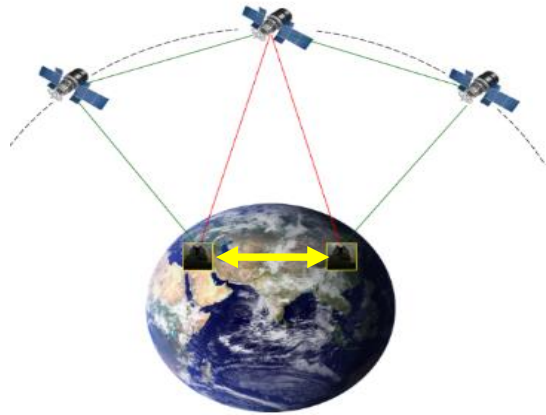


“Building a Quantum Network”

# Quantum Technologies in Satellite Communication



**The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place !**

**--- George Bernard Shaw (GBS)**

March 27, 2023

**By**  
**Nilesh M Desai**  
Director

Space Applications Centre (ISRO)  
Ahmedabad

**Key National Missions:** “Enabling future preparedness in emerging domains of science and technology”



Building excellence in the quantum frontier through this mission is essential for national security and development of quantum computers, **quantum communication**, new materials, **quantum sensors**, and **quantum cryptography**.

# The Nobel Prize in Physics 2022

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the Nobel Prize in Physics 2022 to

## Alain Aspect

Université Paris-Saclay and  
École Polytechnique, Palaiseau, France



## John F. Clauser

J.F. Clauser & Assoc.,  
Walnut Creek, CA, USA



## Anton Zeilinger

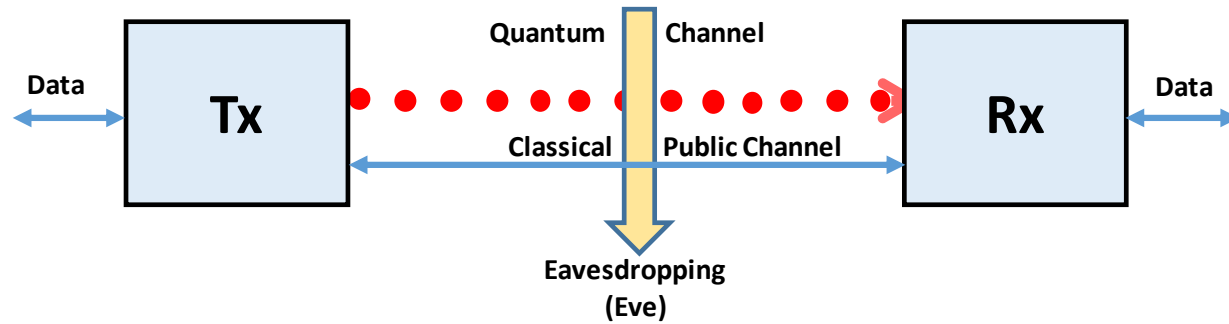
University of Vienna, Austria



- They experimented with entangled photons, establishing the violation of Bell inequalities and pioneered quantum information science.
- At the heart of their research was quantum physics, a field of science that aims to study matter and energy at the most fundamental level. Each of the three winners conducted groundbreaking experiments using entangled quantum states, where two particles behave like a single unit even when they are separated.

The world is now moving towards quantum communication, which is being held as the safest way of communicating that works on principles of hard encryption.

# Quantum communication



Quantum Channel	Classical public channel
Secure key generation & distribution	Encrypted Communication

## Salient Features :

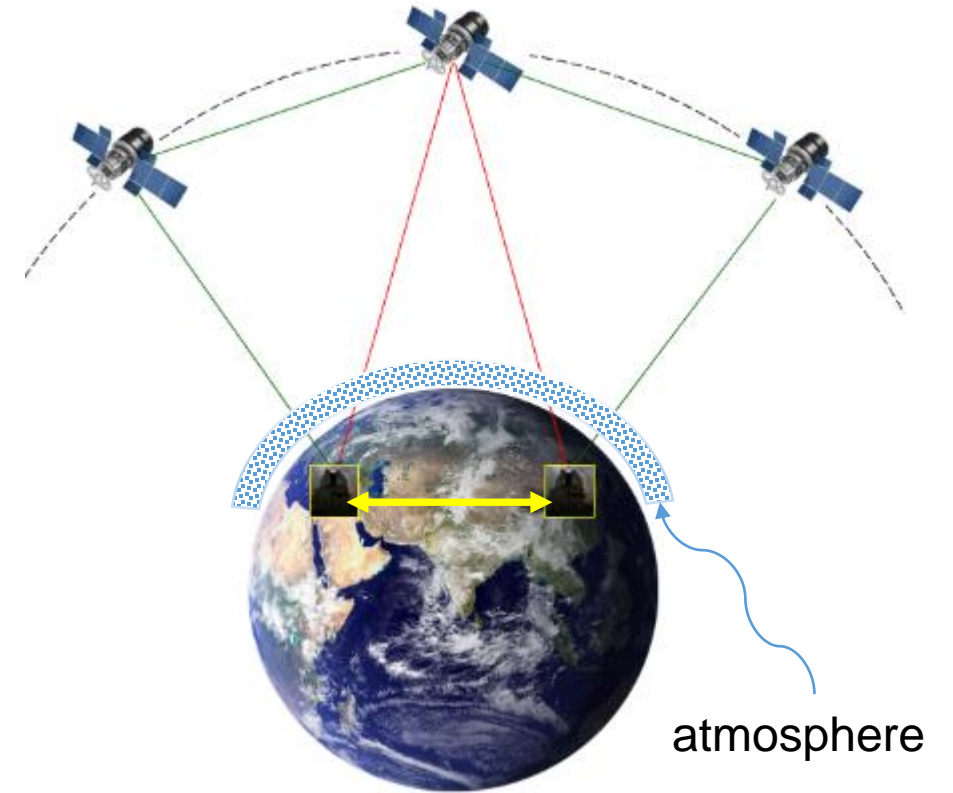
- Security of cryptographic protocols is based on the laws of quantum physics, and not on the unproven assumptions of computational complexity theory.
- Quantum cryptography or **Quantum Key Distribution (QKD)** provides a level of communication security that cannot be obtained by classical cryptographic means.
- Urgency for secure Quantum communication is due to threat perception from quantum computing that is drawing huge investments from industry as well as governments.

## Applications :

- Satellite based Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) over larger distances
- Banking/ Finance Industry: Protecting sensitive client information
- Credit card industry: Protecting customer credit card information
- Government and defence industry
- Protecting high value/sensitive data in remote data centres
- NavIC based RS-Key distribution

# Why Satellite based Quantum Communication (SBQC) ?

- The quantum communication relies on individual photons to carry quantum information.
- But even the best optical fibers/ terrestrial free space can carry these photons only upto few hundreds of kilometers before light absorption makes the process impossible.
- The Quantum satellites can be set up for intra & intercontinental quantum cryptography services for secure data communication and distances of the order of thousands of kilometer are possible.
- China & Japan have successfully demonstrated Quantum Communication experiments from satellite to ground.



# Worldwide Developments Related to Satellite based quantum communication (SBQC)

- ✓ Free space entangled photon distribution over 13km (**China**)
- ✓ Free space QKD over 144km using decoy state BB84 & E91 protocol (**Spain**)
- ✓ BB84 QKD achieved over 148.7 km of optical fiber
- ✓ Measuring polarization characteristics through LEO-to-ground atmospheric transmission paths (**OICETS-Japan**)

- ✓ Free space entangled photon distribution over 100km & Gnd-Sat QKD verification using hot air balloon (**China**)
- ✓ BB84 between moving airplane and OGS (**DLR-Germany**)
- ✓ LEO-Gnd polarization measurements (**SOTA-Japan**)
- ✓ Validating entangled photon source in space -1U Cubesat (**SPEQS-1 - Singapore**)
- ✓ GEO-Gnd CV-QKD experiment (**AlphaSat XL - ESA**)

- ✓ Decoy state BB84 QKD & Entangled photon distribution over 1200km using Micius satellite (**QUESS-China**)
- ✓ Sat-Gnd quantum-limited communication & polarization measurement using a 50-kg-class microsatellite (**SOTA-Japan**)
- ✓ Miniaturized polarization entangled photon pair source on board testing - 3U CubeSat (**SpooQy-1-Singapore**)

2005 - 2010

2011 - 2015

2016 - 2020

2021 - 2025

- Receiver onboard satellite to measure uplink quantum signals (**QEYSSAT-Canada**)
- Long distance QKD using CubeSat uplink (**NanoQEY-Canada**)
- BB84 QKD and Sat-Gnd entangled photon distribution using 6U satellite (**CQuCoM-UK, Austria, Singapore, Italy**)

- Space-to-ground QKD experiment from the ISS (**SpaceQUEST-ESA**)
- Network of 6U CubeSats for communication with ground stations across UK (**QUARC-UK**)
- WCP source downlink QKD and compact QRNG - 3U CubeSat (**QUBE-Germany**)
- Uplink polarisation based Quantum comm. on 12U & 3U CubeSat (**NanoBob & Q3sat - Austria**)

- Downlink QKD demonstration using 6U cubesat (**ROKS - UK**)
- Sending an integrated entangled photon source (810nm+1550nm) to ISS (**SEAQUE - NASA**)
- Deploy a satellite QKD test bed using 12U cubesat (**SPEQTRE - Singapore**)
- Spaceworthy entanglement and WCP source based QKD validation onboard (**QuantESS and QuTDS - India**)
- OQC payload development and establishment of satellite to ground Quantum comm. link (**India**)

- Demonstrated milestones
- Proposed missions

# Successful Demo missions/programs related to QKD

## Micius

Year	2016
Organization	Chinese Academy of Sciences, University of Vienna, Austrian Academy of sciences
Objective	<b>Decoy state BB84, Entanglement distribution, Optical communication link</b>
Orbit/Link details	LEO (600km) -> Gnd
Parameters	BB84 QKD (weak coherent source based) @ 850nm : keyrate ~ 1.1 kbps to 10kbps, BBM92 QKD (entangled source based) @ 810nm : < 1 bps keyrate



Fig. The Micius satellite and the payloads

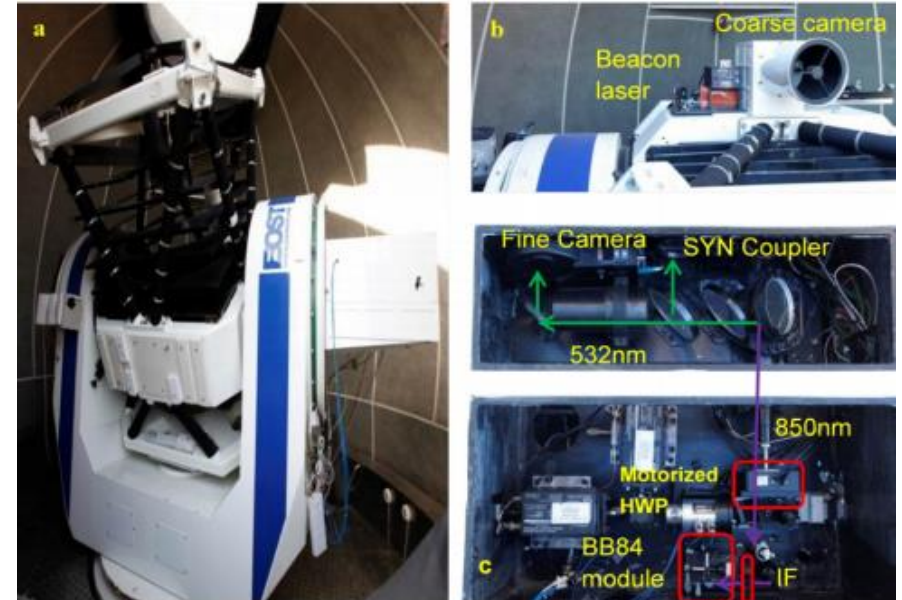
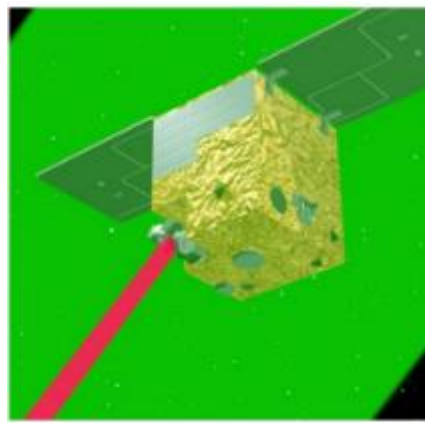
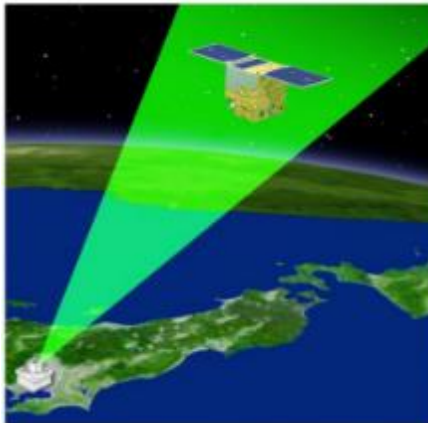


Fig. Optical ground station (OGS) at Xinglong

# Recent successful missions/programs related to QKD

## SOCRATES

Year	2017 (Japan) (Satellite-to-ground <b>quantum-limited</b> communication using a microsatellite)
Organization	NICT, Japan
Objective	LEO-to-ground polarization measurement through small optical transponder (SOTA terminal), B92 <b>Quantum key distribution</b>
Orbit/Link	LEO -> Gnd
Parameters	800 nm - 10 MHz on board pulse rate

