

ONEWEB SATELLITES SET FOR LAUNCH BY SPACEX

Relevant for: Science & Technology | Topic: Space Technology & related matters

NEW DELHI : British satellite internet service provider OneWeb, whose satellite launch plans were suspended as a collateral impact of the Ukraine-Russia conflict, has chosen American space operator SpaceX to launch the remainder of its satellites with. Announced earlier today, OneWeb stated that the first launch with SpaceX is “anticipated in 2022” – without disclosing either the terms of the agreement, or a timeline for when the first batch of OneWeb satellites could be launched with SpaceX.

“We thank SpaceX for their support, which reflects our shared vision for the boundless potential of space. With these launch plans in place, we’re on track to finish building out our full fleet of satellites and deliver robust, fast, secure connectivity around the globe,” said Neil Masterson, chief executive of OneWeb.

OneWeb is part-owned by Indian telecom operator Bharti Group, along with the government of the United Kingdom. The company is building a constellation of 648 low-Earth orbit (LEO) satellites, of which 428 satellites, or two-thirds of the constellation, have already been deployed in orbit. OneWeb’s regular launches were being conducted with Russian rocket Soyuz, which is operated by Roscosmos – the Russian state-owned space agency.

However, regular plans came to a halt after Roscosmos chief, Dmitry Rogozin, stated earlier this month that the Russian space agency would no longer launch OneWeb satellites aboard their rockets – unless the UK government decides to give up their stake in the company, and OneWeb signs an agreement stating that their satellites will play no part in any geopolitical conditions. Rogozin’s words came as conflicts escalated between Ukraine and Russia, which prompted numerous countries, including the UK, to impose economic sanctions against Russia.

A total of 36 OneWeb satellites were scheduled to be launched aboard an upcoming Soyuz mission, but plans were put on hold in the aftermath of this announcement. On 9 March, a OneWeb spokesperson had told Mint that the company was “looking at all available options”, which also included the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro), to complete launches of their future satellites.

Shivaji Chatterjee, senior vice-president of Hughes Communications, a technology partner of Bharti Global and OneWeb for their satellite internet plans, told Mint that Roscosmos’ refusal to launch OneWeb satellites will likely push back plans for OneWeb’s global commercial launch of services by a couple of months.

Chatterjee had also affirmed that losing the batch of 36 satellites due to Russia’s refusal to continue its contract would likely not affect OneWeb too heavily. “The situation is not like how it would have been with geostationary satellites, where only one satellite is made and launched. Now, a new set of satellites will need to be added at the end of the schedule. Each one of OneWeb’s 648 satellites in the constellation can be made every day by Airbus. If 36 satellites are lost, they can be made up in the next 40 days or so,” he said.

OneWeb also stated that its services are now being activated above the 50th latitude, allowing early internet operators to start offering their services on the ground.

Never miss a story! Stay connected and informed with Mint. [Download](#) our App Now!!

Log in to our website to save your bookmarks. It'll just take a moment.

Oops! Looks like you have exceeded the limit to bookmark the image. Remove some to bookmark this image.

Your session has expired, please login again.

You are now subscribed to our newsletters. In case you can't find any email from our side, please check the spam folder.

This is a subscriber only feature [Subscribe Now](#) to get daily updates on WhatsApp

END

Downloaded from **crackIAS.com**

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

crackIAS.com