

National News

PM Modi, other leaders rally around ISRO, say we are proud of our scientists

Agency New Delhi Sept.7,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has reassured the national space agency ISRO today, saying, the communication loss from the Lander of Chandrayaan-2 has not weakened the spirits but has strengthened it further. He addressed the space scientists from the ISRO Centre in Bengaluru just a few hours after the Lander Vikram turned silent near its destination on the moon.

The Prime Minister said, resilience and tenacity are central to the ethos of India. He noted that in the glorious history of the nation, there could have been crushing moments but her people never gave up. He underscored that the country has bounced back after trying situations and has gone on to do spectacular things.

Prime Minister Modi said, India knows that there would be many more proud moments to rejoice. He said, when it comes to space programmes, the best is yet to come. He deeply appreciated the tireless efforts of the space scientists in nation-building. Earlier, the lander of the lunar craft Chandrayaan-2 snapped its communication with the ground stations just minutes before its planned soft-landing on the moon early this morning. The powered descent of the Lander was initiated at 1-hour, 38-minutes, and three seconds by the ISRO scientists in presence of Prime Minister

Lander Vikram of Chandrayaan-2 loses its communication minutes before soft landing

Agency New Delhi Sept.7,

The lander of the lunar craft Chandrayaan-2 has gone incommunicado just minutes before its planned soft-landing near the moon's South Pole early this morning.

A statement from the ISRO Mission Control Centre in Bengaluru says the Vikram Lander descent was initiated

as planned and normal performance was observed up to an altitude of 2.1 km. Subsequently, the communication from the Lander to the ground stations was lost. The data is being analyzed.

The statement was also read out by a spokesperson of the ISRO later. Earlier, the ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan also confirmed that the

lander has lost its touch with humans.

The powered descent of the lander Vikram of Chandrayaan-2 began at 1 hour 38 minutes and 3 seconds today. It was going down smoothly, closely matching with the predicted path until it came closer to 2.1 kilometres above the lunar surface. Afterwards it went silent.

Narendra Modi. Seventy school children were also invited to witness the important operation, who were selected based on a nationwide space quiz.

The powered descent went on smoothly, closely matching with the predicted path until it came as close as 2.1 kilometres above the lunar surface. Afterwards, it went silent. Describing the sequence of the Lander's powered descent, a statement from the ISRO Mission Control Centre in Bengaluru later said the data are being analysed to ascertain the cause of the lander turning incommunicado.

Earlier, the ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan, who gathered himself from his disappointment, also confirmed that the lander has lost its contact.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was with the scientists patted them for their hard work and asked them to move forward. Morale boosting messages

poured in from various quarters for ISRO as several leaders asked the space agency not to get disheartened after Chandrayaan-2's Vikram lander lost contact with ground stations minutes before its planned touchdown on the lunar surface.

The President Ram Nath Kovind congratulated the entire team of ISRO scientists for showing exemplary commitment and courage. In a tweet he said, the country is proud of ISRO. The President further said, we all hope for the best.

Home Minister Amit Shah has said India stands with its hard working scientists at ISRO. In a tweet, Mr Shah said, ISRO's achievement with getting Chandrayaan-2 so far has made every Indian proud.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the whole country is standing with the team ISRO. In a tweet, Mr Javadekar said,

scientists have achieved amazing achievements in the past and will achieve many more in the future.

In a tweet, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said it has laid the foundation for many more path-breaking and ambitious space missions. He said, the passion and dedication of scientists are an inspiration to every Indian and their work is not in vain.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said, people are immensely proud of Indian scientists. They have been a source of perennial inspiration with their vision, commitment & tenacity.

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati also consoled scientists. In a tweet message, she said that Indian scientists, specially ISRO's achievement is a matter of pride and it should be lauded. She asked the scientist not to be desperate and sad because it is needed to progress and go ahead.

