



DELTA PLANE LOSES A WHEEL, BRAKE PARTS ON TAKEOFF FROM ISRAEL

News / Airlines



A back wheel and part of the braking system fell off a Delta Air Lines plane during takeoff from Israel's Ben Gurion Airport last week, Israeli television reported Sunday.

Worse, the debris "plunged down onto the runway" and was left there for some five hours, during

which 10 further flights took off from the same runway, because a warning system highlighting the danger was dismissed as a false alarm.

The TV report did not specify the Delta plane involved, but referred to a takeoff close to midnight last Saturday night, indicating it was likely Delta Flight 469 on October 3, which headed from Tel Aviv to New York's JFK at that hour.

A radar system at Ben Gurion designed to warn of debris on the runway triggered an alarm in the control tower, which should have led to the runway's immediate closure, an alert to Delta, and the clearing of the debris. But for unknown reasons, a controller in the tower concluded it was a false alarm.

Only with daybreak were the scattered parts seen on the runway, which was then closed and cleared.

The flights taking off in the interim were at risk of parts of the debris flying into the engines or puncturing tires, the report said.

Once the debris was spotted, Israeli officials notified Delta, which arranged for heightened alert at the plane's destination airport. The plane landed safely.

According to the report, authorities do not know why the wheel and parts of the braking system fell away. Israeli and American flight safety authorities are investigating both the damage to the plane and Ben Gurion Airport's mishandling of the runway debris.

The incident is considered "extremely serious," the TV report said.

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SOURCE: THE TIMES OF ISRAEL

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