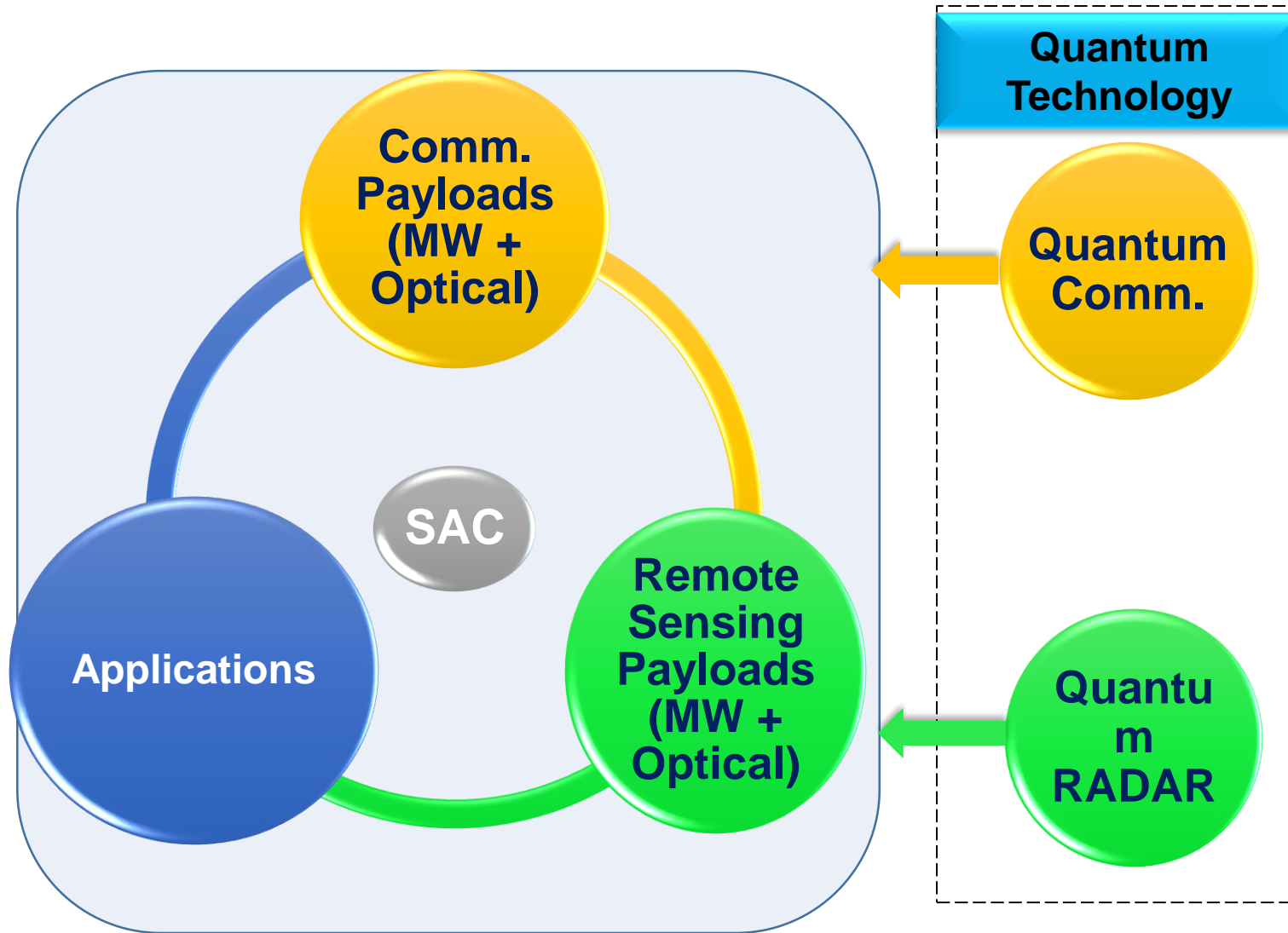


## SpooQY-1

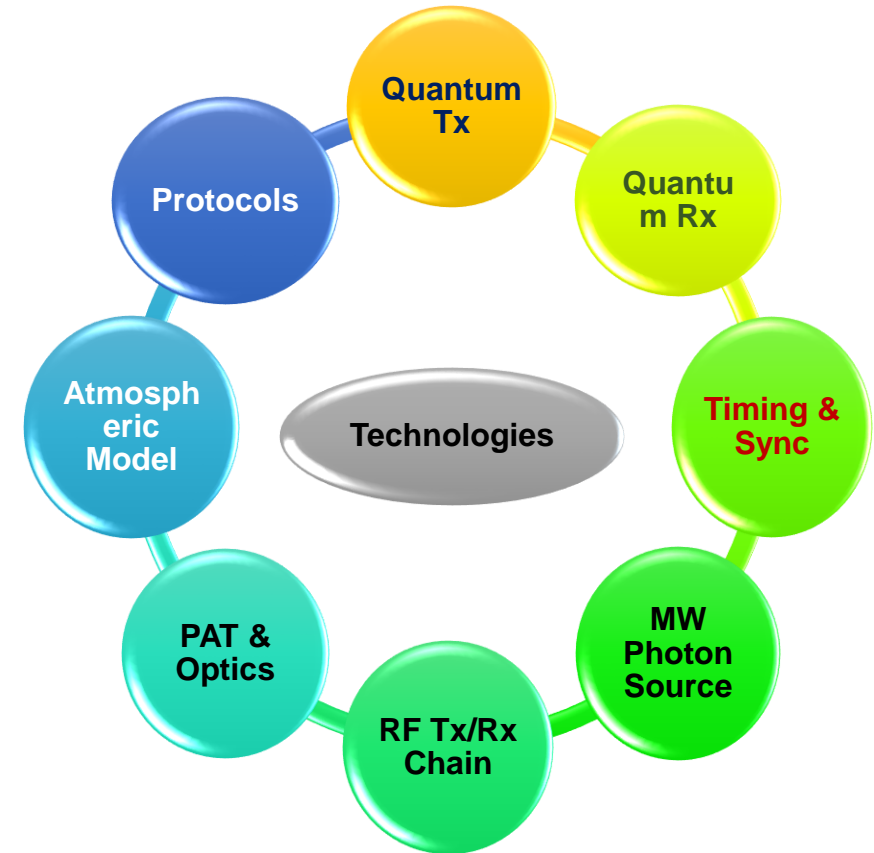
Year	2019 (Singapore)
Organization	The CQT (Center for Quantum Technologies) at NUS (National University of Singapore)
Objective	Demonstrated the operation of a compact, low-power, lightweight, and robust source of <b>entangled photon pairs</b> into low Earth orbit. <b>(Loop-back mode)</b>
Orbit/Link	LEO (onboard)







## Needed Technologies



# Baseline Technologies for SBQC

## Quantum Tx

- Weak Coherent Pulse (WCP) Source
- Single photon source
- Entangled Photon Source

## Quantum Rx

- Single Photon Counting Module (SPCM)
- Single Photon Avalanche diode (SPAD)
- Polarization compensation

## Time tagging & Synchronization

- NavIC Based Clock Synchronization
- Time To Digital Converter (TDC) & Coincidence Counter

## QKD Protocols

- BB84 / Decoy BB84
- BBM92

## Telescope with PAT system

- Pointing, Acquisition & Tracking (PAT) mechanism
- Optics and Gimbal design & development

## Atmospheric Channel Modelling

- Free Space atmospheric Channel Studies & Experiments

## Microwave Quantum Source

- Josephson Junction Fabrication
- Development of Entangled Photon Source

# System-level Technologies for SBQC

## Single Photon based QKD System

- End-to-End BB84 QKD System has been demonstrated over 300m Free Space Channel
- Validated: WCP source, BB84 IP, Qu Rx, NavIC-Sync System technologies

## Entangled Photon based QKD System

- End-to-End BBM92 QKD System has been demonstrated over 300m Free Space Channel
- Validated: EPS source, Qu Rx, NavIC-Sync System, TDC, BBM92 IP

## QKD over moving platform

- Demonstration of QKD Link on moving platform like drone
- Validate: PAT system, polarization compensation for moving scenarios

## QuantESS Payload

- Transformation of BB EPS to Space worthy EPS and qualification for Space
- Validation in Space (loopback mode): EPS, Qu Rx, Ruggedized SPCM, HOM

## TDS Payload

- Realization of WCP source and qualification for Space use
- Validation in Space (loopback mode) : WCP source, Qu Rx, Ruggedized SPCM, QRNG, cryptography

## Optical Ground Station (OGS)

- Augmentation of existing 700mm OGS facility at SAC Ahmedabad
- Establishment of new OGS facilities at Mt. Abu & Hanley.

## Opto-Quantum Communication (OQC) Payload

- Technology development and demonstration of SBQC
- Technology development & demonstration of SBOC
- Quantum secured communication between two ground stations

## Achieved

- QKD demonstrations at Lab Scale
- QKD demonstrations over 300m atmospheric channel using Single Photon Based and Entanglement Based Protocols – Technology Breakthrough

## Ongoing

- QuantESS payload - *PS4-OP*
- QuTDS Payload - *TDS-01*
- Technology Development Programs (TDPs)

Precursor Technology Demonstrators

# Satellite Based Quantum Communication (SBQC)

Upcoming Technology Demonstrators

## Space Segment

- Opto-Quantum Communication (OQC) Program
- Satellite based QKD

## Ground Segment

- Optical Ground Stations (OGS)
  - *Augmentation of existing OGS*
  - *New OGS development*
- Drone QKD

Photonic Integrated Circuits (PIC) development

ASIC development

**Inter-building Free Space  
Single-Photon based Quantum key distribution (QKD)  
inside SAC campus : March, 2021**

# End-to-end Free Space quantum comm. link experiment b/w 2 buildings (During March-2021)

**Buildg-38 (Quantum Tx)**

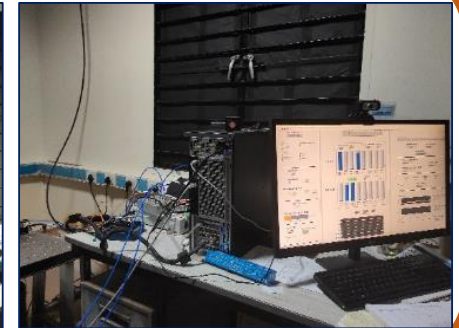
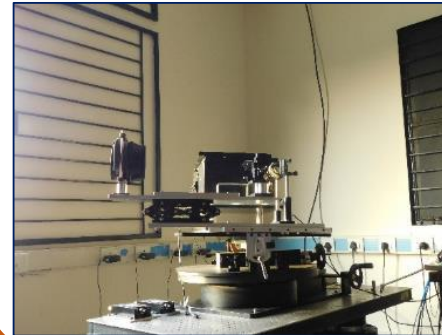


**Buildg-22 (Quantum Rx)**



**Free space  
quantum  
communication  
Link (~300m)**

**(~300 Metres Apart)**



# End-to-end Free Space quantum comm. link establishment between 2 buildings (contd..)

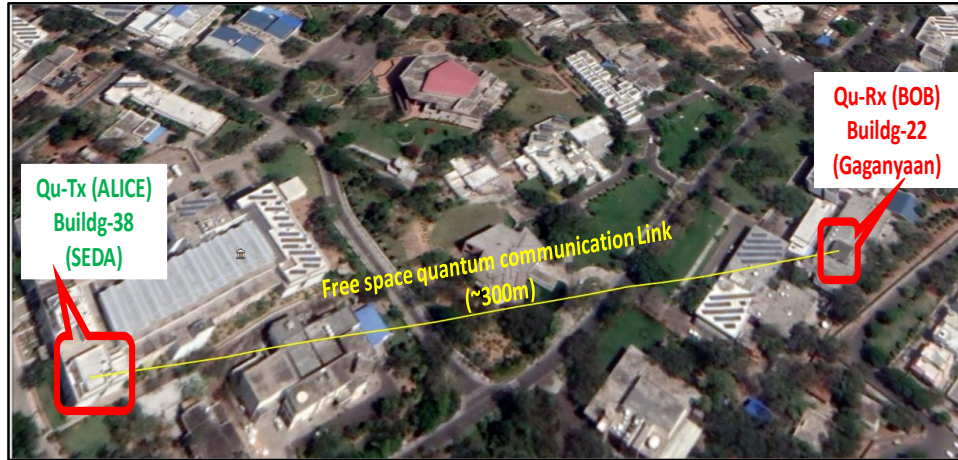


Fig. Aerial view of two buildings inside SAC campus



Fig. Coarse alignment using visible beacon laser

## Salient Features:

- **INDIA's first** probabilistic single photon based inter-building free space quantum communication link establishment over a distance of  $\sim 300\text{m}$  of atmospheric channel
- **INDIA's first** 2-way quantum secured **client-to-client live video conferencing demonstration**
- **NavIC enabled synchronization** mechanism implemented
- **Presence of Eavesdropper(eve)** emulated in the software and validated during experiment
- **Polarization encoded** single photon transmission and reception
- **BB84 protocol** based quantum key distribution (QKD) protocol
- **Secure key rate  $\sim 300$  Kbps, QBER  $< 3\%$ , mean photon no./pulse ' $\mu$ '  $\sim 0.15$**
- **Indigenously designed & developed weak coherent pulse source @785 nm wavelength.**
- **Reported/published in India's leading news papers and websites**

# News on Social media and other websites incl. ISRO Website



**Inter-building Free Space  
Entanglement based Quantum key distribution (QKD)  
inside SAC campus : Nov.-2021**

# Salient Features/ Achievements of Entanglement Based QKD

- INDIA's first **Entanglement based, fully automated with real time processing & NavIC Synchronized** inter-building free space quantum communication link establishment over a distance of **~300m atmospheric channel**
- **Applications Demonstrated :**
  - ✓ *Quantum secured text and image encryption and decryption*
  - ✓ *2-way quantum assisted client-to-client live video & audio calling demonstration*
- **Technical Performance Achieved :**
  - ✓ *Secure key rate ~2.0 Kbps, QBER <10%, Visibility > 80%, Bell's parameter > 2.2*
  - ✓ *Repeatable & Stable quantum link performance observed over atmospheric channel during several nights*
- **Technologies Developed:**
  - ✓ *Robust, High brightness entangled photon source (EPS)*
  - ✓ *BBM92 protocol IP implemented for quantum key distribution (QKD) involving data acquisition, timing and clock synchronization, key sifting, QBER computation, post processing viz. error correction & privacy amplification etc.*
  - ✓ *NavIC enabled synchronization mechanism implemented*
  - ✓ *Polarization compensation technique implemented*
  - ✓ *Application software for Text, image, audio and video applications developed*

# Major Breakthrough Step: End-to-end Free Space quantum communication link experiment between 2 buildings (~300 Metres Apart) during Nov-Dec, 2021

