

Delayed astronauts leave International Space Station for Earth

June 11 2015



Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti has broken the record for the longest single stay by a woman in space with her 200-day mission on the International Space Station

Three astronauts left the International Space Station (ISS) Thursday for a return to Earth that had been delayed for a month by a rocket failure.

Russia's space agency told AFP that the Soyuz capsule carrying the

astronauts, who hail from Russia, the United States and Italy, had detached from the ISS and was due to land in Kazakhstan as scheduled at 1343 GMT.

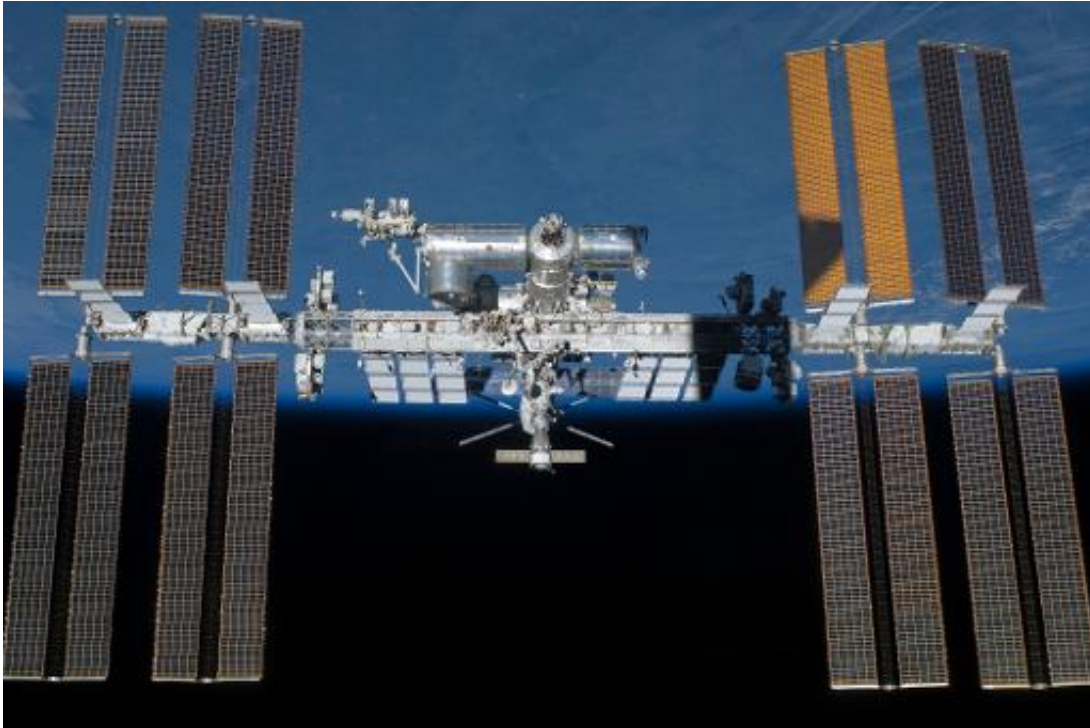
"We confirm that the Soyuz with the crew has left its dock at the planned time," mission control at Russia's Roscosmos agency said.

The delayed return means that Italian astronaut Samantha Cristoforetti has broken the record for the longest single stay by a woman in space with her 200-day mission on the research outpost.

"So long... and thanks for all the fish!" she wrote on Twitter before starting the journey home, using a quote from Douglas Adams' cult science fiction novel "The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy."

Russia's troubled space programme has experienced a series of recent failures.

It was forced to delay the return of the astronauts and the departure of their replacements in May after a supply ship crashed back to Earth following a rocket failure.



The next manned mission to the International Space Station is due to blast off from Kazakhstan between July 23-25

The next manned mission to the ISS is due to blast off between July 23 and 25, launching from Kazakhstan with astronauts from Russia, Japan and the US, Roscosmos said on Tuesday.

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