

## NASA's latest communications satellite arrives in orbit

[Washington](#), Aug 18 ( [IANS](#)) [NASA](#) on Friday said its third and final in a series of next generation communications satellites has successfully been placed into orbit.

The Tracking and Data Relay Satellite-M (TDRS-M), launched aboard a [United Launch Alliance](#) (ULA) Atlas V rocket with a liftoff at 8:29 a.m. EDT from [Cape Canaveral Air Force Station](#)'s Space Launch Complex 41.

NASA said it will conduct additional tests before putting the Boeing-made TDRS-M into service early next year.

When ready, TDRS-M will become part of NASA's [Space Network](#) providing navigation and high-data-rate communications to the International Space Station, NASA's [Hubble Space Telescope](#), rockets and a host of other spacecraft.

"The [TDRS](#) fleet is a critical connection delivering science and human spaceflight data to those who can use it here on [Earth](#)," said [Dave Littmann](#), the TDRS project manager at NASA's [Goddard Space Flight Center](#) in Greenbelt, Maryland.

"TDRS-M will expand the capabilities and extend the lifespan of the Space Network, allowing us to continue receiving and transmitting mission data well into the next decade," Littmann said.

TDRS-M's predecessors, TDRS-K and TDRS-L, also launched on Atlas V rockets from the same launch complex in January 2013 and January 2014, respectively

More than an hour and a half after launch, the TDRS-M spacecraft separated from the rocket's Centaur upper stage, heralding the end of the launch effort and the mission's beginning.

Following several months of calibration and testing, TDRS-M will be renamed TDRS-13, and it will be eligible to begin supporting NASA's Space Network.

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