

Raksha Mantri felicitates Gaganyatris - Gp Capt Shubhanshu Shukla, Gp Capt PB Nair, Gp Capt Ajit Krishnan & Gp Capt Angad Pratap - in New Delhi

Our astronauts are pioneers of India's aspirations:
Shri Rajnath Singh

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but as the future of tomorrow's economy, security,
energy & humanity”

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Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh felicitated Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, Group Captain PB Nair, Group Captain Ajit Krishnan, and Group Captain Angad Pratap who are part of Gaganyaan, ISRO's maiden space flight mission, during an event in New Delhi on August 24, 2025. Speaking on the occasion, Raksha Mantri described the four Gaganyatris as gems of the country and pioneers of national aspirations.



Highlighting the expanding presence of India in space, Shri Rajnath Singh said “We do not see space only as a field of research, but as the future of tomorrow's economy, security, energy, and humanity. We're steadily advancing beyond the Earth's surface into new frontiers of space. We've already marked our presence from Moon to Mars, and today, the nation stands fully prepared for missions like Gaganyaan”.

Raksha Mantri termed the achievement as not merely a technological milestone, but a new chapter in *Aatmanirbhar Bharat*. “India proudly stands tall among the world's leading space powers. Its space programme is not confined to laboratories and launch vehicles. It's a reflection of our national

aspirations and global vision. From Chandrayaan to Mangalyaan, we have demonstrated that even with limited resources, an unlimited willpower can transform the most challenging goals into remarkable accomplishments," he said.



Shri Rajnath Singh pointed out that the technologies derived from space, be it communication satellites, weather monitoring or disaster management are delivering services to every village and every field across India and emphasised that India cannot stay behind in the space journey. In the coming times, space mining, deep space exploration, and planetary resources will redefine the course of human civilisation, he said.

Raksha Mantri added that the world has entered an era where space is no longer a symbol of military power or technical prowess, but a new stage in the collective journey of human civilisation. "India has always given the message of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* to the world. And, today, our scientists and astronauts are taking the same message to new heights," he said.

Commending Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla for his successful space mission, Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted the officer's determination and courage which reflect the spirit of India, making him a source of national pride. "Completing a two-and-a-half year's training in just two-and-a-half months, Group Captain Shukla's remarkable testament showcased his personal dedication and the perseverance of the Indian people. His extraordinary feat is not just a technological achievement, it is a message of faith and dedication. It is not just India's pride, it is proof of the progress of entire humanity," he said.



Raksha Mantri described Group Captain Shukla as a symbol of civil-military fusion. "Though he wears the uniform of the Indian Air Force, his journey into space was not merely on behalf of the Armed Forces or India alone, but as a representative of all humanity. His contribution to the civil sector, through this historic

mission, will forever be recorded in history,” he said.

Underlining the need to prepare astronauts physically, mentally, emotionally, and psychologically, Shri Rajnath Singh highlighted the pivotal role played by Institute of Aerospace Medicine in this training. “Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is a shining embodiment of that institute’s success,” he said.

As part of the event, Group Captain Shukla shared his extraordinary experience of travelling to the International Space Station as part of the Axiom Mission 4. Chief of Defence Staff General Anil Chauhan and Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal AP Singh were also present during the felicitation ceremony.

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