ED questions Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal for alleged contravention of foreign exchange law

Agency New Delhi Sept.7,

Enforcement Directorate questioned Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal yesterday in a case of an alleged contravention of the foreign exchange law. The questioning comes days after a dozen premises, including Goyal's Mumbai

residence, his group companies and offices of Jet Airways were searched by the ED. Goyal's businesses include 19 privately-held companies, five of which were registered abroad. According to the agency, these foreign firms allegedly carried out doubtful transactions under the guise of selling, distribution and operating

expenses. While Goyal's statement was recorded under the Foreign Exchange Management Act at the agency's zonal office in Mumbai yesterday, additional evidence may lead to registration of a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. A full-service carrier, Jet Airways shut its operations

in April this year due to financial crisis.

An inspection report by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs revealed large-scale irregularities, including diversion of funds. Currently, the airline is going through the resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

'Traffic fines steep, unaffordable': Shiv Sena calls for rethink

Agency Mumbai Sept.7,

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Maharashtra ally Shiv Sena has questioned the logic of imposing hefty fines on traffic rule violators saying people cannot afford it. This comes amid reports of drivers being fined up to Rs 59,000 for flouting the amended MV Act that came into force on September 1.

Airing its views on the law, Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamna editorial said it was not against the new law, but against levy of steep fines. "The new law is being opposed because of the ten times higher fines for traffic rule violations proposed under it... The law is welcome but will hefty fine be affordable to the poor people of the country?" the editorial, published on Saturday, asked. Saying that the new Act spearheaded by Nitin Gadkari has been passed but has invited sharp criticism for the hefty fines amounts, the Sena added that the central Surface Road Transport



Ministry will have to "rethink" the steep fines. "The demand that first the government should plug all the potholes and then bring in a new law is not wrong. The potholes on roads invite accidents," the editorial said referring to the Goa Congress demand that the government must defer the implementation of the new Act until it can fix the pothole-ridden roads and improve road infrastructure.

Maharashtra transport minister and Sena leader Dwakar Raote, who has already voiced his opposition to the steep fines, said that the department has sent the file to law and judiciary department for its opinion on whether the fine amounts can be reduced. The Sena pointed out that many BJP-governed states such as Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand have opposed the new law.

Since the new law came into force, a driver of a tractor in Haryana's Gurugram, a Delhi suburb, was fined Rs 59,000 for driving under the influence of alcohol. Apart from driving while drunk, the trolley driver was also not carrying the required documents when he was stopped by the police. Earlier, a motorcyclist from Delhi was fined Rs 23,000 for driving without a helmet and not being able to produce documents when asked and an auto-driver was asked to cough up Rs 32,500.

North east News

Queensland and NSW facing intense bushfire emergency as hundreds of blazes still burn

Courtesy 9 News Queensland Sept.7,

Queensland remains in the grips of a bushfire emergency with more than 60 fires raging across the state, leaving homes under threat as weather conditions continue to hamper firefighter's efforts.

In total, 17 homes have so far been lost to the fires and that number could rise as the flames continue to grow.

Authorities' biggest concerns tonight are the areas around Applethorpe and Stanthorpe in the Southern Downs region, west of the Gold Coast.

In both of those rural towns, flames have been seen leaping as high as trees - forcing hundreds of local residents to evacuate with pets and children.

"This is where they raised their children, their grandchildren, so we have a number of families at the moment that are actually going through some really traumatic times," Queensland Premier Annastacia Palaszczuk said today.

The land surrounding the two townships remains charred from the blazes and firefighters continue to face the threat of possible flare-ups, with wind gusts up to 90km/h fanning the flames.

The ongoing threat also saw Queensland Fire and Emergency Services authorities urge employers to allow volunteer firefighters off work to assist.

"If you are an employer of a rural firefighter, right now is

where we need your assistance," a spokesperson said today.

"If they need to go over the next three to four days, please let them go."

Queensland Fire and Emergency Services also issued emergency warnings for Binna Burra, The Summit, Thulimbah, Cottonvale and Dalveen advising locals to watch and act.

The fires come amid the worst drought in living memory experienced by residents in the Darling Downs region, with Stanthorpe expected to run out of water entirely by Christmas. Meanwhile, at Canungra on the Gold Coast bushfires also continue to burn tonight and many families from the Hinterland region have sought refuge at the Canungra Showgrounds.

"This is a tragedy unfolding," Greg Christensen, the Scenic Rim Mayor, said today. "Thank you to my community, you've shown firstly great courage, but secondly great compassion."

