

Air China flight diverted after man holds attendant hostage

Written by Shamim

Monday, 16 April 2018 01:28 -

Beijing, Apr 15 (AP) - An Air China flight bound for Beijing was diverted to central China on Sunday after a passenger tried to hold a flight attendant hostage using a fountain pen as a weapon, the country's civil aviation authority said.

All passengers and crew on Flight 1350 made it safely off the plane after it landed in Zhengzhou city at 10 a.m. due to what had earlier been described by authorities as an unspecified "illegal interference."

The flight had taken off at 8:40 a.m. from the city of Changsha in Hunan province and was scheduled to land in Beijing at 11 a.m.

The Civil Aviation Authority of China said in a statement on its website that the plane was diverted when a male passenger held a flight attendant hostage. It said only that "the matter was successfully handled" by 1:17 p.m. but did not provide any details. The alleged hostage-taker's status was unclear.

In its brief report on the microblog Weibo.com, state broadcaster China Central Television included an image of what appeared to be paramilitary police in combat uniforms and helmets assembled outside a Zhengzhou airport hotel and another image of several ambulances. The Zhengzhou airport immediately activated emergency measures, its statement said, adding that the passengers who disembarked were in a stable mood and that the airport is operating normally.

The airline said police and aviation authorities were handling the matter and refused to provide further information. It said it was arranging for another plane to pick up the passengers from Zhengzhou.

The Beijing News said on its Weibo page that a passenger described being awoken by a scream coming from the front of the plane and that "nobody knew what was going on."

The Xiaoxiang Morning Herald quoted a passenger as saying that the disturbance occurred in the first or business class cabins but that the curtains separating those sections from economy class were pulled tightly shut.

She looked out the window and saw many police cars, ambulances and fire engines parked outside the plane as it was landing in Zhengzhou, the newspaper said in a Weibo post. The passenger described seeing armed personnel in camouflage uniforms assembled in two or three rows.