

GAGANYAAN TOP PRIORITY: ISRO

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Spreading out: ISRO Chairman K. Sivan, right, addressing the media in New Delhi on Friday. R.V. Moorthy

The priorities for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) this year are working on the human space flight programme Gaganyaan and launching a major student outreach apart from the scheduled missions, said its Chairman Dr. K. Sivan on Friday, while stating that India is no less than China in its space programme.

“A separate Human Space Flight Centre has been formed in ISRO. The Gaganyaan project will come under it and that’s how we will target the first unmanned mission in December 2020,” Dr. Sivan said.

Responding to questions on the Chinese space programme, he said China had gone slightly ahead following its human space programme but, “Once Gaganyaan is launched, we will be equal to them in all respects.”

Young scientist scheme

Stating that this year ISRO is planning to spread its wings in new areas, Dr. Sivan announced a Young Scientist Programme (YSP) and termed it their most important project to reach out to students.

Under the YSP, three students, 8th standard pass, would be selected from each of the 29 States and seven Union Territories and will spend one month at ISRO during which they will be given lectures, get access to research and development and will be given experience to build a satellite.

“If the satellite is good, we will launch it. This programme is similar to U.S. space agency NASA’s student outreach,” Dr. Sivan stated. This year ISRO has planned 32 missions, including 14 launch vehicles, 17 space craft and one demo.

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