

EADS and RISDE to form joint venture

Regional

Dr Yuri M Ulrichich, General Director of the Federal State Unitary Enterprise 'Russian Institute of Space Device Engineering' (RISDE), and Rainer Hertrich, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of EADS, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the creation of a joint venture aimed at the development and production of space telecommunication technology including on-board and ground equipment.

According to the MoU, the two parties are planning to combine their resources, transfer the required technologies, harmonise standards and train Russian

personnel. The technology produced is set to be marketed in Russia and the former USSR countries first, and in the rest of the world at a later date. The MoU was signed in Moscow in the presence of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin and the German Chancellor, Gerhard Schröder.

The joint venture, which will be registered in Moscow, will be 51 per cent owned by RISDE. The remaining 49 per cent will be distributed among EADS companies. The deal is expected to be completed and

the joint venture to be operational by the end of the year.

Rainer Hertrich, CEO of EADS, declared: "We are very pleased to develop our space interests in Russia. This follows other joint ventures we have set up in Russia in the space business: Starsem and Eurokot in the satellite launchers business; and Return & Rescue

Space Systems GmbH (RRSS), set up between EADS Space Transportation GmbH and Babakin Science and Research Centre, which is focused on re-entry technology. This new ven-

ture will be dedicated to spacecraft payloads and equipment."

RISDE is Russia's leading company for the design, development, manufacturing and installation of satellite on-board and ground systems, subsystems and equipment, in particular but not limited to telecommunication payload, either for civilian or other special purposes.

EADS Astrium is one of Europe's leading satellite system specialists. Its activities cover civil and military telecommunications and Earth observation systems, science and navigation programmes, and all spacecraft avionics and equipment. □



Arabsat signs DTH transponder deal with SamaCom

Regional

SamaCom, a satellite service provider and subsidiary of Dubai Technology and Media Free Zone, has announced the signing of a transponder deal with Arabsat for the launch of a new Direct-To-Home (DTH) platform. According to the terms of the agreement, the two companies

will co-operate in marketing a new DTH platform using transponder capacity on the Arabsat 2D satellite.

The new platform will also allow broadcasters from Europe, America and Asia to deliver their content from other satellites on the Arabsat/SamaCom platform. According to a company's official

statement, the platform complements SamaCom's portfolio of DTH platforms for Nilesat, Asiasat 2, Asiasat 3S, Hotbird and Atlantic Bird satellites.

SamaCom's new platform will enable direct uplink to Arabsat 2D, thus improving broadcast quality and reducing satellite space costs. Prior to this

agreement, the Dubai Media City-based broadcasters used to transmit signals to Arabsat's DTH platform in Tunis before uplinking on Arabsat 2D.

SamaCom currently broadcasts more than 36 television channels, serving over 25 broadcasters and providing uplinks to over 15 satellites. □

No open skies for India

India's Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has rejected a recommendation from the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) for an open-sky policy for Direct-To-Home (DTH) and Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) services. The country's DoT has also rejected a recommendation from the broadcasting regulator for DTH operators to be exempted from paying spectrum fees for uplinking from India.

The rejection of the open-sky policy comes as a blow for DTH operators planning to use foreign-owned satellite platforms for beaming DTH programmes.

In an official statement, Pradip Baijal, Chairman of

TRAI, had recommended the use of VSAT and DTH platforms for low-cost broadband service proliferation in rural areas. He stated: "DTH and VSAT can provide broadband with very fast roll out and coverage. The main advantages are that VSAT will be a contributor once technical restrictions and licence conditions are removed, allowing costs to come down by 40 per cent."

DoT has cited security as the main reason for not allowing VSAT and DTH operators to work directly with the foreign satellites. The licence issued to the VSAT operators stipulates that they can use only Insat satellites and its use should be restricted to the boundaries of India. □

LORAL-built Telstar 18 reaches orbital position

Global

Loral Space & Communications has announced that Telstar 18, launched on 28 June 2004 aboard a Sea Launch Zenit-3SL rocket, has successfully reached its in-orbit testing position at 142 degrees East longitude.

