Eight bodies found in Indonesian plane crash

Agency
Jakarta, Aug 12

A 12-year-old boy is the sole survivor of a plane crash that killed eight people in mountainous eastern Indonesia, authorities said today.

The Swiss-made Pilatus aircraft lost contact with air traffic control Saturday during what was supposed to be a flight of around 40 minutes in remote Papua province.

The wreckage of the plane was found in a heavily forested area on a mountain side in the Oksibil subdistrict on Sunday morning.

"Eight passengers were found dead and one was found alive," Papua military spokesman Lieutenant colonel Dax Sianturi said.

"At the moment the cause of the crash has not been confirmed," he told AFP, adding an investigation would be carried out by the national transportation safety committee.

The plane, which was owned by private charter company Dimonim Air, was carrying seven passengers and two crew. Before the accident, villagers in nearby Okatem reported hearing a loud roar followed by an explosion.

Search and rescue teams walked two hours to reach the crash site and were still recovering the bodies late morning.

Indonesia relies heavily on air transport to connect its thousands of islands but has a poor aviation safety record and has suffered several fatal crashes in recent years.

Papua is a particularly difficult area to reach.

Five people died after a small plane crashed near Wamena in Papua province in July last year.

In August 2015, a commercial passenger aircraft operated by Indonesian carrier Trigana crashed in Papua due to bad weather, killing all 54 people on board.

Internet domain names in Indian languages soon

Agency
Kolkata, Aug 12

Getting an Internet domain name in English is pass, now get ready to have it in your own regional language.

The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), the non-profit corporation with the responsibility for Internet's Domain Name System (DNS) management worldwide, has been on the job to support domain names in numerous languages spoken in India, including the 22 scheduled languages of the country.

"Work is on for nine Indian scripts - Bengali, Devanagari, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Kannada, Malayalam, Oriya, Tamil and Telugu. These scripts are expected to cover many different local languages," ICANN India head Samiran Gupta told Agency.

ICANN has been working towards building the rules for secure and stable definition of the top-level domains for scripts used globally, so that people with no knowledge of English are able to go online and access the websites with the domain names completely in their languages.

For example, one can enter the domain in Hindi to get Hindi content, instead of typing a domain name in English for this purpose, which is the current practice.

About 52 per cent of the world population have access to Internet now and ICANN is contributing towards bridging the digital divide, he said.

"Many of the remaining 48 per cent are non-English speaking people and those who do not have the ability to type in English. The work will allow domain names to be available for these people in their languages," the ICANN India head said.

When asked that searching content in regional languages is already possible in Google and other search engines, he said the current effort is focused on enabling the domain names in regional languages, which in turn would enable the system to publish local language content being searched.

"This work for defining rules for the domain names for languages spoken in India is underway with a dedicated community based panel," he said.

The Neo-Brahmi Generation Panel, as it is called, consists of more than 60 technical experts and linguists from India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Singapore, where these languages and scripts are used, Gupta said.

The proposals for six scripts - Devanagari, Gujarati, Gurmukhi, Kannada, Oriya and Telugu - are already released for public comment.

"One can review these proposals and provide comments by visiting www.icann.org/idn," he said. Currently there are 4.2 billion Internet users globally which may rise to 5 billion by 2022, Gupta said.

Nobel prize-winning author V S Naipaul dies

Agency
London, Aug 12

Nobel prize-winning author V S Naipaul, known for his critical commentary on colonialism, idealism, religion and politics, has died at the age of 85, his family said early today.

"He was a giant in all that he achieved and he died surrounded by those he loved having lived a life which was full of wonderful creativity and endeavour," his wife Lady Nadira Naipaul said in a statement.

Naipaul wrote more than 30 books of fiction and nonfiction. His first book was 'The Mystic Masseur'. His most celebrated novel, A House for Mr Biswas, was published in 1961.

His other works include the three stories in In a Free State (1971), Guerrillas (1975), A Bend in the River (1979), A Way in the World (1994), The Mimic Men (1967), The Enigma of Arrival (1987), Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions among the Converted Peoples (1998), Half a Life (2001), The Writer and the World (2002) and Literary Occasions (2003), The novel Magic Seeds (2004) - a sequel to Half a Life - and In The Masque of Africa (2010).

He is the recipient of numerous honours, including the Man Booker Prize in 1971 and a knighthood for services to literature in 1990.

Naipaul was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2001.

In awarding him the prize, the Swedish Academy praised him "for having united perceptive narrative and incorruptible scrutiny in works that compel us to see the presence of suppressed histories".

