

# WITH HUMAN SPACE FLIGHT, INDIA TO PUSH FRONTIERS

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Gaganyaan, the human space flight Programme green-flagged and set for 2022 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, is highly doable, Chairman of the Indian Space Research Organisation K. Sivan said here soon after it was announced on Wednesday.

V.R. Lalithambika, a specialist in advanced launcher technologies, will helm the project as Director of the Human Space Flight Project.

The mission is estimated at Rs. 9000 crore. Most of the critical technologies and hardware required for the project are ready or have been demonstrated by its centres. ISRO would now stitch them up into a complete project and present a comprehensive project report to get a formal approval of the government, Dr. Sivan said. "We have tested the necessary critical technologies required for the Human Space Flight Programme (HSP) and are confident of achieving it as stated by the Prime Minister," he said.

"We will now speed up the paper work and submit a project report for formal approval. We may immediately need around Rs. 2,000 crore for enhancing infrastructure and technologies at two or three centres and we will be asking for this amount," he told *The Hindu*.

When it achieves the mission, India would be the fourth nation to circle Earth after the Soviets, the Americans and the Chinese. In 1984, India's first astronaut Wing Commander (retd.) Rakesh Sharma orbited Earth as part of a Soviet mission.

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