

Iran says it sent a capsule capable of carrying animals into orbit as it prepares for human missions

December 6 2023



This photo released by the Iranian Defense Ministry on Wednesday, Dec. 6, 2023, claims to show a rocket with a capsule carrying animals is launched from an undisclosed location into orbit, Iran. Iran said Wednesday it sent a capsule into orbit carrying animals as it prepares for human missions in coming years. Credit: Iranian Defense Ministry via AP

Iran said Wednesday it sent a capsule into orbit capable of carrying animals as it prepares for human missions in coming years.

A report by the official IRNA news agency quoted Telecommunications Minister Isa Zarepour as saying the capsule was launched 130 kilometers (80 miles) into orbit.

Zarepour said the launch of the 500-kilogram (1,000-pound) capsule is aimed at sending Iranian astronauts to space in coming years. He did not say if any animals were in the capsule.

He told state TV that Iran plans to send astronauts into space by 2029 after further tests involving animals.

State TV showed footage of a rocket named Salman carrying the capsule.

Iran occasionally announces successful launches of satellites and other spacecraft. In September, Iran said it sent a data-collecting satellite into space. In 2013, Iran said it sent a monkey into space and returned it successfully.

Reports said the country's Defense Ministry built and launched the Salman rocket while the capsule was built by the Iranian civil space agency. Media reports did not say where the launch took place. Iran usually makes launches from Imam Khomeini Space Center in northern Semnan province.



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It says its satellite program is for scientific research and other civilian applications. The U.S. and other Western countries have long been suspicious of the program because the same technology can be used to develop long-range missiles.

In 2020, Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it put the Islamic Republic's first military satellite into orbit, unveiling what experts described as a secret space program.

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