Government of India
Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau
Ministry of Civil Aviation

PRELIMINARY REPORT: ACCIDENT TO M/S KESTREL AVIATION AW119MKII HELICOPTER VT-RNK ON 07.06.2025 AT SERSI

1. General Information

1	Aircraft	Type	AW119MKII
		Nationality	Indian
		Registration	VT-RNK
2	Owner and Operator	Kestrel Aviation Pvt. Ltd	
3	Pilot	CHPL	
4	No of passengers on board	05	
5	Date & Time of occurrence	07.06.2025, 12:53 Hrs IST	
6	Place of occurrence	Kestral Aviation Helipad, Sersi	
7	Last point of departure	Kestral Aviation Helipad, Sersi	
8	Intended landing place	Kedarnath Helipad	
9	Types of operation	Shuttle Services	
10	Phase of operation	Take off	

2. Brief description of Accident:

On 07th June 2025, M/s Kestrel Aviation Pvt. Ltd AW119MKII helicopter VT-RNK, was involved in an accident shortly after takeoff from Sersi helipad in Uttarakhand. The helicopter was operating scheduled passenger shuttle services between Sersi and Kedarnath as part of the Char Dham helicopter operations. This helicopter is certified for Single Pilot operations.

At approximately 1253 Hrs. IST, VT-RNK lifted off from the Kestral Aviation Helipad at Sersi with 05 passengers on board and the pilot for Kedarnath ji Helipad. This helipad is around 40 to 50 feet above the national highway. After take-off the helicopter made a counter-clockwise turn and initiated flight towards Kedarnath. As seen in CCTV footage available from the helipad, soon after liftoff, the helicopter began to lose altitude. While the main fuselage cleared the edge of the elevated helipad, the tail rotor guard and tail rotor blades hit the edge of the helipad, causing significant damage to the Tail rotor blades Tips and leaving visible grooves on the concrete edge of the helipad.

Following the tail rotor strike, the helicopter kept losing height and crash-landed on the national highway situated immediately below the helipad at approx. 40 to 50 feet. During the crash landing, the helicopter impacted a commercial shop structure on one side of the road and a parked vehicle on the opposite side, causing damage to both. The helicopter sustained substantial structural damage, including separation of the tail boom and collapse of the landing gear. The aircraft came to rest in a perpendicular position to the road effectively blocking the entire roadway.

There was no post-impact fuel leakage or fire. The passengers on board managed to evacuate the helicopter using the emergency exits, with some removing the interior

window lining on the port side and opening the door on the Starboard side of the helicopter respectively. The Pilot-in-Command, despite sustaining a serious injury, completed all engine shutdown procedures before evacuating the helicopter.

The passengers exited the crash site along with their baggage and subsequently confirmed that they had not sustained any injuries during the accident.

A team from the AAIB and DGCA reached the accident site at Sersi to conduct the onsite investigation. They carried out a detailed examination of the accident site and relevant evidence pertinent to the investigation were collected.

As per PIC's preliminary statement, the liftoff was normal, but the helicopter's collective did not respond effectively when he started the flight. Both the tail rotor blades and guard struck the helipad's edge as the helicopter lost altitude. Thereafter the helicopter was uncontrollable and PIC made efforts to cushion the landing.

3. Injuries to Persons

Injuries	Crew	Passengers	Others
Fatal	Nil	Nil	Nil
Serious	01	Nil	Nil
~~Minor~~/None	Nil	05	Nil

4. Aircraft Information

Sr.No.	Description	Details
1.	Aircraft Model	AW119MKII
2.	Registration No.	VT-RNK
3.	Serial No.	14841
4.	Year of Manufacture	2015
5.	C of A No.	6752
6.	C of R No.	4642
7.	Radio License Valid Upto	31.01.2026
8.	Engine Type	PT6B-37A
9.	Max Takeoff Weight	2850 kg
10.	All-Up Weight at Departure	2541.5 kg
11.	Total Aircraft Hours (Since New)	4013:39 hrs
12.	Engine Hours (Since New)	3456:53 hrs
13.	Aircraft Hours (Since Last ARC)	155:07 hrs
14.	Insurance Valid Upto	08.02.2026
15.	Last Major Inspection	800 Hrs Inspection on 22.04.2025 at 3921:47 A/F hrs
16.	MEL Status	Nil
17.	Defects Reported After Last Inspection	None

