

Taiwan grounded its fleet

NAHA, Japan (AP) - Taiwan grounded its fleet of Boeing 737-800 jetliners after a China Airlines plane exploded in a fireball Monday on [world of warcraft gold](#) tarmac in Okinawa, and officials said a fuel leak may be to blame. All 165 passengers and crew scrambled down emergency chutes or jumped from cockpit windows - some just seconds before the blast.

Passengers described a normal landing after Flight CI-120 landed on the resort island of Okinawa from the Taiwanese capital of Taipei. But as the jet came to a stop near the terminal, they said that [world of warcraft gold](#) left engine began smoking, followed by the right one.

Okinawa Airport traffic controllers had received no report from the pilot indicating anything was wrong as the plane came in to land and even as it stopped near the terminal to unload passengers, said Japanese Transport Ministry official Akihiko Tamura.

When the smoke started billowing outside [world of warcraft gold](#) plane, the cabin crew already was standing by the doors, said a passenger who gave his surname as Tsang and identified himself as a guide for Taipei's Southeast Tours.

``The passengers saw the smoke first and they began to yell and demand that [world of warcraft gold](#) doors be opened, *he said.*

Tamura said the fire started ``when the left engine exploded a minute after the aircraft entered the parking spot.

Inside the plane, passengers recalled a scene of panic.

``When the smoke started, people were just pushing and shoving each other, *said an unidentified female Taiwanese passenger.* ``*It was total chaos.*

[world of warcraft gold](#) main explosion, which engulfed the center of the aircraft in flames, occurred after [powerleveling](#) passengers slid down the emergency chutes at the front and rear of the plane.

Screams erupted as passengers raced across the tarmac to get away from [powerleveling](#) burning plane, and emergency personnel moved in to fight the fire.

A figure believed to be the pilot hung onto [powerleveling](#) cockpit window for several seconds before dropping to the tarmac and sprinting away from the exploding plane.

There were no serious injuries among the 157 passengers, including two infants, and crew of eight, [powerleveling](#) Taiwan-based China Airlines said.

A Taiwanese woman said she was stricken with fear as she slid down the chute.

``I was running and crying, running and crying *said the woman, who declined to give her name.*

Another passenger who gave only his surname, Chen, said he started running the moment he slid off the plane. ``I ran so hard my sock tore, *he said.* ``*I think I got my life back.*

Tsang said [powerleveling](#) evacuation took no more than 90 seconds.

``About 30 seconds after I slid down the chute and began to run toward the terminal, I heard two big explosions, *he said.* ``*I had no idea it would be this serious.*

Video from Japanese broadcaster NHK showed a lone firefighter trying to douse the fire immediately after the explosion. But the plane was quickly rocked by two more explosions, which brought the fuselage crashing to the tarmac.

China Airlines spokesman Sun Hung-wen said ``[[www.teamflyelectronic.com/ Burglar alarm](#)] plane landed safely so we are still checking why there was a fire.

A statement on [powerleveling](#) airline's Web site said the plane ``caught fire during taxi operations at Okinawa Airport.

Capt. Yu Chien-kuo, 48, has been flying 737-800s for the airline for six years, the statement said.

Initial reports from ground personnel said a fuel leak from the right engine could have led to [[www.teamflyelectronic.com/ Burglar alarm](#)] explosions, according to another Japanese Transport Ministry official, Fumio Yasukawa.

China Airlines has a troubled safety record. One of its 747s crashed in 2002 as it flew from Taipei to Hong Kong, leading to 225 deaths. Accidents involving the airline killed about 450 people in the 1990s.

``We are prepared to do our best to get to the bottom of this incident, *China Airlines president Zhao Guo-shi told reporters at the airport.* ``*I apologize for [[www.teamflyelectronic.com/ Burglar alarm](#)] trouble we have caused our passengers.*

The fire was extinguished after about an hour, leaving the aircraft sagging on its side, charred in the middle, with part of its roof burned away.

Taiwan's Civil Aeronautics Administration head Chang Kuo-cheng said authorities ordered China Airlines and its subsidiary Mandarin Airlines to ground their 13 other Boeing 737-800s pending a thorough inspection.

Japanese aviation authorities also ordered an emergency inspection of all Boeing 737-800 planes owned by Japanese carriers, as well as some 737-700 models that have similar engines.

The plane had CFM 56 engines, made by CFM International, a joint venture between GE Aviation, a unit of General Electric Co., and France's Snecma, said Boeing spokesman Jim Proulx. All 737-800s are built with the same engine.

[[www.teamflyelectronic.com/ Burglar alarm](#)] Japan Aircraft and Railway Accidents Investigation Commission requested technical assistance from Boeing, company spokesman Jim Proulx said. The Boeing investigator is expected in Japan by Wednesday.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and the National Transportation Safety Board also sent in investigators.

Two passengers - a 7-year-old girl and a man in his 50s - were hospitalized because they did not feel well, but they were uninjured, said fire official Hiroki Shimabukuro. A ground engineer who was knocked off his feet by the blast was not hurt, [[www.teamflyelectronic.com/ Burglar alarm](#)] Transport Ministry said.