

Bangalore, we have a problem

The world's second-largest nation held its breath. *Scores of* engineers at mission control in Bangalore had done all they could to get their country's second Moon mission into place above the lunar surface.*** The final part, the descent of the landing module onto the Moon itself, was self-guided — the craft had to find its own path down.

scores of 许多; 大量

"Fifteen terrifying minutes" was how Kailasavavidoo Sivan, boss of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), had described this phase of the landing sequence. His fears were *well-founded*. About 30 minutes before the expected landing time at 1.54 am Indian time on September 7th, ISRO lost communication with the module.

well-founded 有根据的; 理由充足的

India had been aiming to become only the fourth member of the lunar club, after the Soviet Union, America and China. This mission, Chandrayaan-2, departed Earth on July 22nd from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in southern India, after several delays.

What went wrong with the landing module is *anybody's guess* — such is the nature of a communications breakdown. All was well until the final 30km powered descent to the surface, Dr Sivan's *hellish* quarter hour. Several braking stages went off without a *hitch*, but then 1.24 am passed without further news.

anybody's guess 难以预料

hellish 地狱的; 凶恶的

hitch 障碍

After half an hour of *mounting* tension, Dr Sivan appeared before the cameras to give a short statement. "Subsequently, communications from the lander to ground station was lost. The data is being analysed."

mounting 增加; 攀登; 支座; 增加的

The lander was named Vikram, *Sanskrit* for 'valour', and Modi called for "courage" in his parting words to the ISRO scientists. But all the guts in India will not re-establish contact with a robot 239, 000 miles away, and get Chandrayaan-2 back on course. India's Moon mission needs a miracle.

Sanskrit 梵文