During the satellite's launch, the Zenit rocket's upper stage shut down 54 seconds early and released the satellite into a low orbit. After the launch, engineers at Space Systems/Loral (SS/L) raised the spacecraft to its correct orbit using a series of carefully planned satellite manoeuvres and thruster burns.

All systems on the satellite are performing nominally and in-orbit testing has begun. The sat-

ellite, which was able to use its significant station-keeping fuel margin for the unplanned orbit raising activities, has enough on-board fuel remaining that will allow it to exceed its specified 13-year life.

"Telstar 18's ability to reach orbit, even with a launch vehicle anomaly, showcases the robustness of SS/L's 1300 platform. Using its reserve margin, the satellite was able to correct for the launch shortfall and ensure the mission's success. SS/L's 1300 platform has a demonstrated record of exceeding our customers' requirements even in anomalous conditions," concluded Patrick DeWitt, President of SS/L. □

CABSAT and GVF sign agreement

Regional

Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), organiser of the Middle East International Cable, Satellite, Broadcast and Communications Exhibition (CABSAT), has entered into a landmark agreement with the GVF, the global trade association of the satellite sector, in a move designed to raise the profile and positioning of the show on the world stage.

As a result of this agreement, the GVF will be endorsing CABSAT as the representative international event for the Electronic Media and Communications Industry in the Middle East, a move which will result in reinforcing the position of the show as centrally significant of its kind in the region, and boosting the awareness of CABSAT as an event not-to-be-missed for those seeking a foothold in the region's rapidly expanding broadcast and satellite market.

Riding on the strength of this association, CABSAT aims to draw more international exhibi-

tors to showcase their latest technologies as well as develop conference programmes, workshops, and tailored exhibition platforms that will benefit the industry in the region.

The GVF, an association of 170 key companies involved in the business of delivering advanced digital fixed and mobile satellite systems and services to consumers, commercial and government enterprise worldwide, has endorsed CABSAT and will organise the GVF Arab & African States Satellite Symposium, a major two-day regional event for satellite industry professionals with a focused interest in satellite-based video solutions, as well as data and voice.

"Drawing upon the expertise of top executives and key officials, the GVF Arab & African States Satellite Symposium will provide delegates with valuable insights into cutting-edge broadcasting & telecommunication applications, the latest regulation &

policy trends, state-of-the-art technology, and successful business models," said David Hartshorn, Secretary General of the GVF. Commenting further, Hartshorn said that: "This is an exciting opportunity to bring together the key people to discuss the major trends at a strategic event for the satellite sector around the region."

The GVF and CABSAT will also co-ordinate on the provision of a special satellite pavilion as part of the central exhibition facility, and within which satellite system and service companies will be able to demonstrate their latest offerings to the market.

CABSAT 2005, which will be held at the Dubai World Trade Centre Complex on 8-10 March, is already acknowledged in the industry as the ideal showcase in the burgeoning Middle East market for the latest technologies and business strategies, and for providing an avenue for the exploration of new business opportunities. This fact is rein-

forced by leading industry players having scheduled a series of launches and presentations during the event so as to be able to more effectively reach their target audience.

The tenth edition of CABSAT in 2004 saw a remarkable surge in visitor numbers with 6,112 going through the gates, an increase of more than 35 per cent over the 4,523 trade visitors who came to the previous edition of the show. Visitors came in from all parts of the world including the Middle East, Africa, Southern Asia, Europe and the US.

With Dubai being the gateway to the entire Middle East region and being ideally located at the crossroads of a potential market of over two billion consumers, the development of Dubai's media industry has provided increased momentum to the show. CABSAT has also benefited from the region's rapidly developing electronic media markets and associated activities. □

ILS Proton Successfully Launches Amazonas Satellite

Kazakhstan

On 5 August, a Proton rocket launched by International Launch Services (ILS) successfully carried the Amazonas satellite into orbit.

