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Russia Announces Plans to Establish Moon Colony by 2040

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Russia plans to establish a moon colony by 2040, the federal space agency announced on Wednesday after discussions on the country's long-term space program.

A previous program drafted by the federal space agency Roscosmos in 2014 envisioned a three-stage plan to send humans to the lunar surface to set up infrastructure for a colony. Hundreds of aspiring cosmonauts had submitted applications willing to become the first Russians to land on the moon.

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"The lunar program will be implemented in several stages by 2040," Roscosmos said Wednesday after a joint session with the Russian Academy of Sciences' space council.

The first stage foresees the launch of a module to orbit the moon, the RBC news website reported, citing Nikolai Sevastyanov, the head of Russia's TsNIIMash federal rocket and spacecraft development corporation.

The second phase will reportedly involve sending the country's first manned mission to the moon and starting construction of a long-term base between 2025 and 2034. The program's third stage envisions the completion of the base's construction by 2040 and the establishment of an "integrated manned moon exploration system."

Construction of the moon colony is set to begin late in 2025, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency cited Yevgeny Mikrin, Russia's chief designer of manned space programs, as saying during a presentation of the draft lunar program on Wednesday.

Dmitry Rogozin, the head of Roscosmos, has said that the final document for the lunar program will be finalized by late February 2019.

At Wednesday's joint session, scientists also proposed establishing a telescope on the dark side of the moon to gather data from space as part of the lunar program, Rustam Dagkesamanskiy, the director of the Pushinsky observatory, told RIA Novosoti.

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