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PSLV suffers back-to-back setbacks, Isro mission fails

BENGALURU: The Indian Space Research Organisation's (Isro) first mission of the year failed on Monday after the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) carrying an earth surveillance satellite and 15 other payloads went off track after lift-off, in a fresh setback to the workhorse launch vehicle.

"The PSLV-C62 mission encountered an anomaly during the end of the PS3 stage. A detailed analysis has been initiated," Isro said in a statement, without giving further details on what went wrong.

The space agency's last mission involving PSLV also failed when the launcher suffered a "motor pressure issue" after lift-off in May last year. **→P12**

→P12



PSLV-C62 carrying the EOS-NI lifts off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

PT

PSLV-C62 deviates from flight path after anomaly

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SRIHARIKOTA: Isro's PSLV-C62 rocket carrying 16 satellites, including a foreign Earth Observation payload, failed to place them in the intended orbit after encountering an "anomaly" in the critical third stage of the launch on Monday.

"Disturbances in the rocket and later deviation from the flight path were observed when strap-on motors were providing thrust during the flight's third stage to propel the vehicle to the intended altitude", V Narayanan, chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation, said, adding a detailed analysis has been initiated to identify the cause.

The mission to place the satellites in the intended orbit could not be achieved, and all 16 satellites were lost in space, people familiar with the matter said, adding that this was the second consecutive PSLV mission failure during the third stage.

A similar, previous attempt in May 2025 (PSLV-C61-EOS-09) also did not succeed due to a "motor pressure issue," and there was a fall in the chamber pressure of the motor case.

Among the satellites lost were DRDO's Anvesha, a strategic super-eye to unmask military camouflage from nearly 500 km,

AayulSAT, India's first in-orbit fuelling satellite, and CGUSAT, a small, student-developed Low Earth Orbit (LEO) satellite designed primarily for emer-

The Earth Observation satellite was built jointly by Thailand and the UK.

The PSLV-C62 also carried KID, or Kestrel Initial Technology Demonstrator from a Spanish startup that was a small-scale prototype of a re-entry vehicle. A former top Isro scientist said it

What went wrong with PSLV-C62?

Indian Space Research Organisation's (Isro) first mission of the year ended in a failure on Monday after an "anomaly" was detected in the PSLV-C6 launch vehicle during the flight's third stage.

THE MISSION

The 44.4-metre tall four-stage PSLV-C62 lifted off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota at 10.18am.

Mission payload: 16 satellites, including Earth observation satellite EOS-N1, to be injected into a sun-synchronous orbit

DISTURBANCES DETECTED DURING FLIGHT

During the flight's third stage, disturbances in the rocket and later deviation from flight path was observed.

"The performance of the vehicle up to the end of the third stage was expected. Close to the end of the third stage we are seeing more disturbance in the vehicle and subsequently, there was a deviation observed in the flight path."

— V Narayanan,
Isro chairman

Back-to-back failures

Monday's setback meant that Isro's workhorse, the PSLV, has now faced two failures in a row. On May 18, 2025, the PSLV-C61 launch did not succeed after an anomaly was detected during the third stage

would take some time for the space agency to collect data, analyse, understand what happened

It is expected that Isro will officially release the findings in the days to come, he told PTI, requesting anonymity.

To a query, he said, "it is a setback as the satellites did not reach the intended orbit and all satellites lost in space maybe drifting as space debris."

As the 22.5-hour countdown concluded on Monday morning, the 44.4 metre tall four-stage rocket lifted off as scheduled at 10.18 am from the spaceport here. The mission was to deploy a primary Earth Observation satellite and multiple co-passenger satellites into a 512 km Sun-Synchronous Orbit, after a flight journey of about 17 minutes.

The initial phases of the flight proceeded according to plan. However, after the announce-

ment that the "third stage ignited," an uneasy calm took over the Mission Control Centre.

In his address at the centre, Narayanan said: "The PSLV is a four-stage vehicle with two solid stages and two liquid stages. The performance of the vehicle up to the end of the third stage was expected. Close to the end of the third stage, we are seeing more disturbance in the vehicle, and subsequently, there was a deviation observed in the flight path."

Confirming the mission's failure on its 'X' handle, Isro said, "The PSLV-C62 mission encountered an anomaly during the end of PS3 (third stage) of the vehicle. A detailed analysis has been initiated."