Preliminary Report on the Accident involving a Cessna 172E aircraft with nationality and registration marks 5N-ASR, operated by Skypower Express Airways Nigeria Limited, which occurred during approach to Runway 17 at Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, Owerri (DNIM), on 16 December 2025

Operator:	Skypower Express Airways Nigeria Limited
Owner:	YOMED Nigeria Limited
Aircraft type and model:	Cessna 172E
Manufacturer:	REIMS Aviation S. A., Reims, France, under licence from Cessna Aircraft Company, USA
Year of manufacture:	1968
Nationality and registration marks:	5N-ASR
Serial number:	FR172-00366
Location:	About 270 m from the threshold on the Approach Path of RWY 17, DNIM, at coordinates 5°26' 28.8384" N, 7°12'9.8028" E.
Date and time:	16 December, 2025 at about 20:02 h *All times in this report are local time equivalent to UTC+1 unless otherwise stated.*

INTRODUCTION

The Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau (NSIB) was notified of the occurrence by the Federal Airports Authority of Nigeria (FAAN). Investigators were dispatched to the occurrence site the following day. They commenced post-occurrence assessments under the provisions of the Civil Aviation (Investigation of Air Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2023 and Annex 13 to the Convention on International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

This Preliminary Report details the initial facts, discussions, and findings surrounding the occurrence. It includes information gathered from witness statements, evidence, and a preliminary inspection of the site and the aircraft.

This report presents the status of the notification's processing. Its content may still change and does not necessarily bind the conclusions published in the investigation's Final Report.

The investigation is ongoing.

1.0 FACTUAL INFORMATION

1.1 History of the flight

On 16 December 2025, a Cessna 172E aircraft, with nationality and registration marks 5N-ASR, operated by Skypower Express Airways Nigeria Limited, was scheduled for a positioning flight from Hassan Usman Katsina International Airport, (DNKA) Kaduna to Obafemi Jerimiah Awolowo International Airport (DNPO), Omagwa, Port Harcourt, under a Visual Flight Rules (VFR) flight plan to conduct Banner Towing operations. On board were four persons, including two flight crew, and two passengers (company representatives), with a fuel endurance of 4 hours 30 minutes. The Captain was the Pilot Flying (PF), while the Co-pilot was the Pilot Monitoring (PM).

At about 16:17 h, 5N-ASR departed DNKA after being cleared by Kaduna Tower to 8,500 ft Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL).

During the post-occurrence interview, the flight crew stated that the aircraft was about 45 NM from ABC[1], they were vectored by Air Traffic Control (ATC) to Heading 090 to avoid a Prohibited Zone. Subsequently, 5N-ASR was vectored back to its original track and heading. The flight continued uneventfully.

Information retrieved from a Garmin Aera 660 - a GPS device recovered from 5N-ASR shows that the diversion took the aircraft to the left of its original track.

According to the flight crew, at about 50 NM to DNPO, 5N-ASR was vectored to intercept Radial 040 POT[2]. After reporting established, 5N-ASR was further vectored to intercept Radial 020 POT. While performing this manoeuvre, the flight crew reported a sudden loss of engine power and declared EMERGENCY to Port Harcourt Approach. The DNPO Tower instructed 5N-ASR to contact Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, (DNIM) Owerri Tower on 118.4 MHz to report the situation.

[1] The identifier for Abuja Airport VOR Station
[2] The identifier for Port Harcourt VOR Station

At about 19:56 h, 5N-ASR contacted Owerri Tower and reported en route to Port Harcourt but experiencing a "Technical issue" with the intention of landing at DNIM. Owerri ATC responded, "Okay, clear to OWR".

At 20:00 h, Owerri Tower further stated "Owerri at 1900 UTC, Surface wind Calm, Visibility 8 km, Weather Nil, Cloud Few 330 meters, QNH 1009, Temperature 29, Dew point 24", to which the crew acknowledged. The crew requested the runway in use, and Owerri Tower responded, "Runway 17 in use".

Afterwards, the flight crew reported sighting another aircraft on Approach to RWY 17 and contacted ATC to confirm. Owerri ATC responded affirmatively, "The aircraft is landing Runway 17 now".

The Owerri Tower transcript revealed that the other aircraft had landed on the hour and reported Marshaller in sight, as instructed by ATC.

During the post-occurrence interview, the flight crew stated that, after sighting the other aircraft on the runway, the crew decided to continue "swerving from left to right, S-pattern in the air, to delay the Approach due to the traffic."

