NASA Satellite Tumbles from Orbit as Rescue Team Mobilises

Description

The Swift spacecraft is expected to crash back to Earth, likely before the year ends, unless it receives a boost in altitude. Katalyst Space Technologies plans to use its robotic servicing spacecraft, named Link, to dock with Swift and extend its operational life.

This mission involves several challenges. Swift was not originally designed for docking or altitude boosts. Additionally, this will be Katalyst's first attempt to connect with another satellite. NASA has set a tight deadline of nine months for Katalyst to build, test, and launch the mission before Swift descends too low for a safe intervention.

Ghonhee Lee, founder and CEO of Katalyst, described the mission as technically ambitious. The spacecraft is scheduled for launch on June 1, but there is little room for mistakes. By late summer or early autumn, Swift's altitude could drop below 200 miles (320 kilometres), jeopardising the mission.

NASA aims to achieve two objectives: to showcase important technology for future space missions and to save the Swift spacecraft from an uncontrolled re-entry, allowing it to continue its scientific work. Lee noted that achieving a 100% success rate is unlikely.

During a recent visit to Katalyst, technicians were diligently soldering parts and assembling solar panels. A company official commented that while the project is not as advanced as typical government missions, significant progress has been made in just five months.

Vocabulary List:

1. **altitude** //ˈæltəˌtuːd// (noun): height above the ground or sea
2. **dock** //dɑk// (verb): to join two ships or vehicles together
3. **robotic** //roʊˈbɑtɪk// (adjective): made or controlled by robots or machines
4. **deadline** //ˈdɛdˌlaɪn// (noun): a time by which something must be finished
5. **jeopardising** //ˈdʒɛpərˌdaɪzɪŋ// (verb): putting something at risk of harm or loss
6. **intervention** //ˌɪntərˈvɛnʃən// (noun): an action to change a dangerous situation

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What is the expected timeline for the Swift spacecraft to crash back to Earth?

   Option: Before the year ends
   Option: Next year
   Option: In five years
   Option: In a month

2. What does Katalyst Space Technologies plan to use to extend Swift's operational life?

   Option: A satellite
   Option: A rover
   Option: Link
   Option: A drone

3. What is the deadline set by NASA for Katalyst to complete the mission?

   Option: Six months
   Option: Nine months
   Option: One year
   Option: Three months

4. Who is the founder and CEO of Katalyst?

   Option: Elon Musk
   Option: Jeff Bezos
   Option: Ghonhee Lee
   Option: Richard Branson

5. When is the spacecraft scheduled for launch?

   Option: June 1
   Option: July 1
   Option: May 1
   Option: August 1

6. What altitude could Swift's altitude drop below by late summer or early autumn?

   Option: 300 miles
   Option: 150 miles
   Option: 200 miles
   Option: 250 miles

True-False

7. The Swift spacecraft was originally designed for docking.

8. Katalyst's mission is their first attempt to connect with another satellite.

9. NASA has allowed ten months for Katalyst to complete the mission.

10. Ghonhee Lee described the mission as easy and straightforward.

11. The mission aims to save the Swift spacecraft from an uncontrolled re-entry.

12. Achieving a 100% success rate for the mission is considered likely by Lee.

Gap-Fill

13. The Swift spacecraft is expected to crash back to Earth unless it receives a boost in altitude. Katalyst plans to use _____ to dock with Swift.

14. NASA set a deadline of nine months for Katalyst to build, test, and launch the mission before Swift descends too _____.

15. Ghonhee Lee noted that achieving a _____ success rate is unlikely.

16. The spacecraft is scheduled for launch on June 1, but there is little room for _____.

17. By late summer or early autumn, Swift's altitude could drop below _____ miles.

18. During a recent visit to Katalyst, technicians were soldering parts and assembling _____.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. Before the year ends 2. Link 3. Nine months 4. Ghonhee Lee 5. June 1 6. 200 miles
True-False: 7. False 8. True 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. False
Gap-Fill: 13. Link 14. low 15. 100% 16. mistakes 17. 200 18. solar panels

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL4

POST TAG

1. B2
2. ESL learning
3. esl news
4. falling out of orbit
5. Level 4
6. NASA satellite
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