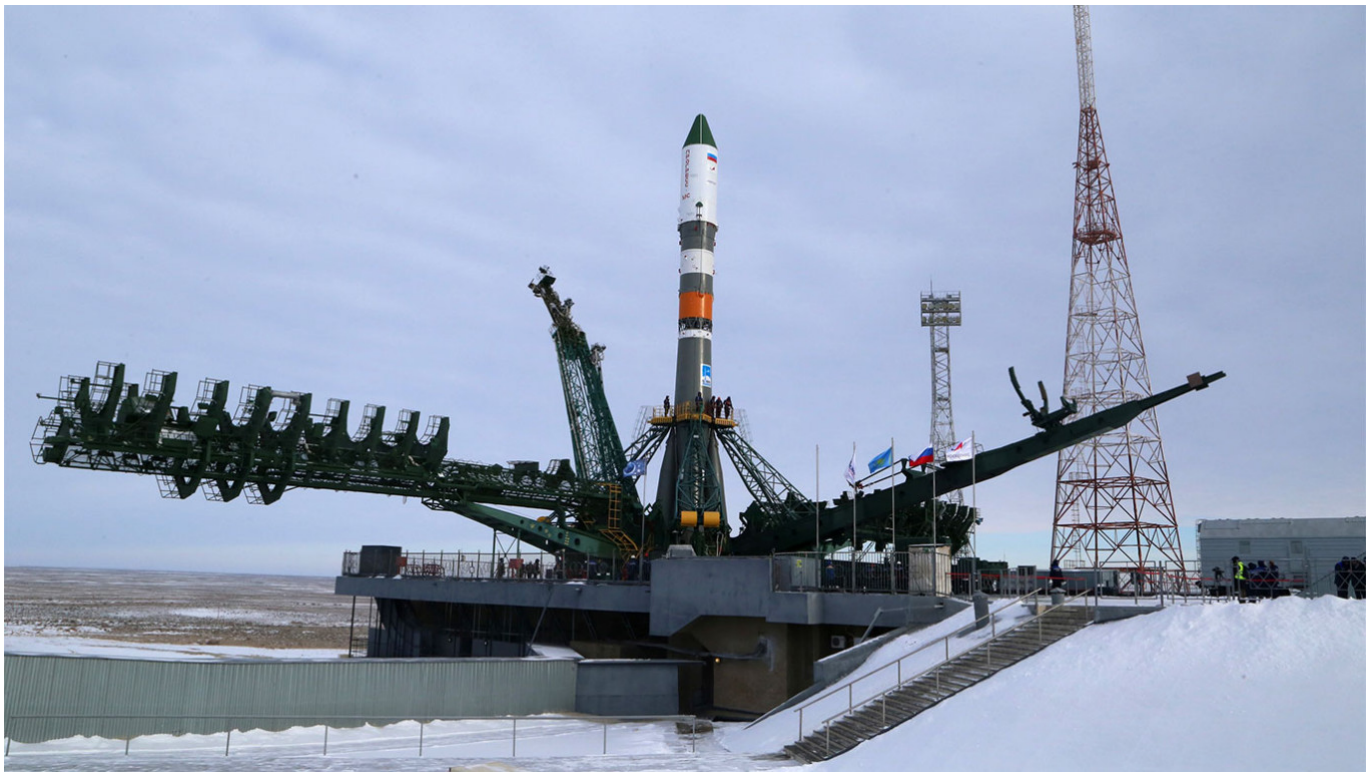
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INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Launches Supply Rocket to ISS

By AFP

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Roscosmos

Russia on Thursday launched a supply rocket to the International Space Station, one of the rare Russia-U.S. projects kept alive since Russia's offensive against Ukraine.

A Soyuz-2 rocket carrying the Progress MS-26 cargo ship was launched at the Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan, Russia's space agency said on its Telegram channel, showing a video of the lift-off.

The rocket was due to arrive at the ISS on Saturday, the agency added.

The mission is to take fuel, food and scientific equipment to the seven people currently at the space station.

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There are three Russian cosmonauts, two American astronauts, one Danish and one Japanese specialist.

The Russian and U.S. space agencies agreed in December to extend their joint flights to the ISS until 2025.

Russia had said in July 2022 that it would withdraw from the ISS project after 2024.

Russian cosmonauts are permanently in the space station and play a key role in its functioning. The creation of a new Russian space station has been presented as a priority for Moscow however.

The ISS was set up by Russia, the United States, Europe and Japan and assembly was first started in 1998.

It was meant to keep working until 2024, but the U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration has said it could keep going until 2030.

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