

Russia says delayed space flight on for April 5

18 March 2011



"A decision has been reached of continuing to prepare the craft for a April 5 launch," the agency statement said.

Russia named the March 30 mission in honour of Gagarin, the pioneering [cosmonaut](#) whose historic [space flight](#) at the height of the Cold War is still feted as one of the country's most important achievements.

The mission will include the Russians Alexander Samokutyayev and Andrei Borisenko as well as NASA astronaut Ronald Garan.

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The nose of a Russian Soyuz TMA-20 is seen on the skyline during the rocket installation on a launch pad at the Russian leased Baikonur cosmodrome in 2010. Russia said Friday it had solved the problem that caused it to delay the launch of three astronauts to the International Space Station and would proceed with the mission on April 5.

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The Soyuz launch from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan is of huge importance to Russia as it comes ahead of the 50th anniversary of the first human space flight by Yuri Gagarin on April 12.

But the March 30 lift-off had to be delayed because of a glitch with the Soyuz capsule's switching system that allows the crew to communicate with ground control.

The Russian Federal Space Agency said in a statement that it had replaced the faulty part with a fully functioning system, which was not being tested for the final time.

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