

ISRO SETTING UP LAUNCH PAD FOR GAGANYAAN MISSION

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The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is setting up a third launch pad at Sriharikota to undertake the Gaganyaan manned space flight programme, an ISRO official said on Friday. In addition, ISRO is scouting for a location on the western sea coast near Gujarat to set up another launch pad for Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLV).

Third launch pad

“We have two launch pads currently, which are already full. A third launch pad is being set up for the human space flight. It will be ready in time for the mission,” a senior ISRO official said.

In the Independence Day address this year from the Red Fort, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced that an Indian will go to space by 2022.

Following this, ISRO has announced an ambitious roadmap to put a three-man Indian crew in a low earth orbit for 5-7 days by the 75th Independence Day.

ISRO Chairman Dr. Sivan had stated earlier that ISRO has begun work on the manned mission in 2004, and that many of the critical technologies required for human spaceflight have already been validated through various tests — Space Capsule Recovery Experiment, Crew Module Atmospheric Re-Entry Experiment and Pad Abort Test.

ISRO will use its GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle, which can carry the heavier payload of the Gaganyaan, and this will take off from the new launch pad.

In addition to the third launch pad at Sriharikota, ISRO is also scouting for a new location near Gujarat for the SSLV.

ISRO is developing the SSLV to offer affordable launch options for smaller satellites through Antrix, the space agency’s commercial arm. ISRO currently piggybacks smaller satellites on the PSLV and GSLV along with bigger satellites.

The SSLV is expected to reduce the launch time as well as cost less to launch small satellites, which are much in demand.

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