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NASA Invites ISRO to Join Its Moon Base Programme Under the Artemis Accords

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NASA Invites ISRO to Join Its Moon Base Programme Under the Artemis Accords

11 August 2026 · 3 min read ·

✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

*NASA formally invited **ISRO** to participate in its Moon Base programme under the **Artemis Accords** framework, at the **9th India-U.S. Civil Space Joint Working Group** held at **ISRO Headquarters, Bengaluru**, on **August 5-6, 2026**.*

WHAT WAS DISCUSSED

The Joint Working Group session was addressed by ISRO Chairman **Dr V. Narayanan** and US Ambassador to India **Sergio Gor**, and centred on deepening India-US civil space cooperation, including the possibility of Indian participation in NASA's lunar surface infrastructure plans under Artemis. A formal invitation of this kind signals that Washington views India as a **substantive** partner for lunar exploration, not merely a signatory of the Accords' governing principles.

THE ARTEMIS ACCORDS FRAMEWORK

The United States launched the Artemis Accords in **2020** as a set of non-binding principles governing civil space exploration and the peaceful use of the Moon, Mars and other celestial bodies, covering transparency in space activities, **interoperability** of systems between partner nations, provision of emergency assistance to astronauts, registration of space objects consistent with the UN's **Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)** framework, and public release of scientific data. India signed the Accords on **June 21, 2023**, joining a growing group of signatory nations without committing to any specific hardware or mission role at the time.

BUILDING ON EXISTING INDIA-US SPACE COOPERATION

The invitation extends an already active cooperation track: India and the US jointly developed and launched the **NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar)** Earth-observation satellite in **July 2025**, and the two countries' space agencies operate under the broader **US-India TRUST Initiative** for technology cooperation. A Moon Base role would be a considerably deeper commitment than a joint Earth-observation satellite, involving longer-term technical, financial and strategic alignment.

THE STRATEGIC-AUTONOMY QUESTION

India's space diplomacy has historically balanced cooperation with multiple blocs, maintaining engagement with Russia (including legacy human-spaceflight cooperation) even as it deepens ties with the US-led Artemis framework. Accepting a substantive Moon Base role would require India to weigh the benefits of technology access and prestige against the risk of being cast as a junior partner in a US-led architecture, rather than a co-equal contributor shaping lunar-base governance. India's own Gaganyaan human-spaceflight programme and Chandrayaan lunar-exploration expertise give it leverage to negotiate a more substantive role than a purely symbolic one.

UPSC RELEVANCE

GS Paper 2: India's space diplomacy and **strategic autonomy**; the Artemis Accords as a framework for international space governance; India's participation in multilateral and plurilateral scientific frameworks (COPUOS).

GS Paper 3: India's space capabilities (Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan, NISAR) as leverage in international space cooperation; technology-transfer and collaboration models in high-technology sectors.

Mains angle: "India's participation in the Artemis Accords tests the balance between deepening technological cooperation with the US and preserving strategic autonomy in space diplomacy." Discuss with reference to the NASA Moon Base invitation.

★ FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGEPEDIA

NASA'S MOON BASE INVITATION TO ISRO:

Extended at the 9th India-U.S. Civil Space Joint Working Group, ISRO HQ, Bengaluru, August 5-6, 2026

ISRO Chairman: Dr V. Narayanan; US Ambassador to India: Sergio Gor

ARTEMIS ACCORDS:

Launched by the US: 2020; India signed: June 21, 2023

Core principles: transparency, interoperability, emergency assistance, data-sharing, COPUOS-consistent space-object registration

RELATED INDIA-US SPACE COOPERATION:

NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar) launched: July 2025

Broader framework: US-India TRUST Initiative

Sources: PIB, ISRO, The Hindu

Source: NASA Invites ISRO to Join Its Moon Base Programme Under the Artemis Accords — Ujyari.com | Free
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