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**NASA spacecraft flies closest ever to the Sun – 26th December 2024**

## Level 0

The USA's NASA space agency has set a new record. On Christmas Eve, its Parker spacecraft flew closer to the Sun than any spacecraft before. Parker left Earth in 2018 to photograph the Sun. Parker is also the fastest object ever made. In 2023, it flew at a speed of 635,266 kph.

Parker is named after a scientist. He spent his life studying the Sun. He wanted to know why the Sun's flares are hotter than the Sun's surface. The surface is 4,100°C; while the flares can be 1.1 million degrees Celsius. Scientists also want to find out how solar winds start.

## Level 1

A new space record has been set by the USA's NASA space agency. In 2018, NASA sent a spacecraft to photograph the Sun. The spacecraft is called the Parker Solar Probe. It made history on Christmas Eve by going closer to the Sun than any spacecraft before. Parker holds another record. It is the fastest object ever made. In 2023, it flew at a speed of 635,266 kph. At this speed, it could go from New York to Tokyo in 1.025 minutes.

The Parker Solar Probe is named after a scientist. He spent his life studying the Sun. He wanted to know why solar flares are hotter than the Sun's surface. The temperature at the Sun's surface is 4,100°C; while the temperature of the flares can reach 1.1 million degrees Celsius. Scientists also want to find out how solar winds originate. NASA said Parker has faced amazing 980-degree heat on its record-breaking trip.

## Level 2

Things are heating up for the USA's NASA space agency. In 2018, NASA sent a small research probe to research and photograph the Sun - our nearest star. The spacecraft is called the Parker Solar Probe. It made history on Christmas Eve by going closer to the Sun than any spacecraft before. It flew to within 6.1 million km of the Sun. Parker holds another record. It is the fastest object ever built. In September 2023, it flew at a speed of 635,266 kph. At this speed, it could travel from New York to Tokyo in just 1.025 minutes.

The Parker Solar Probe is named after an astrophysicist. He spent his life studying the Sun and its solar flares. He wanted to know why the flares are hotter than the Sun's surface. This mystery is known as the "coronal heating problem". The temperature at the Sun's surface is 4,100°C; while the temperature of the corona's flares can reach 1.1 million degrees Celsius. Scientists also want to find out how solar winds originate. NASA said Parker has faced extreme heat on its record-breaking fly-by. Temperatures reached a baking 980 degrees Celsius.

## Level 3

Things are heating up for the USA's National Aeronautical Space Administration (NASA). One of the agency's missions is to study the Sun. In 2018, NASA sent a small research probe to photograph our nearest star. The spacecraft is called the Parker Solar Probe. It made history on Christmas Eve by going closer to the Sun than any spacecraft has ever gone before. Parker flew to within 6.1 million kilometers of the Sun. This is very close. Parker also holds another record. It is the fastest object ever built by humans. In September 2023, it flew at a speed of 635,266 kph. At this speed, the probe could travel the 10,846 km from New York to Tokyo in just 1.025 minutes.

The Parker Solar Probe is named after the astrophysicist Dr Eugene Parker. He spent most of his life studying the Sun and its solar flares. He wanted to know why the flares, which shoot off from the Sun's surface, are hotter than the surface. This is known as the "coronal heating problem". It is a long-standing mystery for scientists. The temperature at the Sun's surface is around 4,100°C; while the temperature of the corona's flares can reach 1.1 million degrees Celsius. Scientists also hope to find out how solar winds originate. NASA said Parker (the probe) has faced extreme heat on its record-breaking fly-by. Temperatures reached a scorching 980 degrees Celsius.