

Beat: Technology

Japanese airliner narrowly avoids crash just 75 meters above water

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USPA News - An airliner belonging to budget carrier Peach Aviation dived to a dangerously low altitude of just 75 meters (248 feet) above the East China Sea as it prepared to land on the Japanese island of Okinawa, but the pilots narrowly avoided a crash, officials said on Tuesday. The incident occurred at about 11:47 a.m. local time on Monday when Peach Aviation Flight MM252 was flying from the remote island of Ishigaki in the Yaeyama Islands to the city of Naha on Okinawa Island.

The Airbus A320 was carrying a total of 59 people, including 53 passengers and six crew members. Japan's transport ministry said the airliner dived to an altitude of just 75 meters (248 feet) above the East China Sea after the pilot misunderstood instructions from air traffic control. The jet, which was flying amidst poor visibility, was able to gain altitude before hitting the water after the pilots were alerted by the aircraft's ground proximity warning system. The transport ministry described the event as a "serious incident," prompting an investigation by Japan's Transport Safety Board (JTSB). A transport ministry official was quoted as saying by the Kyodo news agency that the aircraft was in a "dangerous situation as it could have crashed into the sea." Peach Aviation confirmed Monday's incident, saying the aircraft flew lower than normal during its final approach for landing at Naha Airport. "Peach Aviation Limited extends its sincere apologies for any inconvenience and anxiety caused to customers onboard and parties concerned," the airline said in a statement on Tuesday, adding that it would fully cooperate with authorities to prevent similar incidents in the future. Peach said the aircraft underwent an inspection after the incident, resulting in the cancellation of four domestic flights.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD

483 Green Lanes

UK, London N13NV 4BS

contact (at) unitedpressagency.com

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