



153 killed, as Dana plane crashes in Lagos

By Adeola Yusuf, Abel Orukpe and Efe Ebelo (Lagos)

A DANA Air plane on a flight from Abuja to Lagos crashed in Iju Ishaga, a densely populated residential area of Lagos on Sunday killing about 190 people, including all the 146 passengers, seven crew members, and about 37 people on the ground.

•NNPC spokesman, Ajuonuma, ex-AIG Ahmadu, others on board •Family of five perishes •Jonathan declares three-day mourning •Black box recovered

The aircraft was about five minutes to landing at the Murtala Muhammed Airport, Lagos, when the crash occurred.

It was 11 nautical miles to touching the ground when the

pilot reportedly declared emergency.

Director General of the Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA), Harold Demuren, confirmed that all the passen-

gers died.

Among the passengers were Group General Manager, Corporate Affairs of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Levi Ajuonuma,

retired Inspector General (AIG) of Police, John Ahmadu, and son of late Chief of General Staff, Augustus Aikhonu, Ehime.

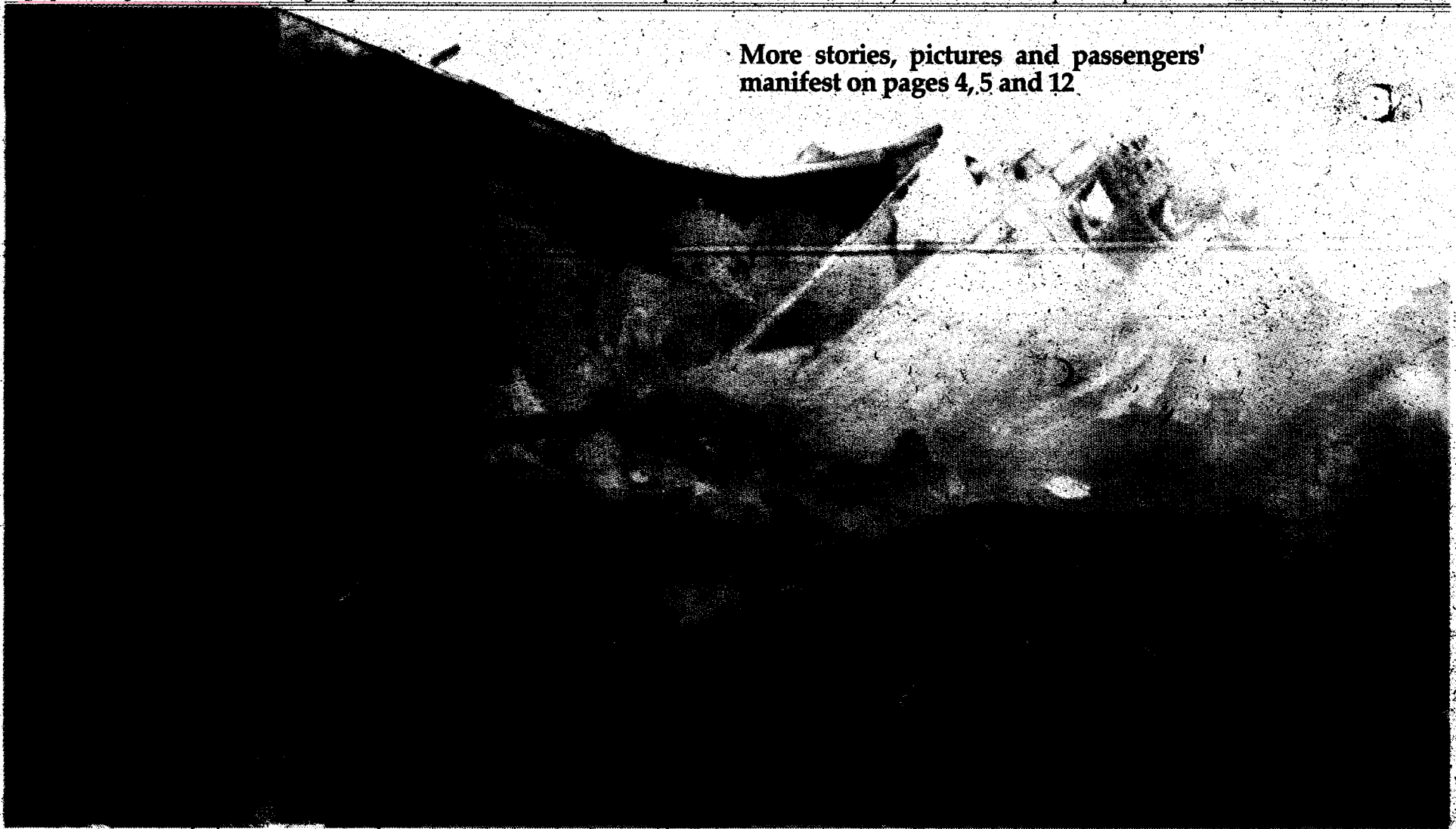
A family of five and some other couples also perished in

the crash.

