

Aircraft crashes into Beijing's tallest building

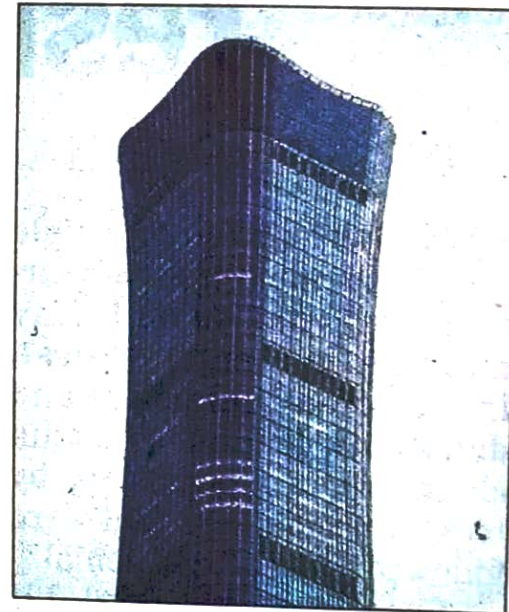
Beijing: An aircraft about the size of a car crashed into Beijing's tallest building, CITIC Tower, on Friday, two bystanders told Reuters, as police closed off roads around the skyscraper and stopped passersby from filming the scene.

The building, known as CITIC Tower or China Zun, is a 108-storey skyscraper in Beijing's central business district. It is the headquarters of the state-owned conglomerate CITIC Group.

There was a heavy police presence at the site, with some approach roads closed to cars. Police prevented some people from taking pictures and asked others to delete those they had taken while ushering people away from the building.

Two glass panels on a high floor were damaged. There was no immediate official comment. Beijing's municipal government did not immediately respond to a faxed request for comment from Reuters outside of business hours.

A courier whom Reuters spoke to near the building said he had rushed over to CITIC Tower around 6pm (local time)



The damaged exterior of the CITIC Tower in Beijing on Friday. (Reuters)

from a nearby location after hearing a loud crash as a aircraft about the size of a car hit the building.

"It was so loud — louder than fireworks," he said.

He said he had shot a video of the aircraft sticking out of the building, but later deleted it because he was scared of getting caught by police.

Another courier whom Reuters spoke to said he had come to the scene after seeing unverified social media images showing wreckage of a small aircraft on a road next to

the building.

Social media posts of the building on Friday were quickly removed from Chinese social media. A search of the building's name on the Xiaohongshu app returned only posts dated Thursday.

Dozens of police cars and several fire trucks lined the roads around the building.

A police officer told Reuters journalists to depart from the scene. Asked why they had to leave, the police officer said: "We all know why!"