

Pakistan mourns air crash victims

All 127 on board dead; judicial probe launched

AFP, Islamabad

Distraught relatives wept Saturday as they collected the remains of loved ones after a Pakistani passenger jet crashed in bad weather near Islamabad, killing all 127 people on board.

The Bhoja Air flight from Karachi came down in fields near a village on the outskirts of capital Islamabad at around 6:40 pm on Friday evening (1340 GMT) -- the city's second major fatal air crash in less than two years.

The airline said the Boeing 737 was carrying 121 passengers, including 11 children, as well as six crew.

Civil aviation official Junaid Khan told AFP: "All 127 people died. No one survived. There was no possibility of any survivor in this crash."

Rows of coffins, some sprinkled with rose petals by hospital staff as a gesture of compassion, were lined up in a room with hand-

written notes identifying the dead by name, TV images showed.

The Boeing 737-200 was 28 years old, a Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) official who asked not to be named told AFP, but Bhoja Air insisted that despite its age, the plane was safe to fly.

Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani, visiting the hospital, told reporters a judicial commission would investigate the crash, which came less than two years after the worst ever air disaster on Pakistani soil.

In July 2010 an Airbus A321 operated by the private airline Airblue crashed into the hills overlooking Islamabad while coming in to land in heavy rain and poor visibility, killing all 152 people on board.

Boeing offered "profound condolences" to the victims' families and said it would provide technical assistance to the investigation into the Bhoja crash.



PHOTO: REUTERS
Demonstrators run through a cloud of tear gas fired by police during a protest in the village of Diraz, west of Manama yesterday. Crowds of masked protesters hurled petrol bombs at police who fired tear gas back in Bahrain on Saturday, turning the streets into a battle zone on the eve of a Formula One Grand Prix that demonstrators say glorifies a repressive government.

Three killed in Libya clashes

AFP, Tripoli

Fresh fighting flared in the Libyan desert town of Kufra overnight leaving three people dead and 17 others wounded, local sources told AFP yesterday.

"The situation is very bad," Toubu tribe leader Issa Abdelmajid Mansur told AFP in reference to fresh fighting in Kufra, where tribal clashes claimed more than 100 lives in February.

He said that Toubu living in the southeastern town were attacked on Friday by what was meant to be a peacekeeping brigade, Shield Libya, under defence ministry command.

Mansur said cries for help to the national army had fallen on deaf ears.

In February, the clashes pitting Toubu against Zwai tribesmen in Kufra that cost more than 100 lives also displaced half the population, according to UN figures.

FRANCE PRESIDENTIAL POLLS

First round of voting today

AFP, Paris

French presidential candidates marked a one day truce yesterday on the eve of voting in a first-round poll to whittle the 10-strong field down to two frontrunners.

French election rules outlaw both campaigning and opinion polling on the last day of the race, but Socialist challenger Francois Hollande went into the weekend favourite to oust right-wing incumbent Nicolas Sarkozy.

The two 57-year-old political veterans are expected to win the two spots in the May 6 run-off, and polls suggest that the left-winger will comfortably win the battle to become one of the most powerful leaders in the world.

Parisians went about their business without being accosted by pamphleteers, the campaigns' websites, Facebook pages and Twitter feeds were left without updates and broadcasters



had to find other subjects to interview. But some hints of the campaigns' moods slipped past the censors.

The left-wing daily Liberation emblazoned its front page with the headline "A strong left" against the backdrop of a blue ocean under open skies, mocking the slogan and imagery of Sarkozy's "A strong France" campaign.

The pro-Sarkozy Le Figaro stuck doggedly behind its champion, but doubts clouded its front page editorial, which warned all those thinking of voting far-right or centrist that second round would depend on the first.

Privately, Sarkozy's top supporters have begun to admit that if Sarkozy fails

to regain the momentum and slip ahead of Hollande today, he will have too much ground left to make up before the May 6 showdown.

France is a nuclear-armed power, a permanent member of the UN Security Council and the tenth biggest economy in the world in terms of GDP. Its executive president wields extraordinary personal power.

Sarkozy has, in the teeth of much criticism of his hyperactive leadership style, made the office still more influential by downgrading the role of his prime minister and taking day-to-day charge of matters of state.

The eventual winner of the May 6 vote will still have to win legislative elections in June to make sure of his or her authority, but any French leader with a parliamentary majority has wide room to manoeuvre.

First, however, 44.5 million French electors must make their choice.

