

A photograph of the Space Shuttle Columbia being launched from the launch pad. The shuttle is white with black and red markings, and it is surrounded by a large plume of white smoke and fire. The launch pad structure is visible on the left side of the image.

Today in History

November 12, 1981

▲ The space shuttle **Columbia** was launched for the second time, becoming the first space vehicle to be used more than once. The shuttle programme ended in 2011

1931: Abbey Road Studios, immortalised by the Beatles album of the same name, was officially opened

1994: Billionaire **Bill Gates** paid a record \$30m for a 72-page scientific treatise by **Leonardo Da Vinci**

2008: The EU scrapped rules banning bent bananas and curved cucumbers

2014: The **Philae** space probe, deployed from the **Rosetta** mission, made a historic first landing on a comet, 510 million km from Earth