

Russia to make fresh attempt to launch new rocket

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Russia's Soyuz TMA-13M spacecraft blasts off from the launch pad at the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome early on May 29, 2014

Russia will on Wednesday attempt to launch its newest rocket after an embarrassing last-minute glitch forced authorities to abort the initial test last week.

"A new attempt to [launch](#) the Angara rocket will take place on July 9,"

the Interfax news agency reported Saturday, citing a source close to the state commission deciding on the issue.

Designed to succeed Proton and other Soviet-era launchers, the Angara is billed as the first rocket to have been completely built after the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It was scheduled to blast off from Plesetsk in northern Russia on June 27 when officials reported a sudden automatic launch abort, footage of which was broadcast on national television.

President Vladimir Putin was overseeing the planned launch via live linkup.

The mishap was the latest blow to the Russian government's plans to overhaul a space programme famed for having sent the first man into space in 1961 and launching the first sputnik satellite four years earlier.

In May a Proton launcher carrying an advanced communication satellite fell back to Earth just minutes after lift-off.

Last July, an unmanned Proton carrier rocket exploded on takeoff at the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, releasing hundreds of tons of toxic fuel in spectacular images caught on live television.

Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev has called the Angara a "strategically important" [rocket](#) that will rival the world's best spacecraft.

Its development was ordered by the then president Boris Yeltsin in the early 1990s and has cost "tens of billions of dollars", according to the Centre for Analysis of World Arms Trade.

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