

ROHINGYAS'S BID TO GET NID Ctg UP chairmen giving certificates with fake identities

FM MIZANUR RAHAMAN, Ctg

Union parishad chairmen in several upazilas of Chattogram have allegedly been issuing citizenship certificates to Rohingyas, paving the way for the refugees to eventually obtain Bangladeshi national identity card or passport.

Many of these refugees have fled from the camps in Cox's Bazar and came to Chattogram where local influential persons are giving them shelter and helping them get included in the voters' list, officials said.

"We came to know that some UP chairmen are issuing certificates to Rohingyas due to their own political interests and a section of local influential persons have given shelter to them in hilly and remote areas of Patiya upazila," Habibul Hasan, upazila nirbahi officer of Patiya, told The Daily Star.

On August 28, he issued letters to the municipality mayor and 16 UP chairmen and members, asking them not to provide shelter to Rohingyas.

The UNO also used loudspeakers, asking locals not to shelter any refugees fleeing the camps.

"I have also sent copies of the letter to the deputy commissioner and deputy director [local government] of Chattogram," the UNO said.

"We have told all the chairmen and mayors about the issue and asked them to be cautious while issuing certificates," said Chattogram DC Eliash Hossain.

A few days ago, administration officials in Patiya had cancelled the birth certificate of a woman, who went by the name of Tasmina Akhter, after learning that she was a Rohingya, UNO Habibul said.

The woman was married to one Abdul Kader of Barlia union and had been living there, officials found out.

At Patiya UNO office, several locals told this correspondent that the refugees who managed to flee the camps had been living in the remote

areas of Kelishahar, Haidgaon and Kachua unions.

They added that some of the refugees have been entering Chattogram city by boarding local trains from Chandanaish and Patiya.

The issue had also been discussed in recent meetings of law enforcement agencies.

The focus on the issue has intensified since August 18 when Election Commission officials in the port city detained a Rohingya woman and a man, who went to the EC office to receive the woman's smart NID card. Officials found that she had a fake NID card, but her information was saved in the EC database. The incident is under investigation.

Former expatriates' welfare and overseas employment minister Nurul Islam said, "During my tenure, we found that thousands of Rohingyas holding Bangladeshi passports have already gone to different foreign countries and our workers are facing different problems due to this."

The overseas job market for Bangladeshi people will shrink if Rohingyas keep getting Bangladeshi passports and going abroad. Besides, Bangladesh has to bear the responsibility if the Rohingyas involve in unlawful conduct overseas, he added.

On July 30, Patiya police sent back 30 Rohingyas to Cox's Bazar from Haidgaon.

Nurul Kader, a resident of Kachua union, said, "The Rohingyas, who came to the area about 15 to 20 years ago, are providing shelter to the ones who entered into Bangladesh in 2017."

On August 28, divisional passport officials detained a suspected Rohingya man, who went by the name Faisal and claimed that he was from Sitakunda. He also had documents vouching for his origin in the area.

A Rohingya woman was held at the passport office on similar suspicions on August 22.

Syndicate helps

FROM PAGE 1
embassy in the capital for visa processing, said Mustafizur Rahman, officer-in-charge of Akbar Shah Police Station.

Also on Thursday night, Bayezid police detained four Rohingya women from the port city's Barma Colony area, some 10km from Kattoli. One of the women carried a Bangladesh NID card.

Mustafizur said the three men used to live in Thaingskhali refugee camp in Ukhaia, and used an address of Noakhali to get their passports.

"They got the passports with the help of a syndicate that includes local and Rohingya brokers. They spent Tk 60,000, Tk 90,000 and Tk 1.09 lakh

he was from Jungle Salimpur union of Sitakunda. The woman on the other hand identified herself as Sumaiya Akhter from Dhaloi union under Hathazari upazila.

The two even produced the NID cards of their parents, said Abu Sayeed, deputy director of Chattogram Divisional Passport Office.

"The Rohingyas are submitting all the necessary documents to get passports. It is really difficult to identify the Rohingya from among a huge number of applicants," he told The Daily Star.

He said they could not initially verify the authenticity of the documents, but after suspicion arose, they matched their fingerprints on the Rohingya database and found that they were Rohingyas.

"We have limited access to the server of the NID of the Election Commission, but we have access to the recently-developed database of the Rohingya people," he said.

During interrogation, the Rohingya people told the passport officials that the brokers managed all the documents for them, he added.

Sayeed blamed local elected public representatives for issuing the documents such as NID card, birth certificate and citizenship certificate.