Britain marks Queen's 86th birthday

AFP, London

Britain marked Queen Elizabeth II's 86th birthday yesterday with 41-gun salutes at Hyde Park and the Tower of London, while the monarch herself celebrated with family.

Gun salutes also took place at several military bases across the country to mark the occasion.

The queen's official birthday is celebrated each June, in the hope of warmer weather for the annual Trooping the Colour military ceremony.

This year's Trooping the Colour on June 16 will be part of a packed summer schedule for the queen, who is marking her diamond jubilee with a tour of Britain and is set to open the London Olympic Games on July 27.

A new arms race in Asia?

BBC ONLINE

India's test firing of an Agni-V ballistic missile this week is a potent signal of the country's growing nuclear capabilities.

The weapon - with a range of more than 5,000km (3,100 miles) is capable of delivering a nuclear warhead to the Chinese capital Beijing. The Agni-V is the latest in a series of Indian-developed missiles of varying ranges and capabilities.

It will become operational within about two years, adding significantly to India's nuclear punch.

So should China be worried? Probably not, according to US nuclear expert Taylor Fravel, an associate professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

"The missile has been under development for some time," he told me, "and is already factored into Chinese planning."

"The development of this missile does not undermine China's own deterrent capability," he says, "even though it may strengthen India's. China retains the ability to survive a first strike by India, however unlikely that may be."

Indeed, western experts have been quick to play down the significance of the Indian missile test, noting that the nuclear dynamics of the region are complicated and involve other countries, not just India and China.

Jeffrey Lewis, who heads the East Asia Non-Proliferation Programme at the Center for Non-Studies in Monterey, puts it this way: "Beijing tends to focus much more on the United States, rather than India. Indian officials talk about China much more than their Chinese counterparts talk about them."

Indeed, he suspects that "New Delhi's emphasis on China is more about slighting Pakistan than competing with China."

China is already modernising its own nuclear-armed medium- and intermediate-range missile systems that could be used to target India. But as Taylor Fravel notes, "India and China have similar nuclear doctrines, as both emphasize no first use and achieving deterrence through development of a secure second-strike."

It should be remembered that compared to Russia and the United States, China and India have relatively small nuclear arsenals. China is believed to have a stockpile of around 240 warheads, with perhaps 175 of them active and have around 100 warheads.

Jeffrey Lewis suggests that it is wrong to see in the dynamics between Beijing and Delhi echoes of the Cold War arms race between the US and the Soviet Union.

"I doubt very much," he says, "that China and India will engage in an arms race, scaled-down or otherwise."

NEWS ANALYSIS

Obama urges talks to ease Sudan tensions

AFP, Juba

South Sudanese forces were pulling out from Sudan's main Heglig oilfield yesterday, an official said, as US President Barack Obama called on both sides to resume talks.

Obama said late Friday that "the presidents of Sudan and South Sudan must have the courage to return to the table and negotiate and resolve these issues peacefully."

"We know what needs to happen -- the government of Sudan must stop its military actions, including aerial bombardments," he said in a videotaped message to the people of the two countries.

"Likewise, the government of South Sudan must end its support for armed groups inside Sudan and it must cease its military actions across the border," the president added in the address, released by the State Department.

"Our troops are still withdrawing; it will



take three days," South Sudan's Information Minister Barnaba Marial Benjamin told AFP.

"We are responding to the request of the UN Security Council and others, as a member of the UN and the African Union."

Sudanese army spokesman Sawarni Khaled Saad told AFP on Saturday afternoon: "Now the fighting in Heglig is finished."

While the 10-day occupation, which UN chief Ban Ki-moon branded illegal, appeared to be coming to an end, each side had its own version of events.

On Friday, Sudan said its soldiers had "liberated" the oil field by force, speaking after South Sudanese President Salva Kiir had already announced that "an orderly withdrawal will commence immediately."

Border clashes between Sudan and South Sudan escalated last week with waves of air strikes hitting the South, and Juba seizing the Heglig oil hub on April 10, sparking fears of a wider war.

US-PHILIPPINES NAVAL DRILL

China warns of confrontation

REUTERS, Beijing

China's military yesterday warned the United States that US-Philippine military exercises have raised risks of armed confrontation over the disputed South China Sea in the toughest high-level warning yet after weeks of tensions.

China's official Liberation Army Daily warned that recent jostling with the Philippines over disputed seas where both countries have sent ships could boil over into outright conflict, and laid much of the blame at Washington's door.

This week American and Filipino troops launched a fortnight of annual naval drills amid the stand-off between Beijing and Manila, who have accused each other of encroaching on sovereign seas near the Scarborough Shoal, west of a former US navy base at Subic Bay.

