

No. 12

Pakistan International Airlines, Dakota aircraft, AP-ACZ,  
crashed on Lash Golath Mountain, near Jalkot on 25 February 1956.  
Report released by Department of Civil Aviation, Government of Pakistan.

Circumstances

The aircraft took off at 0820 hours West Pakistan Standard Time from Chaklala aerodrome on a charter flight to Gilgit. After landing at 1014 hours at Gilgit, the captain advised the passengers and ground staff that he would not carry passengers on the return flight due to the very bad weather conditions en route. At 1400, AP-ACZ departed Gilgit on the return flight and at 1410 was in wireless telegraphy communication with Gilgit aerodrome. At 1421, Chaklala passed on to the aircraft the latest MET observation and the transmission was acknowledged. Nothing further was heard from the aircraft until 1454 when the following S. O. S. was picked up by the ground stations and two other aircraft:-

"S. O. S. , AP-ACZ, INDUS mouth position trapped in bad weather, Indus mouth"

Chaklala aerodrome acknowledged the S. O. S. but failed to contact the aircraft. The flight crashed on the peak of Lash Golath Mountain at a height of approximately 14 000 to 15 000 feet. All three crew members, the sole occupants, were killed.

Investigation and Evidence

No technical investigation was carried out.

While AP-ACZ was at Gilgit the following message was transmitted from Chaklala to Gilgit:-

"From Captain AP-AAG, weather deteriorating very badly between points A and B. Precipitating. Visibility 1 to 1-1/2 miles. "

This message was passed on to the first officer of AP-ACZ. Subsequently, telephone messages were exchanged between the control tower at

Gilgit and the captain of AP-ACZ. According to the air traffic control officer, only bad weather reports were passed on to the captain.

Documentary evidence shows that bad weather messages and forecasts between points B and A (i. e. the region of mountains flanking gorge of the River Indus) were repeatedly passed on to the captain of AP-ACZ, by the meteorological office at Chaklala, the captain of aircraft AP-AAG and the air traffic control officer at Gilgit Tower.

It appears that the aircraft, on its return flight, maintained an altitude of 10 000 feet to 11,000 feet until it entered the area of the gorge flanked by high mountainous terrain rising up to 16 720 feet. According to villagers in this area, visibility was very poor and there was rain followed by sleet and a thunderstorm. The aircraft was hemmed in between three mountain peaks, each rising to well over 16 000 feet in the form of an equilateral triangle.

According to eye witnesses, the aircraft completed two circuits near Jalkot village but whilst carrying out the third circuit there was an explosion and they realized that the aircraft had crashed.

The villagers were unable to reach the scene of the accident immediately due to bad weather, but two days later some of them managed to climb up to the wreckage, which had been swept down the mountain slope by an avalanche. On the arrival of a ground party from Rawalpindi, it was found that most of the wreckage had been taken away by local tribesmen.

Probable Cause

The accident was attributed to pilot error while he was attempting a flight beyond his ability or experience.

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