

After two delays, SpaceX counts down to satellite launch (Update)

December 3 2013



SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket is readied on October 7, 2012 for an evening launch from Cape Canaveral, Florida

Private US company SpaceX was Tuesday poised for a third attempt to launch its first commercial satellite, after repairs were made to the Falcon 9 rocket.

The launch window opens at 5:41 pm (2241 GMT) and goes until 7:07

pm (0007 GMT) from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida, SpaceX said in a statement.

The rocket's cargo is a telecommunications satellite for the Luxembourg company SES, which until now has used European Ariane rockets or the Russian Proton for its satellite launches.

"SES-8 will be SpaceX's first launch to a geostationary transfer orbit—80,000 kilometers (50,000 miles) from Earth—and most challenging mission to date," the company said on Twitter.

The SES-8 satellite is due to provide television, cable TV and other services to countries including China, India and Vietnam. It should reach orbit 33 minutes after launch.

SpaceX, owned by Internet entrepreneur Elon Musk, is eager to get into the commercial satellite launch business, estimated to be worth \$190 billion a year.

The launch is the first using an improved version of the Falcon 9 after a test flight in California.

A delay on Thursday was blamed on unexpected technical problems with the rocket's fuel system. Its first attempt at launch was also put off on Monday of last week.

"All known rocket anomalies have been resolved," SpaceX said late Monday.

The Falcon 9 has already succeeded in sending its Dragon capsules to the International Space Station under a contract with the US space agency, NASA.

The Dragon capsule takes cargo into space and brings back material from scientific experiments.

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