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## Isro inks agreements for space biotech research

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**NEW DELHI:** The department of biotechnology and the Indian Space Research Organisation have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost space biotechnology research.

There are five experiments that are underway, according to scientists, of which 2-3 biotech related projects may be included in the joint Isro-Nasa effort to the International Space Station (ISS) next year.

"A couple of these experiments will be on the Axiom 4 (Isro ISS Mission), then they will be on the uncrewed mission of Gaganyaan and the idea is to use these for the crewed Gaganyaan mission too. These are in

the pipeline," said S Somanath, Isro chairman.

According to A Vamsi Krishna, scientist, DBT, the key challenges in space missions are the continuous availability of nutrients, preservation of food, microgravity and radiation, health hazards among others.

"MoU is a symbolic signing but there is a lot of work to be done. Whatever we are trying to do at this stage, which includes a space station and human mission, we need to have a benefit at the end of the day. The government needs to fund it and work on it on a longer term, and we should create some economic activity out of this and produce some tangible benefits," said Somanath.