

China launches Turkish satellite

18 December 2012

China early Wednesday "successfully" launched a Turkish earth observation satellite into orbit aboard a Chinese rocket, according to state media, hailed in Turkey as a "historic moment". (c) 2012 AFP

A statement from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in northwest China's [Gobi Desert](#) said the satellite was launched at 12:13 am (1613 GMT Tuesday) and was delivered into its predetermined orbit by a Long March 2D rocket, the official [Xinhua news agency](#) reported.

The satellite, jointly developed by Turkey's Space Technologies Research Institute and Turkish Aerospace Industries, will mainly be used for environmental protection, mineral resource exploration, urban planning and disaster monitoring and management, the statement said.

In Ankara, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan watched the launch live from giant screens along with hundreds of Turks. "It is a historic moment for our nation," he said following the launch.

"In the past we did send satellites to space but Gokturk-2 has proven that we are now a country with a claim in this field. We are rising to position ourselves as one of the 25 countries which are capable of producing their own satellites."

He said Turkey, as the next step, would aim to become one of the few countries with its own [launch pad](#).

China views satellite launches as part of its ambitious space programme. The country sent its first female astronaut, Liu Yang, into space earlier this year on the Shenzhou-9 in China's first manual space docking mission.

Last month China launched a European-made [telecommunications satellite](#) into orbit, according to Xinhua. In September a Chinese rocket launched a Venezuelan [earth-observation satellite](#).

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