

China hopes to cover flights, trains with internet

China is hoping to make the internet available in aircraft cabins, high speed trains or even remote mountainous areas, thanks to six communication satellites it's planning to send into orbit this year, according to China National Radio.

The first satellite – Shijian-13 – is to be launched on a Long March 3B (also known as the CZ-3B) rocket from the Xichang Satellite Launch Center (XSLC) in April.

Shi Jian 13 is an experimental geostationary satellite, designed to test electric propulsion, with an orbital life of 15 years, according to Gunter's Space Page.

Deputy chief designer, Wang Min, says it's the country's first high-throughput satellite (HTS). It's capable of relaying traffic many times the speed of traditional fixed satellite services (FSS), for the same amount of allocated frequency on orbit, according to intelsat.com.

Later in the year, the scientific research satellite Shijian-18 will be delivered into orbit by the Long March 5B rocket in mid-2017, according to Space Flights News.

Zhou Zhicheng, director of the communications satellite department of the China Academy of Space Technology, said the launch of these communications satellites will help improve the prospects for China's satellite mobile communications system.

On a global scale, 24 communications satellites operating in orbit currently were manufactured by Chinese organizations, according to China National Radio.