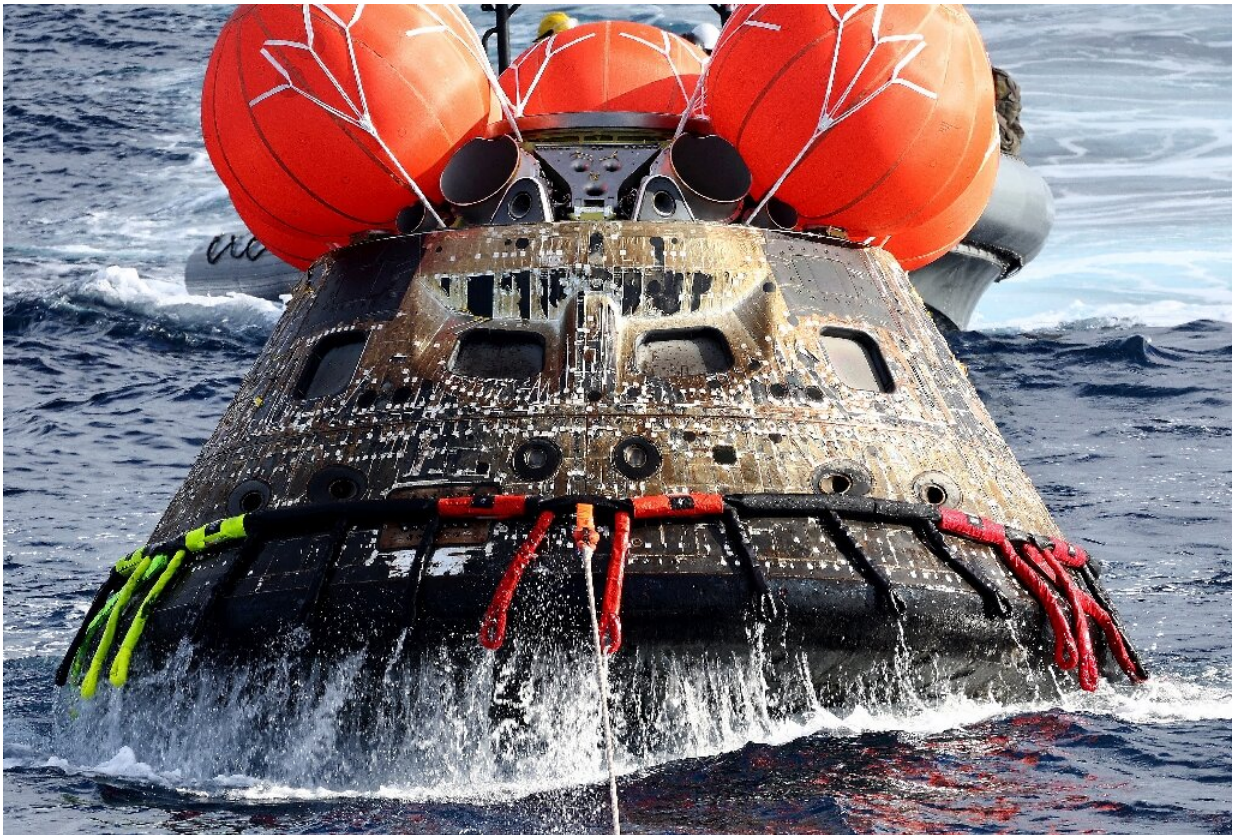


NASA to reveal crew members in April for flight around Moon

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NASA's Orion space capsule being retrieved after splashing down in the Pacific Ocean.

NASA will announce the names next month of the four astronauts—three Americans and one Canadian—who will fly around

the Moon next year, the head of the US space agency said Thursday.

NASA administrator Bill Nelson said the crew members of the mission known as Artemis 2 would be revealed on April 3.

"Astronauts—three from America and one from Canada—will fly around the moon and they'll test NASA's Space Launch System, which is our rocket, and the spacecraft called Orion," Nelson said.

The first Artemis mission wrapped up in December with an uncrewed Orion capsule returning safely to Earth after a 25-day journey around the Moon.

Artemis 2, scheduled to take place in late November 2024, will take a four-person crew around the Moon but without landing on it.

The ambitious program aims to return humans to the Moon for the first time since the historic Apollo missions ended in 1972.

Artemis 3, scheduled for about 12 months after Artemis 2, will see [astronauts](#) land for the first time on the south pole of the Moon.

NASA hopes to establish a lasting human presence on the [lunar surface](#) and later launch a years-long trip to Mars.

As part of the Artemis missions, NASA is planning to send a woman and a person of color to the Moon for the first time.

Only 12 people—all of them white men—have set foot on the Moon.

The space agency also announced Thursday that it will unveil a prototype in Houston on March 15 of the next generation spacesuits being made by Axiom Space that the NASA astronauts will wear on the Moon's surface.

Nelson welcomed the \$27.2 billion requested for NASA in President Joe Biden's 2024 budget on Thursday and noted it was a 7.1 percent increase over the previous fiscal year.

"This [budget request](#) reflects the administration's confidence in NASA and its faith in the world's finest workforce," he said.

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