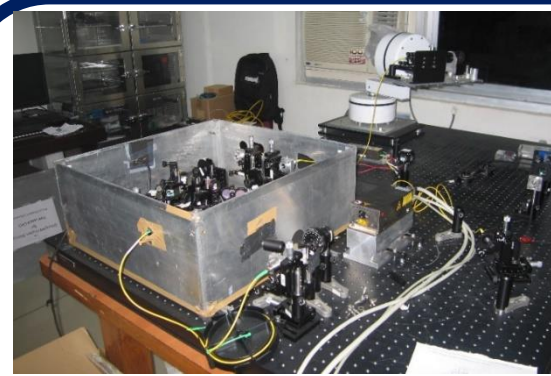
**Buildg-38 (EPS and Quantum Rx-1)**



**Buildg-22 (Quantum Rx -2)**



**Free space quantum communication Link (~300m)**



**Entangled photon source (developed by PRL)**



**Rx-1 with electronics module**



**Rx-2 with electronics module**

# Measured performance results for inter-building Free Space Quantum Comm. link

- Weak coherent pulse based probabilistic single photon source (BB84 QKD Protocol)
- Entangled photon pair source (BBM92 QKD Protocol)

TABLE. BB84 QKD System  
(Demonstrated in March-2021)

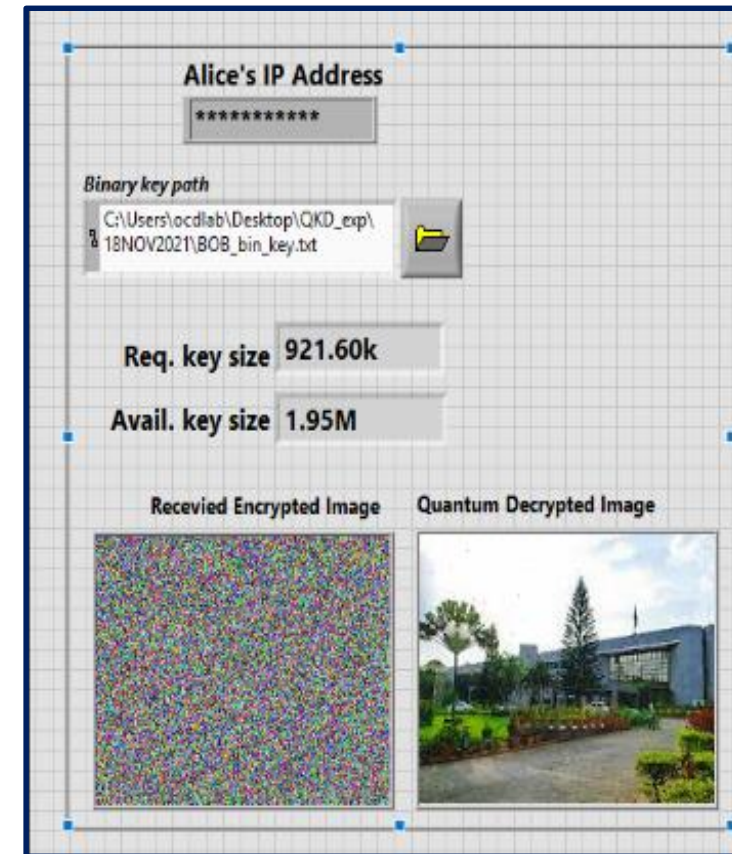
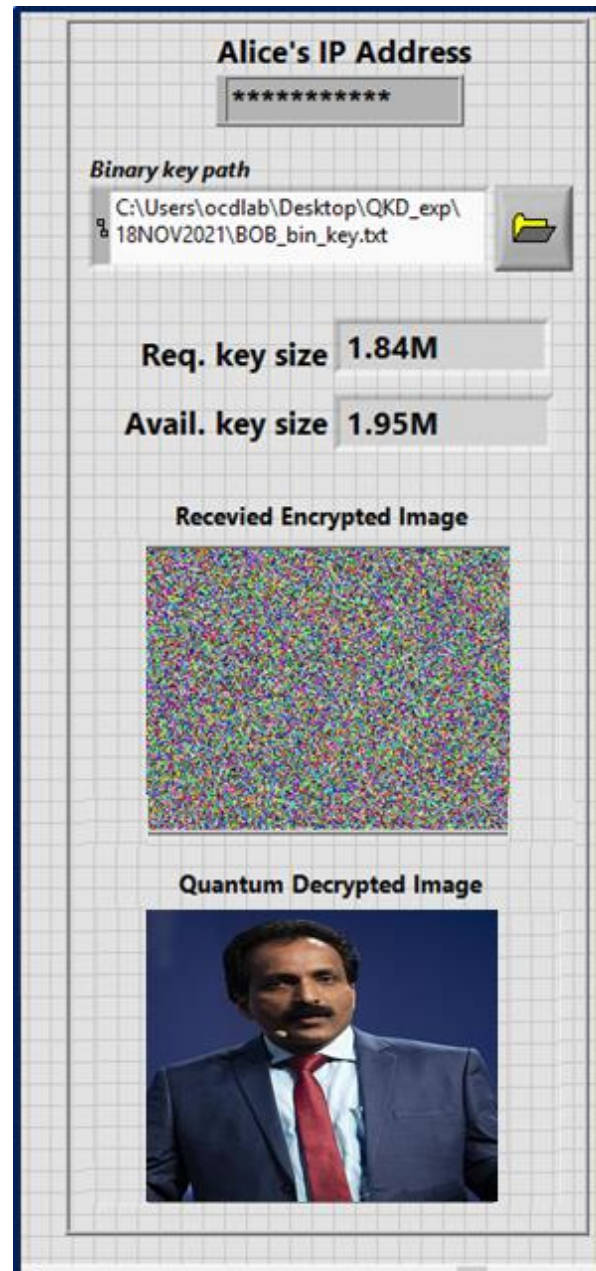
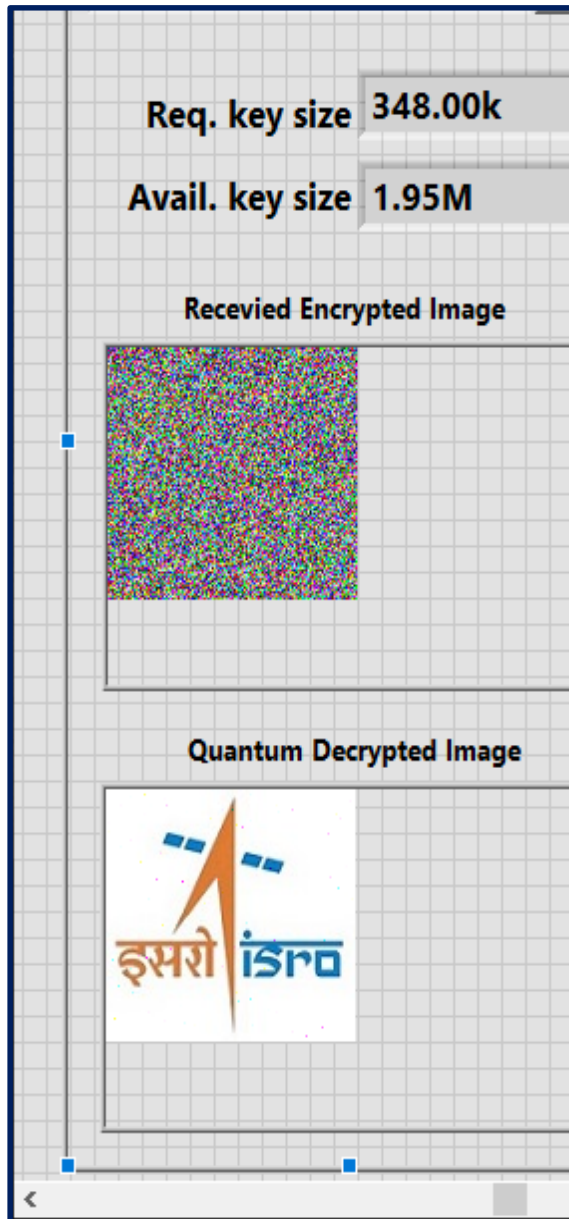
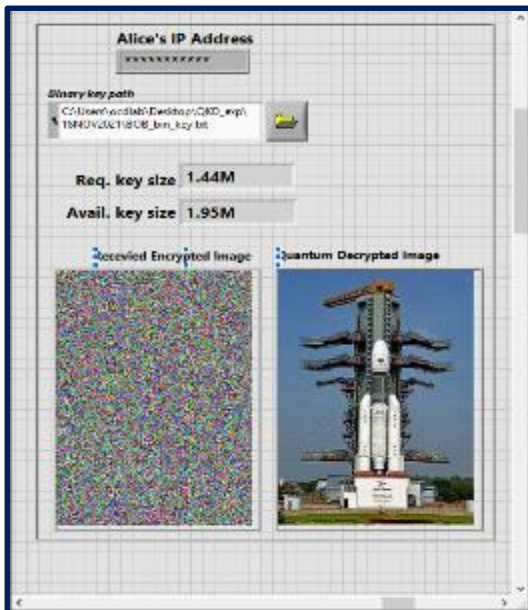
Sr.	Parameters	Measured Results
1.	Source	Weak coherent pulse (probabilistic single photon)
2.	Wavelength	~785 nm
3.	QBER	< 3 %
4.	Sifted Key Rate	390 - 450 Kbps
5.	Secure Key Rate	260 - 300 Kbps @ 20 MHz

TABLE. BBM92 QKD System  
(Demonstrated in November-2021)

Sr.	Parameters	Measured Results
1.	Source	Entangled photon Pair source
2.	source wavelength	~810 nm
3.	QBER @ 78% Visibility	< 10 %
4.	Sifted Key Rate	4.5 - 5 Kbps
5.	Secure Key Rate	1.3 -1.8 Kbps

# Quantum key encrypted Image data transmission and reception

- One time pad (OTP) based encryption



# **Satellite Based Quantum Communication : Prototype Demo using COTS Technology**

# QuantESS Payload (Quantum Entanglement studies in Space) onboard POEM-2 on PSLV-C55

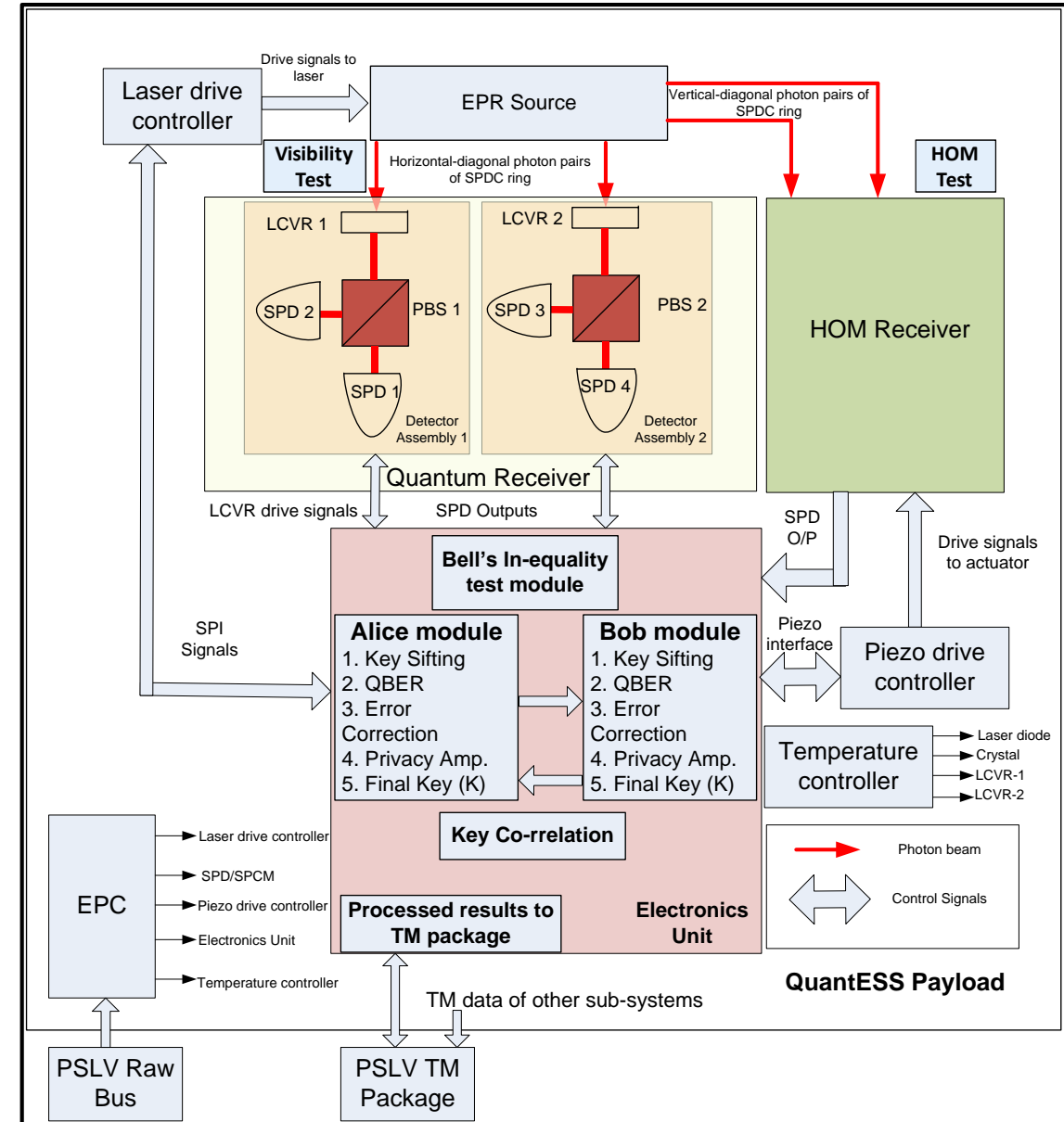
## Objectives:

### Technology:

- Development of space worthy entangled photon source and prove its reliability and robustness in space by performing Bell's inequality, Visibility & Hong-Ou-Mandel (HOM) Bench tests.
  - Entanglement Study: visibility test and Bell's inequality violation test
  - HOM interference Experiment: photon indistinguishability test
- Demonstration of entangled photon source application in space by generating quantum keys using end-to-end entanglement based QKD protocol implementation with limited hardware.
- Study of impact of space environment on performance of single photon detectors for long mission durations
- Proving / Evaluating many associated technologies (like a quantum receiver, time tagger, Single-photon detector, LCVR, etc.).

