

Aircraft crash leads to mass flight cancellations in S Korea

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Seoul : Passengers with South Korea's Jeju Air have been canceling their tickets following the crash of one of its aircraft, which tragically killed 179 people.

As of 1 p.m. on Monday (Dec 30), the airline reported that 68,000 flight reservations had been canceled, according to South Korea's news agency.

The majority of cancellations occurred after Flight 7C2216 crashed on Sunday (Dec 29). Of the cancellations, approximately 33,000 were for domestic flights and 34,000 for international flights.

Jeju Air is South Korea's largest low-cost airline.

The Boeing 737-800 crashed while trying to land at South Korea's Muan International Airport at 9:03 a.m. 179 of the 181 people on board were

killed, local authorities said.

Footage showed the plane slide on the runway before it came off, hit a barrier, and burst into flames.

The CEO of the airline, Kim E-bae, issued a public apology: "Above all, we express our deepest condolences and apologies to the families of the passengers who lost their lives in this accident.

"At present, the cause of the accident is difficult to determine, and we must await the official investigation results from the relevant government agencies. Regardless of the cause, as CEO, I feel profound responsibility for this incident," he said, according to The Guardian's translation.

On Monday, most of the homepage of the airline's website had been cleared. A black banner on its English-language version said: "We deeply apologize to all those affected by the incident. We will make every effort to resolve the situation. We sincerely regret the distress caused."

Mass cancelations have happened before after major accidents. This includes customers canceling bookings with Malaysia Airlines after two deadly incidents in 2014.

Investigations into the South Korean crash are underway and no cause has been concluded yet.

A bird strike is one possible factor, with an official in South Korea's transport ministry reportedly saying the airport's control tower issued a bird strike warning before the crash.

But experts are skeptical that it would likely be the only reason, as planes are designed with fail safes and with bird strikes in mind.

Video footage showed the plane landing without its landing gear deployed.

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