

# 13 astronauts celebrate 2 big space anniversaries

April 12 2010, By MARCIA DUNN , AP Aerospace Writer

---

(AP) -- The astronauts aboard the orbiting shuttle-station complex celebrated two big anniversaries Monday as they geared up for the third and final spacewalk of their mission.

And the world was treated to the first recital of traditional Japanese music and poetry in space.

Monday marked the 49th anniversary of the first [human spaceflight](#) - by Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin on April 12, 1961 - and the 29th anniversary of the first shuttle launch.

In honor of Russia's Cosmonauts Day, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev called the residents of the [International Space Station](#) to wish them well. Three are Russian, two are American and one is Japanese.

"Space is something that unites all of us. It's a global issue," Medvedev told them.

He added: "Space is our highest priority, regardless of how hard the economic situation was in the country and will be, I'm sure."

In addition to the space station residents, there are seven shuttle visitors - a Japanese woman and six Americans.

Later in the morning, the two Japanese on board - the space station's Soichi Noguchi and visiting shuttle astronaut Naoko Yamazaki - took a

call from Japanese dignitaries and schoolchildren in Tokyo.

This is the first time two Japanese astronauts have flown together in space.

Yamazaki shared a haiku - or Japanese poem - she wrote after seeing Earth for the first time from space. Then, with Noguchi accompanying her on an electric keyboard, she performed a Japanese folk music springtime piece, "Sakura Sakura," which translates as "Cherry Blossom." Noguchi opened the piece with a few notes on a traditional wooden flute.

"This is probably the first time that you are going to hear the historic performance from space," Noguchi said.

The recital took place in Japan's big science lab, Kibo, or Hope.

Yamazaki will depart the space station Saturday with her six U.S. shuttle colleagues.

One more spacewalk still needs to be conducted to finish installing a new ammonia tank, on Tuesday. The astronauts will place a big cargo carrier back aboard Discovery on Thursday, after it's stuffed with old equipment and trash. Then on Friday, the shuttle will be inspected for any signs of micrometeorite damage.

This survey of the shuttle wings and nose usually is conducted after undocking. But Discovery's main antenna is broken, and there would be no way to transmit all the laser 3-D images to Mission Control for analysis. NASA added a day to the shuttle's visit so the inspection could be carried out at the station and the data could be sent using station resources.

Shuttle inspections became mandatory in space following the 2003 Columbia disaster.

Columbia lifted off on the first shuttle flight on April 12, 1981.

©2010 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

Citation: 13 astronauts celebrate 2 big space anniversaries (2010, April 12) retrieved 25 June 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-04-astronauts-celebrate-big-space-anniversaries.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.