Subsequently, ATC contacted 5N-ASR for details of the technical issue and to confirm its intention to land in Owerri. The flight crew reported ENGINE VIBRATION and affirmed it would land in Owerri. Tower further requested the distance and the flight level maintained at that moment. The flight crew stated that the field was in sight and that they were positioned for RWY 17. ATC gave landing clearance to 5N-ASR, "Surface wind Calm, Runway 17, QNH 1009, cleared to land", and the flight crew acknowledged.

At about 20:03 h, the pilot of the other aircraft contacted Owerri Tower, "Confirm you have fire services. You can just check on them [5N-ASR] because we saw them approaching beyond the red lights when we were parking." Owerri Tower responded, "Copied".

Shortly afterwards, Owerri Tower contacted 5N-ASR, but there was no response from the flight crew. Then, the pilot of the other aircraft contacted Owerri Tower, "Can you call and send the fire rescue team, please, please do that for them [5N-ASR]" and Owerri Tower responded, "Copied".

At about 20:04 h, the pilot of the other aircraft contacted Tower to report seeing beams of light purportedly from flashlights, beyond the Approach Path of Runway 17. Owerri Tower copied. At about 20:06 h, the pilot of the other aircraft contacted Owerri Tower to request taxiing to the final approach of Runway 17 for a better view to avoid delay. Thereafter, they reported seeing a fire truck moving towards RWY 17 Threshold.

At about 20:08 h, Tower contacted the pilot of the other aircraft to request position and stated that the situation regarding 5N-ASR had not yet been ascertained. Tower reported having no contact with 5N-ASR and instructed the fire truck not to proceed towards the threshold of the RWY 17 Approach Path. Then, the pilot of the other aircraft requested taxiing to RWY 17 to enable them to report the situation appropriately. Tower cleared the United Nigeria aircraft as follows: "QNH 1009, taxi hold short RWY 17". Shortly afterwards, while at the Stop Way RWY 17, the pilot of the other aircraft reported sighting 5N-ASR just before the Approach Lights and requested to continue the taxi and backtrack RWY 17. Owerri Tower acknowledged and granted the request.

The Duty Air Traffic Controller (DATCO) notified the Airport Rescue and Fire-fighting Services (ARFFS), and the post-occurrence report indicated that the officers arrived at the site at 20:14 h and commenced rescue operations. The occupants were rescued through the right-side cabin door.

The flight crew sustained no injuries, while the two passengers sustained serious injuries.

The accident occurred at night in Visual Meteorological Conditions.

1.2 Injuries to persons

Injuries	Crew	Passengers	Total in the Aircraft	Others
Fatal	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
Serious	Nil	2	Nil	Nil
Minor	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil
None	2	Nil	Nil	Nil
Total	2	2	4	Nil

1.3 Damage to Aircraft

The aircraft was substantially damaged.

1.4 Other damage

Nine approach lights on the Approach Path of Runway 17 were damaged.

Figure 1: A damaged approach light on Row 11

Figure 2: Another damaged approach light on Row 10

1.5 Personnel information

1.5.1 Captain

Nationality:	Nigerian
Age:	57 years
Licence type:	Airline Transport Pilot Licence (Aeroplane)
Licence:	Valid till 15 September 2028
Aircraft ratings:	Aeroplane - Single engine/Multi engine **Part 1:** TBM-850
Medical certificate:	Valid till 18 August 2026
Simulator:	Not available
Instructors' rating:	Valid till 2 September 2026
Instrument rating:	Valid till 2 September 2025

Proficiency check:	Not available
Total flying time:	5,100 h
Total on type:	505 h
Total on type (PIC):	505 h
Last 90 days:	30 h
Last 28 days:	10 h
Last 7 days:	Not available
Last 24 hours:	Nil

1.5.2 Co-pilot

Nationality:	Nigerian
Age:	37 years
Licence type:	Commercial Pilot Licence (Aeroplane)
Licence:	Valid till 21 February 2029
Aircraft ratings:	Aeroplane - Single engine/Multi engine
	Part 2: EMB-135/145
Medical certificate:	Valid till 26 January 2026
Simulator:	Not available
Instrument rating:	Valid till 11 August 2024
Proficiency check:	Not available
Total flying time:	543 h
Total on type:	241 h
Total on all types (PIC):	304 h
Last 90 days:	01:05 h
Last 28 days:	01:05 h
Last 7 days:	Not available
Last 24 hours:	Nil

