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Moon mission set for Chinese honeymoon

Hemanth CS

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BANGALORE: India's Chandrayaan-1 spacecraft is not alone in deep space. The spacecraft, which is currently in the lunar orbit, will be having a Chinese spacecraft for company.

Chandrayaan-1's mate near the moon is none other China's maiden mission to the moon - the lunar orbiter Chang'e 1 which was launched last year.

The Chang'e 1, which has been put in the lunar orbit to do a few experiments similar to that of Chandrayaan-1, will cruise around the moon along with the Indian spacecraft.

Launched in October 2007, the Chang'e 1, apart from intending to develop a topographic map of the moon and measure the depth of the lunar soil, like Chandrayaan-1, will be looking for Helium-3 - a fuel for future nuclear fusion reactors which is in abundance in the moon.

According to China National Space Administration, the national space agency of China, Chang'e 1's mission duration will continue for a year .

Though the Indian Space Reserach Organisation (ISRO) has maintained that it is not competing with China's space programme, it will be interesting to see the two spacecrafts performing their experiments in tandem.

Apart from Chang'e 1, Chandrayaan will be having a rendezvous with the Japanese orbiter Kaguya, which was launched last year to create a detailed map of the moon's gravity field.

The three spacecraft will be joined by NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter which has been designed to capture highresolution images of the entire surface of the moon. NASA's Lunar Orbiter program ended in 1967.

In 2009, a few other lunar missions are planned which will keep the moon's orbit crowded. NASA's Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, China's Chang'e 2 and Russia's Luna Glob will be orbiting or landing on the moon surface.

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“ All the spacecrafts orbit around the moon in polar orbit at about 100km distance from moon. <http://www.space.com/missionlaunches/sfn-081110-india-moonprobe-orbit.html> ”

By Rex
11/18/2008 10:15:00 PM

“ It is lazy to say "we should take our time to get developed". This is the attitude being followed on all civil projects as well. On the other hand, we need to set aggressive schedule and beat the schedule. This is not to prove to anyone. This is to show ourselves our commitment to excel. ”

By Rex
11/18/2008 10:02:00 PM

“ I would like to know, at what distances from moon's surface, are China's Chang'e 1 and Japanese orbiter Kaguya orbiting the moon. ”

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“ India should not race with anybody. Infact it should walk on its own pace. We do not have to prove anybody about our greatness. And we should take our own time to get developed. Rajat Texas ”

By [Rajajt](#)
11/18/2008 12:25:00 AM

“ India must ensure that it does not lose in the space race to put a man on the moon before China and establish a Union Territory on the moon. Otherwise others will stake a claim to the moon. Those who criticize the moon mission today are similar to those who were against Spain spending money on Columbus historic voyage across the Atlantic. Europe too had a large number of poor 600 years ago but look at them today. Please do not listen to pessimists who only want India to focus on poverty. ”

By [Raj](#)
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