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Even in Space the East is Rising as China, India and Russia Accelerate Programmes in 2007

But Increased Worldwide Launch Failures Affect Commercial Satellite Launch Schedule

LONDON--(BUSINESS WIRE)--It was a record breaking year for both China's and India's space programmes as each successfully launched more satellites in 2007 than in any previous year. Russia's space programme also accelerated, while the overall number of orbital launch attempts globally reached its highest level since 2000.

According to analysis by [Ascend](#), the world's leading provider of information and consultancy to the global aerospace industry, China launched 11 satellites in 2007 and India 7, up from 8 and 1 respectively in 2006.

Over the last decade, China has notched up an impressive and reliable launch record, with Sino-spacecraft successfully transporting dozens of satellites and taikonauts (Chinese astronauts) into orbit. In 2007 alone, China secured a record 10 successful launches and, for the fourth consecutive year suffered no launch failures. China's Commission of Science, Technology and Industry for National Defence (COSTIND) plans for 2008 are even more ambitious: it has already scheduled 15 launches for the New Year, including the third manned launch of the Shenzhou spacecraft. The craft will be crewed by three taikonauts, one of which is expected also to conduct a short spacewalk.

Launch failures up

Worldwide, 117 satellites were launched in 2007 on 68 flights – up from 115 and 66 the year before. A further year-on-year increase in the number of Russian launches underpinned this recovery. However, five launch-related failures and partial failures across the year, the most since 2000, impacted on commercial satellite launch schedules, with only 16 launches, down from 20 in 2006.

The Sea Launch and Proton launch failures during the year and reports in December that RASCOM QAF 1 and EXPRESS AM-22 satellites have major in orbit anomalies combined to deliver space insurers their first annual market loss since 2001. Claims and expected claims in 2007 currently total more than \$750m, and could reach \$850m. This is well in excess of the broker estimated gross premiums of around \$650 million.

A fragile confidence

“We are beginning to see China and India really flex their muscles in space,” says Gehan Talwate, Managing Director of Ascend. “The two have been building their capability over the last 20 years and their growing confidence is reflected in accelerating and increasingly bold space programmes for 2008. However, the launch failure rate globally remains stubbornly high and, in 2007, the space insurance market saw its first loss for five years. These two factors underline just how fragile the industry can be.”

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