

## 2024 : Deadly year for air travel

- A Monitor Report

Date: 16 January, 2025



Dhaka : 2024 has made people worry about flying, particularly during the year end, when over 200 people died in two separate plane accidents just days apart. 38 people lost their lives when an Azerbaijan Airlines plane crashed in Kazakhstan. Four days later, 179 died when a Jeju Air flight crash landed in South Korea. 2024 was a year full of disasters in aviation.

In early January, a fierce crash in Tokyo stunned the globe, leaving five members of the Japan Coast Guard dead, although passengers on the Japan Airlines plane escaped safely.

Days later, part of a plane fell off when it was departing from Portland, Oregon, leaving a hole in the side of the fuselage. Again, all 177 passengers survived the emergency landing, however, the fallout from the event kept the major plane manufacturer Boeing in the spotlight all year.

During the summer the tragic loss of a Voepass flight in Brazil claimed the lives of 62 passengers and crew. On top of this, multiple reports of aircraft hitting severe turbulence and injuring people, including one fatality on a Singapore Airlines flight, have given travellers cause to worry about their safety.

According to the Aviation Safety Network, a total of 318 people died in aircraft accidents in 2024, making the year the deadliest in aviation since 2018.

Still flying is safer

According to research from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), flying is safer today than ever. In the 2018-2022 period, the risk of dying through air travel was calculated to be one per every 13.7 million passenger boardings. That is down from one per 7.9 million boardings in 2008-2017 and a major decrease from the one per every 350,000 boardings in 1968 to 1977.

Research from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical Academy has shown that up to 80 per cent of aviation accidents can be attributed to human error. A mistake on the pilots' part is thought to account for 53 per cent of accidents, while mechanical failure was considered to be at fault in just 21 per cent of cases.

Airbus studied which part of the flight was most dangerous, and found that takeoff and landing were when accidents were most likely to occur.

Every accident makes air travel safer

The small silver lining in the terrible year aviation has experienced is that every accident serves to make air travel safer in the future. All the aviation events of 2024-fatal and otherwise-will be analyzed minutely to understand what can be learnt to enhance future safety.

In the case of both the Jeju Air and Azerbaijan Airlines crashes, the infamous 'black boxes' have been recovered and sent for interrogation. These two boxes should shed some light on what happened prior to the crash.

A preliminary report will likely be made public in the coming weeks, although the final report will take longer. From these reports, various recommendations will be made to avoid a similar situation in the future.

