

Russian space freighter accident caused by rocket linkage peculiarity — space agency



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The state commission has completed the investigation into the causes of the crash



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MOSCOW, June 1. /TASS/. A specific design linkage of a Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket and a Progress M-27M space freighter is the cause for their recent faulty launch, the press office of Russia's Federal Space Agency (Roscosmos) said on Monday.

Roscosmos made this statement, referring to the results of the state commission's investigation into the recent accident with the carrier rocket and the space freighter.

"A design peculiarity in the joint use of the spaceship and the rocket related to the frequency-dynamic characteristics of the linkage between the spaceship and the rocket's third stage is the cause for the damage done to the spaceship as a result of the emergency separation of the carrier rocket's third stage and the transport spacecraft," Roscosmos said.

According to the state commission, this peculiarity was not taken into full account during the design work for the development of this rocket and space complex.

Roscosmos is now elaborating a plan of measures for the complex's further flight tests, the press office said.

"No limitations on the further operation of Soyuz-2.1a carrier rockets with other spacecraft have been revealed," Roscosmos said.

The adjusted schedule of launches under the program of manned flights, including space freighter launches, will be specified on June 9, Roscosmos said.

The Soyuz-2.1a carrier rocket with the Progress space freighter blasted off from the Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan on April 28. However, the carrier rocket failed to put the cargo ship into a designated orbit and Russia's Mission Control lost communications with the space freighter that was intended to deliver supplies to the International Space Station.

The Progress cargo ship burnt up in the dense layers of the Earth's atmosphere over the Pacific Ocean in the morning of May 8.

Roscosmos later said the accident had been caused by the "off-nominal separation of the third stage of the Soyuz and Progress space vehicles" as a result of the fuel tanks' depressurization.

Head of Flight Control of the Russian segment in the International Space Station Vladimir Solovyov earlier said Roscosmos planned to postpone the ISS crew's landing until June, then launch a Progress space freighter and send a new manned expedition only after that.

The soonest launch for the ISS is scheduled for July. A TASS source in the rocket and space industry said "a Progress M-28M will be launched to the ISS on July 3 and a Soyuz TMA-17M manned spacecraft will blast off late in the evening of July 24."



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