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# MEDIA RELEASE

## **UPDATE ON INVESTIGATION (AIC 24-1003) INTO BN-2B-26 ISLANDER, P2-SAM, COLLISION WITH TERRAIN IN SAPMANGA AREA**

The Papua New Guinea Accident Investigation Commission (AIC) successfully accessed the aircraft accident site with the support of the Joint Coordination Recovery/Extraction Team. The site, located in challenging terrain, was accessed on 27 December 2024. AIC's onsite investigation activities were carried out over four days, coinciding with the recovery efforts led by the Joint Coordination Recovery/Extraction Team.

Initial observations at the site revealed substantial damage to the aircraft upon impact. Tragically, all passengers onboard sustained fatal injuries. A post-impact fire severely consumed the cockpit and cabin.

In addition to the onsite investigation, the AIC teams based in Lae and Port Moresby have been actively gathering evidence and conducting interviews with relevant persons and agencies, including the operator, to gain further insights into the accident.

The onsite investigation concluded on 30 December 2024. The AIC, in collaboration with the Joint Coordination Recovery/Extraction Team, completed the recovery of the remains of the deceased victims, and all parties departed the accident site on 31 December 2024.

To ensure a dignified and thorough recovery process, the AIC deployed a forensic pathologist with expertise in aircraft accident investigations to Lae on 25 December 2024. This expert worked closely with the recovery team to manage the careful and proper recovery of the victims' remains. Autopsies were subsequently conducted at the Angau Hospital mortuary in Lae, as part of a coronial inquiry running parallel to the AIC's safety investigation.

Without limiting the scope of the investigation, the AIC's is looking into a range of areas, including weather conditions, flight routes, aircraft systems, maintenance and operational practices, organisational and safety management systems, communication protocols, personnel training, navigation aids, and regulatory oversight.

As mandated by law, the AIC's investigations are carried out independently with the sole purpose of improving aviation safety. The AIC does not assign blame or liability to any individual or organisation.

In line with Annex 13 of the Convention on International Civil Aviation, the AIC will publish a Preliminary Report within 30 days of the accident. This report will detail the validated facts identified during the initial stages of the investigation and will be accessible on the AIC's official website ([www.aic.gov.pg](http://www.aic.gov.pg)). Should any safety deficiencies be identified during the investigation, the AIC will promptly issue safety recommendations to the appropriate authorities, including international counterparts, to facilitate preventive safety measures.

On behalf of the AIC, I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims of this tragic accident. Our thoughts remain with those affected during this difficult time.

We are deeply grateful to all the government agencies and private entities involved in the coordinated recovery efforts, which successfully overcame the significant challenges posed by adverse weather conditions and the rugged terrain.

The AIC remains committed to conducting a thorough and impartial investigation, adhering to the highest standards of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) Annex 13, to determine the contributing factors to this accident and to address any safety deficiencies.

*Authorised for release by:*

**Maryanne J. Wal**

*Chief Commissioner*