gone beyond the Earth's orbit. Omran Sharaf, project director of Emirates Mars Mission, said in a Twitter video message Sunday: "The Emirates' Mars mission is a message of hope to the Arab youth. If a young nation like UAE is able to reach Mars in less than 50 years, then we can do much more as a region."



# When a Saudi went to space

Prince Sultan bin Salman speaks exclusively to Arab News about his 1985 NASA mission and how he became the first Arab, Muslim and royal in space

**Enter**

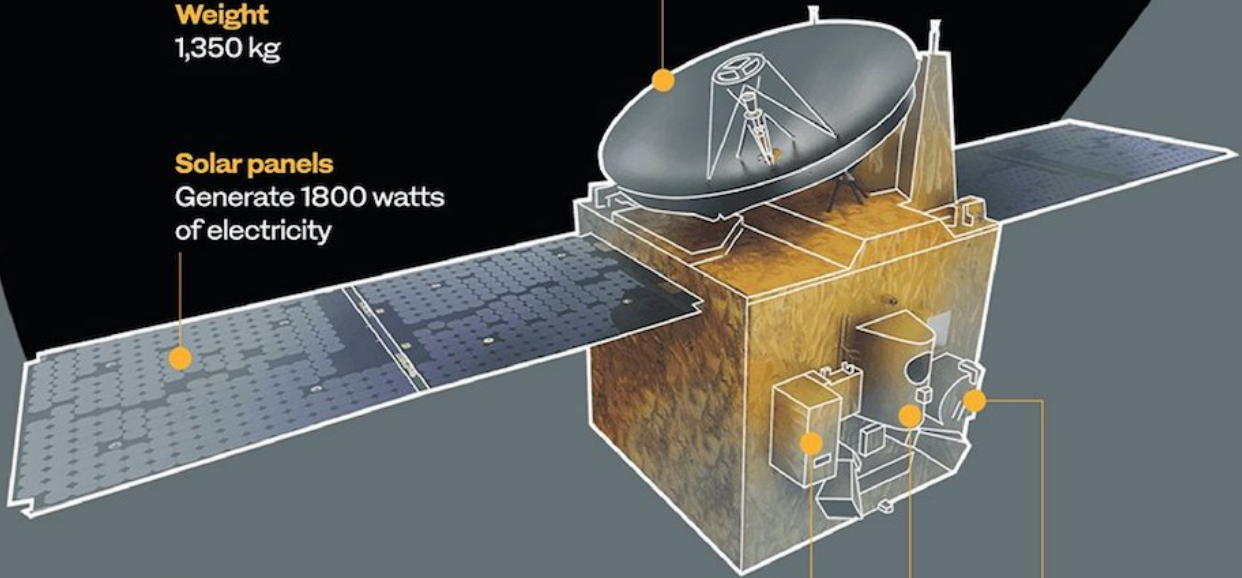


**Dimensions**  
3 m x 7.9 m  
(with solar panels open)

**Weight**  
1,350 kg

**Solar panels**  
Generate 1800 watts  
of electricity

**High-gain antenna**  
Communicates with Earth



**EMIRATES MARS ULTRAVIOLET SPECTROMETER (EMUS)**

Measures global characteristics and variability of thermosphere and hydrogen and oxygen coronae



Ultraviolet

**EMIRATES MARS INFRARED SPECTROMETER (EMIRS)**

Measures global thermal structure and abundance of water ice, water vapor and dust in the atmosphere on Mars



