Singapore deploys 3 more satellites for research, monitoring

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The Republic made further strides in space with the launch on Thursday of three new satellites for national, research and commercial uses.

The two larger satellites – developed by government agencies and firms – will act as eyes on the region for various uses such as enhancing maritime security, detecting oil spills and monitoring disasters.

The third and smallest among them, a 3.1kg nanosatellite, was designed and built by more than 50 students from Nanyang Technological University (NTU). This research satellite will remain in space for six months to test new technologies.

On Thursday, a 44m-tall rocket carrying the three satellites lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in South India after 6pm (8.30pm Singapore time). The satellites were released into orbit about 570km above Earth, a little after 8.50pm Singapore time.

Mr David Tan, executive director of Singapore’s space office, the Office for Space Technology and Industry (OSTIn), said: “We are committed to supporting the development of local capabilities in space-based technologies.”

“Part of the solar energy coming to Earth is reflected (back to space). Because of climate change and global warming, we are retaining more of the energy,” said Assistant Professor Amal Chandran from NTU’s Satellite Research Centre, who designed and developed the solar spectrum sensor.

Scoob-I is also the first of three NTU satellite missions that will be helmed by students. The three projects allow them to take on more leadership roles and make decisions related to the missions, said Prof Chandran, who is the director of space science and technology at the research centre.

One of the engineering undergraduates who worked on Scoob-I, Mr Isaac Wong, 25, said: “One of my main tasks was to iron out any remaining kinks in the software and ensure (the satellite) is flight ready.

“It feels unreal to be able to send something I worked on to space.”

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