The 58.2-metre tall vehicle lifted off at 4:32AM from Baikonur and the rocket's Breeze M upper stage placed the satellite into a Geostationary Transfer Orbit (GTO) nine hours and 11 minutes later.

The launch vehicle was built by Khronichev State Research and Production Space Centre of Moscow, a partner in the ILS joint venture along with Lockheed Martin Corp. This was the third Proton launch of the year for ILS, and the seventh mission overall for the company in 2004.

The satellite was built for Hispasat of Spain, and will be used by its subsidiaries Hispamar of Brazil and Hispasat

Canarias to provide a multitude of communications services at both C- and Ku-band on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean. When it reaches its operating position of 61 degrees West longitude, the Amazonas satellite will be the largest in the Hispasat fleet. The high-power satellite is a Eurostar E3000 model built by EADS Astrium of Europe, the third E3000 spacecraft launched by ILS this year.

"We thank Hispasat for again selecting an ILS vehicle," said ILS President Mark Albrecht. "We have demonstrated that Hispasat can rely on us for a good launch, whether they choose Proton, or whether they choose Atlas as they have twice before."

Albrecht added that the Proton vehicle has now completed five missions this year, three for ILS and two for the Russian government. "We call this the work-

horse of the Russian fleet, because it flies so often and so reliably. Everyone from start-up businesses to telecommunications giants to participants in the International Space Station (ISS) have put their trust in Proton," he said. "ILS is proud to market this vehicle for commercial satellite launches."

"This is a major milestone for EADS Astrium, with Amazonas being the third Eurostar E3000 version satellite to be launched this year by a Proton Breeze M launcher from ILS," said Antoine Bouvier, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of EADS Astrium. "Amazonas is the most powerful satellite ordered by Hispasat. The satellite was delivered in time, which was very important. This satellite is equipped with a new lithium-ion battery offering higher efficiency. All our teams in Europe were mobilised to make this event a success." □

Helios IIB

France

Alcatel has announced the delivery of the second flight model of the Helios II high-resolution instrument to EADS Astrium for integration on the Helios IIB satellite in Toulouse, due to be launched in late 2009.

This very-high-resolution optical imaging instrument will ensure the continuity of the Earth observation mission within the scope of the Helios II defense programme. The system comprises two satellites, Helios IIA and Helios IIB, in sun-synchronous orbit. EADS Astrium is prime contractor for the two satellites. Alcatel Space has already supplied the two imaging systems currently in orbit on the Helios 1A and Helios 1B satellites. In mid-December 2002, it delivered the HR instrument for Helios IIA, which is expected to be launched by the end of the year. □

GlobeCast expands coverage of Canal Algérie

EMEA/North America

GlobeCast has announced that it has begun distributing Algerian television station Canal Algérie as well as radio stations Chaîne 1 and Chaîne 3 via multiple satellites, expanding the network's coverage over Africa and the Middle East via GlobeCast's C-band Direct-to-Home (DTH) and cable distribution platform on NSS-7, and over North America via the GlobeCast WorldTV DTH platform on Intelsat Americas 5 (IA-5).

Originating in Algiers, Canal Algérie, Chaîne 1 and Chaîne 3 currently broadcast on NSS-7 Ku-band through Télédiffusion d'Algérie. GlobeCast's C-band platform offers expanded coverage of the entire African Continent as well as the Middle East and allows the Algerian broadcaster to reach not only additional DTH viewers, but also cable headends from across the region.

GlobeCast receives the Canal Algérie feed at its technical

operations centre in Paris where it integrates the channel into GlobeCast's NSS-7 multiplex.

Simultaneously, GlobeCast feeds the signal via fibre to its New York teleport for insertion into the GlobeCast WorldTV DTH platform on IA-5. This Ku-band service allows Canal Algérie, Chaîne 1 and Chaîne 3 to reach homes across the continent, as part of the fastest-growing international broadcasting community on American satellite.

Canal Algérie, Chaîne 1 and Chaîne 3 are owned by Algeria's national television group, ENTV.

