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Current Affairs Today, August 24, 2026

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SCIENCE & TECH

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

CHINA LAUNCHES CHANG'E-7 LUNAR MISSION TO THE MOON'S SOUTH POLE

China launched its **Chang'e-7** lunar mission from the **Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site, Hainan**, aboard a **Long March-5 (Y14)** rocket, background: a Chinese heavy-lift launch vehicle family, on **August 24, 2026**, targeting a landing near **Shackleton crater** at the Moon's south pole.

Mission Details

Chang'e-7 comprises an orbiter, lander, rover, and a hopper, making it China's most ambitious lunar mission to date and an explicit precursor to its planned crewed lunar landing, targeted for **2030**. The mission carries international payloads, including a Russian dust-detection instrument, an Italian laser retroreflector, a Bahrain/Egypt-developed camera (LunaHcam), a Thai-Chinese high-energy particle instrument, and a Swiss dual-channel Earth radiation spectrometer.

Why This Matters

The mission intensifies international competition around the lunar south pole, the same region where India's **Chandrayaan-3** achieved the first soft landing near the pole, background: since August 23, 2023. Permanently shadowed craters in this region are suspected to harbour water-ice deposits, a resource with major implications for future in-situ resource utilisation and crewed lunar missions.

UPSC Relevance

This connects GS3 space technology and comparative lunar exploration with GS2 space diplomacy, given the mission's **multilateral** instrument-sharing arrangement. A useful Mains angle examines the strategic urgency for India's own follow-on lunar missions, such as the India-Japan joint Lunar Polar Exploration Mission (LUPEX), to maintain first-mover credibility in lunar south-pole resource mapping.

 FACTS CORNER, KNOWLEDGE PEDIA**CHANG'E-7 MISSION:**

Launch site: Wenchang, Hainan; rocket: Long March-5 (Y14)

Mission components: orbiter, lander, rover, and hopper

Target landing zone: near Shackleton crater, lunar south pole

China's crewed lunar landing target: 2030

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

Background: India's Chandrayaan-3 Vikram lander achieved the first soft landing near the lunar south pole on August 23, 2023

Sources: *Space.com*, *Scientific American*

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