



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

India Successfully Lands Spacecraft on Moon

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India became the fourth country to successfully land a spacecraft on the moon on Wednesday. It also became the first country to land a spacecraft near the moon's south pole.

Its moon lander, called Chandrayaan-3, touched down near the moon's south pole just after 6 p.m. in India.

The landing brought cheers and **applause** from space scientists who were watching in the control center in city of Bengaluru. After a failed landing almost four years ago, India joined the United States, the Soviet Union and China as the only countries to send a spacecraft to the moon.

"This moment is unforgettable. It is **phenomenal**. This is a victory cry of a new India," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"India is on the moon," said S. Somanath, the head of the Indian Space Research Organization.

The moon's south pole is thought to be an important area for exploration. Scientists believe it has important resources, including frozen water and minerals.

Just days earlier, Russia's Luna-25 spacecraft tried to land in the same area but **spun** out of control and crashed. It would have been Russia's first moon landing in 47 years.

People across India gathered in shops, offices, restaurants and their homes to watch the landing on television.

The name Chandrayaan means "moon craft" in the Sanskrit language.

The Indian Space Research Organization discussed the mission ahead of the landing. The organization called the possible landing “a remarkable **milestone** ... a **significant** step forward for Indian science, engineering, technology and industry.”

The group discussed the “sense of pride” that comes from the success and suggested it will lead to more innovation from India.

The previous landing attempt broke down because of a software problem, according to India’s space organization.

The moon vehicle will take up to one day to come out of the spacecraft and will operate for two weeks. It will run experiments on the minerals on the moon’s surface, Somanath said.

Observers say the successful landing shows India’s interest in demonstrating its strength in technology and space exploration. The landing should be an important part of Modi’s campaign to keep his government in power leading up to the country’s general election in 2024.

Many countries want to know about the moon’s south pole because it could hold resources that may help future space missions. Other countries and private companies are trying to land there.

The Indian landing comes after the failed Russian mission, plus recent crashes by spacecraft from both Japan and Israel. Japan will launch another mission this weekend. Two private U.S. companies have attempts planned by the end of 2023. And the American space agency NASA hopes to send astronauts to the moon’s south pole in coming years.

I’m Dan Friedell.

Dan Friedell adapted this story for Learning English based on a report by The Associated Press and Reuters.

Words in This Story

applause *-n.* a show of approval or appreciation at a play, speech, sporting event, etc., in which people strike their hands together over and over

phenomenal *-adj.* very good or great : unusual in a way that is very impressive

spin *-v.* to move over and over in a circle, often without being in control

milestone *-n.* an important achievement, or notable event

significant *-adj.* used to describe something important or memorable in magnitude

We want to hear from you. What do you think India will find on the moon's south pole?