

Japan flagship rocket successfully lifts off after earlier failure



Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's H3 rocket is launched from the Tanegashima Space Center in Minamitane, Tanegashima island

AFP | Tokyo

Japan's flagship H3 rocket successfully blasted off yesterday, live footage showed, months after its previous mission to put a geolocation satellite into orbit ended in failure.

The H3 was developed to boost the international competitiveness of Japan's rocket industry, and the country's space agency has come under pressure to increase the success rate of launches.

The rocket has been mooted as a rival to SpaceX's Falcon 9, and could one day deliver cargo to bases on the Moon.

Yesterday, the rocket -- which was carrying six small

satellites -- lifted off at 9:53am local time from Tanegashima Space Center in southern Japan.

"The second-stage combustion, action control and trajectory are all normal," the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (Jaxa) said in a live YouTube broadcast, about six minutes after blast-off.

The satellites loaded onto the rocket included Tokyo University of Science's "Umit-subame", which observes the Earth and other targets with a high-performance camera, and Shizuoka University's "Shiraito", which is testing space debris capture technology, according to Jaxa.

China warns 'spy turtles' are fishing for sea secrets

AFP | Beijing

Foreign spies are fitting turtles and fish with sensors to create underwater maps of China's coastline, Beijing warned yesterday in apparent reference to its Western competitors.

In a social media post ominously titled "Under the deep blue, undercurrents are surging", the Ministry of State Security said international spy agencies are using "new types of espionage equipment" to steal sensitive marine data.

"Relatively large marine animals with sensors attached have been discovered in certain waters of China," the ministry said, in a section titled "spy turtles, spy fish".

The clandestine creatures

were found "swimming in a specific area, collecting sensitive data about the marine environment such as water temperature, salinity and ocean current, transmitting it overseas via satellite", it said.

Foreign groups also used solar-powered wave gliders, buoys with high-precision sensors, and devices loaded onto cargo ships capable of capturing "port dynamics" in real time, it added, without naming a particular agency.

The data collected would be used to create "underwater maps" that can "identify weak points in China's coastal defences, posing a serious threat to China's national security", according to the ministry.

Trump blasts Iran version of deal

Washington and Tehran offer conflicting accounts of a proposed agreement

● US outlines five key terms

● Nuclear programme remains contested

● Hormuz control sparks disagreement

AFP | Washington

US President Donald Trump said yesterday that Tehran's stated version of a deal on stopping the war is not what was agreed to, with the White House insisting Tehran would dismantle its nuclear program.

The two sides released starkly different accounts of the proposed agreement, with Tehran insisting on its right to enrich uranium and maintain control over the Strait of Hormuz.

"The terms that Iran leaked out to the Fake News have NOTHING to do with the terms that were agreed to, in writing," Trump said in a post on his Truth Social network.

"What they said, including their weak and pathetic statement on having a deal, bears no relation to the truth. Very dishonorable people to deal with," Trump added.

"They better get their act together, and FAST!" Trump said in a statement on his Truth Social platform.

A senior Trump administration official said the Iranians had agreed to five key points in the deal.

"This is what they have agreed to. This is a performance-based deal," the official told AFP on condition of anonymity.

According to the official, Iran's nuclear material would be re-



US President Donald Trump speaks before signing a proclamation in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington, DC

moved and destroyed, and its nuclear programme dismantled.

The official also said that Iranian frozen assets would remain inaccessible until agreed conditions were met, that the Strait of Hormuz would remain open to international shipping, and that Iran would cease support for designated militant and terrorist groups.

However, Iran's official news agency, IRNA, reported that the removal of Iran's enriched nuclear material was not under discussion and that Tehran would continue to seek authority over navigation management in the Strait of Hormuz.

IRNA reported that, following an initial memorandum of understanding, Iran and the United States would hold 60 days of negotiations and that Iran's urani-

39 times at minimum has Donald Trump claimed an Iran peace deal was imminent since March 23, according to a television network calculation

um enrichment programme and existing enriched material would remain key issues in discussions toward a final agreement.

The dispute over the content of the proposed deal comes as both sides seek to demonstrate that their objectives have been advanced following the conflict that began after US and Israeli military operations against Iran

on February 28.

Trump said on Thursday that the two sides had reached a "great settlement" that would be signed in Europe as soon as this weekend. Tehran said nothing had been finalized.

The US president has often announced an Iran peace deal is imminent only for nothing to emerge, with CNN calculating Trump has made the claim at least 39 times since March 23.

The network broadcast a montage of Trump repeatedly making the claim using the same phrases.

After a shaky ceasefire agreement on April 7, Trump told AFP that the United States had won a "total and complete victory" but sporadic clashes have continued since then and a deal has remained elusive.

S. Korea's ex-president gets 30 years over North Korea drone incident

AFP | Seoul

A South Korean court sentenced ex-president Yoon Suk Yeol to 30 years in prison yesterday for sending military drones into North Korea, saying he planned the action as pretext for his disastrous martial law declaration in 2024.

The drone flights two months before Yoon suspended civilian rule, had sparked anger in Pyongyang, which accused the South of dropping propaganda leaflets as well.

'All of us of are migrants,' pope says in Canary Islands

AFP | San Cristóbal de La Laguna

Pope Leo XIV told migrants at a reception centre on the Spanish island of Tenerife yesterday that "all of us are migrants", on the final day of a weeklong visit to Spain focused on the plight of irregular immigrants.

Tenerife is one of the Canary Islands in the Atlantic, which have become a gateway for tens of thousands of irregular arrivals seeking a better life in Europe.

The leader of the world's 1.4 billion Catholics is concluding his trip with a call for more help for migrants and action against traffickers, at a time when immigration remains a hot topic of political debate.



Pope Leo XIV greets migrants at the "Las Raíces" (The Roots) centre in San Cristobal de la Laguna

"In a sense, all of us are migrants, for we are all pilgrims on our way to our heavenly homeland," he said in an address to

hundreds of migrants at Las Raíces (The Roots), a reception centre housed in a former military barracks that was initially heavily criticised for overcrowding.

"Let us help make this journey more humane for everyone by contributing in whatever way we can," he added.

The US-born pope is then expected to celebrate an open-air mass in the port of Santa Cruz de Tenerife in front of tens of thousands of people.

After visiting Madrid and Barcelona earlier in the week, the pope arrived in another island of the archipelago, Gran Canaria, on Thursday.

He condemned "indifference" towards migrants and cast a

wreath into the sea at the port of Arguineguin to honour the thousands who have died trying to reach the Canaries.

"Human dignity has no passport," he said on the dockside before blessing a faded blue cross made of wood from a boat that migrants arrived on.

"Monsters lurk in these seas... traffickers who enslave women and children, and those whose indifference allows the poor to be swallowed up by exploitation or forgetfulness," he said.

Nearly 1,200 people died or went missing travelling from Africa to the Canary Islands last year, according to the International Organization for Migration, making it one of the world's deadliest migration routes.