



KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY
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Chandrayaan-3 Honoured with 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award

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India's lunar mission Chandrayaan-3 has been awarded the prestigious 2026 Goddard Astronautics Award by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA). The award recognises the mission's historic achievement of successfully landing near the Moon's south pole and its contribution to global lunar exploration and scientific research. India's Ambassador to the United States, Vinay Kwatra, accepted the award on behalf of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) during the AIAA ASCEND 2026 Conference held in Washington DC.

Why Chandrayaan-3 Received the Award

The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) honoured ISRO for the "groundbreaking landing" of Chandrayaan-3 near the lunar south pole region, which helped deepen scientific understanding of the Moon and future space exploration possibilities.

On 23 August 2023, Chandrayaan-3 achieved a historic soft landing on the Moon, making India:

The first country to land near the Moon's south pole,

The fourth country to successfully soft-land on the Moon after the Soviet Union, the United States, and China.

Key Features of Chandrayaan-3 Mission

Launch Vehicle: LVM3-M4

Launch Date: 14 July 2023

Landing Date: 23 August 2023

Landing Site: Shiv Shakti Point near the lunar south pole

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Plot A P.127, AF block, 6 th street, 11th Main Rd, Shanthi Colony, Anna Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu 600040
Phone: 044 4353 9988 / 98403 94477 / Whatsapp : 09710729833

Mission Components: Vikram Lander, Pragyan Rover & Propulsion Module

Scientific Importance of the Mission

Chandrayaan-3 conducted experiments related to: Lunar surface temperature, Seismic activity, Plasma environment, Presence of sulphur and other elements on the Moon.

The mission significantly enhanced India's status in global space exploration and demonstrated cost-effective space engineering capabilities.

About the Goddard Astronautics Award:

Presented by: American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA)

Considered one of the highest honours in the field of astronautics.

Named after Robert H. Goddard, regarded as the father of modern rocketry.

Award recognises outstanding achievements in space science and astronautics.

About ISRO:

Established: 1969

Headquarters: Bengaluru

Founder: Vikram Sarabhai

Parent Department: Department of Space, Government of India.

Chairman: V. Narayanan

Chandrayaan Programme

India's Chandrayaan programme is a series of lunar exploration missions:

Chandrayaan-1 (2008): Helped discover evidence of water molecules on the Moon.

Chandrayaan-2 (2019): Orbiter mission successful; lander lost communication.

Chandrayaan-3 (2023): Successful soft landing mission.

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