

# ISRO LAUNCHES TWO U.K. SATELLITES

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The PSLV-C42 carrying the two satellites from the U.K. in Sriharikota on Sunday.R. Ragu

The late-night dark skies at Sriharikota lit up in bright orange hues as the PSLV-C42 lifted off and vanished into the thick black clouds, carrying two satellites from the United Kingdom – NovaSAR and S1-4 from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, SHAR here.

The lightest version of the PSLV, flying in its core-alone version without the six strap-on motors, the PSLV-C-42 rose into the skies at 10.08 p.m. Almost 18 minutes later, the two satellites were placed in the desired orbit by ISRO. This was the 12th such launch of a core-alone version of the PSLV by ISRO.

“This was a spectacular mission. We have placed the satellite in a very, very precise orbit,” R. Hutton, Mission Director, said.

The two satellites, owned by Surrey Satellite Technology Ltd (SSTL) were placed in a circular orbit around the poles, 583 km from Earth. The commercial arm of ISRO, Antrix Corporation earned more than Rs. 220 crore on this launch.

The NovaSAR is a technology demonstration mission designed to test the capabilities of a new low cost S-band SAR platform. It will be used for ship detection and maritime monitoring and also flood monitoring, besides agricultural and forestry applications. The S1-4 will be used for environment monitoring, urban management, and tackling disasters.

“This unique mission is mainly for ‘ascending daytime node’ launch. This is the first time we have executed a different type of mission altogether,” K. Sivan, Chairman, ISRO said.

Outlining the road map for ISRO, Mr. Sivan said the next six months will see 18 missions – 10 satellite missions and 8 launch vehicle missions.

“We are almost going to have one launch every two weeks. Definitely the load on us is going to be huge,” he said.

Among the slew of launches scheduled over the next few months, the much-awaited and delayed, India’s second lunar mission, Chandrayaan-2 finally has a launch window.

“Chandrayaan-2 is planned for a window from January 3 to February 16, 2019 that we are targeting. It can happen anytime during that window. But we are aiming for the beginning of the window, January 3,” Mr. Sivan said.

“Right now with the status of the rocket, the GSLV Mk-3 M1, and the present status of the satellite, we are not expecting any more delay. At the same time tests are going on.”

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