

India announces crew for first space mission

REUTERS, New Delhi

India yesterday introduced four crew members for its maiden 'Gaganyaan' space voyage, as it aims to become the world's fourth country to send a crewed mission into space just months after a historic landing on the south pole of the moon.

Gaganyaan, or "sky craft" in Hindi, is the first mission of its kind for India and will cost about 90.23 billion rupees (\$1.1 billion). It involves the launch of a habitable space capsule over the next year to an orbit of 400 km (250 miles) and its return via a landing in the Indian Ocean.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi awarded the four crew members, all of them air force

officers, "astronaut wings" at a space centre in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala state on Tuesday, in their first public appearance after months of rigorous training.

The four officers are Prashanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan, Angad Pratap and Shubhanshu Shukla, a government statement said.

It was not clear if all four astronauts would be on board the mission.

Gaganyaan is a "historic" achievement for India, Modi said on X and in a statement, coming four decades after air force officer, Rakesh Sharma, became the first Indian to travel to space - with a Soviet mission.

"Time is ours, countdown is ours and so is the rocket," Modi said.



Demonstrators gather in front of the Palace of Culture and Science to attend a farmers' protest against EU climate measures and Ukrainian imports in Warsaw yesterday.

PHOTO: AFP

SAPPORO DENTAL COLLEGE AND HOSPITAL
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Chairman, Government Body
Sapporo Dental College & Hospital

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 - Equivalence certificate from Ministry of Education (in case of foreign Degree).
 - Three copies of recent (not older than six months) passport size color photograph
 - BMDC registration certificate.
- Name of the applied post and Department must be indicated on the top of the envelop.
- No TA/DA will be provided to the candidates for appearing for the viva.
- Incomplete application, application received after deadline, and application with false information will be rejected.
- Only short listed candidates will be contacted.

Principal
Sapporo Dental College & Hospital

BIDEN SAYS TRUCE DEAL CLOSE Gaza's warring enemies cautious

REUTERS, Dubai/Cairo/Rajah

Israel and Hamas, as well as Qatari mediators, all sounded notes of caution yesterday about progress towards a truce in Gaza, after US President Joe Biden said he believed a ceasefire could be reached in under a week to halt the war for Ramadan.

Hamas is now weighing a proposal, agreed by Israel at talks with mediators in Paris last week, for a ceasefire that would suspend fighting for 40 days, the first extended truce of the five-month-old war. Both sides have delegations in Qatar this week hammering out details.

But it appears to stop short of satisfying Hamas's main demand for any agreement to include a clear path towards a permanent end to the war and Israeli withdrawal, or resolving the fate of fighting-aged Israeli men among the hostages.

In remarks broadcast on a late-night talk show after midnight yesterday, Biden said Israel had already agreed to halt fighting in Gaza for Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, which is expected to begin in two weeks, on March 10.

"Ramadan is coming up, and there's been an agreement by the Israelis that

they would not engage in activities during Ramadan, as well, in order to give us time to get all the hostages out," Biden said on NBC's "Late Night with Seth Meyers".

Earlier on Monday, Biden said he hoped a ceasefire agreement would be nailed down by March 4: "My national security adviser tells me that they're close. They're close. They're not done yet. My hope is by next Monday we'll have a ceasefire."

But Qatar, which has acted as the main mediator, said a breakthrough had yet to be reached.

"We don't have a final agreement on any of the issues that are hampering reaching an agreement. We remain hopeful, not necessarily optimistic that we can announce something today or tomorrow. But we remain hopeful that we can get to some kind of agreement," said Majed Al Ansari, spokesperson for Qatar's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Two senior Hamas officials told Reuters that Biden's remarks appearing to suggest that an agreement had already been reached in principle were premature. There were "still big gaps to be bridged", one of the Hamas officials told Reuters.

ENDORSEMENT BY SWIFT? Biden says that's 'classified'

REUTERS, US

US President Joe Biden made light of conspiracy theories about him and pop superstar Taylor Swift during an appearance on a late night show and had a ready answer to the question of whether she'll endorse him in 2024: that's classified.



During an appearance on NBC's "Late Night with Seth Meyers" on Monday, Biden, a Democrat, joked with Meyers, a comedian, about conspiracy theories that the president and the singer-songwriter are in "cahoots." Meyers said recent polling showed 18% of Americans believed Biden and Swift were somehow working together.

"Can you confirm or deny that there is an active conspiracy between you and Ms. Swift?" Meyers asked Biden. "Where are you getting this information?" the president quipped, to laughter. "It's classified." Swift, whose massive popularity with young people would be a boon for the president as he runs for re-election in 2024, endorsed Biden in 2020, the president happily pointed out. "You think it might come around again?" Meyers asked. "I told you, it's classified," Biden replied.




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