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Space Expert: Iran's Monkey Launch 'a Publicity Stunt'

Iran's launching of a monkey into orbit was a publicity stunt that says nothing about its ballistic missile capabilities, Israeli space expert Tal Inbar told *The Times of Israel* on Tuesday.

Tehran on Monday launched a Pishgam (Pioneer) spacecraft bearing a primate to suborbital altitude and lauded the monkey's successful return to Earth as "the first step for Iran towards sending humans into space," according to semi-official local media.

Inbar, head of the Space and UAV Research Center at the Fisher Institute for Air and Space Strategic Studies, explained that the primate-bearing rocket was an unguided projectile that reached a maximum altitude of 74 miles (120 km).

Inbar added that there was "no connection between [the unguided, suborbital rocket] and Iran's ballistic missile capabilities."

Iran, he said, has launched three satellites into Earth's orbit, "none very successfully."



Reuters

A still image from video footage released by Iran's state-run media shows the monkey that was launched into space.