In case of the three men held on Thursday, they first contacted a Rohingya broker in Ukhaia who introduced them to a Bangladeshi broker in Chakaria of Cox's Bazar, said Mustafizur, the OC of Akbar Shah Police Station.

The man in Chakaria sent them to another broker in Feni who took them to Noakhali after striking a deal.

"The three Rohingya men told us that the passports were made following the due process and they got those within a month after applying for them," the OC added.

"None of these irregularities could be detected during the verification process, including the police verification, because the syndicate has a strong and powerful network," he said.

Two aid workers killed in 'ambush' in Ethiopia

AFP, Addis Ababa

Two staff members with Action Against Hunger have been shot dead by unidentified "armed individuals" in western Ethiopia, the aid group said.

Action Against Hunger said the aid workers were "ambushed" on Thursday while leaving Nguenyiyl Refugee Camp in the Gambella region.

The camp hosts tens of thousands of refugees from neighbouring South Sudan, which has been mired in civil war since 2013.

"Two employees were killed at the scene," Action Against Hunger said late

on Thursday.

"Action Against Hunger has suspended full operations in Gambella, but are maintaining the provision of life-saving assistance."

The international humanitarian group also said it was "coordinating with the authorities who are investigating this attack."

The office of the United Nations resident and humanitarian coordinator in Ethiopia condemned the attack.

"Attacks on aid workers in clearly marked humanitarian vehicles constitute a violation of international humanitarian law," it said in a statement.



Iron rods occupy a pavement and a portion of Mayor Annisul Huq Road in front of an under-construction building in the city's Tejgaon area yesterday, forcing pedestrians to use the street and risk their lives.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Rashid stars as Afghans take control

FROM PAGE 1
firing with both bat and ball, Afghanistan are set to take a big first-innings lead over the Tigers, who were still trailing by 148 runs with two wickets in hand at stumps and will resume the today on 194 for eight, with Mosaddek Hossain and Taijul Islam at the crease.

At 130 for seven, it seemed that The Tigers may even face the humiliation of following on before Mehedi Hasan Miraz and Mosaddek carried them past the mark of 142 and then Taijul joined the latter to construct a face-saving 48-run ninth-wicket stand.

Bangladesh's batsmen never looked comfortable after coming in to bat just before the lunch break as the pitch seemed to transform from the one on which Afghanistan, riding on a maiden Test fifty from Rashid, scored 342. While his teammates maintained a disciplined line and length, it was Rashid who starred with the ball too, picking up four wickets to put his team in a commanding position.

However, Bangladesh did well at the start of the day picking up the last five Afghan wickets for just 71 runs after the visitors resumed on 271 for 5. Asghar Afghan, who resumed the day on 88, departed on 92 while Afsar Zazai also departed quickly for 41, adding just six runs to his overnight score.

Left-arm spinner Taijul Islam was the most successful bowler for the Tigers with four wickets while Shakib,

who was wicketless on the first day, picked up two.

With four overs to go before lunch, Bangladesh started their dismal show with the bat by losing opener Shadman Islam in the very first over without troubling the scorers.

The left-hander edged a delivery moving away from his off stump, giving a wicket to the only specialist pacer in the game in Yamin Ahmadzai.

Yamin, along with off-spinner Mohammad Nabi, kept things tight as Liton Das -- who came in at number three -- and fellow strokemaker Soumya Sarkar, found it difficult to score runs. A measure of Afghanistan's discipline was that Bangladesh's first boundary -- a six hit by Liton off chinaman bowler Zahir Khan -- came in the 17th over.

But Soumya, pinned to his crease and playing across when he should have been playing forward and straight, was trapped in front by Nabi's straighter delivery for 17 tortuous runs off 66 balls.

Liton, who had started to look comfortable, paid a heavy price for not taking time to adjust to Rashid's faster pace when the he played a cross-batted shot against the leg-spinner and was bowled for 33.

Rashid delivered a hammer blow to the hosts just before the tea break when he removed Bangladesh's two most experienced batsmen -- skipper Shakib and Mushfiqur Rahim -- in the same over.

Shakib was trapped leg-before for 11 off a brilliant Rashid delivery and lost a review in the process. Mushfiqur, however, was a touch unlucky as he was given out for a duck after playing a back foot defence straight down only to see the ball bounce off his toes and go into short leg's hands, with the TV umpire adjudging that the ball had not hit the ground.

