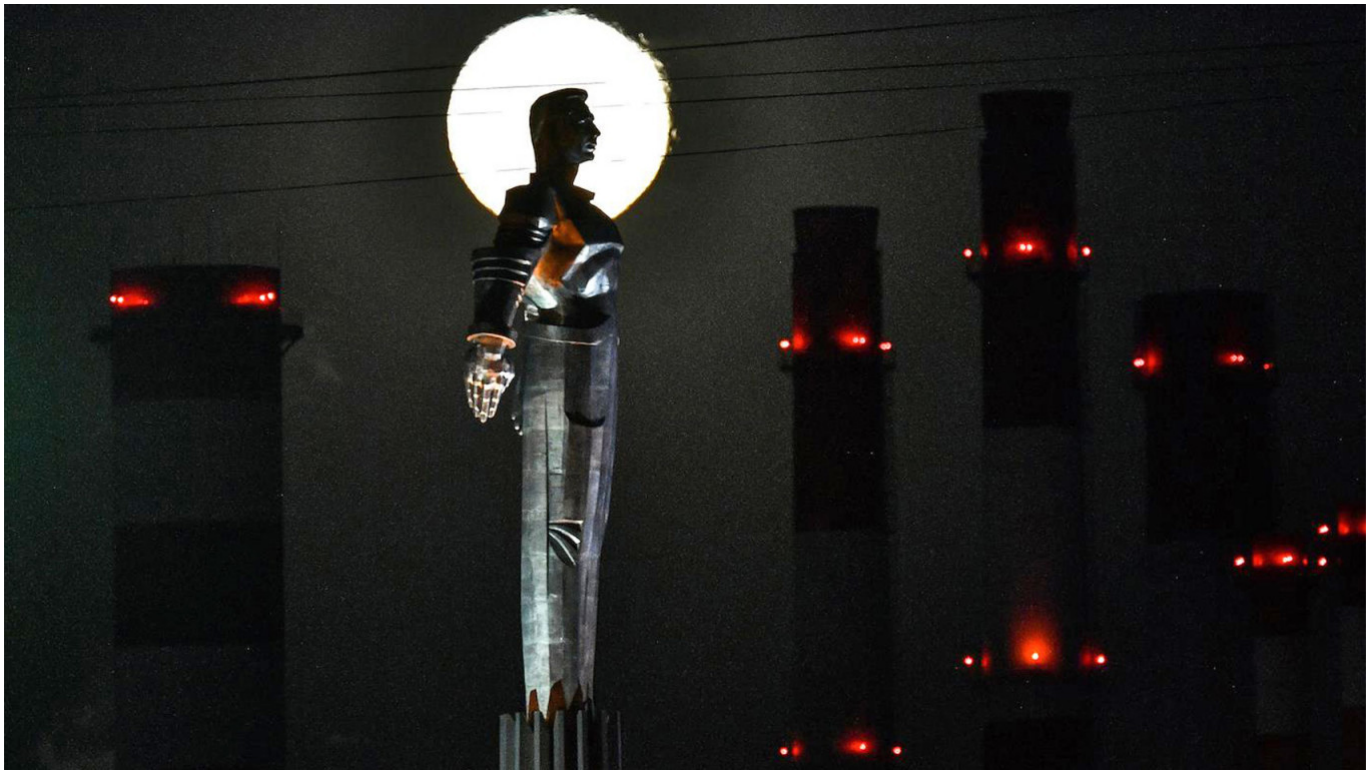
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Roscosmos Says It Plans to Build Nuclear Power Plant on the Moon

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A monument of Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin in Moscow. **Igor Ivanko / Kommersant**

Russia's state space agency on Thursday announced plans to build a nuclear power plant on the Moon as part of its long-term ambitions for lunar exploration.

Roscosmos chief Dmitry Bakanov unveiled the plans in a statement published on Telegram marking Russia Day, saying that his agency is "creating new reasons to be proud and laying the foundation for economic growth and a better quality of life."

He said that Russia plans to expand its satellite network to improve internet speeds and coverage, upgrade its global navigation system, as well as "move forward with building a new Russian orbital station to succeed the International Space Station."

Russia is also preparing "to launch the first-ever nuclear power station on the Moon — a cornerstone for future lunar bases," Bakanov said. "And we will explore Venus. After all, we remain the only country to have successfully landed a spacecraft there."

The Soviet Union's Venera program was the first and only mission to land a probe on the surface of Venus, accomplishing the feat in 1970.

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"There are grandiose goals ahead," he said. "We will have to realize such projects that require courage, scale of thought, and engineering genius."

Bakanov became head of Roscosmos in February after President Vladimir Putin dismissed his predecessor, Yury Borisov, whose term was marked by high-profile failures and stalled programs.

Last August, Russia's first post-Soviet lunar lander, Luna-25, crashed into the Moon during a pre-landing maneuver. The mission had been touted as a revival of Moscow's lunar ambitions after decades of limited space activity and growing isolation from the West.

Russia last landed a spacecraft on the Moon in 1976, before shifting its focus to Venus exploration and construction of the Mir space station.

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