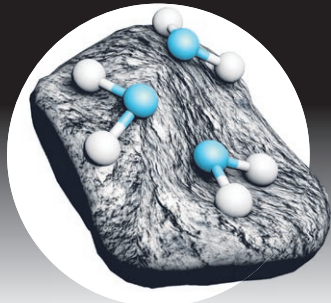
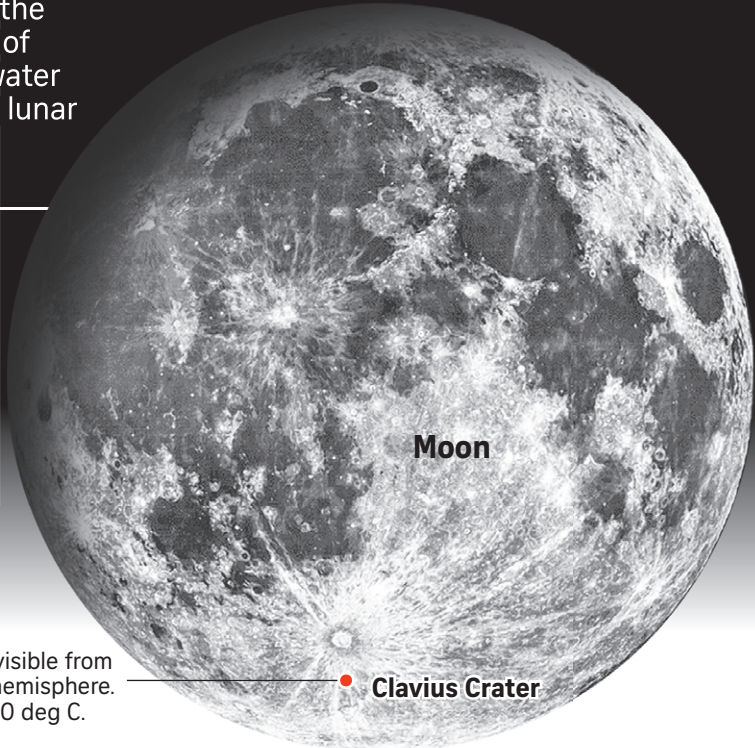


Finding water on Moon's sunlit surface

Nasa has discovered water for the first time on the sunlit surface of the Moon. This indicates that water may be distributed all over the lunar surface and not just in cold, shadowed places.

Study reveals existence of 'tens of billions' of ice-trapping micro-craters.



Where water is found

Clavius Crater, one of the largest craters visible from Earth, is located in the Moon's southern hemisphere. The temperature here is around minus 160 deg C.

What does this mean

If water can be extracted, it could provide a potentially useful resource for future space missions to send the first woman and next man to the lunar surface in 2024, and establish a sustainable human presence there by the end of the decade.

How water is discovered

The Stratospheric Observatory for Infrared Astronomy (Sofia) is a Boeing 747SP aircraft (right), modified to carry a 2.7m reflecting telescope. Flying into the stratosphere above 99 per cent of Earth's infrared-blocking atmosphere, it allows astronomers to study the solar system and beyond which is not possible with ground-based telescopes.

The total water surface on the Moon is estimated at **40,000 sq km**
60% of it at the south pole.