After tea, Rashid dismissed the other experienced batsman in Mahmudullah Riyad with a ball that kept low and burst through the gaping gap between bat and pad to hit timber.

Mominul Haque, Bangladesh's Test specialist, was the only home batsman who looked in control even with the procession of batsmen coming and going at the other end. The left-hander, having come in at number four, started to accelerate with a couple of boundaries and also reached his fifty, but got carried away and paid the price for playing an extravagant shot to be caught at mid on trying to hit Nabi over the top on after top-scoring with 52 off 71 balls.

Leg-spinner Qais Ahmed then got his maiden Test wicket by removing Mehedi as Bangladesh were on the verge of being bundled out below 150 before Mosaddek and Taijul came together.

Mosaddek was not out on 44 off 74 balls and Taijul was unbeaten on 14 off 55 deliveries.

Locals speak

FROM PAGE 1
When the man refused to give the money, Khairul arrested him and accused him in a drugs-related case. Several residents of the woman's neighbourhood said they were aware of the incidents.

"Khairul along with his informant and two others again came to my home a few days later and promised to release my husband if I gave him Tk 50,000," the woman said.

She said she recently sold a piece of land for Tk 1.5 lakh. With the money, she and her husband started preparing a piece of land for a roadside shop.

"This money and my husband's wish to become a good man has brought me the disaster," the victim said.

Around 2:30am on Tuesday, the SI and several others allegedly went to her village home and demanded Tk 50,000 for the release of her husband. But when she refused to give any money, the SI and his informant raped her.

Police arrested three suspects -- Kamrul, 40, Omar Ali, 50, and Abdul Latif, 48, over the alleged rape.

SI Khairul refutes the allegations. The Police Bureau of Investigation is investigating the case.

While this correspondent was talking to the woman, over a dozen locals gathered and listened to her.

The locals seemed willing to talk to reporters visiting the area, but most of them didn't say much when asked about SI Khairul.

Only three residents, asking not to be named, spoke about Khairul.

"Khairul unleashed a reign of terror in the area," said one of them.

Another man, aged about 40, said, "Khairul collects information about villagers through his informants and often forces his targets to give him money by threatening to implicate them in false cases."

He never verifies whether the information he receives through his informant is correct, the man added.

"Khairul would not even spare the respected people of the village," said another man.

They also said Khairul used to skim off the top of the money some people in the area earned by smuggling in everyday objects from India.

Khairul said all allegations against him were false and part of a conspiracy.

The area is not far from the Bangladesh-India border and it is not hard to find people in the neighbourhoods who earn their living by smuggling in goods or drugs.

The only police camp in the area is at Gorpura. After serving as the camp-in-charge for around three years, Khairul was transferred. But he managed to come back as the camp in-charge about a year ago.

