

# Russia's Luna-25 probe crashes on Moon

The Luna-25 probe, Russia's first Moon mission in almost 50 years, has crashed on the Moon after an incident during pre-landing manoeuvres, Russian space agency Roscosmos said on Sunday.

Communication with Luna-25 was lost at 2:57 pm (11:57 GMT) on Saturday, Roscosmos said, AFP reported.

According to preliminary findings, the lander "has ceased to exist following a collision with the Moon's surface".

"Measures taken on August 19 and 20 to locate the craft and make contact with it were unsuccessful," the space agency added.

It said a ministerial investigation would be launched into the causes of the crash, without giving any indication of what technical problems might have occurred.

With Luna-25, Moscow had hoped to build on the legacy of its Soviet-era Luna programme, marking a return to independent lunar exploration in the face of financial trou-

bles and corruption scandals at the programme and growing isolation from the West.

The 800-kilogram Luna-25 probe was to have made a soft landing on Monday on the lunar south pole – the first in history.

Russia has not attempted to land on a celestial body since 1989, when the Soviet Union's ill-fated Phobos 2 probe to explore the moons of Mars failed due to an onboard computer malfunction.

Roscosmos boss Yuri Borisov had said the venture would be "risky", telling President Vladimir Putin in June that the probability of it succeeding was "around 70 percent".

Luna-25 had been successfully placed in the Moon's orbit on Wednesday after being launched from the Vostochny cosmodrome in the Russian Far East.

But on Saturday, Roscosmos said an "emergency" had been detected during a manoeuvre by the probe prior to its Moon landing, preventing the operation from being car-

ried out.

Luna-25 had been expected to stay on the Moon for a year, collecting soil samples and looking for water – an ingredient enthusiasts hope could be used to make rocket fuel for future launches and support potential colonies living there.

Cameras installed on the lander have already taken shots of the lunar surface.

Doubts have overshadowed Russia's long-running space cooperation with the West over its military campaign in Ukraine.

While Russia has said it intends to use the International Space Station until 2028, the European Space Agency (ESA) has dropped plans to co-operate with Moscow on Moon and Mars missions.

Moscow last landed a probe – Luna-24 – on the Moon in 1976 and then shifted away from lunar exploration in favour of missions to Venus and building the Mir space station.

Landing Luna-25 successfully



A Roscosmos photo shows Luna-25 on its flight to the Moon on August 16, 2023. **HANDOUT/AFP**

would have paved the way for further Russian missions to the Moon, at a time when India and China are launching their own probes and the US returns to manned missions. India's competing space probe, Chandrayaan-3, entered the Moon's orbit earlier in August and also hopes to land on the south pole. Only Russia, the US and China have previously achieved a controlled landing on the Moon.

A Soyuz-2.1b rocket booster with a Fregat upper stage and the lunar landing spacecraft Luna-25 blasts off from a launchpad at the Vostochny Cosmodrome in the far eastern Amur region, Russia, on August 11, 2023. **ROSCOSMOS/REUTERS**

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### US, Japan, Australia plan joint drills



AP – The US, Japan and Australia are planning a joint navy drill in the South China Sea off the western Philippines this week to underscore their commitment to the rule of law in the region after a recent show of Chinese activities in the disputed waters, Filipino security officials said Sunday.

On Aug. 5, Chinese coast guard ships used water cannons against Philippine vessels in the contested waterway where disputes have long been regarded as a potential flashpoint and have become a fault line in the rivalry between the US and China in the region.

### Ukrainian drones attack four regions: Moscow

REUTERS – Russia said Ukrainian drones had attacked four separate regions in a flurry of attempted strikes on Sunday, injuring five people and forcing two of Moscow's airports to briefly divert flights. Russia's Kursk, Rostov and Belgorod regions, all of which border Ukraine, reported attempted drone strikes, while Russia's defence ministry said it had jammed a Ukrainian drone in the Moscow region, forcing it to crash in an unpopulated area.

### BC wildfires intensify, doubling evacuations to over 35k



REUTERS – Forest fires in Canada's western province of British Columbia intensified on Saturday, with the number of people under evacuation orders doubling from a day earlier – a further 30,000, as authorities warned of difficult days ahead.

The province declared a state of emergency on Friday to access temporary authoritative powers to tackle fire-related risks, as out-of-control fires ripped through interior British Columbia, partially shutting some sections of a key highway between the Pacific coast and the rest of western Canada, and destroying many properties.

# Pakistan's losses two years after Kabul's fall



By Syed Ali Hassan  
Iran Daily's correspondent in Pakistan

Under the patronage of the US, the Ghani government in Afghanistan, along with the US-trained Afghan forces, stood as a fragile barrier against the Taliban. Ultimately, Ghani fled to the UAE, taking all his equipment, while the Afghan Army retreated, finding itself confined to Kabul. The Doha talks were widely seen as a US defeat, causing a loss of morale among the various forces active in Af-

ghanistan under the influence of the US Army.

