

International Space Station status report: SS07-11

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

The International Space Station's Expedition 14 crew continued work this week on scientific experiments, station maintenance and clean up following a Feb. 22 Russian spacewalk. An altitude reboost engine firing planned for Friday was postponed following the launch delay of Space Shuttle Atlantis earlier this week. The STS-117 mission was targeted for liftoff on March 15. The shuttle mission was put on hold following a hail storm Monday. The storm caused damage requiring repair to the shuttle's external fuel tank foam. Russian flight controllers now plan two engine firings on March 16 and 28 to increase the station's altitude, which will place the station in the desired orbit for arrival of a Soyuz spacecraft due to launch April 7. The Soyuz will bring Expedition 15 Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin, Flight Engineer Oleg Kotov and spaceflight participant Charles Simonyi to the station. Docking to the station is due April 9. Expedition 14 Commander Mike Lopez-Alegria, Flight Engineer Mikhail Tyurin and Simonyi plan to land in Kazakhstan April 19. Space station managers are reviewing the work planned aboard the station for the remaining weeks of Expedition 14 and for Expedition 15 in light of the shuttle launch delay. The review seeks to optimize use of the crews' time due to the shuttle's delay. The station crew Thursday was awakened briefly by a caution signal when the starboard Thermal Radiator Rotary Joint (TRRJ) experienced a dropout in commands from the Rotary Joint Motor Controller. The TRRJ automatically defaulted to another command link, and there was no impact to operations. Engineers are analyzing what may have caused the problem. The rotary joint turns the radiator to provide the best possible cooling. Flight Engineer Suni Williams practiced on a laptop computer simulation Wednesday to maintain her skill in using the station's Canadarm2 robotic arm. She also joined her fellow crewmates in the Test of Reaction and Adaptation Capabilities (TRAC) experiment to gather hand-eye coordination data before, during and after their mission. TRAC Principal Investigator Dr. Otmar Bock of the German Sport University in Cologne, Germany, hopes to better understand how the brain adapts during spaceflight. The experiment will be performed during both Expedition 14 and Expedition 15.

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