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INDIA'S COMMUNICATION SATELLITE GSAT-31 LAUNCHED SUCCESSFULLY FROM FRENCH GUIANA

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Department of Space

India's communication satellite GSAT-31 launched successfully from French Guiana

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India's latest communication satellite, GSAT-31 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana during the early hours today.

The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 lifted off from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana at 2:31 am (IST) carrying India's GSAT-31 and Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 satellites, as scheduled.

After a 42-min flight, GSAT-31 separated from the Ariane 5 upper stage in an elliptical Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit with a perigee (nearest point to Earth) of 250 km and an apogee (farthest point to Earth) of 35,850 km, inclined at an angle of 3.0 degree to the equator.

With a lift-off mass of 2536 kg, GSAT-31 will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit. The satellite will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites. GSAT-31 derives its heritage from ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT satellite series.

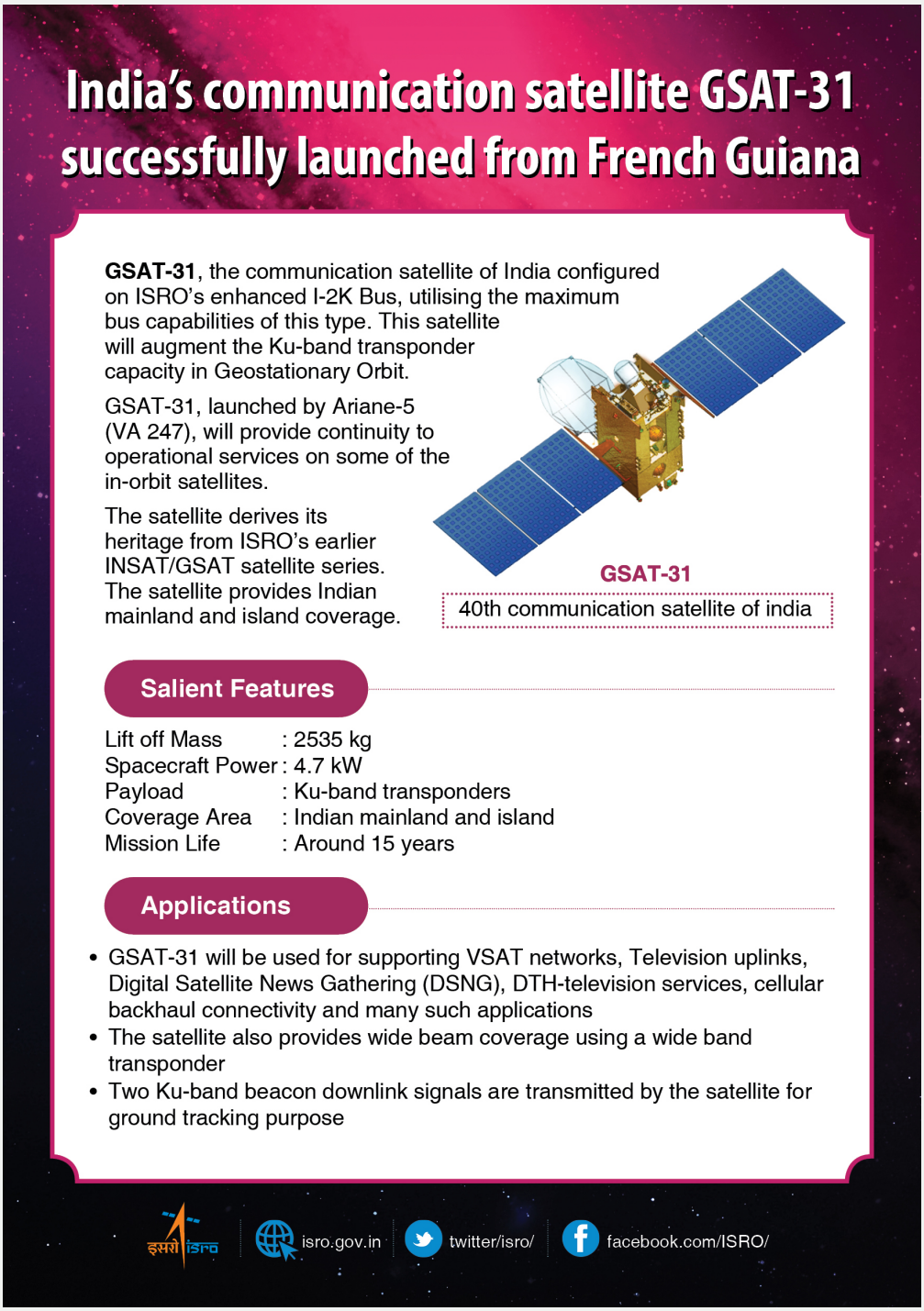
"GSAT-31 has a unique configuration of providing flexible frequency segments and flexible coverage. The satellite will provide communication services to Indian mainland and islands" ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan said.

Dr. Sivan also remarked that "GSAT-31 will provide DTH Television Services, connectivity to VSATs for ATM, Stock-exchange, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) and e-governance applications. The satellite will also be used for bulk data transfer for a host of emerging telecommunication applications."

After separation from Ariane-5 upper stage, the two solar arrays of GSAT-31 were automatically deployed in quick succession and ISRO's Master Control Facility at Hassan in Karnataka took over the command and control of GSAT-31 and found its health parameters normal.

In the days ahead, scientists will undertake phase-wise orbit-raising manoeuvres to place the satellite in Geostationary Orbit (36,000 km above the equator) using its on-board propulsion system.

During the final stages of its orbit raising operations, the antenna reflector of GSAT-31 will be deployed. Following this, the satellite will be put in its final orbital configuration. The satellite will be operational after the successful completion of all in-orbit tests.



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