

Chinese spacecraft completes mission

June 25 2013



Chinese astronauts (L-R) Wang Yaping, Nie Haisheng and Zhang Xiaoguang waving after they entered the Tiangong-1 space module on June 13, 2013. China's Shenzhou-10 spacecraft has completed a challenging mission to manually dock with a space module and its three astronauts are expected to return to earth on Wednesday, state media said Tuesday.

China's Shenzhou-10 spacecraft has completed a challenging mission to manually dock with a space module and its three astronauts are expected to return to earth on Wednesday, state media said Tuesday.

The astronauts have completed their mission after docking twice with the Tiangong-1 space module, where they conducted [medical experiments](#) and delivered a lecture to schoolchildren, China's official [Xinhua news agency](#) said.

The spacecraft pulled off the tricky manoeuvre of manually detaching from the module before returning to its previous point of orbit, the report said.

The successful [manoeuvre](#) was China's first ever such test, the report said, and it marks a step towards China's goal of building a permanent [manned space station](#) by 2020.

China first sent a human into space only in 2003 and its capabilities still lag behind the US and Russia. But its programme is highly ambitious and includes plans to land a man on the moon.

Beijing sees its multi-billion-dollar space programme as a symbol of its rising global stature, growing technical expertise, and the Communist Party's success in turning around the fortunes of the once poverty-stricken nation.

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