

MAY 25, 2011

A Pilatus PC 12 operating as an air ambulance on behalf of Apollo Hospitals from Patna to Delhi crashed around 2245IST (1715Z) into a residential colony in Faridabad about 14nm from Indira Gandhi International. Eight bodies have been recovered. Ground casualties not confirmed, but two apartments are seen to be on fire. Delhi was struck by a storm around that time. Eyewitness says he saw the aircraft quite low and being "blown" along the direction of the wind, apparently out of control. As per news channels aircraft's last contact with Delhi Tower was at FL110 and Tower warned pilots of gusty winds minutes before it went off the radar.

Preliminary probe by aviation regulator DGCA into the Faridabad air crash that claimed ten lives today pointed towards technical malfunction and high velocity winds as possible major reasons for the mishap.

Sources close to probe team of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said the small single-engine turboprop Pilatus PC 12 aircraft could not apparently withstand the strong winds and a storm in the area and the pilots probably lost control, leading to the crash last night.

Minutes before the crash, the commander of the ill-fated plane, Capt Harpreet, reported to the Air Traffic Control (ATC) in Delhi that he was facing bad weather, the sources said, adding that he was asked by the ATC not to descend.