

Hindustan Times

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Shubhanshu Shukla to travel to International space stn on May 29

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MUMBAI: Axiom Space Inc on Tuesday announced that the international space mission that will carry Indian astronaut Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, 39, of the Indian Air Force (IAF) to the International Space Station (ISS) will be launched on May 29 at 10.33pm (IST).

"Mark your calendars. The #Ax4 crew is scheduled to launch to the International Space Station on May 29 at 1:03pm EDT from Florida," read a post in X by the private space firm.

Their post on X came as soon as NASA space operations had posted, also on X, "Axiom Mission 4, the fourth private astronaut mission to the @Space_Station, is targeted to launch no earlier than 1:03 p.m. EDT, Thursday, May 29, from @NASAKennedy in Florida."



Shubhanshu Shukla

Two weeks ago, Union minister of state (independent charge) for science and technology Jitendra Singh, following a high-level meeting to review major future mission plans of Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) in the coming months led by its chairman V Narayanan, had announced that

Shukla will fly to the ISS next month as part of Axiom Space's Ax-4 mission, a NASA approved private spaceflight.

The duration of mission is up to 14 days docked to the ISS. In addition to Isro, the two other agencies that will be part of the mission are the European Space Agency and the Hungarian to Orbit Program.

A decorated test pilot with IAF, Shukla was shortlisted under Isro's Human Spaceflight Program (HSP). He is among the top contenders for the Gaganyaan mission, India's first indigenous crewed orbital flight. Aboard the Ax-4 mission, Shukla is expected to gain critical hands-on experience in spaceflight operations, launch protocols, microgravity adaptation, and emergency preparedness — all essential for India's crewed space ambitions.

Last year on February 27, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled Shukla as one of the elite astronauts undergoing intensive training for Gaganyaan. Shukla will serve as a pilot alongside Peggy Whitson, former NASA astronaut.