

India abandons satellite after losing contact

August 31 2009, By ASHOK SHARMA , Associated Press Writer

(AP) -- India's space agency has abandoned the country's only satellite orbiting the moon after efforts to revive communication with it failed, an official said Monday.

Communications with the Chandrayaan-1 satellite, which has been orbiting the [moon](#) for nearly a year, snapped Saturday and scientists lost control of the satellite. The space agency's efforts to restore contact since then have failed, agency spokesman S. Satish told The Associated Press.

"The mission has been terminated," Satish quoted G. Madhavan Nair, chief of the Indian Space Research Organization, as saying Sunday.

The space agency said it is investigating the communications failure.

The launch of Chandrayaan-1 in October 2008 put India in an elite club of countries with moon missions. Other countries with similar satellites are the United States, Russia, the [European Space Agency](#), Japan and China.

The agency plans to hold talks with the U.S. and Russian space agencies to track the satellite, which is now orbiting 125 miles (200 kilometers) from the surface of the moon, Satish said on Monday.

"Tracking of the spacecraft is of academic interest," he said.

The \$80 million lunar spacecraft has had problems in the past. In May,

the [satellite](#) lost a critical instrument called the star sensor. Two months later, the spacecraft overheated but scientists were able to salvage the craft and resume normal operations.

The [spacecraft](#) had completed around 95 per cent of the two-year mission's objectives, Satish said on Saturday.

Scientists say the Chandrayaan project will boost India's capacity to build more efficient rockets and satellites, especially through miniaturization, and open research avenues for young Indian scientists.

[India](#) plans to follow the Chandrayaan, which means "moon craft" in Sanskrit, by landing a rover on the moon in 2011.

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