The helicopter on 07.06.2025 underwent its 100-hour scheduled maintenance at Sahastradhara Helidrome before 1st sector of the day of accident. Following completion of the maintenance, the Chief Pilot of the Operator flew the helicopter from Sahastradhara to Kestral Aviation Helipad at Sersi and thereafter conducted 14

successful shuttle sorties between Sersi and Kedarnath helipad until 1200 Hrs. Due to Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL), a change of pilot was arranged, and the next sortie was scheduled for 1300 Hrs. IST**.**

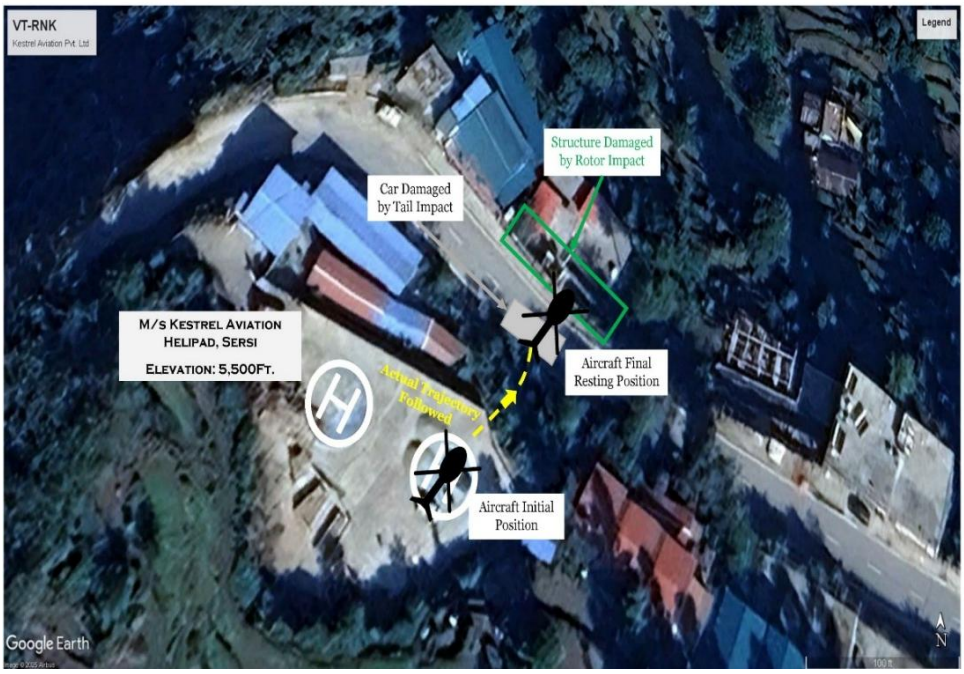

Fig 1: Trajectory of Crash Landing

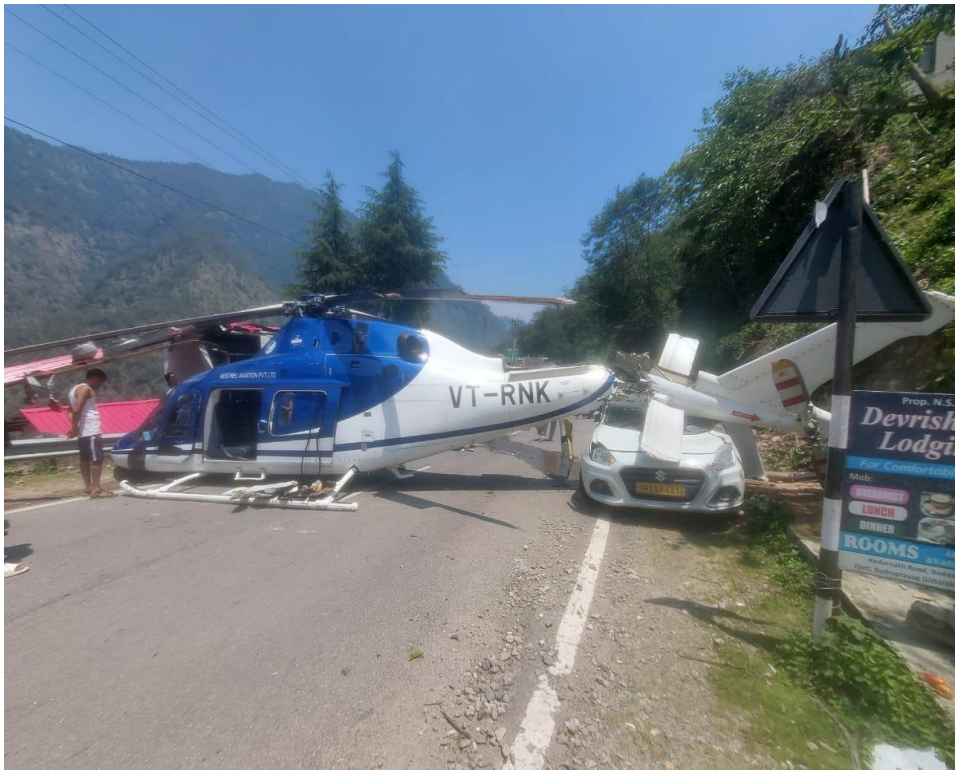

Fig 2: Helicopter Wreckage at the Site

5. Damage to Aircraft:

Section	Component	Damage Description
Cockpit	Pilot & Co-pilot Windshield	Damaged
	Pilot Lower Windshield	Damaged
	Radom	Damaged
	Pilot & Co-pilot Door	Damaged
	Forward and Aft Cross tubes	Broken
	Right Cabin Footstep	Damaged
	Cockpit Door Post	Damaged
Main Rotor Head	All 4 Main Rotor Blades	Damaged
	Main Rotor Hub	Damaged
	Main Rotor Damper	Broken
	Main Rotor Grip	Damaged
Tail Boom	Rear Body	Damaged
	Tail Drive Shaft	Sheared Apart
	Tail Boom	Detached from Horizontal Stabilizer to Tail Rotor
	Tail Rotor Blade	Damaged
	Tail Skid	Damaged
Cabin Area	Passenger Door Windows (Both)	Damaged
	VHF Antenna (Side)	Damaged

6. Other Damages

- Observed damage to makeshift shop structure on the side of the road due Main rotor Blade hits.
- Observed damage to a car parked on the other side of the road opposite to the damaged shop.

Personnel Information (Pilot-in-Command):

Sr. No.	Description	Details
1.	Age	57 Years
2.	License	CPL(H)
3.	Date of issue	16.08.2012
4.	Valid up to	15.08.2027
5.	Category	Helicopter
6.	Class	CPL(H)
7.	Limitation	NIL
8.	Date of last Med. Exam	11.02.2025
9.	Medical exam Valid up to	31.08.2025
10.	FRTOL License No. (Restricted)	17424
11.	Date of Issue	16.08.2012
12.	Valid up to	09.07.2047
13.	Total Flying Experience	4261:40 Hrs.
14.	Total Flying Experience During last 30 days	101:35 Hrs
