

# Shubhanshu Shukla Selected For ISRO Mission

## Why In News

- United States space agency NASA will send **Indian astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla** to the International Space Station (ISS), marking a significant milestone in international space collaboration. This historic mission was announced by the Indian Space Research Organisation.



- ISRO's Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) has finalised a **Space Flight Agreement (SFA)** with the US-based Axiom Space for the upcoming **Axiom-4 mission**. This mission will see two Indian Air Force officers, with Group Captain Shukla as the primary mission pilot and **Group Captain Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair** as the backup pilot.

## Training And Mission Details

- Training for the mission, known as "**Gaganyaatri**," will commence in the first week of August. During the mission, the crew will undertake a series of scientific research **projects and technology demonstration experiments** aboard the ISS. They will also engage in various space outreach activities to promote space science and exploration.



- The **Axiom-4 mission crew** will include NASA's veteran astronaut **Peggy Whitson** as the Commander, India's Group Captain Shukla as the pilot, and Mission Specialists Sławosz Uznanski from Poland and Tibor Kapu from Hungary.

## India's Journey To Human Spaceflight

- This collaboration is part of **India's broader Gaganyaan mission**, an ambitious program aimed at establishing India's human spaceflight capabilities. Last year, **four test pilots from the Indian Air Force** were selected and began their primary training at **ISRO's Astronaut Training Facility** in Bengaluru. The Gaganyaan mission plans to send a crew of three astronauts into a **400 km orbit** for a three-day mission, culminating in a safe splashdown in Indian waters.



## Who is Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla

- **Born in the historical city of Lucknow**, Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla began his journey with the Indian Air Force 18 years ago at the National Defence Academy. Inspired by the heroic tales of bravery from the Kargil War, he pursued a career in the armed forces. He was only 14 when the war broke out in 1999, a pivotal moment that shaped his ambitions.



## The Axiom Mission 4

- Scheduled for launch in October 2024, **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)** is a private spaceflight to the ISS, operated by **Axiom Space** using a **SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft**. The mission will lift off from the Kennedy Space Center in Florida aboard a **Falcon 9 launcher** and will last for 14 days.



- Axiom Space, headquartered in **Houston, Texas**, is an American privately funded space infrastructure developer. Ax-4 marks the fourth mission by Axiom Space, following the success of Axiom Missions 1, 2, and 3.

- This collaboration **between ISRO, NASA, and Axiom Space** represents a significant step forward in international cooperation in space exploration.
- **Shukla and Nair are two** of the four astronauts announced earlier this year by Modi for India's first human spaceflight mission set for next year. The other two pilots are **Group Captain Ajit Krishnan and Group Captain Angad Pratap**.

