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# CHINA DAILY

FRIDAY, September 12, 2025

中國日報

www.chinadailyhk.com HK \$12

## New rocket expected to launch by end of year

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CAS Space, a rocket maker owned by the Chinese Academy of Sciences, is completing research and development of its new carrier rocket, the Kinetica 2, and plans to conduct its maiden flight before year's end, the company said.

The Beijing-based firm said in a press release on Tuesday that the first Kinetica 2 rocket has been assembled and has begun comprehensive testing. The new rocket is scheduled to make its maiden flight in the fourth quarter, which will also mark the debut of a new robotic cargo vessel named Qingzhou, or "Light Ship", that will ride atop the launcher.

The Kinetica 2 is a medium-lift, liquid-fuel rocket and the second launch vehicle developed by CAS Space, following the Kinetica 1.

The 52-meter model will feature a multi-stage core booster with a diameter of 3.35 meters and two side boosters. Its liftoff weight will be 625 metric tons, with a maximum thrust of 766 tons. The rocket will be able to transport spacecraft with a combined weight of 8 tons to a sun-synchronous orbit at 500 kilometers, or 12 tons to a low-Earth orbit.



The complex is open to research institutions, businesses and universities, aiming to build a public platform for international collaborative research."

**Yang Yiqiang**, founder and chairman of CAS Space

CAS Space expects the Kinetica 2 to become its main vehicle for large-scale satellite deployments and low-cost supply missions to the Tiangong space station.

The first Qingzhou cargo vessel has been built by the Shanghai-based Innovation Academy for Microsatellites of the Chinese Academy of Sciences. The vessel will be used by the China Manned Space Agency to ferry supplies between Earth and Tiangong, complementing the existing Tianzhou series.

To prepare for the launch, CAS Space has constructed a new technical preparations facility and a Kinetica 2 launch pad at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region.

Alongside the baseline configuration, an enhanced, reusable version of the Kinetica 2 is also planned, featuring more side boosters for extra thrust and greater carrying capacity, the company said.

CAS Space also announced on Tuesday that its liquid-fueled engine testing complex has begun operations in the mountainous suburb of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province. The facility can handle engines with a thrust of up to 400 tons and can also test reusable engines. The company said it is China's first spacecraft propulsion testing site open to foreign users.

"The complex is open to research institutions, businesses and universities, aiming to build a public platform for international collaborative research and technological innovation, and contribute to in-depth cooperation in the global space community," said Yang Yiqiang, founder and chairman of CAS Space.

As the sole comprehensive space industry hub in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the complex will host not only spacecraft testing but also spaceflight-themed educational and recreational activities to promote space culture and knowledge among the public, Yang said.