

Indonesia wants to lure SpaceX to build rocket launch site

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Tesla and SpaceX boss Elon Musk hopes to be able to one day launch several space ships to Mars

Indonesia has invited Tesla boss Elon Musk to build a launch site for his SpaceX's rocket in the Southeast Asian country, pointing out the benefits

of a location next to the equator, officials said.

"Indonesia has several areas located near to the equator," Jodi Mahardi, spokesman of Coordinating Maritime Affairs and Investment Ministry, told AFP on Monday.

"The cost of SpaceX's [rocket launch](#) will be lower because its satellite won't need any manoeuvring to adjust its orbit to the equator," he added.

President Joko Widodo officially extended the invitation to the world's second-richest person in a [telephone conversation](#) on Friday.

Indonesia's [space agency](#) announced last year a plan to build its first spaceport on the island of Biak, off the north coast of the island of New Guinea and has been in talks with foreign partners.

SpaceX last week launched a prototype Starship [rocket](#) from Texas which it hopes will be used for Mars missions. The rocket crashed on landing but Musk was upbeat, saying they got all the data they needed from the experimental flight.

Musk and Widodo, along with Coordinating Minister for Maritime Affairs and Investment Luhut B. Pandjaitan, also discussed investment opportunities for Tesla in Indonesia, according to a press statement.

The pioneering electric car company is reportedly eyeing Indonesia's large nickel reserves, a key component for its batteries.

"Tesla CEO Elon Musk responded to the invitation of Indonesian President Joko Widodo by planning to send his team to Indonesia in January 2021 to explore all the opportunities for this collaboration," the ministry statement said.

However, Mahardi said no exact date had been confirmed.

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