

# Chandrayaan strikes ice on the moon

Onboard NASA radar finds over 600 metric tonne of ice in 40 lunar craters

**Washington:** A NASA radar aboard India's maiden lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 has detected craters filled with thick deposits of ice near the moon's north pole, the



US space agency said today. NASA's Mini-Sar experiment found more than 40 small craters, ranging in size from one to nine miles, containing water ice.

"Although the total amount of ice depends on its thickness in each crater, it's estimated there could be at least 600 million metric tonne of water ice," the space agency said in a statement.

The radar's findings "show the moon is an even more interesting and attractive scientific, exploration and operational destination than people had previously thought," said Paul Spudis, lead investigator of the Mini-SAR experiment at the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston, Texas.

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The Mini-SAR has spent the last year mapping the moon's permanently-shadowed polar craters that are not visible from Earth, using the polarization properties of reflected radio waves. "After analysing the data, our science team determined a strong indication of water ice, a finding which will give future missions a new target to further explore and exploit," Jason Crusan of NASA's Space Operations Mission Directorate in Washington said.

NASA's Moon Mineralogy Mapper, which was also on board Chandrayaan-1, has discovered water molecules in moon's polar regions while water vapour was detected by NASA's Lunar Crater Observation and Sensing Satellite, or LCROSS. PTI

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