

Macro Roundup Article

Headline: [Despite An Explosion, Elon Musk Is Closer to His New Space Age](#)

Article Link: <https://www.economist.com/science-and-technology/2023/04/20/despite-an-explosion-elon-musk-is-closer-to-his-new-space-age>

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Tweet: [Despite Starship's failure yesterday, once the identified problems are fixed Starship is likely to dramatically bring down the cost of putting payloads into orbit. @TheEconomist](#)

Summary: The good news is that SpaceX says it is building Super Heavies and Starships at a healthy clip; it should in principle be possible to rerun the test reasonably soon once the nature of the problem becomes clear and a fix is found. The bad news is that the structure which supports the Super Heavy as it launches seems to have been damaged to an extent that may well require a significant redesign rather than simply repair. That could entail significant delays. If SpaceX puts right both the problems that struck today and the others that the test programme will surely uncover, the Starship system will not just be able to put larger payloads into orbit than any competitor, it will be able to do so at a cost per tonne far lower than any the industry has seen before. A Starship launched by a Super Heavy will be capable of lifting 100-150 tonnes of cargo to orbit. That far exceeds the capacity of today's most powerful commercial launcher, SpaceX's Falcon Heavy, which is basically three Falcon 9s strapped together so as to be able to lift up to 64 tonnes. The cargo which could be lifted with a space shuttle was just 24 Tonnes. That low cost is one of the advantages offered by a system with just two parts, both of which are fully reusable. Another is that a system which can take off, land, and take off again in short order opens up a new range of possibilities for flights beyond Earth orbit.

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