Sea Launch Delivers PAS-9 Satellite to Orbit

Sea Launch, the multinational ocean-based launch services company, returned to flight operations today with a perfect launch of the PAS-9 satellite.

From the equatorial launch site at 154 degrees West Longitude, the Sea Launch Zenit-3SL rocket lifted off from the Odyssey Launch Platform at exactly 3:42 p.m. PDT and soared into space. All systems performed nominally during flight. The 8,067-pound PAS-9 satellite was successfully delivered to geostationary transfer orbit about one hour and 37 minutes after liftoff. Hughes Space and Communications built the 601-HP model spacecraft for PanAmSat.

"Today's success clearly establishes Sea Launch's position as a proven launch services provider," said Will Trafton, president of Sea Launch. "We now have three very successful missions and have moved into full scale operations. The teamwork and dedication of this partnership are incomparable. I am really proud of our team."

Following liftoff, the Russian and Ukrainian rocket rose from the Odyssey and headed downrange to the east, before disappearing from view on its ascent to geostationary transfer orbit. All systems onboard the three-stage rocket performed nominally. The Block DM upper stage separated from the satellite over the Indian Ocean, one hour and 10 minutes into the flight. As planned, PanAmSat acquired the satellite 25 minutes later from a ground station in Sydney, Australia.

PAS-9 will be located at 58 degrees West Longitude and will replace the PAS-5 satellite. It will provide PanAmSat customers with advanced video distribution, Internet and data services throughout the Americas, the Caribbean and western Europe. PAS-9 will also serve as the permanent platform for Sky Mexico's DTH service, to digitally deliver television channels in Mexico, Northern Central America and parts of the Caribbean.

Sea Launch provides commercial satellite customers such as PanAmSat and Hughes the most direct and cost-effective route to geostationary transfer orbit. From the ocean-based launch site, the robust Sea Launch Zenit-3SL rocket can lift a heavier spacecraft mass or place a payload into a higher perigee, helping satellite operators to attain a longer satellite service capability.

The Sea Launch multinational partnership includes: Boeing Commercial Space Company of Kent, Wash., (provides spacecraft integration and the payload fairings); the Anglo-Norwegian Kvaerner Group of Oslo, Norway (vessel builder); RSC Energia of Moscow, Russia (provides the Block DM Upper Stage and its integration with the launch vehicle); and SDO Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash of Ukraine (provides the first two stages of the launch vehicle and launch support operations).

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