Sir Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was born on August 17, 1932 in Trinidad into an Indian Hindu family and moved to England at 18 after receiving a scholarship to University College, Oxford. He subsequently settled in England, although he travelled extensively thereafter.

Naipaul married Patricia Ann Hale in 1955. After her death in 1996, he married divorced Pakistani journalist Nadira Khannum Alvi.

AMBIS to raise crime detection & conviction rate in Maha: CM

Agency
Mumbai, Aug 12

Once the Maharashtra government implements its ambitious Automated Multi-modal Biometric Identification System (AMBIS), the crime detection and conviction rate of the state will go up, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said today.

He said the uniqueness of the system is that with the help of mobile live scanners, a police patrol team can ascertain on the spot whether a suspect has any criminal antecedents or not.

"Besides detecting crime through usual finger prints at the crime scene, the system with the help of retinal scan, writers pad, palm and even bare sole scans can help trace criminals with 100 per cent accuracy and that too within a matter of 0.46 milliseconds," Fadnavis told Agency.

Prasad Joshi, Assistant Police Inspector (Cyber) and a biometrics expert said in the matters of any crime, finger print as evidence is accorded very high value and if available it is accepted in a court of law.

"Ever since the British introduced the finger print identification in Kolkata way back in 1857, the Finger Print Bureau has been under the jurisdiction of the state Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

"But since the system crashed in 2012, the CID has been manually scanning and matching the finger print data to the available crime scene data employing eight to 10 different characteristics. The enormity of the task is so huge that the CID has to go through 6.50 lakh finger print data stored with it," Joshi said.

He said the finger print data can be shared by the state with the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), other state governments, other investigation agencies, courts, crime experts and even with Interpol and foreign investigation agencies.

"The system will prove useful in identification of unidentified bodies, especially in cases where the body is mutilated, does not have an arm or a hand is lost. In such cases, the bare sole scan can help identify the body," Joshi said.

According to him, another major irrefutable advantage of the system is that with retinal scans, it will be difficult for criminals to escape the ambit of the law.

He added that sometimes the finger print is not available if the criminals try to burn their hands, but they surely cannot burn retina of their eyes.

"The retina of every individual is unique and the blood vessels inside the retina too have unique arrangement," the officer said.

Another feature of the system is that it can do facial recognition of suspects in cases of mob violence and mob lynching with the help of photographs and going through CCTV footages.

Professor Amol Deshmukh, a forensic and investigation expert and adviser to the Maharashtra government, said the system will prove handy in cases of terrorist attacks in places of huge crowd presence like railway stations giving 50 to 60 per cent accuracy if 40 per cent of the information available is correct.

In case of a new criminal, the system will create a complete biometric data which will be useful in future, Deshmukh adds.

Inspector General of Police (Cyber Crime) Brijesh Singh said the state has allocated Rs 50 crore to Rs 55 crore for AMBIS.

Under the system, every police station in the state will have a scanner which will be linked to the main server which is located at the state headquarters on a secured server.

"The hi-tech system ensures that there will be no data loss and has a back-up facility at a very high level. Another feature of AMBIS is that it can be interfaced with any other operating system, whereby data can be accessed anywhere, anytime," Singh says.

At present world over, the system is being used by the Interpol and other European agencies.

Singh added that it uses NIST (National Institute of Standards and Technology) file and process standards which allow to freely interchange data with Interpol and other international agencies when required.

Singh further stated that though 22 states in the country have their own finger print data, but nothing can match the system being introduced by the state.

Balsing Rajput, SP Cyber, says the state government has taken the software, designing and technology from France and integrated it to suit our needs.

He added that once the system comes into operation, which will happen soon, the rate of conviction will rise substantially from the current 34 per cent.

"The system has been developed with the help of IIT professors, experts in the CID and local police. More importantly, the system has been developed taking feedback of the local police station constables who usually feed crime data online," he said.

AMBIS has been the brainchild of chief minister Fadnavis, who is likely to unveil it soon, Rajput said.

1 cop killed, 3 security personnel injured in encounter with militants in J&K

Agency
Srinagar, Aug 12

A policeman has been killed and three security forces personnel injured during an early morning encounter with militants in Batmaloo area here today, police said.

"On a specific information about presence of terrorists in a hideout, an operation was launched in Batmaloo Srinagar leading to exchange of fire, one SOG boy martyred, one JKP & 2 CRPF Jawans sustained injuries, operation continues," Director General of Police (DGP) S P Vaid wrote on Twitter.

The state's police chief shared no further details.

A police official said security forces launched a cordon and search operation in Diyarwani in Batamaloo area of the city early this morning following a tip-off about the presence of militants in the area.

