

International Space Station status report: SS07-26

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

HOUSTON - This week, the Expedition 15 crew unpacked new supplies and began preparing for the arrival of the next visiting spacecraft and two upcoming spacewalks at the International Space Station. The ISS Progress 25 docked to the aft port of the Zvezda Service Module at 12:10 a.m. CDT Tuesday. During the week, the crew began unloading the more than 5,000 pounds of cargo from the supply ship. Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin and Flight Engineer Oleg Kotov prepared for their May 30 and June 6 spacewalks by working on the Pirs Airlock. The cosmonauts will wear Russian Orlan spacesuits to install orbital debris protection panels on the Zvezda Service Module and replace experiments on the module's hull. Mission experts at NASA's Johnson Space Center, Houston, will provide an overview of the spacewalks in a news briefing at 1 p.m. Wednesday, May 23, on NASA Television. The crew prepared for the arrival of space shuttle Atlantis, which is targeted to launch on June 8. Yurchikhin and Kotov practiced digital photography techniques for their role in the inspection of the shuttle's heat shield as it approaches the station for the joint STS-117 mission. Flight Engineer Suni Williams assembled a spacewalk tool and wrapped it in protective tape to be used if spacewalkers need help with retracting the P6 starboard solar array. On Thursday, the crew called its colleagues working at National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Aquarius undersea laboratory for the 12th NASA Extreme Environments Mission Operations (NEEMO). A flight surgeon, two astronauts and a Cincinnati doctor completed their 12-day mission Friday. That crew tested space medicine concepts, robotic telesurgery operations and moon-walking techniques. With its unique environment, Aquarius is an ideal training facility for future spaceflight. Williams was a member of the second NEEMO mission in May 2002. On Friday, Williams completed an additional run of the Elastic Memory Composite Hinge experiment, which studies the performance of a new type of composite hinge to determine if it is suitable for use in space. The experiment uses elastic memory hinges to move an attached mass at one end. Materials tested in this experiment are stronger and lighter than current material used in space hinges and could be used in the design of future spacecraft. Additionally, the crew spoke with C-SPAN, and Williams participated in interviews with two hometown Boston television stations. On Saturday, Williams is expected to update software on the station support laptops.

International Space Station status report: SS07-26 by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources