



PRELIMINARY REPORT

Accident involving Cessna 208 Amphibian Aircraft, Registration 4R-CAE, operated by Saffron Aviation (Pvt) Ltd, during Landing at Gregory Lake on 7 January 2026 while operating a Domestic Flight from Bandaranaike International Airport (VCBI) to Nuwara Eliya (Gregory Lake).



SYNOPSIS

On 07 January 2026, a Cessna 208 Amphibian aircraft (Call sign Cinnamon Air 901), operated by Saffron Aviation (Pvt) Ltd, operating a domestic commercial flight from Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake (VCBI) to Nuwara Eliya (Gregory Lake), was involved in an accident during a water landing attempt at Gregory Lake. The aircraft was operated under Visual Meteorological Conditions (VMC).

At the time of the accident, there were no passengers on board. The two flight crew members evacuated safely from the aircraft.

Upon receipt of the initial notification, Civil Aviation Authority of Sri Lanka (herein after referred to as “the Authority”) immediately dispatched a team to the accident site on the same day. On reviewing the nature of the damage to the aircraft due to the impact, the Authority appointed an Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) to initiate an investigation in accordance with ICAO Annex 13 on Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation.

The accident was notified to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) being the State of Manufacturer and the State of Design of the aircraft and engine, as per the Standards and Recommended Practices stipulated in ICAO Annex 13, to the Convention.

1. FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of Flight

The aircraft involved was a Cessna 208 Amphibian aircraft bearing registration 4R-CAE, operated by Saffron Aviation (Pvt) Ltd on a domestic commercial flight from Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake (VCBI) to Nuwara Eliya (Gregory Lake).

The aircraft departed Bandaranaike International Airport, Katunayake at approximately 1150 hrs (Local Time) under VMC. The departure and initial climb were uneventful. After departure, the aircraft climbed normally and initially cruised at an altitude of approximately 8,500 ft AMSL. En-route conditions were reported as normal, and no technical abnormalities were reported or observed during the flight.

The aircraft arrived in the vicinity of Nuwara Eliya at approximately 1215 hrs (Local Time). During the arrival and initial approach phase, the Pilot-in-Command (PIC) observed gusty crosswind conditions over the lake surface. Based on the prevailing wind conditions, the PIC selected the landing direction accordingly. For the approach, the PIC selected a flap setting of 20 degrees and maintained an approach speed of approximately 80–85 KIAS, which was slightly higher than the reference speed to account for gusty wind conditions.



Shortly after water contact, the aircraft experienced a loss of directional control and began veering laterally (to left) toward the lake bank. An attempt to regain directional control was unsuccessful.

With the aircraft continuing to drift toward the shoreline, the PIC initiated a go-around while the aircraft remained hydrodynamically engaged with the water. During the go-around attempt, power was applied and a right bank was introduced. The aircraft did not achieve sufficient aerodynamic stability, and the right wing contacted the water surface, resulting in loss of control and substantial damage to the aircraft.

1.2 Injuries to Persons - One flight crew member sustained with minor injuries and there were no fatalities.

1.3 Damage to Aircraft - The aircraft sustained substantial damage.

- (a) Significant structural damage to the right wing, including deformation of the wing structure and damage to associated control surfaces.
- (b) The left-wing sustained deformation of the wing structure, damage to associated control surfaces, and damage to wing attachments and supporting structures.
- (c) Damage was also observed to the fuselage and amphibious float structure, consistent with high-energy water contact and secondary impact forces.
- (d) The propeller blades sustained bending and deformation consistent with water contact.
- (e) Secondary damage to the engine assembly and engine mounts was also noted.
- (f) Additional damage was identified to:
 - (i) Wing attachment points and supporting structures
 - (ii) Amphibious landing gear components
 - (iii) External aircraft skin and structure

1.4 Other Damages - Nil

1.5 Personnel Information

1.5.1 Pilot-In-Command

- (a) Licence: ATPL(A) (CAASL-72-A-10513) issued by the DGCA Sri Lanka on 06.09.2010 and valid until 28.02.2026
- (b) Age : 53 yrs, Male
- (c) The medical certificate: Class I; Last medical: 27th Feb 2025 & valid up to 03rd March 2026
- (d) Aircraft Ratings with issued date: Single Engine Turbine issued on 09.01.2020
- (e) Flying experience: Total - 8840 hrs
Total PIC - 4503 hrs
Total PIC on C 208 B - 1171 hrs



(f) Recent Training and flight checks:

Training/ Check	Completion date	Expiry date
PPC	15 July 2025	15 Jan 2026
LOFT	19 Nov 2025	19 Nov 2026

