

WASHINGTON CRASH

Investigators try to salvage aircraft

Another black box recovered

REUTERS, Washington

Investigators yesterday pushed forward with efforts to retrieve the two aircraft involved in a crash in Washington that killed 67 people and raised questions about air safety in the US capital.

Fresh from recovering the so-called black boxes from the American Airlines plane that crashed into the Potomac River after colliding with an Army Black Hawk helicopter on Wednesday, divers aim to “salvage the aircraft” and find additional components, Washington’s fire department said.

“Overnight, boats will remain on scene for security and surface



searches from local, state, and federal regional partners,” it said.

The National Transportation Safety Board is studying the cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder from the CRJ700 airplane, which carried 60 passengers and four crew members, all of whom perished in the crash. The three members of the helicopter crew also died.

The board said it will have preliminary report into disaster within 30 days. Authorities have not pinpointed a reason for the collision.

The military said the maximum altitude for the route the helicopter was taking is 200 feet (61 meters) but it may have been flying higher.

The collision occurred at an altitude of around 300 feet, according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24.

Senator Maria Cantwell, the top Democrat on the Senate Commerce Committee, questioned the safety of military and commercial flights separated by as little as 350 feet (107 m) vertically and horizontally.



Honduran migrants deported from the United States wait in line to board a bus at the Centre for Attention to Returned Migrants in San Pedro Sula, Honduras, on Thursday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

Russia slams Trump’s missile defence shield plan

Accuses US of plotting to militarise space

REUTERS, Moscow

Russia yesterday condemned an executive order by US President Donald Trump to build a new missile defence shield, accusing the United States of trying to upset the global nuclear balance and pave the wave for military confrontation in space.

Trump on Monday signed an order that “mandated a process to develop an ‘American Iron Dome,’” a next generation US missile defence shield against ballistic, hypersonic, cruise missile and other forms of aerial attack.

The White House said the intention was to modernise an outdated system and address a “catastrophic threat” that had become more complex as US adversaries developed new delivery systems.

But Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the plan was aimed at undermining the ability of both Russia and China to exercise

nuclear deterrence.

In the sharpest Russian criticism so far of a policy announced by Trump’s new administration, she said that the planned US move would hinder the prospects for talks on nuclear arms control - something

The plan was aimed at undermining the ability of both Russia and China to exercise nuclear deterrence: Russia

that both Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin have said they favour.

“It (the plan) directly envisages a significant strengthening of the American nuclear arsenal and means for conducting combat operations in space, including the development and deployment of space-based interception systems,” Zakharova

told reporters at a news briefing in Moscow.

“We consider this as another confirmation of the US focus on turning space into an arena of armed confrontation... and the deployment of weapons there.

“The indicated US approaches will not contribute to reducing tensions or improving the situation in the strategic sphere, including creating a basis for a fruitful dialogue on strategic offensive arms,” she said.

The White House’s Iron Dome statement did not refer to strengthening the US nuclear arsenal, but said: “The Iron Dome will further the goals of peace through strength. By empowering the United States with a second strike capability, the Iron Dome will deter adversaries from attacks on the homeland.”

Trump and Putin have both said they would like to meet face-to-face to discuss a range of issues, including the Ukraine war.

Indian soldiers kill two in J&K near Pak border

AFP, Srinagar

Indian soldiers killed two fighters in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) along the heavily militarised frontier with Pakistan as they attempted to cross into the Indian-administered part of the disputed territory, the army said yesterday.

Muslim-majority Kashmir has been divided between nuclear-armed rivals India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947, with both claiming the territory in full.

An “intense and heavy firefight” was triggered Thursday night between soldiers and “infiltrating terrorists” near the de facto border known as the Line of Control (LoC), the Indian army’s White Knight Corps said in a statement on social media.

The overnight fighting led “to the neutralisation of two terrorists”, the statement said, referring to the suspected rebels.

Weapons and “war-like stores” were recovered from the site, the army said, but it was not clear if the bodies of slain fighters were also retrieved.

The incident could not be independently verified.

India has a permanent deployment of more than half a million soldiers in the territory, and rebel groups have fought for decades demanding independence for Kashmir or its merger with Pakistan.

Two killed in Israeli strikes on east Lebanon

AFP, Beirut

Overnight Israeli air strikes on the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon killed two people, the health ministry said yesterday, two months into a fragile ceasefire.

“The strike by the Israeli enemy on Janta killed two people and wounded 10,” the ministry said.

The Israeli military said it struck “multiple” Hezbollah targets in the Bekaa, a stronghold of the militant group with which it fought a war last year.

“The targets that were struck include a Hezbollah terrorist site containing underground infrastructure, used to develop and manufacture weaponry and additional terrorist infrastructure sites on the Syrian-Lebanese border used by Hezbollah to smuggle weaponry into Lebanon,” the military said in a statement.

The village of Janta area lies close to the Syrian border and the area was already hit by Israeli strikes on January 13.

The overnight strikes came after the Israeli military said it had intercepted a Hezbollah surveillance drone approaching Israeli airspace on Thursday, in a “breach of the ceasefire understandings between Israel and Lebanon”.

