

Laser strikes on aircraft become rising issue over disaster risk

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Dhaka: Pilots of several airlines have warned that major accidents can happen as people keep shining laser beams at aircraft during take-off and landing after dark at Dhaka Airport.

The claimed the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh's efforts are inadequate in this regard as they are mostly limited to awareness building campaigns – not enough to prevent laser strikes, which distract and dazzle the eyes of pilots.

Complaints of recurring incidents of laser strikes on aircraft at Dhaka Airport comes almost daily, said Group Captain AHM Touhid-ul Ahsan, then Executive Director of HSIA.

"When a laser beam hits an aircraft windshield, tiny scratches and dirt on the windshield create a glare effect which spreads the light across the pilot's field of vision. This is a serious safety concern to us especially when the aircraft is in the sensitive takeoff or landing position," said Touhid, according to reports.

Besides at HSIA, pilots said they often face laser strikes while landing at Chattogram Airport too during night.

Syed Nazmul Hasan, Pilot of Biman Bangladesh Airlines, said, "The laser strikes have

reached such a level that a major accident could happen at any time,"

In Bangladesh, such activities are punishable under the Civil Aviation Authority Act-2017. The law terms the laser strike a "threat" to aircraft operations and stipulates punishments like life imprisonment or a fine of BDT 5 crore.

There are however no instances of arrest or imposing fines for such crimes, said Touhid-ul Ahsan.

According to reports, the laser is usually pointed from outside the premises of the airport, often from homes and hotels within a five-to-six-kilometre radius including Uttara, Nikunja, Ashulia and Savar.

This makes it hard to take strict steps. Reports cited duty officers at the Turag and Airport Police Stations saying, it is hard to detect persons involved in laser strikes as most often, they shine the laser from distant areas and flee by the time officials reach there.

CAAB officials assured they are sincerely working to address the issue.

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