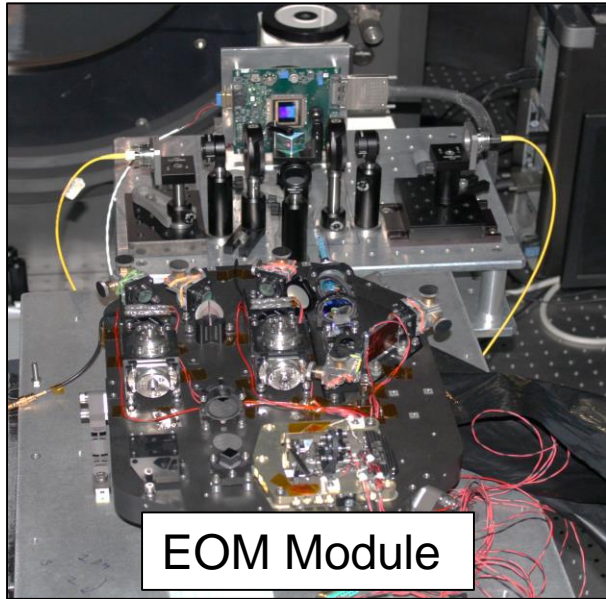
### Scientific:

- Demonstration of HOM experiment under space conditions. This will be the first of its kind experiment and the starting point of a future HOM experiment between two satellites to measure the photon delay due to the space-time curvature.
- The HOM experiment will also enable us to study the single-photon quality of the entangled photon source required for secure quantum communication.



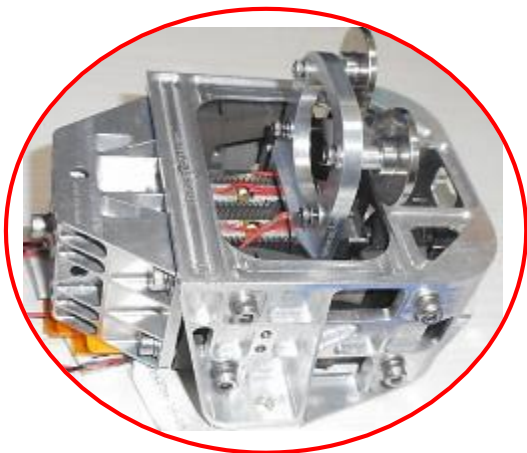
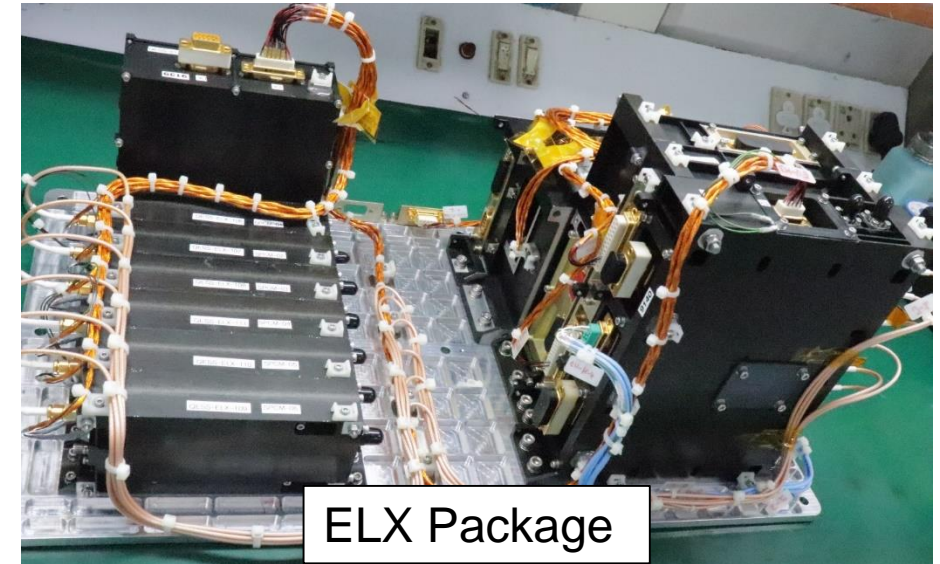
**Payload Block Diagram**

# QuantESS Payload onboard POEM-2 on PSLV-C55 (Contd..)

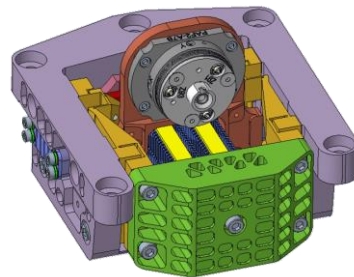


<b>Payload Mass</b>	<b>14.7 Kg</b>
<b>EOMM Mass (AI)</b>	<b>4.5 Kg</b>
<b>EOMM</b>	<b>370x300x150mm</b>
<b>ELX dimensions</b>	<b>500x260x225mm</b>
<b>ELX Mass</b>	<b>9 Kg</b>
<b>Harness Mass</b>	<b>1.2 Kg</b>

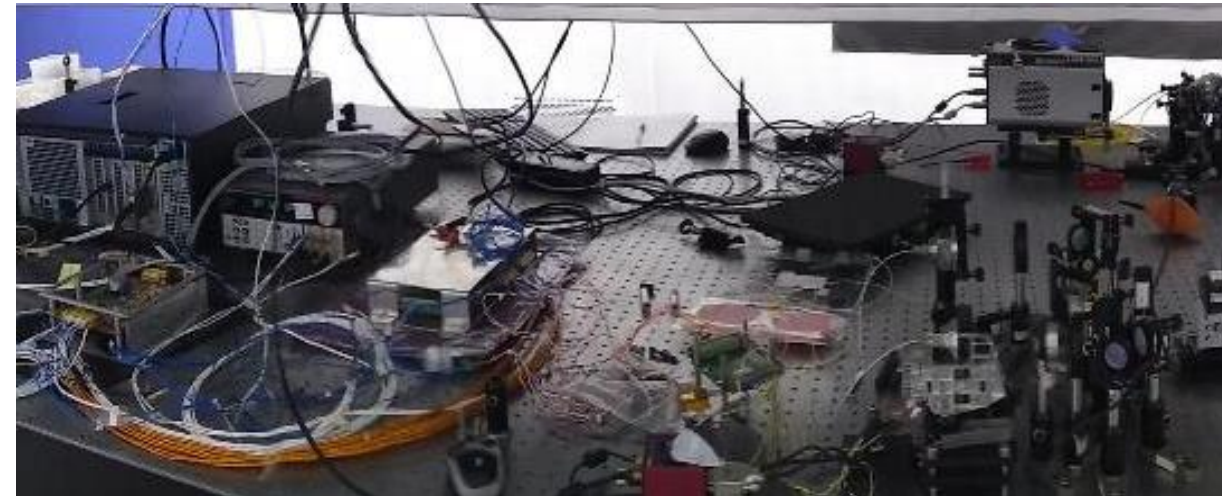
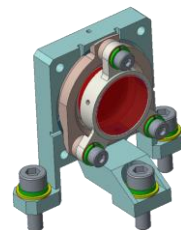
<b>Payload Power</b>	<b>134W</b>
<b>PDE_LD</b>	<b>20W</b>
<b>SPCM_EU</b>	<b>58W</b>
<b>Temp. CS</b>	<b>56W</b>



**Mechanical  
Amplified  
Linear  
Actuator**



**Gonio  
Optical Mount**



**HOM Test using DVM Hardware**



# Space Segment: QuTDS Payload (Quantum Technology Demonstration in Space)

(Proposed for TDS-01 satellite)

	Objectives
1.	Quantum Random Number Generation (QRNG)
2.	Quantum Cryptography
3.	Optical beacon link from satellite to ground
4.	Quantum key distribution (QKD)

## Outcome

- QKD set-up based quantum random bit sequence generation and downlink
- Triggering of pulse laser modules by generated QRNG sequence

Quantum key encrypted data downlink

- Optical beacon link evaluation
- Validation of synchronization methodology for upcoming Satellite based quantum communication.
- Polarisation characterisation with moving satellite platform

Weak coherent source based BB84 protocol

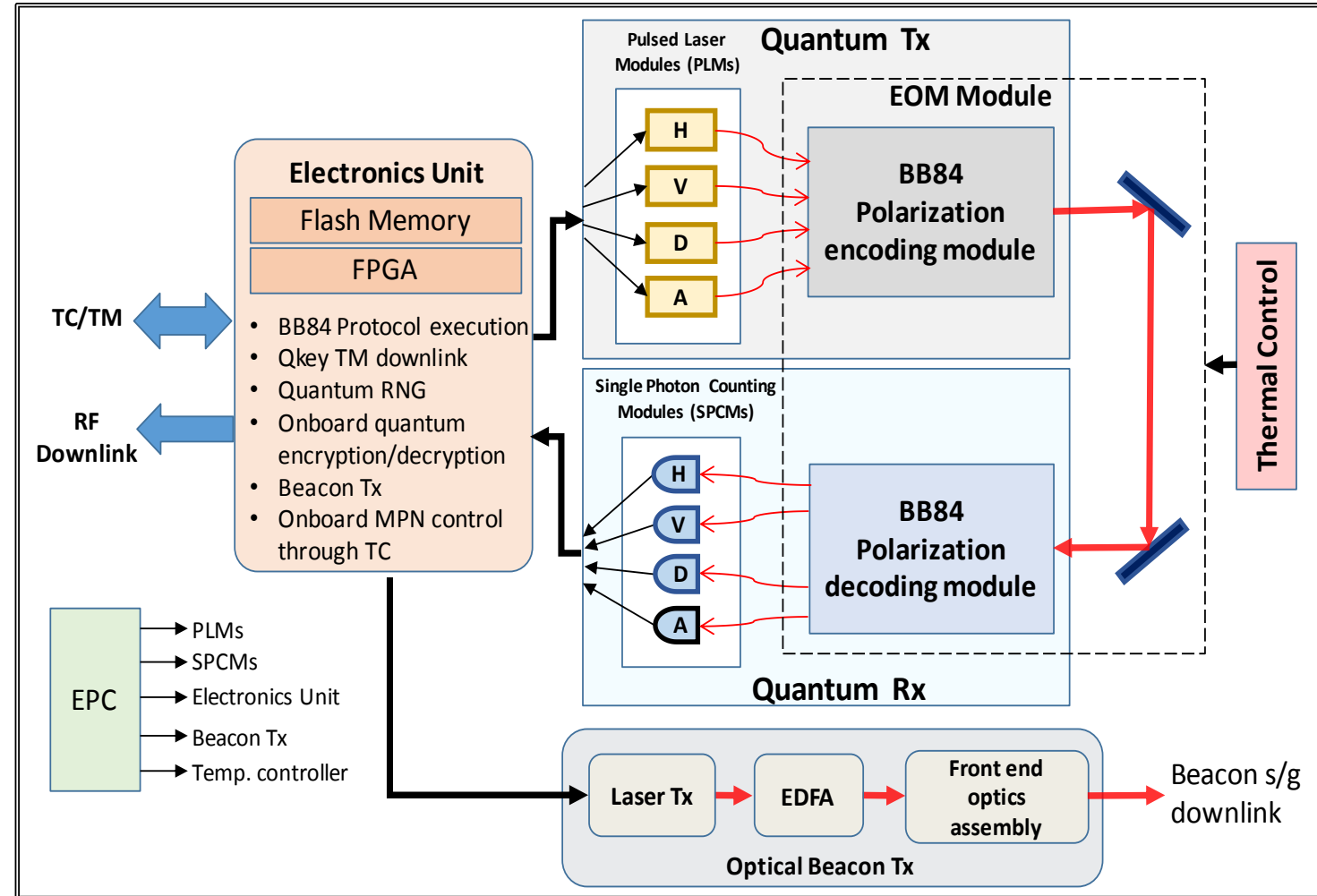
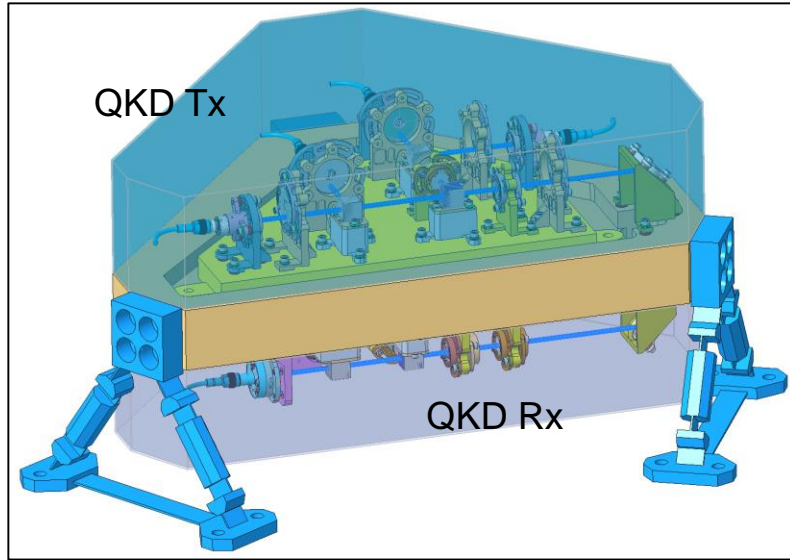
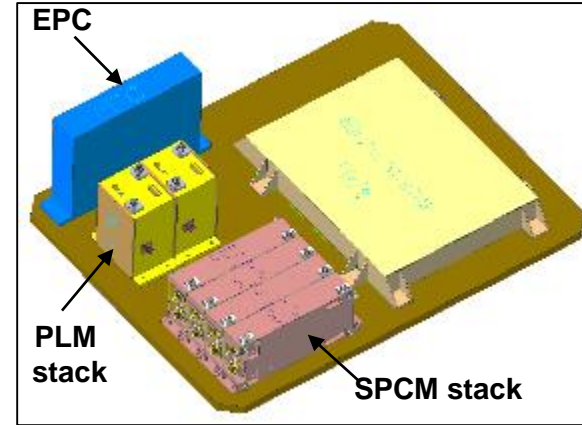


Fig QuTDS Payload Block diagram

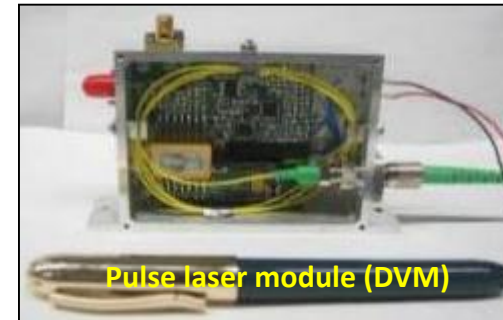
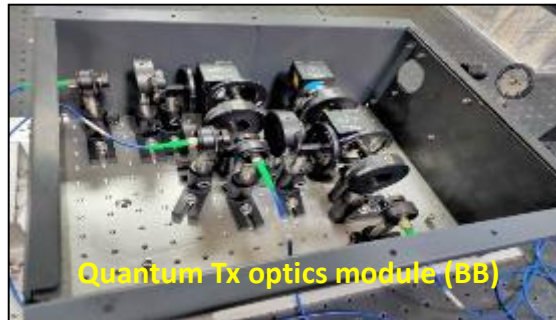
# Space Segment: QuTDS Payload (Contd..)