Across the Hinterland, 11 homes in total have been destroyed with 10 succumbing to flames last night alone.

Across the state, no lives have been lost as a result of the bushfires however there have been close calls - with one family needing to be rescued by helicopter from Tabletop Road in the Hinterland after their house was destroyed.

In Riverview, a separate bushfire has also been brought under control this afternoon by firefighters

who now plan to backburn the area in the hope of reducing flare-ups.

That blaze continued to rage today for several hours, fanned by intense winds that brought the flames - at times - within 200 metres of residential properties.

The State Government has today renewed its health warning to residents in areas affected by fires, urging people to seek shelter from the smoke being blown across Queensland.

"I am concerned about people's health. If you are asthmatic, if you do not need to go outside - don't go outside, because there is a lot of dust and everything that is being picked up right across the south-east," Ms Palaszczuk said.

The weather forecast for Queensland over the coming days also looks dire for firefighters, with zero chance of rain for the entire state predicted for tomorrow. The high-speed winds are also not expected to die down until at least Tuesday, meaning the bushfires may continue to burn through the weekend.

NSW bushfire emergency Queensland is not the only state battling an emergency tonight, with 65 blazes still burning in NSW in the earliest start to a bush season the state has ever seen.

The town of Tenterfield, in the state's north, is facing the worst of the conditions with homes and businesses today lost to the flames.

Sports News

Sachin Tendulkar leads Indian cricket fraternity in mourning Abdul Qadir's death

Agency New Delhi Sept.7,

Batting great Sachin Tendulkar led the Indian cricket fraternity's tribute for Pakistan spin legend Abdul Qadir, who died in Lahore after suffering a cardiac arrest. Qadir, who would have turned 64 on September 15, passed away on Friday before he could be brought to a hospital.

Tendulkar, who as a 16-year-old had played many attacking shots against Qadir during an exhibition match, described him as one of the best spinners of his times. "Remember playing against Abdul Qadir, one of the best spinners of his times. My heartfelt condolences to his family RIP," Tendulkar wrote on his twitter handle.

Ace India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin also took to twitter to express his grief at Qadir's demise. "Extremely saddened by the demise of Abdul Qadir the spin bowling stalwart from Pakistan. My heart goes out to his family and friends. #RIP," Ashwin tweeted.

Harbhajan too expressed his shock at the death of the legendary spinner. "Shocked

to hear Abdul Qadir passed away. Methim two years back he was full of energy as always... A champion bowler, great human being, you will be missed forever ... condolences to the family #RIPabulqadir," he tweeted. In his condolence message, former India batsman VVS Laxman said was always mesmerised by Qadir's unique bowling style. "Sad to hear about the demise of Abdul Qadir. Was always mesmerised by his unique style of bowling and he was one of the best leg-spinners to play the game. Heartfelt condolences to his family and loved ones."

Qadir became an icon for keeping the art of wrist spin alive in the '70s and '80s with his bouncy and unique run-up and flamboyant personality. Qadir played 67 Tests and 104 ODIs to pick up a total of 368 wickets in his international career. Tributes also poured in from Australian spin legend Shane Warne, who termed him a "terrific bowler", someone he always looked up to.

"It's very sad news about Abdul Qadir, what an opportunity to meet him in

1994 during my first tour of Pakistan and a lot of people who bowled leg-spin like I did, we looked up to him," he said on air during the ongoing Ashes Test match between England and Australia. "He was a terrific bowler who bamboozled a lot of batsmen," said Warne.

Former Indian cricketer Madan Lal also lamented that he will miss his "dear friend". "Shocking news legendary leg spinner Abdul Qadir passing away. He was a dear friend will miss him. I would like to extend my heartfelt condolences to his family. May his soul Rest in peace," he wrote in his handle. Former India batsman Aakash Chopra also offered his condolences, saying Qadir made leg-spin fashionable. "Abdul Qadir—The man who made leg-spin fashionable. Long curly hair... bounce in every step of a fairly long run-up. Rest In Peace. Condolences to the family and loved ones," he tweeted.

In his condolence message, former England cricketer Mark Ramprakash wrote: "Tragic news to hear of the passing of Pakistani leg spinning great Abdul Qadir, what an entertainer - RIP."