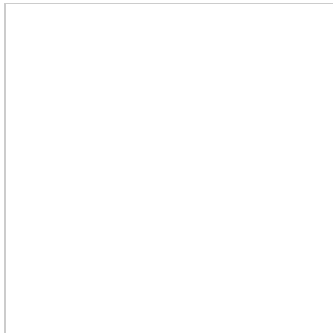




Black cats, Mondays and the number 13 are all considered unlucky in Russia



Scrap unlucky 13th mission: Russian space chief

Apr 14, 2008

MOSCOW (AFP) — The next Russian spacecraft should be renamed to avoid the traditionally unlucky number 13, the head of Russia's space agency has said.

"In Russia, many people have superstitious beliefs -- black cats, Mondays, the number 13. That's why I think that it is a good idea to change the number of the next space ship," said Anatoly Perminov, head of the Russian space agency Roskosmos, according to his press secretary Alexander Vorobyov.

The first South Korean astronaut Yi So-Yeon went into space earlier this month on a Russian spacecraft called the Soyuz TMA-12. The next mission should be called Soyuz TMA-13.

"I support the idea that it should be Soyuz TMA-14," said Perminov.

Superstition is not uncommon among astronauts, who observe good-luck rituals at the Soviet-era Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan before take-off.

For example, on their last evening before launching, astronauts watch the classic Soviet movie "White Sun of the Desert."

The film gained a reputation for bringing luck in the wake of the Soyuz 11 accident in June 1971 that killed three cosmonauts.

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