Titumir College students block road again BNP secures backing of allies

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stayed in front of the college gate yesterday morning, with 10 of them on a hunger strike, he added.

More demonstrators joined them in the afternoon, resuming the blockade at 3:00pm.

The students marched towards Gulshan and blocked the Gulshan-1 intersection for about an hour and a half after 9:00pm, causing a complete halt in traffic and resulting in severe congestion, said Banani Police Station Officer in Charge Russell Sarwar.

The protests are being held under the banner of Titumir Oikya. Habibullah Rony, a member of the committee associated with Titumir Oikya, told The Daily Star yesterday that the students started the hunger strike at 5:00pm on Wednesday.

After 50 hours, at 7:00pm yesterday, nine students were still on hunger strike and all of them fell very ill, he said.

The protesters would not break their fast and leave the street until the college was declared a university, Rony said.

He also said they were considering more road and railway blockades.

They blocked the road for the same demand on November 18, creating

heavy traffic jams. Several train carriages at Mohakhali level-crossing were vandalised at the time.

People also suffered because of traffic jams in the area on Thursday when the students resumed the protests around 11:00am.

On Friday, traffic in the area was not affected much since it was the weekend, police said.

Dhaka Metropolitan Police’s Traffic Gulshan Division said in a Facebook post that traffic on the road linking Mohakhali’s Amtoli and Gulshan-1 was halted because of the protests.

Police created diversions to keep the situation normal, requesting people travelling from Banani-Kakoli to Jahangir Gate to use the flyover.

Those heading towards Gulshan-1 from Mohakhali via a right turn at Amtoli were advised to continue straight towards Kakoli/Banani, then take a U-turn at Kakoli Crossing or further ahead to access the Banani/Gulshan 2 roads.

Travellers from Banani/Kakoli towards Mohakhali Terminal were able to proceed straight via Amtoli.

The latest round of protests is being held after seven Dhaka University-affiliated government colleges, including

Titumir, parted ways with the university.

The separation came after the college students for years complained about delays in announcing examination schedules, conducting examinations, and publishing results.

The existing students of the colleges would continue studies under the DU administration while new students would be admitted under a separate university or institution, according to decisions taken on Monday.

But the Titumir College students demanded that their institution be recognised as a separate university.

On Thursday night, a government delegation led by Joint Secretary Nuruzzaman of the education ministry, Titumir College Principal Shipra Rani Mondal and other officials talked with the student protesters for over an hour, but no agreement was reached.

The other demands of the Titumir College students include ensuring residential facilities for all students or covering the full cost of accommodation, introducing at least two internationally recognised subjects, such as law and journalism, recruiting teachers with PhD degrees, limiting student intake, allocating land and funds for a research lab.

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the alliance leaders agreed with the BNP on organising programmes for public engagement before Ramadan.

A leader from the 12-party alliance, who wished to remain anonymous, told The Daily Star that the alliance will pressure the government to hold elections this year.

During the meeting, leaders also criticised the government for its failure to control the rise in rice prices ahead of Ramadan and the worsening law and order situation.

They expressed concern over the government’s lack of attention to arresting individuals accused in cases related to violence targeting the July-August movement.

According to BNP sources, the party plans to organise the programmes in Dhaka and other parts of the country this month.

After the meeting, Maulana Monjurul Islam Afendi, secretary

general of Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam, told journalists, “We want the election to be held within this year after completing necessary reforms.”

“We will move forward together,” Afendi added.

According to meeting sources, the BNP aims to expand the alliance by involving other democratic, leftist, and Islamist parties.

Leaders from various parties at the meeting expressed positive opinions on this matter, supporting the initiative to strengthen the coalition and work collectively towards their shared goals.

Jamiat’s Afendi said, “The country has not yet been freed from the conspiracies of the defeated fascists and their allies. We have collectively agreed, for justified reasons, that the unity of the patriotic people is crucial. This unity must be preserved at all costs.”

During a press briefing, BNP’s Nazrul said it was holding a series of

discussions with other parties. “We discussed the socio-economic and political situation of the country and found common ground on many issues,” he said.

About the election, he said, “A necessary period will certainly be needed for the election. However, we don’t think it will take too long to complete the required reforms and hold the polls.”

“We sought the fall of fascism to reinstate democracy in the country. We hope democracy will be restored through a free, fair, and inclusive election.”

The 12-party alliance was led by Mostafa Jamal Haider, chairman of the breakaway Jatiya Party faction loyal to late politician Kazi Zafar, with other senior leaders in attendance. Another meeting was held with Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam leaders, including Senior Vice President Maulana Ubaidullah Farooq and Vice President Maulana Abdur Rab Yusufi, among others.

ADB to provide up to \$1b

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One condition would be the approval and implementation of the Updated National Strategy for Pourashava Governance, 2026-2035, to address climate priorities in municipalities.

Another condition would be the approval and implementation of the Revised Strategic Transport Masterplan for Dhaka, 2025-2041, by the ministry of road transport and bridges.

