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SINGAPORE

Space bound: Two NTU satellites to be launched in 2015

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One of them is Singapore's first climate satellite, according to Nanyang Technological University, while the other is an experimental communication satellite.



SINGAPORE: Nanyang Technological University (NTU) plans to send two more satellites into outer space by the fourth quarter of 2015, buoyed by the success of its previous launches.

The local varsity hoped to send what it claims to be Singapore's first climate satellite and an experimental communication satellite into space, and these new satellites will be adopting some of the technologies successfully tested by its VELOX-P11 and VELOX-I satellites. The former is a pico-sized device launched a year ago, while its bigger brother was launched in June this year, the press release stated.

The VELOX-P11 and VELOX-I tested a variety of new satellite components built by NTU students and research staff. These include a new radiation-resistant image sensor; a mechanism to control the orientation of the satellites; a new satellite communication system; and a fast response Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) module. Both satellites combined have flown more than 7,600 times around Earth, NTU noted.

For the satellites slated for launch next year, NTU said the VELOX-C1 is a 130kg satellite about the size of a mini fridge. Funded by the Singapore's Economic Development Board, it will be used to study tropical climates.

Using a technique known as radio occultation and advanced algorithms, VELOX-C1 will be able to obtain weather data such as upper atmospheric temperature, humidity and pressure, which are useful for long-term climate studies, said the varsity.

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As for the VELOX-II, it will carry experimental satellite-based communication hardware developed by Addvalue Innovation. If proven successful in space, the payload will allow the satellite to send data back to the NTU ground station from anywhere even if the satellite is not flying above Singapore, as is presently the case, it added.

"The success of the NTU satellites validates the expertise of our satellite engineers, giving us the confidence to integrate our new knowledge into building more advanced satellites, which will help Singapore in its quest to establish a space industry," said Associate Professor Low Kay Soon, Director of NTU's Satellite Research Centre.

- CNA/kk



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