

Airplane pilots fall asleep instead of landing

22nd August, 2022



Two pilots fell asleep on the job during one of the most crucial parts of their flight. The pair were in charge of a Boeing 737 that was travelling from Khartoum, Sudan to Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. The airliner was at its cruising altitude of 37,000 feet (11,278

metres) and was due to begin its descent to Addis Ababa Bole Airport. Air traffic controllers at the airport were shocked when their flight radar showed the plane had overshot its destination. The pilots woke up after the autopilot disconnected and the alarm sounded. They quickly did a loop of the skies above the airport and successfully landed the plane. None of the concerned crew or passengers on board were hurt.

An airline spokesperson made a statement about the incident. She said: "We have received a report which indicates the Ethiopian flight...temporarily lost communication with air traffic control....The flight later landed safely after communication was restored." The airline said the pilots "have been removed from operation pending further investigation". It added: "Appropriate corrective action will be taken based on the outcome of the investigation. Safety has always been and will continue to be our first priority." An aviation analyst said the incident might have been the result of pilot fatigue. He said this was "nothing new, and continues to pose one of the most significant threats to air safety".

Sources: metro.co.uk / cnn.com / nypost.com

Writing

Pilots should be tested for sleepiness before they fly. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

pilots / asleep / crucial / flight / altitude / air traffic control / radar / alarm / crew / airline / communication / investigation / safety / priority / aviation / fatigue / threat

True / False

- 1) Two pilots fell asleep seconds before their plane landed. T / F
- 2) The pilots were flying a Boeing 737 from Sudan to Ethiopia. T / F
- 3) Air traffic controllers guided the plane to land safely. T / F
- 4) Several crew members were hurt during the eventual landing. T / F
- 5) The airline said the plane lost communication with air traffic controllers. T / F
- 6) The two pilots are now under investigation. T / F
- 7) The airline said pilot training was its first priority. T / F
- 8) An expert said pilot fatigue was a big threat to air safety. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| 1. fell asleep | a. reinstated |
| 2. crucial | b. height |
| 3. altitude | c. injured |
| 4. destination | d. shows |
| 5. hurt | e. important |
| 6. indicates | f. prime concern |
| 7. restored | g. awaiting |
| 8. pending | h. nodded off |
| 9. priority | i. constitute |
| 10. pose | j. landing place |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) What should happen to the two pilots?
- c) How can airlines make sure pilots do not fall asleep?
- d) How important is sleep?
- e) What do you do to keep awake when you are really tired?
- f) How often are you fatigued?
- g) What other threats are there to air safety?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the pilots?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| 1. during one of the most crucial | a. of pilot fatigue |
| 2. The airliner was at its cruising | b. on board were hurt |
| 3. the autopilot disconnected and the alarm | c. priority |
| 4. They quickly did a loop of the | d. altitude of 37,000 feet |
| 5. None of the concerned crew or passengers | e. of the investigation |
| 6. pending further | f. skies above the airport |
| 7. action will be taken based on the outcome | g. significant threats |
| 8. continue to be our first | h. investigation |
| 9. might have been the result | i. parts of their flight |
| 10. pose one of the most | j. sounded |

Discussion – Student B

- What do you think of pilots?
- How difficult is the job of a pilot?
- What do you think of flying?
- How would you feel if your pilots fell asleep?
- How safe is flying?
- Have you ever fallen asleep on the job?
- What do you think of autopilot systems?
- What advice do you have for the pilots?

Spelling

- one of the most rualicc parts
- at its cruising etailudt of 37,000 feet
- due to begin its secdtne
- the plane had overshoot its toeaitnsdin
- the iatptloou disconnected
- crew or spgeraesns on board
- the Ethiopian flight ltriaormepy lost communication
- pending further nvotaigintsei
- continue to be our first iiyortpr
- An oiaaitny analyst
- the result of pilot atuegfi
- one of the most aigtnciisnf threats

Answers – Synonym Match

1. h	2. e	3. b	4. j	5. c
6. d	7. a	8. g	9. f	10. i

Role Play

Role A – Overeating

You think overeating is the thing that can make us sleep quickest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as sleep-inducing. Also, tell the others which is the least likely of these to make us sleep (and why): boredom, English grammar or exercise.

Role B – Boredom

You think boredom is the thing that can make us sleep quickest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as sleep-inducing. Also, tell the others which is the least likely of these to make us sleep (and why): overeating, English grammar or exercise.

Role C – English Grammar

You think English grammar is the thing that can make us sleep quickest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as sleep-inducing. Also, tell the others which is the least likely of these to make us sleep (and why): boredom, overeating or exercise.

Role D – Exercise

You think exercise is the thing that can make us sleep quickest. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them why their things aren't as sleep-inducing. Also, tell the others which is the least likely of these to make us sleep (and why): boredom, English grammar or overeating.

Speaking – Sleep

Rank these with your partner. Put the things that send you to sleep the quickest at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Overeating | • University lectures |
| • Boredom | • Reading English books |
| • Screen time | • Exercise |
| • Relaxing music | • Sitting on a train |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 F	4 F	5 T	6 T	7 F	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.