Jet in hot water

Our worst fears have been realised. The international jetliner industry has temporarily grounded operations after a Boeing 737 Max 8 plane crashed into the sea off Java island, killing all 189 people on board in the latest disaster to hit the beleaguered manufacturer's reputation. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has grounded all Boeing 737 Max 8 and Max 9 aircraft while it investigates the plane's design and operation.

The move comes after Indonesia's National Transportation Safety Committee (KNKT) said on Sunday that the plane was flying at a high altitude just before it crashed, suggesting it was experiencing problems at high speeds.

The crash has sparked fresh concerns about the safety of the Boeing 737 Max 8 model, which has been involved in several accidents since its introduction in 2017. The FAA had already ordered a review of the plane's electrical system in the wake of earlier accidents, including a crash in Ethiopia in March 2019 that killed 157 people.

The crash of the Lion Air flight 610, operated by Lion Air, occurred on 29 October 2018, just a week after a SpiceJet flight from Delhi to Kanyakumari had to make an emergency landing in Bengaluru due to technical issues. The 737 Max 8 model has been involved in other accidents, including a crash in Indonesia in 2016.

Boeing has said it is working to fix the software issue that caused the Lion Air crash, and has been trying to reassuring customers and regulators that the plane is safe. But the crash has raised new doubts about the company's ability to deliver on its promises and has put pressure on the company to make changes to the plane's design.

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Silent chickpea revolution

Once a winter favourite for farmers in North India, the crop lost ground to wheat and rice. But in Archana Pradhan's hot climate, it is being resurrected by research efforts of agi-scientists.

The adaptation of chickpea, also known as chana, is a marvel. The Leguminosae family is a well-known group of flowering plants, classified as legumes, to which beans, peas, and lentils belong. Among the legumes, chickpeas are the most widely grown for human consumption.

Central India, including the states of Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan, is the leading producer of chickpeas in the world. The crop is grown in both small and large-scale farms and is also consumed as a dry bean in many cultures.

However, the chickpea crop has been facing challenges due to climate change, pests, and diseases. To address these challenges, scientists at the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) have been working on developing chickpea varieties that are more resilient and adaptable to changing conditions.

The scientists have developed a new chickpea variety called 'ARCHOS 1', which has been tested in different locations and found to be resistant to various diseases and pests. The variety has also been found to have higher yield and better quality compared to the existing varieties.

The 'ARCHOS 1' variety is expected to help farmers in Central India increase their yields and improve their income. The ICAR scientists have also been working on developing other chickpea varieties that are suitable for different regions and farming conditions.

The development of these new varieties is a testament to the ongoing research and development efforts of agi-scientists in India. The chickpea crop, which has been a mainstay of Indian agriculture for centuries, continues to evolve and adapt to meet the challenges of modern farming.

In conclusion, the chickpea crop, with its resilience and adaptability, remains an important food source for many cultures around the world. The efforts of the ICAR scientists and other agi-scientists are crucial in ensuring that this crop continues to thrive and provide food security for future generations.