

# Russia's recent catalogue of space disasters

August 25 2011

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Russia's Progress 35P is docked to the PIRS Docking Compartment during three scheduled sessions of extravehicular activity shared by the Atlantis STS-129 crew and the crew members of Expedition 21. The failed launch of the unmanned Progress cargo space craft which crashed into Earth instead of delivering supplies to the ISS was the latest in a spate of mishaps in the Russian space programme.

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The accidents are particularly embarrassing for Russia in the year it celebrates the 50th anniversary of Yuri Gagarin's first [manned space flight](#) and has become the sole nation capable of delivering humans to the [International Space Station](#).

While the format of launches have changed little since the days of

Gagarin and Soviet chief rocket designer Sergei Korolyev, Moscow has always prided itself on the reliability of its systems.

Herewith is a chronology of the spate of accidents in the last months.

-- December 5, 2010: Three satellites crucial for the completion of Russia's [GLONASS](#) navigation system -- a rival to the US GPS -- crash into the Pacific off Hawaii shortly after their launch on a Proton-M rocket.

The financial loss is estimated at 4 billion rubles (138 million dollars). An investigation later blames a programming error which led to the wrong amount of fuel being used in the rocket.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergei Ivanov later blasts a mistake which was "a childish one that had serious consequences".

-- February 1, 2011: A key military satellite, the Geo-IK-2 which would have drawn a three-dimensional map of the Earth and located the precise positions of targets, is put into the wrong orbit after its launch on a Rokot rocket.

A Russian official initially blames "electromagnetic intrusion" carried out by a foreign power for the accident.

But it later turns out that a fault with the [rocket booster](#) was to blame. According to the Kommersant daily, it then lost its orientation to the sun, resulting in a [power failure](#) and its complete loss.

-- March 30, 2011: Russia delays a [manned mission](#) to the ISS planned for March 30 due to a glitch with the Soyuz [space](#) craft's communications systems.

The mission goes ahead smoothly on April 5 but Russia's leadership, who had planned to witness the March 30 lift-off in commemoration of Gagarin's flight, are reportedly furious.

-- April 12, 2011: Russia marks a half century since [Yuri Gagarin](#) became the first man in space with a glittering Kremlin reception bringing together legendary cosmonauts and astronauts.

"Humanity will continue to invest in space. I want to say, in the name of Russia, that we will of course do this as space is a priority for us," declares President Dmitry Medvedev.

-- April 29, 2011: Prime Minister Vladimir Putin fires the Russian space agency chief Anatoly Perminov after the high-profile setbacks. He is replaced by First Deputy Defence Minister Vladimir Popovkin.

-- August 18, 2011: The Express-AM4 satellite, launched on a Proton-M rocket to provide digital television, telephone and Internet services across Russia, is lost after being placed in the wrong orbit. A fault with the booster is again blamed.

The cost of the loss of the satellite -- said to be the most powerful telecommunications satellite ever built in Europe -- is estimated at 7.5 billion rubles (260 million dollars). Proton-M rockets are grounded after the failure.

-- August 24, 2011: The Progress M-12M freight vehicle carrying tonnes of cargo for the International Space Station (ISS) crashes into Siberia shortly after launch.

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