

# Tiangong 1 to provide 'splendid' show: China

**Beijing**  
A defunct space laboratory that will plunge back to Earth in the coming days is unlikely to cause any damage, Chinese authorities say, but will offer instead a "splendid" show akin to a meteor shower.

China's space agency said Thursday that the roughly eight-tonne Tiangong-1 will re-enter the atmosphere some time between Saturday and Monday. The European Space Agency has a smaller window between midday Saturday and early Sunday afternoon GMT time.

But there is "no need for people to worry", the China Manned Space Engineering Office (CMSEO) said on its WeChat social media account.

Such falling spacecraft do "not crash into the Earth fiercely like in sci-fi movies, but turn into a splendid (meteor shower) and move

across the beautiful starry sky as they race towards the Earth", it said.

The lab was placed in orbit in September 2011 and had been slated for a controlled re-entry, but it ceased functioning in March 2016 and space enthusiasts have been bracing for its fiery return.

The ESA said the lab will make an "uncontrolled re-entry" as ground teams are no longer able to fire its engines or thrusters, though a Chinese spaceflight engineer denied earlier this year that it was out of control.

China sent another lab into orbit, the Tiangong-2, in September 2016 and hopes to turn it into a crewed space station by 2022.

Experts have downplayed any concerns about the Tiangong-1 causing any damage when it hurtles back to Earth, with the ESA noting that nearly 6,000 uncontrolled re-entries of

large objects have occurred over the past 60 years without harming anyone.

The CMSEO said the probability of someone being hit by a meteorite of more than 200 grammes is one in 700 million.

- 'Spectacular show' -  
During the uncontrolled re-entry, atmospheric drag will rip away solar arrays, antennas and other external components at an altitude of around 100 kilometres (60 miles), according to the Chinese space office.

The intensifying heat and friction will cause the main structure to burn or blow up, and it should disintegrate at an altitude of around 80 kilometres, it said.

Most fragments will dissipate in the air and a small amount of debris will fall relatively slowly before landing, most likely in the ocean, which covers more than 70 percent of the Earth's surface. (AFP)

## #PollToday



Tiangong 1 is all set to crash into the Earth some time between Saturday and Monday. Do think, as experts say, the space station will dissipate in the air?

Yes  No  Cant Say



"Those who enter into cooperation and solidarity with terror groups against Turkey...will, like the terrorists, become a target of Turkey. We hope France does not take such an irrational step,"

Recep **Tayyip Erdogan**,  
Turkish President

## Rest in sight

Russia tests new ballistic missile



Russia has successfully tested its latest intercontinental ballistic missile, the country's military said Friday.

Fire on bus in Thailand kills 20 migrant factory workers

A fire on a double-decker bus carrying migrant workers killed 20 people early Friday.

Afghanistan sets October for elections

Afghanistan aims to hold parliamentary and local district elections in October, more than three years late, a senior election official said.

16 injured in hot air balloon heavy landing in Australia

A hot air balloon landed heavily after hitting a tree north of Sydney on Friday, injuring 16 people, officials said.

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# Huge chocolate statues spring up in Belgium



**Durby**

It sounds like a chocoholic's dreamland - giant sculptures of elephants and flamingos all crafted from Belgian chocolate.

The animal creations, up to 3 meters tall, are the centrepiece of an exhibition in Belgium of around 50 chocolate pieces by 40 international artists.

The ChocoPalace festival, in the small city of Durby, southeast of Brussels, also features a chocolate river and stalls selling macarons and boozy chocolate drinks.

The festival has already attracted more than 30,000 visitors and is set to draw in plenty more over the Easter holidays until it closes on April 8.

Durby, with a population of around 10,000, light-heartedly bills itself as "the smallest city in the world", and attracts sightseers from nearby Brussels and Luxembourg.

"The idea was to bring the biggest chocolate sculpture festival in the world to the smallest city in the world," said Laura Trommelen, from PLG, the advertising group that has organised the festival.



## Fall of the Chinese space station Tiangong-1

