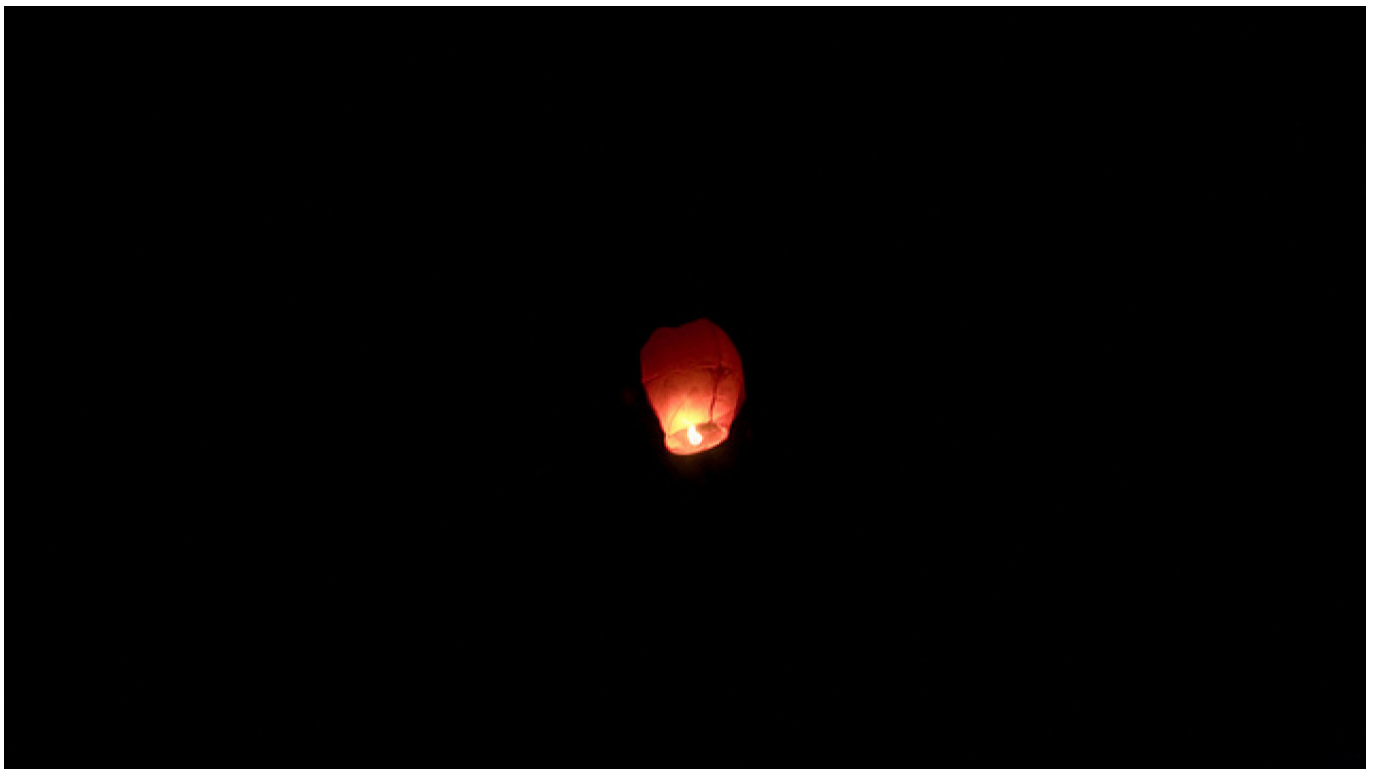


# Chinese Lantern Could Have Caused Novodevichy Convent Fire – Report

May 28, 2015



The fire that raged through the bell tower of Moscow's Novodevichy Convent in March could have been caused by a stray Chinese lantern, the Izvestia newspaper reported Thursday, citing Russia's Emergency Situations Ministry.

The Emergency Situations Ministry came to this conclusion after probing different theories about the origin of the blaze, Izvestia reported.

The Russian government introduced new fire safety regulations last year forbidding the release of sky lanterns in inhabited and forested areas, as well as their use near airports, power lines and billboards. Offenders can face fines of up to 1,500 rubles (\$28).

The Russian media ran rife with speculation about the cause of the fire at the time of the incident. Some outlets reported that the fire could have been caused by a short circuit as a result of restoration work that had required the use of heat guns, power tools that emit hot air and are used for stripping paint.

News agency RIA Novosti cited in March an unnamed source as saying that the blaze could

have been sparked by thieves who had climbed the scaffolding to snatch the bell tower's golden ornaments.

The Ensemble of the Novodevichy Convent, one of Moscow's main tourist attractions, was added to UNESCO's World Heritage List in 2004.

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