

Athar ud Din*

With the successful completion of the Chandrayaan 3 mission, India has become the fourth country that has successfully reached the Moon and is the first country to make a landing on the South pole of the Moon ¹. The increasing space prowess of India was never in doubt. For instance, in 2017, ISRO achieved a remarkable feat when it launched more than 100 satellites from a single rocket ². India has also launched an interplanetary mission, i.e., the Mars Orbiter Mission, also known as the Mangalyaan. India also displayed its military capability in outer space with the successful test of the ASAT system in 2019 ³. By successfully landing on the Moon's south pole India has cemented its place as an important space-faring nation. The fact that it has achieved this feat as part of the Global South makes it even more commendable. In his speech made just after the landing of the Vikram Lander, the Prime Minister also stated that he hopes that other countries, specifically from the Global South, carry out similar feats ⁴.

India's heritage as an important member of the Global South means that its accomplishments in space technology are entwined with tremendous responsibilities in space politics and law. As a significant space power, of particular interest will be the role India plays in shaping the emerging contours of international space law.

This paper argues that India at present enjoys a unique position. On the one hand, it has joined the elite club of States that possess advanced space-faring technology, while at the same time, it has a long history of championing the cause of the Global South. Moreover, India's relationship with the United States (a significant space-faring power and the architect of the

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¹ Geeta Pandey, *Chandrayaan-3: India Makes Historic Landing near Moon's South Pole*, BBC News (23 August 2023), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-66594520>

² ISRO, *PSLV-C37 Successfully Launches 104 Satellites in a Single Flight*, <https://www.isro.gov.in/SuccessfullyLaunches104.html>