



PRATUSH Telescope

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Why in the News?

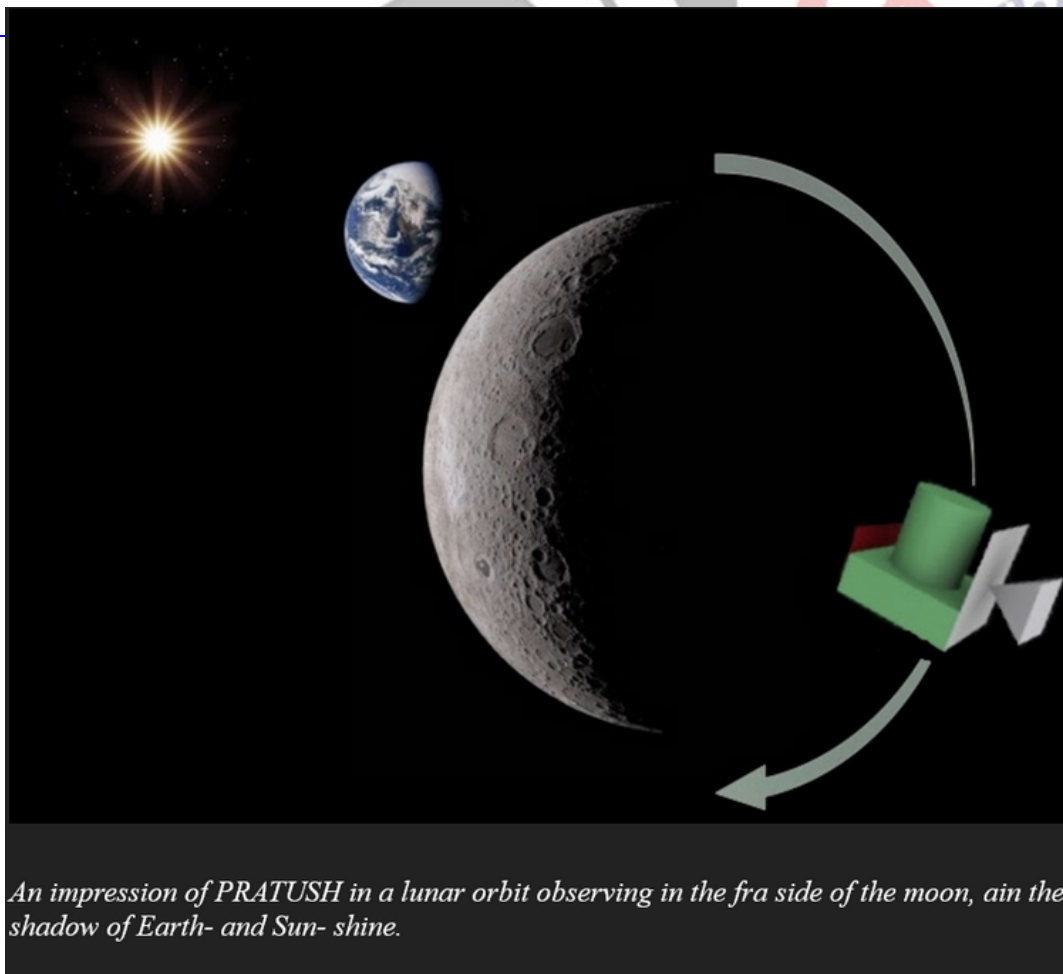
Astronomers globally are anticipating a new era of exploration with **high-resolution telescopes** set to be placed on the moon and in orbit around it. Various proposals, like **India's PRATUSH (Probing ReionizATIOn of the Universe using Signal from Hydrogen)**, aim to open this new window to the universe.

What is PRATUSH?

- **About:**

- PRATUSH is a **radio telescope** designed to be placed on the far side of the moon. It is built by Raman Research Institute (RRI), Bengaluru **and** [Indian Space Research Organisation \(ISRO\)](#).

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▪ **Objective:**

- It aims to uncover the timing and characteristics of the first stars' formation in the universe, including the colour of the light during **Cosmic Dawn**.
- It will unveil the evolution of our early universe from its initial cold gas state to the formation of stars, galaxies, and the universe as we observe it today **post-Big Bang**.
 - The Cosmic Dawn marks the period when the **first sources of radiation**, such as stars and galaxies, formed in the universe.

