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# Alpha Block 2 Launches This Summer as Falcon Sets Landing Record

## Description

The Falcon 9 team has been recognised for its significant contributions to humanity, according to Dan Dumbacher, chair of the Neil Armstrong Space Prize selection committee. He emphasised that the team's work has had a clear and visible impact.

Meanwhile, Chinese commercial launch startup Nayuta Space is working on an innovative rocket called the Xuanniao-R. The company has completed multiple Pre-A financing rounds to support this project. The Xuanniao-R is a two-stage rocket, 70 metres long and 3.8 metres in diameter. It aims to use an aerodynamic deceleration method for landing, rather than traditional engines. Nayuta Space plans to conduct a test flight in the first half of 2027.

However, challenges remain. The new aerodynamic approach could increase the rocket's weight and complexity, making the planned timeline ambitious. With its size and the unproven technology, some experts doubt it will meet the 2027 target.

On another front, SpaceX has set a new record for safe booster landings. On Tuesday, it launched a routine Falcon 9 mission from Vandenberg Space Force Base in California, successfully putting more Starlink v2-mini satellites into orbit. This mission marked SpaceX's 611th successful recovery and established a record of 268 consecutive booster landings.

Additionally, SpaceX is preparing for the 12th flight of its Starship vehicle. On Thursday, the company conducted a successful 15-second test firing of the Super Heavy booster stage, a vital step towards the launch of the newest Starship version, V3. Although no launch date has been set, mid-May is being considered as a possibility.

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## Vocabulary List:

1. **aerodynamic** //,ɛrəʊdaɪ'næmɪk// (adjective): shaped to move easily through air
2. **deceleration** //diː,selə'reɪʃən// (noun): slowing down of motion or speed
3. **financing** //ˈfaɪnænsɪŋ// (noun): money provided for a project or business
4. **booster** //ˈbuːstə// (noun): part of a rocket that gives extra power
5. **consecutive** //kən'sekjətɪv// (adjective): happening one after another without interruption
6. **complexity** //kəm'pleksɪti// (noun): many parts or details that make it difficult

## Comprehension Questions



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## Multiple Choice

1. Who is the chair of the Neil Armstrong Space Prize selection committee?  
Option: Elon Musk  
Option: Dan Dumbacher  
Option: Jeff Bezos  
Option: Richard Branson
2. What is the length of the Xuanniao-R rocket?  
Option: 60 metres  
Option: 70 metres  
Option: 80 metres  
Option: 90 metres
3. How many successful booster landings has SpaceX achieved?  
Option: 611  
Option: 500  
Option: 450  
Option: 400
4. What is the diameter of the Xuanniao-R rocket?  
Option: 2.5 metres  
Option: 3.8 metres  
Option: 4.0 metres  
Option: 3.0 metres
5. When is Nayuta Space planning to conduct a test flight for the Xuanniao-R?  
Option: 2025  
Option: 2026  
Option: 2027  
Option: 2028
6. What significant achievement did SpaceX accomplish during its Falcon 9 mission?  
Option: First launch to Mars  
Option: New record for safe booster landings  
Option: First launch of Starship V3  
Option: Completion of Starlink v1



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### True-False

7. The Xuanniao-R rocket uses traditional engines for landing.
8. Dan Dumbacher emphasized that the Falcon 9 team's work has had an unclear impact.
9. Nayuta Space has completed multiple Pre-A financing rounds for the Xuanniao-R project.
10. SpaceX's Falcon 9 mission successfully launched Starlink v2-mini satellites.
11. The Super Heavy booster stage has not been tested yet.
12. The challenges faced by Nayuta Space are related to the rocket's size and unproven technology.

### Gap-Fill

13. The Xuanniao-R is a two-stage rocket, \_\_\_\_\_ metres long.
14. Nayuta Space is working on an innovative rocket called the \_\_\_\_\_.
15. SpaceX's 611th successful recovery established a record of \_\_\_\_\_ consecutive booster landings.
16. A successful \_\_\_\_\_ test firing of the Super Heavy booster stage was conducted by SpaceX.
17. The mission marked SpaceX's \_\_\_\_\_ successful recovery.
18. The company's rocket aims to use an aerodynamic \_\_\_\_\_ method for landing.

### Answer

**Multiple Choice:** 1. Dan Dumbacher 2. 70 metres 3. 611 4. 3.8 metres 5. 2027 6. New record for safe booster landings

**True-False:** 7. False 8. False 9. True 10. True 11. False 12. True

**Gap-Fill:** 13. 70 14. Xuanniao-R 15. 268 16. 15-second 17. 611th 18. deceleration

### CATEGORY

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1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

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