

Three Iranian satellites launched into orbit on Russian Soyuz rocket

International Desk

Iran on Sunday sent three domestically built remote sensing satellites into orbit from Russia, using Russia's Soyuz launchers.

Iranian officials said the three satellites were launched into orbit from Russia's Vostochny Cosmodrome as part of a multi-payload mission, marking the seventh time the country has used Russian rockets for satellite deployment.

The Soyuz satellite carrier lifted off on Sunday at 16:48 Tehran time, carrying multiple payloads, including Iran's Zafar 2, Paya, and Kowsar satellites. The three satellites intended to help with monitoring agriculture, natural resources and the environment.

Iran's Space Agency chief, Hassan Salarieh, said the launch heralded a bright future for the country's space sector. "The successful launch of these



The screengrab shows a Soyuz-2.1b rocket booster, carrying Iranian satellites, blast off from the Vostochny cosmodrome outside the city of Ulgorsk in the far eastern region of Amur, Russia on December 28, 2025.

● ROSCOSMOS

satellites, achieved through the participation of various actors in the space industry, reflects

the expanding scope of Iran's space program and the rapid growth of new players in this

field," he said.

Salarieh said Iran has long been among the world's top

10 to 11 countries with full space technology, from building satellites and launch vehicles to having its own systems for launching, controlling, and receiving data.

In remarks ahead of the launch, Iran's Ambassador to Moscow, Kazem Jalali, described the mission as a major step forward for Iran's space program. In a series of posts on the social platform X, Jalali emphasized that the satellites were designed and built entirely with indigenous Iranian technology, the result of collaboration between government agencies, universities, and private knowledge-based companies.

The ambassador explained that while all stages of design and construction were completed in Iran, the launch itself is being carried out in cooperation with Russia. "Two of the satellites belong to the government, and one belongs to the private sector, and

our knowledge-based companies and universities are active in this field."

Paya (Tolou-3), weighing in at 150 kilograms, is Iran's heaviest satellite to date. It delivers imagery with a resolution of about five meters in black and white and 10 meters in color. Zafar-2, developed by the Iran University of Science and Technology, is designed to monitor natural resources, assess environmental conditions, and provide data for disaster response and mapping.

Kowsar-1.5, an upgraded version of earlier Kowsar and Hodhod satellites, integrates Internet of Things (IoT) capability, enabling real-time data transmission for smart monitoring systems.

Iran first entered the space arena in 2009 with the launch of the Omid satellite. Despite Western sanctions, Tehran has steadily expanded its civilian space program.

Iraqi PM says Baghdad trying to host Iran-US talks

International Desk

Iraq's Prime Minister Mohammed Shia al-Sudani said on Saturday that Baghdad seeks to host a face-to-face meeting between Iranian and US officials to resolve their differences over Iran's nuclear program.

Sudani told Lebanese TV channel Al-Mayadeen that efforts are underway to arrange the meeting but it needs guarantees because previous talks in other countries failed to pro-

duce results due to threatening language and empty promises, which the Iranian side does not accept.

Sudani stressed that both sides are ready for resumption of talks. However, he said Iran underlines that any negotiations must be serious, not dictated and without threats.

"Part of my conversation with (US envoy) Tom Barrack when he visited Baghdad, was to bring the views between Tehran and America closer, and he asked me

how to deal with the situation, and I told him that it should be treated with respect."

"It is not acceptable to reach an agreement and hours later an attack takes place," Sudani said he told Barrack.

His remarks appeared to refer to an aggression by the Israeli regime against Iran in June.

Iran and the US were in the middle of nuclear negotiations in June when Israel launched the surprise attack on Iran, a few days before the sixth round of

talks between Tehran and Washington.

More than a week later, the US also entered the war by bombing three Iranian nuclear sites in a grave violation of the United Nations Charter, international law, and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).

On June 24, Iran, through its successful retaliatory operations against both the Israeli regime and the US, managed to impose a halt to the illegal assault.



Mohammed Shia al-Sudani

Araghchi underscores need to preserve Yemen's territorial integrity

International Desk

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Sunday stressed the need to preserve Yemen's territorial integrity and called on the entire Yemeni groups to prevent the realization of the enemies' plots to disintegrate Yemen following recent tensions in the Arab country.

Araghchi made the remarks during a phone conversation with Abdulwahid Abu Ras, acting foreign minister of Yemen's Government of Change and Construction.

The Iranian foreign minister called for dialogue between all Yemeni parties and groups to prevent the realization of the conspiracy of the enemies of the region to weaken and divide Yemen.

The talks came after troops from the UAE-allied separatist Southern Transitional Council (STC) took control of several provinces south of the country.

The STC has said that it is getting closer to declaring an "independent state" in the south.

"The south is approaching



Forces of Yemen's separatist group, the Southern Transitional Council (STC), arrive in a mountainous area where they are launching a military operation in the southern province of Abyan, Yemen, December 15, 2025.

● REUTERS

a decisive moment embodied by the declaration of a state, and this hope has become nearly complete," Ali al-Kathiri, head of the STC's National Assembly, said on Saturday during a meeting with local dignitaries and tribal figures from Hadramout, as cited by the council's official website. The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen says it will respond to any separatist military movements that undermine de-escalation efforts in the southern region, as Riyadh

doubles down on calls for the group to "peacefully" withdraw from recently seized eastern provinces. The Iranian foreign minister also held separate talks with Qatar's Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani to discuss developments in Yemen. The two officials emphasized the importance of preserving Yemen's territorial integrity and unity amid escalating clashes in the south.

Tehran, Beijing can upgrade ties to 'outcome-driven partnership': Iranian ambassador

The Iranian ambassador to China emphasized the capacity of Tehran-Beijing relations to turn into an "outcome-driven partnership" relying on cultural interactions between the two nations.

Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli made the remarks in a new round of meetings with Chinese intellectuals, researchers, and academic elite aimed at fostering synergy between the global initiatives of both countries, reviewing geopolitical developments in West Asia, and identifying opportunities for economic and technological cooperation, Press TV reported.

"The relations between Iran and China hold the potential to be transformed into a lasting, outcome-driven partnership," he said, noting that "building on mutual respect, refraining from interference, adopting a long-term outlook, and resolving differences through dialogue can serve as a roadmap in this regard."

Rahmani Fazli added that Iran-China ties move forward on the basis of economy and connectivity.

The bilateral relations can be secured by trust-building security cooperation while enduring through mutual understanding and people-to-people contacts,



Iran's Ambassador to Beijing Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli (c) poses for a family photo with Chinese intellectuals, researchers, and academic elite in China on December 27, 2025.

● IRNA

he said.

Wang Jin, director of the Center of Strategic Studies at Northwest University in China, called for the continuation of meetings between the Iranian ambassador and Chinese scholars, saying such sessions can play an effective role in exposing the realities of the West Asian region.

Wang, who has recently visited Iran, also stressed that the image portrayed by the media of the Islamic Republic is far from the realities of the country.

Western media try to portray Iran as unstable, but firsthand experience in Iran reveals the falsity of such claims, he

pointed out.

In March 2021, Iran and China signed a landmark 25-year comprehensive strategic partnership agreement in defiance of unilateral sanctions imposed on the two nations by the United States. The deal officially sets the outlines of cooperation in political, cultural, security, defense, regional, and international domains.

Over the past few years, bilateral cooperation between Tehran and Beijing has been advancing steadily in various fields.

In 2024, the trade volume between the two countries reached \$13.37 billion.