

China completes B737 crash search and rescue, working on report

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Dhaka : China has completed the main search and rescue work at the site of a China Eastern Airlines plane crash on March 21, and plans to complete a preliminary report within 30 days of the event, an aviation official said on March 31.

A final report into the crash of the Boeing 737-800 will be completed and made public after the investigation is concluded, Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC) safety head Zhu Tao said.

The plane crashed into a mountainside in southern China on March 21, killing all 132 people onboard.

Under international rules, a 30-day report must be lodged with the UN aviation agency ICAO but it does not need to be public. A final report is due within a year of the crash, though sometimes it can take longer.

Zhu said authorities have done preliminary analyses of the crash, such as predicting the possible trajectory, position and impact force of the airplane when it hit the ground and reading data from air traffic control radar systems.

CAAC investigators are also working to decode the data from both the black boxes, he added.

Investigators from the US National Transportation Safety Board are set to travel to China to support the CAAC's investigation into mainland China's deadliest aviation

disaster in 28 years.

Over 40,000 pieces of aircraft wreckage and debris have been found and a majority of the pieces have been transported to a hangar, Zhu said.

Global, Bangladeshi airlines concerned

Meanwhile, the latest crash has made airlines all over the world and in Bangladesh worried over safety aspects of the popular airplane model of the US-based aircraft manufacture company Boeing.

China Eastern Airlines has already stopped operations of all the 109 Boeing 737-800 aircraft in its fleet.

India's aviation regulator too has put the country's fleet of Boeing 737 planes under "enhanced surveillance" after the deadly crash in China.

The worries even reached Bangladesh as the country's two airlines - Biman Bangladesh Airlines and US-Bangla Airlines - both have a large number of Boeing 737-800 aircraft in their respective fleets.

The national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has put its fleet of six Boeing 737 planes out of total 21 aircraft under "surveillance". Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, Managing Director and CEO, Biman, said, they are monitoring flight procedures, air worthiness and operations of Boeing 737-800s.

Speaking to The Bangladesh Monitor, Kamrul Islam, General Manager, Marketing Support and Public Relations, of US-Bangla Airlines, also expressed concern about the airplane model. The largest private carrier currently has six of this variant in its 16 aircraft fleet.

"We are waiting for the probe results of the crash in China. Boeing is assisting the Chinese authorities in the probe. Let's see what the results indicate -- if the crash was a result of any technical issue of the aircraft or a manmade error. Our next course of action depends on it."