

Scientists study India's deadly 'meteorite' (Update)

February 9 2016

Indian scientists were Tuesday analysing a small blue object, described by local authorities as a meteorite, which fell from the sky and killed a bus driver.

The team from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics was also examining the crater left in the ground by the plummeting [object](#) in the southern state of Tamil Nadu.

Experts say other explanations are possible for the incident on Saturday. But if proven, it would be the first confirmed death by a meteorite in recorded history, they say.

"Our team has taken samples from the site and the object. It will take a couple of days to determine its origin," a senior official at the institute, who did not want to be named, told AFP.

"As of now we cannot confirm if it is a meteor or not," he said.

The mysterious object struck inside a college campus in Vellore district, shattering window panes of a nearby building and killing the driver who was walking past.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa Jayaram said Monday the object was a meteorite.

The college principal said he heard an unusual sound on Saturday

afternoon and rushed to the spot with other staff.

"There was a very abnormal sound at 12:30 pm and over the sky there was white smoke stripe... I saw one of my drivers badly injured," G. Baskar told the NDTV news channel.

Police said doctors have found rock fragments embedded in the driver's body.

The object, being held by police, adheres to magnets, indicating it is made of metal, authorities have been quoted as saying.

Experts have said the object could be debris from a rocket or a space shuttle.

Meteors are particles of dust and rock that usually burn up as they pass through Earth's atmosphere.

Those that do not burn up completely, surviving the fall to Earth, are known as meteorites.

Indian experts say meteorites sometimes hit the Earth but no deaths have been recorded in recent history.

In February 2013 a [meteorite](#) plunged over Russia's Ural Mountains, creating a shockwave that injured 1,200 people and damaged thousands of homes.

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