

Scrutiny mounts on AAIB as 2023 crash report stuck

Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: The civil aviation ministry's 2024-25 annual report says that of 104 accidents, investigations into 91 had been completed by December 31, 2024, with 88 final reports made public. As per International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) norms, investigations such as these require a final report within a year of the incident.

HT looked back at Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) final reports and found that among the delayed reports is that of a September 2023 runway accident involving VSR Aviation, the company from which Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar chartered the Learjet 45 that crashed on Wednesday, killing him and four others.

The delay has raised questions about AAIB's capacity, but more critically, experts said the missing findings could have determined if VSR Aviation required stricter oversight long before the Baramati crash.

It is still unclear whether the 2023 incident was purely weather-related or linked to technical issues. Had the final findings been released, it would have clarified whether corrective action was required, said an aviation professional, requesting anonymity.

The September 2023 accident saw a VSR Learjet 45, registration VT-DLBB, break into two pieces during a heavy rain landing at Mumbai airport. All six occupants survived with injuries. AAIB issued a preliminary report one month after the crash, stating that flight recorder data had been downloaded and records relating to maintenance, crew, radar, air traffic control communications and the enhanced ground proximity warning system had been sent for analysis.



Among the delayed AAIB reports is that of a 2023 runway accident involving VSR Aviation, the firm from which Ajit Pawar chartered the Learjet 45 that crashed on Wednesday.

However, 16 months later, the final findings have not been released. The ministry report also shows that of 123 serious incidents, 108 investigations were completed with 107 final reports released, leaving at least one report delayed and is pending probe. The September 2023 incident, with no fatalities, was classified as an "accident", while the Baramati crash, and incidents that involve the potential of mass casualties, are likely to be considered as a "serious incident".

Investigation backlogs and resource constraints JS Rawat, former joint director general of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), said every accident occurs due to a unique set of factors as he stressed on the need for faster timelines. The sole purpose of an investigation report is to understand what went wrong and how such incidents can be avoided in the future," he said. "The weather conditions in Mumbai and Baramati were different. That said, as per norms, the report should have been released within a year. Since there were no fatalities in the Mumbai aircraft crash,

the authorities should have completed the investigation in accordance with the rules." Rawat emphasised: "It is high time that a reasonable timeline should be defined for completing an investigation."

One former bureaucrat familiar with the agency said AAIB is beset with staff shortages, functions "barely with 8-10 people". "With the aviation sector expanding rapidly, the AAIB needs adequate staffing. Its role is vital, yet it has not received the attention it deserves," he added.

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mon among many NSOPs to delay expensive maintenance. A sector expert said this was an open secret. "It is widely known that operators like this under-report aircraft and engine hours to prolong maintenance. The OEM on-condition parts are ignored until components fail. Engines fly with high vibration and low temperature margins; I have seen fan blades chipped beyond limits," said Mark D Martin of Martin Consulting.

Martin added that several chartered jets operate with critical equipment inoperative. "Unlike airlines, NSOPs must pay upfront cash for parts costing \$30,000 to \$150,000. The mantra is not maintenance but 'passive-vessel'," he said.

The former bureaucrat quoted above said VSR is alleged to maintain multiple log sheets shown to DGCA inspectors. "By under-logging hours, it is obvious that the maintenance cycle is also delayed," he said. "This is a clever way to deal with the annual surveillance and spot checks by the DGCA. However, there is a need for the regulator to seek flight plans from the Airports Authority of India to cross-check the operators' claims. This will ensure that NSOPs do not take safety for granted."

A former DGCA official cautioned against painting all NSOPs with the same brush. "Big corporate operators—such as Reliance or Bajaj—do not compromise on safety. The problem lies with jet operators said operators like it 'wait for the aircraft to break and then fix it, with very poor oversight in CAMO (Continuing Airworthiness Management Organisation). maintenance and quality. Pilots are manipulated to fly poorly maintained aircraft."

VSR did not respond to requests for comment. Another pilot said under-reporting of flight hours is common among many NSOPs to delay expensive maintenance. A sector expert said this was an open secret. "It is widely known that operators like this under-report aircraft and engine hours to prolong maintenance. The OEM on-condition parts are ignored until components fail. Engines fly with high vibration and low temperature margins; I have seen fan blades chipped beyond limits," said Mark D Martin of Martin Consulting.

Navy, coast guard ALHs likely to fly again in April

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HYDERABAD: Plane maker Hindustan Aeronautics Limited has fixed a lingering flaw affecting a key component of the transmission system of the navy and coast guard's Dhruv advanced light helicopters and they are likely to be cleared to fly again in April, ending the long grounding of an aircraft in the Indian military, HAL chief DK Sunil said on Saturday.