The ill-fated plane crashed into a compound on Popoola Street, off Toyin Bus Stop in the

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More stories, pictures and passengers' manifest on pages 4, 5 and 12



Wreckage of the ill-fated Dana aircraft that crashed at Iju-Ishaga area of Lagos State on Sunday

Photo: Kunle

Suicide bomber, eight others killed in Bauchi church blast

By Rotimi Akinwumi (Abuja), Patience Ogbodo (Bauchi) and Praise Sakera (Lafia)

BAUCHI State Police Command on Sunday confirmed nine people dead and 27 others injured following a bomb attack in front of Harvest Field Church of Christ near the Living Faith

•Dozens feared dead in Nasarawa communal clash
•Listen to Northern elders on insecurity, Gov tell Jonathan

Church in Yelwa area, a suburb of Bauchi metropolis.

An eyewitness told our correspondent that the explosion occurred at about 9:20 am when

worshippers of Living Faith Church ended the first service of the day and those for the second service were coming in.

A suspected suicide bomber was alleged to have carried out the attack.

The eyewitness said fire outbreak followed the blast, destroying parts of the church

building and some cars. State Commissioner of Police, Mohammed Ladan, during a press briefing said: "Nine people were killed, including the

suicide bomber while 27 people, including one policeman and a soldier were injured and currently receiving treatment at the Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University Hospital (ATBUTH), Bauchi."

Ladan disclosed that one improvised explosive device

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Assad: Syria massacre carried out by 'monsters'

Syrian President Bashar Assad denied Sunday that his government had anything to do with last week's gruesome Houla massacre, saying not even "monsters" would carry out such an ugly crime.

In a televised speech to parliament, Assad said his country is facing a "real war" and blamed foreign-backed terrorists and extremists for the bloodshed. He pledged to press ahead with his military crackdown.

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Politics

Why we lost South West to ACN—Bode George

If I have to do a total x-ray of the problems of our party in the South West it has nothing to do with it, absolutely nothing. It has nothing to do with imposition. You know when you allow the managers to do their jobs properly you need also to convince the electorate because it is not only your party that will be voting for them to go to the Senate, House of Representatives, House of Assembly or to the council etc. We created a self-destructive machinery when we don't respect ourselves; when we forgot those who voted for us. We set Governor A against Governor B; Mr. A against Mr. B for no genuine reason.

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Sports

Eagles pin Namibia 1-0

News

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Iju Ishaga neighbourhood, damaging a two-storey building and a Pentecostal church, Mispem Bible Church. The crash resulted in several house fires.

Eyewitnesses said the crash occurred at 3.49 p.m. and was followed by a loud bang, leading to a fire outbreak in the area.

When *Daily Independent* got to the scene, several charred human bodies were seen in the rubble while fire fighters pulled out at least two bodies from the damaged building.

Three middle-aged men who were trapped in the two-storey building were calling for help, as the building collapsed.

Lagos State Government said in a statement later in the day that 153 people were on the Dana Air flight.

Spokesman for the National Emergency Management Agency, Yushau Shuaib, said the agency was still trying to get an the manifest when our correspondent spoke to him.

Lagos State Emergency Management Director General, Femi Oke-Osanyinpolu, told *Daily Independent* that the casualty figures were not yet known but a resident of the area said over 37 people were killed on the ground.

"The fact that today is a Sunday when many of us are at home worsened the situation," Tunji Soyato, a resident of Tolulope Street told *Daily Independent*.

He continued: "I saw that the plane descended so low and that was unusual; then we be-

came afraid. Later we just saw that it forcefully landed. One of its wings rammed into the two-storey building.

"Immediately we heard a bang and the whole place was engulfed by fire. Many people were inside the house when it happened and it is so disheartening."

