

Japan to launch new spy satellite

January 30 2015

Japan's government said it will launch a back-up spy satellite on Sunday, after cancelling an earlier lift-off due to bad weather.

Tokyo put spy satellites into operation in the early 2000s after its elusive neighbour North Korea fired a mid-range ballistic missile over the Japanese mainland and into the western Pacific in 1998.

Four Japanese intelligence satellites are currently in orbit—two optical satellites and two radar satellites.

The backup satellite will supplement the two radar satellites, a government official said Friday.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries delayed the planned Thursday launch of the H-2A rocket from the Tanegashima Space Center in southwestern Japan.

They said it was due to the possible presence of lightning during lift-off.

The new launch is set for 10:21 am (0121 GMT) on Sunday, JAXA and Mitsubishi Heavy said, adding that it could be postponed again "depending on weather conditions".

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