

Russia launches British comms satellite into space

1 February 2015



A Proton-M rocket is transported to the launch pad at Russian leased Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome, on May 14, 2012

In 2013, a rocket carrying cargo for the International Space Station exploded in mid-air right after takeoff.

A year earlier, a smooth launch ended in failure after the rocket missed the correct orbit, losing two satellites in the process.

Sunday's launch—the 402nd launch of a Proton rocket—started smoothly, with the first, second and third stages of separation taking place on time as the 6.7-tonne satellite headed on its course.

Russia wants to eventually replace the Proton workhorse with the newer Angara rocket, which completed a successful maiden flight last year.

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Russia on Sunday carried out its first space launch of the year, using its commercial Proton rocket to send a British satellite into orbit.

The launch went ahead as planned just after 1230GMT from the Russia-owned Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, a live broadcast shown by Russia's Roscosmos space agency showed. It is expected to reach orbit at 0402GMT Monday.

The communications satellite Inmarsat-5 F2 is the second in a \$1.6-billion fleet called Global Xpress designed to provide broadband communications on land, at sea and in the air.

The I-F F2 satellite will cover the Americas and the Atlantic Ocean, according to Inmarsat.

The Proton-M rocket has launched numerous Western and Asian commercial satellites, but it has suffered several setbacks in recent years.

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