

Bangladesh signs \$250m satellite deal with French firm

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Bangladesh on Wednesday signed a \$250 million deal with French-Italian firm Thales Alenia Space in Dhaka to build the country's first communications satellite, officials said.

Thales Alenia Space will build the [satellite](#) called Bangabandhu-1 for the Bangladesh Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to be launched into [space](#) in 2017.

BTRC chairman Shahjahan Mahmud said the contract was worth 19.51 billion taka (\$250 million).

Junior telecoms minister Tarana Halim hailed the deal which would save Bangladesh coffers \$14 million a year from renting transponders of foreign satellites.

"With the launch of Bangabandhu-1, Bangladesh will become the 57th member of the exclusive club of satellite-owning countries," Halim said at the contract-signing ceremony in the capital.

Bangladesh was targeting December 16, 2017 as the satellite's [launch date](#), to mark the 47th anniversary of the nation's victory over Pakistan in its war of independence.

"The satellite will cover Bangladesh, other South Asian countries, Indonesia, the Philippines and several other nations," the minister added.

Early this year Bangladesh bought a satellite orbital slot from Russian company Intersputnik International for \$28 million.

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