

# Meteorite strikes in town in western Cuba

February 2 2019

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Residents and tourists in a town in western Cuba saw a flare pass through the sky and heard an explosion Friday in what officials said was a meteorite strike.

Witnesses reported seeing a ball of fire and a smoke trail in a clear midday sky, and a rain of black stones fell on the tourist town of Vinales and other parts of Pinar del Rio province. Explosions were also heard and a smoke trail seen in Havana. There were no reports of damage or injuries.

"We were coming from the center ... and we saw a ball of fire cross the sky," said Spanish tourist Jesus Nicolas, 34, in Havana. "Sure it was a [meteorite](#) and a very big one."

Amid speculation on [social media](#), state media in Cuba denied that a plane had crashed and called it a "natural, physical phenomenon."

Later Friday, a statement from Cuba's Ministry of Science and the Environment read on a nightly newscast confirmed that it was a meteorite strike.

Efren Jaimez Salgado, head of the Environmental Geology, Geophysics and Risks department of Cuba's Institute of Geophysics and Astronomy, earlier told state newspaper Granma that preliminary information suggests a meteorite or meteorite fragments struck an area near the Mural of Prehistory in Vinales and that a team was heading to the area to take samples.

Photos published showed small black stones which when split open had dark red veins.

People in the archbishopric of Pinar del Rio confirmed that two strong explosions were heard and in rural areas of the province rumblings were heard and some houses shuddered.

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