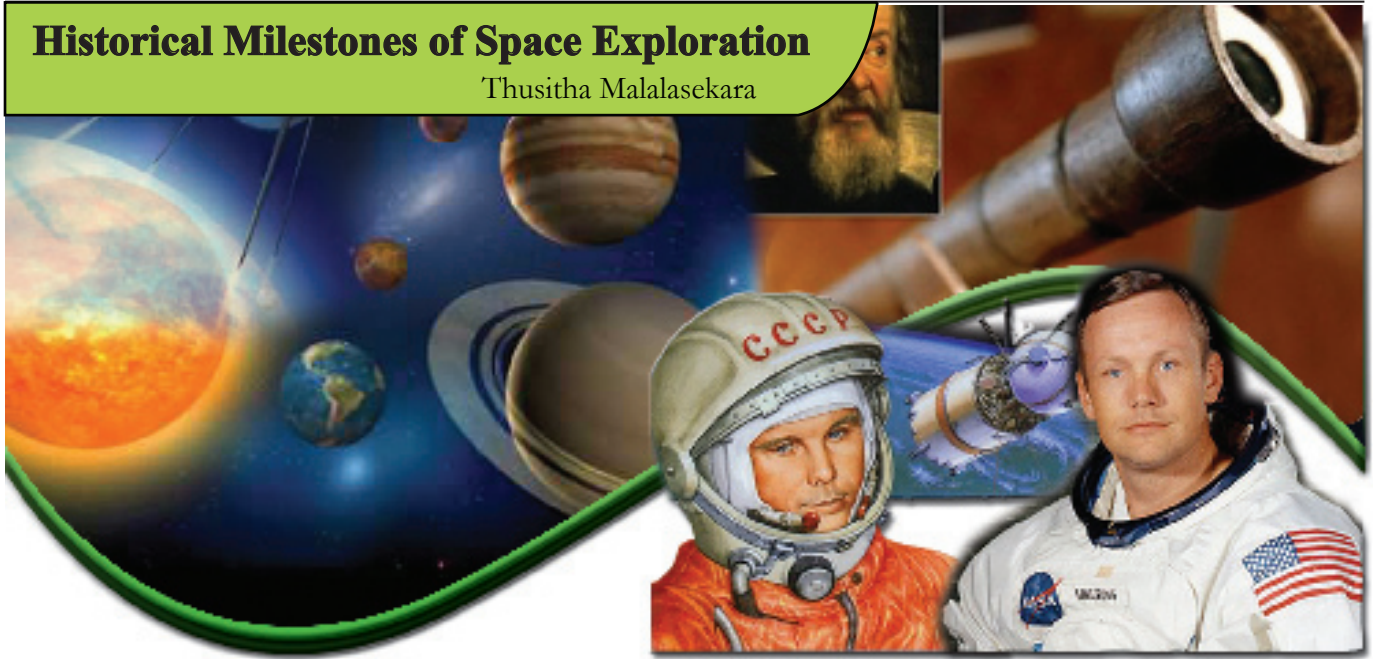


Historical Milestones of Space Exploration

Thusitha Malalasekara



Humankind began exploring space not only for curiosity but also for the improvement of their knowledge. Listed below are a few key milestones in space exploration since 1543 to date.

Earth is not the centre but only a planet in the solar system.

1543 – Polish astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus suggested that earth is just another planet that orbits around the sun.

First telescope to observe the solar system.

1609 – Italian astronomer Galileo



First Telescope

Galile built a simple telescope to observe planets and proved that Copernicus was right.

Birth of the rockets

1926 – The first liquid fuelled rocket was launched by Robert Goddard an American scientist. It reached a height of 12.5m in 2.5 second.

Prediction of the possible use of artificial satellites for communication.

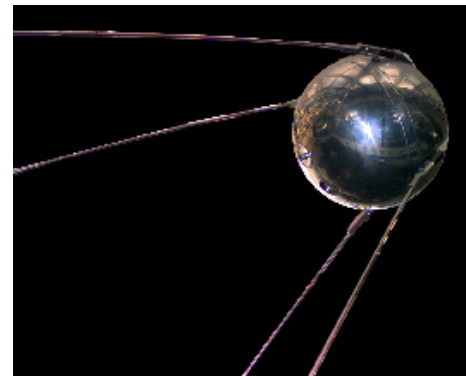
1945 – The possibility of using artificial satellites for global transmission of communication signals was first suggested by Arthur.C.Clarke.

First man made satellite

1957 – Spuntinick – 1 (USSR) the first man made satellite took 98 minutes to orbit the earth.

1957 – First living creature to be sent to space

Laika the female dog was strapped to Spuntinick – 2 (USSR) and became the first living creature to be sent to space.



First Satellite

First glimpse of the rear side of the moon.

1959 – Luna – 3 (USSR) spacecraft was able to show the rear face of the moon for the first time.

First man to enter space.

1961 – Russian cosmonaut – Yuri Gagarin was the first human being in space. He was sent up in Vostok – 1 on 12th April 1961 for a 108 minute orbit.
(April 12th has been celebrated as the World Space Day due to this occurrence)

Relay of first satellite television signals.

1962 – The first satellite television signals were relayed by the telestar satellite in 1962.

The first women in space

1963 – The first woman in space was the Russian cosmonaut Valentina Theveshkova. Her flight in Vostok – 6 lasted 70 hours and 50 minutes. She orbited 48 times around the earth.

The first space walk.

1965 – The first man to walk in space (coming out from the space craft) was Alexi A. Leonov (USSR)



Space Shuttle

First human being to step on the moon

1969 – The first human being to step on the moon was Neil Armstrong from Apollo – 11 (US). This happened on 20th July 1969. He was followed by his colleague Edwin Aldrin while Michelle Collins commanded the Apollo – 11 (Mother ship) Armstrong and Aldrin landed on the moon on Eagle (The daughter ship). Apollo-11 was powered to space by Saturn –V rocket and was launched from Kennedy Space Center



First human being to step on the moon

First US space station

1973 – The first US space station named SKY LAB, went in to orbit. More than 300 experiments were conducted inside skylab before it perished in 1979 when re-entering the earth's atmosphere.

Exploration of the solar system

1977 – Voyager 1 and Voyager 2 were launched to study the solar system, especially the planets Jupiter, Saturn and Uranus.

Launch of space shuttle

1981 – The first space shuttle was launched in April 1981. The partly reusable craft has taught immense amount about working in space.

MIR –the Russian space station

1986 – The first of MIR, the Russian space station was launched. It was the first permanent resident in space.

International space station

1998 – The first part of the international space station was launched in 1998. Powered by large solar panels it orbits the earth at an altitude of 360km.

Photos from Saturn

2004 – Cassini spacecraft exploring the Saturn started sending photos of that grand planet

Mars under probe

2012 – “Curiosity” the space research exploration craft has commenced sending information regarding the planet Mars.



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