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[Soyuz Rocket Ready to Take the First Korean Astronaut into Space](#)

The liftoff will take place tomorrow

Yesterday, the Russian engineers from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan rolled out the Soyuz rocket, which is supposed to carry two Russian cosmonauts and the first South Korean astronaut to the International Space Station. The 50-meter Soyuz spacecraft will take off from the same launch pad used to send a man into space for the first time ever, the Soviet cosmonaut Yury Gagarin. Flying with the 29-year-old South Korean astronaut Yi So-Yeon will be Sergei Volkov and Oleg Kononenko. The rocket is scheduled for launch this Tuesday. So-Yeon will spend 12 days on board the ISS before returning to Earth. "Our people, our country are very happy about this. Yi's flight will form the basis of our manned space program," said the director of the Korean Aerospace Research Institute, Sim Eunsup. The Soyuz rocket has been lifted into position and is now ready for tomorrow's launch. Yi is a biosystems engineer and, during her stay on the ISS, she will have the mission of performing a series of scientific experiments into space. Although she is South Korean, Yi expressed her hope that one day the South and the North will reconcile and would like to know that North Korea is 'happy' for her historic mission. The total cost of the mission, for the South Korean side, was 27 million dollars. **Controversy** Allegedly, the first South Korean to go into space was not Yi So-Yeon, but 31-year-old Ko San. However, the Russian side requested an immediate swap of Ko with another astronaut because he broke training center rules. According to Russian officials, Ko removed reading material from the training center and even sent a training book back to his country. In another incident, Ko is said to have taken a book from one of the colleagues at the training center and began reading it, although the information contained inside were not meant for him.