भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER LUCKNOW 13 JULY 2025

Height restrictions within 20 km radius of Noida airport

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA ■ Noida

No constructions or tree planting is allowed within a 20 km radius of the Noida International Airport without a 'Height Clearance' or 'No Objection Certificate' (NOC) from the Airport Authority of India (AAI), officials said.

Noida International Airport on Friday issued an advisory for builders and local authorities and others to follow height limits within 20 km radius of the airport.

Getting a clearance for any such activity with the area is not merely a regulatory formality but a vital requirement to safeguard flight operations and navigation infrastructure from potential obstructions, Noida airport's chief operating officer (COO) Kiren Jain said.

"As Noida International Airport nears commissioning, it is imperative for the public, real estate developers, and local authorities to strictly adhere to the height restriction regulations laid down by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to ensure the safety and efficiency of aircraft operations," Jain said in a press statement. The statement further added that all concerned parties must approach local bodies before initiating any vertical development within the 20 km perimeter.

These bodies will consult the Colour-Coded Zoning Map (CCZM) issued by AAI to assess permissible height limits. Based on the proposed construction height, the applicant may be directed to apply for a Height NOC via AAI's NOCAS portal, the press note said.

This process is governed by GSR 751(E), Ministry of Civil Aviation (Height Restrictions for Safeguarding of Aircraft Operations) Rules, 2015, which prohibits any unapproved construction within safeguarded airspace. Any violation poses serious risks to Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) and the integrity of navigation systems, compromising overall flight safety.

To enforce compliance, the Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions caused by Buildings and Trees) Rules, 2023, empower authorities to initiate legal proceedings, including demolition of unauthorised structures or trees and imposition of penalties under the Aircraft Rules, the issued statement stated.

All stakeholders, especially builders, landowners, and residents, are strongly advised to halt any unapproved development activities within the safeguarded zone and obtain the necessary NOC from AAI at the earliest.

Timely compliance is essential to support safe, efficient, and obstruction-free operations at the upcoming Noida International Airport, the statement added.

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AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR JAIPUR 13 JULY 2025

एयरपोर्टः दुबई फ्लाइट रही साढ़े पांच घंटे लेट

जयपुर | एयरपोर्ट से शनिवार को एक इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट साढ़े पांच घंटे लेट रही। इससे दुबई जाने वाले 150 से भी अधिक यात्री परेशान होते रहे। मामला एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की फ्लाइट आईएक्स-195 का है। ये जयपुर से सुबह 5:55 बजे दुबई के लिए रवाना होनी थी। फ्लाइट करीब साढ़े 5 घंटे लेट 11:30 बजे रवाना हुई, जबकि दुबई से आने वाली निर्धारित शेड्यूल पर जयपुर आई थी।

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DAINIK NAVJYOTI JAIPUR 13 JULY 2025

पटना हवाई अड्डा को बम से उड़ाने की धमकी

एजेंसी/पटना। बिहार की राजधानी पटना के जय प्रकाश नारायण अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर ईमेल के जरिए बम से उड़ाने की धमकी मिलने के बाद सुरक्षा व्यवस्था कड़ी कर दी गई है। हवाई अड्डे के आधिकारिक सूत्रों ने बताया कि इस धमकी के बाद उच्च-स्तरीय सुरक्षा अलर्ट जारी कर दिया गया है। यह धमकी सीधे हवाई अड्डे के निदेशक के आधिकारिक ईमेल आईडी पर भेजी गई थी, जिसमें दावा किया गया था कि हवाई अड्डे को उड़ा दिया जाएगा। हवाईअड्डा पर सीआईएसएफ, स्थानीय पुलिस, बम निरोधक दस्ता और डॉग स्क्वॉयड को तैनात किया गया था।

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
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FREE PRESS JOURNAL MUMBAI 13 JULY 2025

Rewa airport boundary wall collapses in heavy rain

Heavy rainfall in Rewa, Shahdol

Airport wall collapses in Rewa after heavy rainfall on Saturday

Our Staff Reporter
BHOPAL

Rewa airport boundary wall has collapsed due to heavy rain on Saturday. The boundary wall of the airport was built at a cost of Rs 300 crore. PM Narendra Modi had inaugurated it on October 24, 2024. On the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, a large part of the boundary wall of Rewa airport collapsed due to rain. After this, water also filled inside the airport. Rewa recorded 205mm rainfall.

Airport Director AK Mandal informed Free Press, 'There was heavily water-logging up to 4ft-5ft in the campus of Airport after heavy rainfall. It led to the collapse of boundary wall. Rainy water reached up to the runway. The entire airport is a low-lying area. So water from agriculture field rushes towards the Airport side leading to heavy water-logging. We have made green field to check the water logging but this time it was not sufficient.'

Heavy rainfall paralysed normal life in Rewa district. There was flood-like situation due to heavy rain in various districts like Shahdol, Mandla, Seoni, Balaghat, Maihar and Dindori. Water level of Bansagar dam swelled in Shahdol triggering flood-like situation in low-lying areas in Shahdol.

An alert has been issued for very heavy rainfall, thunderstorm and lightning, gusty winds (30-40 kmph) In Vidisha, Rajgarh, Guna, Ashoknagar, Shivpuri, Katni, Jabalpur, Damoh, Sagar, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh and Niwari districts. Heavy rainfall, thunderstorm and lightning, gusty winds (30-40 kmph) are likely in Raisen, Narmadapuram, Dhar, Indore, Ratlam, Ujjain, Shajapur, Agar, Mandsaur, Neemuch, Gwalior, Datia, Bhind, Morena, Sheopur, Sidhi, Rewa, Mauganj, Satna, Shahdol, Umaria, Dindori, Narsinghpur, Chhindwara, Seoni, Mandla, Balaghat, Panna, Maihar Pandhurna, Bhopal, Sehore, Betul, Harda, Burhanpur, Khandwa, Khargone, Barwani, Alirajpur, Jhabua and Dewas districts.

RAINFALL IN 24 HOURS

PLACE	MM
Beohari	251.0
Majhgaon	238.4
Gudh	220.0
Huzur	205.0
Rewa	203.6
Unchehra	195.0
Ajaigarh	190.2
Rampur	189.0
Sidhi	186.8
Churhat	170.0
Rampur Baghelan	154.4

Waterlogging was up to 4ft-5ft in Airport campus; water reached up to runway: Airport director

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HINDUSTAN TIMES MUMBAI 13 JULY 2025

CM SETS SEPT 30 TARGET FOR NAVI MUM AIRPORT

CM Fadnavis, along with his deputy Eknath Shinde, visited the airport on Saturday noon to take stock of the progress.

G Mohiuddin Jeddy and Yogesh Naik
letters@hindustantimes.com

NAVI MUMBAI: With over 94% of the construction complete, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis has announced a target of September 30 for the formal inauguration of the long-awaited Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA). The greenfield project, which has seen years of delays, is being readied at a rapid pace, with the state government now pushing to complete the remaining work in time for Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate it.

Fadnavis, along with deputy chief minister Eknath Shinde, visited the NMIA site on Saturday noon to take stock of the progress. "The airport is progressing rapidly, with around 14,000 workers on-site. If needed, the workforce will be doubled to meet the deadline. Although the September 30 target is ambitious, we've aligned it with the Prime Minister's availability for the inauguration," the CM told the media.

The airport project, billed as one of India's most modern aviation hubs, is being developed by the Adani Group-led Navi Mumbai International Airport Limited (NMIAL) in partnership with CIDCO. It will eventually handle up to 90 million passengers annually, more than double the capacity of Mumbai's existing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

Final work underway

Officials say the runway is fully completed, while terminal construction is nearing the finish line. Ongoing work includes interior fittings, façade installations, and ceiling work. Most of the necessary construction and regulatory clearances are in place, with only a few commercial operation licences pending, which will be processed in parallel with remaining construction.

"The goal is to have all operational permissions ready by the time we begin commercial flights," Fadnavis said. Domestic operations are expected to commence two months after the inauguration, following security handover and clearance by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). International services will be launched a few months thereafter.

Mumbai-Pune Eway missing link deadline

Fadnavis has also urged the Maharashtra State Road Development Corporation (MSRDC) to advance the completion of the 'missing link' project on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway. While the current deadline is December, Fadnavis, during a site visit on Saturday, asked officials to aim for November.

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MILLENNIUM POST DELHI 14 JULY 2025

DIRECTIVE AIMS TO PREVENT OBSTRUCTIONS TO FLIGHTS

Noida Int'l Airport issues 20-km ban on unapproved construction, tree planting

DIPIKA KIROLA

GREATER NOIDA: As the Noida International Airport nears completion, authorities have issued a strict advisory of "no construction or tree planting" is allowed within a 20-kilometre radius of the airport without a Height Clearance or No Objection Certificate (NOC) from the Airport Authority of India (AAI).

This advisory is aimed at real estate developers, builders, local authorities, landowners, and residents in the surrounding area. According to Kiren Jain, Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Noida International Airport, obtaining clearance

is not just a formality—it is a critical safety measure to protect flight operations and navigation systems from potential obstructions.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has issued height restriction regulations under the GSR 751(E) Rules, 2015 to safeguard aircraft operations. These rules prohibit any unapproved vertical development within safeguarded airspace, as it could impact the Obstacle Limitation Surfaces (OLS) and risk the safety of aircraft, a YEIDA press statement reads.

All concerned parties must first consult local authorities before starting any construction or planting activity. These authorities will refer to the Colour-Coded Zoning Map (CCZM) provided by AAI to determine the permissible height at the proposed site. If the planned height exceeds the limit, applicants must apply for a Height NOC.

According to officials, to ensure strict compliance, the government has introduced the Aircraft (Demolition of Obstructions caused by Buildings and Trees) Rules, 2023. These rules empower authorities to take legal action, including demolition of unauthorized structures or trees and imposing penalties under the Aircraft Rules. "The airport has strongly urged builders and residents to immediately stop any unapproved development within the 20 km radius and apply for the necessary NOC without delay. Timely compliance is essential to ensure safe, efficient, and obstruction-free operations at the upcoming Noida International Airport, which is expected to become a key hub for air travel in the region" said a senior Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL) official.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA AHMEDABAD 13 JULY 2025

Start flights from Navi Mum airport by end of Sept: Fadnavis

B B Nayak, Nisha Nambiar & Anurag Bende | TNN

Navi Mumbai: Stating that 94% of the work on the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) was over, CM **Devendra Fadnavis** on Saturday said the remaining work should proceed in such a way that the first passenger flight can start operations by end of Sept.

He said airport authorities had been asked to increase the numerical strength of workers to meet this target. Along with the airport, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway 'missing link' project will help the state govt develop an economic corridor comprising Mumbai, Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune, he said.

For the 'missing link' project too, though MSRDC has set a Dec 2025 deadline, the CM said he was hoping for completion in Oct-Nov.

On his way to Pune by road, Fadnavis reviewed the progress of the airport. Fadnavis said the new airport would have the world's 'fastest baggage claim system'.

The airport's initial phases will accommodate 20 million passengers and 0.8 million metric tonnes of cargo annually from Sept 2025, he added.

He expressed satisfaction that PM Modi, who performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the airport in 2018, will also inaugurate the facility in Sept.

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AMAR UJALA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

लखनऊ : टेकऑफ से पहले तकनीकी खराबी रनवे से लौटा विमान

लखनऊ। चौधरी चरण सिंह एयरपोर्ट से रविवार सुबह हैदराबाद के लिए उड़ान भरने के लिए तैयार एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के विमान में टेकऑफ से पहले तकनीकी खराबी आ गई। इस कारण विमान को रनवे से लौटाया गया। जांच के बाद उड़ान को निरस्त कर दिया गया। इस पर फ्लाइट में सवार 150 यात्रियों ने हंगामा किया। सूत्र बताते हैं कि कॉकपिट में कुछ खराबी आ गई थी।

विमान आईएक्स-2816 की सुबह 8:40 बजे बोर्डिंग हो चुकी थी और यात्री भी बैठ चुके थे। विमान उड़ान भरने के लिए तैयार था। अचानक पायलट को कॉकपिट में तकनीकी गड़बड़ी का संदेह हुआ। उसने तत्काल एटीसी को सूचना दी। इसके बाद इंजीनियरों की टीम ने प्रयास किया, लेकिन गड़बड़ी दूर नहीं हो सकी। आखिरकार उड़ान रद्द कर दी। संवाद

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
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AMAR UJALA | DELHI | 14 JULY 2025

एएआईबी के पूर्व प्रमुख बोले-पायलटों की भूमिका पर निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी

अहमदाबाद विमान हादसे पर कहा, एजेंसी को अपनी जांच पूरी करने देना चाहिए

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो/एजेंसी

नई दिल्ली/मुंबई/रायगढ़। विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो (एएआईबी) के पूर्व प्रमुख अरबिंदो हांडा ने कहा कि पिछले महीने एअर इंडिया के विमान की दुर्घटना की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट से पायलटों की भूमिका पर निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी होगी। उन्होंने कहा कि हमें अंतिम रिपोर्ट का इंतजार करना चाहिए जिसमें दुर्घटना के सबसे संभावित कारण के बारे में बताया जाएगा। एएआईबी ने एक दिन पहले ही अपनी प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट जारी की है।

हांडा ने कहा कि हमें एएआईबी को निष्पक्ष, निष्पक्ष और पारदर्शी तरीके से जांच पूरी करने की अनुमति देनी चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा कि प्रारंभिक जांच में एएआईबी ने अच्छा काम किया है। आगे, अब जांचकर्ता यह पता लगाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करेंगे कि विमान के ईंधन स्विच क्यों और कैसे हिले और क्या इनमें कोई यांत्रिक या विद्युतीय खराबी थी। हांडा ने 2020 में कोझिकोड में हुई एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस विमान दुर्घटना सहित 100 से अधिक विमान दुर्घटनाओं की जांच की है।

एएआईबी ने शनिवार को जारी अपनी रिपोर्ट में कहा है कि दुर्घटनाग्रस्त बोइंग 787-8 विमान के दोनों ईंधन स्विच उड़ान भरने के तुरंत बाद एक सेकंड के अंतराल में अचानक ऑफ हो गए थे और फिर बाद में ऑन भी हो गए। कॉकपिट वॉयस रिकार्डिंग में एक पायलट दूसरे से यह पूछते सुनाई पड़ता है कि उसने स्विच क्यों बंद कर दिया, जिसपर दूसरा जवाब देता है कि उसने ऐसा नहीं किया। लेकिन जांच में यह नहीं बताया गया है कि कौन पायलट क्या कह रहा है। हांडा ने कहा कि एअर इंडिया की उड़ान संख्या 171 पर एएआईबी की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट के आधार पर किसी भी निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचना जल्दबाजी होगी, जिसमें पायलटों में से एक की भूमिका भी शामिल है। उन्होंने कहा, कुछ जगहों पर, खासकर विदेशी मीडिया में, यह संकेत देने की कोशिश की जा रही है कि किसी एक पायलट की गलती हो सकती है। एक बार फिर, मैं अपने अनुभवी एविएटर्स से अनुरोध करना चाहूंगा कि वे किसी भी तरह की अटकलबाजी से बचें।

यह निष्पक्ष और न्यायसंगत जांच का मामला : मार्टिन

एएआईबी की जांच पर सवाल उठाने वाले विमानन सुरक्षा सलाहकार और मार्टिन कंसल्टिंग के संस्थापक और सीईओ, मार्क डी मार्टिन ने रविवार को हादसे की निष्पक्ष और न्यायसंगत जांच की मांग की। उन्होंने कहा, दुनिया के पायलट बेवकूफ नहीं हैं। दुनिया के पायलट सच्चाई जानते हैं। एक पायलट जो अपने परिवार की रोजी-रोटी के लिए अपनी जान जोखिम में डालता है, वह इस रिपोर्ट के झांसे में नहीं आएगा, भले ही उसे इसकी जानकारी हो। अब समय आ गया है कि हम इस जांच को गंभीरता से लें। यह पायलटों को दोषी ठहराने के लिए किसी के पीछे पड़ने का मामला नहीं है। यह एक निष्पक्ष और न्यायसंगत जांच का मामला है।

पायलटों पर दोष मढ़ने की कोशिश...मार्टिन ने कहा कि सीधी बात है जब इंजन फेल हो गए हैं, जब इंजन तक ईंधन नहीं पहुंच रहा है, तो ईंधन कट-ऑफ की नौबत क्यों आती है? अब वे जानबूझकर पायलटों पर दोष मढ़ना चाहते हैं और ओईएम (ओरिजिनल इक्विपमेंट मैन्युफैक्चरर) को दोषमुक्त करना चाहते हैं, और यह सही नहीं है।

■ पीएम मोदी से हस्तक्षेप की मांग

इस दुर्घटना के वैश्विक प्रभाव की ओर ध्यान दिलाते हुए मार्टिन ने प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से हस्तक्षेप का आग्रह किया। उन्होंने कहा, मैं अपनी बात दोहरा रहा हूं। मैं प्रधानमंत्री से हस्तक्षेप करने का आग्रह करता हूं। हम पक्षपातपूर्ण जांच रिपोर्ट नहीं दे सकते क्योंकि बोइंग 787 विमान दुनिया भर में उड़ान भर रहे हैं और हम बात कर रहे हैं, दुनिया भर के ऑपरेटरों पर इसका असर पड़ रहा है। उन्होंने उन टिप्पणियों को मूर्खतापूर्ण और हास्यास्पद बताया, जिसमें पायलट आत्महत्या जैसी बातें कही जा रही हैं।

■ पायलटों को बदनाम करना ठीक नहीं

भारतीय वाणिज्यिक पायलट एसोसिएशन (आईसीपीए) ने कहा कि एअर इंडिया एआई 171 विमान के चालक दल ने चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों में अपने प्रशिक्षण और जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप काम किया था। पायलटों को अनुमान के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।

■ एअर इंडिया ऐसी लापरवाही नहीं कर सकती

एअर इंडिया विमान हादसे में मारी गई चालक दल की सदस्य मैथिली पाटिल की मां प्रमिला पाटिल ने विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो (एएआईबी) की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट पर प्रतिक्रिया व्यक्त करते हुए कहा कि एअर इंडिया ऐसी लापरवाही नहीं कर सकती। उन्होंने कहा, मैं इस बारे में कुछ नहीं कह सकती, क्योंकि हमें इसके बारे में ज्यादा जानकारी नहीं है। हम गांव वाले हैं। लेकिन मुझे पता है कि सरकार इस मामले को संभाल लेगी।

बोइंग ने कहा-हमारे ईंधन स्विच लॉक सुरक्षित

नई दिल्ली। अहमदाबाद विमान हादसे की चल रही जांच के बीच अमेरिकी संघीय उड्डयन प्रशासन (एफएए) और बोइंग ने कहा कि बोइंग विमानों के ईंधन स्विच लॉक सुरक्षित होते हैं। एफएए की यह जानकारी बीते शुक्रवार को अहमदाबाद विमान हादसे की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट जारी होने के बाद आई है। रिपोर्ट में इंजन ईंधन कटऑफ स्विच पर सवाल उठाए गए थे। नागरिक उड्डयन प्राधिकारियों को भेजे गए एफएए के नोटिफिकेशन में कहा गया है कि ईंधन नियंत्रण स्विच का डिजाइन, लॉकिंग फीचर सहित, विभिन्न बोइंग विमान मॉडलों पर एक समान हैं और यह सुरक्षित होते हैं। ब्यूरो

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BUSINESS LINE DELHI 14 JULY 2025

'Electrical, software faults in spotlight as other factors ruled out for AI crash'

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Aviation experts believe that future lines of enquiry by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) are likely to focus on possible electrical or software malfunction that may have caused the crash of Air India Flight AI 171.

