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AIB Bulletin

AIB Bulletin No.	18	Ref:	CAV/ACC/18/04	Category:	1.3
Aircraft Type & Reg:	Cessna172N	Reg.	5H-PKD	Serial No.	172-1639
No. & type of Engines:	One Lycoming O-320				
Year of Manufacture:	1977				
Date and Time (UTC):	30 th November 2004 at 1320 hours				
Location:	9 nm SW of Zanzibar International Airport				
Type of Flight:	Scheduled flight				
Persons on Board:	Crew -1 Passengers -2				
Injuries:	Crew -Nil Passengers -Nil				
Nature of Damage:	Aircraft submerged in the Indian Ocean				
Commander's License:	CPL				
Commander's Age:	33				
Commander's Experience:	350hrs of which 127 were on the type				
	Last 90 days				
	Last 28 days				
Information Source:	Telephone call from the operator.				

ALL TIMES UTC

History of the flight:

The aircraft took off from runway 05 of Dar es Salaam International Airport at 1300 hours. It was operating a Tropical Air scheduled flight from Dar-es-salaam to Zanzibar with two passengers and one pilot. The take off and cruise at 1500 feet were normal until at about 9 nm from Zanzibar airport when the engine started running rough. The pilot tried to activate carburetor heating to no avail. The engine subsequently stopped. This happened about 11 minutes into the flight. Sensing the danger ahead, the pilot distributed life vests to his passengers and instructed them to put on as he did himself. He made an emergency call to Zanzibar Tower as he was gliding to ditch into the Indian Ocean.

The Bulletin contains facts relating to the accident, which have been determined up to the time of issue. This information is published to inform the public and the aviation industry of the general circumstances of the accidents at the preliminary stage and must necessarily be regarded as tentative and subject to alteration or correction if additional evidence becomes available.

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The pilot said that the aircraft made contact with the water smoothly and he helped his passengers out, jackets were inflated. The aircraft quickly sunk into the sea. The pilot however, claimed that he tied himself to his passengers in order to keep together. Between 30 minutes to 1 hr after the accident, they started hearing sounds of aircraft flying overhead but none could locate them as they waived.

They remained in the sea trying to swim as the water waves were pushing them unidirectional. The night and darkness were drawing in without any signs of rescue.

As the sun rose on the morning of the following day, they felt a sigh of relief when they saw some boats in the horizon. The boats and planes roaming in the vicinity could not locate them.

Rescue came to their sight at about 1000 hours when a cargo dhow plying between Bagamoyo and Zanzibar picked them up. They were finally transferred to a navy boat which was on a search and rescue mission.

The pilot and his passengers were rushed to the hospital in Zanzibar for medical attention where one passenger was hospitalized for fatigue. The pilot and the remaining passenger were released after a medical check up.

Physical inspection:

The aircraft could not be inspected, as it was completely submerged into the Indian Ocean.

Damage to the aircraft:

The extent of the damage is not known.

Probable causes of the accident:

Investigation of the circumstances leading to the accident is being carried out by AIB.

Safety recommendations and Conclusions:

None at the preliminary stage.