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Russia Evacuates Far East Village Ahead of First Post-Soviet Moon Lander Launch

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The Luna-25 lunar lander. **Roscosmos**

The first moon landing mission in Russia's post-Soviet history will be accompanied by an evacuation of a village where rocket boosters are expected to fall this week, a local official said Monday.

The Luna-25 lunar lander is scheduled to launch from the Vostochny Cosmodrome in Russia's Far East at 23:10 GMT on Friday, Aug. 11. It will be Russia's first lander since 1976 and the first research station to land on the moon's south pole.

"Travel to the drop zone of the [Soyuz-2 Fregat] launch vehicle's first stage is prohibited," warned Alexei Maslov, the head of the Khabarovsk region's Verkhnebureinskyi district, located some 300 kilometers east of the Luna-25 launch site in the Amur region.

The population of Verkhnebureinskyi district is listed at 25,000.

Maslov, writing on the Telegram messaging app, said residents of the village of Shakhtinsk —

which has an estimated population of 27 people as of 2021 — will be evacuated around the time of the launch.

He did not say when the villagers would be allowed to return home.

Russia's state-run news agency RIA Novosti reported that Saturday at 23:35 GMT was reserved as a backup launch time.

Luna-25's one-year mission includes exploring for resources such as water, research of the moon's internal structure and the development of soft-landing technologies.

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