

Japan cargo spacecraft docks at ISS

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The HTV is Japan's first freighter spacecraft aiming for a share of space transport after the retirement of the US [space shuttle](#) fleet next year.

"I'm so relieved because I was feeling the pressure and responsibility," Koji Yamanaka, the flight director in charge of the cargo mission, told reporters at Japan's Tsukuba space centre.

It was the first time that astronauts operate a Canadian robotic arm at the ISS to dock a [spacecraft](#) at the station.

The HTV carried 4.5 tonnes of supplies, including food and daily necessities for the six ISS crew, as well as materials for experiments, such as seeds for growing plants in space.

The 10-metre (33-foot) long cylindrical vehicle, which cost 20 billion yen (217 million dollars), will soon unload the supplies.

It will later take waste materials and return to Earth, burning up as it re-enters the atmosphere.

Japan has spent 68 billion yen developing the vehicle, which could be modified in future to carry humans.

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