Launched in 1994, Canal Algérie is a general programming channel, offering a range of programming that brings together news, culture, sports and entertainment for Algerian communities worldwide. Canal Algérie also makes a particular effort to reach out to viewers abroad who are interested in the current political and economic situation in Algeria. □

Golden Telecom signs lease for Intersputnik's LMI-1 capacity

CIS

The Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications and Golden Telecom, a leading independent telecommunication operator in Russia and other countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), signed a contract for the lease of two C-band transponders on the LMI-1 telecommunication satellite, located at 75 degrees East, for the duration of five years. The 72MHz capacity leased by Golden Telecom will be used to provide voice and data transmission within the footprint of the LMI-1 satellite's Beam A.

Ordered by the joint venture Lockheed Martin Intersputnik, the LMI-1 spacecraft was built by Lockheed Martin Commercial

Space Systems (LMCSS) of the US, and brought into use in November 1999. LMI-1 carries 44 high-power transponders in C- and Ku-band and features high station-keeping accuracy. With a guaranteed active lifetime of 15 years, LMI-1 boasts a unique four-beam service area covering the whole of Russia and the CIS, Europe, South and Southeast Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Australia.

LMI-1 is used by telecommunication operators and broadcasters from different countries to establish voice and data transmission channels, Very Small Aperture Terminal-based (VSAT) dedicated networks, digital broadcasting to distribution and user networks, as well as high-speed Internet access. □

300 Gilat VSATs for Koochi Communications Ltd

Nigeria

Gilat Satellite Networks Ltd. will supply to Koochi Communications Ltd. an additional 300 Skystar 360E terminals to deliver broadband communications to Small Office/Home Office (SOHO) and Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) users in Nigeria and West Africa. A rollout of 50 terminals was completed in the Fourth Quarter (Q4) of 2003, with shipment of the additional 300 terminals currently in process.

Koochi Communications Ltd. is a satellite network provider, offering access, deployment and maintenance of satellite solutions to Africa's service providers. Koochi's purchase of a Gilat satellite network based solution will enable the company to de-

liver an efficient broadband alternative to its customers. Koochi will provide its satellite network via a shared Hub facility based in Fuchstadt Germany.

According to Kelly N Kanu, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Koochi Communication, the selection of Gilat's Skystar 360E reflects Koochi's belief in adopting best-of-breed communications solutions, which maintain a consistently proven resilience to our market environment. He said: "Our technical appraisal of the Skystar 360E performance is sincere, as it comes ultimately affirmed by those who inspire us - our clients. This is in many ways, reflective of a business relationship enhanced through affordable pricing and support from Gilat." □

Major milestone at West Coast Atlas V launch pad

US

Lockheed Martin marked a major milestone in its drive to complete the West Coast Atlas V launch facility with the arrival of the fourth and final Fixed Launch Platform (FLP) segment at Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB), California.

"Delivery of the fixed launch platform puts us well on our way to pad completion by the end of the year, and it brings us another step closer to the first Atlas V

launch from the West Coast, which is vital in providing assured access to space for our Air Force customers," said James V. Sponnick, Atlas programme Vice President (VP). "It also marks the successful completion of a complex, one-of-a-kind transportation effort. As long as a football field, the largest FLP transport rig is thought to be the biggest over-the-road shipment ever attempted cross-country." The fixed launch platform supports

the 19-storey Atlas V launch vehicle during its integration on the pad, during fuelling and final preparation for launch, and during the lift-off of the vehicle. Now that all four FLP segments are at the launch pad construction site, construction crews will assemble the entire launch platform structure before positioning it on top of the launch exhaust duct. The first Atlas V booster is on schedule to be launched from the site in 2004. □

ViaSat modems for Connexion by Boeing

Global

ViaSat Inc. has received a follow-on order for 85 airborne modems from Connexion by Boeing.

ViaSat has already delivered around 150 modems to Connexion by Boeing, and this order increases the backlog to well over 100 additional modems. □