The workhorse twin-engine fleet was grounded in January 2025 following a fatal coast guard crash.

"HAL has started upgrading the swashplate assembly mounted around the Dhruv ALHs main rotor mast to boost its fatigue tolerance in a harsh marine environment, and the exercise will be completed by March-end. The swashplate assembly life has been significantly shown to DGCA inspectors. By under-logging hours, it is obvious that the maintenance cycle is also delayed," he said.

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The Dhruv ALH fleet was grounded in January 2025 following a fatal coast guard crash.

ability of the pilots to control the helicopter's motion — it translates stationary control inputs from the pilot into rotating inputs connected to the main rotor blades. The snag related to the swashplate assembly in the navy and coast guard helicopter was detected after the fatal coast guard ALH crash at Porbandar in Gujarat on January 5, 2025 in which two pilots and an aircrew driver were killed.

The military's entire fleet of 330 ALHs was instantly grounded. Four months later,

on May 1, the 300 choppers operated by the army and air force were declared airworthy by HAL after comprehensive safety checks. The 30 ALHs operated by the navy and coast guard were, however, not given the green light to return to the skies.

A fleet-wide inspection conducted after the January 5 crash revealed that the navy and coast guard ALHs were facing the same problem as the Dhruv that crashed in Porbandar — cracks in the swashplate assembly, linked to sustained operations in a saline environment. HT was the first to report on February 4, 2025 that a detailed analysis by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Aerospace Laboratories (CSIR-NAL), Bengaluru, pointed to a swashplate assembly failure.

At Wings India 2026, HAL showcased the Dhruv NG (new generation) helicopter for the civil sector, and signed a deal with Pawan Hans Limited for supplying 10 units to the helicopter service provider.

HAL's internal estimates suggest that India will require around 400 helicopters in the Dhruv NG category in the coming years.

NEET ASPIRANT DEATH: BIHAR RECOMMENDS CBI INVESTIGATION

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PATNA: The Bihar government on Saturday decided to hand over the probe into the mysterious death of a 17-year-old NEET aspirant to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), with the parent's of the deceased demanding the probe to be monitored by the high court.

State's deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhary in a post on X said: "CM Nitish Kumar has requested the central government to hand over the investigation of the NEET student's death case in Patna to the CBI so that the incident can be thoroughly probed in a transparent and impartial manner."

However, the deceased's parents expressed distrust in the CBI, citing alleged delay and suspected tampering with evidence. "We never demanded a CBI probe. The CBI will do the same thing that the SIT has been doing. There should be a probe under the supervision of the court," they said.

The 17-year-old girl was found unconscious in her hostel room in Patna on January 6. She died at a hospital on January 11.

MIYA MEANS B'DESHI INFILTRATORS, WE'LL PUNISH THEM BACK: HIMANTA SICHAR

Assam chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Saturday made a categorical statement on the politically contentious use of the term "Miya", asserting that it refers to Bangladeshi infiltrators and vowing to drive them out of the state.

"Miya means Bangladeshi infiltrators, and we have decided to go as far as it takes to send every one of them back to Assam. This is a war and a matter of life and death for us," Sarma said at a public gathering.

On January 27, he had urged people in Assam to "go after" members of the Miya community and continue to "disturb" them.

Jalandhar schools receive bomb threat ahead of PM visit

JALANDHAR: Security was stepped up in Punjab's Jalandhar district as four schools received bomb threat emails on Saturday, a day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi's scheduled visit to the district, police said.

The emails reportedly had anti-government rhetoric and references to separatist sentiments.

Jalandhar commissioner of police Dhyanraj Kaur Randhawa said, "The anti-sabotage teams searched the schools and the areas surrounding the schools," she said, adding that no suspicious object or activity was detected during the search operations.

Navyat Kaur Sidhu quits Cong, slams Punjab unit chief

CHANDIGARH: Suspended Congress leader Navyat Kaur Sidhu on Saturday said she has quit the party, while hitting out at its Punjab unit chief Amrinder Singh Raja Randhawa for allegedly "damaging" the organisation.

The former MLA accused Warring of selling the party for petty gains through an understanding with the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in Punjab. "RAJA WARRING, The most horrific, incapable, corrupt president ever. You saved yourself from jail by co-partnering with CM to destroy Congress," she said on X.

