

Boeing 737 crash in China concerns global, Bangladeshi airlines

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Dhaka: A Boeing 737-800 flight of China Eastern Airlines carrying 132 people crashed on March 21 afternoon in a rural, mountainous part of the southern region of Guangxi, China. No survivors have been found yet and authorities are still looking for the black boxes of the aircraft which could reveal the reason behind its crash.

Meanwhile, the latest crash has made airlines all over the world as well as in Bangladesh worried over safety aspects of the popular airplane model of the US-based aircraft manufacture company Boeing.

China Eastern Airlines has already stopped operations of all the 109 Boeing 737-800 aircraft in its fleet.

India's aviation regulator too has put the country's fleet of Boeing 737 planes under "enhanced surveillance" after the deadly crash in China. Indian DGCA's Chairman, Arun Kumar, said they have increased the monitoring of the Boeing 737 fleet operated by SpiceJet, Vistara, and Air India Express - the three Indian carriers which operate the variant.

The worries even reached Bangladesh as the country's two airlines - Biman Bangladesh Airlines and US-Bangla Airlines - both have a large number of Boeing 737-800 aircraft in

their respective fleets.

The national flag carrier Biman Bangladesh Airlines has put its fleet of six Boeing 737 planes out of total 21 aircraft under "surveillance". The airline said it is monitoring flight procedures, air worthiness and operations of Boeing 737-800s.

On this note, Abu Saleh Mostafa Kamal, Managing Director and CEO, Biman, said, "Like other countries, we have also placed our fleet of Boeing 737 aircraft under surveillance after the crash witnessed in China," adding, "Flight safety is a serious issue and we are closely monitoring the situation."



Speaking to The Bangladesh Monitor, Kamrul Islam, General Manager, Marketing Support and Public Relations, of US-Bangla Airlines, also expressed concern about the airplane model. The largest private carrier currently has six of this variant in its 16 aircraft fleet.

"We are waiting for the probe results of the crash in China. Boeing is assisting the Chinese authorities in the probe. Let's see what the results indicate -- if the crash was a result of any technical issue of the aircraft or a manmade error. Our next course of action depends

on it," said Kamrul Islam of US-Bangla.

Boeing 737-800 aircraft is a globally renowned and one of the most used aircraft model in the world. Currently, over 4000 of this aircraft model is flying in the skies all over the world by different airlines while Boeing has delivered 5000 of this aircraft since its introduction in the 90s.

This particular aircraft variant had an impressive track record until March 21 when China Eastern Airlines' B737 nosedived in a mountain.

According to reports, the China Eastern flight was flying at about 30,000 feet at a cruising speed of 523 mph before it dropped.

The latest accident follows two previous Boeing plane crashes of another variant of the 737 family - 737 MAX - in 2018 and 2019, one in Indonesia while another in Ethiopia. After the two earlier crashes, the 737 MAX model was grounded worldwide by all the airlines, which was followed by legal actions and billions of dollars fine against Boeing.

However, while Boeing has been in efforts to reintroduce the 737 MAX aircraft, and reel from the devastating impact of coronavirus in aviation trade, this latest crash of the 737-800 aircraft has put a dent in the struggling plane manufacturer's status further.

Hence, on March 22 morning, Boeing shares' value fell by 5 per cent.

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