

Vietnam Launches Second Satellite Successfully

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AsianScientist (May 18, 2012) - Four years after launching its first satellite, Vinasat-1 in 2008, Vietnam blasted into higher orbit with the successful launch of its second satellite on Wednesday.

Vinasat-2, weighing 2,969 kg and costing US\$260-280 million, was flown into orbit by Arianespace's Ariane-5 ECA rocket which is the most powerful version of the Ariane-5 launchers. The lift off was from the European spaceport in French Guiana, Kourou.

The spacecraft separated from the launcher precisely 36 minutes after lift off.

The satellite, having a 15-year life span, was carried along with the Japanese JCSAT-13 satellite. Manufactured by the U.S.-based Lockheed Martin, the satellite will be managed by the Vietnam Post and Telecommunication Group (VNPT) which funded its development.

Soon after the successful launch, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dong said that the flight had political and economic significance and will provide data to remote places and help in critical areas like defense and disaster management.

The PM called it a major step in strengthening Vietnam in the field of communication and information technology.

Deputy Director of the Vinasat Information Center, Kieu Ngu Yen, said that foreign experts were positioned at the Que Duong ground control center to familiarize technicians on the operation of the new satellite.

He said that Vietnamese space scientists were sent to Lockheed Martin to observe the manufacture of Vinasat-2. The Hanoi-based ground control station has completed all the measurements and is now ready to acquire data from the satellite.

VNPT chairman Pham Long Tran has been quoted as saying that Vinasat-2, which is 20 percent larger than Vinasat 1, will be located close to the latter and both would provide the country a tremendous boost in the areas of service delivery and security.

According to him, the mission will reinforce the safety of the national telecommunication network and meet the demand for satellite capacity until 2020.

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