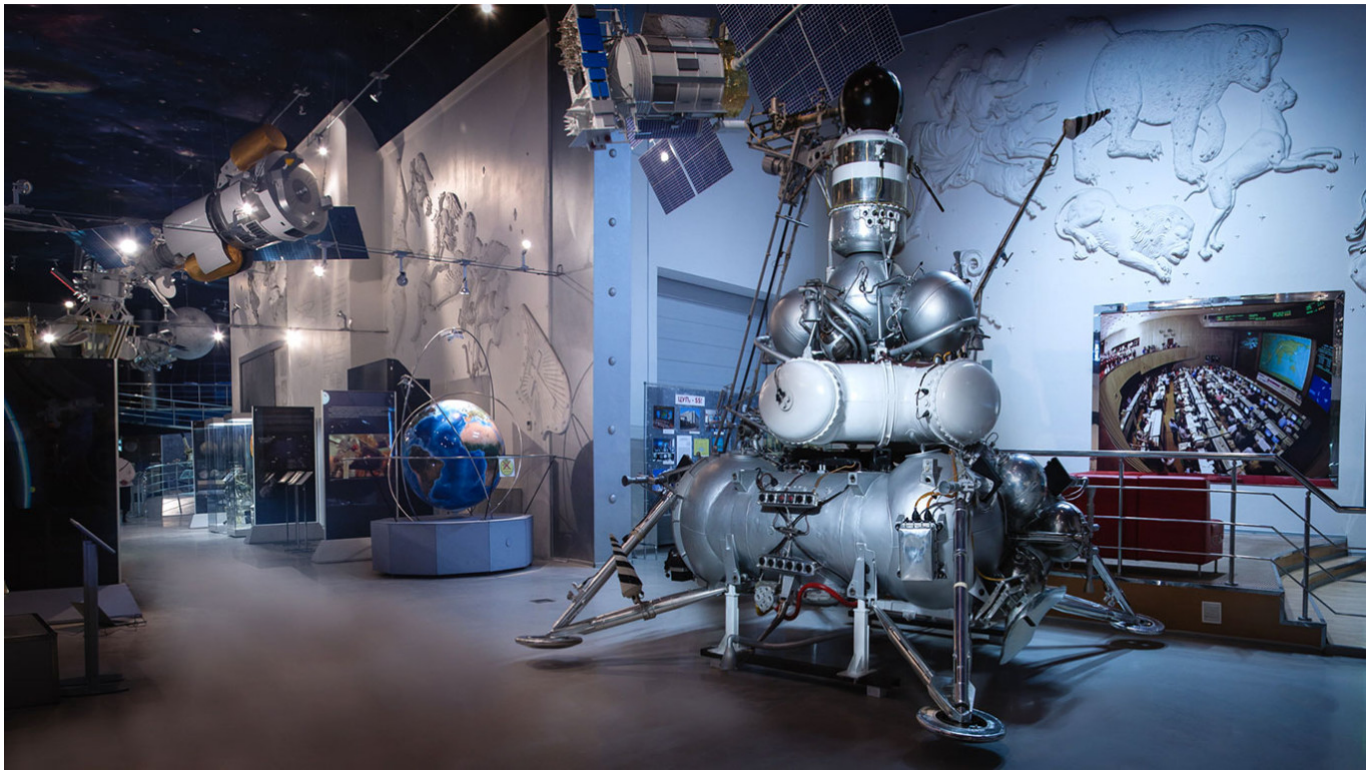
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Kremlin Vows to Pursue Moon Race After Luna-25 Crash

By AFP

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The 1976 Luna-24 Station in the Museum of Cosmonautics. **Museum of Cosmonautics**

The Kremlin said Tuesday that Russia would not give up its ambitions to land a craft on the Moon after its first lunar mission in nearly 50 years failed this month.

The Luna-25 module crashed on the Moon's surface after an incident during pre-landing maneuvers. An Indian mission days later successfully landed near the Moon's south pole.

"We know that the way to the stars is through thorns. The main thing is to continue the Russian program," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters.

"The plans are quite ambitious and they will be realized," he said, adding that the failed mission was not a reason to "tear your hair out."

The Luna-25 mission was meant to mark Moscow's return to independent Moon exploration

in the face of financial troubles and corruption scandals, and growing isolation from the West.

It last landed a probe on the Moon in 1976, before shifting away from lunar exploration in favor of missions to Venus and building the Mir space station.

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