

'Black box' recovered from roof of student hostel

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Investigators have found a "black box" flight recorder from the Air India flight to London that crashed in Ahmedabad on Thursday, killing all but one of 342 people on board.

Civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kiranjapu said on social media post the recovery yesterday of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner's flight recorder marked "an important step forward" that would "significantly aid the inquiry into the incident".

The device, which records both cockpit voices and flight data, was retrieved from the rooftop of a mass building in a student hostel where the plane crashed, said an aviation industry official, who asked not to be identified.

Civil aviation authorities yesterday ordered additional maintenance checks on Air India's Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 aircraft after Prime Minister Narendra Modi toured the site of the disaster and visited survivors in hospital.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation required additional inspections and tests of the Boeing aircraft that included checks of their oil and hydraulic systems "as a preventive measure". Air India did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the order. It said it was "giving its full co-operation to the authorities".

Air India confirmed yesterday that all but one of the 250 passengers and 12 crew on board were killed. "The passengers comprised 169 Indian nationals, 53 British nationals, seven Portuguese nationals and one Canadian national. The survivor is a British national of Indian origin," Air India said.

The Federation of All India Medical Association said four medical students had been killed and six relatives of doctors. Labourers who worked near the building were also reported dead.