Experts cited the Bureau's preliminary findings ruling out other potential causes such as weather conditions, the aircraft's airworthiness, pilots' competencies, bird strike and substandard fuel.

Quoting the report, experts told *businessline* that given the sudden shutdown of both engines and the pilots' reaction to reverse it, the AAIB "is expected and should seriously investigate the electrical or software fault angle".

Several pilots told *businessline* that "no evidence so far supports any misconduct by the pilots. Even the report does not blame the pilots. However, there is a lot of doubt over electrical or software fault."

FUEL SWITCH

Experts also pointed to a 2018 FAA (US' Federal Aviation Administration) advisory on possible disengagement of the fuel switch locking mechanism on similar Boeing models. However, the advisory was not considered a critical safety issue at the time and not acted upon by Air India, as compliance was not mandatory. Veteran aviator Captain Shakti Lumba asked the AAIB why the position of the fuel control switch is not mentioned in the EAFR.

"AAIB must state if they refer to this switch's physical position or the relay/s in the TCB (Throttle Control Box) position as 'Run' and 'Cutoff'," he said. "The fuel control switch, when moved, makes a distinct sound. Has the voice recorder confirmed this movement of the switch prior to the query by one pilot to the other?"

According to Mark D. Martin of Martin Consulting, that the fuel switches were found in 'run' from the crash evidence itself shuts down the malicious, biased, and appalling "theory of suicide."

Martin said the engine shutdown was most likely due to the faulty Honeywell-made switch, which the FAA alerted airlines to in 2018, or further evidence needs to be reviewed as to what, apart from the switches, caused both engines to shut down on takeoff.

"The crew response was swift and in line with emergency procedures. Everything in the data shows they were trying to save the aircraft, not bring it down," another expert told *businessline*.

Fuel switch locks are safe: US FAA, Boeing to civil aviation authorities

Reuters
Washington/New Delhi/Montreal

The US Federal Aviation Administration and Boeing have privately issued notifications that the fuel switch locks on Boeing planes are safe, a document seen by Reuters showed and four sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The FAA's Continued Airworthiness Notification on July 11 came after a preliminary report on Friday into last month's Boeing 787-8 crash that killed 260 people, raised questions over engine fuel cutoff switches.

The FAA's notification to civil aviation authorities, seen by Reuters, said: "although the fuel control switch design, including the locking feature, is similar on various Boeing airplane models, the FAA does not consider this issue to be an unsafe condition that would warrant an Airworthiness Directive on any Boeing airplane models, including the Model 787."

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BUSINESS LINE DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Plane truth

Don't use Air India crash interim report to assign blame

The preliminary report of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) into the crash of Air India Flight AI 171 offers a chilling finding: fuel supply to both engines was cut off three seconds after take-off from Ahmedabad. Fuel-control switches for each engine, which are not meant to be touched during flight, were found to have moved from "Run" to "Cutoff", effectively shutting down both engines at a critical moment of ascent.

The simultaneous and unexplained cutoff of fuel casts a long shadow over the tragic incident, while also opening up several difficult questions. The AAIB has acknowledged the improbability of accidental activation, as the switches are spring-loaded and mechanically protected against unintended movement. It has not, however, established definitive cause or intent. Was it a mechanical failure? Was there an inadvertent signal from an external system? Or was there a moment of human error under duress that we still do not fully understand?

Further complicating the picture are technical advisories from the past cited by the AAIB report. While the report has not recommended "actions to Boeing 787-8" engine operators and makers "at this stage", it did refer to a 2018 US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) warning regarding potential issues with the fuel control switch locking mechanism on various Boeing models. The warning came after reports that these switches were sometimes installed without the locking feature engaged, potentially allowing for inadvertent movement during flight. This advisory is relevant to the Air India crash, as the aircraft involved, a Boeing 787-8, had the same type of fuel control switches with the same locking mechanism. The fact that such vulnerabilities were known and yet not addressed through binding regulation, raises questions about oversight and compliance.

Reactions from the aviation community have been sharp, particularly from pilots' associations. There is concern that the narrative emerging from the preliminary findings appears too quick to lean on the possibility of pilot error. Excerpts from the cockpit voice recorder, particularly one exchange where one pilot is heard asking, "Why did you cut that off?", have been interpreted by some as suggestive of blame. But without full contextual evidence, such fragments should not be used to cast aspersions, especially when the pilots are no longer alive to respond. Pilots' unions have rightly cautioned against what they perceive as a pattern: a tendency to shift focus towards cockpit error when systemic or design issues may be at play. There is discomfort with the possibility that conclusions may be drawn in ways that shield aircraft manufacturers from deeper scrutiny. The AAIB report is a preliminary document. To extrapolate blame or motive from it is to risk undermining the integrity of the investigation. The final report will hopefully be shaped by exhaustive technical analysis, consultation with experts and full transparency.

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बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड
वर्ष 18 अंक 126

स्पष्टता की कमी

गत 12 जून को अहमदाबाद से लंदन जा रही एयर इंडिया की उड़ान संख्या 171 के दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने के बाद आई एयरक्राफ्ट एक्सिडेंट इन्वेस्टिगेशन ब्यूरो (एएआईबी) की प्रारंभिक जांच के नतीजों ने जवाब देने के बजाय नए प्रश्न खड़े कर दिए हैं। उस हादसे में 260 लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। इंटरनैशनल सिविल एविएशन ऑर्गनाइजेशन (आईसीएओ) की अनुशंसाओं के पालन के अंतर्गत 2012 में गठित एएआईबी की रिपोर्ट महत्त्वपूर्ण है क्योंकि यह टाटा समूह द्वारा एयर इंडिया के अधिग्रहण के तीन साल पूरे होने के कुछ समय बाद आई है। परंतु रिपोर्ट के निष्कर्ष में अटकल वाले तत्व शामिल हैं, जो न तो पीड़ितों के परिजनों को संतुष्ट कर पाएंगे और न ही विमानन उद्योग के सुरक्षा प्रोटोकॉल को स्पष्टता दे पाएंगे। रिपोर्ट में विमान चालकों की भूमिका को लेकर अस्पष्टता भी परेशान करने वाली है।

एयर इंडिया का अहमदाबाद से लंदन जा रहा विमान एआई 171 उड़ान भरने के 30 सेकंड के भीतर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया था। वह विमान एक भीड़ भरे इलाके में चिकित्सकों के छात्रावास पर गिर गया था। दुर्घटना के ठीक पहले एक विमान चालक ने 'मे डे' की आपातकालीन पुकार लगाई थी। एएआईबी की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट कहती है कि इंजनों की ईंधन आपूर्ति उड़ान भरने के तुरंत बाद बंद हो गई थी क्योंकि फ्यूल कंट्रोल स्विचों को 'चालू' से 'बंद' कर दिया गया था। कॉकपिट वॉयस रिकॉर्डर की रिकॉर्डिंग के हवाले से रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि एक पायलट ने दूसरे से पूछा कि उसने फ्यूल स्विच बंद क्यों किया? इस पर दूसरा पायलट कहता है कि उसने स्विच बंद नहीं किया। रिपोर्ट आवाजों की पहचान नहीं करती। रिपोर्ट में 2018 के अमेरिकी फेडरल एविएशन एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन के एक बुलेटिन का भी हवाला दिया गया, जिसमें फ्यूल स्विच की लॉकिंग प्रणाली में दिक्कत की बात कही गई थी। चूंकि वह बुलेटिन मशविरे की प्रकृति का था और इस मुद्दे को असुरक्षित नहीं माना गया था और वह कानूनी रूप से प्रवर्तनीय निर्देशों की मांग नहीं करता था इसलिए एयर इंडिया ने अपने बेड़े के विमानों की जांच नहीं करवाई थी। रिपोर्ट का यह कथन भी अस्पष्टता बढ़ाता है कि बोइंग या जीई जीईएनएक्स 1 इंजन निर्माताओं के लिए किसी कार्रवाई की अनुशंसा नहीं की गई।

एएआईबी की 15 पन्नों की रिपोर्ट के साथ दिक्कत यह है कि इसने पायलटों की चूक की अटकलों को जन्म दिया है। इसे खराब ढंग से कहें तो यह पायलट द्वारा आत्मघाती ढंग से उठाए कदम का संकेत है। रिपोर्ट के नतीजों का पीड़ितों के परिजनों को किए जाने वाले भुगतान पर कोई असर नहीं होगा लेकिन विशेषज्ञों ने रिपोर्ट की तीखी आलोचना की है और कहा है कि फ्यूल बंद होना मानवीय चूक थी या तकनीकी खामी, इस विषय पर अधिक जानकारी की जरूरत है। यह भी लगता है कि रिपोर्ट में प्रस्तुत घटनाक्रम भ्रामक है। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि फ्यूल कंट्रोल स्विच को उड़ान के कुछ ही सेकंड के बाद बंद कर दिया गया। रिपोर्ट यह भी कहती है कि रैम एयर टर्बाइन या बैकअप पॉवर सोर्स जो केवल तभी काम करता है जब दोनों इंजन फेल हो जाते हैं, वह उड़ान भरने के तुरंत बाद सक्रिय हो गया था। इससे संकेत मिलता है कि विमान के जमीन से ऊपर उठते ही दोनों इंजन बंद हो गए थे। कॉकपिट वॉयस रिकॉर्डर तथा अन्य तकनीकी आंकड़ों की पूरी जानकारी के बिना हादसे की वजह पता चलनी मुश्किल है।

नागर विमानन मंत्री राम मोहन नायडू ने सही कहा है कि मीडिया और जनता को नतीजों पर नहीं पहुंचना चाहिए क्योंकि ये प्रारंभिक निष्कर्ष एक जटिल जांच की शुरुआत हैं जो कम से कम एक साल चलेगी। सवाल यह है कि इतनी अस्पष्ट रिपोर्ट जारी क्यों की गई। एएआईबी की जांच टीम के पास विशेषज्ञता की कमी नहीं है। इसका नेतृत्व महानिदेशक के पास है जो भारतीय वायु सेना के पूर्व एरोनॉटिकल इंजीनियर हैं। इसमें अमेरिकी नैशनल ट्रांसपोर्टेशन सेफ्टी बोर्ड के सदस्य, एक एयर ट्रैफिक कंट्रोल अधिकारी और एक विमानन चिकित्सा विशेषज्ञ शामिल हैं। भारत ने आईसीएओ के विशेषज्ञ को भी पर्यवेक्षक दर्जा देने का अनुरोध स्वीकार किया है ताकि जांच के नतीजे अधिक स्पष्ट रूप से सामने आ सकें।

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एयर इंडिया विमान हादसा

प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट से पायलट हताश

दीपक पटेल
नई दिल्ली, 13 जुलाई

अहमदाबाद में पिछले महीने हुए एयर इंडिया एआई 171 विमान हादसे को लेकर आई एक जांच रिपोर्ट के प्रारंभिक निष्कर्षों में ज्ञात तकनीकी समस्याओं को कम करके आंकने और पायलटों की गलती की ओर संकेत किए जाने से कई सवाल उठ रहे हैं। एयर इंडिया के कई पायलटों ने रविवार को बिज़नेस स्टैंडर्ड को बताया कि वे इस अस्पष्ट रिपोर्ट के कारण 'बेहद परेशान' और 'हताश' महसूस कर रहे हैं।

एयरक्राफ्ट एक्सिडेंट इन्वेस्टिगेशन ब्यूरो (एएआईबी) की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट 12 जुलाई को जारी हुई और उसमें पाया गया कि बोइंग 787-8 विमान के दोनों इंजनों के फ्यूल कंट्रोल स्विच को 12 जून को विमान के उड़ान भरने के महज तीन सेकंड बाद 'रन' से 'कटऑफ' की स्थिति में कर दिया गया था जिससे दो इंजन वाले इस विमान ने अचानक उड़ान क्षमता खो दी। ये स्विच इंजन में ईंधन की आपूर्ति को शुरू या बंद करते हैं। उन्हें 'कटऑफ' करने से इंजन को ईंधन मिलना पूरी तरह बंद हो जाता है।

एयर इंडिया के पायलटों को सबसे अधिक परेशानी इस बात से हुई है कि रिपोर्ट में 'ट्रांजिशंड' शब्द का इस्तेमाल किया गया लेकिन यह साफ नहीं किया गया कि स्विच को चालक दल के किसी सदस्य द्वारा हाथ से बंद किया गया या सिस्टम की किसी गड़बड़ी की वजह से वे स्वतः बंद हो गए। एक वरिष्ठ कैप्टन ने पूछा, 'रिपोर्ट से यह स्पष्ट नहीं है कि स्विच की स्थिति का आकलन किया गया था या नहीं। क्या किसी ने उन्हें हाथ से जानबूझकर बंद किया या फिर सिस्टम ने कोई गलती भांप कर खुद उसे बंद किया?'

बोइंग 787 के फ्यूल स्विच को बंद करने के लिए पूरी मेहनत मशक्कत लगती है, वह अपने से बंद नहीं हो सकता। इसके अलावा ये स्विच थ्रोटल लीवर के पास होते हैं जो इंजन की क्षमता को नियंत्रित करता है। एक अन्य पायलट ने कहा, 'ये गलती से बंद नहीं हो सकते हैं। विमान की इलेक्ट्रॉनिक प्रणाली या उसकी स्विच प्रणाली में कुछ न कुछ गंभीर खामी हुई होगी।'

कुछ ने प्रश्न किया कि स्विचों को हाथ से बंद किया गया या फिर विमान के कंप्यूटर ने ऐसा कुछ भांप लिया कि वे सही काम नहीं कर रहे हैं। फ्लाइट डेटा रिकॉर्डर में वही दर्ज

एएआईबी की जांच रिपोर्ट

- जांच रिपोर्ट में पायलटों की गलती की ओर संकेत किए जाने से उठ रहे कई सवाल
- एयर इंडिया के कई पायलटों ने कहा कि वे परेशान और हताश महसूस कर रहे हैं

हुआ होगा जो उस समय सिस्टम में हो रहा था। जरूरी नहीं कि वह हुआ जो स्विच दिखा रहे हैं। यह सवाल रिपोर्ट में एक गंभीर कमी की ओर इंगित करता है।

एक अन्य वरिष्ठ पायलट ने कहा, 'अगर दोनों इंजनों ने उड़ान के बाद एक साथ काम करना बंद कर दिया और विमान के क्रू ने फ्यूल स्विच बंद नहीं किए थे तो हम बहुत जोखिम के साथ उड़ान भर रहे हैं। जब तक असली वजह नहीं पता चलती है, इसे दोहरे इंजन की विफलता मानी जानी चाहिए।'

एएआईबी की रिपोर्ट में दोनों पायलटों की बातचीत का केवल एक हिस्सा शामिल किया गया है जहां एक पायलट दूसरे से पूछता है कि क्या उसने स्विच को कटऑफ किया है। इस पर दूसरा चालक जवाब देता है कि उसने ऐसा नहीं किया है। कुछ ही सेकंड बाद 'मे डे' की पुकार हुई और विमान बीजे मेडिकल कॉलेज हॉस्टल परिसर में ध्वस्त हो गया। उस हादसे में विमान में सवार 241 लोगों के अलावा 19 अन्य लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। एक यात्री चमत्कारिक रूप से बच गया था।

एयर इंडिया के एक चालक ने कहा, '30 सेकंड में यह सब हो गया। वी1, रोटेट, गियर अप, पॉजिटिव रेट जैसे सामान्य मानकों का क्या? उस बातचीत को क्यों नहीं शामिल किया गया?' उनका इशारा उन बातों की ओर था जो उड़ान के दौरान की जाती हैं और जो विमान के बारे में काफी कुछ बताती हैं।

(शेष पृष्ठ 8 पर)

प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट से पायलट वर्ग में ...

