

Volcanic ash in Indonesia further delays Hamid Ansari's Brunei visit

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Bali: Vice President Hamid Ansari's departure from Indonesia to Brunei has been further delayed following shutting down of operations at the Bali airport due to spewing of ash from a rumbling volcano.

Officials sources said that with the situation not improving, the Vice President's visit to Brunei is likely to be cancelled.

Ansari was scheduled to leave Bali this morning but the flight was cancelled, officials said, adding, there seemed very little possibility that Ansari may be able to leave today and he may head directly to India.

It is learnt that one of the factors because of which the Brunei trip may be cancelled is that Chinese Vice President Li Yuanchao has arrived in India on a five-day visit to the country.

Li, is scheduled to hold talks with Ansari and Prime Minister Narendra Modi on November 6, besides calling on President Pranab Mukherjee.

As per the earlier schedule, the Vice President was to leave Bali yesterday, but his departure had to be deferred due to closure of Bali International Airport following the spewing of volcanic ash.

Ansari had arrived in Indonesia on November 1 and after two days in Jakarta had arrived in Bali November 3. In Bali Ansari had yesterday visited the famous Tanah Lot Temple and addressed students of the University of Udayana, The closure of Bali airport has forced closure of hundreds of flights and left many tourists stranded. The closure of the airport, one of of Indonesia's busiest, follows a volcanic eruption on the nearby island of Lombok.

According to reports, volcano-blasted ash and debris thousands of feet into the air has disrupted flight operations.

- PTI