

US Moon lander's battery likely has hours left: company

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Intuitive Machines said the images captured during the Odysseus lander's descent represent the 'closest observations of any spaceflight mission to the south pole region of the Moon'

An American lunar lander that tipped over during its historic touchdown last week likely only has hours left until its battery runs out, the private company operating it said Tuesday.

The uncrewed *Odysseus*, built by Houston-based Intuitive Machines, made the first return by a US craft to the Moon in five decades—and the first such successful mission by the private sector.

But one of the lander's legs caught on the surface as it came down near the Moon's south pole, making it pitch over and come to rest on its side.

The mission, partially financed by NASA, was originally projected to last around seven days.

"Flight Controllers continue to communicate with *Odysseus*. This morning, *Odysseus* efficiently sent payload science data and imagery in furtherance of the Company's [mission objectives](#)," Intuitive Machines said Tuesday in a post on X, formerly Twitter.

"Flight controllers are working on final determination of battery life on the lander, which may continue up to an additional 10-20 hours," the update said.

Intuitive Machines on Monday said it intended to "collect data" from *Odysseus* "until the lander's solar panels are no longer exposed to light."

NASA is planning to return astronauts to the Moon later this decade, and paid Intuitive Machines around \$120 million for the mission, as part of a new initiative to delegate cargo missions to the private sector and stimulate a "lunar economy."

Odysseus carries a suite of NASA instruments designed to improve scientific understanding of the lunar south pole, where the [space agency](#)

plans to send astronauts under its Artemis program later this decade.

Unlike during the US space agency's Apollo missions, the plan is to build long-term habitats, harvesting polar ice for drinking water and for rocket fuel for onward missions to Mars.

The company also published a new photo taken by the probe during its descent, some 30 meters (100 feet) above the Moon's surface.

"The images included here are the closest observations of any spaceflight mission to the south pole region of the Moon," the company said.

Intuitive Machines joined an exclusive club of five countries that have achieved soft lunar landings: the Soviet Union, the United States, China, India and Japan. Three prior private attempts failed, including by another American company, Astrobotic, last month.

The Japanese space agency landed a craft on the Moon last month, but it also came down on its side.

However, JAXA on Monday announced it was able to wake up the SLIM lander following the lunar night, which lasts around two Earth weeks.

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