पृष्ठ 1 का शेष

ये मानक बातचीत दोनों पायलटों के बीच की चर्चा होती हैं जो यह सुनिश्चित करती हैं कि उड़ान के इस अहम चरण में उनके बीच पूरा तालमेल है। वी1 उस गति को दिखाता है जिसके बाद समस्या होने पर भी उड़ान की प्रक्रिया जारी रखी जानी जरूरी है। रोटेट वह मौका है जब विमान का अगला हिस्सा रनवे से ऊपर उठ जाता है। पॉजिटिव रेटबताती है कि विमान सुरक्षित ढंग से ऊपर बढ़ रहा है और गियर अप लैंडिंग गियर को वापस खींचने का निर्देश देता है। कॉकपिट क्रू के कई सदस्यों ने रिपोर्ट की भाषा को अस्पष्ट बताते हुए इसकी आलोचना की। उन्होंने कहा कि अस्पष्टता के कारण गलत व्याख्या या अटकलबाजी की गुंजाइश बनती है। एयर इंडिया के पायलटों ने यह भी कहा कि किसी विमान के दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने के पहले इमरजेंटसी लोकेटर ट्रांसमिटर नामक उपकरण बचाव संकेत भेजता है लेकिन वह सक्रिय नहीं हुआ। वह काम क्यों नहीं कर रहा था? उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि इस बारे में रिपोर्ट में कोई संकेत नहीं है।

कॉकपिट क्रू के कई सदस्यों ने रिपोर्ट की भाषा को अस्पष्ट बताते हुए इसकी आलोचना की।

एयर इंडिया के कई विमान चालकों ने 2018 में अमेरिकी फेडरल एविएशन एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन द्वारा जारी सेफ्टी बुलेटिन का जिक्र किया जिसमें चेतावनी दी गई थी कि बोइंग के कुछ विमानों के फ्यूल स्विच की लॉकिंग प्रणाली अनचाहे ही बंद हो जाती है। हालांकि बुलेटिन अनिवार्य नहीं था और एयर इंडिया ने भी इस बात की पुष्टि की है कि उसने यह जांच नहीं की थी। पायलटों द्वारा उठाए गए मुद्दों के बारे में पूछे जाने पर बोइंग ने रविवार को उस बयान को पुनः दोहराया जो उसने एक दिन पहले जारी किया था- 'हमारी संवेदनाएं एयर इंडिया की उड़ान 171 में सवार यात्रियों, चालक दल के प्रियजनों और अहमदाबाद में हादसे वाली जगह पर प्रभावित सभी लोगों के साथ हैं। एयर इंडिया में नैरो-बॉडी फ्लीट पायलटों का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली इंडियन कमर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन (आईसीपीए) ने रविवार को एक बयान में इस अटकल को खारिज कर दिया कि चालक दल ने जानबूझकर ईंधन बंद कर दिया होगा।

संयम का आग्रह

यहां तक कि विमान हादसों की जांच से जुड़े रहे पूर्व अधिकारियों ने भी इस मामले में संयम बरतने का आग्रह किया है। एएआईबी के पूर्व प्रमुख अरविंदो हांडा, जिन्होंने 2020 में कोझिकोड हवाई अड्डे पर एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की दुर्घटना समेत 100 से अधिक दुर्घटनाओं की जांच का नेतृत्व किया, ने कहा, 'प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट से किसी भी निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचना जल्दबाजी होगी, जिसमें पायलटों में से एक की भूमिका भी शामिल है। हमें एएआईबी को निष्पक्ष, निष्पक्ष और पारदर्शी तरीके से अपनी जांच पूरी करने देनी चाहिए।' हांडा ने कहा कि अब ध्यान इस बात पर होना चाहिए कि ईंधन बंद क्यों हुआ। उन्होंने कहा, 'अंतिम रिपोर्ट से पूरी स्थिति सामने आएगी।'

एयर इंडिया ने लिखा पत्र

प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट सार्वजनिक होने के घंटों बाद शनिवार को पायलटों को भेजे गए एक पत्र में एयर इंडिया के फ्लाइट ऑपरेशंस के वरिष्ठ उपाध्यक्ष मनीष उप्पल ने त्रासदी को स्वीकार किया और इससे सबक सीखने की बात पर जोर दिया। उप्पल ने कहा, '12 जून को अहमदाबाद से लंदन गैटविक के लिए हमारी उड़ान एआई171 से जुड़ी हालिया दुखद दुर्घटना में जांच रिपोर्ट आधिकारिक तौर पर जारी की गई है।

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
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BUSINESS STANDARD DELHI 14 JULY 2025

देश में तीन बड़े विमानन हादसे और उनकी जांच से मिले सबक

दीपक पटेल

अहमदाबाद हवाई अड्डे के पास पिछले माह 12 जून को हुई एआई171 दुर्घटना के संबंध में विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो ने अपनी प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट सौंप दी है। जांचकर्ता अब इस बात पर ध्यान केंद्रित करेंगे कि दुर्घटनाग्रस्त एयर इंडिया के इस विमान के ईंधन स्विच कटऑफ मोड में क्यों चले गए थे, जिससे दोनों इंजनों को तेल मिलना बंद हो गया और दुर्घटना हुई। देश में पिछले तीन बड़े वाणिज्यिक विमानन हादसों (पटना (2000), मंगलूरु (2010) और कोझिकोड (2020) से भी काफी कुछ सीखा जा सकता है।

पटना विमान हादसा (2000)

पटना में 17 जुलाई, 2000 को एलायंस एयर की उड़ान सीडी-7412 की दुर्घटना में 60 लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। मार्च 2001 को सरकार को सौंपी गई कोर्ट ऑफ इंक्वायरी की रिपोर्ट में खुलासा हुआ था कि यह हादसा पायलट की गलती से हुआ था।

रिपोर्ट में क्या आया

रिपोर्ट में रखरखाव निरीक्षण और हवाई अड्डे की सुरक्षा में बदलाव, पटना हवाई अड्डे की क्षमताओं के मद्देनजर रिपोर्ट ने बिहटा एयरबेस को एक विकल्प के रूप में विकसित करने के साथ-साथ रनवे के पास पेड़ों को हटाने, आसपास यातायात कम करने, देश भर में नेविगेशनल उपकरण अपग्रेड करने जैसी सिफारिशें की गईं।

मंगलुरू हादसा (2010)

22 मई, 2010 को मंगलुरू हवाई अड्डे पर एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की उड़ान आईएक्स-812 की दुर्घटना में 158 लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। कोर्ट ऑफ इंक्वायरी में इसमें भी पायलटों की गलती सामने आई। जांच प्रमुख एयर मार्शल बी.एन. गोखले द्वारा सरकार को सौंपी गई रिपोर्ट में विमान में कोई यांत्रिक खराबी नहीं पाई गई। दुबई से मंगलुरू जाने वाला बोइंग 737-800 विमान साफ-सुथरे मौसम के बावजूद दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया।

जांच में क्या सामने आया

जांच मेंमंगलूरु हवाई अड्डे के चुनौतीपूर्ण टेबल-टॉप रनवे डिजाइन और सुरक्षा प्रणालियों में खामियां भी सामने आईं। जांच रिपोर्ट में हवाई अड्डों पर बेहतर पायलट थकान प्रबंधन, अस्थिर लैंडिंग से निपटने और कॉकपिट समन्वय के लिए बेहतर प्रशिक्षण तथा रनवे सुरक्षा प्रणालियों की स्थापना सहित महत्त्वपूर्ण विमानन सुरक्षा सुधारों की सिफारिश की गई थी।

कोझिकोड हादसा (2020)

7 अगस्त, 2020 को कोझिकोड हवाई अड्डे पर एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की उड़ान आईएक्स-1344 दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गई, जिसमें 21 लोग मारे गए और 169 घायल हुए थे। एएआईबी ने इस दुर्घटना की जांच में पायलट की गलती और संस्थागत सुरक्षा विफलताओं की ओर इशारा किया। वंदे भारत मिशन के तहत दुबई से उड़े बोइंग 737-800 विमान ने भारी बारिश के दौरान कोझिकोड के चुनौतीपूर्ण टेबल-टॉप रनवे पर दो बार लैंडिंग का प्रयास किया। लेकिन विमान 110 फीट गहरी खाई में जा गिरा।

रिपोर्ट में की गई सिफारिशें

एएआईबी ने अपनी जांच रिपोर्ट में पायलटों की सख्त चिकित्सीय निगरानी खासकर दवा के उपयोग के संबंध में व्यापक सुधारों की बात कही। इसने एयरलाइनों को गीले रनवे पर उड़ान संचालन के लिए आधुनिक सिम्युलेटर प्रशिक्षण लागू करने और चालक दल संसाधन प्रबंधन प्रोटोकॉल को मजबूत करने का आदेश दिया। हवाई अड्डों को 300 मीटर तक रनवे सुरक्षा क्षेत्रों का विस्तार करने और 2024 तक सभी टेबल-टॉप रनवे पर सेंटरलाइन लाइटिंग स्थापित करने की भी सिफारिश की। डीजीसीए ने मानसून के दौरान 10 समुद्री मील से अधिक की टेलविंड के साथ लैंडिंग पर प्रतिबंध लगा दिया।

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BUSINESS STANDARD DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Low visibility

AAIB report needed more technical clarity

Last week's preliminary report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on the crash of Air India Dreamliner Flight 171 to London on June 12, killing 260 people, has raised more questions than answers. The probe by the AAIB, which was set up in 2012 to comply with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO's) recommendations, is significant because it comes a little over three years after the Tata group acquired Air India. But the report appears to raise a raft of speculative conclusions, which will neither bring closure to the victims' families nor offer clarity on safety protocols for the aviation industry. The report's lack of clarity on the role of the pilots is also troubling.

The plane crashed 30 seconds after takeoff from Ahmedabad, ploughing into a doctors' hostel in a crowded locality. One of the pilots had submitted a Mayday call just before the crash. The AAIB's preliminary report said the fuel supply to the engines stopped moments after takeoff because the fuel-control switch had shifted from "run" to "cut-off" position. Recordings from the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) report one of the pilots asking the other why he had switched off the fuel switch, to which the reply was that he hadn't. The report does not identify the voices. It also cites a 2018 Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin of the United States (US) Federal Aviation Administration, which flagged a disengagement issue with the fuel switch-locking mechanism. Because the bulletin was advisory and the issue was not deemed an unsafe condition requiring a legally enforceable airworthiness directive, Air India had not conducted inspections on its fleet. Adding to the ambiguity is the statement in the report that there was no recommended action for Boeing or manufacturers of the GEnx-1B engine.

The problem with the AAIB's 15-page report is that it has sparked damaging speculation about "pilot error" or, worse, pilot suicide. Neither finding has a bearing on compensation payouts to the families of victims. But experts have sharply criticised the report, pointing out that the issue of whether the fuel "cut-off" was a result of human error or a technical flaw requires more comprehensive information. It has been suggested that the order of events presented in the report is confused. The report states that the fuel-control switches moved to cut-off position some seconds after the liftoff. But the report also notes that the Ram Air Turbine, or the backup power source that activates only after both engines fail, was deployed immediately after takeoff, suggesting that the engine ceased functioning before liftoff or the moment the aircraft's wheels left the ground. Without an analysis of the full transcript of the CVR and other technical data, it is impossible to gain clarity on the cause of the crash.

Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu has rightly urged the media and the public not to jump to conclusions since, as he has pointed out, these preliminary findings are just the beginning of a complex investigation, which will take at least a year. The question is why it was issued with such obvious gaps. The AAIB's investigation team is not lacking in expertise. It is led by the director general, who is a former Indian Air Force aeronautical engineer, and includes members from the US National Transportation Safety Board, an air traffic control officer, and an aviation-medicine specialist. India had also granted a request for observer status for an ICAO expert. Given this collective expertise, a report with clear findings would have been in order.

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Pilot error or not, insurance payout unlikely to be affected

AATHIRA VARIER
Mumbai, 13 July

With the initial findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on last month's Air India crash in Ahmedabad not explicitly attributing the incident to pilot error, industry experts said insurance payouts would not be affected even if that were the case.

"The insurance amount has to be paid by the airline because even if it was an error by the pilot that caused the accident, it is covered in the policy. The insurance amount has to be paid irrespective of the scenario. Also, some of the victims have approached a UK law firm to get better compensation," an insurance broker told *Business Standard*

The only case where there could be a change in insurance payout is if Air India's management were found to be aware of the accident and the accident was deliberate.

"Pilot's mistake does not change anything. The insurance is still payable. Only if the management has deliberately crashed the aircraft or were aware of the pilot's condition, people might be eligible for higher compensation. But, it is too early to comment on it," another insurance broker told *Business Standard*.

Industry experts have estimated insurance claims to the tune of $475 million PHOTO: PTI

Typically, an aviation claim includes three kinds of liabilities: damage to the aircraft, loss of lives who were aboard the aircraft, including the crew members, and third-party liability because of loss of lives where the aircraft crashed, and cargo liability.

The third-party liability compensation for those who lost their lives is governed by the Montreal Convention, which applies to most international flights.

Under the Convention, airlines are strictly liable for damages up to a certain threshold — currently around special drawing rights (SDR) 128,821, or approximately ₹1.50 crore per passenger — and can be held liable for higher amounts if negligence, including pilot error, is proven.

Industry experts have estimated insurance claims to the tune of $475 million, with $125 million for the hull and the remaining $350 million for liability, which includes third-party liability as well.

Major part of the claims will likely be borne by global reinsurers, as aviation policies are typically structured with primary insurers transferring a significant portion of the risk through reinsurance arrangements. State-owned GIC Re will pay about 5.15 per cent of the $475 million — 4 per cent from obligatory cession and 1.15 per cent written through its London branch. it will make the provision in Q1, which will be less than ₹200 crore.

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What India's last 3 air crashes revealed

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 13 July

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has released its preliminary report on the June 12 Air India (A-I) Flight 171 crash near Ahmedabad. Investigators are now focused on what caused the flight's fuel switches to move to cutoff mode, cutting thrust and triggering the crash.

India's three previous major commercial aviation disasters — Patna (2000), Mangalore (2010), and Kozhikode (2020) — all pointed to pilot error and procedural lapses. They offer hard-earned lessons for investigators and regulators alike.

Patna, 2000: A stall triggered by panic
What happened:

PHOTO: REUTERS

Alliance Air Flight CD-7412, a Boeing 737-2A9, was flying from Kolkata to Delhi via Patna and Lucknow. While approaching Patna around 5.30 am, the pilots realised they were too high. They asked for a 360-degree turn to lose altitude, but while banking, the aircraft stalled and crashed into a residential area. All six crew members and 49 passengers died, along with five people on the ground.

Why it happened:
The inquiry found no mechanical faults. The crew flew too slowly during descent, made sharp turns, and tilted the nose up. When a stall warning triggered, the pilots failed to recover and lost control.

What changed after:
The court of inquiry led by Air Marshall P Raj Kumar called for stronger pilot training in discipline and emergencies. It also flagged Patna airport's limited infrastructure, recommending Birsa airbase as an alternative. Broader reforms included clearing obstacles near runways, upgrading navigational aids, and improving local disaster response systems.

Mangalore, 2010: Asleep, then too late

PHOTO: REUTERS

What happened:
On May 22, 2010, A-I Express Flight IX-812, a Boeing 737-800 from Dubai, landed too far down Mangalore's tabletop runway and couldn't stop. It overshot the runway, hit an antenna, and plunged into a gorge. Of 166 people onboard, 158 died.

Why it happened:
The captain ignored multiple automated warnings and the first officer's repeated calls to abort the landing. He had been asleep most of the flight and may have suffered sleep inertia when abruptly woken. The unstable approach — too high, too fast — wasn't corrected in time. The co-pilot didn't override the captain, pointing to weak cockpit command protocols. Airport limitations compounded the disaster.

What changed after:
The inquiry led by Air Marshall R N Gokhale pushed for fatigue management policies, better training for unstable approaches, and cockpit coordination. It led to the creation of the AAIB in 2012 and called for runway safety systems at critical airports. The report stressed that clear procedures and assertive decision-making could have prevented the crash.

Kozhikode, 2020: One landing too many

What happened:

PHOTO: PTI

On August 7, 2020, A-I Express Flight IX-1344 crashed during a repatriation flight under the Vande Bharat Mission. The aircraft attempted two landings in heavy rain at Kozhikode, a tabletop runway. After aborting the first, it landed with a strong tailwind and skidded off the runway, falling into a gorge. Twenty-one people died, 169 were injured.

Why it happened:
The approach was unstable, and the captain ignored the first officer's calls to go around. The aircraft touched down halfway down the runway. Contributing factors included poor visibility, tailwinds, and a malfunctioning windshield wiper. The captain was also on unprescribed diabetes meds, and operational pressure due to crew scheduling played a role. Air traffic control gave inaccurate wind data. Crucially, the co-pilot again didn't take control in time.

What changed after:
The AAIB called for sweeping reforms, including stricter medical oversight for pilots and improved training for wet runway operations. Airlines were told to reinforce cockpit communication and empower first officers to act in emergencies. Airports were instructed to extend runway safety areas by 300 metres and install centreline lighting by 2024. Landings with tailwinds over 10 knots during monsoon were banned. Full-scale flight data monitoring became mandatory.

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Dismay, unease among A-I pilots after crash report

They flag its 'vague' language and omission of key technical details

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 13 July

Air India pilots are "deeply disturbed" and "demoralised" by what they claim is an ambiguous preliminary report that hints at pilot error while failing to account for known technical concerns, following last month's fatal crash of flight AI171 near Ahmedabad.

Speaking to *Business Standard*, pilots criticised the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB) preliminary findings — released on Saturday — for using vague language and omitting key technical details.

The report stated that both engine fuel control switches on the Boeing 787-8 "transitioned" from "RUN" to "CUTOFF" just three seconds after takeoff on June 12, resulting in a sudden dual-engine power loss. But it does not clarify whether the switches were moved manually, shifted due to mechanical failure, or activated by an electrical fault.

These switches, located on the Boeing 787-8's throttle quadrant, stop fuel supply to the engines when moved to "CUTOFF".

"Did someone move them by hand, or did the system interpret some error and act on its own?" asked one senior captain.

The switches are spring-loaded and require a deliberate pull-and-turn motion, making accidental movement highly unlikely. "The likelihood of both failing together — within one second — is minuscule unless something seriously went wrong in the switch mechanism or aircraft electronics," said another pilot.

Some questioned whether the switches "transitioned" physically or whether the aircraft's computers simply behaved as if they had, due to a fault. "The flight data recorder may be recording what the system did, not necessarily what the switches physically showed," one said, highlighting a key gap in the report.

Another veteran pilot stated bluntly: "If both engines lost thrust simultaneously after take-off, and the fuel cutoffs weren't commanded by the crew, we're all flying with a wing and a prayer. Until they find the actual cause, it must be treated as a dual engine failure."

Turn to Page 6

Key findings in AAIB's report

- **13:08:39 hours:** Aircraft lifts off, engine fuel control switches turned off with a time gap of 1 second. The switches were turned on later
- **13:09:05 hours:** One of the pilots transmitted 'Mayday Mayday Mayday'. Air traffic controller enquired about call sign, but did not get response
- At this stage of investigation, there are no recommended actions for B787-8 and/or GE GEnx-1B engine operators and manufacturers

PAGE 6

Pilot error or not, insurance payout to remain intact

With the initial findings of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau on last month's Air India crash in Ahmedabad not explicitly attributing the incident to pilot error, industry experts said insurance payouts would not be affected even if that were the case.

■ The fuel switch at the centre of the debate

EDIT P9

Low visibility

Dismay, unease among A-I pilots after crash report

The AAIB report includes a brief cockpit exchange: One pilot asks why the fuel was cut off; the other replies he did not do it. A mayday call followed seconds later, before the aircraft plunged into a hostel compound belonging to BJ Medical College, killing 241 people on board and 19 on the ground. One passenger survived.

"In 30 seconds, that's all they said? Where are the standard callouts like V1, rotate, gear up, and positive rate? Why has that transcript not been included?" said an Air India pilot, referring to mandatory verbal cues during takeoff that confirm speed milestones and aircraft configuration.

These standard callouts serve as verbal checkpoints between pilots to ensure both are aligned during the most critical phase of flight. "V1" marks the speed beyond which takeoff must continue even if there is a problem; "rotate" is the moment when the aircraft's nose is lifted off the runway; "positive rate" indicates that the plane is climbing safely; and "gear up" instructs retraction of the landing gear.

Several cockpit crew members criticised what they saw as "ambiguous language" and key omissions. There was no reference, they noted, to alerts from the Electronic Centralised Aircraft Monitoring (EICAS) system, which logs warnings in real time. "If the switches were moved, or fuel flow was interrupted, surely there would've been engine shutdown alerts?" a pilot said.

Also missing is any mention of the Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT), a crash-survivable device meant to activate automatically. "Why did it not trigger?" a pilot asked. "If it didn't activate, either it was damaged, not functioning, or improperly installed," the pilot added.

"We feel deeply disturbed and demoralised by the way this report has been issued, and by the conclusions the general public is drawing from it," one pilot said.

