China Targets 15 Percent of Satellite Launch Market

Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China is looking to increase its share of the global commercial satellite launching business, targeting a 15 percent share by 2020, a leading space program official said Saturday.

China hopes to increase its market share by establishing strategic alliances with major launch services providers and satellite manufacturers, along with developing its own technology, the deputy head of the China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, Liang Xiaohong, told the official Xinhua News Agency.

China has just 3 percent of the market now, but the goal laid out by Liang points to its ambitions to become a major player in space, just one decade after becoming only the third country after the U.S. and Russia to launch a man into space.

Elsewhere in the Xinhua interview, Liang said China's first solid-fuel rocket that could be launched on short notice would be ready to make its first flight by 2016.

China has a well-developed range of Long March rockets for use in commercial launches, all of which now mainly burn liquid fuel that must be pumped in just prior to launch. Solid fuel rockets can be kept in storage, then fired when needed, making them ideal for military use in launching ballistic missiles.

Liquid-fueled rockets are generally considered best-suited for launching large payloads, while solid rockets are used for placing smaller satellites weighing less than 2 tons into low Earth orbit.

"The development of the Long March 11 will greatly improve China's capabilities to rapidly enter space and meet the emergency launching demand in case of disasters and emergencies," Liang was quoted by Xinhua as saying.

On Friday, China's space program said it would send three astronauts to its orbiting space station this summer as part of preparations to establish an even larger permanent presence above Earth.

The Shenzhou 10 spacecraft, which will likely include one female astronaut, will spend two weeks aboard the Tiangong 1, where the trio will spend two weeks conducting tests of the station's docking system and its systems for supporting life and carrying out scientific work.

Two Chinese spacecraft, one of them manned, have docked already with Tiangong 1 since it was launched in September 2011.

The station is to be replaced in around 2020 with a permanent space station that will weigh about 60 tons, slightly smaller than NASA's Skylab of the 1970s and about one-sixth the size of the 16-nation International Space Station.

Source URL (retrieved on *03/11/2014 - 9:53am*):
http://www.wirelessdesignmag.com/news/2013/03/china-targets-15-percent-satellite-launch-market?qt-most_popular=0