

Japan sets third launch attempt of next-gen rocket for February

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Japan's space agency announced Thursday it will launch its next-generation H3 rocket in February after two failed attempts early this year.

The rocket, billed as a flexible and cost-effective new flagship, is scheduled to lift off between 9:22 am and 1:06 pm (0022 and 0406

GMT) on February 15 from the southern island of Tanegashima, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) said in a press release.

The third launch attempt comes after the spacecraft was forced to self-destruct in March when the command center concluded its mission could not succeed.

A first attempted launch in February, already delayed by several years, failed when the solid rocket boosters did not ignite.

Developed by Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, the H3 is the successor to the H-IIA launch system, which debuted in 2001.

Following the previous failures, the rocket will now carry an instrument to check rocket performance, along with two small secondary satellites.

Japan succeeded in putting its SLIM [space](#) probe—nicknamed the "Moon Sniper"—into the moon's orbit this week, but the country has been plagued by a series of space failures.

Last year, the normally reliable solid-fuel Epsilon rocket self-destructed after detecting trouble.

And in July, a test of an Epsilon S [rocket](#), an improved version of the Epsilon, ended in an explosion 50 seconds after ignition.

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