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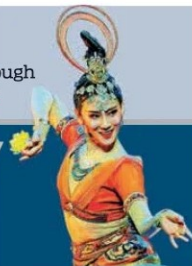
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## New rocket set to debut soon, launch six satellites

By ZHAO LEI  
[zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn](mailto:zhaolei@chinadaily.com.cn)

The Ceres 2, a new model of solid-propellant carrier rocket, built by Beijing-based private rocket maker Galactic Energy, is scheduled to conduct its debut flight in the coming days, China Daily has learned.

The launch mission will occur at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region, and is intended to test the overall design and actual performance of the rocket model, according to sources familiar with the Ceres 2's research and development plan.

Besides verifying the rocket's capability, the first flight will be used to deploy six commercial satellites and two experimental equipment — these payloads have a combined weight of more than one metric ton, sources said.

According to Galactic Energy, the Ceres 2 has three solid-propellant core stages and a liquid-fueled upper stage, and weighs 100 tons. It is capable of transporting satellites with an overall weight of 1.6 tons to a low-Earth orbit at an altitude of 500 kilometers, or 1.3 tons of payloads to a 500-km sun-synchronous orbit.

It boasts a good carrying efficiency and can be launched both on land and at sea, the company said.

The first Ceres 2 was manufactured and underwent functional

checks in Sichuan province's Ziyang and Shandong province's Haiyang.

Galactic Energy is one of the first private enterprises in China that can send satellites into orbit with their own rockets. Its founders and major designers worked at State-owned space conglomerates such as China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp before setting up the private venture.

The company's Ceres 1 model performed its maiden flight in November 2020 at the Jiuquan center, becoming the second privately developed Chinese carrier rocket to successfully realize an orbital mission, after Space's SQX 1.

The solid-propellant Ceres 1 model stands about 20 meters tall, with a diameter of 1.4 meters. It primarily burns solid propellant and has a liftoff weight of 33 tons. It can deliver a single 300-kilogram satellite or multiple satellites with a combined weight of 300 kg into a 500-km sun-synchronous orbit. It can also carry a 350-kg payload to a low-Earth orbit at an altitude of 200 km.

Twenty of the rocket's 22 flights so far have been successful and they have placed 85 commercial satellites into orbit.

Multiple rocket makers have chosen to conduct the first mission of their new models around year's end, including LandSpace that debuted its ZQ3 last week and Space Pioneer that plans to launch the first TL 3 in the coming weeks.