

UPDATE: Repatriation of the deceased pilot to India: Duma has ensured that the family of the pilot is updated and has given his team from his office strict guidelines and protocols to follow

Media and Public Statement by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma

18 October 2025

Inkosi Mhlabunzima Maphumulo House: We are in receipt of enquiries from the mainstream media.

As indicated on Thursday afternoon, I assigned a team from my office to be closer to the families of the two pilots who died in an aircraft crash on Wednesday, in the KZN Midlands.

May the departed pilots rest in peace:

1. Martin Brown (33) South African
2. Mayank (28) Indian national

I have personally expressed my deepest condolences to both families.

Mayank was the only son, and the family is devastated. We cannot imagine the pain of waiting for the remains of your only son, who died tragically in the mountains in another country.

We wish God to grant them strength. Our prayers are with the Brown family, the aviation school, instructors, and friends.

The aviation industry has lost much-needed skills with young stars with a promising future characterized by increasing air-travel and passenger growth.

Based on public records, the global population of active commercial airline pilots is approximately 382,000.

It is estimated that the aviation industry will need between 267,000 and 660,000 new pilots over the next 10 to 20 years. The South African Airways boasts 204 experienced pilots.

As the Department of Transport, we will be engaging with SAA, SA Aviation Authority, aviation schools, and other major stakeholders to develop a provincial pilot population register.

It is important for the Department to have a clear sense of what is being done to develop the next generation of pilots to sustain the airline industry.

In order to ensure the free flow of information to Mayank's family in India, I mandated my team to create a WhatsApp Group and include key role-players and the members of the family.

Last night and this morning we updated the family about the following:-

1. The MEC for Health, Nomagugu-Simelane assigned senior management from Forensic Pathology Services and a chief specialist to conduct a postmortem following strict protocols in line with modern-day aviation. The two aviation cases were autopsied, and postmortems were completed by lunchtime yesterday.
2. Flowing from above, the bodies were removed, with a high level of sensitivity, to the mortuary.
3. Afterwards a meeting with the Office of the Consular General of India in Durban was held and it lasted until 20h00. All the necessary documents required to fast-track the international movement of the body from KZN to

Johannesburg and India were processed. The documents will be handed over to the High Commission of India in Pretoria.

4. We have engaged the Department of Home Affairs who will today finalize the processing and issuing of a death notice. Because Mayank is not in our population register as a foreign national, this death notice will be used by his family to apply for a death certificate through India's Home Affairs Department.
5. We are also engaging the Department of Health to obtain the necessary permits and medical certificates to ensure the transfer of the mortal remains.

We are also relying heavily on the staff assigned by the Minister of International Relations and Cooperation, Ronald Lamola to manage the international transfer of deceased foreign nationals.

Finally, as Transport and Human Settlements, we have a responsibility to be with the bereaved family members and to do everything in our power to ease the burden on their shoulders.

Ends

Issued by the MEC for Transport and Human Settlements, Siboniso Duma

Enquiries

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