



MINISTER for TRANSPORT & CIVIL AVIATION

Wednesday 1st March 2023



MINISTERIAL STATEMENT REGARDING THE FOUR RECENT OCCURRENCES

Within the month of February, there have been a total of three (3) accidents and one (1) investigable occurrence which is currently undergoing the classification process. The Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) under my watch has deployed investigators for all these occurrences and is conducting investigations.

Listed below in chronological order, from the most recent, are the occurrences and brief known and reported.

AIC 23-1004, P2-ANT - Passenger Injury during depressurization event

On 20th February 2023, an Air Niugini Limited Fokker 70 aircraft, registered P2-ANT, was conducting a descent into Port Moresby, when during descent into Port Moresby the aircraft sustained a cabin depressurisation.

The aircraft was reportedly operating a scheduled domestic passenger flight from Jacksons Airport, Port Moresby to Kagamuga Airport, Mt Hagen, Western Highlands Province when the crew decided to conduct an air return back to Port Moresby due to the weather conditions in Mt Hagen.

According to the pilots, on descent into Port Moresby, the crew became aware of incorrect cabin pressurisation setting. On taking corrective actions, the aircraft experienced a cabin depressurisation. The crew terminated the ATC cleared approach and decided to fly a holding pattern south of the airfield to rectify the issue. The flight crew reported that they were able to rectify the issue and proceed with a normal approach and landing into Jacksons Airport.

There were 67 persons on board which included two (2) infants. On disembarking the aircraft at Jacksons Airport, a passenger of the occurrence flight alerted Air Niugini Customer Service that a few passengers from the flight were bleeding. On assessing the injured passengers, Air Niugini Customer Service then activated a response plan and had the injured passengers transported to Pacific International Hospital for further medical assessment.

It was reported that from the 22 passengers that sustained injured, seven (7) had experience bleeding from the ears and nose and were admitted to hospital, six (6) persons were under review, and nine (9) persons were discharged from the hospital. Further information is being gathered to confirm extent of injury.

The ATC was notified of the occurrence on 22nd February, 2023 at 1 6:19 local time. From the initial information gathered, the AIC has determined that the occurrence is a serious incident. The AIC has opened and will carry out the investigation in accordance with its mandate and Annex 1 3 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation.

A team of investigators visited the concerned aircraft, P2-ANL at the Air Niugini Hangar at Jackson's International Airport to download the FDR data to further assess the aircraft performance at the time of the occurrence.

Due to the late reporting, certain crucial information, such as the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) data, is found to have been overwritten because the aircraft was returned to operation following the event. The Civil Aviation Act requires immediate reporting to the appropriate authorities for assessment. However, the AIC became aware of this event more than two days after it.

The Preliminary report will be publicly released on 26th March, 2023.

AIC 23-1003, P2-HSM - Hard emergency landing on unprepared surface due to complete loss Tail Rotor Function

On 18th February, 2023, at about 11:48 local time, a Heli Solutions Limited helicopter, registered P2-HSM, was operating a flight from Epope to Wapenamanda, Enga Province when it sustained inflight tail rotor damage resulting in an emergency landing.

The helicopter reportedly experienced a total loss of tail rotor function inflight and subsequent vibrations. An emergency landing was conducted and the helicopter was landed in a local village garden.

The pilot stated that after landing the helicopter, he contacted the Operator and advised them of the accident and requested for the emergency response to be activated. The AIC was subsequently notified by the Operator at 12:29 on the same day.

There were six (6) persons on board the aircraft: one pilot, one loadmaster and four (4) passengers.

A team of four (4) investigators was deployed to the accident site on 19th February, 2023, the day after the accident. The on-site investigation team identified that the tail rotor shaft had severed causing a disconnection and loss of function of the tail rotor. The investigation has been launched to identify the contributory factors. The AIC will publicly release the Preliminary Report on 20th March, 2023.

AIC 23-1002, P2-HFA Runway excursion and terrain impact during landing roll

On 10th February, 2023, at about 13:40 local time, a Helifix Operations Limited Cessna Caravan 208B aircraft, registered P2-HFA, was operating a Charter flight from Kiunga, Western Province to Eliptamin, Sandaun Province when it experienced a runway excursion during landing and subsequently sustained substantial damage.

There were four (4) persons on board the aircraft: one pilot and three passengers. According to the pilot, when turning on to finals at Eliptamin Airstrip, the aircraft is committed to land as the surrounding terrain does not allow for a missed approach. The pilot stated that when turning on to finals on the day of the accident, he felt very strong winds.

After touchdown, the pilot recalled that the aircraft became airborne twice by the prevailing winds on the airstrip. As a result, the aircraft was pushed further up the airstrip, and there was less airstrip surface left for the aircraft to complete its ground roll. The aircraft subsequently overran the end of the airstrip sustaining substantial damage to the propellers and the nose landing gear.

The pilot stated that he exited the aircraft through the forward left door and assisted the passengers to evacuate the aircraft through the same door. The pilot checked all three passengers and confirmed that they had nil injuries. The pilot then notified the AIC of the accident.

Investigators from the investigation team that arrived in Jiwaka on 10th February, 2023 for an investigation into another accident that occurred on 9th February, 2023 at Giramben Airstrip, were deployed to Eliptamin to conduct onsite activities. The AIC will publicly release a Preliminary Report on the accident investigation on 12th March, 2023.

AIC 23-1 001, P2-BJD Controlled Flight into Terrain during Take-off

On 9th February 2023, at about 12:50 local time, a North Coast Aviation PAC 750-XL aircraft, registered P2-BJD, was conducting a Charter flight when it crashed into a local garden during the take-off phase at Giramben Airstrip, Jiwaka Province.

The pilot stated that, during the take-off run on full power, right before the aircraft was airborne; he felt the right main wheel hit a soft spot on the airstrip. The pilot stated that he felt that this subsequently reduced the momentum and speed of the aircraft. At that point, the aircraft was already past the committal point for take-off and could not reject the take-off.

The aircraft continued to roll to the end of the airstrip, and as soon as it got airborne, the main wheels got caught on the wire fencing of the airstrip. The aircraft subsequently impacted the ground, initially by its right main landing gear and wing, and crashed into a local garden. The cockpit separated from the cabin as the aircraft came to rest.

There were 4 persons on board the aircraft: one pilot, two adult passengers and an infant.

According to local eyewitness interviews conducted, after the aircraft had crashed, the locals assisted in evacuating the pilot and passengers on board the aircraft. The pilot was found to be unconscious at the time.

According to a representative of the Kudjip Hospital, the pilot and the infant sustained severe injuries and were admitted to the hospital while the two adult passengers sustained minor injuries and were discharged.

The AIC was notified of the accident via social media, Facebook, and immediately commenced inquiring with the Operator and other relevant agencies.

A team of 5 investigators was deployed to the accident site on 10th February, 2023, the day after the accident. The AIC will publicly release a Preliminary Report on the accident investigation on the 11th March, 2023.

Authorised for release!

Hon. Walter D. Schnaubelt, MP
Minister for Transport & Civil Aviation