The master plan promotes rail-based urban transport services including the MRT and improved bus and other public transport services including the BRT to reduce air pollution caused by the road transport sector.

Another condition would be the implementation of the Disaster and Climate Risk Information Platform by the planning ministry at the sub-district (upazila) level, covering at least 250 out of 500 upazilas, to enhance climate risk and vulnerability assessment and required expenditure allocation for public projects to address climate shocks.

Furthermore, the lender could ask

the agriculture ministry to fulfil at least 20 percent of the National Adaptation Plan priority interventions.

The objective will be to strengthen the resilience of the sector, ensure farmers’ access to enhanced agriculture extension services and develop climate-proof agricultural land.

Under the policy, the ADB will emphasise using advanced technologies such as Artificial Intelligence in early warning systems for farmers and the development of e-commerce platforms for climate-resilient agriculture value chain development.

Besides, the ministry of local government, rural development and co-operatives would be asked to approve and implement the National Urban Policy, 2025, to develop climate-resilient cities and regions through integrated urban drainage management and eco-engineered waste management, conservation of urban wetlands and biodiversity, and implementation of locally-led adaptation actions.

Trump repeats

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merely about creating joint investment platforms.

“In all likelihood, US experts probably need to explain the BRICS agenda in more detail to Mr Trump,” he added.

A study by the Atlantic Council’s GeoEconomics Center last year showed that the US dollar remains the world’s primary reserve currency, and neither the euro nor the so-called BRICS countries have been able to reduce global reliance on the dollar.

The bloc was founded as an informal club in 2009 to provide a platform for its members to challenge a world order dominated by the United States and its Western allies. South Africa was the first beneficiary of an expansion of the bloc in 2010 when the grouping became known as BRICS.

The group added Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran and the United Arab Emirates in 2023, and Indonesia became member earlier this month.

12 lives lost in road crashes

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members, he said Shafikul got married few months ago and was going to an in-law’s house for a dinner party along with his family members in Belkuchi upazila.

In Rangpur, at least five people were killed and 23 injured in three separate incidents.

One of the deceased was identified as Md Shaheen, 28, son of Manju Miya of Kaunia Shyampur. Police could not immediately identify the other two victims.

Three passengers of a Rangpur-bound three-wheeler died on the spot after the vehicle collided head-on with a Kurigram bound bus at the Satmatha China Hall area around 8:30am, reports our Dinajpur correspondent.

Their bodies were sent to the Rangpur Medical College Hospital (RMCH) morgue. Four others were injured as well. They were admitted to RMCH.

Masud Alam, assistant director of Rangpur Fire Service and Civil Defence, said there was dense fog on the road in the morning.

Meanwhile, a collision between two buses in Pirganj upazila left one passenger dead and 19 others injured. The incident took place around 7:30am in front of the Barodargah Highway Police Outpost on the Rangpur-Dhaka Highway.

The deceased was identified as Aslaam Khan, 45, of Kaliganj, Satkhira.

Md Moniruzzaman, officer-in-charge of the Highway Police Outpost, police have seized both buses involved

in the Pirganj incident.

In another incident, a pedestrian was killed after being hit by a bus in the Najirerhat area of Sadar upazila today around 8:30am.

Masud Miya, 45, was a resident of Chadnipara area in Gangachara upazila.

In Mymensingh, a motorcyclist and his pillion died after they fell off their bike in the Jhigatola area of the Dhaka-Mymensingh highway in Sadar upazila around 11:00am.

The deceased were identified as Abir Hossain, 19, and Mehdi Hasan, 21, both friends and residents of Mymensingh city, reports our local correspondent.

Kotwali Police Station OC Md Safiul Islam Khan said they were rushed to Mymensingh Medical College Hospital, where doctors declared them dead.

In Kushtia, two people died and two others were injured after a stone-laden truck crashed into a CNG-run autorickshaw in Mirpur upazila.

The accident happened at a place called Ranakharia Ghoramara on the Kushtia-Isurdi highway around 8:30am, said Kushtia Chowrhash Highway Police Station OC Syed Al Mamun.

One of the deceased is Tania Akhter, 30, a passenger in the autorickshaw. The other victim is the autorickshaw driver, whose name could not be known immediately, reports UNB.

The injured passengers, who were also travelling in the autorickshaw, were taken to the Kushtia General Hospital.

Check manuscripts

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said, “We have held several coordination meetings. We have requested the officials of Bangla Academy to ensure that no provocative books make it to the fair. We’ve asked the Bangla Academy to scan, vet, and then present books at the stalls.”

On a different topic, the DMP chief said if the banned student organisation Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL) attempts to hold any programme, police will take action against them.

“We are receiving information about various programmes from different places, and we are actively countering them. While they may plan events through video message, we are handling them on a daily basis.

“We have already arrested many leaders of the banned Chhatra League. If they attempt to organise any programmes, we will certainly take action.”

Recently, Awami League and BCL have announced political programmes including hartal during the month of February.

Replying to a query, Sazzat Ali said, “The traffic situation in Dhaka city is very bad. People are suffering a lot. I also feel sorry for myself when I see people stuck on the streets for hours.”