

# Myanmar mulling satellite launch: Japan company

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Myanmar is looking at launching a small Earth-observation satellite with Japanese aid, a company official said Thursday, as the country comes in from the cold after decades of isolation.

Japan's Marubeni Aerospace Corp. has been conducting a feasibility study for the Myanmar government this year on the satellite launch, a company official said.

He added that Myanmar's Minister for Transport Nyan Tun Aung met with a regional representative of Marubeni Corp., the aerospace firm's parent, on Wednesday as they prepared to hold a workshop on the plan in the second week of October.

"We are in the process of assessing if the launch will be valuable for Myanmar. We have yet to draw up a report," the official said. "It may take a long time before a decision is made."

He added that the [satellite launch](#) was one of a number of possible projects that might be funded through official Japanese loans.

If the [launch](#) goes ahead, the satellite will be used by the [meteorology](#) and [hydrology](#) department of Myanmar's transport ministry, according to the country's official media.

In April, Japan announced it would forgive about \$3.7 billion of Myanmar's debt and resume suspended aid as Japanese firms continue a

push into the country.

Myanmar has largely untapped natural resources, including minerals, metals and [fossil fuels](#), and a potentially huge tourism sector, although challenges abound with the rule of law weakly enforced and a major infrastructure deficit.

The junta that ran the country for decades handed power to a quasi-civilian regime—albeit dominated by former soldiers—in a bloodless political transition in March 2011.

A series of reforms ensued that have been praised by the opposition and the West, with biting sanctions that had once stymied the country gradually being relaxed.

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