Many Air India pilots pointed to a 2018 safety bulletin issued by the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) that had warned of potential malfunctions in the locking mechanism of fuel switches with the same part number (4TL837-3D) used on the Boeing 787. While the advisory was not mandatory, Air India confirmed it did not conduct the advised inspections. "It may have been advisory, but not acting on it was a lapse. Especially when the throttle quadrant on this plane was replaced twice — once in 2019 and again in 2023. Why wasn't this checked?" a pilot asked.

Pilots also raised concerns about the data captured by the Flight Data Recorder. "Did it log the switch position or the valve status downstream? If it's recording only electrical commands, even a momentary short circuit or power fluctuation could show up as a fuel cutoff event," one pilot explained.

An experienced Dreamliner pilot at Air India also raised a technical theory: "Once the Ram Air Turbine (RAT) deploys after total power loss, only the captain's (left seat) display systems remain active. If the first officer (right seat) was the one flying at takeoff, the captain may have taken control immediately post-thrust loss. But again, the report doesn't clarify any of this: Who was flying when mayday was called? Who tried engine relight?"

Air India and the Ministry of Civil Aviation did not immediately respond to Business Standard's queries regarding this matter.

The preliminary report has not issued any directive to planemaker Boeing and enginemaker GE.

When asked about the concerns raised by pilots, Boeing reiterated on Sunday the statement it had issued a day earlier: "Our thoughts remain with the loved ones of the passengers and crew on board Air India Flight 171, as well as everyone affected on the ground in Ahmedabad. We continue to support the investigation and our customers. We will defer to the AAIB to provide information about AI171, in adherence with the UN International Civil Aviation Organization protocol known as Annex 13."

In a statement on Sunday, the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA), which represents narrow-body fleet pilots at Air India, rejected speculation that the crew could have shut off the fuel deliberately. "Until the official investigation is concluded and the final report is published, any speculation is unacceptable and must be condemned. The crew acted in line with their training under extremely challenging conditions," the association said.

The ICPA also denounced the "reckless and unfounded insinuation" circulating in some quarters, including foreign media which hinted at pilot suicide. "There is absolutely no basis for such a claim. Pilots undergo extensive psychological screening, recurrent training, and operate under the highest safety standards," it said.

The Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA) has separately alleged that the investigation may be biased. "The tone and direction of the investigation suggest a bias towards pilot error... we strongly object to this line of thought," ALPA said, demanding that its representatives be allowed to observe the investigation process.

Even former investigators have urged restraint. Aurobindo Handa, former chief of the AAIB who led probes into more than 100 crashes, including the Air India Express crash at Kozhikode airport in 2020, told PTI: "It will be too premature to draw any conclusions, including the role of one of the pilots, from the preliminary report. We should allow the AAIB to complete its investigation in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner."

Handa said the focus now should be on why and how the fuel switches moved to CUTOFF. "That's what the final report should establish," he noted.

With tensions running high, some Air India pilots say the preliminary findings have left them uneasy about operating the Dreamliner until more clarity is available. One senior captain said the airline should consider proactively inspecting the fuel control switches across the entire fleet rather than relying on selective checks, adding that caution should take precedence over convenience.

Another pilot noted that the preliminary report raises unresolved technical questions and that any premature conclusions about crew error would be deeply unfortunate, especially if subsequent findings point to a mechanical or electronic fault.

In a communication sent to pilots on Saturday -- hours after the preliminary report was made public -- Manish Uppal, senior vice-president for flight operations at Air India, acknowledged the tragedy and stressed the importance of learning from it. "Preliminary investigation report has been officially released in the recent tragic accident involving our flight AI171 from Ahmedabad to London Gatwick on June 12. As aviation professionals, we understand top importance from every safety event is the learning to ensure safe skies," Uppal said.

He noted that the incident has deeply impacted the airline's pilot community and the broader aviation fraternity. "The initial report gives the airline an initial insight. This is not the last word, but an important step in identifying factors and ensuring that all possible measures are taken to prevent such a tragedy from reoccurring," he added.

Uppal also said that pilots are trained to remain calm under pressure, to continuously learn, and to act decisively, and urged them to apply those values now. "Together, we will reflect, react and rise more than before," he said. Air India, he noted, will soon organise a dedicated session to collectively review the findings of the report.

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DAINIK BHASKAR JAIPUR 12 JULY 2025

हैदराबाद फ्लाइट में तकनीकी खराबी, 20 घंटे तक खड़ी रही

जयपुर | एयरपोर्ट से हैदराबाद जा रही एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की फ्लाइट को गुरुवार को तकनीकी खराबी के चलते रद्द कर दिया गया। इससे 20 घंटे से भी अधिक समय से फ्लाइट जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर ही खड़ा है। दरअसल एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की फ्लाइट आईएक्स-2872 गुरुवार को दोपहर 12:20 बजे जयपुर से हैदराबाद के लिए रवाना होनी वाली थी, तभी एयरलाइंस ने संचालन कारणों का हवाला देते हुए रद्द कर दिया। ऐसे में इसके बाद हैदराबाद जाने वाले करीब 175 यात्रियों को एयरपोर्ट पर परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा। इनमें से कुछ यात्रियों को अन्य फ्लाइट से भेजा गया।

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DECCAN CHRONICLE HYDERABAD 13 JULY 2025

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Cockpit audio hints at cut off of fuel flow, confusion: AAIB report

Pilot: Why did you cut off the switches? 2nd pilot: I did not; AAIB finding shocks

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 12

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB) preliminary report on the Air India flight 171 plane crash in Ahmedabad indicates fuel supply was shut down to both engines, one after the other, as the fuel switches were shifted from "Run" to "Cut Off" mode immediately after take-off, resulting in engine shut down and the accident.

The sound picked up from the cockpit voice recorder of the ill-fated Boeing 787 aircraft that crashed on June 12 indicates that during the take-off the fuel system transitioned from "Run" to "Cut Off", prompting one of the pilots to ask the other, "Why did he shut it off?" The second pilot responded, saying "he didn't do it".

The pilots then tried to bring the fuel switches back to "Run" mode and attempted to relight the engines, due to which Engine 1 showed partial recovery, but Engine 2 was incapable of sustaining any recovery.The pilots tried to bring the fuel switches back to "run" mode. Engine 1 showed partial recovery, but Engine 2 did not. The ram air turbine (RAT) got deployed.Thirtytwo seconds after it took off, the aircraft crashed

■ Page 15: RAT deployed, aircraft crashed after 32 seconds

30 SECS TO TRAGEDY

THE AIRCRAFT ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION BUREAU (AAIB) REPORT RECORDS THE LAST CHILLING MOMENTS BEFORE THE CRASH OF THE BOEING 787-8 DREAMLINER OPERATING AIR INDIA FLIGHT AI 171 FROM AHMEDABAD TO LONDON ON JUNE 12.

1 PM 38 MINUTES AND 39 SECONDS: AI171 takes off (transitiones to air mode)

1:38.42: Flight achieves maximum airspeed of 180 knots.

THE NEXT 12 SECONDS

FUEL cut-off switches moved from 'run' to 'cut-off', with a gap of one second.

Both engines decrease from their take-off values.

ONE PILOT ASKS THE OTHER WHY HE CUT OFF FUEL SWITCHES. THE OTHER PILOT REPLIES HE DID NOT.

Ram air turbine, an emergency generator, deploys.

AIRCRAFT loses height.

Fuel control switches on the B787-8 aircraft

1:38.47: RAT starts producing power.
1:38.52: Engine 1 fuel cut-off switch transitions from 'cut-off' to 'run'.
1:38.54: Auxiliary power unit opens.
1:38.56: Engine 2 fuel cut-off switch switched to 'run'.

NEXT NINE SECONDS

SIGNS OF ENGINES SWITCHING ON.
- Engine 1 relights, progresses to recovery
- Engine 2 relights, unable to recover.

1:39.05: PILOT TRANSMITS "MAYDAY MAYDAY, MAYDAY"

AIR TRAFFIC control asks for callsign.

THERE IS NO RESPONSE

1:39.11: Aircraft data recorder stops

ATC OBSERVES plane crashing

1.44.44: Airport fire tender leaves for rescue.

FUEL SWITCHES

VETERAN pilot says position of a fuel switch cannot be changed accidentally, there is a procedure.

SWITCHES guarded with brackets so that there are no accidental movement.

SWITCHES have to be pulled up manually before changing position

DREAMLINER switches are located under the thrust levers in the cockpit.

FAA had in 2018 flagged concerns on the switches. AI said check was not must

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DECCAN HERALD BANGALORE 13 JULY 2025

AI crash probe: Fuel was cut off soon after takeoff

One pilot asked other if he toggled fuel switch, got 'no' as reply

SUMIT PANDE
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Both the engines of the fateful Air India flight 171 were starved of fuel within seconds of the aircraft taking off as fuel switches transitioned from 'run' to 'cutoff' position, one after the other, within a gap of one second, according to a preliminary investigation report into the crash of the Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner last month.

The report prepared by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) was released late on Friday, a month after the crash of the London-bound AI flight from Ahmedabad that killed all but one of the 242 people on board and 19 others on the ground on June 12.

In a chilling sequence of events reconstructed by the investigators from the data retrieved from the cockpit voice recorder, one of the pilots is heard asking the other why he had cut off the fuel supply. He responds by saying he hasn't done anything like that. The report, however, does not specify which pilot said what.

It is a matter of investigation whether the transitions in the switch positions of the fuel supply were done manually, inadvertently, or were triggered by an electronic malfunction.

Though the fuel control switches were subsequently "moved from cutoff to run", the engines could not induce core speed acceleration and recovery, resulting in one of the worst civil aviation disasters, as the fuel-laden aircraft rammed straight into a hospital complex.

As the flight started losing altitude before crossing the airport perimeter wall, one of the pilots transmitted "Mayday, Mayday, Mayday". With the aircraft losing thrust, the RAT, Ram Air Turbine, was activated immediately, indicating a loss of power supply to the aircraft systems.

A picture in the AAIB report shows the thrust levers in the aircraft were found to be in the idle position after the crash, but were in a takeoff position during the short duration the flight was airborne.

At the takeoff, co-pilot Clive Kundar was flying the aircraft, while Captain Sumeet Sabharwal was the pilot-in-command, monitoring the flight. Ahead of the flight, the two cleared a breathalyzer test. Sabharwal had nearly 8,600 hours on the Boeing 787 under his belt, while Kundar had over 1,100 hours.

The aircraft, with 10 crew members, was operating between Ahmedabad and London's Gatwick airport.

The report says the takeoff weight was within prescribed limits under the existing conditions, and there were no dangerous goods on board. The samples collected from the tank of the tanker used for refueling were tested and found to be satisfactory.

▸ AI crash, Page 7

The disaster that defied logic. Page 9

The Air India plane that crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport, lies on a building. PTI FILE

Reconstructing the final moments

Captain Sumeet Sabharwal & co-pilot Clive Kundar

11.17 am VT-ANB, which will **fly to Gatwick, lands** in Ahmedabad from Delhi

12.10 pm Troubleshooting carried out. **aircraft released** for flight

12.35 pm **Crew arrives** at boarding gate

1.13 pm Pilots request **pushback and start-up;** ATC approves pushback

1.19 pm To ATC query, pilots conform requirement of **full length of Runway-23**

1.32 pm Aircraft transferred from **Ground to Tower Control**

1.37 pm Aircraft cleared for takeoff

1.38 pm
- Aircraft achieves **maximum recorded airspeed** of 180 Knots;
- **Fuel cutoff** switches of engine 1 and engine 2 transitioned from **RUN to CUTOFF** in a gap of one second

1.39 PM
- **'Mayday' call** from one of the pilots;
- ATC enquires about call sign but no response
- ATC observes **aircraft crashing** outside airport boundary, activates emergency response

Let's not jump to conclusions: Minister Naidu

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu on Saturday said it is immature to jump to conclusions at this juncture over the Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad, as the AAIB has only released the preliminary report. He expressed appreciation for the work done by the probe agency.

Details on Page 9

Pilots' Assn alleges bias

Rejecting the preliminary report of the AAIB into the AI crash, the Airline Pilots Association of India (ALPA-I) alleged the tone and direction of the probe suggested a bias towards pilot error. "We feel that the investigation is being driven in a direction presuming the guilt of pilots, and we strongly object to this line of thought," ALPA-I said.

Details on Page 9

AI crash report: Fuel was cut off soon after takeoff

AI crash, from Page 3

Both engines crossed the takeoff decision speed, which was consistent with the liftoff parameters. Within three seconds, the aircraft achieved a maximum recorded speed of 180 knots, and immediately thereafter, the fuel supply to both engines was switched off.

The investigation team is reviewing and examining further evidence to shed more light on the sequence of events that led to the crash.

At this stage, the report does not recommend any action to Boeing, or GE, the engine manufacturer, or Air India, the aircraft operator.

A day after the crash, the AAIB recovered one of the black boxes from the rooftop of the hospital where the aircraft crashed. The second black box was recovered from the debris on June 16, 2025.

AAIB, which operates under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, is tasked with investigating all air accidents involving aircraft with an All Up-Weight (AUW) of more than 2,250 kgs or turbojet aircraft.

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DAINIK JAGRAN DELHI 14 JULY 2025

जरूरी सवालों की अनदेखी करती रिपोर्ट

मार्क डी. मार्टिन

एअर इंडिया विमान हादसे की आरंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट पहली नजर में ही पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रस्त दिखती है। इसमें पूरा दोष पायलटों पर मढ़ने का प्रयास हुआ है

अहमदाबाद में दुर्घटनाग्रस्त एअर इंडिया के विमान की आरंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट जवाब से कहीं अधिक सवाल उठाने वाली है। अहमदाबाद से लंदन के लिए जा रही उड़ान संख्या एआइ 171 की दुर्घटना से जुड़ी यह रिपोर्ट पहली नजर में ही पूर्वाग्रह से ग्रस्त दिखती है। इसमें किसी न किसी तरह पूरा दोष उन पायलटों पर मढ़ने का प्रयास है, जो इस हादसे में मारे गए। तथ्यात्मक रूप से रिपोर्ट यही बताती है कि टेक आफ यानी उड़ान भरते समय इंजन बंद हो गए थे। ऐसी स्थिति में रैट-रैम एयर टरबाइन स्वाभाविक रूप से सक्रिय हो जाता है। रैट असल में एक आपातकालीन उपकरण है, जो विमान के दोनों इंजनों के बंद होने की स्थिति में आवश्यक ऊर्जा प्रदान करता है। इसमें विमान की गति से चलने वाली हवा के उपयोग से ही ऊर्जा उत्पन्न होती है। रैट फ्यूल स्विच/वाल्व को कट आफ करने की स्थिति में सक्रिय नहीं होता। वैसे भी पायलट इतने मूर्ख नहीं होते कि दोनों इंजनों के फेल हो जाने की स्थिति में फ्यूल को कट आफ कर दें। फ्यूल कट आफ का तर्क तभी गले उतरता है, जब अंतिम उपाय के रूप में अपनी जान बचाने के लिए पायलट इंजनों को दोबारा चालू करने का प्रयास करते हैं।

प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट में चालक दल की आपसी बातचीत को लेकर रहस्य बुनने की मंशा भी बहुत चौंकाने वाली है। यह असंभव सी बात है कि ऐसी आपात स्थिति के दौरान काकपिट में कोई हलचल न हुई हो। ऐसी परिस्थितियों में वहां इतनी शांति कैसे हो सकती है। जाहिर है कि कुछ पहलुओं को जानबूझकर छिपाने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है। जिस तरह रिपोर्ट लिखी गई है उसका भाव यही संकेत करता है कि यह कुछ और नहीं, बल्कि विमान दुर्घटना के लिए पायलटों को दोषी ठहराने का गुप्त प्रयास है। इसके अलावा यह भी समझ से परे है कि जब जांच के किसी ठोस नतीजे पर पहुंचने में अभी और तीन माह से लेकर एक साल तक का समय लग सकता है तो फिर बोइंग एवं इंजन बनाने वाली कंपनी जीई को क्यों संदेह के दायरे से दूर रखा जा रहा है? फिर इस जांच रिपोर्ट को रात करीब दो बजे जारी करने का क्या तुक, जब इस दुर्घटना से सर्वाधिक प्रभावित भारत और ब्रिटेन जैसे देशों में कामकाज करीब-करीब बंद हो जाता है।

पायलट, सेफ्टी मैनेजमेंट सिस्टम और उससे जुड़े पेशेवरों के अलावा आडिटर और जांचकर्ताओं के लिए किसी उड़ान के दो सबसे महत्वपूर्ण पड़ाव टेक आफ और लैंडिंग होते हैं। इस दौरान पूरा ध्यान विमान को करीब

अंतिम रिपोर्ट से ही स्पष्ट हो सकेगी विमान हादसे की तस्वीर ● फाइल

2000 फीट तक मैनुअली उड़ाने पर होता है, जिसके लिए हाथ से ही सभी उपकरणों को चलाना पड़ता है। उसके बाद ही विमान आटो-पायलट की अवस्था में आ सकता है। थ्रस्ट सेटिंग भी मैनुअल होती है और इस कवायद में पूरा फोकस विमान से जुड़ी अहम नियंत्रक प्रणालियों पर होता है।

चूंकि यह रिपोर्ट एक व्यापक परिचालन वाले बोइंग 787 ड्रीमलाइनर विमान से जुड़ी है तो पूरी दुनिया के लिए उसके गहरे निहितार्थ हैं। रिपोर्ट में उल्लेख किया गया है कि फ्यूल वाल्व-स्विच कट आफ यानी निष्क्रिय कर दिए गए थे। इसके दूर-दूर तक कोई आसार नहीं दिखते कि कोई भी पायलट विशेष रूप से टेक आफ के दौरान और जब उसे सबसे अधिक थ्रस्ट की जरूरत होगी, तब वह फ्यूल स्विच से कोई छेड़छाड़ करेगा। इस दौरान अमूमन काकपिट के फ्रंट पैनल में लगे लैंडिंग गीयर उठाने या फ्लैप्स उठाने पर जोर रहता है। ऐसे में अगर फ्यूल वाल्व-स्विच को कट आफ स्थिति में ले जाने के लिए वापस मोड़ने की वजह बताई जाए तो यह गहन जांच का विषय है।

फ्यूल वाल्व/स्विच पर संकेतक होता है कि इसमें विसंगति हो सकती है। अमेरिका के संघीय विमानन प्रशासन-एफएए ने यह माना भी है। एफएए ने 2018 में वायु परिवहन के मोर्चे पर एक चेताने वाले बुलेटिन में कहा था कि कुछ ऐसे मामले में सामने आए हैं, जिनमें फ्यूल स्विच अपने आप ही कट आफ स्थिति में चला गया। इनमें जापान और यूरोपीय विमानन सेवाओं से जुड़े मामलों का संदर्भ भी था। मेरे विचार में अगर स्विच में कोई खराबी थी तो यही दुर्घटना का सबसे संभावित कारण हो सकता है। ऐसे में एनटीएसबी, एफएए, ईएएसए के अलावा एएआइबी जैसी एजेंसियों को यह जांचने-परखने की जरूरत है कि फ्यूल स्विच क्यों कट आफ अवस्था में चले गए, क्योंकि कोई पायलट ऐसी मूर्खता नहीं करेगा कि उड़ान के जिस पड़ाव पर उसे सबसे अधिक ऊर्जा की जरूरत हो तो वह उसके स्रोत को ही बंद कर दे।

