



PRELIMINARY REPORT
ON
ACCIDENT TO M/S PAWAN HANS LTD
AIRBUS HELICOPTERS AS365N3 BEARING REGISTRATION
VT-PHY NEAR MAYABUNDER ON 24th FEBRUARY 2026

Government of India
Ministry of Civil Aviation
Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau

FOREWORD

This document has been prepared based on the preliminary factual information and evidences collected during the initial stages of investigation. The information is preliminary and subject to change. Hence, unless and otherwise specified, no conclusion shall be drawn from the information provided in the document.

In accordance with Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and Rule 3 of Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents), Rules 2025, the sole objective of the investigation of an Accident/Incident shall be the prevention of accidents and incidents and not to apportion blame or liability. The investigation conducted in accordance with the provisions of the above said rules shall be separate from any judicial or administrative proceedings to apportion blame or liability.

Consequently, the use of this report for any purpose other than for the prevention of future accidents or incidents could lead to erroneous interpretations.

1. General Information

1.	Aircraft	Type	Airbus Helicopters AS365N3
		Nationality	Indian
		Registration	VT-PHY
2.	Owner and Operator	M/s Pawan Hans Limited	
3.	Total No. of Persons on Board	07 02 crew + 05 Passengers (04 + 01 Infant)	
	Extent of Injuries	Fatal: 01 Passenger, Serious Injuries: 02 Passengers (including one infant) Minor Injuries: 02 Passenger No Injuries: 02 Crew	
4.	Date & Time of Accident	24 February 2026, 0415 UTC	
5.	Place of Accident	Near Mayabunder Helipad, North & Middle Andaman District, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, India	
6.	Co-ordinates of Accident Site	Latitude:	12.904861 N
		Longitude:	92.885736 E
7.	Last Point of Departure	Rangat Helipad	
8.	Place of Intended Landing	Mayabunder Helipad	
9.	Type of Operation	Commercial Helicopter Operation	
10.	Phase of Flight	Approach	

2. Aircraft Information

Airbus Helicopters AS365N3 helicopter bearing registration VT-PHY and Serial No. 6922 was manufactured in the year 2010. The aircraft was owned and operated by M/s Pawan Hans Ltd. under DGCA AOP No. 02/1998, which is valid till 14th March 2029. The aircraft's Certificate of Registration and Certificate of Airworthiness were valid on the date of accident. The last Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC) was issued on 14 January 2026 and is valid till 16th January 2027. The Certified Maximum All-Up-Weight is 4300 Kgs. The aircraft is fitted with two Arriel 2C turboshaft engines. Prior to operating the accident flight on 24th February 2026, the helicopter had accumulated 11597:27 Airframe Hours, engine No. 1 (LH, Sl. No. 24536) had accumulated a total of 7845:12 hrs (Time Since New) and engine No. 2 (RH, Sl. No. 49021) had accumulated a total of 7679:48 hrs (Time Since New).

Last Major Maintenance Inspection carried out was 3000 Hrs & 1200hrs/04 Years at 11296:51 Airframe hours and released for service on 05th November 2025. Last Maintenance Inspection carried out was 300hrs/1 Year at 11590:09 Airframe hours and released for service on 22nd February 2026. Last Major Engine Inspection carried out on No.1 and No.2 engines was 600 Hrs Inspection at 7545.48 and 7379:12 Engine hours respectively.

Scrutiny of the Journey/Technical Logbook revealed that there was no defect pending for rectification on the aircraft before operating the flight on 24th February 2026. As per the certificate provided by M/s PHL, all applicable Airworthiness Directives/ Alert Service Bulletins due till 23rd February 2026 have been complied with on VT-PHY.

3. Crew Information

	PIC	Co-Pilot
Age	58 Years	59 Years
Date of joining M/s Pawan Hans Ltd.	01 st March 2019	25 th January 2024
License	Commercial Helicopter Pilots License	Commercial Helicopter Pilots License
Date of Issue	27 th May 2009	14 th October 2024
Valid upto	07 th March 2036	13 th October 2034
Date of Class I Medical Exam.	15 th January 2026	29 th December 2025
Class I Medical Valid up to	03 rd February 2027	10 th January 2027
Date of issue of Flight Radio Telephone Operator's License (FRTOL)	20 th July 2022	21 st June 2024
FRTOL Valid up to	19 th July 2036	19 th May 2030
Total flying experience	7817:30 Hrs	4054:33 Hrs
Aircraft endorsements as PIC	AS 365N3	S365 / EC155
Total flying experience on type	2300 hrs	762:10 Hrs
Total flying experience on type as PIC	639:30 Hrs	NIL
Total flying experience during last 1 year	382:45 Hrs	593:45 Hrs
Total flying experience during last 6 Months	137:15 Hrs	263:40 Hrs
Total flying experience during last 90 Days	79:35 Hrs	107:50 Hrs
Total flying experience during last 30 days	31:20 Hrs	22:40 Hrs

Total flying experience during last 07 Days	11:15 Hrs	NIL
Total flying experience during last 24 Hours	NIL	NIL
Rest period before flight	17 Hrs approx.	20 Days off from 03-23 Feb 2026

4. Weather Information

The Base Assistant in Pawan Hans Operations Department at Sri Vijaya Puram takes basic weather details from the helipad handlers on telephone. The briefing sheet for the weather on the day of the accident did not contain any details of weather for Rangat and Mayabunder helipad.

