

Iran to launch observation satellite in 'coming days'

February 1 2020

Iran is preparing to launch a new scientific observation satellite in the "coming days", the head of the country's national space agency told AFP on Saturday.

Manufacture of the Zafar (Victory in Farsi) [satellite](#) "began three years ago with the participation of 80 Iranian scientists," said Morteza Berari, without giving a date for the launch.

The 113-kilogram satellite will be launched by a Simorgh rocket 530 kilometres (329 miles) above the Earth, where it will make 15 orbits daily, said Berari.

The satellite was designed to remain operational for "more than 18 months", he added.

Its "primary mission" will be collecting imagery, said Berari, who said Iran needed such data to study earthquakes, prevent [natural disasters](#) and develop its agriculture.

"It will be a new step for our country," said Berari, noting that Iran had previously managed to place a satellite into orbit 250 km (155 miles) above the Earth.

While the Islamic republic's satellite programme has concerned some Western countries, Berari said Iran advocates for the "peaceful use of outer [space](#)".

"All our activities in the domain of outer space are transparent," he said.

The Iranian Space Agency hopes to construct five more satellites before March 2021, Berari added.

In January 2019, Tehran announced that its Payam (Message in Farsi) satellite had failed to reach orbit, after authorities said they launched it to collect data on environmental change in Iran.

The launch of its carrier rocket was preceded by warnings from Washington, which described it as a "provocation" and a violation of a 2015 UN Security Council resolution which endorsed an international accord on curbing Tehran's nuclear programme.

Resolution 2231 called on Iran to refrain from any activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Iran maintains it has no intention of acquiring nuclear weapons, and says its aerospace activities are peaceful and do not violate the security council resolution.

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