

ISRO TO CELEBRATE SARABHAI CENTENARY, LAUNCH TV CHANNEL

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The Indian Space Research Organisation will have a year-long Vikram Sarabhai centenary celebration starting in August 2019 to honour visionary scientist and its legendary founding father.

In a few months' time, it plans to roll out a dedicated ISRO TV channel showcasing space applications, developments and science issues and targeted at youngsters and people in remote areas in their language.

Sarabhai, the architect of the Indian space programme, the first ISRO chief and renowned cosmic ray scientist, was born on August 12, 1919.

Its tributes to Sarabhai start with naming the first Indian Moon landing spacecraft of the Chandrayaan-2 mission 'Vikram'. The mission is planned for January 2019. "A chair each at Sarabhai's alma maters Cambridge University and Gujarat University, and MIT would be set up apart from giving awards, scholarships and fellowships in the country and abroad," ISRO Chairman K. Sivan told at the news conference on Sunday which marked the 99th birthday of the legend. The events are being taken up with an initial outlay of 50 crore.

"We have planned a year-long centenary of the visionary architect of the space programme and our first Chairman, Dr Sarabhai, during 2019-20. A series of activities will be organised nationally and internationally to commemorate a great international scientist," Dr. Sivan said.

Earlier, former Chairman K. Kasturirangan unveiled a new bust of Sarabhai at the remodelled atrium of ISRO headquarters, Antariksh Bhavan, amidst a gathering of heads and staff of ISRO centres. Dr. Sivan said 100 lectures by science luminaries would be held across the country and in association with global space networking body, the International Astronautical Federation. Space clubs, knowledge centres, talk shows and awards are among the plans.

As it strengthens its public outreach, ISRO will shortly start allowing public to watch satellite launches from the Sriharikota launch centre. "We are opening our space port to visitors just as NASA does. We are preparing separate systems for visitor entries. Selected students of classes 8 to 10 will be trained at ISRO for a month and taken to various laboratories and centres across the country. Making of student satellites would be encouraged. We want to instil scientific temper and interest in space developments in youngsters," Dr. Sivan said.

Six Startup incubation centres were being set up across the country to tap the best brains. Technology cells would be started for industry and academia to improve the existing linkages.

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