उचित होगा कि हम समग्र एवं व्यापक जांच रिपोर्ट के सामने आने की प्रतीक्षा करें। एआइ 171 उड़ान हादसे से जुड़ी आरंभिक रिपोर्ट पर गौर करें तो यदि फ्यूल कट आफ स्विच अपने आप ही हरकत में आ गए तो यह उन तमाम विमानन कंपनियों के लिए सतर्कता बढ़ाने का समय है, जो ड्रीमलाइनर 787 विमानों से परिचालन कर रही हैं। उन्हें फ्यूल स्विच प्रणालियों की सघन समीक्षा और व्यापक जांच-पड़ताल करनी होगी। बोइंग 787 ड्रीमलाइनर व्यापक डिजिटल एवं साफ्टवेयर प्रणाली पर संचालित विमान है, जिसे निरंतर रूप से सिस्टम अपडेट एवं सिक्योरिटी पैच की भी आवश्यकता होती है। अगर फ्यूल स्विच कट आफ हो गए तो इसके पीछे के कारण को तलाशना होगा। स्वाभाविक तौर पर इसमें तमाम जटिलताएं आएंगी, लेकिन इस काम को पूरा करने की प्रक्रिया में सभी जांच एजेंसियों को कोई कोर-कसर शेष नहीं रखनी चाहिए। यह भी उतना ही महत्वपूर्ण होगा कि इस जांच के दायरे में उन अन्य अनेक कंपनियों और नियामकों को भी जोड़ना चाहिए, जो 787 विमानों के परिचालन से जुड़े हैं।

(लेखक विमानन विशेषज्ञ एवं मार्टिन कंसल्टिंग के सीईओ हैं)
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पायलटों को अनुमान के आधार पर बदनाम न करें : पायलट संगठन

मुंबई प्रेट: भारतीय वाणिज्यिक पायलट संघ (आइसीपीए) ने कहा कि चालक दल ने आपातकाल के लिए अपने प्रशिक्षण के अनुरूप काम किया। अटकलें गैर-जिम्मेदाराना हैं। इस स्तर पर इस तरह के दावे का कोई आधार नहीं है। आइसीपीए के अनुसार, विमान के चालक दल ने चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों में अपने प्रशिक्षण और जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप काम किया। पायलटों को अनुमान के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। संगठन ने जोर देकर कहा कि जब तक आधिकारिक जांच पूरी नहीं हो जाती और अंतिम रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित नहीं हो जाती, तब तक कोई भी अटकलबाजी अस्वीकार्य है। इसकी निंदा की जानी चाहिए। आइसीपीए ने कहा कि वह मीडिया और सार्वजनिक चर्चाओं में उभर रहे काल्पनिक नैरेटिव खासकर पायलट पर लगाए जा रहे बेतुके और निराधार आरोपों से बेहद व्यथित है।

अमेरिकी एफएए ने कहा-बोइंग के फ्यूल स्विच सुरक्षित

वाशिंगटन, रायटर: अहमदाबाद में एअर इंडिया विमान हादसे की चल रही जांच के बीच अमेरिकी संघीय विमानन प्रशासन (एफएए) और बोइंग ने कहा है कि बोइंग विमानों के फ्यूल स्विच लाक सुरक्षित हैं। एफएए ने यह अधिसूचना ऐसे समय जारी की है, जब एक दिन पहले बोइंग 787-8 दुर्घटना की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट में विमान के फ्यूल कटआफ स्विच पर सवाल उठाए गए थे। नागरिक उड्डयन अधिकारियों को भेजी गई एफएए की अधिसूचना में कहा गया है कि लाकिंग फीचर सहित फ्यूल स्विच का डिजाइन विभिन्न बोइंग विमान माडलों पर समान है। एफएए इस मुद्दे को असुरक्षित स्थिति नहीं मानता है, जिसके लिए माडल 787 सहित किसी भी बोइंग विमान माडल के लिए दिशा-निर्देश की आवश्यकता हो।

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जांच का हिस्सा बनना चाहता है पायलट संगठन

अहमदाबाद विमान हादसे की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट पर उठाए सवाल

आइसीपीए ने पायलटों पर लगाए जा रहे आरोपों को असंवेदनशील बताया

मुंबई प्रेट्र : एयरलाइन पायलट्स एसोसिएशन आफ इंडिया (एएलपीए) ने रविवार को कहा कि वह पिछले महीने अहमदाबाद में हुई विमान दुर्घटना की जांच में अपने सदस्यों को शामिल करने के लिए कानूनी उपायों पर विचार कर रही है। एक दिन पहले ही उसने आरोप लगाया था कि विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो (एएआइबी) की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट पायलटों की गलती की ओर इशारा करती है।

एएलपीए के अध्यक्ष सैम थामस ने कहा कि एएआइबी की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट वेबसाइट पर डाल दी गई है। इस पर किसी का हस्ताक्षर नहीं है। हम पारदर्शिता चाहते हैं। हमने जांच समिति में अपना प्रतिनिधित्व मांगा था। एसोसिएशन यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए कानूनी उपाय पर विचार कर रही है कि उसके सदस्यों को जांच दल का हिस्सा बनाया जाए। थामस ने इस बात पर जोर दिया कि एसोसिएशन के सदस्यों के पास इस क्षेत्र में विशेषज्ञता है और वे विमान दुर्घटना की जांच में सार्थक योगदान दे सकते हैं।

आइएएनएस के अनुसार, भारतीय वाणिज्यिक पायलट संघ (आइसीपीए)

हादसे में 265 की मौत हुई थी। फाइल

ने दुर्घटना के लिए पायलटों पर लगाए जा रहे आरोपों को निराधार और असंवेदनशील बताया। कहा कि चालक दल ने आपातकाल के लिए अपने प्रशिक्षण के अनुरूप काम किया। अटकलें गैर-जिम्मेदाराना और क्रूर हैं। इस स्तर पर इस तरह के दावे का कोई आधार नहीं है। अधूरी जानकारी के आधार पर इस तरह का गंभीर आरोप लगाना बेहद असंवेदनशील है।

आइसीपीए के अनुसार, विमान के चालक दल ने चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों में अपने प्रशिक्षण और जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप काम किया। पायलटों को अनुमान के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। संगठन ने जोर देकर कहा कि जब तक आधिकारिक जांच पूरी नहीं हो जाती और अंतिम रिपोर्ट प्रकाशित नहीं हो जाती, तब तक कोई भी अटकलबाजी अस्वीकार्य है। इसकी निंदा की जानी चाहिए।

एआइ171 विमान हादसे में मृत युवक के पिता की सख्त कार्रवाई की अपील

मेहसाणा, एएनआइ : पिछले महीने एअर इंडिया एआइ171 विमान दुर्घटना में मृत 19 वर्षीय छात्र संकेत गोस्वामी के पिता ने कहा कि वे विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो (एएआइबी) द्वारा जारी प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट से "संतुष्ट नहीं" हैं और सरकार से "गंभीर जांच" कराने की मांग की है। उन्होंने इस घटना के लिए जिम्मेदार लोगों के खिलाफ सख्त कार्रवाई की भी अपील की। हादसे में मारे गए संकेत के पिता अतुल गोस्वामी ने बताया, "मेरा बेटा 19 साल का था... मेरा परिवार बहुत कठिन परिस्थितियों में जी रहा है। हम अपने बेटे पर बहुत निर्भर थे। वह तीन साल के लिए लंदन जा रहा था अपनी डिग्री के लिए। हमारा पूरा परिवार उस पर निर्भर था... हम रिपोर्ट से संतुष्ट नहीं हैं। हम सरकार से अनुरोध करते हैं कि गंभीर जांच की जाए और जिम्मेदार पक्षों के खिलाफ सख्त कार्रवाई की जाए...।"

विमान दुर्घटना 12 जून को हुई, जब एअर इंडिया का बोइंग 787-8 विमान अहमदाबाद के सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से उड़ान भरने के तुरंत बाद दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया।

काकपिट में तकनीकी गड़बड़ी के कारण एअर इंडिया की उड़ान निरस्त

जागरण संवाददाता, लखनऊ

- सीट बेल्ट बांधकर बैठे 150 यात्रियों को अंतिम समय विमान से उतारा
- हंगामे के बाद कई यात्रियों को दिया रिफंड, कुछ को होटल में ठहराया

काकपिट में गड़बड़ी की आशंका के बाद एअर इंडिया की हैदराबाद जाने वाली उड़ान रविवार को अचानक निरस्त कर दी गई। यात्रियों को विमान से नीचे उतार दिया गया। कुछ यात्रियों का रिफंड दे दिया गया, वहीं कुछ यात्रियों को होटल में ठहराया गया।

एअर इंडिया की उड़ान आइएक्स-2816 सुबह 8:40 बजे लखनऊ से हैदराबाद को रवाना होती है। बोर्डिंग और चेकइन सहित सभी प्रक्रिया पूरी करने के बाद फ्लाइट लखनऊ से हैदराबाद के लिए रवाना होने को तैयार थी। सभी 150 यात्री अपनी सीट बेल्ट बांधकर विमान के टैक्सी-वे से रनवे की ओर जाने का इंतजार कर रहे थे। इस बीच पायलट ने क्रू स्टाफ के माध्यम से सूचना दी कि विमान में कुछ तकनीकी गड़बड़ी आ गई है, जिसे ठीक किया जा रहा है। गड़बड़ी ठीक न हो पाने पर सुबह करीब 11 बजे उड़ान को निरस्त कर दिया गया। यात्रियों ने बवाल किया तो उनको रिफंड दे दिया गया।

लगातार निरस्त हो रहीं उड़ानें : गत 12 जून को अहमदाबाद में एअर इंडिया

प्रतीकात्मक

के विमान हादसे के बाद से ही इसका संचालन प्रभावित हो रहा है। पिछले महीने से ही घरेलू और इंटरनेशनल उड़ानें निरस्त हो रही हैं। लखनऊ-दिल्ली की एअर इंडिया की उड़ान एआइ-2460 और एआइ-2461 बीती 21 जून से 15 जुलाई तक निरस्त कर दी गई है। इसी तरह लखनऊ-दुबई की एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की इंटरनेशनल उड़ान आइएक्स-193 और लखनऊ-मुंबई की उड़ान आइएक्स-1219 भी कई बार निरस्त की गई थी। एअर इंडिया की लखनऊ में पिछले एक महीने में 30 उड़ानें निरस्त हो चुकी हैं।

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Misinfo Takes Off amid Fog Over Crash

Experts say part-facts, lack of timeline in initial report on Air India plane putting shadow on pilots

Forum Gandhi

Mumbai: Hours after the preliminary findings into the June 12 Air India crash were released on Saturday, selective excerpts began circulating on social media — particularly the cockpit exchange — interpreting them as an apparent signifier of pilot error.

Aviation safety experts said the report's sparse narrative, lack of timeline, and absence of human factors data have allowed speculation to overwhelm facts.

The report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), tasked with inquiring into the crash, said analysis of the aircraft's cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder showed both fuel control switches had been transitioned from run to cut-off position seconds after lift-off. Between 10-14 seconds later, both switches were turned on again, but the plane failed to regain power fast enough to prevent the crash.

The report offers no explanation for this.

Experts said the absence of technical context, behavioural analysis, or a clear sequence of events has left room for unverified theories and AI-generated content to spread unchecked.

Social Media Conjecture ▸▸ 12

What They Say

Low point in aviation history... It's cruel to the families... clickbait dressed as fact
Capt John Cox
CEO, Safety Operating Systems; formerly of US Airways

Theories fill the gaps. The report debunks some theories, but vague framing fuels others
JOHN STRICKLAND Director at JLS Consulting and airline industry veteran

Timeline, clarity is missing... A simple graphic and human factors summary would help
PATRIK FRYKBERG
ICAO-certified investigator; former head, Peru accident board

Accusing Pilots will be Gross Violation: Union

The Indian Commercial Pilots' Association, an Air India union, has said any accusations of so-called suicide against the crashed plane's pilots would be unfounded. ▸▸ 4

Social Media Conjecture

▸▸ From Page 1

As the report circulated, social media timelines were flooded with so-called explainers and crash reconstructions—many of them drawing conclusions or implying fault despite no cause being mentioned in the report.

"It says that the fuel switches moved. It doesn't say the pilots moved the fuel switches. So it's carefully worded," said Captain John Cox, veteran pilot and safety analyst. The lack of clarity, he warned, has helped misinformation thrive.

In light of this, the government has cautioned people not to jump to conclusions until the final report is out.

"This has been what I would call a low point in aviation history because of the actions of people speculating and using the internet, as well as AI, to present things that they say as fact, when in fact, they're not," said Cox, adding that it was "cruel to the families" and "counterproductive."

The misinformation does nothing, he said, "except provide clickbait for someone who thinks they're an expert when in fact they are not."

"It (the report) does, however, debunk several speculative theories which were in circulation, not least on social media," said aviation consultant John Strickland. Without clearer framing, facts become fodder for fiction, experts said. Various theories have been doing the rounds. Apart from those cited earlier, these include deliberate action, a software or electrical malfunction simulating the activation or that the crew tried to restart engines by toggling cutoffs. Some cited a 2018 FAA bulletin warning of a switch design flaw, reviving concerns about mechanical failure.

Patrik Frykberg, an ICAO-certified investigator and former director of Peru's accident investigation board, said the report's structure did little to aid public or policy understanding. ICAO is the International Civil Aviation Organization.

"While the report meets Annex 13 requirements, there are areas where the presentation could be strengthened," he said. "A brief executive summary or synthesis of the main findings known so far would aid accessibility for non-technical audiences or high-level stakeholders. The report could have benefitted from a clearer timeline graphic, summarising key actions, from liftoff to impact." ICAO's Annex 13 is the framework for investigating incidents involving planes.

Although the report notes that no immediate safety recommendations have been issued, a short section summarising potential human factors under investigation could offer value without prejudging conclusions, Frykberg said.

Strickland, who has over four decades in the industry, said, "The report is brief. It states facts and figures, but it does not draw conclusions. It is a preliminary report, and only the final report will provide full causal analysis and any mandated actions."

UK safety expert David Learmount said pilots can make mistakes under pressure. "It's unlikely, but possible," he said.

"Just after takeoff, both are focused on performance and flight path. Their only task at that point is to raise the landing gear, which isn't near the fuel switches. Yet, they didn't raise the gear, and there was no reason to touch the switches. It's hard to believe trained pilots could make such an error—but maybe. We don't know, and we may never know." So far there's no evidence of intent—only that the switches were moved, he said. Until the final report emerges, experts said, the bigger concern is not just what happened on the flight deck, but how an inconclusive report, according to experts, has unleashed a flood of misinformation.

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BOEING 787 CRASH Claims unfounded, need transparency: Pilot bodies

Accusing Air India Pilots a Gross Violation: Unions

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Indian Commercial Pilots' Association, a union of Air India pilots, has raised concerns about discussions suggesting that a deliberate action by one the pilots may have led to the crash of the Boeing 787 aircraft in Ahmedabad last month.

The association termed such accusations and allegations against the pilots and flight crew a "gross violation of ethical reporting" and "disservice to the profession".

The fuel control switches, which regulate the flow of fuel to the engine, of the aircraft had been disengaged seconds after lift-off, according to the initial findings of an investigation into the accident that claimed 275 lives.

The preliminary report by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) did not recommend action against the manufacturer Boeing, or engine supplier General Electric, indicating no major fault with the plane or its engines, safety experts said.

According to the report, in the voice recordings from the cockpit, one of the pilots was heard asking why the switches were disengaged and the other replying that he did not do so. The AAIB report did not say whether the fuel flow was cut off deliberately or accidently.

"In the aftermath of this incident, we are deeply disturbed by speculative narratives emerging in sections of the media and public discourse—particularly the reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide," the association said.

"Let us be unequivocally clear: there is absolutely no basis for such a claim at this stage, and invoking such a serious allegation based on incomplete or preliminary information is not only irresponsible—it is deeply insensitive," it added. Any mention of pilot error or suicide "in the absence of verified evidence is a gross violation of ethical reporting and a disservice to the dignity of the profession," it said.

Another group, the Airline Pilots' Association of India, also rejected any suggestion of a pilot error causing the accident, stating: "The tone and direction of the investigation suggest a bias toward pilot error. We categorically reject this presumption and insist on a fair, fact-based inquiry." The association renewed its call to be included in the investigation process, at least as observers. "Transparency and the inclusion of qualified personnel, especially line pilots, are essential for public trust," it said.

US FAA, Boeing Notify Fuel Switch Locks are Safe

Reuters

Washington | New Delhi: The US Federal Aviation Administration and Boeing have privately issued notifications that the fuel switch locks on Boeing planes are safe, with the FAA saying they are safe, a document seen by Reuters showed and four sources with knowledge of the matter said.

The FAA's Continued Airworthiness Notification on July 11 came after a preliminary report on Friday into last month's Boeing 787-8 crash, which killed 260 people, raised questions over engine fuel cutoff switches.

FAA says issue doesn't warrant an Airworthiness Directive on any Boeing airplane models

The FAA's notification to Civil Aviation Authorities, seen by Reuters, said: "although the fuel control switch design, including the locking feature, is similar on various Boeing airplane models, the FAA does not consider this issue to be an unsafe condition that would warrant an Airworthiness Directive on any Boeing airplane models, including the Model 787."

When asked for comment, the FAA said it did not have anything to add beyond the notification.

Boeing also referred to FAA's notification in a Multi-Operator-Message sent to the airlines in the past few days, which said the planemaker is not recommending any action, two of the sources said.

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AIR INDIA PLANE CRASH

Probe flags possible Boeing system failure: UK lawyers

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR
Mumbai, July 13

INTERNATIONAL LEGAL EXPERTS representing the families of victims of the Air India crash are pointing fingers at aircraft manufacturer Boeing, stating that preliminary findings suggest a potential failure in its aircraft systems.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) released its 15-page initial report on Saturday, concluding that both engines on the Boeing 787 Dreamliner lost power moments after take-off. This led to a rapid loss of altitude and control, ending in catastrophe that claimed 260 lives. The report cites the aircraft's fuel cutoff switches transitioning inexplicably from 'Run' to 'Cut-off', effectively shutting down the engines one after the other.

Sarah Stewart, aviation partner at Stewarts, the UK's largest litigation-only law firm, told *FE*, "The factual information raises a troubling spectre that this accident may have been caused by un-commanded fuel cut-off, suggesting a possible failure in the Boeing systems." She further said that the cut-off switches were found in the 'Run' position in the wreckage, which could mean the pilots were unaware the switches had disengaged mid-flight. The AAIB report also references a special airworthiness information bulletin issued by the US Federal Aviation Administration in December 2018. It warned of the potential disengagement of the fuel control switch locking mechanism, a technical detail that has resurfaced with grave relevance in this crash.

