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## Isro's first crewed mission to lift off in 2027, says chief

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**NEW DELHI:** India's first crewed spaceflight, Gaganyaan, will lift off in early 2027 kicking off a new era of space exploration, launching two to three astronauts to an orbit of 400 km for a three-day mission, with a second flight scheduled soon thereafter, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief V Narayanan said on Tuesday.

The crewed spaceflights, code-named H1 and H2, will be preceded by three uncrewed missions (G1, G2 and G3), the first to be launched in the last quarter of 2025, he said briefing journalists on the ₹10,000-crore Gaganyaan programme.

"Gaganyaan is catalysing India's emergence as a self-reliant space power, inspiring a new generation of scientists, engineers, and entrepreneurs," he said.

The ISRO chief said the Axiom



Astronaut Shubhanshu Shukla

Mission 4 that will carry Shukla to the International Space Station (ISS) will be launched in early June, and will lift off in a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft for a two-week trip to the ISS.

The Gaganyaan programme goes far beyond scientific achievement, said Union minister of state for science and technology, and space, Jitendra Singh.

"It represents India's rise as a global space power built on indigenous technology, fiscal prudence, and visionary political leadership," he said, adding India's long-term ambitions in space including set-

ting up the Bharatiya Antariksha Station by 2035 and sending the first Indian to Moon by 2040.

The astronauts or Gaganyatris are hand-picked fighter pilots from the Indian Air Force. In February 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi revealed the identities of the four fighter pilots — Group Captains Shubhanshu Shukla, Prasanth Bala-krishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan and Angad Pratap.

They have completed their physical, psychological and space-flight training.

"Gaganyaan is not just ISRO's mission. It is India's mission," Singh said, noting the contribution of the private sector and the country's start-ups following policy reforms initiated by the government.

The human-rated LVM3 vehicle, the crew escape system, and the crew and service modules are undergoing final stages of testing and integration.