

# SpaceX ends test flight with splashdown

By **MARCIA DUNN**  
Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. — SpaceX's swanky new crew capsule returned from the International Space Station to an old-fashioned splashdown in the Atlantic today, successfully ending a test flight that could lead to astronaut rides later this year.

The Dragon capsule undocked from the orbiting lab early today. Six hours later, the capsule carrying a test dummy parachuted into the ocean, a couple hundred miles off the Florida coast.

It was the final hurdle for the six-day demo, a critical prelude to SpaceX's first flight with astronauts as early as summer. While improvements still need to be made, the company aims to fly NASA astronauts Bob Behnken and Doug Hurley on the next test flight.

Astronauts have not launched from Florida for eight years, and NASA is eager to end the drought and reduce its costly dependence on Russia for space station trips.



SpaceX's Dragon capsule splashes into the Atlantic ocean off the Florida coast.

SpaceX employees cheered and applauded at company headquarters near Los Angeles when the Dragon's red and white parachutes popped open. NASA televised the descent live, the dramatic views coming from a plane. The crowd went wild once the capsule splashed down and was seen

floating upright. "Just amazing. I can't believe how well the whole mission has gone" with all major milestones met, said Benji Reed, SpaceX's director of crew mission management.

It was the first time in 50 years that a capsule designed for astronauts returned from

space by plopping into the Atlantic. Apollo 9 — which orbited Earth in preparation for the moon landings — splashed down near the Bahamas on March 13, 1969.

Space station astronauts have been stuck riding Russian rockets since NASA's shuttles retired in

2011. NASA is counting on SpaceX and Boeing to start launching astronauts this year. SpaceX — which has been delivering station cargo for years — is shooting for summer.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine was ecstatic following splashdown. All this is "leading to a day where we are launching American astronauts on American rockets from American soil," he said.

A pair of recovery ships was stationed in the Atlantic well before splashdown and quickly moved in, lifting the capsule from the water within an hour. The capsule is expected at Port Canaveral on Saturday night. Splashdown will occur much closer to shore once astronauts start flying.

Astronaut Shane Kimbrough, part of the recovery team, said it was incredible watching the splashdown up close. The capsule had brown scorch marks from top to bottom, but otherwise looked fine.

Canadian space station astronaut David Saint-

Jacques was the first to enter the Dragon capsule and the last to leave this week. He found it "very slick" and called it business class.

Next up is Boeing. Boeing plans to launch its Starliner capsule without a crew as early as next month and with astronauts possibly in August. The Starliner is designed to land on land — in the U.S. Southwest.

NASA awarded the first contracts in 2014 to SpaceX and Boeing, now totaling about \$8 billion. This first SpaceX test flight opens a new era, Bridenstine said, with new technology and new business approaches.

SpaceX acknowledges some capsule systems need more work before Behnken and Hurley climb aboard for liftoff, as early as July. Vibration, acoustic and other measurements were taken throughout the recently completed flight, not only of the capsule but also the mannequin — named Ripley after the lead character in the "Alien" films — which was strapped into one of the four seats.

## WORLD IN BRIEF

Associated Press

### House broadly condemns hate after emotional anti-Semitism dispute

WASHINGTON — Divided in debate but mostly united in a final vote, the House passed a resolution condemning anti-Semitism and other bigotry Thursday, with Democrats trying to push past a dispute that has overwhelmed their agenda and exposed fault lines that could shadow them through next year's elections.

The one-sided 407-23 vote belied the emotional infighting over how to respond to freshman Rep. Ilhan Omar's recent comments suggesting House supporters of Israel have dual allegiances. For days, Democrats wrestled with whether or how to punish the lawmaker, arguing over whether Omar, one of two Muslim women in Congress, should be singled out, what other types of bias should be decried in the text and whether the party would tolerate dissenting views on Israel.

Republicans generally joined in the favorable vote, though nearly two-dozen opposed the measure, one calling it a "sham."

Generational as well as ideological, the argument was fueled in part by young, liberal lawmakers — and voters — who have become a face of the newly empowered Democratic majority in the House. These lawmakers are critical of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government, rejecting the conservative leader's approach to Palestinians and other issues.

The resolution approved Thursday condemns anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim discrimination and bigotry against minorities "as hateful expressions of intolerance."

### Border agency watchdog looking into database on journalists and 'instigators'

SAN DIEGO — The U.S. government kept a database on journalists, activists, orga-

nizers and "instigators" during an investigation into last year's migrant caravan, infuriating civil liberties and media groups who called it a blatant violation of free speech rights.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection compiled information on dozens of people that included passport and social media photos, dates of birth, personal information and their suspected role in the caravan. Some of the people on the list were denied entry into Mexico and had their passports flagged or visas revoked.

On Thursday, officials said the department's independent watchdog was looking into the database, and stressed that journalists were not targeted based on their occupation or reporting.

The database was revealed Wednesday by the San Diego TV station KNSD. People listed in the documents provided to the station included 10 journalists, many of whom are U.S. citizens, and an American attorney. There were several dozen people in all on the list, including many labeled as "instigators."

The database was denounced by a variety of groups, including the Committee to Protect Journalists, American Civil Liberties Union, Amnesty International and the Southern Poverty Law Center.

### Massive Venezuela power outage raises tensions amid national political crisis

CARACAS, Venezuela — Hospitals struggled to get backup generators running, businesses shuttered and families anxiously tried to contact loved ones amid Venezuela's worst-ever power outage today, raising tensions in a country already on edge from ongoing political turmoil.

Much of the nation of 31 million people was still without electricity as the blackout stretched into a second day and patience began to wear thin.

"This has never happened before," a frustrated Orlando Roa, 54, said, decrying President Nicolas Maduro's administration for failing to maintain the electrical system and letting qualified engineers leave the country.

"This is the fault of the government."

Maduro ordered schools and all government entities closed and told businesses not to open to facilitate work crews trying to restore power.

Venezuela's electrical system was once the envy of Latin America but it has fallen into disrepair after years of poor maintenance and mismanagement. High-ranking officials have been accused in U.S. court proceedings of looting government money earmarked for the electrical system.

### Manafort gets 47 months for fraud, judge cites mostly 'blameless' life

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort has been sentenced to nearly four years in prison for tax and bank fraud related to his work advising Ukrainian politicians, much less than what was called for under sentencing guidelines.

Manafort, sitting in a wheelchair as he

deals with complications from gout, had no visible reaction as he heard the 47-month sentence. While that was the longest sentence to date to come from special counsel Robert Mueller's probe, it could have been much worse. Sentencing guidelines called for a 20-year term, effectively a lifetime sentence for the 69-year-old.

Judge T.S. Ellis III, discussing character reference letters submitted by Manafort's friends and family, said Manafort had lived an "otherwise blameless life."

Manafort has been jailed since June, so he will receive credit for the nine months he has already served. He still faces the possibility of additional time from his sentencing in a separate case in the District of Columbia, where he pleaded guilty to charges related to illegal lobbying.

Manafort steered Donald Trump's election efforts during crucial months of the 2016 campaign as Russia sought to meddle in the election through hacking of Democratic email accounts. He was among the first Trump associates charged in the Mueller investigation and has been a high-profile defendant.

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