

International Space Station status report: SS07-22

by *Bend_Weekly_News_Sources*

HOUSTON - The 14th crew of the International Space Station, Commander Michael Lopez-Alegria and Flight Engineer Mikhail Tyurin, along with spaceflight participant Charles Simonyi landed their Soyuz spacecraft in the steppes of Kazakhstan at 7:31 a.m CDT Saturday. The Expedition 14 mission included many highlights during its seven-month duration, including the setting of several records. Lopez-Alegria completed five spacewalks, which gave him a total of 10 for his career. This set a U.S. record for not only number of spacewalks, but also cumulative spacewalk time, 57 hours, 40 minutes. He also set a U.S. record for a single spaceflight's duration with more than 215 days. This tops the 196-day mark, previously set by station crew members Dan Bursch and Carl Walz in 2001 and 2002. During the mission Flight Engineer Sunita Williams set the record for number of space walks and total time spent on spacewalks by a woman. She participated in four space walks for a total of 29 hours and 17 minutes. Williams will remain on the station for the first part of the new mission. Three of the crew's spacewalks were conducted over the course of nine days, an unprecedented schedule for a station crew. Starting from scratch, it takes about 100 crew-member hours to prepare for a spacewalk. By doing them a few days apart, considerable crew time can be saved by not having to repeat some of those preparatory steps. Before closing the Soyuz-station hatches at 1:03 a.m. Saturday, Lopez-Alegria and Tyurin said farewell to the Expedition 15 crew, Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin, flight engineers Oleg Kotov and Williams. The new crew and Simonyi launched from the Baikonur Cosmodrome on April 7 and arrived at the station on April 9. Simonyi, a U.S. businessman, spent 12 days aboard the station under a contract with the Russian Federal Space Agency. Lopez-Alegria and Tyurin will now spend several weeks in Star City, near Moscow, for debriefing and medical examinations. Their return to Earth was originally scheduled for Friday, April 20, but was delayed due to wet ground conditions, which could have precluded helicopter operations. The one-day change allowed for touchdown in a landing zone farther to the south.

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