

Japan puts new weather satellite into space

7 October 2014

Japan put a new weather satellite into space Tuesday in the hope it can improve the forecasting of typhoons and detect volcanic gas plumes.

The successful launch comes the day after a typhoon strafed Japan and just over a week after a volcano killed more than 60 people when it erupted without warning.

The Japanese-made H-2A rocket carrying the Himawari-8 weather satellite blasted into a blue sky at the Tanegashima Space Center in southern Kagoshima prefecture at 2:16 pm (0516 GMT).

The 17 billion yen (\$155 million) satellite separated successfully from the rocket and entered its designated orbit, sparking applause at the [space centre](#), a Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) spokeswoman told AFP.

Japan's Meteorological Agency will use the satellite, alongside the Himawari-9, which is to be launched in 2016, for forecasting and to replace its ageing Himawari-6 and -7.

The new satellite "can obtain a satellite image of a typhoon once every 2.5 minutes, against the current pace of once every 30 minutes," an official of the weather agency told AFP.

"Together with improvement in computer-aided analysis, we hope our forecasts of a typhoon's future course will be more accurate," he said.

"As [satellite images](#) will become multi-colour from the current black and white, it will be easier to observe volcanic gas" which will be helpful for early warnings of a [volcanic eruption](#), he added.

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