

Chinese cargo spacecraft docks with orbital station

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In this photo released by China's Xinhua News Agency, a Long March 7 rocket carrying the Tianzhou-2 spacecraft lifts off from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in Wenchang in southern China's Hainan Province, Saturday, May 29, 2021. A rocket carrying supplies for China's new space station blasted off Saturday from an island in the South China Sea. Credit: Guo Wenbin/Xinhua via AP

An automated spacecraft docked with China's new space station Sunday carrying fuel and supplies for its future crew, the Chinese space agency announced.

Tianzhou-2 spacecraft reached the Tianhe station eight hours after blasting off from Hainan, an island in the South China Sea, China Manned Space said. It carried [space suits](#), living supplies and equipment and fuel for the station.

Tianhe, or Heavenly Harmony, is third and largest orbital station launched by China's increasingly ambition space program.

The station's core module was launched April 29. The space agency plans a total of 11 launches through the end of next year to deliver two more modules for the 70-ton station, supplies and a three-member crew.

China was criticized for allowing part of the rocket that launched the Tianhe to fall back to Earth uncontrolled. There was no indication about what would happen to the rocket from Saturday's launch.

Beijing doesn't participate in the International Space Station, largely due to U.S. objections. Washington is wary of the Chinese program's secrecy and its military connections.



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