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**Class: 10<sup>th</sup> A**



### **Prime astronaut for India's Future Crewed Missions**

Meet group captain Shubhanshu Shukla – a decorated Indian Air Force test pilot born on October 10, 1985 in Lucknow. With over 2,000 flight hours logged on jets like Su-30 MKI, MiG-21 and Jaguar, he's a bonafide aviation ace.

In 2019 ISRO tapped him for his astronaut cadre supporting the ambitious Gangayan Programme. He trained first at Russia's Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Centre and then at ISRO's facility in Bangalore. In Feb 2024, he was unveiled as a Prime astronaut for India's Future Crewed Missions.

Students from Lucknow's City Montessori School had an extraordinary science class in early July 2025 when they chatted live with Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the first Indian astronaut to reach the International Space Station. Shukla – who is himself a proud CMS alumnus – answered questions from more than 500 excited students at his old school. The event was part of an ISRO outreach program that “brought space science directly into classrooms”. News reports said the children found it nothing short of “transformational” – hearing a real astronaut speak from orbit made science feel “tangible, real, and deeply exciting”. The live chat filled them with pride and reminded them that even reaching for the stars is possible.

During the session, students asked all sorts of fun questions about life in space. For example, one student asked how astronauts slept without gravity. Shukla laughed and said “in space there is no floor and no ceiling” – astronauts float to sleep and secure themselves in sleeping bags tied to the walls so they don't drift away. Another student asked about food. Shukla explained that the crew eats special pre-packaged meals, and he even packed his favorite Indian sweets (like Gajar ka Halwa, Moong Dal Halwa, and Aam Ras) to enjoy a taste of home. When asked what would happen if someone got sick, he reassured them that the crew is well-trained for emergencies and the station carries plenty of medicine. He also shared that the best part of the day is looking out the window at Earth – “so peaceful and beautiful,” he said. The students were thrilled by these answers; they later said Shukla's space stories helped them “think beyond limits” about their own futures in science.