Another eyewitness who spoke to our correspondent, shivering, said she had gone to buy fish in the next street when she heard a loud noise, adding that she was wondering what was happening when she was told that it was a plane crash.

She added that some people, who saw the plane wobbling, followed it to know where it would finally crash.

Policemen were at the scene trying to maintain law and order.

Officials of the fire service and those of the Nigerian Airspace Management Agency were at the scene of the crash while helicopters were also being used for rescue efforts.

Fire fighters tried to put out the smouldering flames and carried at least one corpse from the collapsed building.

Some of those who gathered around the site helped fire fighters bring in the water hoses from their trucks.

Two fire trucks and about 50 rescue personnel were also seen at the site after the plane went down.

The Nigerian Red Cross as well as Nigeria's air crash safety investigators were also seen at the site.

As the rescue operation progressed, a military helicopter

flew overhead.

Lagos International Airport is a major hub for West Africa and saw 2.3 million passengers pass through it in 2009, according to the most recent statistics provided by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria.

Sunday's crash in Lagos came barely 24 hours after a Nigerian cargo plane over shot its runway at the Kotoka International Airport, Accra, Ghana, killing 10 people.

"I don't think there will be any survivors," said eyewitness, Praise Richard. "It would take a miracle."

Richard said he was watching a film when he heard a loud explosion that sounded like a bomb.

He rushed outside and saw massive smoke and flames rising from the crash site around 3.54 p.m.

In August 2010, the U.S. announced it had given Nigeria the FAA's Category 1 status, its top safety rating that allows the nation's domestic carriers to fly directly to the U.S.

The Nigerian government said it also now has full radar coverage of the entire nation.

However, in a nation where the state-run electricity company is in tatters, state power and diesel generators sometimes both fail at airports, making radar screens go blank.

Sources said the plane's black box has been recovered.

Reacting, President Goodluck Jonathan declared a three-day period of national mourning for all those who lost their lives in the crash.

The President, who has cancelled all his public engagements scheduled for today, has also directed that the Nigerian flag be flown at half-mast for the three days of national mourning.

Meanwhile, the President has ordered full investigation into the crash.

In compliance with the directive, the Minister of Aviation, Stella Oduah, has already left Abuja for Lagos to oversee the crash investigations and present an interim report to the Federal Government as quickly as possible.

The President said he joins all Nigerians in mourning all those who lost their lives in the crash.

He noted that it had plunged the nation into further sorrow on a day when Nigerians were already in grief over the loss of many other innocent lives in the church bombing in Bauchi State.

Jonathan assured air travellers in the country that every possible effort will be made to ensure that the right lessons were learnt from the tragic loss of lives in the plane crash and that further measures will be put in place to boost aviation safety in the country.

He prayed that God Almighty will grant families of the victims of the plane crash the courage and fortitude to bear their loss.

Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Aviation, Anne Ene-Ita, who reacted to the crash in Abuja, described the accident as "very unfortunate" and assured that search and rescue had begun.

"For all of us in the aviation sector as well as Nigerians as

a whole, it is very unfortunate. Well, search and rescue operations are on.

"We don't have any further information for now. Please, bear with us, we will be with you as soon as we get information from Lagos.

"The incident happened nearer Lagos than here. So, we are waiting for Lagos to give us more information.

"So, I'm pleading with all Nigerians to bear with us. It is a very sad incident. It is going to affect each and every one of us one way or the other, family members, friends may be in there. So let us pray that all is well," the ministry's statement said.

Also, Special Assistant to the Aviation Minister, Oche Elias, said the ministry understands the pains and anxiety of Nigerians and appealed for understanding, assuring that the ministry will get to the root of the matter and bring every one culpable to book.

Elias disclosed that the aircraft was only 11 miles to touching the ground when the pilot declared emergency, adding that further information would be made available as investigations continued.

"The aircraft was 11 miles to touch the ground when the pilot declared emergency. The pilot declared emergency and the incident happened at about 4 nautical miles to the airport.

"On the nature of the emergency, we don't want to speculate. How many dead or alive, we don't want to speculate, but search and rescue is going on," he said.

Suicide bomber, eight others killed in Bauchi church blast

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which was to be detonated was intercepted under a bridge near the church.

and give useful information to security agencies to enable them bring those involved in the incident to justice.

homeless.

Several thousands more were seen fleeing the troubled spot on Sunday.

However, the Governor, Al-Makura, met with security chiefs in the state on Saturday.

State capital, where he spoke to journalists at the marriage ceremony of children