

Van Allen Probe A

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Van Allen Probe A Latest News

NASA's 600 kg Van Allen Probe A satellite is falling back to Earth, raising questions about whether people on the ground should be concerned.

About Van Allen Probe A

- **NASA's Van Allen Probes** mission was the **first mission to use two spacecraft in tandem to study Earth's radiation belts.**
- **Originally designed for a two-year mission**, the **Van Allen Probes A and B launched** on Aug. 30, **2012**, and **gathered unprecedented data on Earth's two permanent radiation belts — named for scientist James Van Allen —** for almost seven years.
- From 2012 to 2019, the spacecraft and its twin, Van Allen Probe B, **flew through the Van Allen belts, rings of charged particles trapped by Earth's magnetic field, to understand how particles were gained and lost.**

- The **belts shield Earth from cosmic radiation, solar storms**, and the constantly streaming **solar wind** that are harmful to humans and can damage technology, so understanding them is important.
- By having two spacecraft with identical instruments, with one followed by the other along nearly the same path, researchers **could measure changes that occur in Earth's radiation belts over time and through space**, providing insights into the physical dynamics of the radiation belts and changes that occur in this critical region of space.
- **NASA ended the mission after the two spacecraft ran out of fuel** and were no longer able to orient themselves toward the Sun.

Source: NDTV

Source: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/van-allen-probe-a/>

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