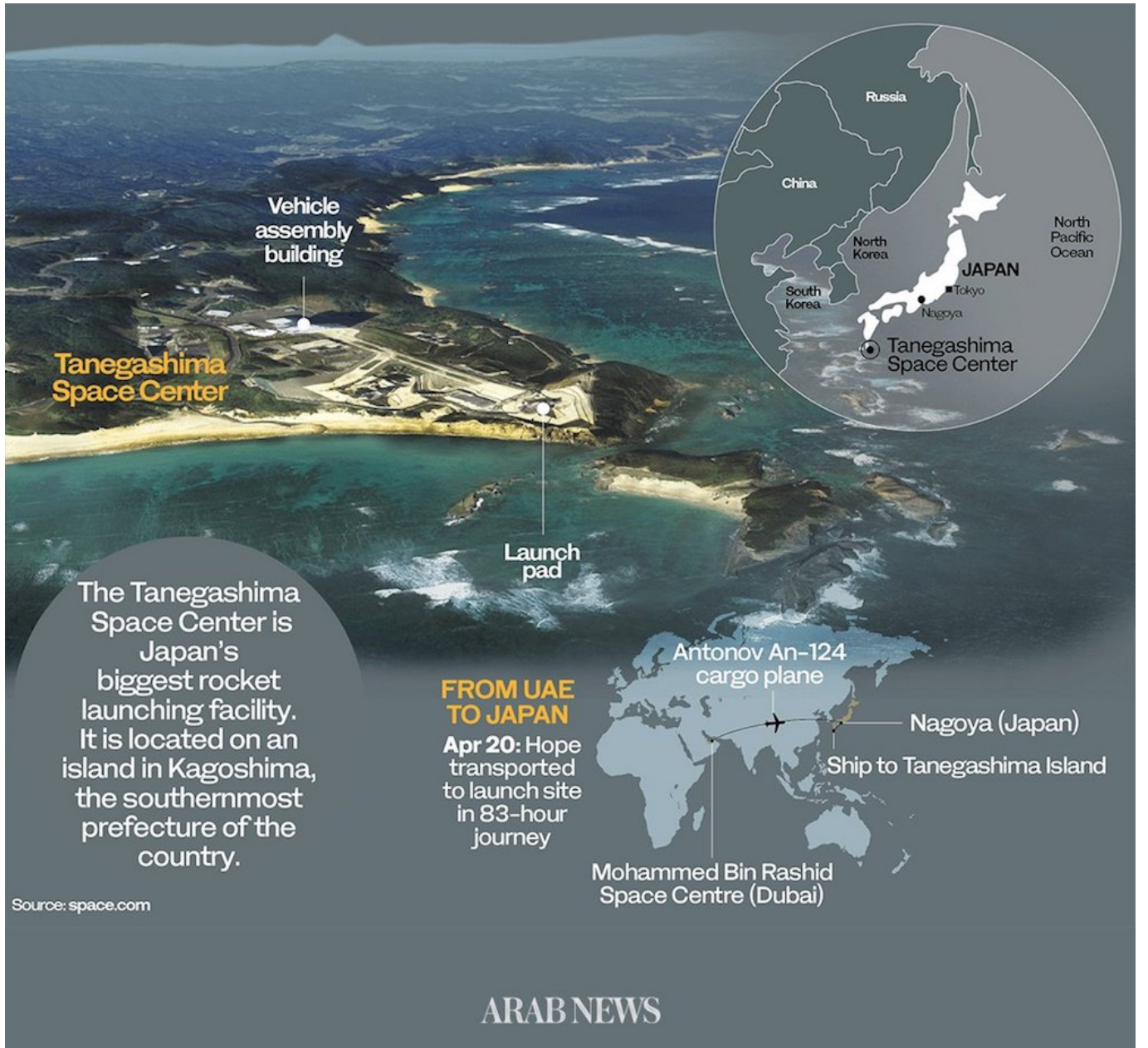
Infrared

**EMIRATES EXPLORATION IMAGER (EXI)**

Measures properties of water, ice and dust aerosols and abundance of ozone in the atmosphere on Mars



High-resolution photos



**Tanegashima Space Center**

Vehicle assembly building

Launch pad

The Tanegashima Space Center is Japan's biggest rocket launching facility. It is located on an island in Kagoshima, the southernmost prefecture of the country.

