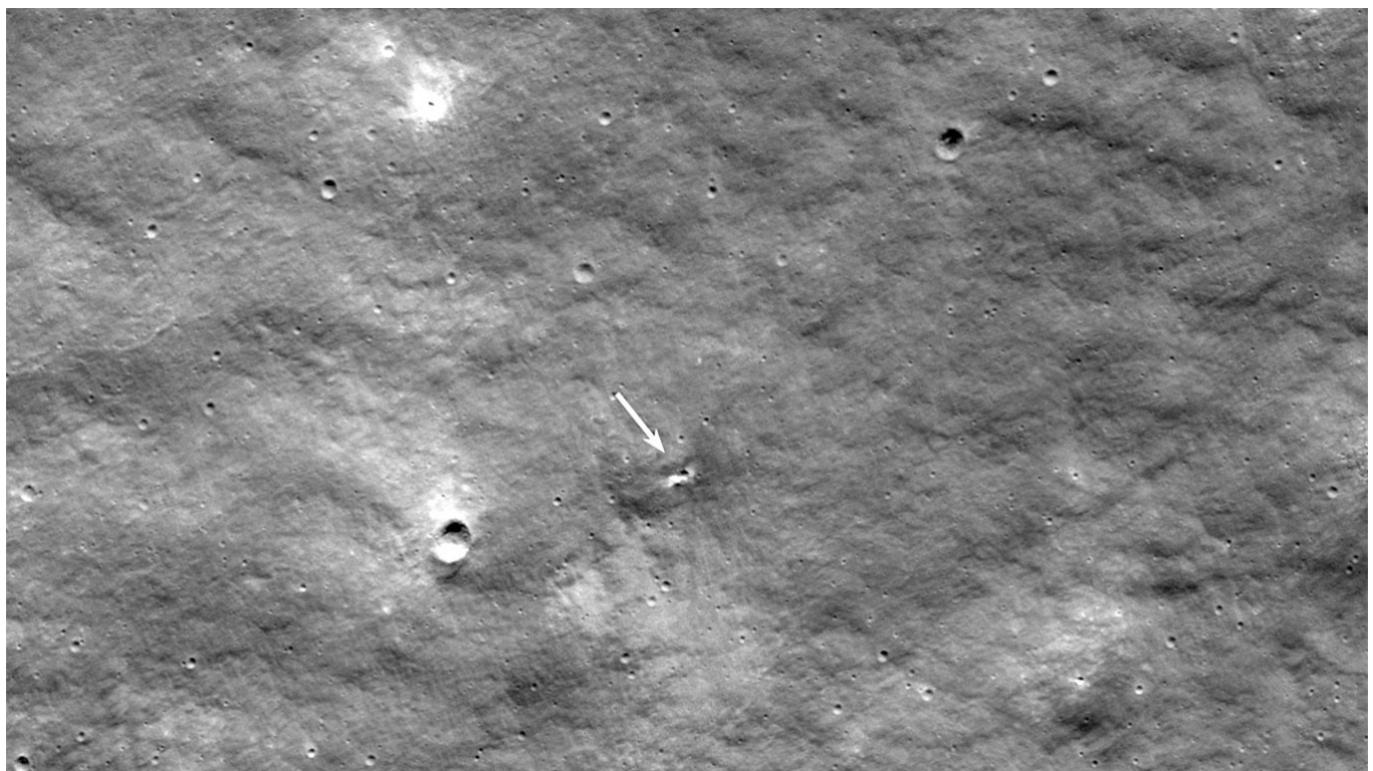


NASA Orbiter Spots Crash Site of Russia's Failed Lunar Lander

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Luna-25's believed impact crater on the Moon. **NASA**

NASA [said](#) Friday it had captured images of the likely crash site of Russia's first post-Soviet lunar lander.

The Luna-25 probe [slammed](#) into the Moon's surface on Aug. 19 during pre-landing maneuvers, according to Russia's space agency Roscosmos.

NASA said its Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) photographed the impact crater on the Moon's south pole where Roscosmos believes Luna-25 crashed.

Close-range images of the same spot dated June 27 and Aug. 24 showed a distinct crater forming on the Moon's surface.

"Since this new crater is close to the Luna 25 estimated impact point, the LRO team concludes it is likely to be from that mission, rather than a natural impactor," NASA said.

Related article: [How Russia's Lunar Ambitions Came Crashing Down](#)

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.

Luna-25's launch was postponed several times in the last five years due to sanctions over Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014.

Days after the crash, India became the [first nation](#) to successfully land a spacecraft on the Moon's south pole.

The Kremlin and Roscosmos have vowed to [continue](#) pursuing the Moon race despite Luna-25's demise.

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