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- [Local News](#)
- [Borneo News](#)
- [World News](#)
- [Sports](#)

- [BB Weekend Online](#)
- [BB Sunday Online](#)
- [Media Permata Online](#)

- [About Us](#)
- [Letters to the Editor](#)
- [Feedback & Comments](#)

WORLD News

German amateur group plans to put satellite in orbit around Mars

BOCHUM, Germany (dpa) - A German amateur group that has already taken part in nine successful space missions confirmed on Saturday plans to put a satellite in orbit around the planet Mars by 2009.

The 500-kilogramme spacecraft would leave earth on top of an Ariane rocket launched in Guyana, and would take nine months to reach the red planet. Signals back to earth would be at a frequency that can be picked up by radio amateurs, or hams, anywhere in the world.

The German chapter of AMSAT is a part of a worldwide group of hams who build, launch and communicate with each other through non-commercial amateur-radio satellites. The German chapter met Saturday in the city of Bochum to celebrate its 30th anniversary.