## QuTDS Electronics packages



## QuTDS EOMM



Developed BB model

# Technology Developments @ SAC / ISRO

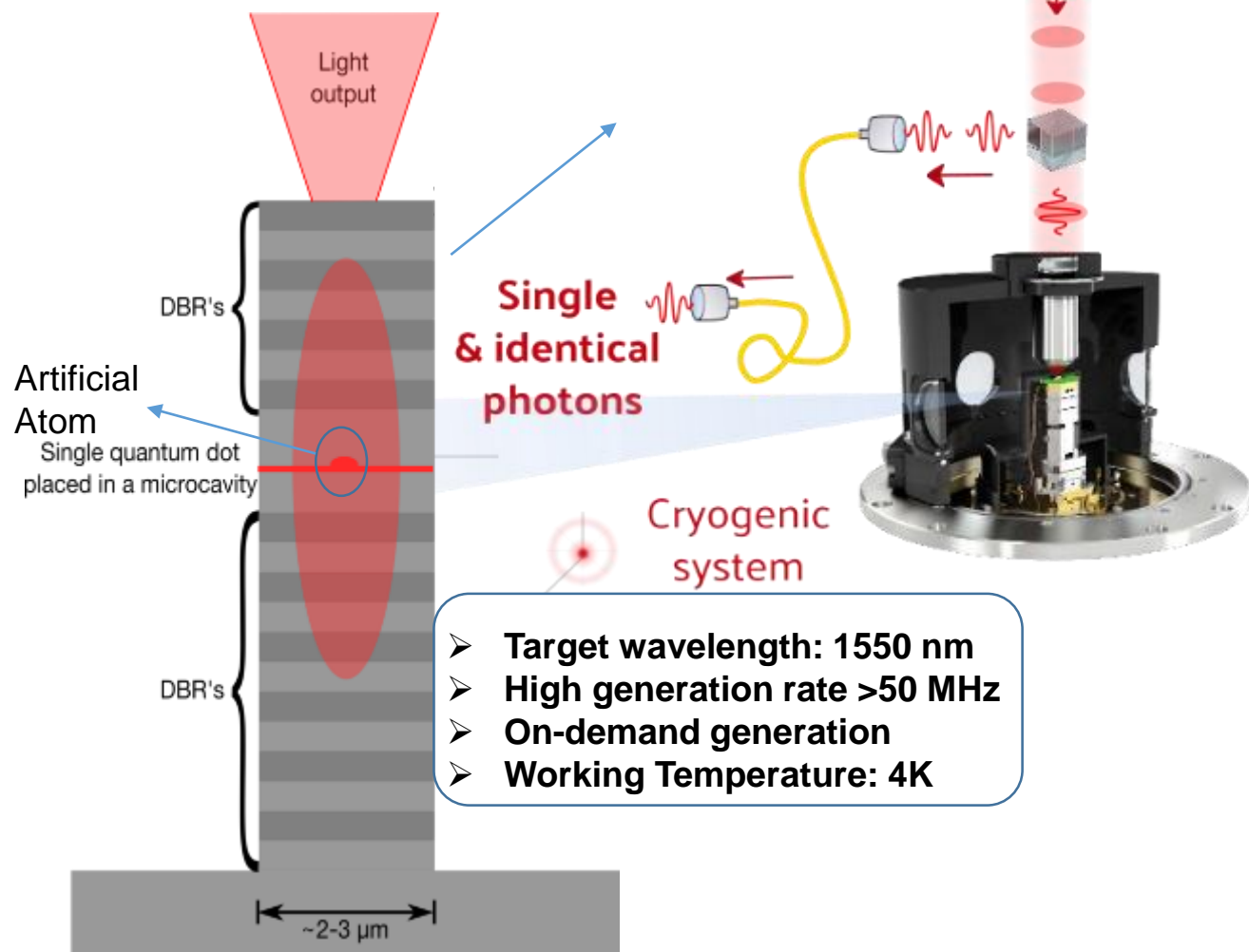
# Quantum-Dot Single/Entangled Photon Source and Single Photon Avalanche Detector SPAD development

## Quantum Dot + Optical Cavity Electrical Tunable

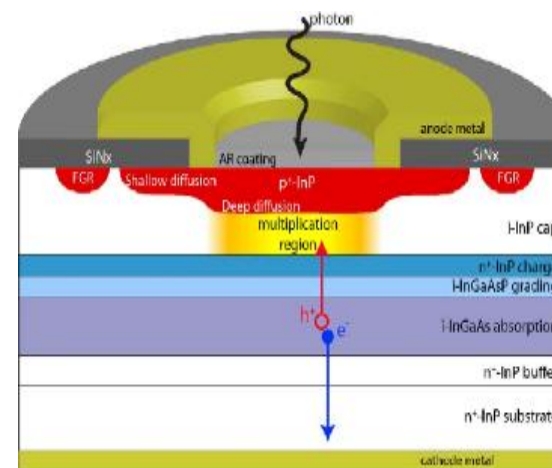
↩ Distributed Bragg Reflector (DBR)

● Dot in Cavity

↪ Distributed Bragg Reflector (DBR)



## Avalanche Diode- Geiger Mode Operation



Stack based on  $\text{In}_{0.47}\text{Ga}_{0.53}\text{As}$  absorption region

(Ref: 978-1-4577-0733-9/12 IEEE)

- Target wavelength: 1550 nm
- Overall Photon Detection Efficiency: >25%
- Dark Count Rate < 1 KHz
- Jitter Time : <200 ps
- Dead Time: 100 ns

# Photonic Integrated Circuit Development

### Fiber-based Transmitter

DSOC Laser Transmitter assembly

Master Oscillator slice  
Stage 1 pre-amplifier slice  
Stage 2 power amplifier slice

### Photonic Integrated Transmitter

Integration platforms chosen for best device performances

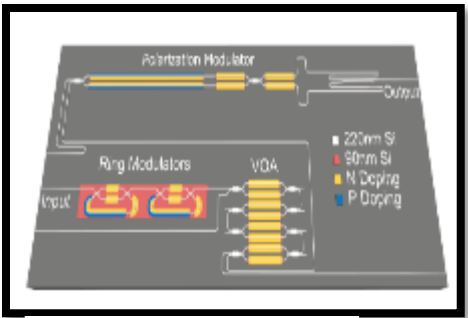
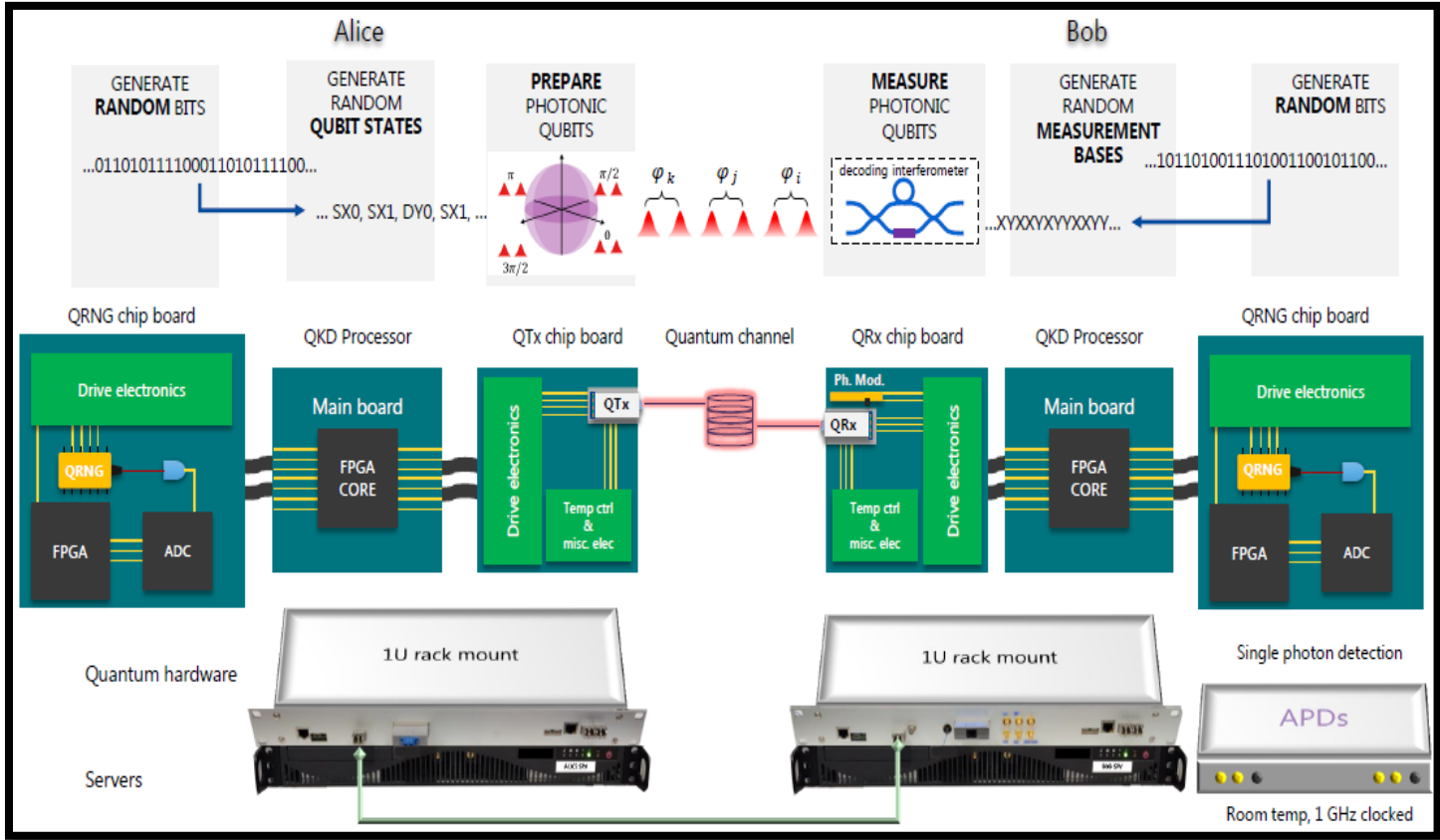
- InP : laser & pre-amplifiers
- LiNbO<sub>3</sub> : modulator
- Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>:Er<sup>3+</sup> : power amplifier

UCSB

1cm

	Discrete	Integrated
Size and weight	8" x 10" x 2.12", 3.4kg	2" x 0.5" x 0.25", 0.2kg
Robustness/Reliability	Large footprint, fibers	Small footprint
Redundancy	Possible (SWAP limited)	"Unlimited" (at no cost)
Functionality (Modulation)	Single (PPM)	Multi (PPM, QPSK)
Output Average Power	5W	1W (in progress)
Performance	Stable	Under development
Environmental testing	Multiple	Unknown yet

