

PSLV TO LAUNCH 2 U.K. SATELLITES TONIGHT

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A PSLV launch on Sunday night will put two earth observation satellites from the U.K. to space.

There is no Indian satellite on this flight. PSLV-C42 will be the first fully commercial trip of the year, breaking a five-month-long lull for the Indian Space Research Organisation.

ISRO did not make any launch post-April 12, after it put replacement navigation satellite, IRNSS-1I to space on the PSLV-C41 rocket.

A few days after that, it recalled its GSAT-11 from the South American launch port of Kourou and weeks before it was due for a launch ISRO Chairman K. Sivan said the interval was not connected with the satellite recall but for the sake of readiness of the two customer satellites.

The countdown to the launch began at 1.08 p.m. on Saturday. The PSLV is being flown in its core-alone format, minus the external boosters. The two satellites together weigh nearly 889 kg; this is the optimum payload that a core-alone PSLV can launch, Dr. Sivan said.

PSLV-C42 is scheduled for launch at 10.08 p.m. from the first launch pad of the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota. It will lift NovaSAR and S1-4 to a sun-synchronous ('pole-to-pole') orbit 583 km from Earth. The entire flight up to the release of the satellites is designed to happen within 17.5 minutes.

The satellites are owned by Surrey Satellite Technologies Ltd., which signed a commercial launch contract with Antrix Corporation, an ISRO release said.

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