

# Soyuz Docks After Glitch

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**The  Moscow Times**

The International Space Station got three new tenants Friday, doubling in crew size with the arrival of a Soyuz capsule.

The Soyuz delivered an American, an Italian and a Russian for a five-month stay. They floated into the orbiting lab two days after their launch from Kazakhstan.

Officials at Russia's Mission Control outside Moscow radioed congratulations, as did the families of the new residents.

Mission Control had lost communication with the Soyuz craft for about three hours late Thursday, Interfax reported, quoting an unidentified official in the space industry.

Loss of contact with space shuttles occurs from time to time but lasts only a short time.

Mission Control became alarmed after hours had passed without information regarding the spaceship's whereabouts and contacted NASA's Mission Control in Houston urging it to use its global positioning system to track the craft, Interfax said.

Friday's docking took place 355 kilometers above Mali in western Africa, just as NASA was wrapping up a fueling test of space shuttle Discovery on its Florida launch pad. Discovery should have flown to the space station in November but is grounded until February because of fuel tank cracks.

The newest space station residents are Catherine Coleman, Paolo Nespoli and Dmitry Kondratyev. Two Russians and one American already are on board.

The young sons of Kondratyev and Coleman sat side by side inside Mission Control, chatting by radio with their orbiting parents.

"We are so glad that you're on the space station," said Coleman's husband, Josh Simpson, a glass artist. "For the last three years, we have been trying to figure out where you are, whether it's in Germany or Moscow or Star City or Japan or Canada or Texas," he said, referring to all her trips during training.

"And now, we know exactly where you are ... you seem close to us now. Our hearts are with you."

Replied Coleman: "I love you guys." She added that the space station was amazing.

NASA's deputy space station program manager, Kirk Shireman, urged the crew to have fun and told them to expect lots of visiting vessels in the next few months, primarily cargo ships.

*(AP, Reuters)*

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