

Massive rat forces KLM flight cancellation

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: Over 250 passengers were left stranded on Aruba and Bonaire after a KLM flight to Amsterdam was canceled following the discovery of a rat on board an Airbus A330.

The incident forced unexpected overnight stays and rebooking delays for travellers during the busy holiday period.

The rodent was first spotted on Wednesday (Dec 10) evening in the cabin of the KLM flight from Amsterdam to Aruba and Bonaire. Mid-flight, passengers reported seeing the animal moving through the cabin.

Pilots decided to continue to Aruba rather than return to Schiphol Airport, as the situation did not pose an immediate safety risk.

Dutch media later published video footage showing the rat slipping from a baggage compartment and disappearing behind a curtain.

Once the aircraft landed, KLM determined it could not operate the scheduled return flight to Amsterdam until it underwent thorough cleaning and inspection.

Airlines treat rodents on board seriously, as they can damage wiring and other technical systems, potentially affecting flight safety.

Thursday's return service from Aruba via Bonaire to Amsterdam was canceled, affecting a total of 254 passengers.

Some travellers were scheduled to board in Aruba, while others were on the connecting flight to Bonaire before continuing to the Netherlands. Passengers were already at the gate when the captain announced the cancellation.

KLM has arranged hotel accommodations on Aruba and Bonaire for the stranded passengers and is working to rebook them on alternative flights back to the Netherlands.

The airline said passenger safety and well-being were the primary factors in the decision to cancel the flight.

Before returning to service, the aircraft must undergo intensive cleaning and technical inspections to ensure the rat is removed and no damage has occurred to cables or other critical systems.

Only after engineers and pest-control specialists give the all-clear will the plane be cleared to fly.

Although such incidents are rare, airlines have strict protocols for handling animals on board, particularly rodents, as even a small animal can cause significant technical issues.

The episode underscores how a seemingly minor issue can disrupt an entire flight schedule and leave hundreds of passengers stranded far from home.

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