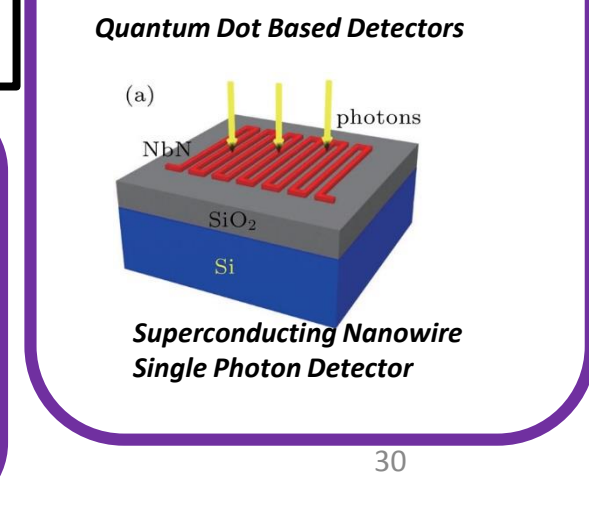
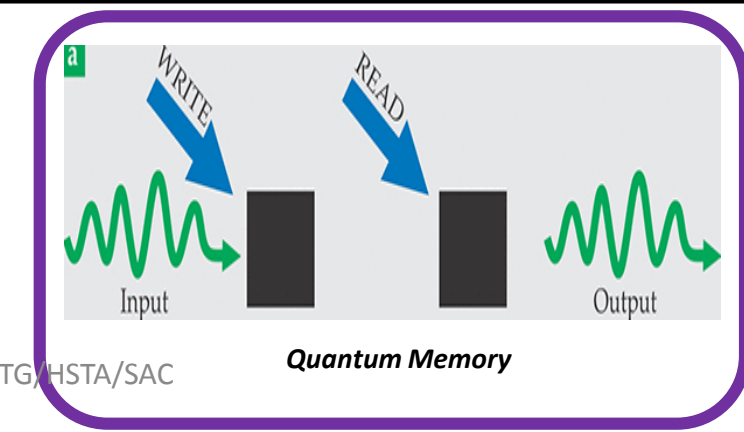
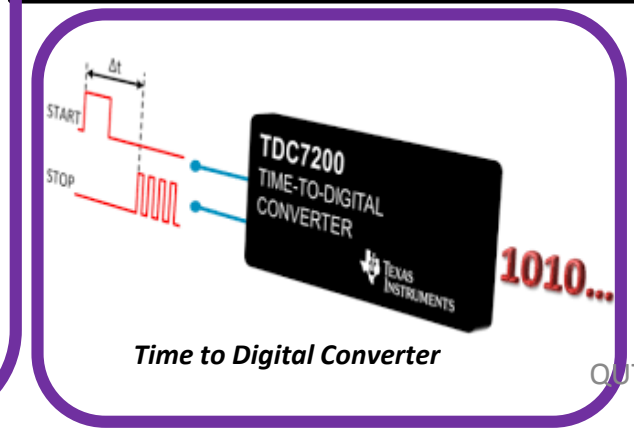
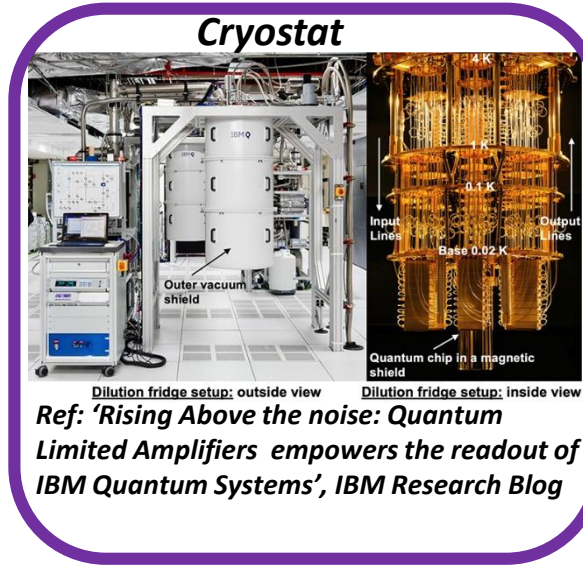
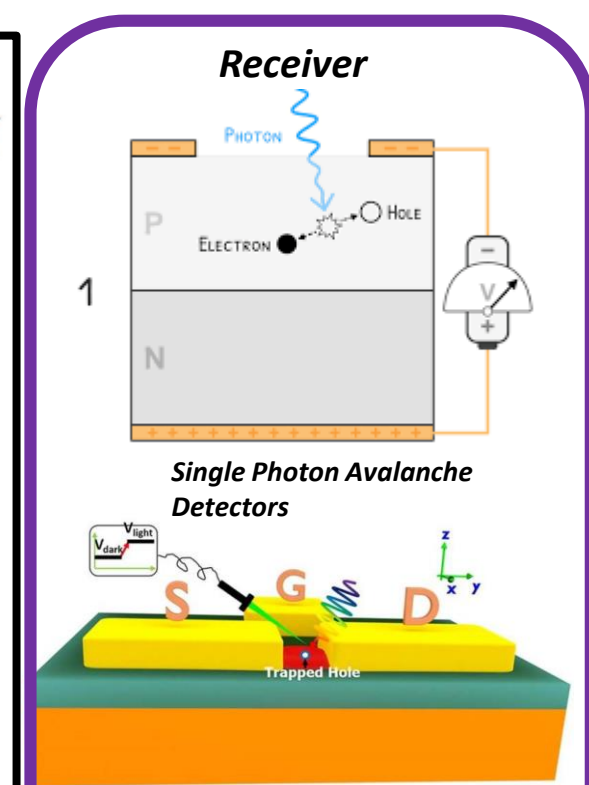
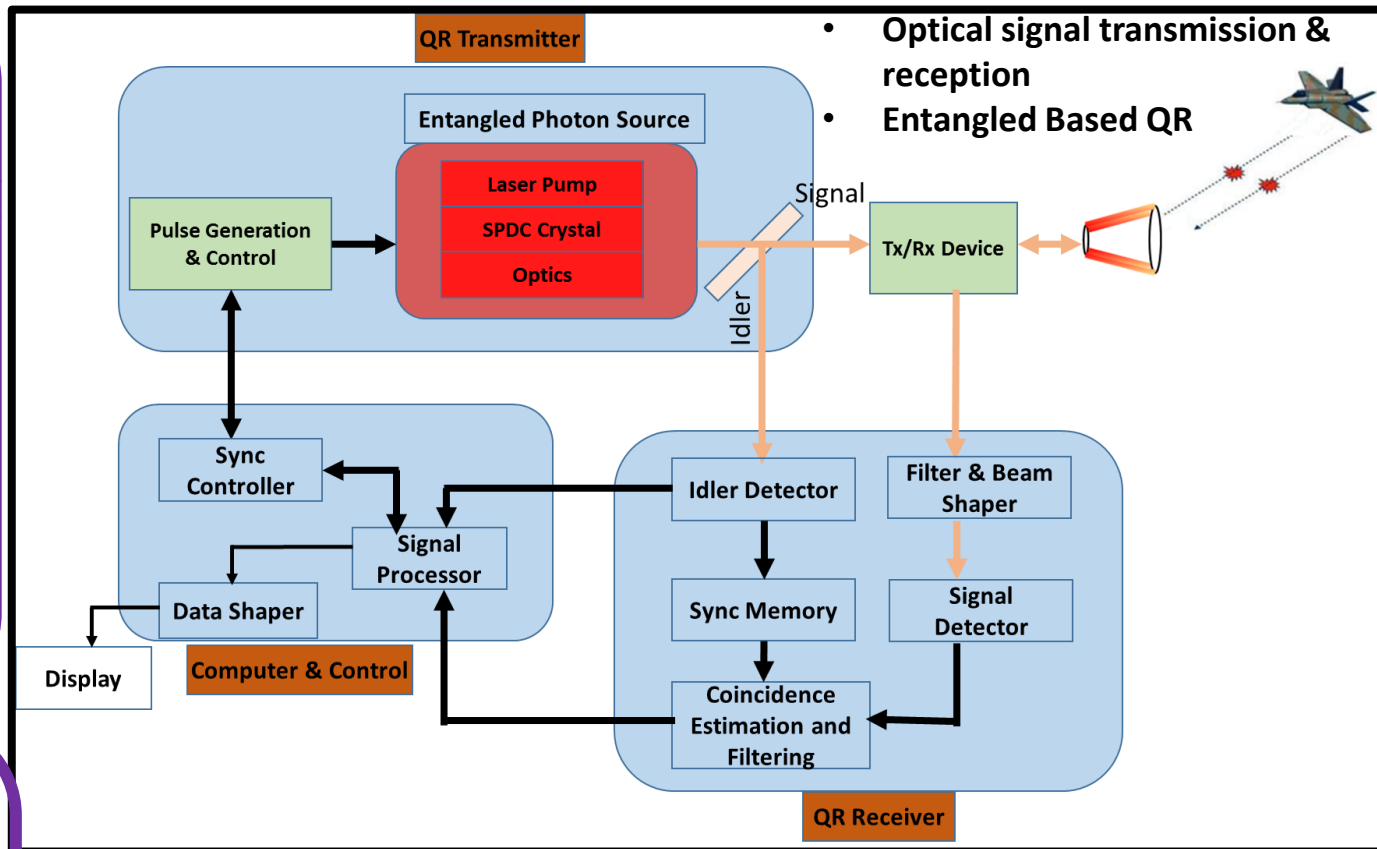
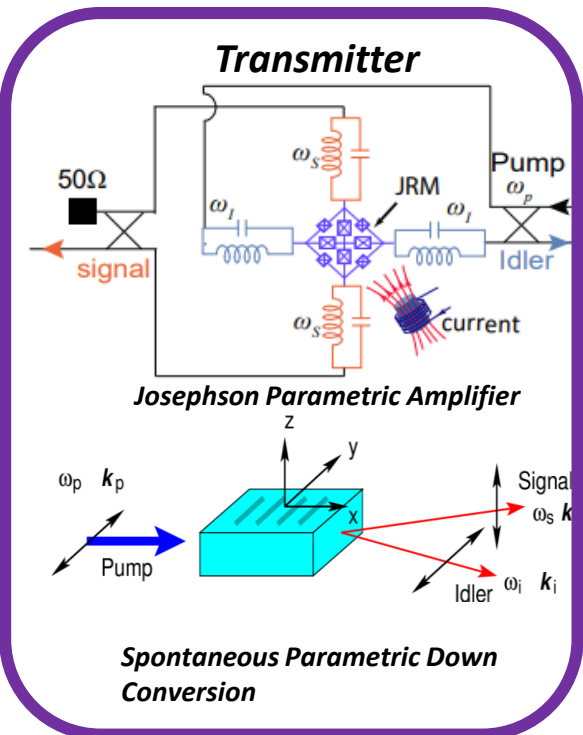
Miniaturization, integration and scalability designed to optimize performance



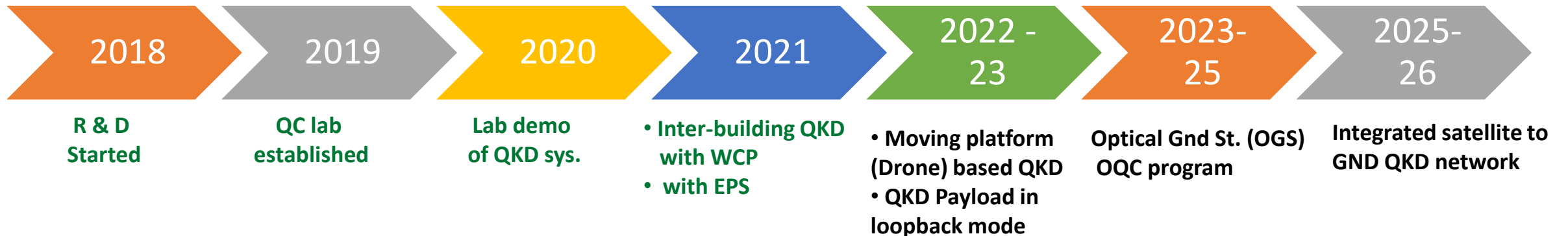
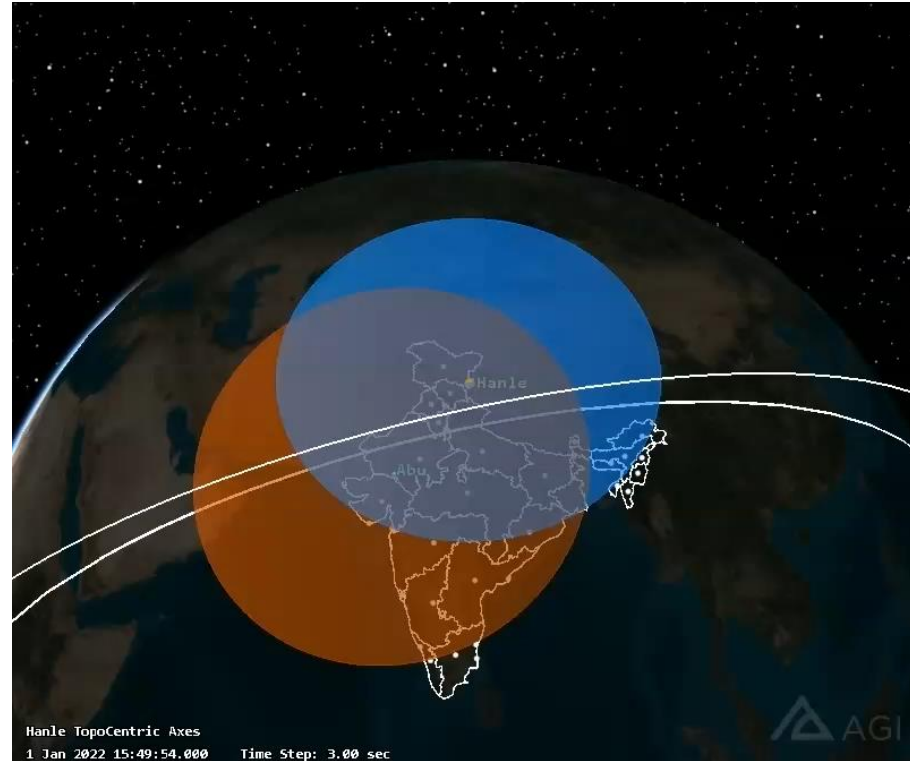
**QKD Tx chip**

- PIC- Single Chip Integration of multiple optical components
- PIC QKD transmitter chip

# Summary of Technologies Involved – SBQC and Quantum Radar



# ISRO's Satellite based Quantum Communication (SBQC) Programme Roadmap



# Opto-Quantum Communication (OQC) Program

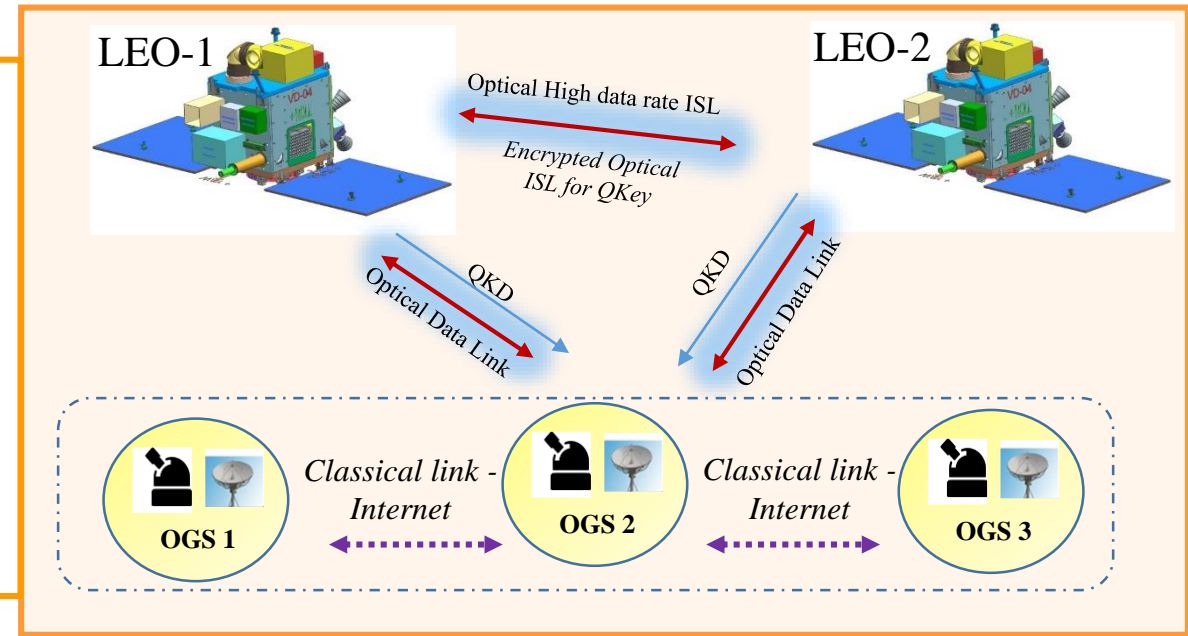
## PART-1

### Deliverables:

- OQC Terminal on LEO satellite 1 and LEO satellite 2
- Optical Ground stations – 3 nos

### Demonstration:

- Satellite based Optical and Quantum Communication between LEO spacecraft and Optical Ground Stations
- High Data Rate Optical Inter satellite link(LEO-LEO)
- Encrypted Optical ISL for QKD (LEO-LEO)