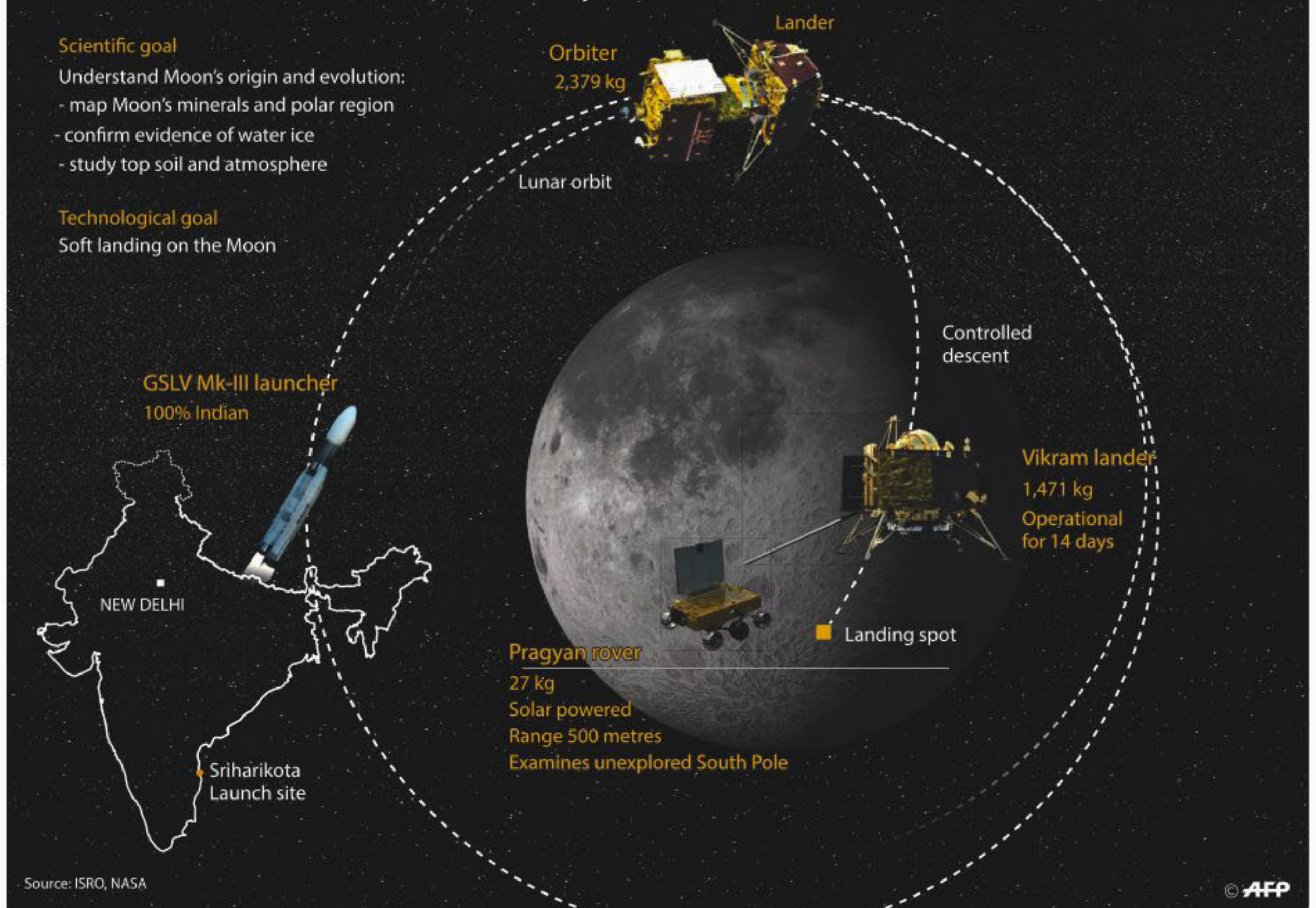
Asked about the allegation against Khairul, Officer-in-Charge of Sharsha Police Station Mashiur Rahman, who is the supervising officer of the SI, said he never received any allegation against Khairul.

The OC added that Khairul was transferred to the district Detective Branch, from where he returned to the camp last November.

Meanwhile, the victim, a mother of two, yesterday again demanded exemplary punishment of the perpetrators.

"They should be punished so that no one dares to rape women," she told reporters.

India's Moon mission: Chandrayaan-2



India set to make space history

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Vikram, the lander of Chandrayaan 2, is scheduled to touch down between 1:30-2:30 am today Indian time. Around four hours later, the lunar rover should emerge.

But landing is a complex manoeuvre, with Kailasavadivoo Sivan, the head of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), calling it "15 minutes of terror".

"It is like suddenly somebody comes and gives you a newborn baby in your hands. Will you be able to hold without proper support?," Sivan told news channel NDTV.

"The baby will move this way, that way but we should hold it," he said.

SOUTH POLE
Until now only the United States, Russia and China have successfully landed on the moon, and India will be the first to land in the region of the lunar South Pole.

The rover will then explore craters

there for clues on the origin and evolution of the moon, and also for evidence on how much water the polar region contains.

According to Mathieu Weiss, a representative in India for France's space agency CNES, this is vital to determining whether humans could one day spend extended periods there.

"India is going where probably the future settlements of humans will be in 20 years, in 50 years, 100 years," Weiss told AFP, calling the Indian mission "exciting".

And if people can survive on the moon, then this means it could be used as a pitstop on the way to Mars, the next objective of governments and private interests such as Elon Musk's Space X. 'IMMENSELY PROUD'

Asia's third-largest economy also hopes to secure lucrative commercial satellite and orbiting deals.

"Every Indian is immensely proud today!", Modi had tweeted as mission control in Bangalore erupted in applause, handshakes and hugs.

"Special moments that will be etched in the annals of our glorious history!"

This time Modi, 68, fresh from a resounding re-election win in May after a campaign steeped in patriotism, will be flanked by youngsters who came top in a national space quiz.

Chandrayaan-2 also stands out because of its low cost of some \$140 million. The United States spent the equivalent of more than \$100 billion on its Apollo missions.

India is also preparing Gaganyaan, its first manned space mission, with the air force announcing that the first level of selection of potential astronauts was complete.