Source: space.com

**FROM UAE TO JAPAN**

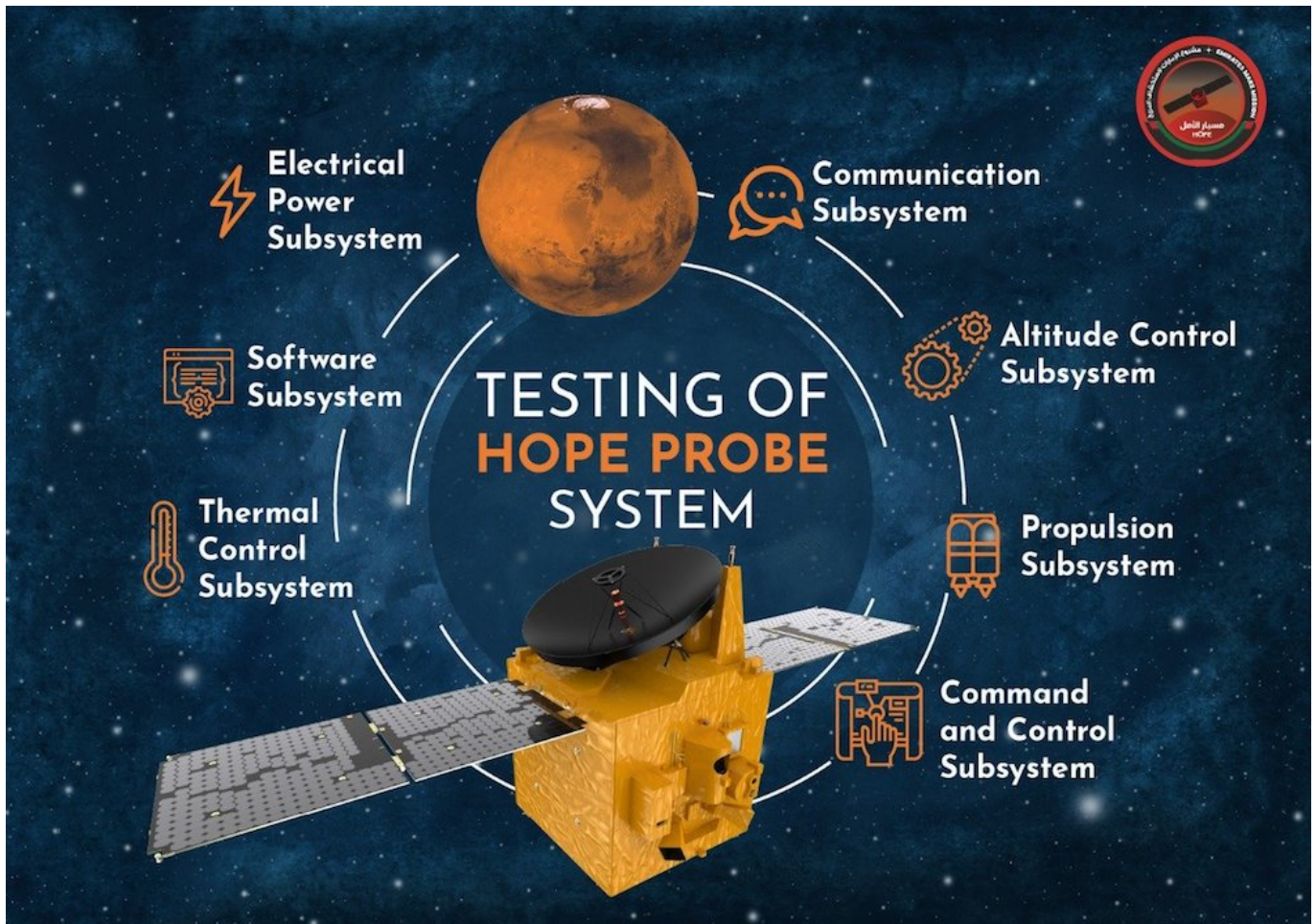
**Apr 20:** Hope transported to launch site in 83-hour journey

Antonov An-124 cargo plane

Nagoya (Japan)

Ship to Tanegashima Island

Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Centre (Dubai)



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Mars](#)

[UAE](#)

[Hope Probe](#)

UAE reschedules Mars mission launch to between July 20 and July 22  
Emirates Mars Mission poised to fulfil Arab hopes and aspirations

## [Yemen seizes boat loaded with weapons in Red Sea](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-07-18 21:47

AL-MUKALLA: Yemen coastguards in the Red Sea have seized a boat loaded with three tons of ammunition, as the country intensifies sea patrols to intercept Iranian weapon shipments to the Houthis.

A local security official said a coast guard vessel on Thursday stopped a boat sailing inside Yemeni waters near Perim Island.

