

Japan firm signs with SpaceX for lunar missions

September 26 2018



The Japanese firm hopes to send two missions to the moon

A Japanese start-up is to send spacecraft to the moon in a deal signed with Elon Musk's SpaceX, the Tokyo-based firm said Wednesday.

Private lunar exploration company ispace said it would blast a lander and rovers towards the moon on a SpaceX rocket on two separate missions.

The spaceware will first orbit the moon in mid-2020, followed by a moon landing attempt set for mid-2021.

It comes a week after SpaceX confirmed Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa will be the first man to fly around the [moon](#) on a SpaceX rocket as early as 2023.

"We share the vision with SpaceX of enabling humans to live in space, so we're very glad they will join us in this first step of our journey," ispace CEO Takeshi Hakamada said in a statement.

Hakamada also told reporters the company chose SpaceX as it is "highly credible" and "capable".

SpaceX President Gwynne Shotwell said in a statement that the company is "proud to have been selected by ispace to launch their first lunar missions".

Hakamada said he could not reveal costs for lunar programmes.

The company has already collected nearly \$95 million from investors.

ispace, which now has more than 60 employees, competed as one of five finalists in the Google Lunar XPrize, which offered \$30 million in prizes but ended with no winner.

© 2018 AFP

Citation: Japan firm signs with SpaceX for lunar missions (2018, September 26) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2018-09-japan-firm-spacex-lunar-missions.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.