Sea Launch Counts Down to Thuraya-2 Launch on June 10

All systems are progressing as planned for the Odyssey Launch Platform and the Sea Launch Commander, now positioned at the launch site on the Equator, where a countdown is underway for a June 10 launch.

The international Sea Launch team is counting down to a 44-minute launch window that will open at 6:56am PDT (13:56 GMT) June 10 for the launch of the Thuraya-2 communications satellite. The team will launch the Boeing GEM (GEO-mobile) satellite for Thuraya Satellite Telecommunications Company of Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. The Sea Launch vessels, the Odyssey Launch Platform and the Sea Launch Commander, arrived at the launch site on June 5.

The platform is now ballasted to its launch depth in preparation for launch, providing a stable environment for both marine and launch operations. The Sea Launch Commander is currently stationed alongside the Odyssey and will be connected to the platform by a link bridge during launch preparations. Prior to launch, the link bridge will retract and the ship will move to a position three miles from the platform. All marine crew and launch personnel will be stationed on the ship throughout launch operations.

Sea Launch's three-stage Zenit-3SL rocket will lift the 5,117 kg (11,413 lb) spacecraft to Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit. In its final orbital position, the satellite will be positioned in Geosynchronous Orbit, 35,786 km (22,236 miles) above the Earth, at 44 degrees East Longitude, inclined at 6.3 degrees, the optimum location for Thuraya operations.

Boeing Satellite Systems (BSS), based in El Segundo, Calif., built the spacecraft. In addition to Thuraya's first satellite, BSS also designed and built the ground system and supplied user handsets for the Thuraya network, which provides mobile voice and data communication services to a region of more than 100 countries in Europe, the Middle East, North and Central Africa, and Central and South Asia. In October 2000, Sea Launch successfully placed Thuraya-1 -- at 5,108 kg (11,260 lb), the heaviest commercial spacecraft ever launched -- into orbit. Thuraya-2 is designed to further support Thuraya's regional mobile communications services, including voice, fax and data.

Sea Launch will provide a live satellite broadcast and webcast of the Thuraya-2 mission on June 10, beginning at 6:35am PDT. The launch broadcast, featuring live video from the launch site as well as commentary and interviews, may be down linked from satellite coordinates here .

Sea Launch Company, LLC, based in Long Beach, Calif., provides reliable, cost effective, heavy lift launch services for commercial satellite customers. The international partners include the Boeing Commercial Space Company (U.S.), RSC Energia (Russia), SDO Yuzhnoye/PO Yuzhmash (Ukraine) and the Kvaerner Group (Norway). The world's only system launching from the Equator, Sea Launch offers the optimal starting point for spacecraft heading to Geostationary Orbit. With the advantage of a launch site on the Equator, the proven Zenit-3SL rocket can lift a heavier spacecraft mass or provide longer life on orbit, offering best value plus schedule assurance. Sea Launch currently has a current backlog of 16 firm launch contracts. For additional information and images, visit the Sea Launch website .

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