

# Russian cargo ship launched to space station

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A Russian cargo ship was launched successfully to the International Space Station on Sunday, clearing the way for the next manned mission and easing concerns about the station's future after a previous failed launch.

The unmanned Progress M-13M blasted off as scheduled at 2:11 p.m. Moscow time (1011 GMT; 6:11 a.m. EDT) from the Russian-leased Baikonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan, Mission Control spokesman Valery Lyndin said.

"It was a perfect launch," Lyndin told The Associated Press, adding the ship successfully reached a designated orbit and will dock at the station Wednesday. A new crew will be launched to the space outpost on Nov. 14, he said.

A Progress launch failure in August, which was blamed on an "accidental" manufacturing flaw, cast doubts about future missions to the station, because the upper stage of the Soyuz booster rocket carrying the cargo ship to orbit is similar to that used to launch astronauts.

The next Soyuz launches were delayed pending the outcome of the probe. NASA said the space station - continuously manned for nearly 11 years - will need to be abandoned temporarily if a new crew cannot be launched by mid-November.

The [Russian spacecraft](#) serve as the only link to the station after NASA retired the space shuttle in July.

Sundays' Progress mission was the second successful launch of a Soyuz booster rocket after the August mishap. Earlier this month, another [Soyuz rocket](#) launched the first two satellites of the European Union's Galileo navigation system from the Kourou launchpad in French Guiana. The launches followed inspections, which required the rocket engines to be sent back to manufacturers for close examination.

The August crash was the latest in a string of spectacular launch failures that have raised concerns about the condition of the nation's space industries. The [Russian space agency](#) said it will establish its own quality inspection teams at rocket factories to tighten oversight over production quality.

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