

40 killed in Nepal's worst air crash in nearly five years

January 15, 2023

The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: At least 40 people were killed on Sunday when a domestic flight with 72 people crashed in Pokhara in Nepal, a Nepal aviation authority official said, in the small Himalayan country's worst crash in nearly five years. The plane had five Indians, four Russians, one Irish, two South Korean, one Australian, one French and one Argentinian national onboard, a Nepal airport official said.

Hundreds of rescue workers continued to scour the hillside site where the plane of domestic carrier Yeti Airlines, flying from the capital Kathmandu, went down. "Rescue operations are on," said Jagannath Niroula, spokesman for Nepal civil aviation authority. "Weather was clear." Local television showed thick black smoke billowing from the crash site as rescue workers and crowds of people gathered around the wreckage of the aircraft.

The crash is Nepal's deadliest since March 2018, when a US-Bangla Dash 8 turboprop flight from Dhaka crashed on landing in Kathmandu, killing 51 of the 71 people on board, according to Aviation Safety Network. There were 72 people on the twin-engine ATR 72 aircraft operated by Yeti on Sunday, including two infants and four crew members, said airline spokesman Sudarshan Bartaula. The plane was 15 years old, according to flight tracking website FlightRadar24.

The ATR72 is a widely used twin engine turboprop plane manufactured by a joint venture of Airbus and Italy's Leonardo. Yeti Airlines has a fleet of six ATR72-500 planes, according to its website. Air accidents are not uncommon in Nepal, home to eight of the world's 14 highest mountains, including Everest, as the weather can change suddenly and make for hazardous conditions. Nepal Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal has called an emergency cabinet meeting after the plane crash, a government statement said.