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## Iranian Satellite-Launch Rocket Lifts Off in Trial

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Iran on Tuesday conducted a trial flight of a new rocket designed to lift satellites and animals into orbit, state media reported (see [GSN](#), Feb. 7).

In preparation for planned space launches of nonhuman primates and later of human astronauts, the Kavoshgar 4 rocket fired this week contained a pod for housing animal life, Reuters quoted Iran's Islamic Republic News Agency as saying. The Middle Eastern nation's Kavoshgar 3 rocket carried several small animals into orbit last year (see [GSN](#), Feb. 3, 2010).

The Tuesday test was intended to aid in evaluating the rocket's launchpad, motor, life support pod and other mechanisms. "Data and images" were expected to be "sent from a [75-mile] orbit," according to the Iranian news report.

Iran's program for launching satellites has drawn concerns from the global community, as technology used to place orbiters into space can also be applied to ballistic missiles. Worries on the nation's missile capabilities are twinned with suspicions that Tehran is operating a nuclear-weapon drive in the guise of a civilian program. Iran says its atomic activities have no military component (see related [GSN](#) story, today).

The United States referred to last year's Kavoshgar 3 launch as a "provocative act" (Reza Derakhshi, [Reuters](#), March 17).