

Proton-M Rocket Launch Leaves Behind Mysterious Trail in Russian Skies

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A zigzag-shaped cloud has appeared in the skies above Russia's southern Altai region, following the launch of a rocket in nearby Kazakhstan.

The Proton-M rocket, carrying a Yamal-401 telecommunications satellite, blasted off in the early hours of Monday morning from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. The satellite has since been successfully launched into orbit, Russia's Federal Space Agency said in an online statement.

Shortly after the launch, residents in Gorno-Altai sk noticed an unusual scribble-shaped cloud had formed in the skies above their town, which experts tied to the disengagement of the rocket's second stage above the region, local news site Novosti Gornogo Altaya reported.

Altai, which lies on the path for all launches into space from Baikonur, functions as a "special zone" for falling space debris, the report added.

The last time such a cloud was witnessed in the region was about Nov. 12 last year, the report

said, citing one reader as saying that low temperatures are needed to facilitate the emergence of such clouds.

The Yamal-401 satellite, which is capable of beaming telecoms signals across Europe and Asia, has a shelf life of 15 years.

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