

LAUNCH OF INDIA'S SECOND MOON MISSION POSTPONED

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A file photo of the Chandrayaan- 1.ISRO

The launch of India's second mission to the moon, Chandrayaan-2, may be delayed till January 2019, according to a top official.

The ambitious mission was supposed to be launched in April, and was later fixed for October. The postponement comes in the wake of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) facing quick setbacks.

Previous setbacks

Earlier this year, the ISRO had launched GSAT-6A, a military communication satellite, but lost communication with it. Following this, the ISRO also recalled the launch of GSAT-11 from Kourou, French Guiana, for additional technical checks. Last September, the PSLV- C39 mission, carrying the IRNSS-1H navigation satellite, failed after the heat shield refused to open and release the satellite.

The ISRO is treading a cautious path after these two setbacks as Chandrayaan-2 is one of the crucial launches for the space agency, particularly after Chandrayaan-1 and Mangalyaan (Mars Orbiter Mission).

It is also ISRO's first mission to land on any celestial body. "We don't want to take any risk," said the official, requesting anonymity.

Chandrayaan-2 will be ISRO's first time attempt to land a rover, on the Moon. The rover, costing nearly Rs. 800 crore, will be made to land near the yet-unexplored south pole of the moon.

Repeated attempts to solicit a response from ISRO Chairman K. Sivan were not successful.

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