

China launches national-record 41 satellites on single rocket

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A Long March 2D rocket lifted off from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in north China Thursday (June 15) at 1:30 a. m. EDT (0530 GMT, or 13:30 local time), Space reported.

Insulation tiles fell away from the rocket and a total of 41 small satellites were released into orbit. These were the Jilin-1 GF06A0 satellites 1-30, Jilin-1GF03D 19-26, HEGS-1, and Jilin-1 PT02A01/02 for Chinese commercial remote sensing satellite company Changguang Satellite (CGST).

The launch broke the previous Chinese record of 26 satellites on a single launch, set just days earlier by a Lijian 1 rocket developed by commercial company CAS Space.

The overall record is 143 satellites, set during SpaceX's Transporter-1 rideshare mission in January 2021.

The satellites launched on Thursday mainly add to CGST's Jilin-1 commercial remote sensing constellation. CGST aims to put more than 300 satellites in orbit by 2025, more than doubling its earlier plan of launching 138 Jilin-1 satellites by the end of that year.

The Jilin-1 Gaofen 06A17-18 satellites are small, light, high-resolution optical remote sensing satellites also known as Golden Bauhinia satellites 37-38.

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The launch was China's 24th of the year. The country plans to launch more than 200 spacecraft across 2023.