

China heavy-lift carrier rocket launch fails: state media

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China on Sunday announced the launch of a powerful rocket designed to carry communication satellites into orbit had been "unsuccessful", in a glitch for the country's ambitious space programme.

The Long March-5 Y2, Beijing's second heavy-lift rocket, blasted off at 7:23 pm (1123 GMT) Sunday from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in the tropical island province of Hainan

"Abnormity was detected during the flight of the rocket," the Xinhua news agency reported.

"Further investigation will be carried out," the report added, without giving any further details.

Capable of carrying up to 25 tonnes, the Long March-5 Y2 had taken off with the Shijian-18 experimental communications satellite (7.5 tonnes), which it was supposed to put into orbit.

It said the satellite will operate on [geosynchronous orbit](#) and provide communications services over China's territory—boosting internet access and providing access to more television channels.

China successfully launched the Long March-5 from the same Wenchang center in November 2016, which it said at the time was the most powerful launcher it had yet developed.

Beijing sees its multi-billion-dollar space programme as a symbol of its rise and of the Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the once poverty-stricken nation.

Last month it successfully launched the Long March-4B, its first X-ray space telescope to study black holes, pulsars and [gamma-ray bursts](#).

And in April, the country's first cargo spacecraft completed its docking with an orbiting space lab—a key development toward China's goal of having its own crewed space station by 2022.

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