James Healy-Pratt of Keystone Law, another UK-based aviation firm advising families, said the report raises serious concerns for both Boeing and Air India. "Our group of families will be taking action against Boeing in US courts very soon to obtain both evidence and answers about the role of the fuel control switches in this tragedy," he said. Lawyers from Stewarts and Keystone Law were in Ahmedabad over the weekend to support families through the coronial process and guide them through compensation procedures. They are also liaising with legal representatives of Air India and its insurers in London for interim payments.

Responding to the preliminary report, Boeing issued a statement, saying, "We continue to support the investigation and our customer. We will defer to the AAIB to provide information about AI171, in adherence with the United Nations International Civil Aviation Organisation protocol known as Annex 13."

LEGAL COURSE

- Report indicates the crash may have been caused by un-commanded fuel cut-off, suggesting a possible failure in the Boeing systems, says Sarah Stewart of the UK-based law firm Stewarts

- James Healy-Pratt of Keystone Law says the report raises serious concerns for both Boeing and Air India
- Lawyers from Stewarts and Keystone Law were in Ahmedabad over the weekend to support families

'Pilots should not be vilified'

THE INDIAN COMMERCIAL Pilots' Association (ICPA) on Sunday said the crew of the AI 171 flight that crashed last month acted in line with their training and responsibilities under challenging conditions, and the pilots should not be vilified based on conjecture. Strongly rejecting insinuations in some quarters about pilot suicide, the association representing narrow-body pilots of Air India stressed that until the official investigation is concluded and the final report is published, any speculation is unacceptable and must be condemned. —PTI

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Small plane crashes at UK's Southend Airport

Associated Press
letters@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: Emergency services raced on Sunday to the scene of a small plane crash at London Southend Airport.

In a statement on social media, the airport confirmed a "serious incident" involving what it termed a general aviation aircraft.

Essex Police said it had been alerted just before 4pm local time to the "serious incident" at the relatively small airport, which is around 72 kilometres east of the capital.

Images posted on social media show a plume of fire and black smoke emanating from the crash site. The plane involved is said to be 12 metres long. No details on where the plane was heading or how many people were on board were immediately disclosed.

"We are working with all emergency services at the scene now and that work will be ongoing for several hours," Essex Police said. As a precaution due to their proximity to the incident, police evacuated a local golf club and rugby club.

Passenger planes parked at Southend Airport in London on April 14, 2020. GETTY IMAGES

The local member of parliament, David Burton-Sampson, urged people to stay away and let the emergency services do their work.

"My thoughts are with everyone involved," he said.

According to the airport's website, four flights scheduled to take off on Sunday afternoon were cancelled.

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More pilots' bodies object to probe report on AI crash

Neha LM Tripathi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: In the wake of the release of the preliminary report into the Air India crash, the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) on Sunday raised concern over imputations being made over the role of the AI171 pilots.

The ICPA is a body originally formed by pilots of the erstwhile Indian Airlines that has, in the interest of fliers, raised several issues related to safety. In an official statement, the ICPA called accusations against the AI171 pilots and flight crew a "gross violation" and a "disservice to the profession".

"In the aftermath of this incident, we are deeply disturbed by speculative narratives emerging in sections of the media and public discourse — particularly the reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide," said ICPA.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) released its 15-page preliminary report on the Air India crash on Saturday, continued on →11

US FAA, Boeing notify fuel switch locks are safe: Report

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI/ MONTREAL: The US Federal Aviation Administration and Boeing have privately issued notifications that the fuel switch locks on Boeing planes are safe, a document seen by Reuters showed and four people with knowledge of the matter said.

FAA's Continued Airworthiness Notification on July 11 came after the preliminary report into the AI171 crash raised questions over engine fuel cutoff switches.

PTI separately reported that Air India replaced the Throttle Control Module (TCM), which includes fuel switches, of the crashed plane twice in the last six years. →P9

PILOTS' BODIES-AI CRASH

July 12. It laid out the sequence of events for the ill-fated flight. As per the report, the fuel to both engines was cut off shortly after take-off. Based on the AAIB report, the fuel control switches were found in the "cutoff" position.

"At about 08:08:42 UTC (1:38pm, 42 seconds) and immediately thereafter, the engine 1 and engine 2 fuel cutoff switches transitioned from RUN to CUTOFF position one after another with a time gap of 01 sec," the report stated.

"In the cockpit voice recording, one of the pilots is heard asking the other why he cut off. The other pilot responded that he did not do so." it added.

"Let us be unequivocally clear: there is absolutely no basis for such a claim at this stage, and invoking such a serious allegation based on incomplete or preliminary information is not only irresponsible—it is deeply insensitive to the individuals and families involved," the ICPA said.

Any mention of pilot error or suicide "in the absence of verified evidence is a gross violation of ethical reporting and a disservice to the dignity of the profession".

Air India flight 171 was headed for London's Gatwick Airport on June 12, when it crashed minutes after taking off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. The flight, which had 242 passengers on board (including cabin crew), crashed into BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad. The accident, which is among the deadliest aviation accidents recorded, killed a total of 260 people --- 241 on board and 19 on the ground at the crash site.

The Airline Pilots' Association (ALPA), a member of the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Association (IFALPA), in a statement on Saturday, said, "The tone and direction of the investigation suggest a bias towards pilot error... ALPA India categorically rejects this presumption and insists on a fair, fact-based inquiry."

While the report mentioned the fuel control switches being found in a mode opposite to what they should have been, it did not share the transcript of the CVR, which not only upset the pilot bodies but also industry experts.

It is learnt that the ALPA India is also considering taking legal action against the authorities for not having a pilot representative as part of the investigating committee.

"It is unfair for the government to not have a trained B787 pilot or a senior commander be part of the investigation. The actual fault leading to the crash should be known; however, there is a fear that the investigation is being carried out in one direction, which is to prove the pilots at fault," one of its officials requesting anonymity said.

Officials in the know of the development said that ALPA India is to meet the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday for an issue not related to the crash.

"ALPA members are meeting the DGCA officials on Monday for some pilot-related issues, but they aim to also discuss the importance of a pilot representative during the investigation of the crash," the person concluded.

nity will help him work towards the BJP's goal of a "Viksit Kerala" and "Viksit Bharat". "Today, thankfully there is peace in Kannur and I am among those who want the peace to prevail. I see the 1994 attack on me as a bad dream which I want to forget. I see my nomination as the party's commitment to Kerala and its people. The party is now promoting the idea of Viksit Kerala and Viksit Bharat. To help realise this vision, I must work even harder," he said.

Eminent academic

A noted historian and academic, Jain worked as an associate professor at the University of Delhi's Gargi College. She has authored several books, including Flight Of Deities And Rebirth Of Temples: Episodes From Indian History and The Battle for Rama: Case of the Temple at Ayodhya. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2020.

"She has distinguished herself as a scholar, researcher and historian. Her work in the fields of education, literature, history and political science have enriched academic discourse significantly. Best wishes for her Parliamentary tenure," the PM said. Thanking the PM and President, she said: "Dear Honourable President and Prime Minister, I am deeply humbled at being nominated to the Rajya Sabha. It is truly a great privilege and honour."

The four nominations come ahead of the Monsoon Session of Parliament and precede elections to Rajya Sabha seats from across states scheduled in 2026. Elections to 75 out of 245 seats are set to take place in April, June, and November next year when several leaders, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda, Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri, and NCP(SP) president Sharad Pawar, are set to complete their terms.

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letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI/ MONTREAL: The US Federal Aviation Administration and Boeing have privately issued notifications that the fuel switch locks on Boeing planes are safe, a document seen by Reuters showed and four officials with knowledge of the matter said.

The FAA's Continued Airworthiness Notification on July 11 came after a preliminary report on Friday into last month's Boeing 787-8 crash, which killed 260 people, raised questions over engine fuel cutoff switches.

The FAA's notification to Civil Aviation Authorities, seen by Reuters, said: "although the fuel control switch design, including the locking feature, is similar on various Boeing airplane models, the FAA does not consider this issue to be an unsafe condition that would warrant an Airworthiness Directive on any Boeing airplane models, including the Model 787."

When asked for comment, the FAA said it did not have anything to add beyond the notification.

Boeing also referred to FAA's notification in a Multi-Operator-Message sent to the airlines in the past few days, which said the planemaker is not recommending any action, two of the sources with direct knowledge said.

When asked for comment, Boeing referred Reuters' questions to the FAA.

The preliminary investigation report into the crash by India's Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), referred to a 2018 FAA advisory, which recommended, but did not mandate, operators of several Boeing models, including the 787, to inspect the locking feature of the fuel cutoff switches to ensure it could not be moved accidentally.

The report said Air India had said it had not carried out the FAA's suggested inspections as the FAA 2018 advisory was not a mandate. The report noted "all applicable airworthiness directives and alert service bulletins were complied on the aircraft as well as engines."

'AI replaced module in cockpit in crashed plane after Boeing directive'

Air India replaced the Throttle Control Module (TCM) of the crashed Boeing 787-8 plane twice in the last six years following a directive from Boeing in 2019, news agency PTI quoted people aware of the matter as saying on Sunday.

TCM includes fuel control switches that have come to focus in the probe into the fatal crash as these switches were cut off immediately after takeoff of the flight. The replacement of TCM twice, in 2019 and 2023, was mentioned in the AAIB's preliminary probe report into the crash that was released on Saturday.

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Who are part of the 5-member AAIB panel leading probe into AI-171 crash

Neha LM Tripathi
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NEW DELHI: The five-member Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) team that probed into the June 12 fatal Air India accident in Ahmedabad, which claimed at least 260 lives, is headed by the agency's director Sanjay Kumar Singh, the bureau has revealed, as it released the list of officers that investigated one of the worst air disasters in decades.

On June 12, the London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner began to lose thrust almost immediately after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport and ploughed into a medical college hostel, killing all but one of the 242 onboard and another 19 on the ground. In a preliminary report released late on Friday, AAIB said the aircraft took off at 08:08:39 UTC (13:38:39 IST) and at about 08:09:05 UTC (13:39:05 IST) one of the pilots transmitted "MAYDAY MAYDAY MAYDAY".

Soon after the incident, AAIB director general GVG Yugandhar appointed a five-member panel to probe the AI-171 crash. Besides Sanjay Kumar Singh, who was appointed the investigator-in-charge, other members on the probe panel were Jasbir Singh Larhga, Vipin Venu Varakoth, Veeraragavan K, and Vaishnav Vijayakumar. A brief profile of these officials:

AAIB director Sanjay Kumar Singh is heading the probe into the June 12 plane crash

Sanjay Kumar Singh

Currently serving as a director at AAIB, Singh has a 15-year experience in aircraft accident investigation and aviation safety. At 56, Singh has managed investigations into 15 accidents or serious incidents and has overseen the classification of at least 300 reported occurrences. Singh holds a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering with a specialisation in aeronautical engineering, along with an MBA. His LinkedIn profile notes over 25 years of experience in consulting, advisory, and operational roles related to Air Force assets.

Jasbir Singh Larhga

Associated with AAIB for over a decade, Larhga has played key roles in numerous aircraft accident probe, including the 2020 Kozhikode Air India Express crash. His career also includes tenures at DGCA, the aviation regulator, as well with Pawan Hans and Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. At AAIB and DGCA, Larhga has contributed to investigations into incidents such as the Jet Airways runway excursion in Goa in 2016 and the Air India Express taxiway incident at Mangalore Airport in 2019. He was a chief investigator in the June 12 Air India crash. A senior official described him as efficient and diligent during his regulatory tenure.

Vipin Venu Varakoth

Currently posted as an assistant director of air safety at the DGCA's Mumbai office, a post he held for over seven years, Varakoth has over 15-year experience with the aviation regulator. According to his LinkedIn profile, he earlier served as an air safety officer for nearly the same duration as his current position.

Veeraragavan K

A colleague of Varakoth's at the DGCA's Mumbai office, Veeraragavan has been posted as an assistant director of air safety for close to four years. Before this, he was posted in Delhi as an air safety officer for nine years. His professional experience includes a brief stint as an analysis engineer at Tata Consultancy Services in Chennai.

Vaishnav Vijayakumar

A serving air safety officer at DGCA, Vaishnav Vijaykumar has been involved in multiple investigations pertaining to aircraft accidents and other serious incidents involving the aviation sector.

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Air India crash report & unanswered questions

The release of the preliminary investigation report into the tragic crash of Air India Flight AI171 on June 12, 2025, brings with it a fresh wave of confusion, and suspicion. The 15-page document, expected to clarify the early findings of the crash of a Boeing 787 Dreamliner at Ahmedabad, opens a Pandora's box of unresolved questions and incomplete disclosures. It paints a picture that is more fragmented than coherent.

Flight AI171, operating a scheduled service from Ahmedabad to London, crashed moments after takeoff, killing all 260 people on board. The aircraft, VT-ANB, lifted off the runway and within seconds, both engines ceased to produce thrust. Within half a minute, the plane had descended into the nearby college hostels, engulfed in flames. According to the report, the aircraft reached a speed of 180 knots at approximately 08:08:42 UTC. Shortly after, the Engine 1 and Engine 2 fuel control switches were found to have transitioned from RUN to CUTOFF — just one second apart. Ten seconds later, the crew attempted to restart the engines. But by then, it was too late. The aircraft descended uncontrollably to the ground.

Amit Singh

ICAO Annex 13 clearly states that the objective of a preliminary report is not to assign blame or determine cause, but to provide a factual sequence of events, highlight significant safety concerns, and issue urgent recommendations if necessary. It is meant to inform other States and parties involved about the early facts of the case, so that timely corrective actions may be initiated if needed.

However, while the AI171 preliminary report adheres to the form of Annex 13, it falls short in spirit and substance. It avoids conclusions, as expected, but in doing so also omits a substantial amount of critical information that should have been presented.

The most glaring absence is of the comprehensive Flight Data Recorder (FDR) data. The report mentions the transition of the fuel control switches, which implies that this data exists and was retrieved. Yet, no graphical or tabular snapshot has been shared through the report. Nor is there any confirmation that 100% of the FDR data was recovered. Similarly, the Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) is only referenced once — a vague sentence about an attempted restart. There is no transcript, no clear timeline of the cockpit conversation, and no insight into the crew's awareness or state of mind.

In high-profile crashes worldwide — such as Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 — the preliminary reports have included detailed readouts from the FDR and CVR, graphical system schematics, warning messages, and pilot action logs. Those reports ran over 30 pages and offered transparency in the public interest. In contrast, AI171's report appears hastily compiled, which should not be the case for an investigative report.

It describes the deployment of the Ram Air Turbine (RAT) — a small emergency turbine that powers key systems during engine failures, shortly after takeoff. It also notes a slew of unrelated system alerts yet offers no explanation as to why these were triggered, whether they were consequential or collateral, or how the aircraft's health monitoring system processed them.

Moreover, critical questions remain unanswered: Did the Engine Indicating and Crew Alerting System (EICAS) generate an ENG FAIL or similar warning at any point? Why did both fuel control switches move to CUTOFF? Was it pilot action, inadvertent contact, or a system fault?

Did the pilots misinterpret any signal, or was the failure abrupt and total? Why did the Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT) not activate? Why were crash-proof recorders (EFAR) damaged, especially when installed in parts of the fuselage designed to survive impact?

Adding to the mystery is the discrepancy in the aircraft's altitude. The RAT is said to have deployed at 60 feet, as inferred from the CCTV image, which again fails to produce a timestamp, which suggests that the onboard systems had already detected a power loss almost instantly after liftoff. Yet, the report timestamps this after the fuel control switch cutoff. Which came first: the RAT deployment or the engine shutdown? Absolute clarity about the sequence is necessary.

The report offers no safety recommendations. Despite multiple system anomalies, potential failure of critical safety features, and questionable cockpit switch behaviour, the report stops short of issuing a preliminary advisory to airlines, manufacturers, or regulators.

Compare this with Boeing's past actions. After similar incidents, service bulletins and safety information bulletins were quickly issued. Was any such communication shared internally within Air India or to other 787 operators worldwide?

For the families of the 260 people killed, this report offers no reassurance on the investigation, no clarity on whether similar aircraft are safe, and no indication that anyone has been held accountable or that corrective measures are underway. Transparency is the cornerstone of trust in aviation safety. A preliminary report that fails to provide basic data may only fuel doubt, and grief. In a country striving to become a global aviation hub, where air traffic is growing exponentially, this tragedy — and the lacklustre handling of its investigation — signals that our institutional capacity for accident investigation is still inadequate.

The AI171 preliminary report was an opportunity to demonstrate transparency, integrity, and commitment to learning. Instead, even as it avoids speculation, it avoids detail too. It follows the letter of ICAO Annex 13, but not its spirit.

What we need next is not just a final report but a cultural shift where accident reports are comprehensive, timely, and made with the public's right to know in mind — where safety recommendations are proactive and where the data speaks for itself, because in aviation, the truth is a matter of life and death.

Amit Singh, a Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society (FRAeS), is the founder of Safety Matters Foundation. The views expressed are personal

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Key to mystery: 32 seconds in flight deck

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NEW DELHI: In the final seconds of Air India Flight 171, as both engines lost power and the Boeing 787 began its fatal descent, a crucial exchange unfolded between two experienced pilots that investigators believe holds the key to understanding what went wrong.

"One of the pilots is heard asking the other why did he cutoff. The other pilot responded that he did not do so," according to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's preliminary report. Those paraphrased words are at the centre of a complex investigation into whether the accident was caused by human error, mechanical failure, or an emergency procedure gone catastrophically wrong.

The cockpit was staffed according to standard procedures: first officer Clive Kunder, 32, served as pilot flying with captain Sumeet Sabharwal, 56, monitoring. Both had passed pre-flight breath analyser tests and met all rest requirements, the report noted.

Kunder, the junior pilot, had 1,128 hours on the Boeing 787 and was responsible for controlling the aircraft during the critical take-off phase. Sabharwal, with 8,596 hours on the same type of jet, was tasked with monitoring systems and providing oversight—a standard arrangement designed to combine experience with operational currency.

JS Rawat, former joint director general of DGCA, cautioned against drawing conclusions from the limited cockpit voice recorder information. "While nothing can be ascertained with a paraphrased sentence in the report that mentions one pilot asking the other if he switched off the fuel switches and the second pilot denying the same, nothing can be positively said at this stage," he said.

The preliminary report provides a precise timeline of the crew's actions. Citing flight data from the EAFR (the integrated blackboxes), it states the switches moved to cutoff state one second apart, almost immediately after the plane lifted off from the ground. "The aircraft achieved the maximum recorded airspeed of 180 Knots IAS at about 08:08:42 UTC and immediately thereafter, the engine 1 and engine 2 fuel cutoff switches transitioned from RUN to CUTOFF position one after another with a time gap of 01 sec," it stated. Roughly 32 seconds later, the plane crashed and exploded.

