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Pakistani satellite among 3 launched

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China launched a Long March 2D carrier rocket on Friday afternoon, deploying three satellites, including an advanced atmospheric research satellite, into their preset orbit.

The rocket blasted off at 12:07 pm at the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Inner Mongolia autonomous region and soon delivered the Tianlu 1, PRSC-EO1 and Lantan 1 into their orbit, according to China Aerospace Science and Technology Corp, the maker of the rocket.

Designed and built by GalaxySpace, a Beijing-based private satellite maker, the Tianlu 1 is carrying several advanced scientific equipment to measure temperature, density, composition of middle and upper atmosphere, and features high resolution, around-the-clock operational capability as well as multi-element detection capacity, according to Xi Bin, a senior spacecraft designer at GalaxySpace.

He explained that it is difficult for most of the satellites and aircraft to reach middle and upper atmosphere, so it needs specifically designed satellites to measure physical elements of those layers.

"Such data is of great importance to forecasting extreme weather events and space environment and studying climate change. The data will also help researchers to establish atmospheric models, study ionosphere and analyze the vertical distribution of air pollutants," he said.

Upon its in-orbit delivery, the satellite will be used by the Jianghuai Frontier Innovation Technology Center in Hefei, capital of East China's Anhui province.

Another satellite on the Long March 2D rocket, the PRSC-EO1 is a remote-sensing satellite developed by the Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission, and is equipped with a high-resolution optical payload.

The remote-sensing data acquired by the satellite will serve various fields in Pakistan, including land mapping, agricultural classification and assessment, urban and rural planning, environmental monitoring, natural disaster relief and natural resource protection.

According to plans made by the Pakistan commission, the PRSC-EO1 network will consist of three optical remote-sensing satellites traveling in a sun-synchronous orbit. The next two in this network will also be launched by Chinese rockets.

Friday's mission was China's third space launch this year and the 556th flight of the Long March family, the nation's main launch vehicle fleet.



A Long March 2D carrier rocket sends three satellites into space on Friday. WANG JIANGBO / FOR CHINA DAILY