South Asia Satellite

Why in news?

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India launched ‘South Asia satellite’ on May 5 2017. This sends a positive signal to the neighbourhood.

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What are the facts about the satellite?

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- The South Asia Satellite (GSAT-9) is a geosynchronous communications and meteorology satellite by the Indian Space Research Organisation.
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- It is launched for the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) region.
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- This idea was mooted by India in 18th SAARC summit.
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- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka are the users of the multi-dimensional facilities provided by the satellite.
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- By launching the GSAT-9 ‘South Asia satellite’, India has reaffirmed the Indian Space Research Organisation’s scientific prowess, but the messaging is perhaps more geopolitical than geospatial.
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What are the benefits of the launch?

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- The benefits the countries would receive in communication, telemedicine, meteorological forecasting and broadcasting.
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- China is planning to launch a cloud for the countries in the south east region, but India wisely took the lead by lunching the SAARC satellite.

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- It is prove once again that India is the only country in South Asia that has independently launched satellites on indigenously developed launch vehicles.
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- More than scientific endeavour, this geopolitically strengthens India’s Strong neighbour’s policy.
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What is the hassle with Pakistan?

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- In recent years Pakistan and Sri Lanka have launched satellites with assistance from China.
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- Pakistan denied the trade permission between Afghanistan and India via the land route, this created distress mong the SAARC countries.
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- Pakistan initially declared its intention of participating in the project, and offered India monetary and technical help.
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- India rejected Pakistani offers, saying that it wanted the project to be a "gift" and multi-national collaboration would be time consuming.
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- As a result, Pakistan declined to participate in the project.
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What is the way forward?

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- This the right move at right time by India as our neighbouring countries trying to seek china’s help for space programs
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- With the GSLV launch India is showing that where it is capable its commitment to the development of its neighbours is strong.
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- Finally, by going ahead with the project despite Pakistan’s decision to pull out, present Government is signalling that it will continue with its plans for the neighbourhood SAARC minus one’ if necessary.
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- It is clear from the launch that if our counterpart Pakistan fails to give Co-

operation through land, we can connect with neighbouring countries through space.
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Source: The Hindu

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