

FINAL INVESTIGATION REPORT



SERIOUS INCIDENT OF TCAS – RA REPORTED BY
M/S. AIR BLUE FLIGHT ABQ 271, A-321, REG. NO.
AP-BMP (JED – ISB) ON 31-10-2017

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Synopsis

On 31st October, 2017 at time 1011 UTC M/s Airblue Flight ABQ 271 (A321, Reg. No. AP-BMP) was cleared for ILS Z approach runway 30 (Islamabad). At 1015 UTC, ABQ271 reported established runway 30 and was changed over to Control Tower frequency with traffic information of M/s Princely Jets (Pvt) Ltd Flight PJP764 (EC130B4, Reg. No. AP-BKH) which was given takeoff from runway 12 by Aerodrome Control Tower, with instructions to turn right. ABQ271 acknowledged the traffic information and changed over to Tower frequency. At time 1016 UTC, PJP764 established contact on Approach Radar and informed clear of turning right. At time 1018 UTC, ABQ271 initiated go around at 5 NM final runway 30 due to traffic PJP764 Helicopter on left side. Tower Controller changed over ABQ271 again to Approach Radar. ABQ271 was vectored for ILS Approach runway 30 and landed at time 1032 UTC. Captain of ABQ271 submitted incident report to APM BBIAP, Islamabad. The incident was reported in daily IOU report for the period of 310500LT to 010500LT October / November, 2017 (**Appendix 'A'**) and Air Traffic Incident Report (Near Collision) submitted by the operator M/s Airblue (**Appendix 'B'**). Memorandum was issued vide letter No. HQCAA/1904/40/114/SIB/661 dated 20th November, 2017 (**Appendix 'C'**). All available evidences were analyzed by Safety Investigation Board (SIB). Significant findings and recommendations of SIB are as under:-

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

- 1.1 **History of Flights.** M/s Airblue Flight ABQ271 (A321, Reg. No. AP-BMP) from Jeddah to Islamabad ETA 1016 UTC, ATA 1032 UTC. M/s Princely Jets (Pvt) Ltd, Flight PJP764 (Euro copter Reg. No. AP-BKH) from Islamabad to Lahore, ETD 1000 UTC, ATD 1015 UTC.
- 1.2 **Injuries to person(s).** No injury was reported on board to anyone on both aircraft.
- 1.3 **Damage to Aircraft.** No damage occurred due to this incident to any aircraft.
- 1.4 **Flight Crew Information.** Not applicable.
- 1.5 **Aircraft Information.**

- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------------------|
| 1.5.1. | M/s Airblue (ABQ271) | |
| | Aircraft Make | : Airbus |
| | Type of Aircraft | : A321 |
| | Aircraft Registration | : AP-BMP |
| | Sector | : Jeddah to Islamabad |
| 1.5.2. | M/s Princely Jets (Pvt) Ltd (PJP764) | |
| | Aircraft Make | : Airbus |
| | Type of Aircraft | : Euro copter EC130B4 |
| | Aircraft Registration | : AP-BKH |
| | Sector | : Islamabad to Lahore |

1.6 **Meteorological Information.** Following weather was reported at the time of incident:-

General Weather	Hazy
Visibility	2 km
Surface Wind	Calm
Weather Warning	For poor visibility valid up to 1200 UTC

1.7 **ATC Tape Extracts.** Audio tape extracts were obtained for detailed analysis.(Appendix 'D')

1.8 **Resumption of Navigation by Aircraft.** Post occurrence, both aircraft continued for their respective destinations.

1.9 **Sequence of Events.**

1.9.1 At time 1003 UTC, ABQ271 established contact with Islamabad Approach and was cleared on FATEH 1 CHARLIE ARRIVAL for ILS Z Approach runway 30. Aircraft was given descend to 9500 ft on QNH 1015.

1.9.2 At time 1007:43, Tower Controller coordinated Approach Radar Coordinator regarding startup of PJP764.

1.9.3 At time 1011 UTC, ABQ271 was given descend to 4500 ft and cleared for ILS Z Approach runway 30.

1.9.4 At time 1013, takeoff release was given by Approach Radar Coordinator for PJP764 along with the progress of ABQ271.

