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MEXICO'S JOURNEY IN SPACE EXPLORATION: A HISTORICAL REVIEW AND FUTURE  
PROSPECTS

**Abstract**

The first Mexican to go to space with the country's flag was Dr. Rodolfo Neri Vela in 1985. At that time, Mexico's involvement in space activities was primarily limited to telecommunications. However, Dr. Neri's return sparked a surge of interest among the population, leading to the creation of space-related events, careers, museums, and the establishment of the Mexican Space Agency. Dr. Neri himself became a prominent figure, with people even asking if he was real. Despite this initial enthusiasm, interest in space exploration waned over the years, prompting many aspiring space enthusiasts to leave the country and seek opportunities elsewhere. However, less than fifteen years ago, Mexico experienced a resurgence of interest in space. This revival was marked by the introduction of Aerospace Engineering programs, military involvement in space activities, such as the Mexican Aerospace Fair, and the commemoration of space-related occasions in Mexican philately. Additionally, aerospace companies and clusters emerged, while universities organized national competitions in rover, rocket, and cansat design. Another turning point came in 2022 when Dr. Katya Echazarreta, a Mexican-born astronaut, embarked on a space mission at the age of 26. This event reignited public fascination with space exploration, particularly among the youth, and prompted politicians to seek to prioritize the country's space endeavors. In this article, there will be an exploration of Mexico's space history, its achievements in space exploration, its participation in global space activities, and the aspirations of Mexicans for the future of the sector and the country as a whole.