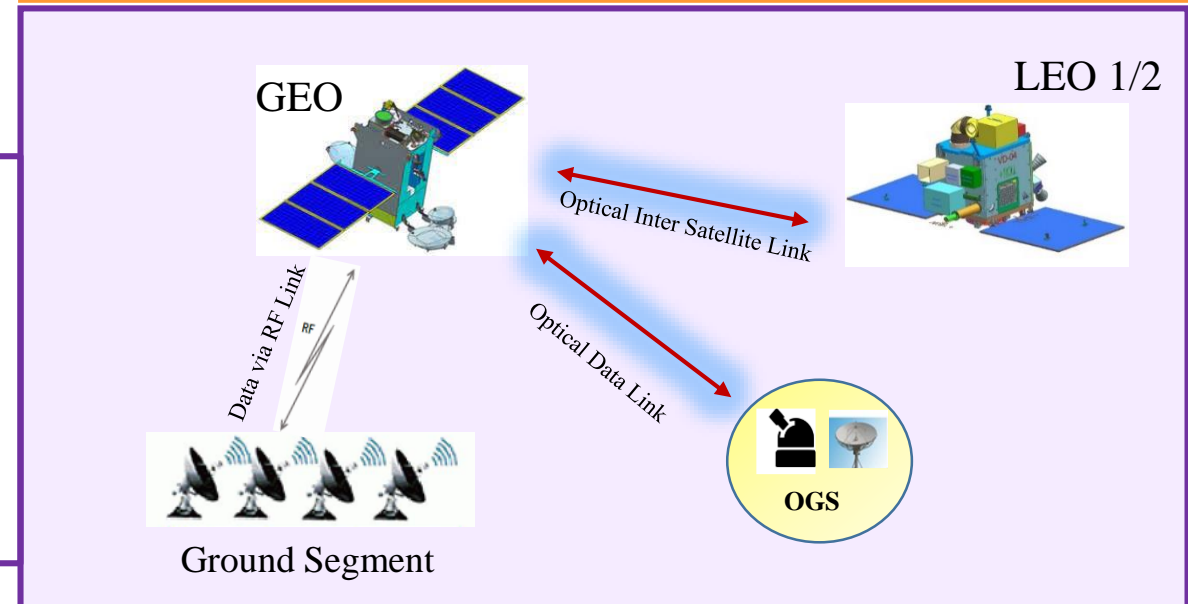
## PART-2

### Deliverables:

- OC Terminal on a GEO satellite

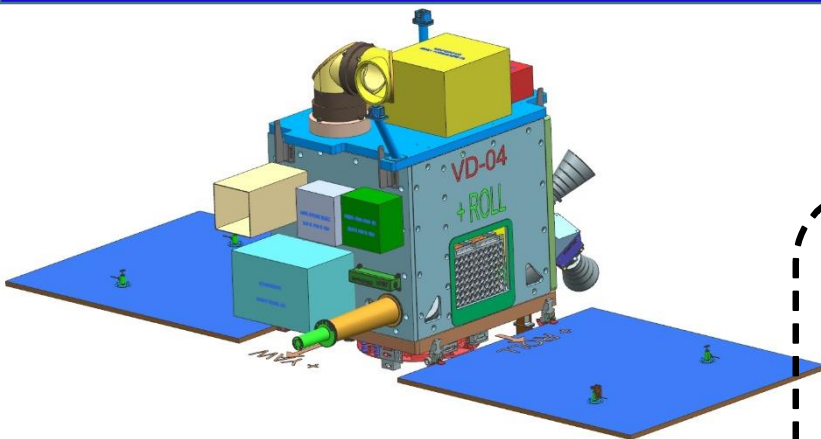
### Demonstration:

- High Data Rate Optical Inter satellite link(LEO-GEO)
- High Data Rate Optical link(GEO-OGS)
- Satellite Based Optical Data Relay via GEO platform

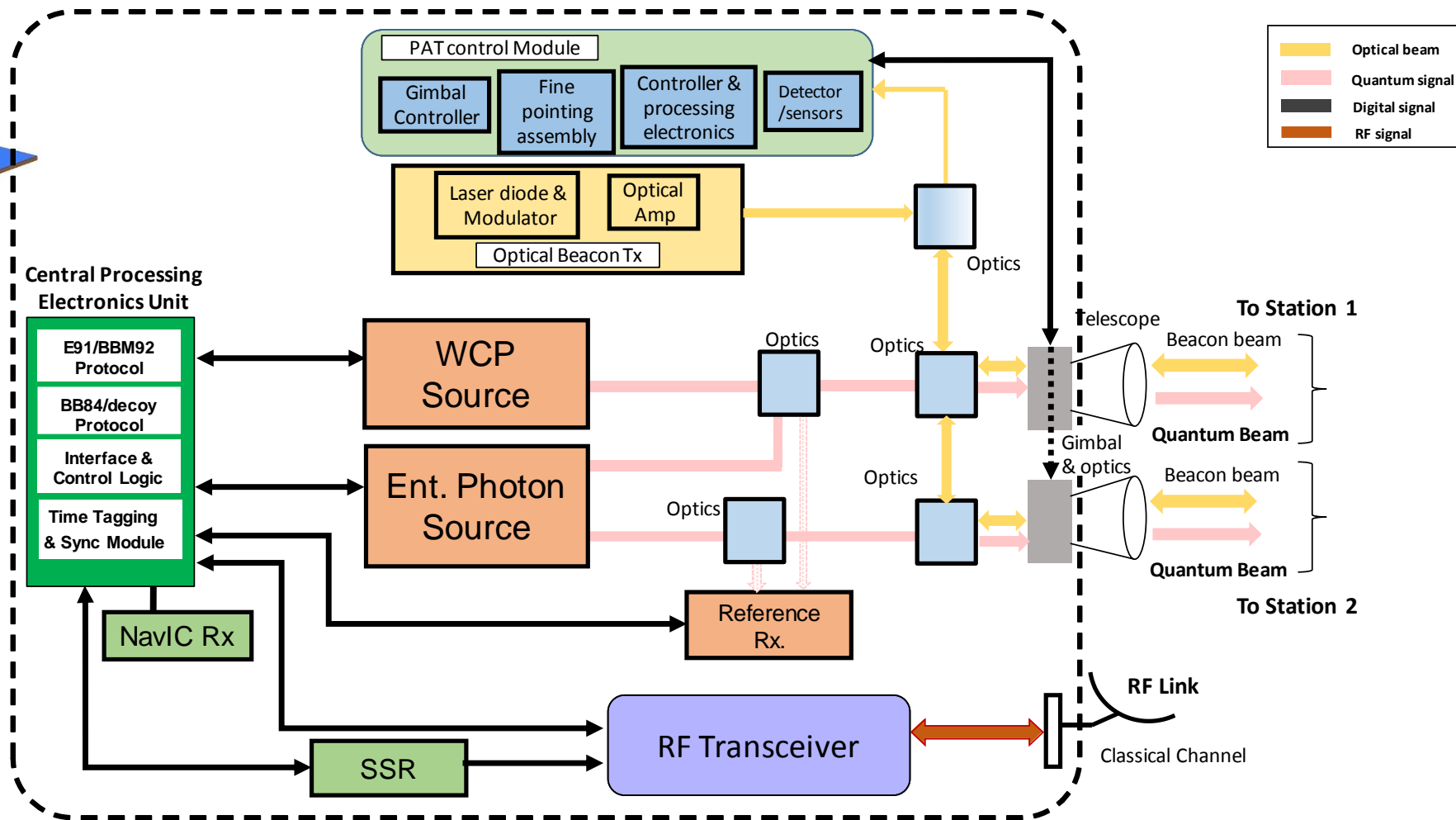




# Opto-Quantum Communication (OQC) Block Schematic

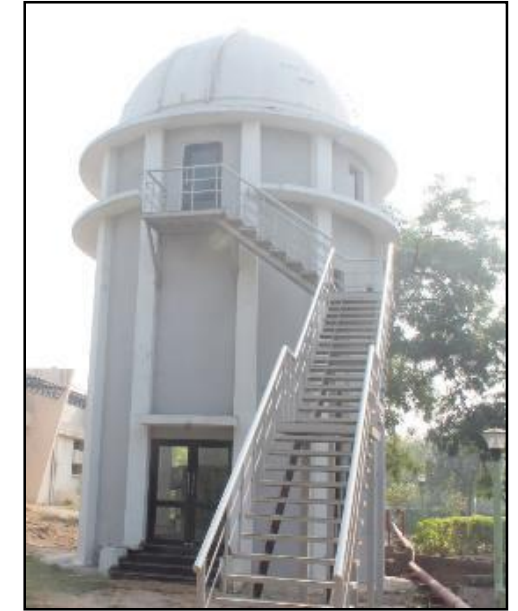
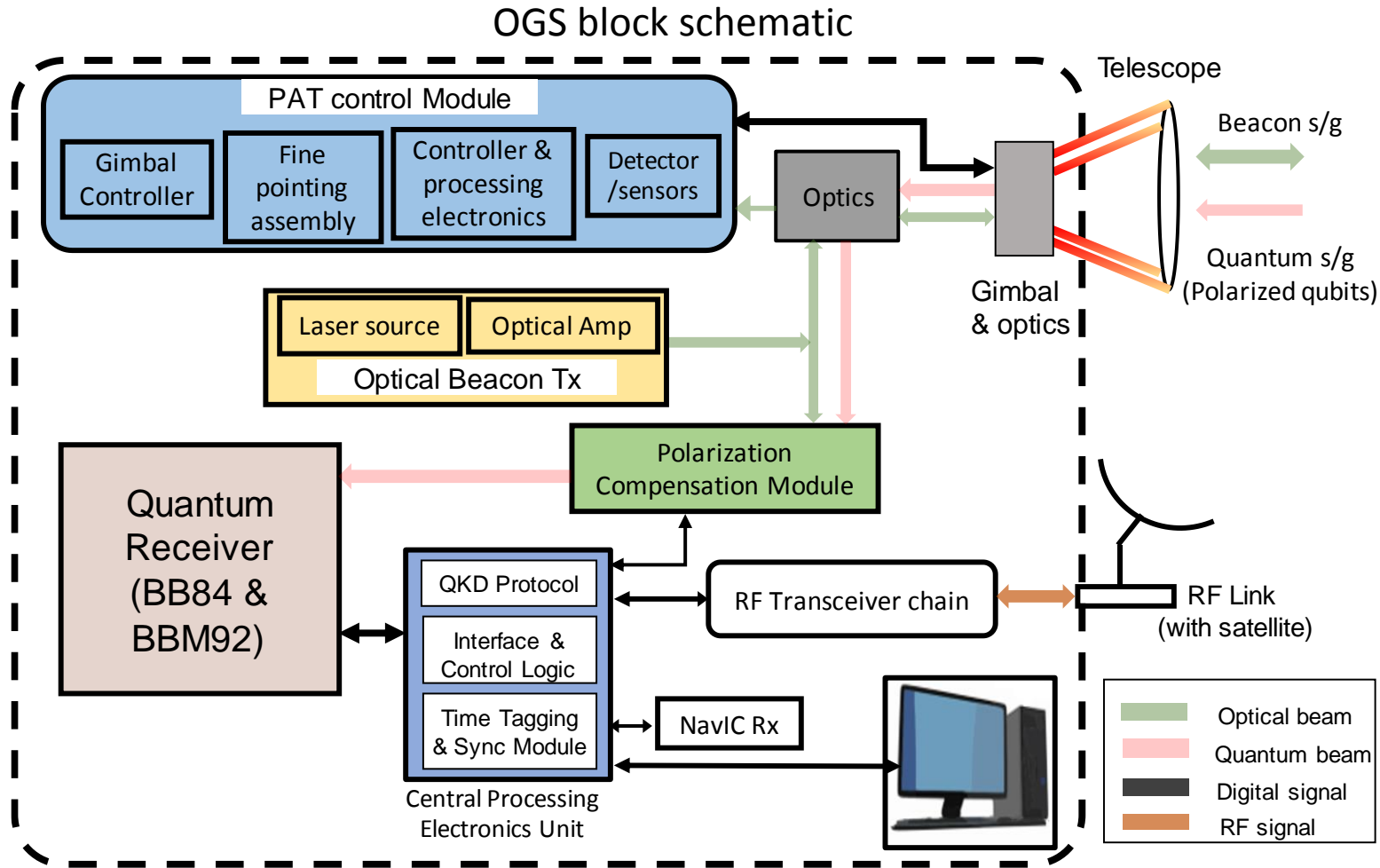


OQC Satellite



Payload Block Schematic

# Optical Ground Station (OGS) Block Diagram



OGS site at SAC



SPROC site at Ponmudi



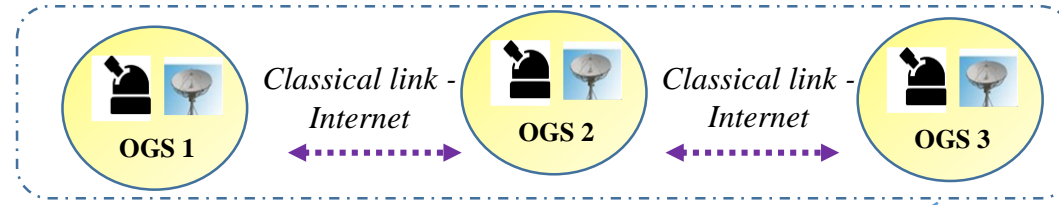
SPROC site at Mt. Abu

## Potential OGSs

- Mt. Abu
- Ponmudi
- OGS, SAC, Ahmedabad
- Hanle, Ladakh

# Optical Ground Stations (OGS)

- Establishment of new OGS facility at Mt Abu and Hanle locations.
- Augmentation of existing OGS facility at SAC.
- Establishment of new RF ground stations co-located with OGS facility to support classical QKD channels



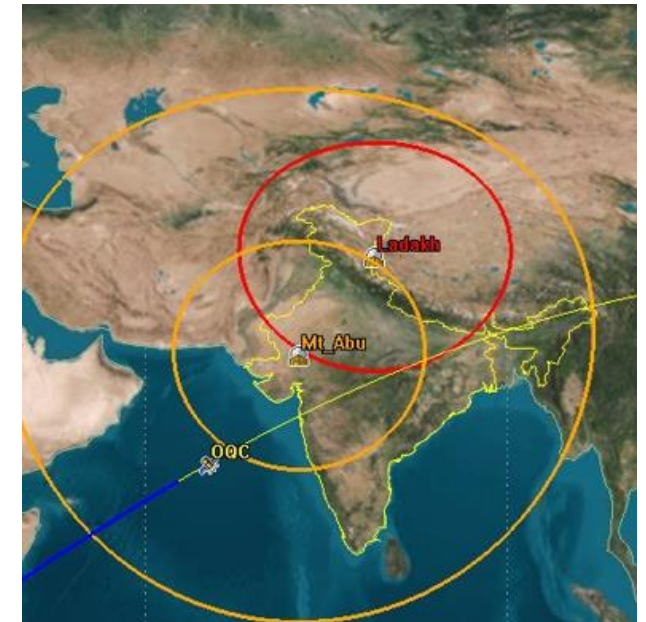
Existing SAC, Ahmedabad 700mm Telescope OGS + Augmentation for QKD

New OGS facility with portable 1m telescope at **Mt Abu & Hanle-Ladakh** along with RF ground station for QKD



1m Portable Telescope (Facility to be established)

Mt. Abu & Hanle location



# Atmospheric Studied for OGS locations

- Five year (2017-2020) MODIS cloud product is used to estimate monthly & annual maps of probability for station visibility (cloud free) for entire Indian landmass.
- Probability of occurrence (Annual) of cloud-free state at Ponmudi is 21%, while at other 3 OGS, it is >50%.

