

World's largest plane takes off; it's a satellite rocket launcher!

In the Mojave Desert, California on April 13th, 2019 an epic event took place. The sun rose along with the world's largest plane! It dominated the skies during its 150 minutes test flight. It flew to a peak altitude of 17,000 feet and hit a top speed of 304 km/h. After 72 long years, Howard Hughes's record for building the largest plane has been broken! Hughes built a flying boat meant for transatlantic transportation during WWII but it was completed only after the war. What's interesting is that it was made entirely of wood!

The behemoth of 2019 has been designed by Stratolaunch. It was the late Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen's brainchild and he funded it. Although it is the largest plane, it is not the heaviest. This plane has a wingspan the size of a football field! This twin fuselage jet with its six engines looks like two jets fused together. What this plane is designed to do is mind blowing. It's a satellite rocket launcher and can carry three satellite laden rockets at a time! Once it reaches a certain altitude, the rocket will fire up and take the satellite into orbit.

There are a limited number of places from where rockets can be launched. The air launch to orbit method allows a rocket to be launched from any point. The plane carries the rocket into thin air which then takes off. This improves performance and saves on fuel costs. Bad weather will not affect a launch as it does a traditional launch. The plane can fly over bad weather and launch away. Another bonus is that booking a launch will become as easy as booking a flight. "Today's flight furthers our mission to provide a flexible alternative to ground launched systems," said Jean Floyd, CEO of Stratolaunch.



Vaijayanti is a writer, a nature enthusiast and an amateur wildlife photographer. She hopes her virtual pen and lens can make the world a better place