15.	Total Flying Experience During last 15 days	52:15 Hrs

7. Progress of the Investigation

i. The accident site was visited for investigation and evidences were collected.
ii. The helicopter wreckage has been thoroughly examined.
iii. During helicopter wreckage examination, the EEC (Engine Electronic Control) unit has been identified for further detailed examination.
iv. The identified helicopter component has been collected for laboratory examination and analysis.
v. Fuel and oil samples were collected from helicopter and were submitted to fuel testing lab of DGCA for examination. The test report for both the samples was satisfactory.
vi. The helicopter wreckage has been shifted to the company's storehouse at Boisar, Maharashtra for safe custody.
vii. The aircraft records have been collected from the operator for further analysis.
viii. Initial interviews/discussions with the Pilot-in-Command and the operator has been carried out.

8. Precautionary action taken by DGCA

After the accident which was the third accident within a month in the Char Dham sector, DGCA issued additional safety measures for helicopter Operations in Char Dham yatra on 09.06.2025. Salient safety measures are as below:

a. Considering the upcoming monsoon season the shuttle operations were restricted up to 22/06/2025.
b. In case the PIC is being inducted into the sectors for the first time / more than 12 months have elapsed since his last flight in the specific operation/sector as PIC, then he/she shall undergo the training and assessment with a current type and operation qualified TRE/TRI.
c. The training flights shall consist of a minimum of o8 take-offs and landing circuits/shuttle operations at that specific helipad. Maximum permissible load (for IGE conditions) shall be carried in the familiarization training and competency assessment to simulate the actual operations.
d. All operations to helipads at/above 10,000 ft AMSL shall be conducted taking into account OGE performance calculations of AUW for the prevailing temperatures.

END