

Muan, South Korea: Two survivors were found in the tail section of a Jeju Air flight that crashed at Muan International Airport on Sunday, according to reports from Reuters.

The survivors, a male and female crew members, were rescued from the only part of the aircraft that retained any shape after the crash. The rest of the plane was largely destroyed by fire, with much of it burned beyond recognition.

The survivors are currently receiving treatment at a hospital, authorities confirmed. Lee described the aftermath of the crash, stating, "Only the tail part retains a little bit of shape, and the rest of the plane looks almost impossible to recognize." Footage and images from the scene showed the aircraft's charred remains, with most of the plane blackened by the fire. The tail section, however, was visibly intact, offering a small hope of survival for the crew members onboard.

The death toll from the crash has now risen to 176, according to South Korea's fire service. Among the confirmed victims, 82 are male and 83 are female, with the gender of 11 victims still unconfirmed. Three of the 181 passengers on board are still missing. Rescue operations are ongoing as authorities continue to search the wreckage for any additional survivors. The Jeju Air flight, which was en route from Seoul, crashed during its landing attempt at Muan International Airport.

As the investigation into the cause of the crash unfolds, questions have been raised about the response of ground teams at the airport. Geoffrey Thomas, editor of Airline News, pointed out potential lapses in the preparations by ground operatives. "With an emergency like this, why weren't the fire tenders out beside the runway? Why didn't they put foam on the runway?" Thomas asked while analysing CNN. He also questioned why the plane's undercarriage was not raised during the landing attempt, suggesting that hydraulic issues could have played a role, though a bird strike—which is being speculated as one possible cause of the crash—likely wouldn't have caused such an issue.

Both black boxes from the aircraft, which contain flight data and cockpit voice recordings, have now been recovered, according to a briefing from South Korea's Land Government Ministry. Initial findings indicate that the plane's landing gears were not deployed during the landing attempt, but authorities are awaiting further analysis from the flight data to determine the exact cause of the crash. Runways at Muan International Airport will remain closed until 5 a.m. local time on January 1 (3 p.m. ET on December 31), the ministry said, as rescue and recovery efforts

continue.

Experts suggest that the investigation into the cause of the crash could take years. The South Korean government is working with aviation experts to thoroughly examine the recovered black boxes, while authorities focus on understanding the technical and operational factors that led to the tragic incident. As of now, the survivors' condition remains stable, but the loss of life remains a devastating blow to the families of the victims, with the full scope of the tragedy still coming into focus.