1.9.5 PJP 764, Helicopter got airborne on 1015 UTC.

1.9.6 At time 1015, ABQ271 reported established on localizer runway 30.

1.9.7 At time 1015:37 UTC, ABQ271 was 8 miles from touchdown and was advised by Radar Approach Controller by giving the following call:-
"Continue Approach, check gears down and locked and maintain 3600 ft and descend as per glide. Traffic Helicopter took off runway 12 turning right is climbing 2500 ft will join left base runway 30 contact Tower 123.7"

1.9.8 At time 1017:33 ABQ271 initiated go around due traffic PJP764 Helicopter on left side.

1.9.9 At time 1017:33, ABQ271 again contacted Approach Radar.

1.9.10 At time 1018:32, ABQ271 was taken on Radar vectors for ILS Z Approach runway 30 again.

1.9.11 At time 1022:04, ABQ271 requested for ISDUR.

1.9.12 At time 1022:04, ABQ271 cleared for ILS Z Approach runway 30 from position ISDUR.

1.9.13 At time 1029:01 ABQ271 reported established on runway 30 at 9 NM was changed over to Tower Frequency.

1.9.14 ABQ271 was landed at time 1032 UTC.

2. FINDINGS

- 2.1. There was not any prior / planned coordination between Tower and Radar to accommodate PJP764 from runway 12, against the runway in use (which was 30) same has been reflected in the statements of Approach Controller and Coordinator.
- 2.2. Pilot of PJP764 requested for takeoff from runway 12 and Tower Controller took a split second decision and cleared PJP764 for lineup from opposite runway and subsequently instantly coordinated with Radar Coordinator in hurry for use of runway 12. (refer **Appendix 'E'**). The Tower Controller although had the progress of incoming traffic i.e. ABQ271 on final runway 30, cleared the PJP764 for takeoff from runway 12 without having approval from Approach Controller for the use of opposite runway.
- 2.3. The coordination between Tower Controller and Radar Coordinator was non standard and thus ambiguous (Urdu and English). There is no loud and clear declaration by Tower Controller that PJP764 will take off from runway 12, in spite Tower Controller had update on arriving Traffic ABQ271 well before the departure of Helicopter and during the coordination for release also. (Reference Tape Extracts of Direct speech circuit from time 1013:32 UTC to 1014:17 UTC). The PJP764 was released from runway 12 with right turn after takeoff, by that time ABQ271 had reached almost 8 miles final runway 30.
- 2.4. At time 1015 UTC, PJP764 H/C got airborne in opposite direction of runway in use climbing to 2500 ft. At time 1015:37 UTC Radar Controller gave traffic information to ABQ271 of departing Helicopter from runway 12 climbing 2500 ft and was advised to contact tower.
- 2.5. After establishing contact with control tower ABQ271 which was maintaining height requested for right hand 360 to lose height to come on glide for landing. Tower Controller did not approved 360 as a result the ABQ271 initiated missed approach.
- 2.6. At time 1016:12 UTC, PJP764 established contact with Radar Controller and informed clear of main turning right. Radar Controller observed both the Traffic, but did not take corrective actions to provide separation by advising the PJP764 to expedite right turn.
- 2.7. The departing Helicopter was 2 NM away from Approach path of runway 30 on right side. ABQ271 descended till 2700 ft and both crossed each other with 2 NM Lateral and less than 500 ft vertical separation and ABQ271 initiated go around runway 30 due reciprocal diverging traffic PJP764.
- 2.8. ABQ271 was again vectored for ILS Approach runway 30 and landed at time 1032 UTC.
- 2.9. **Cause of Occurrence**
 - 2.9.1 Tower controller cleared R/W 12 for takeoff to PJP764, whereas R/W in use was 30 without realizing that ABQ271 has come quite close on final approach runway 30.

- 2.9.2 Poor and non-standard coordination between Tower controller and Radar controller.
- 2.9.3 Inability of Approach Coordinator to clarify from Tower Controller who was coordinating ambiguously with regard to runway-in-use for PJP764. He also assumed provision of aerodrome separation between the two aircraft by Control Tower rather than imposing a clear restriction on it.
- 2.9.4 Failure by Tower Controller and Radar controller to follow the standard procedures and allowed PJP764 to takeoff from opposite runway without realizing the eminent traffic conflict.

3. SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1. Directorate of Ops, PCAA is to ensure that both the involved controllers should be given ground training regarding the standard procedures for coordination and use of opposite runway in their respective areas of responsibility.
- 3.2. A General Circular shall be issued by Ops Directorate for Controllers for guidance and awareness about the use of opposite runway to avoid such recurrence in future.
- 3.3. PCAA (Directorate of Ops) should also take measures to check and rectify for any non-standard practices which develop among the controllers over period of time.