NASA’s $500 Million Telescope Passes Critical Testing Stage

Description

A NASA mission aims to save a $500 million space observatory called the Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory. It risks falling and burning in the atmosphere without help.

On Friday, NASA said the Link spacecraft, made by Katalyst Space Technologies, completed important tests at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center in Maryland. This testing finished on May 4. Link will now return to Katalyst’s site in Colorado for more tests before launch.

John Van Eepoel from NASA says this mission is fast and risky. If nothing is done, Swift will likely fall this year. Katalyst completed these tests in only eight months. Swift cannot move on its own and has been going down in orbit. It is currently at about 400 km above the Earth and will re-enter the atmosphere in late 2026 without help.

In 2025, NASA gave Katalyst a $30 million contract to build Link. This spacecraft will dock with Swift and help it rise higher in orbit. The launch is set for June.

Vocabulary List:

1. **observatory** //əbˈzɝvətɔri// (noun): a building with equipment to study space
2. **atmosphere** //ˈætməsfɪr// (noun): the air around a planet or object
3. **orbit** //ˈɔrbɪt// (noun): the path something follows around a planet
4. **dock** //dɑk// (verb): to connect one spacecraft to another
5. **contract** //ˈkɑntrækt// (noun): a written agreement for work or money
6. **mission** //ˈmɪʃən// (noun): a planned trip to achieve a goal

Comprehension Questions

Multiple Choice

1. What is the budget of the Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory?

   Option: $500 million
   Option: $300 million
   Option: $400 million

Option: $600 million

2. Who made the Link spacecraft?

Option: NASA
Option: Katalyst Space Technologies
Option: Lockheed Martin
Option: Boeing

3. When did the testing of the Link spacecraft finish?

Option: April 20
Option: May 4
Option: June 10
Option: March 15

4. What does the Link spacecraft aim to do?

Option: Build a new observatory
Option: Dock with Swift
Option: Monitor Earth
Option: Send data to Mars

5. In what year did NASA give Katalyst a contract for Link?

Option: 2025
Option: 2024
Option: 2023
Option: 2026

6. What is the launch date set for Link?

Option: May 2026
Option: June 2025
Option: June 2023
Option: July 2024

True-False

7. The Neil Gehrels Swift Observatory is in danger of falling into the ocean.

8. Katalyst Space Technologies took over a year to complete the tests for the Link spacecraft.

9. Swift can move on its own.

10. NASA is launching the Link spacecraft in 2026.

11. The Swift Observatory is currently at about 400 km above the Earth.

12. If no action is taken, Swift will fall in late 2026.

Gap-Fill

13. The Link spacecraft will dock with Swift and help it rise higher in _____.

14. Katalyst completed the tests for the Link spacecraft in only _____ months.

15. NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center is located in _____.

16. Swift is currently at about 400 km above the _____ and risks falling.

17. NASA gave Katalyst a _____ million contract to build the Link spacecraft.

18. The launch of Link is set for _____ 2026.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. $500 million 2. Katalyst Space Technologies 3. May 4 4. Dock with Swift 5. 2025 6. June
True-False: 7. False 8. False 9. False 10. False 11. True 12. True
Gap-Fill: 13. orbit 14. eight 15. Maryland 16. Earth 17. 30 18. June

Vocabulary quizzes

Multiple Choice (Select the Correct answer for each question.)

1. What does a lap refer to in racing?

Option: A single circuit around the racetrack
Option: The distance covered in a race
Option: A team of racers
Option: The time taken for a race

2. What is the purpose of downforce in a racecar?

Option: To increase speed
Option: To improve grip on the track
Option: To reduce weight
Option: To lower fuel consumption

3. Why are brake upgrades important for a racing vehicle?

Option: To improve acceleration
Option: To enhance stopping power
Option: To increase engine performance
Option: To reduce tire wear

4. In the context of space exploration, what does 'mission' refer to?

Option: A project timeline
Option: A scientific objective
Option: A team of astronauts
Option: An orbit path

5. What role does technology play in modern racing?

Option: It has no impact
Option: It enhances performance and safety
Option: It is only for marketing
Option: It replaces the need for skill

6. What is the main function of an observatory?

Option: To conduct experiments
Option: To observe astronomical events
Option: To manufacture telescopes
Option: To study weather patterns

7. What is often measured to evaluate a racetrack's performance?

Option: Length
Option: Driver skill
Option: Lap times
Option: Vehicle color

8. What is the purpose of a dock in space missions?

Option: To launch spacecraft
Option: To store fuel
Option: To connect spacecraft
Option: To transport astronauts

9. Which generation of racing cars typically features advanced technology?

Option: First generation
Option: Second generation
Option: Current generation
Option: Final generation

10. What type of challenges do filmmakers face in showbusiness?

Option: Budget management
Option: Scriptwriting
Option: Making content viral
Option: All of the above

Gap-Fill (Fill in the blanks with the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

11. Racetrack upgrades are essential for improving lap times and overall _____.

12. Many race cars are modified to enhance their speed and _____.

13. The team experimented with lightweight materials to reduce the weight of the _____

.

14. During the race, several quick fixes were required to address unexpected _____.

15. The astronaut must recover the data from the mission after returning to _____.

16. Technical delays during the launch can cause significant _____.

17. Enhancements in visual technology have revolutionized the way we experience _____

.

18. The observatory provides a unique perspective on the planet's _____.

19. Astronomers aim to discover new celestial objects outside our solar _____.

20. The racing team signed a contract with a new sponsor to enhance their financial

_____.

Matching Sentences (Match each definition to the correct word from the vocabulary list.)

21. The spacecraft entered a stable orbital path around the planet successfully.
22. Many students dream of entering showbusiness and becoming famous.
23. Every racer faces unique challenges during competitions that test their skills.
24. The researchers gathered information from various sources to complete their study.
25. As the spacecraft ascended, it gradually disappears from the observers' view.
26. Meeting the technical requirements is crucial for mission success.
27. Recent upgrades to the racetrack have improved safety and performance.
28. The car's brakes were upgraded to enhance performance during the race.
29. The modification of the engine led to significant boosts in speed.
30. The performance of the vehicle is assessed after every race.

Answer

Multiple Choice: 1. A single circuit around the racetrack 2. To improve grip on the track 3. To enhance stopping power 4. A scientific objective 5. It enhances performance and safety 6. To observe astronomical events 7. Lap times 8. To connect spacecraft 9. Current generation 10. All of the above
Gap-Fill: 11. performance 12. aerodynamics 13. racecar 14. issues 15. Earth 16. setbacks 17. film 18. atmosphere 19. system 20. support
Matching sentence: 1. orbital 2. showbusiness 3. challenges 4. information 5. disappears 6. requirements 7. upgrades 8. brakes 9. modification 10. performance

CATEGORY

1. Sci/Tech - LEVEL1

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1. ESL learning
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4. NASA
5. rescue mission

6. space telescope

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