

Russia aborts second attempt to launch a heavy-lift rocket from Far East

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In this photo taken from video released by Roscosmos space corporation on Wednesday, April 10, 2024 an Angara-A5 rocket is seen prior to the launch at Vostochny space launch facility outside the city of Tsiolkovsky, about 200 kilometers (125 miles) from the city of Blagoveshchensk in the far eastern Amur region, Russia. The first test launch of the new Angara-A5 rocket was aborted the second day in a row just moments before the scheduled liftoff. The Angara-A5 is a new heavy-lift rocket developed in Russia. Credit: Roscosmos space corporation via AP

Russia failed for a second straight day Wednesday to test-launch a [new heavy-lift rocket](#) from its Far Eastern space complex. Officials have scheduled a further launch attempt for Thursday.

The first attempt to launch the Angara-A5 rocket from the Vostochny spaceport on Tuesday was canceled about two minutes before the scheduled liftoff due to a failure of the pressurization system of the oxidizer tank in the central block of the rocket.

The second attempted launch Wednesday was also aborted by the automatic safety system, which registered a flaw in the engine start control mechanism, said Yuri Borisov, head of Russia's state-controlled space corporation Roscosmos. He added that the failure was most likely rooted in a programming error.

Borisov noted that there were no hardware issues with the rocket that would necessitate spiking the launch, and said that another [launch attempt](#) was scheduled for Thursday.

The launch is to be the fourth for the Angara-A5, a heavy-lift version of the new Angara family of rockets that has been developed to replace the Soviet-designed Proton rockets.

The previous three launches were carried out from the Plesetsk launchpad in northwestern Russia.

After the 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, Russia leased the Baikonur Cosmodrome from Kazakhstan and continued to use it for most of its space launches. The agreement with Kazakhstan allows Russia to keep leasing Baikonur for \$115 million a year through 2050.

While Roscosmos has continued to rely on Baikonur, Russian authorities have developed Vostochny as the facility of choice for Angara launches. The construction of the new spaceport has dragged on for longer than planned and it has seen only limited use so far.

The development of the Angara-A-5, which is set to be the main launch vehicle for Russia's prospective lunar research program, has also faced repeated delays and dragged on years behind schedule.

Like the Soviet-designed Proton it's set to replace, the new [rocket](#) is intended to launch intelligence and communication satellites to geostationary orbits.

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