

SPACE RESEARCH

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INDIAN ASTRONAUTS

"The path from dreams to success does exist. May you have the vision to find it, the courage to get on to it, and the perseverance to follow it." - Kalpana Chawla

RAKESH SHARMA



Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma, AC (born 13 January 1949) is a former Indian Air Force pilot who flew aboard Soyuz T-11 on 3 April 1984 with the Interkosmos programme.

Sharma is the only Indian citizen to travel in space, although there have been other astronauts with an Indian background who were not Indian citizens.

Sharma was conferred the honour of the Hero of the Soviet Union upon his return from space. He remains to date the only Indian to have been conferred this honour. India also conferred its highest peacetime gallantry award, the Ashoka Chakra, on him and the two Soviet members of his mission, Malyshev and Strekalov.

KALPANA CHAWLA



Kalpana Chawla (March 17, 1962 – February 1, 2003) was an American astronaut, engineer, and the first woman of Indian origin to go to space. She first flew on Space Shuttle Columbia in 1997 as a mission specialist and primary robotic arm operator.

In 2003, Chawla was one of the seven crew members who died in the Space Shuttle Columbia disaster when the spacecraft disintegrated during its re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere.

Chawla was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor, and several streets, universities and institutions have been named in her honor. She is regarded as a national hero in India.

SUNITA WILLIAMS



Sunita Lyn Williams (née Pandya; born September 19, 1965) is an American astronaut and United States Navy officer who formerly held the records for most spacewalks by a woman (seven) and most spacewalk time for a woman (50 hours, 40 minutes).

Williams was assigned to the International Space Station as a member of Expedition 14 and Expedition 15.

In 2012, she served as a flight engineer on Expedition 32 and then commander of Expedition 33.

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