

SPACEX ASTRONAUT CAPSULE LAUNCHED ON ISS TEST MISSION

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

This handout photo released NASA shows a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket with the company's Crew Dragon spacecraft onboard is seen on the launch pad at Launch Complex 39A as preparations continue for the Demo-1 mission on March 1, 2019 at the Kennedy Space Center in Florida. | Photo Credit: [JOEL KOWSKY](#)

SpaceX celebrated the successful launch on Saturday of a new astronaut capsule on a week-long round trip to the International Space Station — a key step towards resuming manned space flights from U.S. soil after an eight-year break.

This time around, the only occupant on board SpaceX's Crew Dragon capsule was a dummy named Ripley — but NASA plans to put two astronauts aboard in July, although that date could be delayed.

The new capsule blasted off aboard the Falcon 9 rocket built by SpaceX — run by billionaire Elon Musk — at 2:49 a.m. (0749 GMT) from the Kennedy Space Center, Florida, lighting up the coastline.

The first and second stages separated without incident, placing Dragon in the Earth's orbit 11 minutes after take-off.

Every successful stage of the mission — whose planning suffered three-year delays — triggered cheers at the firm's headquarters and at the Kennedy Space Center.

"I'm a little emotionally exhausted, because that was super stressful but it worked, so far," Mr. Musk told a late-night press conference an hour later.

"It's been 17 years, we still haven't launched anyone yet, but hopefully we will later this year."

The next tricky step for the capsule will be docking at the ISS on Sunday at around 1100 GMT, with a return to Earth scheduled for next Friday.

It is to splash down in the Atlantic Ocean, and then return to Cape Canaveral. The mission aims to test the vessel's reliability and safety in real-life conditions.

Ripley — nicknamed in honour of the character played by Sigourney Weaver in the *Alien* movies — is fitted with monitors to test the forces that future astronauts will be subjected to on takeoff and when they return to the Earth's atmosphere and then land in the Atlantic, braked by giant parachutes.

The mission's successful start provided some immediate reassurance.

At the press conference, Mr. Musk asked the two NASA astronauts slated to fly in Dragon: "You guys think it's a good vehicle?"

They both nodded. "Seeing a success like this, that really gives us a lot confidence in the future," said one of them, Bob Behnken.

In another success, the rocket's first stage returned to Earth, landing on a platform 500 km off the Florida coast in the Atlantic. It marks the 35th such recovery by SpaceX.

"Today represents a new era in space flight" said Jim Bridenstine, head of the US space agency who sees the launch as a step toward the privatization of low Earth orbit.

After the shuttle programme was shut down in July 2011 following a 30-year run, NASA began outsourcing the logistics of its space missions. It pays Russia to get its people up to the ISS orbiting research facility at a cost of \$82 million per head for a round trip.

In 2014, the U.S. space agency awarded contracts to SpaceX and Boeing for them to take over this task.

Please enter a valid email address.

For long, most people were under the assumption that cigarette filters are biodegradable however, cellulose acetate fibre - the predominant filter material - does not readily biodegrade due to the acetyl groups on the cellulose backbone

A living member of species of tortoise not seen in more than 110 years and feared to be extinct has been found in a remote part of the Galapagos

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS