

NASA's newest X-ray telescope rockets into orbit

December 9 2021, by Marcia Dunn



Photographers follow a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket during a time exposure as it lifts off from Launch Complex 39A at the Kennedy Space Center in Cape Canaveral, Fla., Thursday, Dec. 9, 2021. The Falcon 9 will deploy into orbit NASA's Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer (IXPE) spacecraft, an X-ray astronomy mission to study black holes and neutron stars. Credit: AP Photo/John Raoux

NASA's newest X-ray observatory rocketed into orbit Thursday to shed light on exploded stars, black holes and other violent high-energy events unfolding in the universe.

SpaceX launched the spacecraft on its \$214 million mission from Kennedy Space Center. It's called IXPE, short for Imaging X-ray Polarization Explorer.

Scientists said the observatory—actually three telescopes in one—will unveil the most dramatic and extreme parts of the universe as never before.

"IXPE is going to open a new window on the X-ray sky," Brian Ramsey, NASA's deputy principal scientist, said this week.

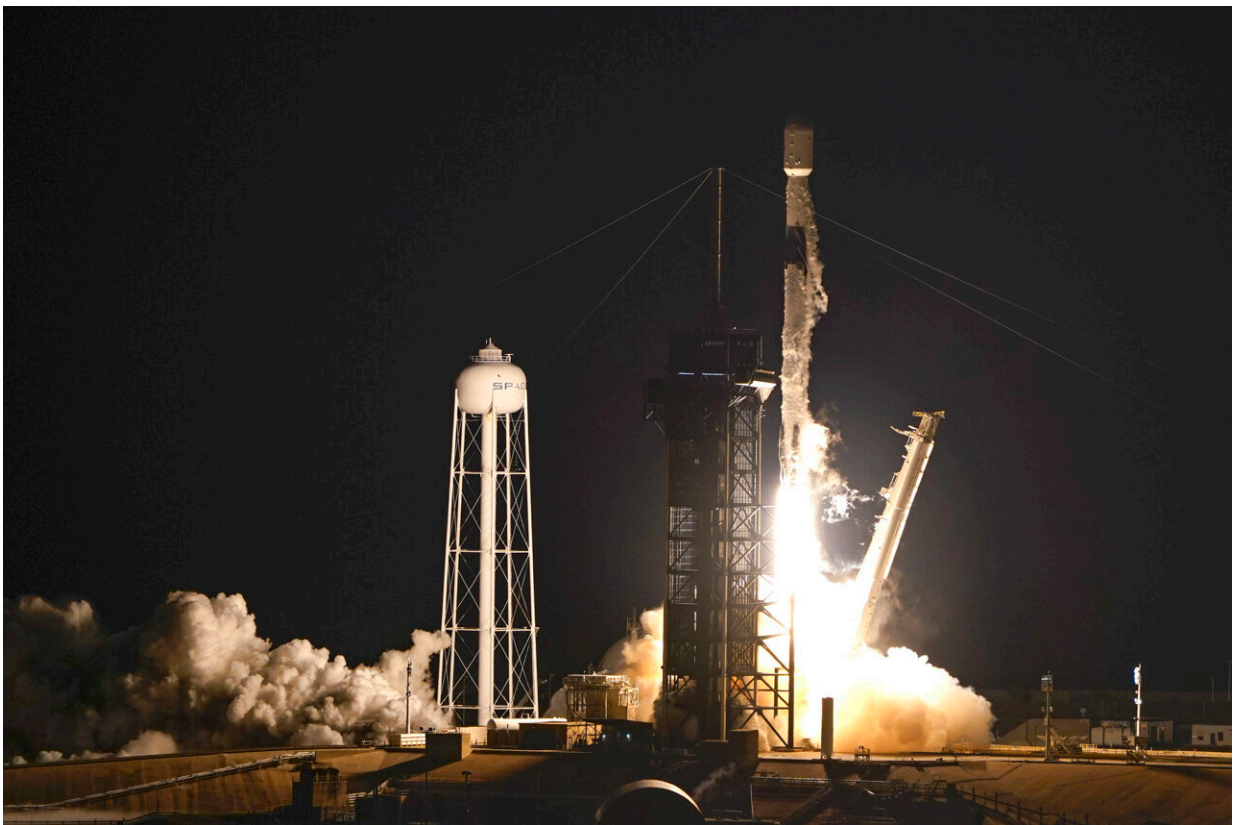
Operations should begin next month. NASA is partnering with the Italian Space Agency on the project.



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Citation: NASA's newest X-ray telescope rockets into orbit (2021, December 9) retrieved 26 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2021-12-nasa-x-ray-telescope-rockets-orbit.html>

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