

Russian rocket launches 34 new UK satellites

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A Russian Soyuz rocket has blasted into space carrying 34 new satellites from British operator OneWeb, which aims to provide broadband internet everywhere in the world.

The rocket operated by Europe's Arianespace took off successfully at

2213 GMT Saturday from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, the Roscosmos space agency said in a statement.

It was the fifth launch of OneWeb satellites this year, with the last one on July 1.

OneWeb is working to complete the construction of a constellation of low earth orbit satellites providing enhanced broadband and other services to countries worldwide.

The company is competing against billionaires Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos in the race to provide fast internet for the world's remote areas via satellites.

The UK company plans for its global commercial internet service to be operational by next year, supported by some 650 satellites.

Arianespace, which has worked with Russia for close to two decades, is under contract to make 16 Soyuz launches between December 2020 and the end of 2022.

With this latest mission, a total of 288 satellites are now in orbit for the constellation.

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