

Kazakhstan Predicts Major Developments For Its Space Program

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Kazakhstan's Prime Minister, Danial Akhmetov, during a visit to the Energia Rocket and Space Corporation at Korolev near Moscow last week, announced that the Republic will further its plans within its Space Industry Development Programme 2005-2007.

Beyond the expected launch of Kazakhstan's first satellite, the KazSat communication satellite, which is to be launched in late December from Baikonur, a second satellite is to be launched within two years. This will be the start of the country's satellite network. "At the present time, we are working on creating a constellation of satellites," commented Prime Minister Akhmetov.

While the KazSat was constructed by the Krunichev Space Centre, a constructor for the country's second satellite has yet to be announced. Nevertheless, the Prime Minister did suggest that Kazakhstan could order this satellite from Energia: "Everything will depend on the competitive abilities of Energia, about which we have no doubts. We wish to diversify our suppliers of space products."

Another promising project is the Ishim satellite launching system which is being developed by Kazakhstan in cooperation with the Moscow Institute of Thermal Engineering. Unlike costly conventional launch complexes, the Ishim system will use a modified missile launched from a Mig-31 fighter jet.

This system will be perfect for launching small payloads of up to 160

Kg. Moreover, the Government of Kazakhstan has instructed KazCosmos and KazMunaiGas to study the possibilities of using such small satellites for geological prospecting as well as for monitoring pipelines.

According to the Prime Minister, long-term projects for Kazakhstan's space program include participating in the development of the "Kliper" spacecraft which is to replace Soyuz as well as the development of the Baiterek rocket launching complex.

The Republic is planning a participation in the International Space Station. In 2008 it is planned to launch a new multi-purpose laboratory unit. Kazakhstan is also considering participating in the development of nuclear propulsion for space vehicles.

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