

NTSB Chair Warns Against "Premature" Reporting on Air India Crash Investigation



The chair of the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Jennifer Homendy, has cautioned against "premature and speculative" media reports surrounding the Air India Flight AI-171 crash. Her statement, issued on Friday, July 18, 2025, aligns with appeals from India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) for restraint in reporting, emphasizing the complex and time-consuming nature of major aviation accident investigations.

The Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, operating as Flight AI-171, crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad, India, on June 12, 2025, while en route to London Gatwick. The accident tragically claimed the lives of 241 of the 242 people on board, along with 19 fatalities and 67 injuries on the ground when the aircraft impacted a residential area.

India's AAIB released its preliminary report on July 11, which highlighted that approximately three seconds after takeoff, the two cockpit fuel control switches for both GE Aerospace GEnx turbofans were moved to the "CUTOFF" position. This action led to a rapid loss of thrust and the aircraft's subsequent descent. The report noted a cockpit voice recording where one pilot asked, "Why did you cut off?" and the other denied doing so.

In the wake of various media interpretations and unofficial sources citing details, the AAIB issued an "Appeal" on July 17. The Indian investigative body explicitly stated, "It has come to our attention that certain sections of the international media are repeatedly attempting to conclude selective and unverified reporting." The AAIB urged both the public and media "to

refrain from spreading premature narratives that risk undermining the integrity of the investigative process" and to "await publication of the final investigation report."

NTSB Chair Homendy fully endorsed the AAIB's appeal, asserting, "Recent media reports on the Air India 171 crash are premature and speculative. India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau just released its preliminary report. Investigations of this magnitude take time." She added that the NTSB, which participates in the investigation as a representative of the country where the aircraft was manufactured, "fully support the AAIB's public appeal... and will continue to support its ongoing investigation."

The NTSB's role in international investigations is to provide technical assistance and expertise, particularly when U.S.-manufactured aircraft or components are involved. This collaborative approach ensures a thorough and unbiased examination of all contributing factors. Both the AAIB and NTSB underscore that drawing definitive conclusions from preliminary information can hinder the investigative process and potentially lead to inaccurate findings. The aviation community now awaits the comprehensive final report, which is expected to provide a complete understanding of the tragic events.