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## Japan launches new satellite to survey disasters

On May 31, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) launched a satellite to study damage caused by natural disasters, including the effects of major earthquakes, tsunamis, and depleting rainforests. The Advanced Land Observing Satellite-2 (ALOS-2), nicknamed “Daichi-2,” will examine the devastation caused by the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami and observe the reconstruction process.

In addition, Daichi-2 will collect data on the deformation of the Earth’s crust and monitor rainforests and ice conditions in polar regions. The satellite will use special radar to survey the Earth’s surface through vegetation, bad weather, and in darkness to supply information regarding shipping lanes and agricultural yields.

Japan experiences 20 percent of the world’s major earthquakes and is also vulnerable to typhoons and tsunamis. Daichi-2 will provide scientific data vital to assessing and responding to future events.

Sources: BBC World News, NASA Spaceflight, Space Daily

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