

GSAT-6A to give armed forces a shot in the arm

The GSAT-6A is scheduled to be launched from Siharikota in Andhra Pradesh on March 29. | Photo Credit: [ISRO](#)

GSAT-6A, the second predominantly S-band communications satellite, is set to be launched from Sriharikota on March 29.

It will complement GSAT-6, which has been orbiting since August 2015 at 83 degrees East longitude. The 2,000-kg-class 6A, costing about 270 crore, is a great deal more than a routine communications satellite. It is designated for the use of the Armed Forces and will not add any transponder capacity for general uses, according to sources in the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

A special feature of the GSAT-6A is its 6-metre-wide umbrella-like antenna, which will be unfurled in once it is in space. The antenna is thrice as broad as the antennas generally used in ISRO satellites. It will enable mobile communication from anywhere via hand-held ground terminals. Regular communication satellites with smaller antenna require much larger ground stations, said a former director of ISRO.

The S-band's antenna was developed by ISRO's Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad. The unfurl-able antenna, hand-held ground terminals, and network management techniques could be useful in future satellite-based mobile communication applications. GSAT-6A will also have a smaller 0.8-metre antenna for communication in the C band. GSAT-6A is slated to be launched at 4.56 p.m. on a GSLV rocket.

Perkin discovered the first synthetic dye, known as mauveine.

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