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# CHINA DAILY

香港版  
HONG KONG

中國日報

WEDNESDAY, January 24, 2024

[www.chinadailyhk.com](http://www.chinadailyhk.com) HK \$10

## Earth-observation satellite commissioned

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The China National Space Administration formally commissioned an advanced Earth-observation satellite on Tuesday afternoon.

At a commissioning ceremony in Beijing, officials from the space administration and the spacecraft's users including the Ministry of Ecology and Environment, the Ministry of Natural Resources and the China Meteorological Administration signed a certificate to open formal operations of the Hyperspectral Multifunctional Observation Satellite, also known as Gaofen 5-01A.

Several world-class apparatuses on the satellite, including a wide thermal infrared imager and an advanced hyper-spectral imager, will help scientists track greenhouse gases such as nitrogen dioxide and ozone, monitor water quality in lakes and rivers, and look for minerals and other resources, the administration said in a news release.

Data obtained by the spacecraft will support China's efforts to protect its ecosystems and natural resources and to respond to climate change, according to mission planners.

At the event, the administration released products created using data collected by the satellite, such as maps of the global ozone-column concentration, global nitrogen dioxide-column concentration, soil moisture and water quality.

Launched by a Long March 2D carrier rocket from the Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in Shanxi province in December 2022, the satellite now travels in a sun-synchronous orbit 705 kilometers above the ground.

The satellite was built by the Shanghai Academy of Spaceflight Technology.

During its trial operation, ground controllers carried out tests on its equipment and checked its overall capability, the administration said.

By Tuesday, the satellite had transmitted 245 terabytes of data, including nearly 86,000 remote-sensing images, back to ground control.

Zhao Jian, director of the space administration's Earth Observation and Data Center, said that during the satellite's research and development, designers worked out several new technologies to give it self-calibration and high-performance data processing capabilities.

"Through the in-orbit tests and assessment, it is fair to say that the satellite's accuracy of radiometric and spectral calibrations and its imaging quality and stability are the best of their kinds," he told reporters after the commissioning ceremony.

"It will also play an important role in bolstering international cooperation by providing data support to scientists around the world for their climate change research," Zhao noted.

China launched the Gaofen program in May 2010 and listed it as one of 16 nationally important projects in science and technology. At present, the program has placed more than 20 satellites in active service.

Images and data from the Gaofen high-resolution Earth observation network have been widely used by thousands of research bodies and enterprises in 28 industries across China and have helped reduce the country's dependence on foreign remote-sensing products.