LOST IN SPACE. *An H-2A rocket carrying an x-ray astronomy satellite called Hitomi is launched from the Tanegashima Space Center in Kagoshima prefecture, southern Japan, in this February 17, 2016 file photo. Japan's space agency has abandoned its efforts to restore the operations of a multimillion-dollar satellite that was to probe the mysteries of black holes using x-ray telescopes. (Kyodo News via AP, File)*

Japan abandons costly x-ray satellite lost in space

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's space agency has abandoned its efforts to restore the operations of a multimillion-dollar satellite that was to probe the mysteries of black holes using x-ray telescopes.

The Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) announced it would stop trying to fix the satellite after determining that it was "highly likely" that its two solar arrays had broken off at their bases.

Contact was lost with the satellite on March 26, more than a month after its launch from southern Japan on February 17.

The satellite, named Hitomi, was much larger than previous Japanese scientific satellites, measuring 46 feet in length and weighing 2.7 tons. It was designed to study x-rays emitted by black holes and other objects in space. The x-rays cannot be detected on earth, because they are blocked by its atmosphere.

The space agency initially thought it had received signals from the lost satellite on three occasions, but later concluded that the frequencies of the communications indicated they were not from Hitomi.

The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) was a principal partner in the Japan-led mission, which involved eight other nations, including Canada and the Netherlands.

Japan's Kyodo News agency reported that Japan spent about 31 billion yen ($290 million) on the project, and NASA had invested about $70 million.

Female coach leads champion men's team in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — At age 27, Chan Yuen-ting is younger than several of the players she coaches at Eastern Sports Club, yet she has already secured a unique place for herself in soccer history by becoming the first woman to lead a men's team to a top-division national championship.

Chan took charge at Eastern in December, with the club not having won the Hong Kong league for 21 years, and in April the team clinched that elusive title and made their female coach the talk of the town.

"I'm really lucky," Chan said to SNTV. "Now I make history and then no one think that will happen in Hong Kong. I have to say thanks to the club that they trust me, give me support, and also player encourage me a lot this season."

Chan had impediments in her path: a family that was skeptical of her career choice, conservative views about women's involvement in men's sports, and her own anxieties about whether she could command authority with players who were often verbally — and occasionally physically — aggressive.

"When I was like, maybe, 13 years old, and I wanted to play football, my family didn't allow it, because in Chinese culture, girls or woman shouldn't play football, you should go to dance or you go to draw something, something like this," Chan said.

A couple of years after that knockback by her family, Chan forged her mother's signature on a form to apply for a summer training program and joined her local club at Sha Tin.

Though her path into the sport, and her subsequent climb to the top of the game in Hong Kong, was littered with hurdles, her initial inspiration to get involved in soccer was a common one for teenage girls at the time — a love for David Beckham.

And her ardor and respect for the former Manchester United and England great has not dimmed.

"Why I play football is because I love David Beckham," Chan said. "Yeah, every time I want to quiz something, I watch Beckham's match video and just try to get some message or positive energy, messages from him."

Eastern's title win gives it a shot at next year's Asian Champions League, and club bosses have promised to invest in the squad to pursue further success in 2017, but

FOOTBALL FIRST. *Eastern Sports Club head coach Chan Yuen-ting (top photo, center), celebrates with her players after winning the Hong Kong Premier League title in Hong Kong. At age 27, Chan is younger than several of the players she coaches at Eastern Sports Club, yet she has already secured a unique place for herself in soccer history by becoming the first woman to lead a men's team to a top-division national championship. In the bottom photo, coach Chan gives instruction during a match against Kitchee Sports Club in the Hong Kong Premier League. (AP Photos/Kin Cheung)*

Chan has ambitions beyond Hong Kong.

"I want to go to another country, maybe just as an assistant coach to get more knowledge," Chan said.

"Hong Kong football level is not very high compared with like Japan, Korea, or even we go other country U.K., U.S., so if I have chance I want to go out. And I want to learn something and then bring something to Hong Kong football."

Kim Jong Un's younger sister gets new post during congress

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's younger sister is among the officials who were awarded key posts at the country's ruling-party congress, according to state media.

The Korean Central News Agency reported that Kim Yo Jong was named a member of the Workers' Party of Korea's Central Committee during the recent congress.

State media also said Kim Yo Jong has served as a vice department director at the ruling party. Believed to be in her late 20s, she frequently appears at her brother's public events, standing out amid elderly male officials.

While the new post raises Kim Yo Jong's profile, it does not elevate her to North Korea's No. 2 position, as some North Korea-watchers had speculated might happen during the congress.

NORTH'S NEPOTISM. *An image of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's younger sister, Kim Yo Jong, is shown on a screen broadcasting a television news program at the Seoul Railway Station in Seoul, South Korea, in this November 27, 2014 file photo. Kim Yo Jong is among the officials who won promotions at the country's ruling-party congress. The letters in the photo read "Kim Jong Un's sister." (AP Photo/Ahn Young-joon, File)*

Malaysia: Two more pieces 'almost certainly' from Flight 370

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Malaysia's government says two more pieces of debris, discovered in South Africa and Rodrigues Island off Mauritius, were "almost certainly" from Flight 370, which mysteriously disappeared more than two years ago with 239 people on board.

The announcement means a total of five pieces of debris from the Malaysia Airlines jet have now been discovered in various spots around the Indian Ocean since it vanished on March 8, 2014, while flying from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing.

Transport minister Liow Tiong Lai said the two new pieces were an engine cowling piece with a partial Rolls-Royce logo and an interior panel piece from an aircraft cabin. This was the first interior part found from the missing plane.

An international team of experts in Australia who examined the debris concluded that both pieces were consistent with panels found on a Malaysia Airlines Boeing 777 aircraft, Liow said.

"As such, the team has confirmed that both pieces of debris from South Africa and Rodrigues Island are almost certainly from MH370," he said in a statement.

In March, investigators confirmed two pieces of debris found along Mozambique's coast were almost certainly from the aircraft. Last year, a wing part washed ashore on Reunion Island in France.

Flight 370 is believed to have crashed somewhere in a remote stretch of the southern Indian Ocean about 1,100 miles off Australia's west coast. An ongoing search has found nothing so far. Authorities predicted that any debris from the plane that isn't on the ocean floor would eventually be carried by currents to the east coast of Africa.

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