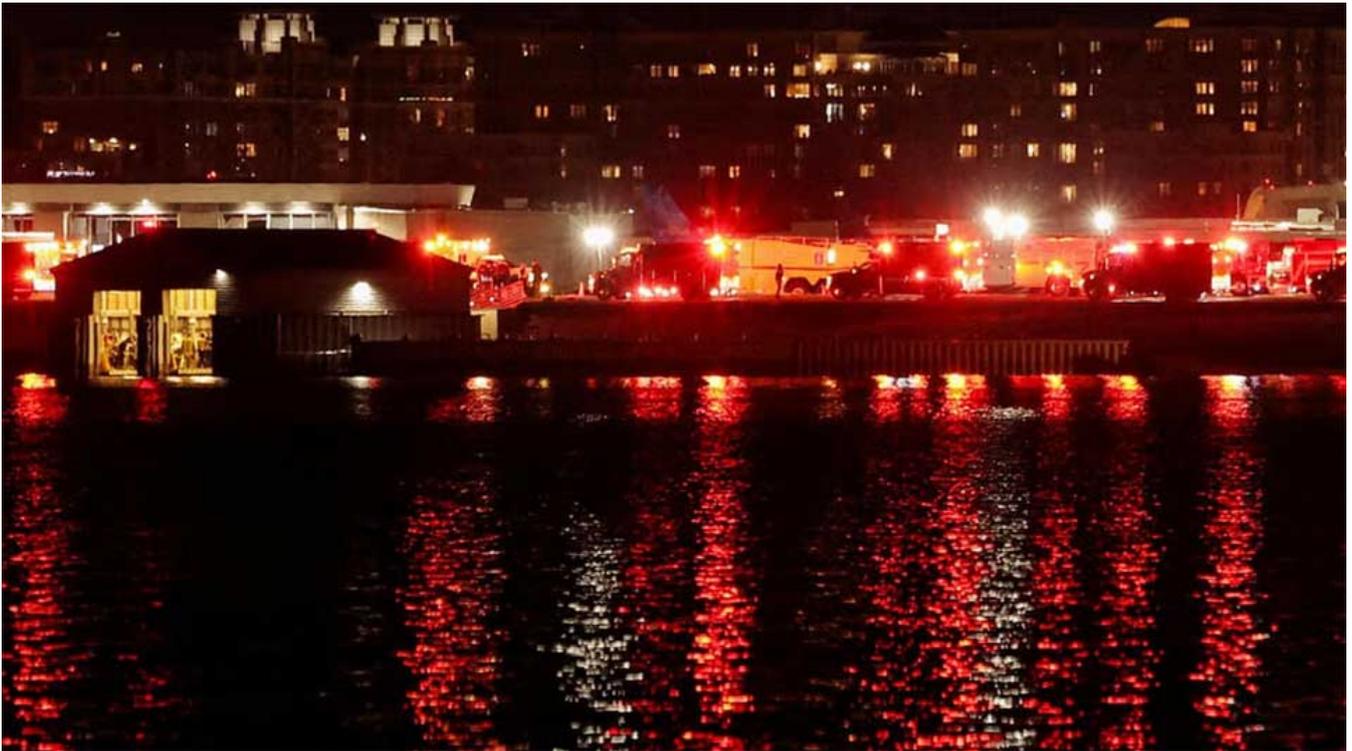


Jet, helicopter crash midair in Washington DC

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Washington DC : A jet carrying 64 passengers collided midair with a military helicopter while attempting to land at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, DC.

The PSA Airlines Bombardier CRJ700, operating as American Airlines Flight 5342, collided with a Sikorsky UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter around 9 p.m. (02:00 GMT) Thursday (January 30), according to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The flight had departed from Wichita, Kansas, before the incident occurred, the FAA confirmed in a statement.

There was no immediate word on casualties or the cause of the collision. All takeoffs and landings from the airport have been halted. Inflatable rescue boats were launched into the Potomac River and first responders set up light towers from the shore to illuminate the area near the site of

the collision.

The FAA said the airport would be closed until at least 5am on Friday.

American Airlines confirmed there were 60 passengers and four crew members on board the aircraft. The US army confirmed that its helicopter was carrying three personnel.

Police and fire services said a multi-agency search and rescue operation was under way in the Potomac River.

News agency said there was an “enormous response” at the scene of the crash, including emergency vehicles and boats.

“We should be very clear, this is the main local airport serving the Washington, DC, metropolitan area,” Rattansi said. “We believe that both of those aircraft are in the river. So that is of enormous concern now.”

Video posted on social media appeared to show the two aircraft collide and explode into flames.

Texas Senator Ted Cruz said “we know there are fatalities”, without elaborating on the number or the source of his information.

If the fatalities are confirmed, the crash would be the first deadly incident involving a US commercial airline since 2009, when Colgan Air Flight 3407 crashed in Buffalo, New York, killing all 49 people on board.

Ronald Reagan Washington national airport, located in Arlington, Virginia, is the closest airport to Washington, DC, lying less than five miles from the US capital.

The airport is popular with many travelers because of its proximity to Washington, DC compared to Dulles International Airport, which is located about 23 miles further away.

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