

Roscosmos Shatters Tuva's Dreams of Using Spacecraft Debris to Attract Tourists

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A fragment of a Russian Progress cargo rocket. **Karaool / VK**

When a Russian Progress cargo rocket fell from the skies over Russia's remote Tuva Republic on Dec. 1, the residents of the isolated village of Eylig-Khem thought they had lucked out. With debris peppering their largely uninhabited region, including a villager's yard, locals believed they finally had an attraction to lure in tourists.

The regional government was quick to get on board with the idea, claiming that a fragment of the spacecraft – loaded with supplies for astronauts and cosmonauts aboard the International Space Station – would be left where it fell. To celebrate this gift from the cosmos, the government reportedly planned to erect a pedestal to mark the spot where the fragment landed. A local museum would receive another piece.

Not so fast, said Roscosmos, Russia's space agency.

Officials are still working to fully understand what happened to the Progress spacecraft, which appears to have suffered an unplanned separation of its upper section from the rest of the rocket around 383 seconds into the flight.

Fragments are important to aerospace accident investigations. Unsurprisingly, Roscosmos ordered them sent to Moscow.

“I was dreaming,” Margen Anai-ool, head of the local Ulug-Khem district, [told](#) the Interfax news agency. “That's the only thing to say about my belief that spacecraft wreckage discovered on our territory would be left with us.”

Anai-ool speculated that the composition of materials used in the spacecraft's construction might be top-secret.

Undeterred, the official said there that is only one thing left to do: “We will have to place exact copies of the fragments at the locations where they fell.”

A master craftsman has already been tapped for the job.

Read more on Tuva: [Shamanism – Tuva's ancient faith – takes on the 21st century](#).

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