

# CHINA SEEKS 2ND BLACK BOX

Too early to determine cause of plane crash that killed 132 people, say authorities

## WUZHOU

**R**ECOVERY crews searched in light rain for a second black box from a China Eastern Airlines passenger plane that plunged into a mountainside with 132 people on board, as more information emerged about the pilots of the flight.

A first black box found on Wednesday was the cockpit voice recorder based on an early assessment, a Civil Aviation Administration of China official said.

The recording material appeared to have survived the impact in relatively good shape, and was being sent to Beijing for analysis, the official said.

The cockpit voice recorder would provide investigators with details of the communications between the flight's three pilots.

Flight MU5735 was en route from the southwestern city of Kunming to Guangzhou on the coast on Monday when the plane suddenly plunged from cruising altitude at about the time when it should have started its descent before landing.

According to flight tracking



Workers carrying a case at the site where a China Eastern Airlines Boeing 737-800 plane flying from Kunming to Guangzhou crashed, in Wuzhou, Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region in China yesterday.

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website FlightRadar24, the plane briefly appeared to pull out of its nosedive, before plunging again into a heavily forested slope in the mountainous Guangxi region of southern China.

Chinese authorities said the pilots did not respond to repeated calls from air traffic controllers during the rapid descent.

It is too early to determine the cause of the crash, which experts said were usually the result of a combination of factors. No sur-

vivors have been found.

The flight's captain, hired in January 2018, had 6,709 hours flying experience, while the first and second officers had 31,769 hours and 556 hours, respectively, a China Eastern official said on Wednesday. One co-pilot was an observer to build up experience, the airline said.

*Phoenix Weekly*, a magazine published by a Phoenix TV, a pro-Beijing private sector broadcaster, cited an aviation expert who

identified the captain as Yang Hongda, the son of a China Eastern captain, and the first officer as Zhang Zhengping, a pilot with 40 years of experience who mentored other pilots. *Southern Weekly*, a large Guangdong-based newspaper, reported Yang, 32, had a year-old daughter, while Zhang, 59, was one of China's first generation of commercial pilots with an impeccable safety record and had been expected to retire this year. **Reuters**