

SpaceX launches two communications satellites

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US space transportation company SpaceX launched two commercial communications satellites atop a Falcon 9 rocket Sunday evening.

The [rocket](#), carrying an Eutelsat and Asia Broadcast (ABS) [satellite](#), lifted off from Cape Canaveral, Florida on schedule at 10:50 pm (3:50 GMT) into the perfectly clear night.

The two satellites deployed 30 minutes afterwards, SpaceX said on Twitter.

Equipped with electric propulsion systems, they will orbit above the equator at an altitude of 22,370 miles (36,000 kilometers).

The Boeing satellites will help distribute television programming plus Internet and cellular phone connectivity worldwide, SpaceX said in a statement.

SpaceX did not attempt to guide the powerful rocket's first stage to a floating barge landing spot in the Atlantic Ocean, as it has done with other recent launches.

If SpaceX were to succeed in retrieving its rockets' first stages, it could prevent the waste of millions of dollars after each launch, when pieces of the rocket are left to fall into the ocean after blastoff.

But its two previous attempts to do so have failed.

SpaceX will attempt to salvage a rocket first stage again in April after the launch of a Dragon spacecraft for a supply mission to the International Space Station.

Successful recovery would mean the rocket first stage could be used multiple times, which would be a financial coup for SpaceX, as it competes in the commercial satellite market.

French company Eutelsat is Europe's leading satellite operator. ABS, although new, is one of the fastest growing satellite operators and is headquartered in Bermuda.

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