1.5.2 First Officer

- (a) Licence: CPL(A) (CAASL-72-A-10679) issued by the DGCA Sri Lanka on 27.02.2017 and valid until 28.02.2026
- (b) Age : 33 years, Male
- (c) The medical certificate: Class I; Last medical: 10th Feb 2025 & valid up to 14th Feb 2026
- (d) Aircraft Ratings with issued date: Single Engine Turbine issued on 28.02.2024
- (e) Flying Experience: Total - 1304 hrs
Total as FO - 992 hrs
Total on C 208 B - 332 hrs
- (f) Recent Training and flight checks:

Training/ Check	Completion date	Expiry date
PPC	03 Aug 2025	28 Feb 2026
LOFT	10 Sep 2025	10 Sep 2026

1.6 Aircraft Information

- (a) Type and Model : Cessna 208 B Amphibian
- (b) Registration : 4R-CAE
- (c) Manufacturer's Serial No. : 20800364
- (d) Certificate of Registration : No. 254 and valid till 12.03.2026
- (e) Certificate of Airworthiness : No. 208 and valid till 21.03.2026
- (f) Total Airframe Hours : 6081.35 (as at 07th January 2026)
- (g) No. of Engines & Type : 01 number & TPE-331-12JR-702TT
- (h) No. of Propellers & Type : 01 number Hartzell HC-B4TN-5QL

	Serial Number	Total Hours
Engine	P123165	145.15
Propeller	CDA 5466	481.30

1.7 Meteorological Information

The table below summarizes the weather conditions observed at the Nuwara Eliya Meteorological Station around the time of the occurrence.

Meteorological Information	11.30 Hrs (LT)	14.30 Hrs (LT)
Weather	No Rain	No Rain
Rainfall	0.0 mm	0.0 mm
Visibility	3000 m	3000 m
Wind Direction/speed	060/10G20 kt	040/10G20 kt
Cloud cover and Cloud base	4/8 300 m (SCT010)	4/8 600 m (SCT020)



Temperature	19.1 °C	16.4 °C
Dew Point	8.4 °C	10.1 °C
Atmospheric Pressure (QFE)	813.7 hPa	811.9 hPa

1.8 Aids to Navigation - Nil

1.9 Communication

During the flight two-way communication was established with Colombo Director (132.4 MHz) and Piduruthalagala Military Radar station (119.70 MHz).

1.10 Aerodrome Information

Gregory Lake, Nuwara Eliya, which is utilized as a CAASL approved water aerodrome for floatplane operations. Landing directions are selected by pilots based on prevailing wind conditions.

The Operator has categorised the aerodrome as Class ‘C’ aerodrome. Operations are conducted under VMC, with pilots relying on visual assessment and operator procedures.

1.11 Flight Recorders

The aircraft was not fitted with a Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) or Flight Data Recorder (FDR), as this equipment is not mandated for this category of aircraft under current certification and operational regulations.

1.12 Wreckage and Impact Information

The accident occurred during a water landing attempt at Gregory Lake, Nuwara Eliya. The wreckage was located within the lake, with debris distribution confined to the water body and adjacent lake bed area.

The initial impact sequence involved contact between the aircraft’s right wing and the water surface during an attempted go-around. Subsequent impacts occurred as the aircraft struck the water and then the lake bed, resulting in further structural damage.

The wreckage was largely concentrated in a single area, indicating a loss of control followed by near-immediate impact rather than an in-flight breakup.

1.13 Fire - Nil

1.14 Survival Aspect

There was no post-impact fire or explosion. The absence of fire significantly reduced the risk of serious injury and facilitated safe evacuation. The flight crew were able to egress the aircraft after the accident. Water depth and lake conditions at the accident site allowed for evacuation without significant difficulty.

Emergency response was facilitated by the proximity of the accident site to the shoreline and the presence of nearby personnel and watercraft. Assistance was rendered promptly, contributing to the favourable survival outcome.



Overall, the survivability of the accident was influenced positively by the relatively low forward speed at final impact, the water environment, the absence of fire, and the timely evacuation and assistance provided.

1.15 Test and Research - Not Applicable

2. Progress of Investigation

Wreckage site activities, including photography and videography, were completed, and protection of evidence was ensured through relocation of the wreckage to a secured area. Following completion of the necessary documentation and with the approval of the Authority, safe custody was released and the wreckage was formally handed over to the operator. Statements from the flight crew and company management have been obtained by the investigators. Additional information is being gathered based on the initial findings. The investigation remains ongoing.

This preliminary report is issued to present factual information available at this stage and may be updated as further evidence becomes available. The analysis, conclusions and safety recommendations will be included in the final report.

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