1.6 Aircraft information

1.6.1 General information

Type:	Cessna C172E
Manufacturer:	REIMS Aviation S. A., Reims, France, under license from Cessna Aircraft Company, USA
Date of manufacture:	1968
Serial number:	FR172-00366
Registered operator:	Skypower Express Airways Nigeria Limited
Registration number:	5N-ASR
Certificate of Airworthiness:	Valid till 15 December 2026
Certificate of Insurance:	Valid till 3 March 2026
Certificate of Registration:	Issued 16 May 2011
Noise certificate:	Not Applicable
Airframe time:	2,381 h
Cycles since new (CSN):	3,412

1.6.2 Engines

Model:	IO-360D9B
Manufacturer:	Continental Aerospace Technologies, Inc., USA
Year of manufacture	2012
Serial number:	1006247
Time Since New:	1,049 h
Cycles Since New:	Not available

1.6.3 Propeller

Model:	Not available
Manufacturer:	McCauley Propeller Systems, USA
Year of manufacture:	Not available
Serial number:	962170
Time Since New:	Not available
Time Since Overhaul	1,049:28 h
Cycles Since New:	Not available
Fuel type used:	AVGAS 110L

Note on Maintenance:

The Techlog of 15 December 2025 shows that a test flight lasted 35 minutes.

1.7 Meteorological information

Meteorological information for DNIM was as follows

Time	**1800 Z**	**1900 Z**	**2000 Z**
Wind	Calm	Calm	Calm
Visibility	10km	8 km	8 Km
Weather	Nil	Nil	Nil
Cloud	Few 360 m	Few 330 m	Few 330 m
Temperature/Dew point	31°C/23°C	29°C/24°C	28°C/24°C
QNH	1008 hPa	1009 hPa	1010hPa

1.8 Aids to navigation

A Garmin Aera 660 GPS was installed on board the aircraft.

The status of navigational aids at Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport on the day of the occurrence was as follows;

VHF 114.9 MHz (VOR/DME)	–	Serviceable
VHF 110.9 MHz (ILS/DME)	–	Unserviceable
LLWAS	–	Unserviceable
Automatic AIS ATS	–	Serviceable
Wind sock, wind velocity indicators	–	Serviceable

1.9 Communications

There was communication between the crew and Air Traffic Control within the scope of information available at the time of reporting.

VHF 118.4 MHz (Mains frequency)	–	Serviceable
VHF 121.7 MHz (Domestic frequency)	–	Serviceable
VHF 124.9 MHz (Port Harcourt Control frequency)	–	Serviceable

1.10 Aerodrome information

Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, Owerri, with location indicator DNIM, has a bidirectional runway with orientations 17 and 35. The length and breadth of the runways are 2,700 m (8,858 ft) and 45 m (148 ft), respectively, with asphalt/concrete surfaces.

The Aerodrome Reference Point is 05°25'38"N, 007°12'22"E and an elevation of 114 m (375 ft) Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL). Runway 35 has a Precision Approach Lighting System (PALS) while Runway 17 has a Simple Approach Lighting System (SALS).

The Airport operational hours are from 0600 – 1800 UTC; fuelling and handling services are not available. The airport has Category 6 fire-fighting capability.

The Aeronautical Information Publication (AIP) reports on the airport services as follows:

Handling	-	Not available
Fuelling facilities and capacity	-	Not available
Rescue equipment	-	Available

The grass verge along the Approach Path of RWY 17 was littered with disused concrete slabs.

1.11 Flight recorders

The aircraft was not fitted with a Flight Data Recorder (FDR) or a Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR), nor was this a requirement under current aviation regulations for this aircraft category.

1.11.1 GPS Data

The Garmin Aera 660 GPS recovered from the aircraft following the crash was downloaded at the Nigerian Safety Investigation Bureau, Transport Safety Laboratory, Abuja, and the aircraft's flight path and track information was deduced.

It shows that the aircraft departed Runway 05 at Hassan Usman Katsina International Airport (DNKA), Kaduna at 15:16:44 Z. The last recorded point was at coordinates latitude 5º26′ 28.8384″, longitude 7º12′9.8028″ at 19:13:40 Z, 270 m short of Runway 17 on the extended centerline at Sam Mbakwe International Cargo Airport, Owerri.

