



20/2024
23 December 2024

MEDIA RELEASE

AIC OPENS INVESTIGATION INTO BN-2B-26 ISLANDER, P2-SAM, COLLISION WITH TERRAIN IN SAPMANGA AREA

At 12:11 pm, Sunday 22 December 2024, the PNG Accident Investigation Commission was informed by NiuSky Pacific Limited that a Britten Norman BN-2B-26 Islander aircraft, registered P2-SAM, owned and operated by North Coast Aviation Limited, had not arrived at Nadzab at its estimated arrival time during a flight from Wasu Airstrip, Morobe Province, PNG.

According to the manifest, the aircraft departed Wasu Airstrip at 10:12 am on a single pilot charter flight with four passengers on board, en route to Nadzab, with an estimated arrival time of 10:47 am. The last radio contact made by the pilot with NiuSky Pacific Limited's Flight Information Service (FIS) was at 10:14 am, when the pilot was instructed by FIS to contact Nadzab Approach when at 15 miles from Nadzab.

At 10:30 am, the NiuSky Pacific Limited's Aviation Rescue Coordination Centre (ARCC) received a distress signal from the aircraft. An emergency Distress Phase was subsequently declared, and the ARCC was activated to conduct the Search and Rescue (SAR) of the aircraft. The signal included a Position Update Alert with coordinates in the Sapmanga Area, Morobe Province.

In coordination with NiuSky Pacific Limited, a search was conducted with the assistance of an air operator based in Morobe. However, due to the weather in the area, the search had to be discontinued. The search resumed this morning and at 8:52 am, the search helicopter pilot spotted the wreckage in the Sapmanga Valley, about 32 nm Northeast of Nadzab.

The aircraft impacted terrain and is embedded in thick forest canopy. Access may be difficult at this point. The ARCC's coordinated SAR activities are still underway, and further information may be provided when they successfully access the accident site. The status of people onboard is not known at this point. The AIC is coordinating with the teams involved in the SAR activities and will provide an update to the public as soon as the status of the persons on board has been established.

The AIC has opened an investigation (*Ref: AIC 24-1003*) and has deployed a team to be based out of Lae to conduct on-site investigation activities. This accident will be investigated in accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation (ICAO Annex 13).

The public is urged to refrain from posting misleading and unverified information on social media and to be considerate of the families and loved ones of the persons on board and the impact those posts may have on them.

The appropriate authorities are conducting their activities and will provide further information in due course.

Authorised for release by:

Maryanne J. Wal

Chief Commissioner

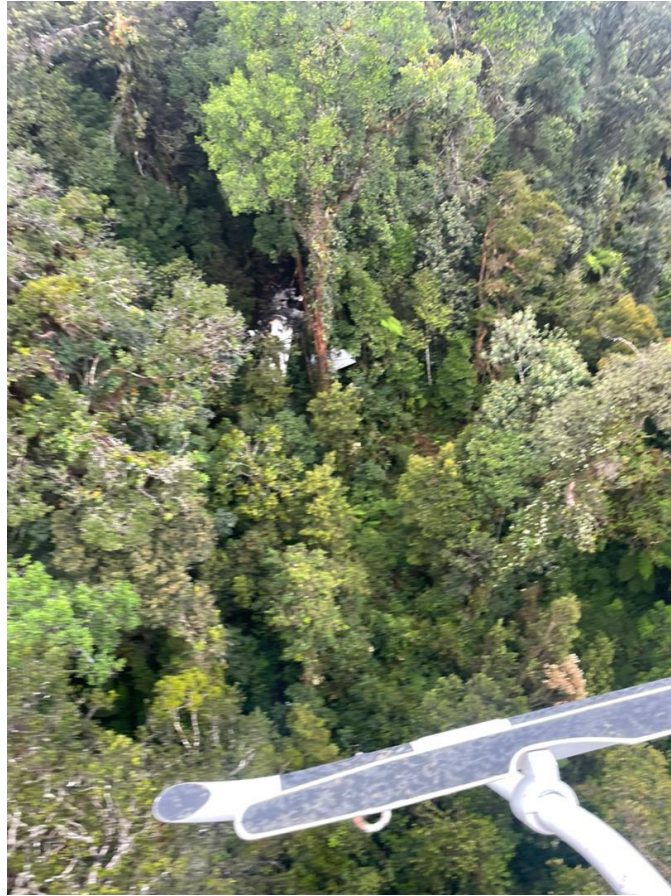


Figure 1: Aerial image taken from the helicopter by the Search and Rescue Team in the Sapmanga Area, 32 nautical miles northeast of Nadzab Tomodachi International Airport, Morobe Province.



Figure 2: Depiction of the wreckage location in reference to Nadzab Tomodachi International Airport, Morobe Province.