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Russia Delays New Space Program Plan Until March

By The Moscow Times

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Head of the Federal Space Agency Igor Komarov

The Russian government will finalize and adopt a long-delayed draft of Russia's national space policy setting objectives and allocating project funding through 2025 by the end of March, the head of the Roscosmos state space corporation, Igor Komarov, told reporters Wednesday.

Komarov made the announcement while touring the construction site of Russia's new $3 billion space launch facility, Vostochny, in the Amur region of Russia's Far East, the TASS news agency reported.

The Federal Space Program for 2016-2025 was expected to be finalized last year. However, an economic slump and sharp devaluation of the ruble forced several rewrites.

According to the most recent version, Roscosmos hopes to receive 1.4 trillion rubles ($17.5

billion) in space over the next decade — down from 3.4 trillion rubles ($42.5 billion) in the original plan.

The U.S. space agency, NASA, will by comparison receive $19.3 billion in 2016 alone.

Reduced funding has forced Roscosmos to reconsider what is possible for Russia to achieve in space. Though talk of a Russian moon mission in 2030 made headlines around the world last year, that goal has been kicked down to road to 2035.

However the agency expects to receive additional resources. These include a possible 115 billion ruble ($1.4 billion) budget allocation in 2021 for a still unspecified project and some 600 billion rubles ($7.5 billion) for launch infrastructure at Russia's three spaceports, which Komarov said on Wednesday could be approved by July 1 this year.

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