

Soyuz Successfully Docks at ISS After Minor Hiccup

March 28, 2014

The  **Moscow Times**

The Russian Soyuz spacecraft has successfully docked with the International Space Station, or ISS, after failing to make its originally planned Wednesday rendezvous.

The three-man Expedition 39 reached the orbital outpost at 3:53 a.m., the Federal Space Agency reported, marking the beginning of a six-month stay in orbit.

After running a series of routine checks to ensure that the connection between the spacecraft and the space station was airtight and without leaks, the crew opened the hatch and joined cosmonaut Mikhail Tyurin and astronauts Rick Mastracchio and Koichi Wakata, who have been staying at the station since November 2013.

The Expedition 39 crew, comprised of cosmonauts Alexander Skvortsov and Oleg Artemyev and astronaut Steven Swanson, was originally scheduled to dock with the space station on Wednesday morning, but a glitch with the Soyuz navigation computer prevented the vessel from executing a critical burn that would have kicked it up to the 370 kilometer orbit of ISS.

[A minor problem in the ship's orientation has been identified as the cause of the problem.](#)

The original "fast-track" flight to the space station, which lasts 6 hours, is an incredibly precise maneuver, and even a minor error necessitates abandoning the flight plan in favor of the slower two-day trip to the space station.

In early March Wakata became the first ever Japanese commander of the football-field sized orbiting laboratory, which has been permanently staffed by crews representing 16 nations since the arrival of Expedition 1 in November 2000.

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