

ISS Expedition 20 Prepares for Departure

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In the front row, Flight Engineers Michael Barratt (left) and Jeff Williams and in the back, Flight Engineers Nicole Stott, Frank De Winne and Robert Thirsk answer questions from CBS News. Credit: NASA TV

(PhysOrg.com) -- The nine residents of the International Space Station were busy with crew handover activities and science-related tasks Thursday as they prepared for the departure of the Expedition 20 crew this weekend.

Expedition 20 Commander Gennady Padalka and Flight Engineer Michael Barratt packed items and tested equipment they will use and carry with them in the Soyuz TMA-14 [spacecraft](#) when they undock Saturday after a six-month stay aboard the station.

Returning to Earth with Padalka and Barratt is spaceflight participant

Guy Laliberté, who arrived at the station on Oct. 2 with Expedition 21 Flight Engineers Jeff Williams and Maxim Suraev aboard the Soyuz TMA-16 spacecraft.

A symbolic change of command ceremony is scheduled for Friday at 3 p.m. EDT. During the ceremony Padalka will hand over control of the station to Flight Engineer Frank De Winne, who will become Expedition 21 commander.

Williams and Suraev continued handover activities and familiarized themselves with the systems aboard the orbiting laboratory. Williams also worked on the initial activation and check out of the new Combined Operational Load Bearing External Resistance Treadmill (COLBERT).

Suraev joined Flight Engineer Roman Romanenko in the Russian section of the station maintaining its systems and performing science experiments.

Flight Engineer Robert Thirsk worked with the Fluid Physics Experiment Facility which is designed to study the dynamics of fluids in the microgravity environment aboard the station.

Several station crew members had time set aside to participate in an interview with CBS News where they answered questions about life aboard the station, how long-duration spaceflight affects the body and their experiences with station visitor Laliberté.

Provided by JPL/NASA ([news](#) : [web](#))

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