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The Tianzhou 5 cargo spaceship atop the Long March 7 Y6 carrier rocket is prepared on Wednesday in Hainan province for its launch in the near future. TU HAICHAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

## Tianzhou 5 readies for launch in Wenchang

By ZHAO LEI  
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As China prepares for the launch of the Tianzhou 5 cargo spacecraft, the Tianzhou 4 is getting ready to return.

The combination of the Tianzhou 5 cargo spacecraft and the Long March 7 Y6 carrier rocket was transferred to the launching area in Wenchang, Hainan province, on Wednesday before the Tianzhou 4 cargo spacecraft departed from the Tiangong space station in the afternoon, according to the China Manned Space Agency.

The agency said in a release that the Tianzhou 5 cargo spacecraft will be launched in the near future at an appropriate time.

The facilities at the launch site, the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site, are in good condition, and various prelaunch function checks and joint tests will be carried out as planned, the agency added.

The Tianzhou 4 craft undocked from Tiangong at 2:55 pm and will be guided by ground controllers back to Earth in due course, the agency said.

Launched on May 10 from the

Wenchang Space Launch Center in Hainan province, Tianzhou 4 docked with Tiangong in a low-Earth orbit of around 400 kilometers later that day.

Carrying nearly 6 metric tons of propellants and materials, including more than 200 packages, the spacecraft was tasked with supporting the Shenzhou XIV mission, during which a three-member crew is scheduled to spend six months inside the space station.

The mission crew has so far spent more than five months aboard the station.

Tianzhou 4 is the third cargo ship to have docked with Tiangong, following the Tianzhou 2 and 3.

Designed to function for more than a year, each Tianzhou cargo spaceship has two parts — a cargo cabin and a propulsion section. The vehicles are 10.6 meters long and 3.35 meters wide.

The cargo vehicle has a liftoff weight of 13.5 tons and can transport up to 6.9 tons of supplies to the space station.

Currently the Tiangong station consists of a core module, two lab modules and a spacecraft used to transport the astronauts.

## BeiDou making mark among navigation systems

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China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System (BDS) will be further developed and feature better compatibility and interoperability coordination with the world's other navigation systems, including the GPS system of the United States, Russia's GLONASS system and the Galileo system of the European Union, an official said during the World Internet Conference Wuzhen Summit in Zhejiang province on Wednesday.

BDS operators will regard bilat-

eral and multilateral cooperation with other systems in the application sectors as an important matter, continue to promote the implementation of some application demonstration projects overseas and practically push forward its international applications, Ran Chengqi, director general of China Satellite Navigation Office, said at a forum during the summit.

"BDS has made significant contributions to the digitalization of economies involved in the Belt and Road Initiative, and it has provided effective and accurate services to more than half of countries and regions worldwide," Ran said.

BDS has released its cooperative initiatives and application scenarios to countries in Africa, Central Asia and Latin America, as well as member states of global organizations like the League of Arab States and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Launched in July 2020, BDS is regarded as one of the four core satellite navigation systems globally. The technology has entered a new stage and is set to play a more important role with the fast development of the global digital economy, and BDS has been adhering to opening-up and cooperation, Ran said.

"Next, we will continue to pro-

vide the construction, development and capacity upgrading of BDS, and provide support for future intelligent and unmanned development. In the future, no matter whether the facilities are underground, indoors or in deep space, we will be able to enjoy highly precise, safe and intelligent positioning and navigation services."

Besides providing positioning and navigation services to global users, BDS has its own innovations and featured services such as providing highly accurate services for bike-sharing management, he added.

For example, the service helps

manage precise locations of shared bicycles nationwide. Currently, China has some 1.1 million bicycles available for sharing that the high-accuracy service of BDS can precisely manage locations of.

Last year, China had some 3.8 million bikes available for bike-sharing services, according to research firm iMedia Research.

Meanwhile, the State Council Information Office published a white paper titled "China's BeiDou Navigation Satellite System in the New Era" on Friday.

As a first-class navigation satellite system developed by China and dedicated to the world, BDS has been applied worldwide, integrated with global infrastructure and introduced into mass markets, empowering industries and profoundly

changing people's lives and the way they work, the white paper said.

According to the white paper, in the years to come, China will further upgrade BDS technologies, functions and services. The goal is to create a comprehensive system that is more extensive, integrated and intelligent, and that provides flexible, smart, precise and secure navigation, positioning and timing services. And by doing so, China will be able to better help improve people's well-being and promote human progress.

In addition, China will promote large-scale BDS applications and encourage their market-oriented, industrialized and globalized development to offer a broader range of public services at a higher quality, the white paper said.