The joint exercises are held in different seas around the Philippines; the leg that takes place in the South China Sea area starts on Monday.

"Anyone with clear eyes saw long ago that behind these drills is reflected a mentality that will lead the South China Sea issue down a fork in the road towards military confrontation and resolution through armed force," said the commentary in the Chinese paper, which is the chief mouthpiece of the People's Liberation Army.

Afghanistan foils terror attack

Seizes 10 tons of explosive

REUTERS, Kabul

Afghanistan security forces have detained five insurgents with massive quantities of explosives intended for use in attacks on crowded areas of Kabul and linked them to Pakistan-based militants, an intelligence spokesman said yesterday.

The alleged connection to militants in Pakistan will likely step up the pressure on Islamabad, after a recent coordinated assault by insurgents on diplomatic and government areas in Kabul and elsewhere put the spotlight on the South Asian nation.

"It could have caused large-scale bloodshed," National Directorate of Security (NDS) spokesman Shafiqullah Tahiri told a news conference.

The 10 tons of explosives were stuffed into 400 bags and hidden under piles of potatoes in the back of a Pakistan-registered truck on Kabul's outskirts, said Tahiri.

The US ambassador to Afghanistan, Ryan Crocker, said there was "no question" that the Haqqani network, which Washington believes is based in Pakistan's North Waziristan region, mounted last weekend's 18-hour rocket and gunfire operation in Kabul.

High food prices

FROM PAGE 20

The slowest progress was in reducing maternal mortality, where only one-third of the goal had been met.

Progress in reducing infant and child mortality has advanced only 50 percent toward the target.

On the good side, targets related to reducing extreme poverty and providing access to safe drinking water have been achieved several years early, and goals on education and the ratio of girls to boys in schools are within reach.

But for nutrition, the report called on countries to create buffers to make them more resilient to food price spikes.

Countries should use policy measures to encourage farmers to increase production, employ social safety nets to improve resili-

ence and strengthen nutritional policies to improve early childhood development.

In addition, trade policies should improve access to food markets, reduce food price volatility and spur productivity gains.

However, the slowing global economy and Europe's financial crisis has made it harder for developing countries to counter high food prices.

"The fragile global economy could very well slow developing countries' progress on human development goals," said Hugh Brendenkamp, deputy director of the IMF's Strategy, Policy and Review Department.

While food prices have declined from their 2011 peaks, commodity prices remained high and volatile,

"a big concern" in the Middle East and North Africa, which is the world's largest wheat-importing region, the report said.

It pointed out that food price spikes since 2007 contributed to the Arab Spring uprisings.

Meanwhile, aid flows appeared set to slow as many large donor countries rein in budgets in the face of the global slowdown. Based on reported donor plans during 2011-2013, overseas development aid was expected to fall by 0.2 percent a year on average.

"Clearly, assistance must be leveraged in new ways if we are to improve food security and nutrition, particularly for the poor and vulnerable," said Jos Verbeek, lead economist at the World Bank.

Independent University, Bangladesh

Admission Summer 2012

Master of Science

- Computer Science
- Software Engineering
- Telecommunication Engineering
- Computer Networks & Communication

Application Eligibility

- Completion of 4 years undergraduate degree in relevant (or closely relevant) discipline from any accredited university.
- Applicants from other disciplines may also join the programs after completing the prerequisites course.

Length and Duration

- Students have to complete a total of 33 credits of graduate course work with or without a thesis.
- Students who have completed all their pre-requisite courses will be able to complete the required program in 3 regular semesters.

Financial Assistance

- Financial assistance is available in the form of Teaching and/or Research Assistantship.
- 15% discount on tuition for IUB graduates.
- 30% discount on tuition for meritorious students on the basis of their result of the first semester.
- Payment of fees in installments.

Our Graduates

- Our graduates are successfully employed in software industries, mobile & land phone companies, multi-national banks, university teaching and other multi-national companies.
- Some graduates have also gone ahead to do their doctoral studies overseas.

Application Deadline : Monday, 7 May 2012

Admission Interview : Thursday, 10 May 2012

Class Commence : Sunday, 20 May 2012

please contact
School of Engineering & Computer Science
Plot-16, Block-B, Aftabuddin Ahmed Road,
Bashundhara, (Academic Block, Level 4) Dhaka-1229
Tel: 8401645-52, e-mail: info@secs.iub.edu.bd

<http://www.secs.iub.edu.bd>

Apply online
at
<http://msc.secs.iub.edu.bd/>