

China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 to be launched



China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 [Photo/Chinanews.com]

China's first cargo spacecraft Tianzhou-1 is to be launched into space between April 20 and 24, according to the office of China's manned space program.

The cargo spacecraft was transferred with a Long March-7 Y2 carrier rocket from the testing center to the launch zone in Wenchang, southern China's Hainan Province, according to a statement from the office Monday.

The transfer took 2.5 hours.

"The completion of the transfer signals the Tianzhou-1 mission has entered its launching stage," the statement said.

Technicians have performed several tests during the assembling of the spacecraft and rocket since February.

In the following days, technicians will continue testing the spacecraft and rocket, and inject fuel before the launch, it said.

Tianzhou-1 is the first cargo ship independently developed by the country. It is expected to dock with the orbiting Tiangong-2 space lab and conduct in-orbit refueling.

The cargo spacecraft will also carry out space experiments, including one on non-Newtonian gravitation, before falling back to earth.