

East Asian Space Race Heats Up: Mars Sample Returns, Lunar Bases, and Sp

Space Exploration · Answer Key · 10 Questions

1. Which East Asian nation has announced an accelerated launch date of 2028 for its Tianwen-3 mission, aiming to bring Martian soil and rock samples back to Earth?

- A) Japan
- B) South Korea
- C) China**
- D) North Korea

2. As of early 2026, which East Asian country's space program is actively developing technologies for lunar construction, with the Chang'e 8 mission in 2028 intended to test habitat-building techniques using lunar soil?

- A) South Korea
- B) Japan
- C) North Korea
- D) China**

3. In late 2023, North Korea achieved a significant milestone by successfully placing which type of satellite into orbit?

- A) A weather observation satellite
- B) A military reconnaissance satellite**
- C) A communications satellite
- D) An astronomical satellite

4. Japan's JAXA is slated to launch the Martian Moons eXploration (MMX) mission in 2026. What is the primary objective of this mission?

- A) To land a rover on Mars
- B) To return samples from Mars' largest moon, Phobos**
- C) To deploy a telescope to study Martian weather
- D) To search for signs of water ice on Mars

5. Which East Asian nation recently announced plans to launch a lunar communication orbiter in 2029 and an unmanned lunar lander in 2032, utilizing its Nuri rocket?

- A) China
- B) Japan
- C) South Korea**
- D) North Korea

6. China's Chang'e 6 mission, which successfully returned samples from the lunar far side in 2024, utilized which type of rocket for its launch?

- A) Long March 2F
- B) Long March 7
- C) Long March 5**
- D) Long March 11

7. As of early 2026, North Korea has cooperated with which nation on its space industry, according to recent reports?

- A) China**
- B) Japan
- C) South Korea
- D) Vietnam

8. Which Japanese spacecraft, after studying Venus from orbit until 2024, is now being used as a basis for future collaborations and has successfully performed precise, lightweight Moon landings?

- A) Hayabusa2
- B) BepiColombo
- C) Akatsuki
- D) SLIM**

9. In April 2026, China celebrated its 11th Space Day, announcing the identification of two new lunar minerals from which sample return mission?

- A) Chang'e 5**
- B) Chang'e 6
- C) Chang'e 4
- D) Chang'e 7

10. South Korea's Nuri rocket successfully launched multiple satellites into orbit in late 2025. This mission was notable for being the first to be jointly conducted with which type of entity?

- A) An international space agency
- B) A private company**
- C) A military branch
- D) A research university