

GAGANYAAN ON TRACK TO TAKE FLIGHT: ISRO CHIEF

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He said work on Chandrayaan-3 is going on smoothly and it may need 14-16 months to get ready.

While he did not name the mission director or say if the same team was retained, he said, "We have identified the project director, Dr. P.Veeramuthuvel, [of the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre] who was also the associate project director of Chandrayaan-2."

Lunar missions

The Chandrayaan-3 lander and rover are estimated at Rs. 250 crore and will go to the moon on a propulsion model. The GSLV Mark III vehicle costs around Rs. 350 crore.

In the second mission that cost nearly Rs. 1,000 crore, an orbiter carried the lander and the rover to a lunar orbit. The orbiter continues to work well around the moon.

Another lunar mission is being discussed with Japanese space agency JAXA (Japan Aeronautics Exploration Agency) but its elements have not been finalised, he said.

Although scores of landers sent by Russia, the U.S. and the Chinese have explored the moon's surface, so far, no other agency has landed in the southern hemisphere. ISRO hopes to be still the first to do so.

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