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Chelyabinsk Meteorite Fragment Heavier Now Than 2 Months Ago

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The Chelyabinsk meteor exploded above the south Urals on Feb. 15, 2013.

Imagine putting on 32 kilograms in the space of just two months. This is exactly what the largest fragment of the 2013 Chelyabinsk meteorite appears to have done, according to new data from Russian scientists.

The fragment from the meteorite, which made global headlines two years ago as it lit up skies in central Russia, was first weighed by the Russian Academy of Sciences in November last year at 473 kilograms.

But when the rock was weighed again on Monday at the Chelyabinsk Regional History Museum, the high-precision electronic scales three times gave a result between 505 kilograms and 510 kilograms — with a one percent margin of error.

South Urals geologist and mineralogist Sergei Kolisnichenko said on the museum's website that knowing the exact weight of the meteorite chunk would be extremely useful for scientists.

"Proceeding from the exact weight, we can more accurately calculate how the meteorite behaved in the atmosphere during the disintegration process," Kolisnichenko said. "This information will be useful in predicting future asteroids' path to Earth."

The meteorite was fished out of Lake Chebarkul, approximately 70 kilometers west of Chelyabinsk, in October 2013 and could have been even bigger had it not split into three parts during the extraction process.

A smaller fragment of the meteorite is currently on display in Moscow at the "Primeval Russia" Festival of Nature at the Central House of Artists until Feb. 22. The fragment was previously exhibited in Sochi during the 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

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