

# **Rocket Lab launches a Japanese satellite from the space company's complex in New Zealand**

December 15 2023

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In this image released by Rocket Lab, an electron rocket successfully takes off from its launch site on the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, Friday, Dec. 15,

2023. California-based Rocket Lab launched a Japanese satellite TSUKUYOMI-I, into orbit on behalf of a Japanese start-up Institute for Q-shu Pioneers of Space Inc, Friday. Credit: Rocket Lab via AP

California-based Rocket Lab, which specializes in putting small satellites into orbit, launched a Japanese satellite on Friday from the space company's complex on New Zealand's Mahia Peninsula.

The mission, named "The Moon God Awakens," was initially scheduled for Wednesday but was postponed due to forecast [strong winds](#). The Electron rocket launched at 5:06 p.m. local time (0406 GMT).

The rocket successfully carried the TSUKUYOMI-I satellite into orbit on behalf of Japanese startup Institute for Q-shu Pioneers of Space Inc, Rocket Lab said in a statement more than two hours after the launch.

The synthetic-aperture radar satellite, named after a Japanese god of the moon, will collect images of the Earth, Rocket Lab said.

The [mission](#) is Rocket Lab's 10th for 2023, exceeding its annual record of nine set in 2022.

It is the 42nd Electron launch from Mahia or from the Mid-Atlantic Regional Spaceport in Wallops Island, Virginia, since 2017. Rocket Lab was founded in New Zealand in 2006.





This image released by Rocket Lab shows an electron rocket on the launch pad at the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, Friday, Dec. 15, 2023. California-based Rocket Lab, which specializes in putting small satellites into orbit, launched a Japanese satellite on Friday from the space company's complex on New Zealand's Mahia Peninsula. Credit: Rocket Lab via AP



In this image released by Rocket Lab, a electron rocket successfully takes off from its launch site on the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, Friday, Dec. 15, 2023. California-based Rocket Lab launched a Japanese satellite TSUKUYOMI-I, into orbit on behalf of a Japanese start-up Institute for Q-shu Pioneers of Space Inc, Friday. Credit: Rocket Lab via AP





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In this image released by Rocket Lab, an electron rocket on the launch pad at the Mahia Peninsula, New Zealand, Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2023. California-based Rocket Lab plans to launch a Japanese satellite TSUKUYOMI-I, into orbit on behalf of a Japanese start-up Institute for Q-shu Pioneers of Space Inc., Friday, Dec. 15, 2023. Credit: Rocket Lab via AP

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