The coastguards who boarded the boat found thousands of ammunition rounds in large plastic bags and unnumbered AK47 assault rifles hidden inside. The official said the three Yemeni crewmen, who come from different Red Sea coastal areas, were arrested.

“They admitted that they were heading to Sudan to sell the ammunition,” the official, who preferred to remain anonymous, told Arab News on Saturday.

He said the three Yemenis were part of a large network involved in smuggling weapons from different countries, including Iran, to Yemen and other places. The official did not say if the seized ammunition and rifles were sent from Iran. “The investigation is still going on,” he added.

In June, coastguards in the Red Sea seized a small boat loaded with dozens of pistols and thousands of rounds. Also that month, five people were arrested after they were found hiding 40 kilos of cocaine in their boat and heading to Houthi-controlled areas.

The Yemeni coast guard authority that fell apart during the Houthi invasion of the country’s coastal areas in early 2015 was later rebuilt by the Saudi-led coalition. Hundreds of soldiers, who were trained inside and outside Yemen, were deployed on fast armed boats along the country’s long coastline in the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea.

For the first time since the beginning of the war, the Yemenis have managed to repel incursions by Eritrean boats and intercept many shipments of weapons and drugs.

“We succeeded because everyone supports us including the Saudi-led coalition, the National Resistance and others. We have now 150 boats,” the officer said, boasting about their achievements.

The Saudi-led coalition and Yemen’s internationally-recognized government have accused the Iranian regime of sending advanced weapons to the Houthis that resupplied their arsenal depleted by fighting and massive aerial bombardment.

In June, the Saudi-led coalition announced the seizure of two Iranian weapon shipments heading to the Houthis.

In a separate development the Saudi ambassador to Yemen, Mohammed Al-Jaber, said that the separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) had returned the seized money to the central bank in Aden after the government agreed to pay military and security forces following a successful Saudi mediation.

“Saudi Arabia’s continuous efforts, through direct meetings between the Govt of Yemen and the STC, to resolve issues of CBY funds and salary payments and implement the Riyadh Agreement, have succeeded due to a consensus among the two parties on alleviating suffering in Yemen,” Al-Jaber tweeted on Friday.

Government and STC officials are engaged in extensive talks in Riyadh, brokered by Saudi Arabia, to discuss ending hostilities in southern Yemen and putting into place the Riyadh Agreement.

In northern Yemen the Defense Ministry said that government forces, backed by Saudi-led coalition warplanes, assaulted Houthis in Qania in the central province of Al-Bayda.



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Tags:

[Yemen](#)

[Red Sea](#)

Yemeni government rejects latest UN peace plan draft Red Sea Project identifies optimum location for luxury resort's 'overwater assets'

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## [Egyptian rail on track as first Russian trains arrive](#)

Author:

Sat, 2020-07-18 21:47

CAIRO: The Egyptian Railway Authority (ERA) has taken delivery of three new Russian trains which will join the existing Egyptian fleet servicing the governorates of Cairo, Alexandria, Assuit and Luxor.

The trains were decorated with flowers, Egyptian flags and pictures of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and the Minister of Transport, Kamel El-Wazir.

The delivery is the first of its type from Russia, following an ERA contract with Russian company Transmashholding, the country's largest locomotive and rail equipment manufacturer. The contract involves building and supplying 1,300 train carriages, some with air-conditioning capabilities.

The first batch of 33 railroad cars arrived recently. 22 arrived several days ago and 10 came at the end of last week. A prototype vehicle is being tested without passengers to ensure the safety of the train cars before the start of full commercial operation.

The 33 cars form three trains and will continue to operate without passengers until the beginning of August. The vehicles will operate on a daily basis until they begin to accept passengers.

The new trains will operate on the main lines in lower and upper Egypt and will replace some railroad cars in use. They are scheduled to move to branch lines used to transport passengers between governorates and suburbs.

As of next month, Egypt is scheduled to receive 35 new railroad cars a month. The contract states that 1,300 railroad cars will be delivered over a 40-month period.

The contract includes the manufacturing of 800 air-conditioned vehicles, 500 of which are third-class. The deal is the largest in the history of the ERA.

