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Repair Work at Baikonur Launchpad to Last Until Early 2026

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The launch of the Soyuz MS-28 rocket at the Baikonur Cosmodrome on Nov. 27. **Bill Ingalls / NASA**

Russia's space agency Roscosmos said Tuesday that it plans to complete repairs to a damaged launchpad at the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan by the end of February 2026.

The launchpad's service cabin was damaged in late November during a crewed Soyuz launch to the International Space Station. The service cabin is a large, movable structure that provides engineers access to a rocket's lower sections for maintenance and fueling.

Some experts had estimated that repairs could take anywhere from six months to two years, raising concerns about potential disruptions to Russia's crewed spaceflight schedule.

In a statement, Roscosmos said all replacement components and equipment for the service cabin have now been delivered to Baikonur. Technicians have begun preparing the cabin's structural elements, which will be transported to the launchpad for assembly and testing, the agency added.

“A work schedule has been approved and is being strictly monitored,” Roscosmos said, adding that the launchpad is expected to be ready for use by the end of February.

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Russia pays Kazakhstan $115 million annually to lease Baikonur, which it has used since the Soviet era to launch astronauts to the ISS, one of the last remaining areas of collaboration between Russia and the West.

The Soviet-built facility, located in southern Kazakhstan, played a central role in Cold War space milestones, including the launches of Yuri Gagarin, the first human in space, in 1961, and Valentina Tereshkova, the first woman in space, in 1963.

Efforts to modernize the cosmodrome have faced delays due to chronic underfunding and geopolitical uncertainty following Russia’s 2014 annexation of Crimea and its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

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