The Bangladesh Monitor - A Premier Travel Publication

Jeju air black box data missing prior to crash

- A Monitor Desk Report Date: 12 January, 2025

Seoul : South Korea's transport ministry announced on Saturday (Jan11) that the black box of the Jeju Air flight, which crashed on December 29, failed to record the last four minutes of the flight.

The flight data and cockpit voice recorders of the Boeing 737-800 ceased recording roughly four minutes before the crash, South Korean officials said, which could complicate the investigation into the disaster that killed 179 of the 181 people on board.

After initial analysis, the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) confirmed that both the flight data recorder (FDR) and the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) stopped functioning approximately four minutes prior to the accident, according to South Korea's Transportation Ministry.

The Boeing 737-800 operated by Jeju Air crashed while attempting an

emergency landing at Muan Airport. The plane skidded off the runway after its landing gear failed to deploy, hitting a concrete structure and bursting into flames.

Following the analysis, South Korean investigators sent the black boxes to the NTSB for further examination after discovering the missing data. The ministry stated that the cause of the failure to record the last four minutes remains unclear.

"Data from the CVR and FDR are crucial for investigating the accident, but investigations will proceed by examining and analyzing multiple sources of information. We are committed to determining the cause of the crash," the ministry said in a statement.

Air traffic controllers had warned the pilot about potential bird strikes two minutes before the aircraft issued a distress signal confirming a bird strike had occurred. The pilot then attempted an emergency landing.

In addition to the investigation, South Korean officials have vowed to improve airport safety. Experts have linked the high death toll to Muan Airport’s localizer system, the structure that the plane struck during the crash.

The localizer, a set of antennas designed to guide aircraft during landing, was housed in a concrete structure covered with dirt and positioned on an elevated embankment. This has raised concerns about whether the structure should have been built with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact.

-B