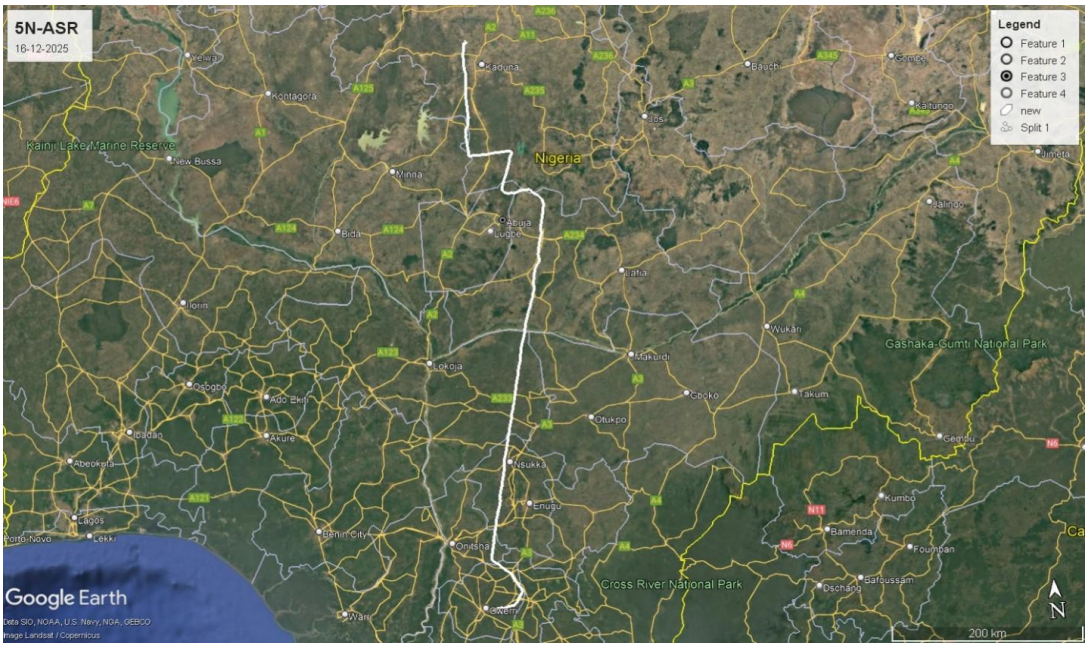

Figure 3: GPS track from DNKA to crash point (DNIM)

Figure 4: Final Portion of the flight

1.12 Wreckage and impact information

Impact marks show that the aircraft impacted the three rows of the approach Lights, damaging nine Approach Lights in all.

The aircraft wreckage was found about 270 m from the threshold of Runway 17, at the coordinates 5°26' 28.8384"N, 7°12'9.8028"E, about 24 m from the edge of the access road.

The aircraft was found relatively intact, overturned onto its wings and with its nose pointing away from Runway 17 and towards the Approach Path. Five approach lights were trapped underneath the wreckage.

The Nose Landing Gear, detached from the Engine Firewall, and was found 17 m away from the main wreckage. The skin of the lower engine cowling at the point of detachment of the nose landing gear was torn and dented due to impact with terrain.

Dislodged earth and dried grass were found embedded in the torn skin. The Nose and Main Landing Gear Tyres remained inflated.

The two propeller blades were found intact and showed no evidence of deformation due to ground impact. The propeller spinner was also intact and attached but had a shallow lateral dent adjacent to one of the propeller blades.

The Right Wing was found bent downward at about a 30-degree angle, beginning about 2.3 m from the Wing Root. The left Wing was dented and twisted slightly downward at the Leading Edge Wingtip. Approach Light Poles had punctured both Wings tanks. There was no evidence of fluid spillage, such as aviation fuel, hydraulic fluid, or engine oil. The Flaps were in the Fully Extended Position; the Left Aileron was found in the UP position, while the right aileron was in the DOWN position.

The Right-Side Cabin Door was found open, while the Left-Side Cabin Door was found closed and latched from the inside. The inspection of the Cabin showed that the Front Seats remained attached to the Seat Rails while the Rear Seats had detached from the Floor Attachment Points. The Rear Passenger Seats were attached to the aircraft floor at four points, two fore and two aft. The Fore Attachment points were found fractured transversely along the diameter of the Bolt Holes, while the aft attachment points were found whole, although the Mounting Bolts were not found.

The Windshield was found intact. The right section of the Rear Windows had been punctured by Banner Towing Equipment located inside the Cabin. The left section of the Rear Windows, as well as the passenger-side window, was broken.

