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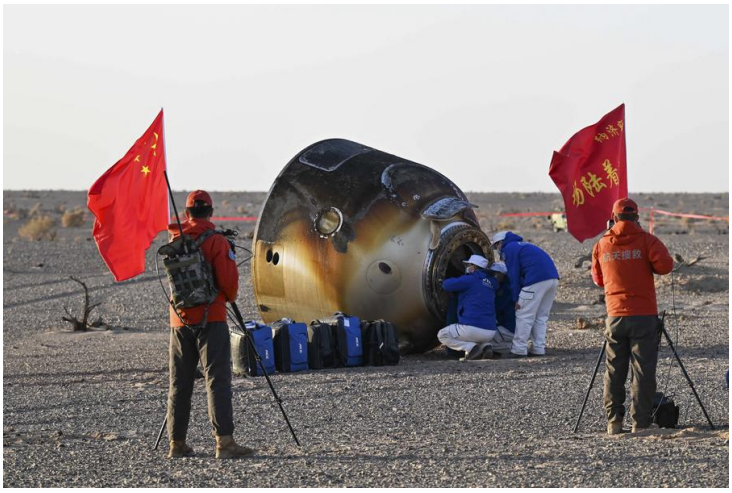
Shenzhou-20 Capsule Returns Safely, China Space Mission Successful



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JIUQUAN, Jan. 19 (Xinhua) – The unmanned return capsule of China's Shenzhou-20 spacecraft safely landed at the Dongfeng site in Inner Mongolia at 9:34 a.m. (Beijing Time) on Monday, the China Manned Space Agency (CMSA) announced.

On-site inspections confirmed the capsule's overall condition was normal, and all items inside were intact. "With the return of the Shenzhou-20 spacecraft, all main tasks of the space emergency response for China's space station have been successfully completed," the CMSA said.

The Shenzhou-20 mission, launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center on April 24, 2025, successfully docked with China's space station and remained in orbit for 270 days to conduct experiments and verify the spacecraft's capability to stay docked for nine months. Its return was postponed in early November due to a suspected space debris impact.

To mitigate risks during the return, astronauts aboard Shenzhou-21 conducted extravehicular inspections of the capsule and installed an emergency window crack treatment device, enhancing its thermal protection and sealing capabilities. The CMSA noted that prompt analysis and mission adjustments ensured the capsule's safe return.

The Shenzhou-20 astronauts—Chen Dong, Chen Zhongrui, and Wang Jie—spent 204 days in orbit, setting a new record for the longest in-orbit stay by a Chinese crew. The trio appeared publicly in Beijing on Jan. 16, reporting good health.

Meanwhile, preparations continue for the Shenzhou-22 and Shenzhou-23 missions, including an emergency launch and backup spacecraft readiness, ensuring continuous support for China's space station operations.

The CMSA hailed the Shenzhou-20 mission as a complete success, demonstrating China's growing expertise in manned spaceflight, emergency response, and long-duration orbital operations.