

China launches first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1

China on Thursday evening launched its first cargo spacecraft, Tianzhou-1, into space, a crucial step for the country in building a space station by approximately 2022.

Lifted by a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket, Tianzhou-1 roared into the air from the Wenchang Space Launch Center in south China's Hainan Province.

In space, the cargo ship will dock with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab, provide fuel and other supplies, and conduct space experiments before falling back to Earth.

China aims to build a permanent space station that is expected to orbit for at least 10 years, and the debut of the cargo ship is important as it acts as a courier to help maintain the space station.

Without a cargo transportation system, the station would run out of power and basic necessities, causing it to return to Earth before the designated time.