

CORRESPONDENCE

Extra-terrestrial Impacts in the Geological Past: Some Reflections

An Addendum

In a note published in the August issue of the Journal entitled 'Extra-terrestrial Impacts in the Geological Past: Some Reflections' (*JGSI*, v.64, Aug. 2004, pp.127-132), I made a reference to the regretful absence of written accounts of the observations of persons who had witnessed such falls in recent years. In making such a statement I was not aware of a most graphic description of the fall of a meteorite from Captain A. Ranganathan, commander of the Air Sahara flight from Bangalore to Kolkata from an altitude of 11.3 km. This came to my notice through an article in *Meteoritics & Planetary Science* (v.39, no.8, Supplement, pp.A121-A132, 2004).

The description is somewhat unique as it was made by a responsible officer flying at a high altitude. He was an eye witness to the fall of a meteorite near Kendrapara in Orissa in the evening of September 27, 2003. Here is the description of Captain Ranganathan as recorded by Dhingra et al. in their paper referred to above.

"I saw what appeared like a normal shooting star from the north. What appeared like a whitish streak started becoming red and growing bigger until it became absolutely brilliant bluish green fireball. The sight was stunning. The size of the fireball was enormous, filling our front windshield completely, hurling straight at us.

Just when I thought that we were going to be blown out of the sky, the whole sky turned into an incandescent blue green light, almost as brilliant as mid-day sun. The fireball burnt out just in front of our eyes!!! It was an amazing but frightening sight."

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