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PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES MORTGAGED TO BANK

UNDER SECURITIZATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property or of the Bank/Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues to the Bank/Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

S. N.	Name of the Account	Description of Properties	DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES/SECURED ASSETS			
			O/S Bal Date of 13 (2) Date of 13 (4)	Reserve Price (Rs. in Lakh) (EMD) Last date of Deposit of EMD Nature of possession (Physical/Symbolic)	Date and Time of E-Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
1	Borrower: Mr. Firoz Ahmed s/o Mohd. Yusuf Co-Borrower: Mrs. Husnara w/o Firoz Ahmed Guarantor: Mr. Saroj Ahmed s/o Mohd. Yusuf Branch: Saraimere (143010)	Plot No 547 Situated at Khudkasta Uri Saraimere, Tappa- Nandipon, PO-Saraimere, Tehsil- Nizamabad, District- Azamgarh in the name of Mr. Firoz Ahmed s/o Mohd. Yusuf. Area- 140.63 Sq. Mtr., Boundaries as per Deed: East: Rasta Kacchha, West: Lane of Seller, North: Lane of Rasteh & Lane of, South: Rasta Kacchha.	Rs. 3,16,423.32 + further interest & other charges 31.12.2025 05.05.2025 19.07.2025	67.59 Lakh 6.76 Lakh 0.10 Lakh Symbolic	18.02.2026 11:00 AM to 16.00 Noon	NIL
2	Borrower: Late Vijay Shankar Singh and all his legal heirs. Guarantor: Smt. Radhika Singh W/o Vijay Shankar Singh Branch: Ballia (125900)	Owner Name: Smt. Radhika Singh W/o Vijay Shankar Singh. The property is situated at Arzoo No. 24, MAJLIA, JALALPUR, pargana-Ballia, Dist.- Ballia. Sale deed no 42907 dated 16.02.2007 registered in Bahr No. 1, Zild no. 3180, from pages 77-96. Boundaries as per actual: East: House of Shri Kashinath Gupta, West: House of Shri Dharmendra Singh, North: 14 feet wide CC Road, South: Lane of Shri Shiv Sankar Singh.	Rs. 7,58,504.00 + further interest & other charges 31.12.2025 25.09.2024 01.03.2025	31.50 Lakh 3.15 Lakh 0.10 Lakh Symbolic	18.02.2026 11:00 AM to 16.00 Noon	NIL
3	Borrower/Legal Heir: Smt. Meera Singh w/o Late Kamal Singh Guarantor/Legal heir: Roshan Singh s/o Late Kamal Singh Branch: PNB- Ballia (125900)	Land & Building at Block No. 20, Arzoo No. C, Area- 2.87 acent or 880 Sq. Ft. (82.55 Sq. Mtr.) Mohalla Jaspigri, Gola road, Pargana & District: Ballia, Sale Deed No. 317, Bahr No. 1, Zild No. 2038, Pages 73-104 at the office of Sub-Registrar office Ballia, (Owner Late Kamal Singh s/o Late Bala Singh). Boundaries as per Deed: East: Lane of Nagar Palika, West: Road Nagar Palika, North: House of Liawati Devi w/o Jai Narayan Thakur & Others, South: House of Dr. Raghuber Tiwari.	Rs. 1,05,329.00 + further interest & other charges 31.12.2025 22.05.2019 15.11.2019	105.59 Lakh 10.56 Lakh 0.10 Lakh Symbolic	06.03.2026 11:00 AM to 16.00 Noon	NIL

Terms & Conditions of E-auction Sale

Terms & Conditions of E-auction Sale: The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS". 2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herewith have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorized Officer, but the Authorized Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation. 3. The Sale will be done through the auction platform provided on the Website <https://banknet.com> on above mentioned date & time and bidders are advised to go through the portal <https://banknet.com> for taking part in the auction. 4. For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://banknet.com> & www.pnbindia.in, Shri Himanshu Bhatt, Chief Manager, the Authorized Officer (Mobile No. 965019650)

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFESI ACT, 2002

Date: 01.02.2026 Place: Mau Authorised Officer - Punjab National Bank

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SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVEABLE/IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, read with provision to Rule 6(2), 8(6) & 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/ charged to the Secured Creditor, physical possession, symbolic possession (specifically marked against the property) of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Central Bank of India (Secured Creditor) will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS" and "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS" as mentioned below against the properties for the recovery of amount due to the Secured Creditor from the Borrowers and Guarantors as mentioned below. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there are no encumbrances on the property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent enquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of properties put on auction and claims/rights/dues affecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The Reserve Price and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) is also mentioned below against each property.

