

# Russia lifts UK telecom satellites into orbit

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A Soyuz rocket blasted off from the Vostochny cosmodrome in Russia's Far East on Friday, putting into orbit 36 UK telecommunications and internet satellites, the Roscosmos space agency said.

The launch was the first and only one to take place from the cosmodrome this year, Roscosmos told AFP.

The rocket took off at 1226 GMT, the [space](#) agency said, carrying satellites made by the British-based company OneWeb.

Nearly five hours later [space agency](#) chief Dmitry Rogozin said that all the satellites had reached their intended orbit.

"The mission has been successfully completed. Congratulations!" he said on Twitter.

Originally planned for April, the launch was delayed after OneWeb collapsed and was forced to declare bankruptcy.

Last month, the UK government and Indian telecommunications giant Bharti took control of the company, investing \$500 million a piece.

The London-headquartered company is working to complete the construction of a constellation of low earth orbit satellites providing enhanced broadband and other services to countries around the world.

OneWeb's first six satellites were launched by a Russian-made Soyuz

rocket from the space centre in Kourou in French Guiana in February 2019.

The company launched 34 more in February this year from the Baikonur launch site in Kazakhstan, then another 34 in March.

OneWeb plans for its global commercial internet service to be operational by 2022, supported by some 650 satellites.

"Today's launch will be the first fully commercial spacecraft launch from the Vostochny cosmodrome," Roscosmos said earlier in the day.

"It will also be the first launch operated by the European launch services provider Arianespace for the company OneWeb from the first Russian civilian spaceport."

The Vostochny [launch](#) site is one of the country's most important space projects, designed to reduce reliance on the Baikonur space centre Russia currently rents from Kazakhstan.

Its construction has for years been tainted by multiple controversies including corruption, and the project has been consistently behind schedule.

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