

Hundreds killed as Air India jet crashes moments after takeoff



Dabu Patni reacts upon learning that her brother, Akash Patni, was one of the more than 240 people killed when a Boeing 787 Dreamliner crashed in the city of Ahmedabad, India, on Thursday. AMIT DAVE/REUTERS

SUMIT KHANNA AHMEDABAD, INDIA

More than 240 people were killed when an Air India plane bound for London crashed moments after taking off from the city of Ahmedabad on Thursday, authorities said, in the world's worst aviation disaster in a decade.

With 242 people on board, the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner – which was headed for Gatwick Airport, south of the British capital – had only one survivor after it crashed onto a medical college hostel during lunch hour.

The sole survivor is a British national of Indian origin and is being treated in a

hospital, the airline confirmed.

“We are still verifying the number of dead, including those killed in the building where the plane crashed,” Vidhi Chaudhary, a top state police officer, told Reuters.

She said the death toll was more than 240, revising down a previous toll of 294 as it included body parts that had been double counted. It was not immediately clear how many of the dead had been on the aircraft or on the ground.

The only known surviving passenger was in seat 11A, next to an emergency exit, Ms. Chaudhary said, adding that there could be more survivors in hospital.

The man told Indian media how he had heard a loud noise shortly after Flight AI171

took off.

“Thirty seconds after takeoff, there was a loud noise, and then the plane crashed,” 40-year-old Viswash Kumar Ramesh told the Hindustan Times, which showed a boarding pass for seat 11A in that name online.

“It all happened so quickly,” he told the paper from his hospital bed.

“When I got up, there were bodies all around me. I was scared. I stood up and ran. There were pieces of the plane all around me,” he said. “Someone grabbed hold of me and put me in an ambulance and brought me to the hospital.”

■ CRASH, A10

Mississauga dentist among victims ■ A10