



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar" Kamarajar"

# SpaceX crew docks with ISS to reach astronauts stuck in space for 9 months

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## Context

A pair of astronauts stranded for more than nine months on the International Space Station were a step closer to returning home on Sunday after a replacement crew docked with the orbital outpost.

The astronauts were shown on live TV embracing and hugging their counterparts in zero gravity on the space station shortly after their SpaceX Crew Dragon arrived at 0545 GMT (1115 IST).

Butch Wilmore and Sunitha Williams have been stuck aboard the ISS since June after the Boeing Starliner spacecraft they were testing on its maiden crewed voyage suffered propulsion issues and was deemed unfit to fly them back to Earth.

## International Space Station

The International Space Station (ISS) is the **largest man-made object in space launched on November 20, 1998**. It serves as a habitat for astronauts in space. Since 2011, the ISS has been continuously inhabited.

Participating States: ISS is a collaborative project of the **United States (NASA), Russia's (Roscosmos), Europe's (ESA), Japan's (JAXA), and Canada's (CSA) space agencies**.

Orbit: The International Space Station is in orbit about **400 kilometres above Earth**.

Speed: It travels around Earth at a speed of about 28,000 kilometres per hour. This means that it **orbits Earth about every 90 minutes**.

**Objectives:** To expand our knowledge about space and microgravity and promote new scientific research. It also serves as an example of international cooperation.

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## Facts

**Russia:** Salyut 1 was **world's first space station** launched by the Soviet Union on April 19, **1971**. Then Russia launched various space stations from Salyut 2 to Salyut 7, and Mir.

**China:** **Tiangong** space station was launched in **2021** (fully operational since late 2022).

**USA:** **Skylab**: USA's first space station, launched by NASA in 1973. Future missions:

**India's Bharatiya Antariksha Station – yet in construction**

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