

India Plans for Lunar Mission in 2007

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Indian Space Research Organisation's unmanned lunar mission will be launched in 2007 as scheduled, country's space program chairman said on Tuesday. If India's first lunar mission scheduled for 2007 is successful, it will launch another one by 2015.

Preparations are on track for the first mission, which is called Chandrayan-I or Moon Vehicle I. The 590-kilogram Chandrayan-I is expected to map the lunar terrain for minerals and conduct scientific experiments. The communication satellite INSAT 4 A would be launched from the launch pad at French Guyana in May this year.

Besides India, the United States, the European Space Agency, China and Japan are planning lunar missions during the next decade. The first man-made object to reach the Moon was the unmanned Soviet probe Luna 2, which crashed into it on September 13, 1959. Humans first landed on the Moon on July 20, 1969 as the culmination of a Cold War-inspired space race between Russia and America. The first astronaut on the Moon was Neil Armstrong, commander of Apollo 11.

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