Table-1. Map for the probability for station to be visible (cloud-free) for conducting SBQC.

OGS	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
Ahmedabad	0.67	0.81	0.88	0.95	0.97	0.34	0.14	0.05	0.22	0.72	0.78	0.61	0.57
Mount Abu	0.83	0.86	0.85	0.8	0.94	0.48	0.2	0.06	0.32	0.73	0.82	0.76	0.62
Ponmudi	0.62	0.71	0.38	0.21	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.07	0.19	0.34	0.21
Hanle	0.50	0.47	0.60	0.56	0.51	0.68	0.51	0.51	0.71	0.84	0.65	0.72	0.62

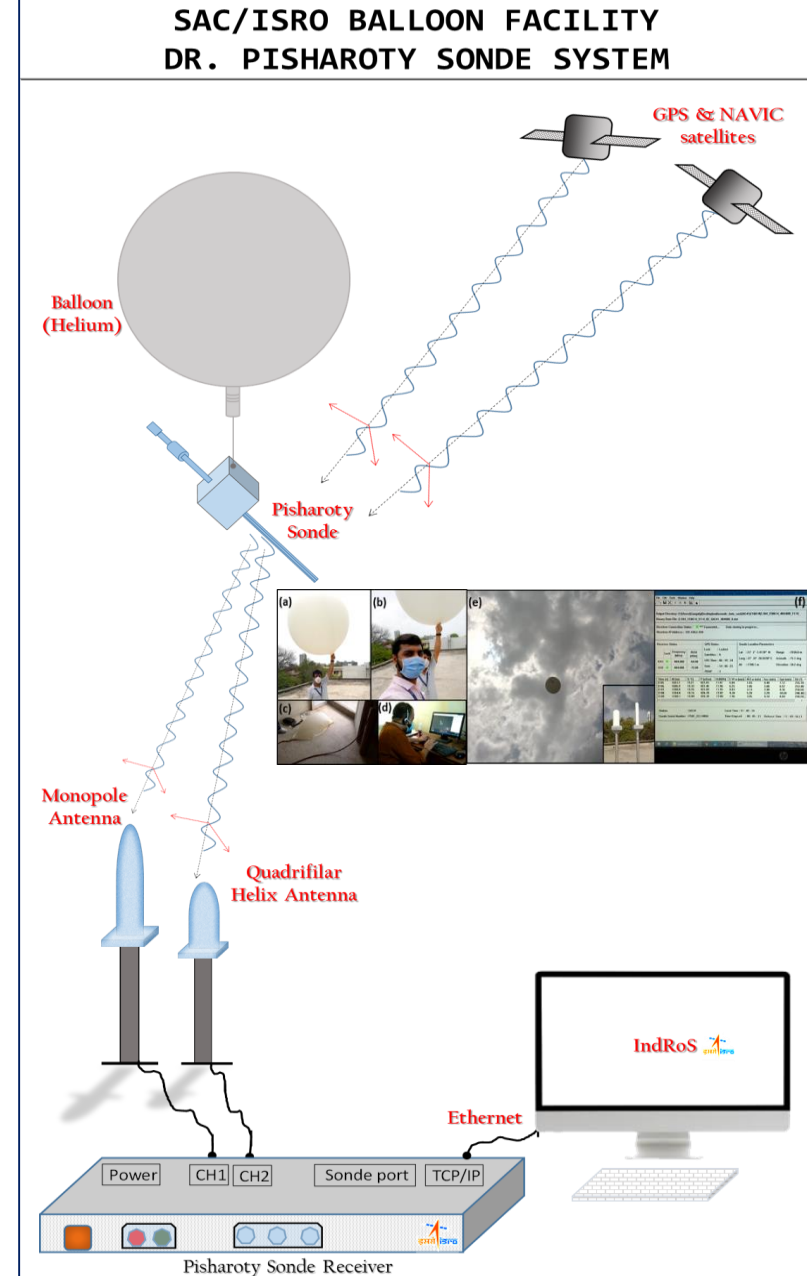
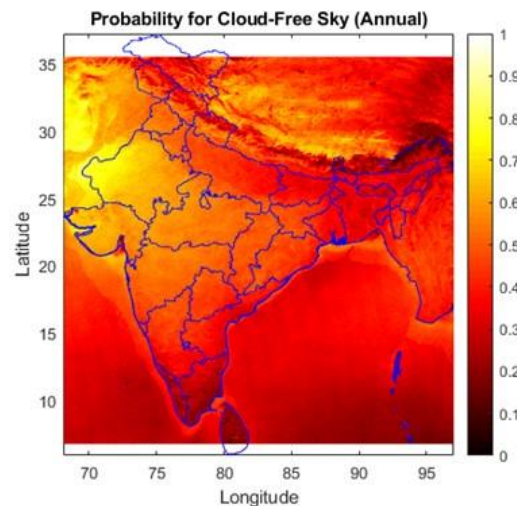
## Priority (Cloud free state)

Hanle = Mount Abu (62%)

Hanle = Mount Abu (62%)

Ahmedabad (57%)

Ponmudi (21%)



# Satellite QKD Schemes

## Satellite QKD scheme (BB84 protocol based)

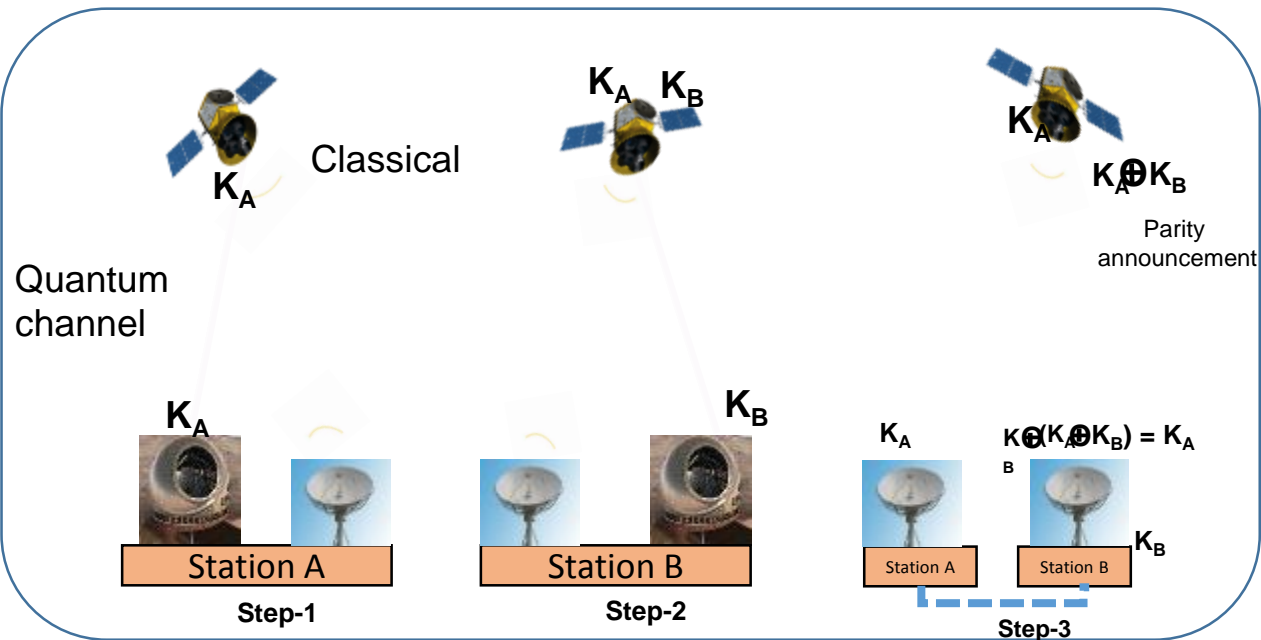


Fig. Single photon based Scheme

## Satellite QKD scheme (BBM92 protocol based)

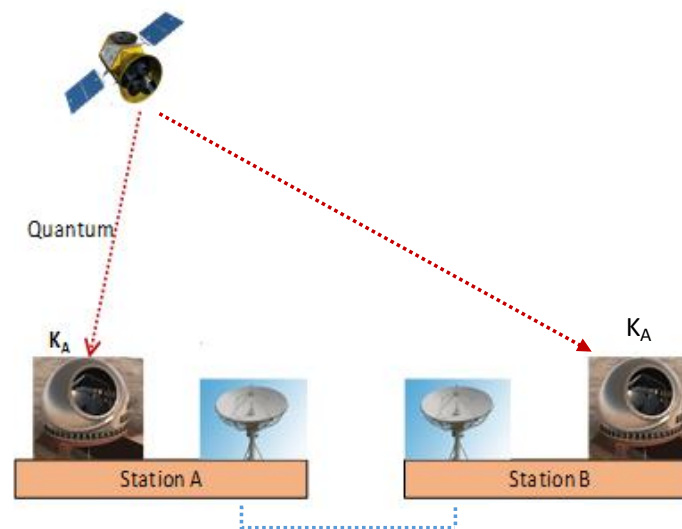
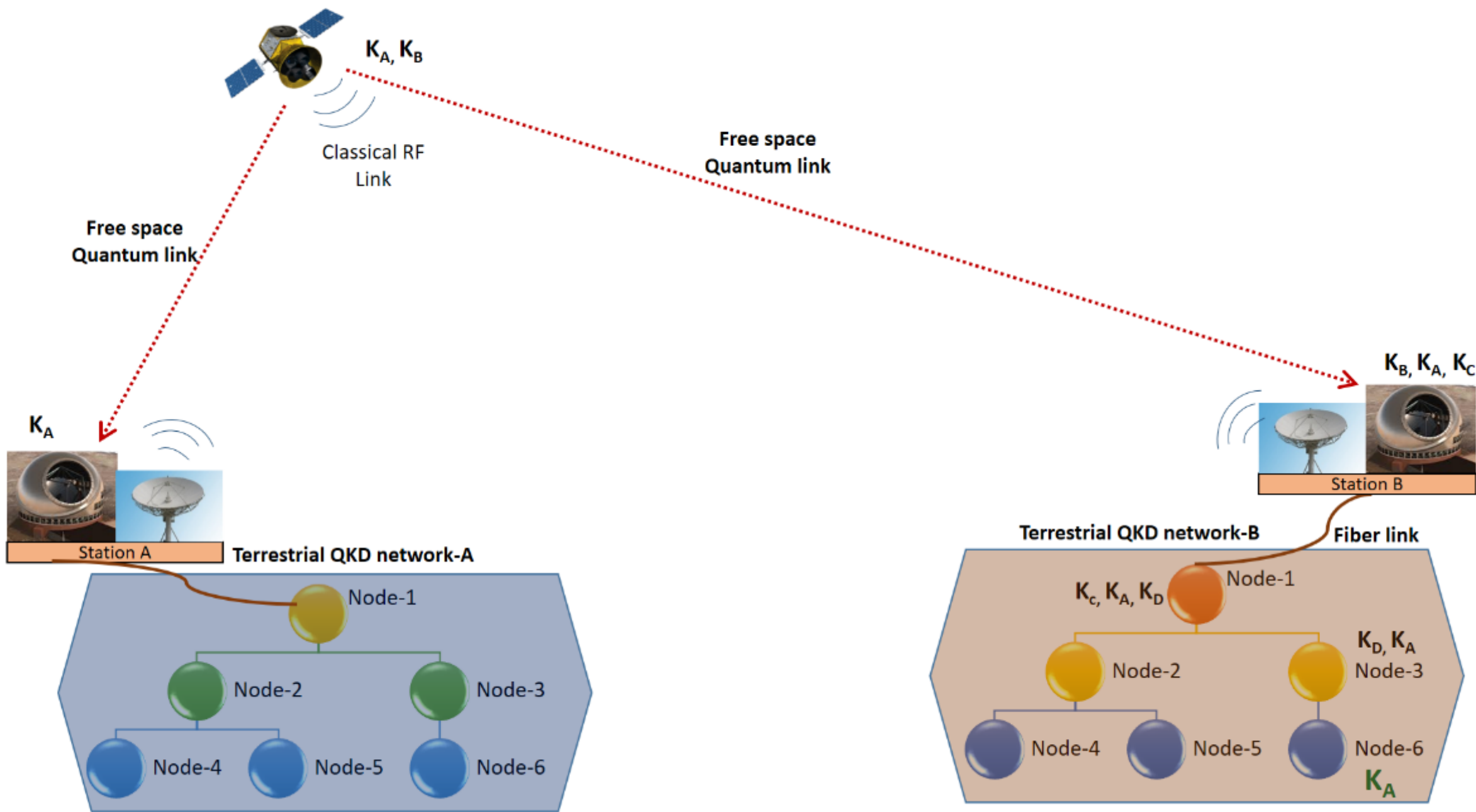


Fig. Entangled photon pair based Scheme

# Integrated Satellite and terrestrial QKD Network



# THANK YOU

Insanity is doing the same thing, over and over again, but expecting different results.

- Rita Mae Brown



## Questions ?

The future depends on what we do in the present.

- Mahatma Gandhi