

# Russia launches British comms satellite into space

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A Proton-M rocket is transported to the launch pad at Russian leased Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome, on May 14, 2012

Russia on Sunday carried out its first space launch of the year, using its commercial Proton rocket to send a British satellite into orbit.

The launch went ahead as planned just after 1230GMT from the Russia-owned Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, a live broadcast shown by Russia's Roscosmos space agency showed. It is expected to reach orbit at

0402GMT Monday.

The communications satellite Inmarsat-5 F2 is the second in a \$1.6-billion fleet called Global Xpress designed to provide broadband communications on land, at sea and in the air.

The I-F F2 satellite will cover the Americas and the Atlantic Ocean, according to Inmarsat.

The Proton-M rocket has launched numerous Western and Asian commercial satellites, but it has suffered several setbacks in recent years.

In 2013, a rocket carrying cargo for the International Space Station exploded in mid-air right after takeoff.

A year earlier, a smooth launch ended in failure after the rocket missed the correct orbit, losing two satellites in the process.

Sunday's launch—the 402nd launch of a Proton rocket—started smoothly, with the first, second and third stages of separation taking place on time as the 6.7-tonne satellite headed on its course.

Russia wants to eventually replace the Proton workhorse with the newer Angara rocket, which completed a successful maiden flight last year.

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