

Soyuz TMA-9 Arrives At Baikonur

September 5 2006

The primary and back up crews of the Soyuz TMA-9 mission have arrived at the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan. At the airport they were met by N.N. Sevastyanov, S.P. Korolev RSC Energia President, General Designer and other Corporation managers.

Cosmonaut M.V. Tyurin from Russia, astronaut M. Lopez-Alegria from the US, and space tourist A Ansari from the US are the primary crew with cosmonaut Y.I. Malenchenko from Russia and astronaut P. Whitson from the US the back up crew.

The crew commanders reported to Nikolai Sevastyanov about their readiness for preflight trainings. From September 4 through September 18 the cosmonauts and astronauts will have to accomplish trainings and sign off on the Soyuz TMA-9 space vehicle.

Last Wednesday (Aug 30) the Interdepartmental Commission made an assessment of the Expedition crew (ISS-14) qualification examination results. The crew completed pre-flight training and got full marks.

Within two days Russian cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin and U.S. astronaut Michael Eladio Lopez-Alegria together with their backups Yuri Malenchenko and Peggy Whitson demonstrated their training currency in Yu.A.Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center on the mock ups of the ISS Russian Segment and Soyuz TMA manned vehicle.

Along with the prime crew the exam was taken by the first woman space tourist Anoushek Ansari, American of Iranian origin. She will travel to

the ISS for a 10-day visiting mission and will return together with ISS-13 Expedition crew to the ground.

As reported by Nikolay Sevastyanov, President, Designer General, Soyuz TMA-9 is slated to lift off from Baikonur cosmodrome on September 14, 2006, but can be postponed to a later time due to a delayed launch date of the U.S. Atlantis Space Shuttle.

According to Mr. Sevastyanov's statement made at the press conference in Star City, if the Space Shuttle is launched on September 6 - 8, the Soyuz TMA-9 will lift off on September 18. He stressed that Soyuz will have to be launched not later September 18. This is due to the fact that the ISS 13 expedition crew will have to return to ground during the daylight time.

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Citation: Soyuz TMA-9 Arrives At Baikonur (2006, September 5) retrieved 25 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2006-09-soyuz-tma-baikonur.html>

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