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ISRO gearing up for space capsule recovery experiment

Special Correspondent

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to carry out a space capsule recovery experiment in 2014 to test some of the critical technologies for manned space missions in future.

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) Director S. Ramakrishnan said here on Friday that the operation would involve the launch of a spacecraft that would later re-enter the earth's atmosphere. The capsule would be recovered from the sea off Andamans.

Fielding questions after delivering the foundation day lecture of the Kerala Academy of Sciences (KAS) here on Friday, Dr. Ramakrishnan said the operation was scheduled to take place before April 14. Efforts were on simultaneously to develop a crew vehicle and space suit for astronauts.

He said it would take 10 years for India to undertake human space flight. "Manned space missions would require more powerful launch vehicles like the GSLV Mark 3 currently under development."

Dr. Ramakrishnan said the mission readiness review of the indigenous cryogenic engine was scheduled for December 28. The GSLV 2 powered by this engine was expected to be launched on January 5.

Dr. Ramakrishnan said the feedback from the Mars Orbiter Mission would help ISRO plan bigger space missions.

Earlier, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy conferred the honorary fellowship of the Kerala Academy of Sciences on three eminent scientists, namely ISRO chairman K. Radhakrishnan, executive vice-president of Kerala State Council for Science, Technology and Environment V.N. Rajasekharan Pillai, and outstanding scientist of CSIR-NIIST A. Ajayaghosh. M. Vijayan, IISc, Bangalore, was conferred the honorary fellowship in absentia. Mr. Chandy also conferred fellowships on 27 scientists.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Chandy said the country was watching ISRO's Mars Orbiter Mission with great enthusiasm.

He exhorted the scientific community to imbibe the spirit of enquiry and direct their research towards newer ways of making life simpler.

In his reply speech, Dr. Radhakrishnan said the Mars Orbiter Mission had enthused the younger generation. He said ISRO had come out successful in precisely directing the spacecraft towards mars through complex manoeuvring.

Dr. Rajasekharan Pillai, in his address, stressed the need for Kerala to build up a critical mass of scientists in different areas to achieve great things in science.

Dr. Ajayaghosh said science education and research had achieved momentum in India. He said students today had ample opportunities to take up science for study and research.

KAS president Oommen V. Oommen and general secretary K.G. Ajitkumar spoke.

Keywords: [ISRO](#), [VSSC](#), [S. Ramakrishnan](#), [Kerala Academy of Sciences](#), [space capsule recovery experiment](#), [space missions](#)