Fearing the Taliban's growing power, even figures like the sons of Ahmad Shah Masood and Dari-speaking commanders of Mazar-i-Sharif excluded Pakistan from the Doha talks. Despite Pakistan's role in convincing US former president Donald Trump to initiate direct talks with the Taliban, the Taliban engaged in negotiations with China, Pakistan, and Iran. The rapid fall of Kabul showcased the Taliban's effective governance plan and their ability to independently manage their

homeland. Pakistan's failure to recover Afghanistan's frozen assets led the Taliban to shift their hopes away from Pakistan, turning their focus toward direct talks with the United States.

Consequently, Pakistan found itself distanced from Afghan affairs, marking a significant failure in its foreign policy. This shift was partly due to entrusting key responsibilities to Bilawal Bhutto, who was perhaps not the ideal candidate. In contrast, Federal Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Hina Rabbani Khar, has played her role effectively.

Chief of the Pakistan Army General Bajwa initially believed that it might take a year or more for the Afghan Taliban to regain power in Kabul following the American withdrawal. He also anticipated strong resistance from the Afghan National Army as the Taliban attempted to capture Kabul. General Bajwa expected the international community to use this time to form a comprehensive government involving all groups. This perspective echoed the emotions displayed by General Aslam Baig during the US's first war against Iraq when he made emotional

and unreasonable statements, considering Saddam a symbol of resistance. When President Biden announced the withdrawal date for US troops from Afghanistan, US intelligence claimed that it might take nine months for the Taliban to seize control of Kabul. However, this assessment was revised in light of evolving circumstances, predicting Kabul's fall within three months of the US Army's withdrawal. The speed at which Kabul succumbed to the Taliban exposed flaws in intelligence analyses by both the US and Pakistani agencies.

Islamabad couldn't have predicted the Afghan Taliban's return to power and the resulting security threat. Pakistan's primary expectation from the Afghan Taliban was assistance in neutralizing the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Yet, despite the passing of two years, TTP's cross-border attacks have escalated, and the Afghan Taliban has not taken action against them. The situation persists as long as Mullah Haibatullah leads the Afghan Taliban, keeping the Kabul government tied to the Pakistani Taliban's support.

**First Announcement**

**N.I.S.O.C**  
NATIONAL IRANIAN SOUTH OILFIELDS COMPANY  
AHVAZ-IRAN

TENDER NO.: 08-38-0240003

National Iranian South Oilfields Company (NISOC) intends to purchase the following

Items	Material Description	Quantity
01	COILED TUBING REEL STRING, QT-800 TAPERED TYPE H2S SERVICE, 15000 FT. LONG WITH FOLLOWING SPECIFICATION SHIPPING SPOOL: STEEL FITTING: FIG. 1502 WING WITH INTERNAL/EXTERNAL CORROSION INHIBITOR TEST CERTIFICATE/ ANALYZES, WELDING LOCATION AND MATERIAL CERTIFICATE ATTACHED ON EACH REEL REF. QUALITY TUBING WALL THICKNESS & SEGMENT LENGTH: 0.109" W.T X 9000 FT. 0.109"-0.134 W.T X 2200 FT. 0.134" W.T X 3800 FT. HUB SIZE: 4 INCH 2.375 IN. O.D. NOM., W/T 0.134 TO 0.203 IN.	5 RL

Vendors who intend to participate in aforesaid tenders are requested to send their "Intention To Participate" letter via fax to the following number along with their resume according to Qualitative Assessment Form no. 1, available at [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir), not later than 14 days after the second announcement, otherwise, their requests for participation in the tender will be disregarded.

The applicants should have relevant background in supplying the required goods and capability to provide and submit a bid bond of 42,220/51 EURO or 17,347,730,000 RIAL, in favor of NISOC. Tender documents including the materials thorough technical specifications and Qualitative Assessment Forms can be accessed

via: [www.nisoc.ir](http://www.nisoc.ir)-material procurement management tab  
ONLY ACCEPTABLE DELIVERY TERM IS D.D.P., NISOC'S WAREHOUSE, AGHAJARI IRAN  
PAYMENT TERM IS C.O.D., SUBSEQUENT TO NISOC'S MATERIAL APPROVAL  
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Kouy-e-Fadaeian Islam (New Site), Ahvaz, Iran  
Tel. No.: 061 34 12 3772  
Fax No.: 061 34 45 74 37

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## Bomb attack kills 11 in Pakistan

Eleven labourers were killed in a bomb blast in north-western Pakistan near the border with Afghanistan, a local government official said Sunday.

The device exploded after being attached to the vehicle they were travelling in on Saturday evening, Rehman Gul Khattak, senior government official for North Waziristan, said in a statement, AFP reported.

"The labourers were working at an under construction post for the Pakistan army," Khattak said.

Amir Muhammad Khan, a senior police official in the area, confirmed the bomb blast and the number of casualties to AFP.

"Heartbreaking to know about the terrorist attack in North Waziristan which claimed the lives of 11 innocent laborers. Strongly condemn this senseless act of violence and stand in solidarity with the families affected," caretaker Prime Minister Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar posted on X, formerly known as Twitter.

Pakistan has seen a sharp rise in militant attacks since the Afghan Taliban surged back to power in neighbouring Afghanistan in 2021.

The militant assaults have been focused in regions abutting Afghanistan, and Islamabad alleges some are being planned on Afghan soil – a charge Kabul denies. Pakistan's home-grown Taliban group, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), has waged a growing campaign against security officials, including police officers.