▪ **Capabilities:**

- PRATUSH will carry advanced radio equipment covering a wide frequency range from **30 to 250 MHz**.
 - It will observe large sky areas continuously, recording detailed radio spectra with a resolution of **100 kHz**.
- It includes a **custom-designed antenna, analog receiver, and digital correlator** for high-resolution spectral analysis.
 - The goal is to achieve a sensitivity level of a few millikelvin with precise
 - Millikelvins (mK) are a unit of measurement used to express temperature on the Kelvin scale, where **1 millikelvin is equal to 1000 of a Kelvin**.
- It is designed for a **two-year mission** in a circumlunar orbit to avoid interference and achieve optimal radio sky measurements.

What are the Other Global Missions Related to Telescopes on the Moon?

- **Lunar Surface Electromagnetic Experiment (LuSEE) Night Project:** It is a collaboration between [NASA](#) and **Berkeley Lab** and aims to land on the moon's far side. It is scheduled for launch in December 2025.
- **NASA's Long-Baseline Optical Imaging Interferometer:** It will be launched in parts and be assembled on the moon's far side.
 - It will study magnetic activity in stars and galaxies using visible and ultraviolet wavelengths.
- **ESA's Argonaut:** European Space Agency plans to launch a [Radio Telescope](#) aboard its lunar lander, 'Argonaut', by 2030, along with other projects focusing on **gravitational wave detection** and **infrared observations**.
- **China's Moon-Orbiting Radio Telescope:** China is set to launch a moon-orbiting radio telescope in **2026**, positioning itself **at the forefront of lunar exploration** and astronomical research.
 - The **Queqiao-2 satellite**, deployed in lunar orbit, carries a 4.2-meter antenna for radio astronomy.

What are Telescopes?

- **About:** Telescopes are devices designed to gather and focus light to form **magnified images of distant objects**.
 - Developed over centuries, with early telescopes credited to inventors like Galileo Galilei and Johannes Kepler in the 17th century.
- **Function:** Telescopes **gather and magnify light from space**, allowing astronomers to study celestial objects in detail.
 - They help observe distant objects, map the sky, study cosmic events, detect exoplanets, and **explore different wavelengths of electromagnetic radiation**, enhancing our understanding of the universe.
 - Telescopes use **lenses or mirrors** to collect and concentrate light, resulting in an enlarged and **clearer view of celestial objects**.
- **Types of Telescopes:**
 - **Catadioptric or Compound Telescopes:** Combine both lenses and mirrors for focusing light.
 - Examples: **Schmidt-Cassegrain and Maksutov-Cassegrain telescopes**.
 - **Radio Telescopes:** Detect radio waves emitted by celestial objects. Comprise large dish

antennas and receivers.

- Example: Giant Metrewave Radio Telescope (GMRT), Pune.
- **Space Telescopes:** It is a telescope in outer space used to observe astronomical objects.
 - Examples: [Hubble Space Telescope](#) (a reflecting telescope) and the [James Webb Space Telescope](#) (a reflecting telescope).

Note

NASA is planning the next big space telescope, called the **Habitable Worlds Observatory (HWO)**. This telescope focuses on **ultraviolet, visible, and near-infrared wavelengths**, ideal for searching for potentially habitable exoplanets. The project is currently in its initial development phase.

UPSC Civil Service Examination, Previous Year Questions(PYQs)

Prelims:

Q 1. In the context of space technology, what is “Bhuvan”, recently in the news? (2010)

- A.** A mini-satellite launched by ISRO to promote distance education in India
- B.** The name given to the next Moon Impact Probe, for Chandrayan-II
- C.** A geoportal of ISRO with 3D imaging capabilities of India
- D.** A space telescope developed by India

Ans: C

Q.2 In the context of modern scientific research, consider the following statements about ‘IceCube’, a particle detector located at South Pole, which was recently in the news: (2015)

1. It is the world’s largest neutrino detector, encompassing a cubic kilometre of ice.
2. It is a powerful telescope to search for dark matter.
3. It is buried deep in the ice.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct ?

- (a)** 1 only
- (b)** 2 and 3 only
- (c)** 1 and 3 only
- (d)** 1, 2 and 3

Ans: D