



QATAR AIRWAYS BIRD STRIKE AT ISTANBUL CAUSES ENGINE FIRE

News / Airlines



A Qatar Airways passenger jet with over 300 people on board made an emergency landing at Istanbul's main airport Thursday after an engine caught fire, the airline said, blaming a "bird strike" for the blaze.

Video footage showed flames spitting out of the left engine of the Airbus 330 as it prepared to land at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport. It made it safely to the ground.

Doha-based Qatar Airways later issued a statement to the Associated Press saying that "all 298 passengers and 14 crew disembarked normally." However, local Turkish news agencies reported one woman on board was hospitalised after suffering a fainting spell.

It said it would send a replacement aircraft to Istanbul to ferry waiting passengers onward to its hub in the vast new Hamad International Airport in Doha, which is preparing to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup.

The airline blamed the fire on Flight QR240 on what it described as a "bird strike," without elaborating. Typically, such strikes can see birds sucked into a passenger plane's jet engine, sparking a fire and shorting it out.

State-backed Qatar Airways is one of the Mid-East's three biggest carriers, alongside the region's

biggest carrier, the Dubai-based Emirates airline, and the Abu-Dhabi-based Etihad Airways. The three have increasingly challenged Western airlines in long-haul flights. Qatar Airways has a fleet of 190 aircraft flying to over 150 destinations. It holds a 20.01-per cent stake in British Airways and Iberia parent IAG and posted net profits of \$445 million for the fiscal year ending March 31, with revenue peaking to \$9.6 billion.

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