"Progress continues on work to prepare the Orion spacecraft for next year's flight test..."

"Happy anniversary to the ISS..."

"And the MAVEN spacecraft is on its way to Mars... Those are some of the stories trending,

This Week at NASA!"

The Mars Atmosphere and Volatile Evolution, or MAVEN spacecraft launched from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on a 10-month journey to Mars.

MAVEN will take critical measurements of the Martian upper atmosphere to investigate how loss of the atmosphere to space impacted the history of water on the planet's surface.

November 20 marked the fifteenth anniversary of the launch of Zarya, the International Space Station's first module.

The station's first crew arrived a couple of years later.
Since then, humans have continuously conducted research on technologies we'll need for future missions to deep space.

During a public workshop at Houston's Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston NASA examined some recently submitted ideas about how to respond to asteroid threats and identify, capture and relocate near-Earth asteroids for study.

Some of the ideas will be considered as NASA refines future plans of its asteroid initiative.

Flight controllers for NASA's Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer mission confirmed that the LADEE spacecraft has begun the science phase of its mission -- analyzing lunar dust particles while orbiting the moon -- to help better understand other planetary bodies in the solar system.

NASA Administrator Charlie Bolden and others checked out work underway at Kennedy Space Center to prepare the Orion spacecraft for its flight test next September.
Meanwhile, a successful separation test of Orion's protective fairing panels at Lockheed Martin ... and at Marshall Space Flight Center -- some special paint for the adapter that will connect Orion to a Delta IV rocket, will provide protection from electrical discharge during the flight test ... and the arrival of a device designed to repel hot gases away from Orion on its way to space.

At Dryden Flight Research Center, an F/A-18 was used to test an autonomous flight control system for NASA's Space Launch System rocket. The autopilot system, known as the Adaptive Augmenting Controller, will enable the SLS to respond to post-launch environmental variations in winds or vehicle flexibility. The system should be ready for the rocket's 2017 flight test. NASA issued a final Request for Proposals for its new Commercial Crew Transportation Capability contract.
CCTCap is meant to ensure commercial companies meet safety requirements for transporting NASA crews from U.S. soil to the International Space Station.

The procurement phase is expected to include crewed demonstration missions to the ISS before 2017.

Among the group of satellites launched on an Air Force Minotaur I rocket from Wallops Flight Facility November 19 were NASA's PhoneSat2 and TJ-cubesat, the first ever space-bound cubesat built by high school students.

Students from Thomas Jefferson School of Science and Technology, near Washington, built TJ-cubesat.

During a White House ceremony, late NASA astronaut Sally Ride was one of sixteen people awarded The Presidential Medal of Freedom -- the Nation's highest civilian honor.

The first American woman in space, Ride also was a passionate advocate for education.
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