The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia to Send Capsule to Rescue ISS Crew After Meteorite Damage

January 11, 2023

Roscosmos General Director Yuri Borisov. **t.me/roscosmos_gk**

Russia's space agency on Wednesday announced it would be sending a rescue capsule to evacuate the crew of the International Space Station after a meteorite damaged the spacecraft that was due to return them to Earth.

"The Soyuz MS-23 launch is on Feb. 20, 2023 in an unmanned mode," Roscosmos said.

The MS-22 spacecraft that was originally set to bring Russian cosmonauts Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin and NASA astronaut Frank Rubio back to Earth had been damaged by a small meteorite strike, Roscosmos said on Wednesday, ruling out a technical fault.

Cosmonauts Sergei Prokopyev and Dmitry Petelin arrived at the ISS with NASA astronaut Frank Rubio on board the Soyuz MS-22 in September 2022. They had been due to return to Earth on the MS-22 in March 2023.

But the MS-22 experienced a leak and pressure drop in its cooling system on Dec. 15, causing a

rise in the capsule's temperature and forcing the last-minute cancellation of Prokopyev and Petelin's spacewalk.

Related article: Russian Space Chief Praises U.S. After ISS Coolant Leak

"Experts concluded that Soyuz MS-22 must descend to Earth without a crew," Roscosmos chief Yury Borisov said in a video statement.

He did not indicate when the space agency plans to drop MS-22 back to Earth.

Prokopyev, Petelin and Rubio's expedition has been extended and they will return to Earth on the MS-23, Borisov said without specifying the date.

The Russian space chief said experiments have confirmed that the MS-22 leak was caused by a tiny meteorite.

"The diameter of the hole is less than one millimeter," Borisov said.

Russia and the United States have continued their rare cooperation in space even as tensions have flared over Moscow's invasion of Ukraine.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2023/01/11/russia-extends-space-crews-mission-over-damaged-capsule-a79917