E-Auction	Date of Inspection & time	Last date & time for deposit of Bid amount	E-Auction Date & time
Sr no 1	12th February 2026 12.00 PM to 4.00 PM	20th February 2026, 12.00PM	20th February 2026, 10.00 AM to 6.00PM

Sr. Name of the Borrower / No. of Guarantors / Contact no. of Branch	Demand Notice Date & Due Amount (Rs. in Lac)	Details of the property	Type of Possession (Physical/ Symbolic)	Reserve price EMD/ Bid increase (Rs. in lac)
1. M/s Meuse Garb Pvt Ltd Mr. Uday Pratap Singh (Director/Guarantor) Kavya Amit Singh (Director/Guarantor) Madhav Jagdish Agarwal (Director/Guarantor) of Sagarca International Ltd (Corporate Guarantor) B/o Stressed Asset Management Branch Ms. Shipa Anand Mob No 9904374559	28.03.2018 Rs. 1640.48 Lacs as on 21.03.2018 plus interest & charges there of	Property ID -CBINMEUSELKO01 First Floor, Shop No. 1,2,3,4, 6,7,8, 10,11,12,13,14 (Total 13 Shops), Vijay Tower, Plot No. 1, Vastu Khand, Ward Chihnut, Near Tulip Apartment and Chihnut Crossing, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh Name of mortgagee - Mr Uday Pratap Singh Area as per Sale deed- 3255.23 sq ft Area available at site- approx. 5000 sqft	Physical	360.00/ 36.00/ 3.00/-

The auction will be conducted through the Bank's approved service provider: Website of E-auction agency <https://banknet.com>/ E-auction agency contact details are: PSB Alliance eKray Helpdesk No. +918291220220 Email: support.banknet@psballiance.com For Any queries related to bidder registration and EMD payment/refund related queries: Email:support.banknet@psballiance.com Please contact the helpdesk officials during office hours on the working days

It is advisable for Bidders to complete the following formalities well in advance

Step 1: Bidder/Purchaser registration: Bidder to register on e-Auction Platform <https://banknet.com> using his mobile number and email-id

Step 2: KYC verification: As a part of e-KYC the documents will be verified by the system. Please note that Steps 1 & 2 should be completed by bidder well in advance.

Step 3: EMD amount: The interested Bidders/Purchasers have to transfer the EMD amount using online mode (i.e. NEFT/transfer/UPI/Net Banking) in his Global EMD Wallet well in advance before during the auction time. In case EMD amount is not available in Global EMD Wallet, system will not allow to bid. The registration, verification of KYC documents and transfer of EMD in wallet must be completed well in advance, before the auction time. Bidders may give offers either for one or for all the properties. Only after having sufficient EMD in his Wallet, the interested bidder will be able to bid on the date of e-auction. Bidder's Global Wallet should have sufficient balance (>=EMD amount) at the time of bidding. In case of offers for more than one property bidders will have to deposit EMD for each property. This may take some time as per banking process and hence bidders, in their own interest, are advised to submit the pre-bid EMD amount well in advance to avoid any last minute problem.

Please follow the guidelines available at <https://banknet.com> for payment of EMD/bidding during auction process

Step 4: Bidding Process and Auction Results: Interested Registered bidders can bid online on e-Auction Platform after completing Step 1, 2 and 3. In case there is sale order for any property, the sale bidder will have to participate in e-auction and will have to increase his/her/bidder's offer at least by the amount equal to the amount of bid increase amount as mentioned in the table above against the property concerned failing which he will not be entitled to be declared successful bidder. It shall be responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the area and specification before submitting their bid.

The authorized officer/Bank reserves the right to postpone/cancel or vary any of terms and conditions of the auction without assigning any reason therefor.

The authorized officer is not bound to accept the highest offer and the authorized officer has absolute right to accept or reject any or all offer (s) or adjourn/postpone/cancel the e-auction without assigning any reason therefor.

Bidding in the last moment should be avoided in the bidders own interest as neither the CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA nor service provider will be responsible for any lapse/failure/Internet failure/power failure etc.). In order to ward-off such contingent situation bidders are requested to make all necessary arrangements such as power supply backup etc., so that they are able to circumvent such situation and are able to participate in auction successfully.

To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on any property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances; title of the properties/put, put on auction and claims/rights/dues affecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The E-auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the Bank. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the Bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues.

Please follow the guidelines available at <https://banknet.com> for payment of EMD/bidding during auction

*Please read the user manual available on the website carefully before commencing bidding process. Bank will not be responsible for any complications arise during bidding process, if any.

It is important to note that the auction purchaser shall bear the Stamp duties, including those of sale certificate, registration charges, all statutory dues payable to Government/any Authority, Taxes, GST and other charges both existing and future relating to properties over and above bid amount.

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided on our Banks Website www.centralbankofindia.co.in

Place: Mumbai
Date: 01.02.2026

Authorized Officer, Central Bank of India
E-MAIL ID: agmif3873@centralbank.co.in
arwmzmo@centralbank.co.in