5. Wreckage and Impact Information

5.1 Aircraft Wreckage

The aircraft wreckage was located approximately 1.6 Km from Mayabunder Helipad at a radial of 235 degrees approximately. Fig.1 refers. The wreckage was available mostly as a single unit and separation of starboard horizontal & vertical stabilizer, a few skin panels and landing gear doors were observed due to impact. The aircraft was resting on the seabed on its Starboard side (water level being 4-5 Ft during low tide). The Port side of the fuselage along with its Port Landing Gear was visible above the waterline. Fig 2 refers.



Fig1: Location of the Crash Site

5.2. Damage to Helicopter

Salient damages are appended below: -

- All 04 Main Rotor Blades found broken at various lengths
- Main Rotor blade Hub Star Flex and Beams found damaged
- All 03 Pitot Tubes found damaged
- The top and bottom Perspex windows of the RH side pilot door were found broken
- RH & LH Forward Floats found open
- LH and RH fixed landing doors found separated
- RH upper cover of the Fenestron was found damaged
- Tail Rotor blade Hub found damaged with broken blades piercing the Fenestron
- Tail Rotor Gear Box attachment tube damaged



Fig 2: VT-PHY at Crash Location



Fig 3: VT-PHY after Salvage Operations

6. Brief Description of the Accident Flight

On 24th February 2026, the crew were detailed for the sectors Sri Vijaya Puram – Rangat – Mayabunder – Rangat – Sri Vijaya Puram on VT-PHY. The sector was planned with a total of 10 passengers (8 Adults + 2 Infants) from Sri Vijaya Puram out of which 05 passengers (4 Adult + 1 Infant) were for Rangat and the rest of the passengers for Mayabunder. The crew had undergone Pre-Flight Medical Check on Breath Analyser and were found satisfactory. The passengers boarded the helicopter at M/s Pawan Hans Ltd, apron. The helicopter made a hover taxi to civil dispersal and switched-off for re-fueling with passengers onboard.

Post refueling, the crew departed from RWY04 for Rangat at 0310 UTC climbed to 3500ft and reached Rangat uneventfully. After the passengers disembarked, without switching off the engines, the crew then took off for Mayabunder helipad. The crew climbed to 1500 ft and while climbing they had encountered Haze and reduced visibility. The crew decided to follow the coastline and continue to destination. The approach to Mayabunder helipad, was conducted by the co-pilot and after turning on to finals, the helicopter descended with high Rate of Descent and crash landed into the sea.

On contact with water body, the helicopter floats did not activate. The helicopter toppled to its Starboard side and as the depth of the sea at the crash location was only 4-5 ft, the port side of the helicopter was above the waterline. Both the crew members managed to

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bring all the passengers out and they were shifted to a local hospital at Mayabunder by boats. Fig. 2 refers. Three passengers (including the infant) and the crew members were shifted to Sri Vijaya Puram by M/s Pawan Hans Ltd helicopter. There was one fatality of a passenger on the 3rd day after the accident while two passengers (1 Adult + 1 Infant) admitted at a hospital at Sri Vijaya Puram were discharged on 12th March 2026.

As per the crew members,

- Throughout the complete sortie, the crew were wearing the complete safety harness including the shoulder straps, whereas the passengers were wearing only the lap straps but not the shoulder straps.
- The floats were not armed in the cockpit during the approach although the same is required by the Standard Operating Procedure for operations at Port Blair as approved by DGCA in the company operations manual.

During the wreckage examination, the float switch was found to be in off position.



Fig 4: Float Switch in OFF position

7. Progress of the Investigation

- The wreckage was salvaged from the sea. SSCVFDR, Engine Control Units, Failure Annunciator Unit and Health & Usage Monitoring Unit (HUMS) units were retrieved and preserved for further analysis.
- The wreckage (Fig. 3 refers) was shifted from Mayabunder to Sri Vijaya Puram airport and secured for further examination.
- The aircraft maintenance and crew folders were collected from the operator for further analysis.
- Initial interviews/discussions with the crew and witnesses were carried out.
- BEA, France has appointed Accredited Representative along with technical advisors

to participate and assist in the investigation as per ICAO Annex 13 requirements.

8. Interim Safety Recommendations

- a) DGCA may issue directions to M/s Pawan Hans Ltd, to ensure strict adherence to usage of all available passenger seat restraint mechanisms and life jackets (wherever applicable). DGCA may conduct spot - checks on operations of all commercial helicopter operators for checking the compliance of the above.
- b) DGCA may issue directions to M/s Pawan Hans Ltd to sensitize their pilots to arm floats for all applicable operations as per the approved company operations manual.