Several items of cargo, including banner towing equipment and a toolbox, were found within the cabin. Several smaller tools from the toolbox were recovered around the wreckage.

The tip of the vertical stabilizer was damaged by impact with the ground after the aircraft overturned, and served to prop the aircraft in its inverted position. The Right Horizontal Stabilizer was dented on its Leading Edge towards the Wingtip, with paint

transfer marks from impact with an Approach Light. The Stabiliser Tip Fairing had been dislodged and was not found.

Figure 5: Aircraft final position viewed from the right side

Figure 6: Aircraft at its final position

Figure 7: Some views of the aircraft at the occurrence site

Figure 8: The detached nose landing gear

Figure 9: A view of the instrument panel in the overturned aircraft

Figure 10: The aircraft cockpit area

Figure 11: The aircraft name plate

Figure 12: The aircraft after wreckage recovery

1.13 Medical and pathological information

A toxicology test was conducted on the crew, and the results were negative.

1.14 Fire

There was no fire.

1.15 Survival aspect

According to the report of the Aerodrome Rescue and Fire-fighting Services (ARFFS), the Fire Watch Room was notified of the occurrence by the Duty Air Traffic Controller (DATCO) and proceeded to the crash site immediately. The ARFFS arrived at the crash site a few minutes later and commenced rescue operations.

The DATCO report indicated that the officers arrived at the site at 20:14 h and commenced rescue operations.

The flight crew sustained no injury, while the passengers were found unconscious. They were evacuated and transported to the airport medical facility, where the unconscious passengers were resuscitated. Later, all the occupants were transported to the Nigerian Air Force Hospital (NAF), Owerri, for further medical care. The NAF hospital discharged all four occupants of the aircraft within 4 days of the accident.

The post-occurrence inspection revealed that the crew and passengers were evacuated through the right-side cabin door.

The flight crew stated during the post-accident interview that the ARFFS arrived at the crash site within 5 minutes after the aircraft overturned.

All four occupants were evacuated through the Right-Side Cabin Door.

The ARFFS reported that there were no signs of fuel or fluid spillage at the accident site.

1.16 Test and research

The Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) recovered from the aircraft was taken to the Bureau's Transport Safety Laboratory in Abuja for inspection. The inspection revealed that the that the battery was to be replaced by October 2015..

1.17 Organisational and management information

Messrs Skypower Express Airways Nigeria Limited was issued a Permit for Aerial Aviation Services (PAAS) with licence number NCAA/ATR313/PAAS13 on 7 March 2025, valid till 6 March 2028. The Main Base of Skypower Express Airways is located at Hassan Usman Katsina International Airport (DNKA), Kaduna, Nigeria.

2.0 FINDINGS

1. The crew were appropriately licensed to operate the flight.
2. The instrument ratings of both crew had expired.
3. The flight departed Kaduna airport with its intended destination, Port Harcourt, for Banner-Towing operations.
4. The flight diverted to DNIM due to reported technical issues.
5. The occupants were rescued by the Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting Service (ARFFS) and transported to a hospital for medical attention.
6. The passengers were seriously injured but have since recuperated at the time of this report.
7. The aircraft came to rest about 270 m from the threshold of Runway 17, along the extended centreline, in an inverted position with the nose pointing away from Runway 17 and towards the approach path.
8. The aircraft was intact except for the nose landing gear, which was found about 17 m from the nose of the aircraft.
9. The aircraft collided with three rows of approach lights, damaging nine along its trajectory.
10. There was no evidence of fluid spills at the site.
11. No fuel was found in the aircraft wing tanks during post-occurrence inspection.
12. There was no evidence of fire.
13. The flight controls were found to be functional during the post-occurrence inspection following recovery of the aircraft wreckage.
14. The Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) was found unserviceable due to the expiry of the installed battery.
15. DNPO reported an inability to track the aircraft on radar while en route.
16. The grass verge along the approach part is littered with disused concrete slabs.
17. The Techlog for 15 December 2025 shows that a test flight lasted 35 minutes.

3.0 IMMEDIATE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 Safety Recommendation 2026-

The Federal Airport Authority of Nigeria (FAAN) should evacuate the disused concrete slabs littered along the grass verge of the Approach Path to Runway 17.

FURTHER INVESTIGATIVE ACTION

1. Examination of the engine and propeller assembly.
2. Examination of the airframe and engine fuel system