

The cosmic connection

A Dive Into The Dynamic Legacy Of Space Exploration

Koyal Das, AIS Gur 43, Alumna

More than six decades have passed since the historic space race between the USA and the Soviet Union captivated the world's imagination. What began with President Kennedy's inspiring speech in 1962, culminated with man landing on the Moon less than seven years later. Today, space exploration has reached unprecedented heights, with new contenders determined to unravel the mysteries of the cosmos.

The Elite Space Club

In 2014, a cartoon in the New York Times depicted a farmer and his cow knocking at the door of an 'Elite Space Club'. Two years later, when India launched 104 satellites in one go, The Times of India published a reinvented version of the same cartoon - an Indian man and his cow were inside the room, while those from other nations knocked at the door to get in. Not just India, countries like Japan, China, and South Korea have officially entered the Elite Space Club, earning recognition and admiration from Western countries.

The celestial conquest

In the last few decades, India's space programme

has made remarkable strides. In 2013, India successfully launched the Mars Orbiter Mission, also known as 'Mangalyaan', which earned India the distinction of being the first Asian country to reach Mars, that too in its maiden attempt. 'Chandrayaan-1' (2008), India's first lunar mission, discovered water molecules on the Moon, while 'Chandrayaan-2' (2019) continues to collect valuable data from its orbiter. The most recent success is that of 'Chandrayaan-3' that successfully made a soft-landing on the Moon's South Pole on August 23, 2023, making India the first country to achieve this milestone. ISRO is now working on launching crew missions into space with its 'Gaganyaan' project. In a move to demonstrate India's human spaceflight capability, tests are being conducted, starting with the success of Crew Escape System of the first development flight Test Vehicle (TV-D1). India has focused on cost-effectiveness, self-reliance, and the use of space technology for societal benefits.

The eastern rising stars

Besides India, other Asian countries have also made vast progress. China's Shenzhou-16 returned safely to Earth with three astronauts on board after their five-month-long mission aboard the Tiangong space station. Japan, on the other hand, has been a pivotal

partner in the International Space Station (ISS) programme, contributing to the Kibo laboratory module. Furthermore, the successful launch of South Korea's home-grown space rocket Nuri, officially the Korea Space Launch Vehicle-II, on May 25, 2023, made the country the seventh nation in the world to have developed a space launch vehicle that can carry a satellite that weighs more than a tonne.

The billionaire space race

The interstellar enigma is tempting and if you have stacks of cash, why not spend it on doing the inconceivable? In 2021, several business moguls picked blasting into space as their new hobby, with their main agenda being space tourism. SpaceX has their 'Ridesharing Tab', Blue Origin allows you to 'Reserve A Seat', and Virgin Galactic has a programme where you can 'Become an Astronaut'. Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos, and Richard Branson have invested significant assets to pursue their aspirations of space flight, sparking a contemporary space race in which ultra-rich men reach for the stars. Privatisation of space travel has led to the discovery of new technology - Spa-



Imaging: Pankaj Mallik
GT Network



ceX's Falcon 9, the first orbital-class reusable rocket that has made 267 successful flights and 225 landings so far. Many other start-ups have also contributed to these missions. The scope for exploration has increased, and the age-old question of 'Are we alone?' is close to being solved.

The colonisation of cosmos

With space tourism becoming a reality, the discussion about space colonisation has also gained attention in human discourse. Simply put, space colonisation means finding a long-term extra-terrestrial habitat. Some of these plans involve colonising the Moon and our neighbouring planet, Mars. As technological advancements continue to expand, the ambition of establishing self-sustaining colonies that exist beyond Earth is no longer untenable.

While many mysteries of the universe remain unsolved, each new space mission reaffirms that the human species has limitless potential to uncover the secrets of the universe.

(Koyal is currently pursuing MBBS from Symbiosis Medical College for Women, Pune.)



THE GT POLL

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- a) Yes
- b) No
- c) Can't say

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Hindi Diwas Special

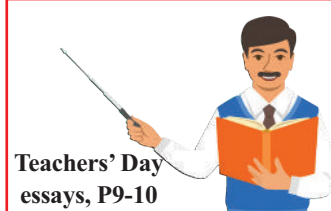


As September unfolds, it brings with it the celebration of one of our nation's most beloved languages, Hindi. The country comes together to appreciate the linguistic beauty of this Rajbhasha, culminating in the grand observance of Hindi Diwas on September 14. In this spirit, The Global Times presents 'Part II' of our two-part Hindi Special Edition, featuring four pages (pages 5-8) dedicated to Hindi. As you explore these pages, let the essence of Hindi inspire you with its timeless charm and cultural significance.

What's inside



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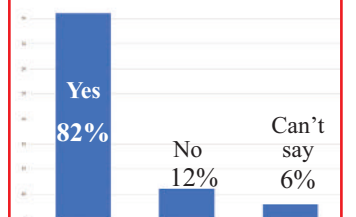


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POLL RESULT

for GT Edition September 2, 2024

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Results as on September 7, 2024