

Russia launches cargo ship to ISS

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A Russian Soyuz-U booster carrying an unmanned cargo spacecraft Progress M-22M is transported to a launch pad at the Russian leased Kazakhstan's Baikonur cosmodrome early on February 3, 2012

Russia successfully launched an unmanned cargo ship to the International Space Station on Wednesday evening after a spaceship carrying three astronauts experienced a technical glitch last month.

"At 19:35 Moscow time (15:35 GMT), the cargo ship separated from the third-stage booster rockets on schedule," the Russian space agency said in a statement on its website after the Progress M-23M ship blasted off from the Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

The ship carrying 2.5 tonnes of supplies including oxygen, containers of food and water and parcels for the crew is due to dock with the ISS at 01:16 am Thursday (21:16 GMT Wednesday).

The spaceship is following a fast-track route to the international space laboratory that takes just six hours.

Last month, a Soyuz spaceship carrying two Russian cosmonauts and a NASA astronaut, was unable to follow the fast-track route to the ISS after a [technical glitch](#) in approach.

The astronauts were forced to spend two days en route to the ISS.

Russia insisted that the glitch was minor and would not prevent future missions from using the fast-track route to the ISS.

NASA has been wholly reliant on Russia for delivering astronauts to the space station since the US retired its space shuttles.

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