

# Japan rocket set to blast off for International Space Station

August 19 2015

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Japan's H-IIIB rocket is pictured on the launching pad of the Tanegashima Space Center in Tanegashima island in Kagoshima prefecture, on the southern Japanese island of Kyushu on August 19, 2015

A Japanese rocket is set to blast off later Wednesday, carrying emergency supplies and an unmanned cargo vessel bound for the

International Space Station.

The H-IIB rocket is set to lift off from the southern island of Tanegashima at 8:50 pm (1150 GMT) after the launch was postponed twice due to weather conditions, the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) said.

Officials from the government run agency said the launch was still on schedule as of Wednesday afternoon.

The rocket will carry a 5.5-tonne [cargo vessel](#) called "kounotori" (stork in Japanese), which contains supplies including food, water, clothing and tools necessary for experiments to be done in space.

Television footage showed the rocket loaded with the cargo being erected at the launcher on Wednesday.

The mission should reach the International Space Station, where Japanese astronaut Kimiya Yui is staying, on August 24.

Yui has been tasked with catching the cargo vessel with robotic arms and then affixing it to the [space station](#).

The rocket will also carry parts for a water recycling system, after US-based NASA asked its Japanese counterparts to include them as "emergency materials" in the cargo following the failure in June to launch a US Falcon 9 rocket.

The unmanned SpaceX [rocket](#) exploded minutes after lift off from Cape Canaveral, Florida, marking a major setback for the fast-charging company headed by technology tycoon Elon Musk.

The accident was the third in less than a year involving US and Russian

supply ships bound for the International Space Station, and raised new concerns about the flow of food and gear to the astronauts living in orbit.

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