The 500 coaches also include 180 second-class air-conditioned cars, 90 first-class air-conditioned cars and 30 which include buffet services. A further 500 third-class carriages include advanced ventilation methods.

Tickets for new carriages will be 20 to 30 percent higher than those of regular services. The contract is estimated to cost over €1 billion (\$1.1 billion), funded by a joint soft loan from the EximBank of Russia and the Hungarian EximBank.

The ERA also delivered a number of newly developed carriages built in the SEMAF factory, which is part of the Arab Organization for Manufacturing.

The trains will be sent to cities including Alexandria, Zagazig, Mansoura, Tanta, Minya, Assiut, Sohag, Luxor and Aswan. The move is intended to demonstrate the willingness of the Ministry of Transportation to put passengers first.

Kamel El-Wazir, the transport minister, visited Ramses Station in downtown Cairo to inspect the new trains and oversee preparations for their operation. The tour included the new Russian trains and those refurbished in Egypt.

El-Wazir said in December last year that by June 30, Egyptian railways would "see new life," with new carriages and coaches helping to reduce passenger congestion.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[EGYPTIAN RAILWAY](#)

Egypt resumes flights to 14 international destinations, including Paris, New York and Sharjah  
How technology is keeping elderly Egyptians safe during coronavirus crisis

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## [African mini-summit on Renaissance Dam slated for Tuesday](#)

Author:

Zaynab Khojji

ID:

1595096946987967300

Sat, 2020-07-18 21:46

CAIRO: Sudan has confirmed that its Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok has received an invitation from the chair of the African Union (AU), the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, to participate in a mini-African summit on Tuesday to discuss the Renaissance Dam project. Egypt and Ethiopia have not announced whether they will participate.

Official Egyptian sources told Arab News that Egypt had received an invitation to hold the mini-summit in the presence of Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi and the prime ministers of Egypt and Sudan in a phone

call between the president and Ramaphosa.

El-Sisi reportedly rejected any unilateral measures that would harm Egypt's rights to the waters of the Nile, and called for a comprehensive legal agreement between all parties involved in the operation of the dam.

Ramaphosa praised what he said was the constructive approach taken by Egypt during the recent round of negotiations on the dam under the auspices of the AU, which, he added, reflected Egypt's sincere will to reach a solution to the crisis.

The dam, which sits on the Nile's main tributary, the Blue Nile, is upstream of Egypt and has the potential to control the flow of water that the country almost entirely relies on.

It also will be, when fully operational, the largest hydro-electric plant in Africa, and is projected to provide power to 65 million Ethiopians, who currently lack a regular electricity supply.

Sudan could also be affected by the dam and is playing a mediating role.

Previous rounds of negotiations between Sudan, Egypt and Ethiopia have failed to overcome the points of disagreement in the legal and technical aspects of the dam, and have raised fears concerning its impact on the water supply downstream.

Cairo and Khartoum are seeking to reach a legally binding agreement on the rules for filling and operating the dam before Addis Ababa begins filling the reservoir. Egypt and Sudan have repeatedly said they would reject any unilateral Ethiopian measures before a comprehensive agreement on the points of disagreement was reached.

The regional director of water resources at the Center for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe, Khaled Abu Zaid, said he believed that if Egypt attended the African mini-summit, it would be beneficial.

"Reaching a solution in the Renaissance Dam negotiations is easy, but Ethiopia continues to delay finding a solution. The biggest impediment is the filling and operating rules of the dam," Abu Zaid said.

He added that the livestock of Ethiopia consumes more water than the total water share of Egypt and Sudan combined. Any disruption in the drainage of the dam, or the occurrence of a collapse, would seriously harm Sudan first, then Egypt, Abu Zaid said.

The political director of EXX Africa, Robert Besseling, told Bloomberg:

"There is no urgent danger forcing Egypt to respond in a more aggressive way today because it will take the Renaissance Dam reservoir over five years to fill up. The risk for Egypt will start two years from now when its water flow weakens."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Grand Renaissance Dam](#)

[Ethiopia](#)

[Sudan](#)

[Egypt](#)

Sudan says Ethiopia denies filling the Renaissance dam reservoir  
Egypt weighing possibility of mini-African summit on Renaissance Dam crisis