

International Space Station status report: SS07-28

by *Bend_Weekly_News_Sources*

HOUSTON - Expedition 15 Commander Fyodor Yurchikhin and Flight Engineer Oleg Kotov prepared this week for two spacewalks while Flight Engineer Suni Williams prepared for her return to Earth. In preparation for her successor's arrival, Williams' downlinked a 10-minute video tour for Clayton Anderson, who will travel to the station on the upcoming space shuttle flight. Mission managers gave a "go" for a May 30 Russian spacewalk to install orbital debris protection panels on the Zvezda service module and a GPS antenna cable associated with Automated Transfer Vehicle navigation systems. This will be the 18th Russian spacewalk in support of station assembly and maintenance. The spacewalk is scheduled to begin at 1:20 p.m. CDT and last approximately six hours. NASA Television coverage will begin at 12:30 p.m. First-time spacewalkers Yurchikhin and Kotov checked out the spacesuits and the Pirs airlock, prepared their tools, and closed the hatch to the Progress resupply vehicle docked to Pirs. Williams, who will help coordinate the spacewalk from inside the station, also prepared U.S. tools that will be used. During the spacewalk, the cosmonauts will retrieve a package, known as the "Christmas tree," which contains three bundles of debris panels. They were temporarily stowed on Pressurized Mating Adapter 3 during the STS-116 mission last December. After transferring the panels to Zvezda, Yurchikhin and Kotov will install the panels from one bundle. The others will be installed during their June 6 Russian spacewalk. Mission managers this week conducted a preliminary review of that spacewalk. Williams this week installed updated software on the station's laptop computers, replaced the elastic "flex packs" in two Resistive Exercise Device canisters used to simulate weightlifting in the absence of gravity, and worked out on a stationary bicycle while medical experts on the ground measured her oxygen intake as part of a periodic fitness evaluation. The crew members also prepared for the arrival of space shuttle Atlantis, targeted to launch on June 8. Yurchikhin and Kotov reviewed a recent digital photography practice session with shuttle imagery specialists, and Williams assembled a spacewalk tool to be used by shuttle astronauts who will retract the P6 starboard solar array. Along with filming the station video, Suni Williams also spoke with Clayton Anderson to help him prepare for his mission. It will begin officially when his specially-fitted Soyuz seat liner is transferred from Atlantis to the station during the STS-117 mission. On Wednesday, Russian flight controllers executed an orbit adjustment burn, increasing the station's speed about one mile an hour and putting it in the proper orbit for Atlantis' arrival. The Expedition 15 crew also participated in interviews with WBZ Radio, CBS Radio, ABC News and MSNBC.

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