

**Concorde bodies found, eyes on black box**

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By Tom Heneghan

PARIS (Reuters) - Investigators found the last charred bodies and decoded the black boxes from the Air France Concorde disaster on Thursday but the exact reason why the supersonic plane went down in flames remained unclear.

Local officials said all 113 bodies -- most burned beyond recognition -- had been recovered from the site of Tuesday's crash at Gonesse, near Roissy airport north of Paris, and transferred to a morgue in the capital.



The plane's two black boxes yielded the final communications between the doomed pilot and the control tower and 600 separate items of flight data that needed to be meticulously checked before conclusions could be drawn, aviation officials said.

As investigators continued their probe, grieving relatives of the dead -- mostly German tourists leaving for New York on holiday -- and a German delegation led by Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer prepared to attend an ecumenical service.

French Transport Minister Jean-Claude Gayssot and Interior Minister Jean-Pierre Chevenement were also due to join the service in the Madeleine church where Parisians prayed for Britain's Princess Diana after her fatal car crash here in 1997.

Staff at the capital's two main airports, Roissy-Charles de Gaulle and Orly, planned to observe a minute's silence when the service began at 5:30 (1530 GMT).

"The second black box has been decoded," a Transport Ministry spokeswoman said. "It contains 600 parameters that must be compared with the first black box and verified."

Didier Bonnel, of the accident inquiry section at the Civil Aviation Authority, told Reuters: "We also have to check the history of the plane itself. We can leave no stone unturned."

Investigators have been working around the clock to decipher the data since the black boxes were recovered on Tuesday night.

"I hope we will have the analysis (Thursday) night," Gayssot said on Wednesday. "I think that in the evening we will release some information and clear up a little better what happened."

**PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELLING FOR GROUND CREW**

The harrowing crash, the first fatal accident involving the elegant Concorde in almost a quarter of a century of service, has sent shockwaves through the industry.

Ground crew who worked on the plane were given psychiatric counselling for shock. Politicians said Paris should consider building a third commercial airport to relieve the growing pressure on Orly and Roissy.

The doomed plane was carrying 100 passengers -- 96 Germans, two Danes, an American and an Austrian -- and nine French crew. Two Polish women were among those killed on the ground.

With the pilot unable to abort the take-off safely or gain altitude once in the air, the airliner plunged into an hotel in Gonesse, killing all 109 on board and four people on the ground.

A criminal investigation for manslaughter was formally launched on Wednesday and French newspapers reported that investigators had seized maintenance documents relating to the repair work on the engine's thrust reverser.

Air France announced it would pay an advance of 140,000 francs to relatives "for their immediate material needs" and also pay for victims' funerals and any psychological treatment their relatives might need.

**AIR FRANCE SEES NO LINK TO REPAIR**

Air France said pilot Christian Marty had asked for a defective part in the thrust reverser, which slows the jet on landing, to be replaced while his plane waited to depart.

The work took half an hour and an Air France spokesman said there was no evidence linking the repairs to the crash.

Philippe Miot of the CGT union at Air France agreed, saying: "It is not because there was work done that there is an automatic link to the accident."

Union leaders said nobody had been suspended and the 100-strong Concorde service team, shocked by the unprecedented disaster, had been offered psychiatric counselling.

France grounded its remaining five Concorde pending the crash investigation findings, but Gayssot said he thought the fleet might be back in the air "in the next few days".

British Airways, which operates seven Concorde, resumed its supersonic services on Wednesday after cancelling two flights on Tuesday in the immediate aftermath of the Paris crash.

One of Concorde's British test pilots, Brian Trubshaw, insisted it was still safe to fly and dismissed talk that the disaster marked the beginning of the end for the jet.

"Obviously we have got to find out what caused the accident but I think it is terribly wrong for people to say -- without in any way trying to diminish the tragedy -- that this is the end of Concorde," he told Reuters.



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