



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
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# NASA's astronaut stranded in space for 9 months returned to earth by SpaceX Ship

Published On: 20-03-2025

## Context

In the early hours (IST) of March 19, a SpaceX crew capsule bearing NASA astronauts Sunita Williams, Barry Wilmore, Nick Hague, and Roscosmos cosmonaut Aleksandr Gorbunov splashed down off the Florida coast.

Ms. Williams and Mr. Wilmore had returned to the earth after nine months in the International Space Station (ISS), whereas they had originally been expected to spend eight days in the course of testing Boeing's Starliner crew capsule.

Following Starliner's launch in June 2024, a series of malfunctions left Ms. Williams and Mr. Wilmore onboard the ISS before the capsule returned empty to the ground in September.

Wilmore and Williams' 286-day stay exceeds the usual six-month ISS rotation but ranks only sixth among U.S. records for single-mission duration. Frank Rubio holds the top spot at 371 days in 2023, while the world record remains with Russian cosmonaut Valeri Polyakov, who spent 437 consecutive days aboard the Mir station.

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