An experienced airline commander, requesting anonymity, questioned the plausibility of pilot error during this critical phase. "It is highly unlikely that any pilot, especially during take-off, would want to fiddle around with switches behind the thrust levels. At best, you'd focus on raising the landing gear which is located in the front panel of the cockpit, or raise the flaps," he said.

A second pilot framed the phase as a time when pilots are laser-focused on flight instruments in the front, and not the centre console, where the fuel switches are located. "No pilot is inept to want to play around with switches in the middle section of the cockpit when all attention is focused on forward flight cockpit instruments located in front of the pilots, during take-off and landing," this person said.

At a subsequent moment after the cutoff – the report does not mention when or in what words exactly – came the exchange between the pilots about how the fuel flow stop was engaged.

Roughly 10 seconds after the first engine cutoff was recorded by the flight data recorder, one of the pilots – it is unclear who – returned the first engine's switch to "RUN" position. Engine 2's switch followed another four seconds later. The four-second interval between restart attempts could indicate pilots following emergency protocols or the time needed to recognise the first engine's restart attempt before moving to the second. "In my view the 4 second interval was part of emergency protocols and call-outs etc. That is why the entire CVR transcript was essential," Aviation expert Sanjay Lazar said.

Once they engaged the fuel switches in the run mode, the 787's Full Authority Digital Engine Control (FADEC) systems automatically began a sequence to restart the engine. The crew then issued a Mayday call at 08:09:05 UTC—23 seconds after the initial fuel cut-off and just six seconds before the flight recorder stopped working.

Both pilots brought significant experience to the cockpit. Sabharwal had accumulated 15,638 total flight hours across multiple aircraft types, while Kunder had logged 3,403 hours overall. Their flying experience was current, with both pilots having flown more than 230 hours in the previous 180 days.

That the report does not identify which pilot made which statement in the crucial exchange reflects investigative protocol designed to avoid prejudging crew actions. Determining whether the pilot flying or pilot monitoring moved the switches—and why—will be crucial to the final investigation. "What surprises is the intentional mystery with the crew communication transcript documented in the PIR. It's impossible that during an emergency the cockpit would be so quiet. For starters, take- off checklist and emergency call out phrases are left out in the report allowing the reader to be creative with making assumptions. Clearly critical aspects that are known to the investigators have been withheld," said Mark Martin, CEO of Martin Consulting, an aviation consulting firm based in Asia.

How the London-bound Air India plane crashed moments after taking off from the Ahmedabad airport on June 12. PTI

Picking up the missing pieces to tragic puzzle

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NEW DELHI: Scattered across a 1,000-foot debris field in Ahmedabad, the remnants of Air India Flight 171 provided investigators with a puzzle of twisted metal and damaged components that would prove crucial to understanding what caused the Boeing 787's catastrophic engine failure. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's preliminary report reveals how each recovered piece — from heavily damaged flight recorders to precisely positioned cockpit controls—contributed to reconstructing the final 32 seconds of a flight that claimed 260 lives.

A tale of two black boxes

The investigation's breakthrough came from one of the aircraft's two Enhanced Airborne Flight Recorders (EAFR), integrated black boxes that combine traditional flight data recording with cockpit voice capture in single units. The aft EAFR, located in the tail section, was discovered on the roof of the hostel mess a day after the crash. "The EAFR had impact and thermal damages to the housing. The wires were protruding from the housing and the connectors were burnt," the report states. Extensive damage rendered it unreadable through conventional means.

A breakthrough came when the forward EAFR was found three days later "from the wreckage debris besides the Building F" — this building was one of the hostels. Despite being "burnt and covered in soot," this recorder remained "still attached to the equipment shelf with part of the connector melted but still connected," providing investigators with the critical data needed to understand the disaster. The forward recorder yielded "approximately 49 hours of flight data and 6 flights, including the event flight" plus "two hours in length" of voice recordings of the final moments.

Console, frozen in time

The cockpit's centre console was recovered, where investigators discovered both fuel control switches in the "RUN" position— confirming the attempt by the pilots to avert the crash. "Both fuel control switch were found in the 'RUN' position".

The components told a story of proper procedures followed until the moment of crisis. The flap handle assembly, despite sustaining "significant thermal damage," was found "firmly seated in the 5-degree flap position, consistent with a normal take-off flap setting."

The landing gear lever remained in the "DOWN" position, indicating the gear had not yet been retracted when the emergency began—consistent with the aircraft being only seconds into its climb. However, the thrust lever "sustained significant thermal damage" with "both thrust levers found near the aft (idle) position" and the report notes this contradicted flight recorder data: "the EAFR data revealed that the thrust levers remained forward (takeoff thrust) until the impact." This discrepancy suggests the levers could have moved during the crash from impact, rather than reflecting pilot actions during the emergency.

Emergency systems: Automatic responses to crisis

The wreckage provided evidence of the aircraft's automatic emergency responses. The Auxiliary Power Unit (APU) was "found intact inside the APU compartment" with its "air inlet door found open," indicating the APU had automatically started in response to the dual engine failure.

The report notes that "the APU Inlet Door began opening at about 08:08:54 UTC, consistent with the APU Auto Start logic," suggesting the aircraft's emergency systems functioned as designed. Despite the intense post-crash fire fuelled by 54,200 kilograms of jet fuel, many critical components survived in recognisable condition. The investigation team successfully recovered and analysed fuel control switches, landing gear components, flap mechanisms, and portions of the flight deck.

One notable absence from the analysis was any mention of the Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT). The report states simply: "The Emergency Locator Transmitter was not activated during this event," without elaborating on the device's condition.

The landing gear lever (left) was in the 'down' position at the time of recovery; and images of the EAFRs found on June 13 and 16. AAIB

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Small plane crashes at London Southend Airport

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, JULY 13

EMERGENCY SERVICES raced Sunday to the scene of a small plane crash at London Southend Airport. In a statement on social media, the airport confirmed a "serious incident" involving what it termed a general aviation aircraft.

Essex Police said it had been alerted just before 4 p.m. local time to the "serious incident" at the relatively small airport, which is around 72 kilometers east of the capital. Images posted on social media show a plume of fire and black smoke emanating from the crash site. The plane involved is said to be 12 meters long. No details on where the plane was heading or how many people were on board were immediately disclosed.

"We are working with all emergency services at the scene now and that work will be ongoing for several hours," Essex Police said. As a precaution due to their proximity to the incident, police evacuated a local golf club and rugby club. The local member of parliament, David Burton-Sampson, urged people to stay away and let the emergency services do their work.

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JUNE 12 AIR INDIA FLIGHT AI 171 CRASH IN AHMEDABAD

Crash report: Unanswered questions, and some reading between the lines

SUKALP SHARMA
& ANIL SASI
NEW DELHI, JULY 13

AT THE heart of the June 12 Air India flight AI 171 crash in Ahmedabad is the fact that the Boeing 787-8 aircraft's two engine fuel control switches transitioned from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' position within a second of each other moments after lift-off, according to the preliminary report into the investigation of the aviation disaster. One of the pilots is recorded as asking the other why he cut off the fuel, to which the other pilot responded saying he did not.

Need for video recorders?

Now, aviation experts are pointing to the likelihood of there being much more on the cockpit voice recorder (CVR) than what's been shared in the report. Why was only the one paraphrased remark — one pilot asking the other why did he 'cutoff' and the second pilot's response in the negative — included, that too without direct quotes from the CVR transcript? What was the pilots' conversation like before and after this specific exchange? Who was the pilot who asked the question, and who answered? The initial report is silent on these. Most preliminary air accident investigation reports in the past have been a compilation of basic facts, mostly detailing 'what happened' more than the 'why it happened'. This particular report marks a departure from the normal in providing more details of what led to the crash, but limits the information on the most crucial exchange that took place in the cockpit to just that one line and a really brief response.

Both switches are documented as transitioning back to 'RUN' after the exchange between the pilots captured in the report. Generally, when the CVR is played, the room has colleagues of the pilots who've worked with both of them so that their voices can be identified in exchanges. In all probability, that exercise would have already been done. The recording data should also be able to identify the individual headset microphones of the two pilots. The report, however, stops short of identifying which of the two pilots asked the question in the cockpit, and who answered.

The fully-labelled cockpit voice recorder transcript, which could be released in the final report, should be able to reveal which of the two pilots tried to restart the engines — co-pilot Clive Kunder (pilot flying) or pilot-in-command Sumeet Sabharwal (pilot monitoring). Experts believe that only the full audio and transcript of the cockpit voice recorder recording would be able to shed light on the pilots' discussions and actions in the cockpit in the minutes leading up to the tragedy. The recording must also be correlated with the flight data from the flight recorders.

The Ahmedabad crash could also underline the need for cockpit video recorders, experts said. The US NTSB is among agencies that have been recommending the need for video recorders in the cockpit for years, only to be met with strong resistance from pilot unions. A video would have given a clear view of the instrument console over the shoulders of the pilots, which would have helped establish if any crucial switches were moved when they weren't supposed to be touched, and if so, by whom.

Wreckage of the Air India plane that crashed on June 12 in Ahmedabad, Gujarat. *Express file*

Aviation psychologist in the probe team

The preliminary report from the investigation, led by the AAIB, had experts from Boeing, General Electric, Air India, Indian regulators other than the AAIB, and participants from the US, the UK and Canada. Alongside "experienced pilots, engineers, aviation medicine specialists...and Flight Recorder Specialists", who have been taken on board as subject matter experts to assist the investigation, there is one interesting addition: an aviation psychologist.

Given the circumstances of the crash, an aviation psychologist could have been drafted to peruse human factors like stress, fatigue, quality of communication between the pilots, and indications of their alertness and decision-making. In this particular case, given the indication that both the fuel control switches transitioned to CUTOFF position in quick succession, the psychologist could help analyse any human involvement that might have been there. It is not clear whether the inclusion of the aviation psychologist in the initial probe was to cover all bases, or to look into any specific aspect.

Aviation psychologists are learnt to have played a big role in the Germanwings Flight 9525 crash enroute from Barcelona–El Prat Airport in Spain to Düsseldorf Airport in Germany in 2015.

Relevance of FAA advisory

The AAIB report does make a specific reference to a December 2018 US Federal Aviation Administration issued Special Airworthiness Information Bulletin (SAIB) highlighting that some Boeing 737 fuel control switches were installed with the locking feature disengaged. The same switch design is used in Boeing 787-8 aircraft, including Air India's AI 171 that crashed. It goes on to say the SAIB was advisory and not a directive, and that Air India did not perform the advised inspections as they were not mandatory.

Notably, the cockpit's throttle control module — which is integrated with the fuel control switches — was replaced in 2019 and 2023, but the reason for replacement was not linked to the switches. The initial report said that no defect pertaining to the fuel control switches on the aircraft was reported since 2023. If that is the case, then why did the initial probe report include this specific SAIB? Was it in the spirit of maximum disclosure while suggesting the issue was not really relevant to this particular aircraft? It is not clear.

If there indeed was a problem with the fuel control switches' locking mechanism, does it imply that the spring-loaded switch could be moved with just a single flick, instead of being pulled up first and then moved from one mode to the other, which is how it is normally operated? Was there any possibility of the switch, if the locking mechanism was disengaged, just flipping on its own and shutting down the engine? That really is not clear.

The report nowhere clearly states that the fuel control switches were indeed moved by either of the pilots during take-off. It just says that they "transitioned" from RUN to CUTOFF based on the black box data. Some pilots and experts have said that the investigators must also closely examine the possibility of an electrical or software malfunction signalling to the aircraft system that the switches were in cut-off mode without being physically moved.

The fact that the preliminary report has not issued any recommendation to the operators of the Boeing 787 aircraft and the GE GEnx-1B engines suggests that the investigators, at least for the time being, do not have sufficient reason to believe that an electrical or system malfunction could have led to the fuel control switches "transitioning" to CUTOFF.

It is worth noting that the preliminary report is only an account of the initial findings of the investigation, and is subject to change on the basis of the progress of the probe over the coming months.

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EXPLAINED AVIATION

Mandate of AAIB, probing Ahmedabad plane crash

The tail end of the AI 171 stuck on top of a medical hostel. *Bhupendra Rana*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 13

A MONTH after the Air India flight crash in Ahmedabad, which killed more than 250 people, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) released a preliminary report on Friday.

The 15-page report stated that the two engine fuel control switches onboard transitioned from 'RUN' to 'CUTOFF' position within a second of each other, moments after lift-off. One of the two pilots is recorded as asking the other why he cut off the fuel, to which the other pilot responded, saying he did not. The report has led to further questions and demands for greater scrutiny of the black box data.

Who conducts aircraft probes?

Matters of international civil aviation are governed by the Convention on International Civil Aviation, or the Chicago Convention, signed in 1944. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), a UN agency with 193 member countries (including India), oversees its technical standards.

Annex 13 of this convention lays out the international protocols for investigating aircraft accidents and serious incidents. It bestows the responsibility for investigation with the 'State of Occurrence' — the country where the accident happened. Some other countries also have a formal right to participate, such as the 'State of Registry' (where the aircraft is registered) and the 'State of Manufacture' (of the aircraft).

What is the AAIB?

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), a government agency under the Ministry of Civil Aviation, is leading the investigation into the crash.

Until 2012, the Air Safety Directorate of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation investigated accidents and safety-related incidents. In line with the ICAO's Standards and Recommended Practices, and to provide independence to the investigation function from the regulatory function, the government established a new bureau.

What are the AAIB's functions?

In general, the AAIB classifies 'Safety Occurrences' involving aircraft operating in the Indian airspace into various categories. It investigates all "Accidents" and "Serious Incidents" with aircraft of an All Up Weight (the total weight of an aircraft with passengers and cargo) of more than 2,250 kg, as well as Turbojet aircraft. It can also investigate other cases.

Under the Aircraft (Investigation of Accidents and Incidents) Rules, 2017, the sole objective of such investigations is the prevention of accidents and incidents and not to apportion blame or liability.

The AAIB deputes Investigators to reach the site and gather evidence soon after it receives notice of the incident. Its website states that initially, the aim is to gather and preserve perishable evidence for subsequent analysis.

Next, the Investigation team reviews evidence to assess the detailed examinations required. Further, documents and records gathered from the Operator, Regulator, involved Personnel, or other stakeholders are analysed. The AAIB is mandated access to all relevant evidence from any agency/organisation without seeking prior official consent.

After completion of the investigation, a draft report is presented internally and accepted by the AAIB Director General. Following further consultations and reviews, the final report is made public and published on the official website.

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JANSATTA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

विमान हादसे की प्रारंभिक रपट पर 'इंडियन कामर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन' ने कहा

पायलटों को बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए

विमान दुर्घटना जांच का हिस्सा बनने के लिए कानूनी रास्ता अपनाने पर विचार कर रहा है एएलपीए-इंडिया

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 13 जुलाई।

'इंडियन कामर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन' (आइसीपीए) ने रविवार को कहा कि पिछले महीने दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुए एआइ 171 उड़ान के चालक दल ने चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों में अपने प्रशिक्षण और जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप काम किया। पायलटों को अटकलों के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।

एसोसिएशन ने कुछ हलकों में पायलट के आत्महत्या करने संबंधी अटकलों को सिरे से खारिज करते हुए कहा कि जब तक आधिकारिक जांच पूरी नहीं हो जाती और अंतिम रपट नहीं आ जाती, कोई भी अटकलबाजी अस्वीकार्य है और इसकी निंदा की जानी चाहिए। 'एअरलाइन पायलट्स एसोसिएशन आफ इंडिया' ने भी एअर इंडिया विमान दुर्घटना की निष्पक्ष और तथ्य-


फाइल फोटो।

आधारित जांच की मांग करते हुए जनिवार को दावा किया था कि हादसे की जांच की शैली और दिशा पायलट की गलती की ओर संकेत करने वाला पूर्वाग्रह है। एएआइबी ने 12 जून को बोइंग 787-8 विमान हादसे की अपनी प्रारंभिक रपट जारी कर दी है, जिसमें कुल 260 लोग मारे गए थे। रपट में कहा गया है कि एअर इंडिया के विमान के अहमदाबाद से उड़ान भरने के बाद दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने से कुछ सेकंड पहले, इसके दोनों इंजनों के ईंधन नियंत्रण स्विच बंद हो गए थे।

पंद्रह पन्ने की रपट में कहा गया है कि काकपिट की आवाज रिकार्डिंग में एक पायलट दूसरे से पूछता सुनाई देता है कि उसने ईंधन क्यों बंद किया, जिस पर दूसरा पायलट ईंधन बंद करने से इनकार करता है। प्रारंभिक रपट में एएआइबी ने कहा कि बोइंग 787-8 विमान के ईंधन स्विच उड़ान भरने के तुरंत बाद बंद हो गए थे। काकपिट की आवाज रिकार्डिंग में एक पायलट दूसरे से पूछता सुनाई देता है कि उसने ईंधन क्यों बंद किया, जिस पर दूसरा पायलट ईंधन बंद करने से इनकार करता है।

पायलटों के समूह एएलपीए-इंडिया ने रविवार को कहा कि वह एअर इंडिया के बोइंग 787-8 विमान दुर्घटना की जांच में अपने सदस्यों को शामिल करने के लिए कानूनी सहारा लेने पर विचार कर रहा है। इससे एक दिन पहले उसने आरोप लगाया था कि वायुयान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो की प्रारंभिक रपट में पायलट की गलती की ओर संकेत करने वाला पूर्वाग्रह है। एअरलाइन पायलट्स एसोसिएशन आफ इंडिया देश भर की एअरलाइन और हेलिकाप्टर कंपनियों के 800 से अधिक पायलटों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। एएआइबी की प्रारंभिक रपट की पृष्ठभूमि में, एएलपीए-इंडिया के प्रतिनिधि सोमवार को विभिन्न मुद्दों पर चर्चा करने के लिए नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) के अधिकारियों से मुलाकात करेंगे।

'पायलट की भूमिका पर निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी, अंतिम रपट का इंतजार करें'

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 13 जुलाई।

विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो के पूर्व प्रमुख अरविंदो हांडा ने रविवार को कहा कि पिछले महीने अहमदाबाद में एअर इंडिया के विमान के दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने से जुड़ी प्रारंभिक जांच रपट के आधार पर पायलट की भूमिका के बारे में निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी होगी। अंतिम रपट में दुर्घटना के सर्वाधिक संभावित कारण का उल्लेख होगा।

विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो द्वारा जांच से जुड़ी प्रारंभिक रपट जारी करने के एक दिन बाद हांडा ने कहा कि हमें ब्यूरो को निष्पक्ष, पक्षपात रहित और पारदर्शी तरीके से जांच पूरी करने की अनुमति देनी चाहिए। हांडा ने 2020 में कोझिकोड में हुई एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस विमान दुर्घटना सहित 100 से अधिक विमान दुर्घटनाओं की जांच की है। उन्होंने कहा कि ब्यूरो अब यह पता लगाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करेगा कि ये ईंधन स्विच क्यों और कैसे हिले और क्या कोई यांत्रिक और/या विद्युत विफलता/खराबी हो सकती है।

हांडा ने कहा कि पायलट इन कमांड (पीआइसी) 56 वर्षीय कैप्टन सुमीत सभरवाल थे और सह-पायलट के रूप में 'फर्स्ट आफिसर' 32 वर्षीय क्लाइव कुंदर थे। सभरवाल का बोइंग 787 के साथ उड़ान अनुभव 8,596 घंटों से अधिक का था, जिसमें पीआइसी के रूप में 8,260 घंटे शामिल हैं। इसी तरह कुंदर का इस तरह के विमान के साथ उड़ान अनुभव 1,128 घंटे का था। उड़ान के दौरान विमान की कमान कुंदर के पास थी, जबकि सभरवाल लगभग 12 साल पुराने बोइंग 787-8 विमान से संचालित इस उड़ान के दौरान पायलट की निगरानी कर रहे थे। प्रारंभिक रपट के अनुसार, दोनों पायलट ने उड़ान भरने से पहले पर्याप्त आराम किया था। हांडा ने कहा कि कुछ जगहों पर खासकर विदेशी मीडिया में, यह संकेत देने की कोशिश की जा रही है कि किसी एक पायलट की गलती हो सकती है।

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Cockpit caution

India's aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu's advice against leaping to conclusions on the 12 June crash of Air India's flight 171 in Ahmedabad needs to be taken by all, just as the classic principle of "reasonable doubt" requires wide public appreciation in a world fed by social media frenzies. Often, the dots in a case join up to offer an apparent answer. The interim probe of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau found that seconds after takeoff, the ill-fated Boeing 787's fuel supply to both engines was cut off in quick succession; one pilot asked the other why he did it and the latter denied doing so. By the time both switches were flipped back to "run", it was too late to regain thrust. The report leaves open a window for a role played by a technical snag, but the potential human role makes it imperative to wait for final findings. The disbelief evoked by the latter possibility is also a reminder of why a just society demands we minimize scope for false attribution of blame, even if it means such a system may err on the side of pinning down less of it overall. Every shadow of doubt on a hypothesis needs to be pursued by investigators, even if a *prima facie* story seems to add up. Let's be patient.