The search operation soon turned into an encounter as the militants fired upon the forces, who retaliated, he said. The gunfight was still going on, the official said, adding further details were awaited. Mobile internet service has been snapped in the city as a precautionary measure, the official said.

OCI card holders appear to enjoy freedom of speech, equality like other Indians: HC

Agency
New Delhi, Aug 12

The Delhi High Court has said that Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) appear to enjoy the fundamental rights of equality before law and freedom of speech and expression in the same way as any other Indian citizen does.The court's bservation came while asking the Centre to place before it the material based on which an intelligence report had recommended cancellation of the OCI registration of a US-based Indian-origin doctor.

Dr Christo Thomas Philip had challenged the cancellation of his OCI registration for alleged missionary activities in Bihar.

"In terms of section 7B (1) of the Citizenship Act, 1955, all rights other than those specified in sub-section (2) of the said section are available to an OCI card holder. Although, Article 16 of the Constitution of India is specified in Section 7B (2) of the Act, Articles 14 and 19 are not included."Thus, prima facie, the rights under Article 14 (equality before law) and 19 (freedom of speech and expression) of the Constitution of India which are guaranteed to the citizen of India also appear to be extended to an OCI card holder," Justice Vibhu Bakhru said.The court issued the direction after finding that one of the facts, regarding the doctor's place of birth, was "incorrect" in the report and there was no material on record to support the government assumption that he was acting as a medical missionary — the reason for cancellation of his OCI registration."The said report indicates that the petitioner was born in USA. This is stoutly disputed by the petitioner. He states that he was born in Kerala. Thus, one of the factual premise in the intelligence report appears to be incorrect. Although, the report states that the petitioner has been acting as a medical missionary, there is no material on record, which supports this assumption," the court said. OCI is a scheme introduced in response to the demands for dual citizenship by the Indian diaspora.The petitioner, in his plea filed through advocates Robin David and Dhiraj Philip, claimed that the action was taken against

He also sought directions to the authorities to permit him to visit his family members in Kerala.

Most landslides in Manipur caused by anthropogenic factors: Env ministry

Agency
New Delhi, Aug.12

Every year, during monsoon, landslides claim a number of lives and cause huge damage to property across the country, especially in the hilly region, and this time it was no different.

Recently, landslides in rain-battered Kerala left a trail of destruction, while in Manipur, a massive landslip killed nine people last month. The northeastern state has witnessed six major landslides since May.

The hill state of Himachal Pradesh was also hit and in Uttarakhand, a number of pilgrims during the Kailash Mansarovar and the Kanwar yatras were left stranded due to landslides.

Specifically for Manipur, the Environment Ministry has indicated that most landslides in the state were "anthropogenically" induced and were caused due to a host of reasons, including modification of slopes for construction and widening of roads.

Experts stressed that there was an urgent need to clearly classify high-landslide prone regions and to update the reviews every decade.

Manipur witnessed six massive landslides in 2018, three in 2017, one in 2015 and four in 2010, according to the data provided by the ministry for the state.

Triggered by heavy rains, a massive landslide came while lives in Manipur's Tamenglong district on July 11.

"Landslides in environmentally sensitive hilly areas of Manipur occur frequently during monsoon in the state.

"Studies have indicated that landslides in Manipur are mostly anthropogenically induced, caused as a result of modification of slopes for construction, widening of road, quarrying for the construction materials, fragile lithology, complex geological structures and heavy rainfall," Minister of State for Environment Mahesh Sharma said in the Rajya Sabha on August 6.

The weathered sedimentary (shale) rocks of Disang formation and thick loose overburden deposits on valley dipping slopes are most vulnerable for landslides in Manipur, he said in a written reply. The six massive landslides in Manipur this year occurred in Tamenglong in July, on NH-102 in East Imphal, NH 37 in Noney district, NH-102A in Ukhrul district and NH-37 in Noney district in June and on NH-37 near Makru bridge in Tamenglong district in May, according to the ministry's data.

Experts also stressed on the need to understand that deforestation, blasting, tunnelling and encroachments on drainage systems among others increase the potential for landslides.

In his reply, Sharma had also said that the government promotes and supports research studies relating to landslides with remote sensing and Geographic Information System (GIS)-based mapping for proper management of landslide-sensitive zones.

He pointed out that GSI was actively engaged in carrying out landslide inventory mapping, national landslide susceptibility mapping (NLSM) on a 1:50,000 scale and 1:5,000 scale, and site specific study of a landslide, including monitoring, to minimize environmental degradation.