Kulasekarapattinam spaceport: ISRO chief meets CM Vijay (6 Nov); launches from 2027

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News

ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan called on Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C. Joseph Vijay at the Secretariat in Chennai on 6 November 2026; they met for about half an hour. The meeting came as ISRO prepares to begin launches from the Kulasekarapattinam spaceport being built near Tiruchendur in Thoothukudi district. Narayanan presented the Chief Minister with a miniature model of a satellite launch vehicle. Speaking to reporters on 5 November, he said launches would begin next year (2027) and work was progressing successfully; on 1 November, at Chennai airport, he had said the first launch could be in March–April 2027. The spaceport is meant for Small Satellite Launch Vehicles (SSLV); Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid its foundation stone on 28 February 2024.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Meeting	6 Nov 2026, Secretariat, Chennai
Participants	ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan – CM C. Joseph Vijay
Spaceport	Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district (near Tiruchendur)
First launch	2027 (target March–April)

Point	Details
Foundation	28 Feb 2024 – PM Modi; RH-200 sounding rocket flown the same day
Vehicle	SSLV – 3 solid stages + liquid Velocity Trimming Module
SSLV capacity	Up to 500 kg to low Earth orbit
SSLV tech transfer	HAL – ₹511 crore (June 2025, IN-SPACe)

Background

- Why Kulasekarapattinam? It allows a direct southward launch, which raises the payload capability of small launchers (ISRO). It is India's second spaceport; the first is the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. On the foundation day, 28 Feb 2024, a Rohini RH-200 sounding rocket was launched from here to an altitude of 75 km.
- SSLV: the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle has three solid-propellant stages and a liquid Velocity Trimming Module (VTM); it carries up to 500 kg to low Earth orbit and 300 kg to sun-synchronous orbit, with low cost and quick integration. In June 2025 Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) won the IN-SPACe-run transfer of SSLV technology for ₹511 crore, becoming the first PSU to build rockets.
- V. Narayanan: a rocket-propulsion expert from Kanniyakumari district, key to cryogenic-engine development. Director of the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram, from 2018, he succeeded S. Somanath as ISRO Chairman on 14 January 2025.
- History and culture: the Dasara festival of the Mutharamman temple at Kulasekarapattinam (Kulasai Dasara) is the most famous after Mysuru's; 'Soorasamharam' is enacted on the beach on the tenth day. Nearby Kayal (Kayalpattinam) was a Pandya-era port; the Venetian traveller Marco Polo visited it in the 13th century and described its rich trade.

Tamil Nadu link: the spaceport is in Thoothukudi district. TIDCO plans a space industrial park and propellant park near it. In April 2025 the State Cabinet approved the Tamil Nadu Space Industrial Policy 2025, targeting ₹10,000 crore investment and 10,000 jobs in five years. The ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) is at Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli district.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Meeting: 6 Nov 2026, Secretariat, Chennai; Participants: ISRO Chairman V. Narayanan – CM C. Joseph Vijay; Spaceport: Kulasekarapattinam, Thoothukudi district (near Tiruchendur); First launch: 2027 (target March–April).

What is the background to this news?

Why Kulasekarapattinam? It allows a direct southward launch, which raises the payload capability of small launchers (ISRO).

Practice questions (with answers)

1. Which festival at the Mutharamman temple, Kulasekarapattinam, is famed as second only to Mysuru's?

A) Karthigai Deepam

B) Dasara

C) Chithirai festival

D) Panguni Uthiram

Answer: B – Explanation: Dasara (Kulasai Dasara) – devotees come in varied guises; Soorasamharam is held on the beach on day ten. The Chithirai festival is Madurai's.

2. What type of propellant do all three main stages of the SSLV, to fly from Kulasekarapattinam, use?

A) Cryogenic

B) Liquid (hypergolic)

C) Solid

D) Semi-cryogenic

Answer: C – Explanation: Solid – three solid stages; a liquid Velocity Trimming Module (VTM) at the end fine-tunes the satellite's placement.

3. Which Venetian traveller visited and described Kayal, the Pandya-era port near Kulasekarapattinam?

A) Ibn Battuta

B) Megasthenes

C) Fa-Hien

D) Marco Polo

Answer: D – Explanation: Marco Polo – he came to the Pandya country in the late 13th century and described Kayal's horse and pearl trade.

4. Which public-sector company won ISRO's SSLV technology transfer in the 2025 IN-SPACe bid?

A) Bharat Electronics (BEL)

B) Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL)

C) Bharat Dynamics (BDL)

D) BHEL

Answer: B – Explanation: HAL – ₹511 crore (June 2025), bidding alone; it beat consortia led by BDL and the Adani-backed Alpha Design.

5. Before becoming ISRO Chairman in January 2025, V. Narayanan was director of which ISRO centre?

A) VSSC, Thiruvananthapuram

B) URSC, Bengaluru

C) SDSC, Sriharikota

D) LPSC, Valiamala

Answer: D – Explanation: The Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (LPSC), Valiamala, Thiruvananthapuram – it develops cryogenic and liquid engines.

Sources: ThePrint (PTI), 6 Nov 2026; DT Next, 2 Nov 2026; ISRO; ThePrint, 20 Jun 2025; DT Next, 18 Apr 2025; DT Next (Kulasai Dasara). © Shanmugam IAS Academy.