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Black Box Data Tells of Chaos Before Plane Crash Near Moscow

February 16, 2018



Moskva News Agency

Black box data recovered from the ill-fated airliner that crashed outside Moscow last week suggests that the plane's pilots had received different speed measurements preceding the crash, leading to chaos and hampering attempts to stave the tragedy.

Saratov Airlines Flight 703 plummeted in the Moscow region four minutes after departing from Domodedovo Airport on Sunday, claiming 71 lives.

The pilots' "inarticulate cries" can be heard on the flight recorder immediately before the crash, the Kommersant business daily reported on Thursday.

Citing an unnamed source familiar with the black box data, the outlet said that it showed "the pilots didn't understand why distorted speed readings showed up on the displays," hampering efforts to bring the critical situation under control.

According to the data, the pilots had failed to turn on the heating of the An-148 aircraft's

pressure measurement equipment before takeoff, despite the procedure being listed on a preflight checklist.

The pilots reportedly got into an argument about the data while trying to solve the problem, increasing the speed and tilting the plane to the ground preceding the crash.

Earlier, Russia's Interstate Aviation Committee (IAC) said that the pilots had failed to turn on the heating unit for the plane's pressure measurement equipment, which displayed incorrect speed readings in cold weather.

Russia's Investigative Committee said Thursday that it would consider the black box data in its criminal investigation of the crash.

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