Beat: News

Meteorite strikes Nicaraguan capital, leaves crater

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USPA News - A meteorite landed near the Nicaraguan capital of Managua over the weekend, leaving a substantial crater in a wooded area and causing a loud boom which was heard and felt across the city, government scientists said on Monday. There were no injuries.

The incident happened at around 11 p.m. local time on Saturday when a loud boom was heard in Managua, followed by a shockwave and a burning smell. Most residents initially assumed that either an earthquake had hit or a bomb exploded, but the government confirmed on Monday that a meteorite was to blame. Footage released by state-run media showed experts as they examined the large crater, which is about 24 meters (78.7 feet) wide and 5 meters (16.4 feet) deep. It is located in a wooded area on the outskirts of the capital, close to both a hotel, the international airport and an air force base, but far enough to cause any damage. The Nicaraguan government said it had reached out to foreign experts to assist in their investigation, but observers said the meteorite was likely part of a small asteroid which passed close to Earth over the weekend. A spokesperson for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) in the United States did not immediately return a request for comment. The asteroid, designated 2014 RC, was discovered on the night of August 31 and estimated to be about 60 feet (20 meters) in size. The asteroid passed Earth on Sunday at a distance approximately one-tenth the distance from the center of the Earth to the moon, or about 25,000 miles (40,000 kilometers). Meteor strikes in populated areas are uncommon. In February 2013, however, an asteroid measuring about 17 to 20 meters (55.7 to 65.6 feet) in size entered Earth`s atmosphere undetected and streaked through the skies over central Russia before exploding in an air burst, damaging more than 7,000 buildings and injuring nearly 1,500 people. The asteroid was the largest known natural object to have entered Earth`s atmosphere since June 1908, when an air burst from a small asteroid or comet flattened an estimated 80 million trees over approximately 2,150 square kilometers (830 square miles) of forest in the Krasnoyarsk Krai region of Russia. There were no casualties as the area is uninhabited, but the asteroid could have destroyed a large metropolitan area had it struck elsewhere.

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