Beat: Miscellaneous

UK and Chinese nationals among 19 killed in Nepal plane crash

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USPA News - Seven British and five Chinese tourists were among nineteen people who were killed Friday when a small passenger plane crashed in the Nepali capital, local authorities said. The accident may have been caused by a bird strike.

The twin-engine Dornier aircraft, operated by Sita Air, crashed shortly after taking off in Kathmandu, the Nepali capital. The aircraft was carrying sixteen passengers, including seven British nationals, five Chinese nationals and four local citizens. Three Nepali crew members were also on board. Aviation authorities said the aircraft was en-route from Kathmandu to Lukia, in the Mount Everest Region, when it went down about four minutes after take off, at around 6:20 a.m. local time. Photos and video from the scene showed a large part of the wreckage was destroyed in a fire, leaving only the tail recognizable. There were no survivors among the nineteen people on board the aircraft. The three crew members were identified as pilot Bijay Tandukar, co-pilot Takesingh Thapa and flight attendant Ruja Shakya. The airline did not immediately respond to requests for more information about the accident. The scene of the accident was located near a small community at the banks of the Manohara River in Thimi, located just east of Kathmandu. "Our thoughts and sincere condolences are with everyone involved in or affected by the tragic air crash in Nepal earlier today," British Foreign Office Minister Hugo Swire said after a meeting with Nepalese Deputy Prime Minister Narayan Kaji Shrestha at the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in New York City. Swire added: "The UK is working closely with the Nepalese authorities to investigate the accident. I have spoken to our Ambassador in Nepal this morning, and have been reassured that we are doing everything possible to support the victims` families and find out what happened. I would like to thank the Nepalese emergency services for all they have done." The cause of Friday`s accident was not immediately known, but local media reports indicated that a bird strike may have been responsible. Weather conditions were good at the time of the accident.

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