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MILLENNIUM POST DELHI 14 JULY 2025

ALPA-India pushes for role in crash probe

A day after claiming AAIB's preliminary report is biased towards pilot error

MUMBAI: Pilots' grouping ALPA-India on Sunday said it is mulling legal recourse to have its members as part of the investigation into the Air India's Boeing 787-8 plane crash, a day after alleging that AAIB's preliminary report suggests a bias towards pilot error.


FILE PIC

The prelim report by the AAIB has been put up on the website. It does not have anyone's signature on it. We want transparency, says ALPA-India chief

The Airline Pilots' Association of India (ALPA-India) represents over 800 pilots of airlines and helicopter companies in the country. It is a member of the International Federation of Airline Pilots' Association (IFALPA), which claims to have 1 lakh pilots from across 100 countries as its members.

Against the backdrop of the AAIB's preliminary report, representatives of ALPA-India will meet officials of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday to discuss various issues.

"The preliminary report by the AAIB has been put up on the website. It does not have anyone's signature on it. Continued on P4

ALPA-India

We want transparency. We had asked for our representation in the investigation panel," ALPA-India president Sam Thomas said.

Thomas stressed that its members have domain expertise and can contribute meaningfully in the investigation of the Air India plane crash.

The association is mulling legal recourse to ensure that its members are made a part of the investigation team.

His comments come at a time when people from certain quarters are opining that fuel switches could have been cut off by a pilot, a proposition that has been strongly rejected by pilots' groupings.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) in its preliminary report on the crash that killed 260 people on June 12 said the fuel switches to the engines were cut off within a gap of 1 second immediately after take-off and caused confusion in the cockpit of Air India flight AI 171.

India's second largest airline by domestic market share, Air India is owned by the Tata Group.

Citing cockpit voice recording, the 15-page preliminary report, released on Saturday, said one pilot asked why the switch was cut off and the other pilot responded that he did not do so.

"We are once again surprised at the secrecy surrounding these investigations. We are also reiterating the fact that suitably qualified personnel are not taken on board for these crucial investigations," ALPA-India said in a statement on Saturday.

"We feel that the investigation is being driven in a direction presuming the guilt of pilots and we strongly object to this line of thought," it had said.

Last month, IFALPA offered its 'technical expertise' to the Indian civil aviation authorities in the Ahmedabad plane crash probe being conducted by the AAIB.

In a letter to AAIB Director General G V G Yugandhar, the federation had said it was ready to provide expert technical and other forms of assistance, share global best practices and offer personnel to collaborate closely with the investigators.

A five-member team appointed by the AAIB is probing the crash, which is also the first where a Boeing 787 Dreamliner accident resulted in hull loss.

"Experienced pilots, engineers, aviation medicine specialist, aviation psychologist and flight recorder specialists have been taken on board as subject matter experts to assist the investigation in the area of their domain expertise," AAIB said in the preliminary report. AGENCIES

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NAVBHARAT TIMES DELHI 14 JULY 2025

विमान हादसाः पायलट का स्यूसाइड एंगल असोसिएशन ने खारिज किया

■ पीटीआई, मुंबई

इंडियन कमर्शल पायलट्स असोसिएशन (ICPA) ने अहमदाबाद विमान हादसा मामले में पायलट के आत्महत्या की अटकलों को खारिज किया। साथ ही कहा कि जब तक जांच पूरी नहीं होती और फाइनल रिपोर्ट नहीं आ जाती, कोई भी अटकलबाजी अस्वीकार्य है। असोसिएशन ने कहा कि पायलटों ने जिम्मेदारियों के मुताबिक काम किया। उन्हें अटकलों के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए। इसका कोई आधार नहीं है।

ICPA ने रविवार को कहा कि पायलट की आत्महत्या की अटकलें परेशान करने वाली है। अधूरी या शुरुआती जानकारी के आधार पर इस तरह के गंभीर आरोप लगाना न केवल गैरजिम्मेदाराना है बल्कि उसमें शामिल व्यक्तियों और परिवारों के लिए भी असंवेदनशील रवैया है।

File

इलेक्ट्रिकल समस्या हो सकती है: एक्सपर्ट

फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन पायलट्स के अध्यक्ष पूर्व कैप्टन सी. एस. रंधावा ने आशंका जताई कि हो सकता है कि प्लेन के इलेक्ट्रिकल या मिकैनिकल फंक्शन में कोई प्रॉब्लम आई हो। इससे फ्यूल की सप्लाई रुक गई हो। शुरुआती जांच रिपोर्ट में दोनों पायलटों की कोई गलती नजर नहीं आती। ▸▸ पेज 12

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NAVBHARAT TIMES DELHI 14 JULY 2025

'प्लेन ऊंचाई पर होता तो बच जातीं जानें'

Maneesh.Aggarwal
@timesofindia.com

■ **नई दिल्ली :** अहमदाबाद में 12 जून को क्रैश हुए एयर इंडिया के विमान की शुरुआती रिपोर्ट में फ्यूल कंट्रोल स्विच के ऑन से ऑफ मोड में चले जाने वाली बात सामने आई है। एयर इंडिया में बोइंग-777 के पूर्व एग्जामिनर सी. एस. रंधावा का कहना है कि एक बात और बेहद अहम है। वह है प्लेन के क्रैश होते वक्त अंदर केबिन में लाइटों का ऑन-ऑफ होना जिसकी जानकारी हादसे में जिंदा बचे एकमात्र यात्री ने दी थी। फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन पायलट्स (FPI) के अध्यक्ष पूर्व कैप्टन रंधावा ने आशंका जताते हुए कहा कि हो सकता है कि प्लेन के इलेक्ट्रिकल या मिकैनिकल फंक्शन में कोई दिक्कत आई हो और

FILE

फ्यूल सप्लाई रूक गई हो। इसके लिए उन्होंने बोइंग 787 प्लेन की 17 जनवरी 2019 में ओसाका में हुई लैंडिंग का हवाला भी दिया। इसमें लैंडिंग के बाद दोनों इंजन अपने आप बंद हो गए थे।

रंधावा का कहना है कि एएआईबी की रिपोर्ट को पढ़ने के बाद यह कहीं से नहीं लगता कि दोनों पायलटों की कोई गलती रही होगी। विमान क्रैश होने से बच सकता था अगर इसकी ऊंचाई दो हजार फीट तक पहुंच जाती। ऐसे में अगर बंद इंजनों को फिर से चालू किया जाता है तो एक बार को प्लेन फ्लाई कर सकता है, लेकिन हाइट ही कम थी।

कॉकपिट में CCTV ज़रूरी: एक्सपर्ट

एक्सपर्ट्स का कहना है कि कॉकपिट में CCTV लगे होने चाहिए ताकि इमरजेंसी ही नहीं कॉकपिट की अन्य सभी तरह की एक्टिविटी भी कैमरो में कैद होती रहे। रिपोर्ट में US फेडरल एविएशन एडमिनिस्ट्रेशन (FAA) की 2018 की एक रिपोर्ट का हवाला भी दिया गया है। जिसमे बोइंग 787 विमान मे फ्यूल कंट्रोल स्विच लॉकिंग की खराबी की चेतावनी दी गई थी। एएआईबी ने अपनी रिपोर्ट मे लिखा है कि एयर इंडिया ने जरूरी जांच नही की, क्योंकि यह अनिवार्य नही बल्कि सलाहकारी था।

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THE PIONEER DELHI 14 JULY 2025

The AI171 tragedy: A crisis of expectations and accountability

The crash of Air India flight AI171 is more than just a tragic aviation incident — it's a reckoning. Beneath the twisted metal and charred debris lies a sobering question: Has the ambition to revive India's national carrier outpaced its ability to reform it?

FIRST Column

The tragic incident involving Air India flight AI171 has shattered more than just an aircraft. It has broken the illusion many held that under the stewardship of the Tata Group, India's flagship airline would reclaim its lost glory and deliver on the long-promised vision of a world-class, safe, full-service carrier.

But as the dust settles and the voices of concern grow louder, one must ask: Was the AI171 tragedy an operational mishap, or was it a culmination of systemic decay masked by legacy prestige?

The Weight of a Name

When the Tata Group reclaimed Air India, public sentiment swelled with optimism. After all, the name Tata has deep roots in Indian aviation, tracing back to J.R.D. Tata, the father of Indian civil aviation, piloted India's first commercial flight in 1932. The re-acquisition was hailed as a homecoming, the return of India's skies to the trusted hands of its aviation pioneer.

But this was not a revival of J.R.D. Tata's vision. This was a corporate acquisition steeped more in sentiment than strategy.

The fanfare surrounding the takeover was immense, but the airline's internal structure remained in disarray. Instead of prioritising safety and culture, the management focused on optics and symbolism, grand uniforms, PR-heavy launches, and flashy advertisements. Unfortunately, these cosmetic changes concealed deeper operational cracks widening by the day.

Management in Disarray

The first sign that all was not well came when the airline's initial choice for CEO, the well-known Turkish Airlines executive, withdrew amid controversy. Reports of alleged connections to opaque foreign funds made headlines, forcing the Tata Group into a hasty retreat and raising questions about the due diligence process. The withdrawal was an embarrassment and a red flag, indicating that the airline's leadership appointments were being made without complete transparency.

AMIT SINGH

What followed was creating a complex, multitiered organisational structure that blurred lines of authority and accountability. Managers directly accountable to the regulator for safety and compliance were often sidelined by "functional managers", corporate overseers with decision-making power but no regulatory responsibility. Above them sat a CEO who neither exercised effective operational control nor assumed full responsibility for outcomes.

This model created a disconnect between authority and accountability, a fatal flaw in an industry where safety demands clarity, discipline, and responsibility at every level.

A Culture of Fear

The signs of rot became visible well before AI171. Over the past two years, the airline has seen a disturbing increase in safety incidents, passenger grievances, and internal dissent. Whistleblowers who dared to point out critical training lapses and safety violations were punished, isolated, or dismissed. Even senior heads of training were removed for allegedly running unauthorised or bogus sorties, yet no systemic correction followed.

A culture of fear took root. Pilots and crew, fearing retaliation, stopped reporting fatigue or safety concerns. Staff were expected to comply unquestioningly, and sick leave was routinely deducted from mandatory rest periods. This is not the airline envisioned by JRD Tata is a command-and-control structure where fear replaces trust, and silence is mistaken for discipline.

The Breaking Point: AI171

AI171 was not just an unfortunate accident. It was the inevitable consequence of a toxic safety culture, unclear leadership, and management that was more focused on appearances than preparedness. In the immediate aftermath, the airline CEO delivered a hastily prepared speech that embarrassingly included plagiarised phrases and offered no absolute assurance to the public. There was no clarity on whether the aircraft was airworthy, whether the crew was sufficiently trained, or what immediate measures had been taken to prevent a recurrence. This information vacuum triggered panic among passengers, leading to cancellations and a crisis of confidence.

> THE FANFARE SURROUNDING THE TAKEOVER WAS IMMENSE, BUT THE AIRLINE'S INTERNAL STRUCTURE REMAINED IN DISARRAY. INSTEAD OF PRIORITISING SAFETY AND CULTURE, THE MANAGEMENT FOCUSED ON OPTICS AND SYMBOLISM, GRAND UNIFORMS, PR-HEAVY LAUNCHES, AND FLASHY ADVERTISEMENT. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE COSMETIC CHANGES CONCEALED DEEPER OPERATIONAL CRACKS WIDENING BY THE DAY

Rather than standing by the CEO or empowering a credible safety head to address concerns, the group CEO, who is not operationally accountable for safety, stepped in to give a news interview. But instead of clarity, the public was treated to deflection. When asked who was responsible for the accident, the group CEO pushed the burden onto the yet-to-be-released investigation report. This finger-pointing left many wondering: if no one is responsible, how do we trust the system?

Who Owns the Blame?

The question that must be asked, and answered, is who is morally responsible for the AI171 tragedy?

In any mature organisation, the person at the top must ultimately accept responsibility, not just legally but ethically. The CEO of an airline is responsible for the safety of passengers and crew. If systems fail, training is compromised, or maintenance is lax, then someone must be held accountable. That someone cannot be a faceless committee or a report yet to be written. It must be leadership.

India's aviation regulator, the DGCA, must also examine its role. Why were repeated safety violations not decisively addressed? Why were whistleblowers ignored or punished? If pilots are too afraid to report fatigue and training records are manipulated or fabricated, then the system is no longer capable of self-correction. That is a regulatory failure as much as a managerial one.

The Duopoly Dilemma

India's civil aviation market is increasingly inching toward a duopoly, with only two major players, IndiGo and Air India, controlling most domestic and international traffic. While IndiGo dominates the low-cost segment, Air India is the only significant full-service carrier with global reach and Government connections. In such a concentrated market, the health of Air India is not just a matter of corporate pride; it is essential for consumer choice, price competition, employee welfare, and national aviation sovereignty. If Air India fails to perform or loses public trust, the vacuum cannot easily be filled. A weakened Air India would embolden monopolistic tendencies, reduce pressure to maintain safety standards, and ultimately burden the passenger with higher fares and fewer options. For the sake of India's aviation future, Air India must get it right for business and balance.

Rebuilding Trust — Or Losing It

The fallout from AI171 will be felt for years. Once broken, trust is hard to regain. Air India cannot hope to restore its image through PR campaigns or polished ads. It must do the hard work: dismantle the culture of fear, rebuild a transparent training and safety oversight system, and empower accountable and independent professionals.

Most importantly, someone must publicly accept moral responsibility. Only then can a new culture take root, where safety is not just a slogan, but a living principle embedded in every layer of the airline's DNA.

A Wake-Up Call

Let the AI171 tragedy be a turning point, not in the rhetoric of airline advertising, but in the actions of its leaders. It reminds us that aviation is not about brand names or corporate acquisitions. It is about human lives.

And those lives demand more than ambition; they demand humility, responsibility, and an uncompromising commitment to safety.

India deserves better, as does the legacy of J.R.D. Tata demands better. And the victims of AI171 and their grieving families deserve nothing less than truth, accountability, and lasting reform.

Let us hope we don't need another tragedy to remind us again.

(Capt. Amit Singh is aviation safety expert, author and Fellow of the Royal Aeronautical Society. Views expressed are personal)

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THE PIONEER DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Too premature to draw conclusions on role of pilots: Former AAIB chief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi

It will be too premature to draw conclusions on the role of pilots from the preliminary investigation report into the fatal crash of Air India plane last month and the final report will mention about the most probable cause for the accident, former AAIB chief Aurobindo Handa said on Sunday.

A day after the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) released its preliminary report into the crash that killed 260 people, he said, "We should allow AAIB to complete the investigation in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner." Handa has investigated more than 100 aircraft accidents, including the Air India Express plane crash in Kozhikode in 2020.

"AAIB has done a good job. Going forward, they will now focus to find out as to why and how these fuel switches moved and whether there could have been any mechanical and/or electrical failures/malfunction," he said. The report, released on Saturday, said the fuel switches of the crashed Boeing 787-8 plane's engines were cut off within a gap of one second, and later switched on.

From the cockpit voice recording, one of the pilots is heard asking the other why he did cut off the switch and the other pilot saying he did not do so. The report did not mention which pilot asked the question and which pilot responded. The co-pilot was Pilot Flying (PF), and the Pilot In Command (PIC) was Pilot Monitoring (PM) for the flight.

"It will be too premature to draw any conclusions, including the role of one of the pilots from the AAIB's preliminary investigation report on Air India flight 171... We should allow AAIB to complete the investigation in a fair, unbiased and transparent manner," Handa said.The Pilot In Command (PIC) was 56-year-old Captain Sumeet Sabharwal and the First Officer was 32-year-old Clive Kundar. Sabharwal's flying experience with 787 was more than 8,596 hours, including 8,260 hours as PIC, while Kundar's flying experience with this type of aircraft was 1,128 hours.

Kundar was pilot flying while Sabharwal was pilot monitoring for the AI 171 flight operated with the nearly 12-year-old Boeing 787-8 aircraft. According to the preliminary report, both pilots had adequate rest period prior to operating the flight.

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RAJASTHAN PATRIKA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

प्लेन क्रैश त्रासदी : विशेषज्ञ दे रहे राय, अंतिम रिपोर्ट का इंतजार

चिप खराबी भी हो सकती है विमान के फ्यूल स्विच ऑफ का कारण

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नई दिल्ली। अहमदाबाद विमान हादसे की प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट के बाद फ्यूल स्विच ऑफ 'किए जाने' या 'अपने आप होने' की बहस छिड़ी हुई है। एक विमानन विशेषज्ञ ने कहा है कि पायलट की गलती का निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी होगी, वहीं दूसरे ने कहा है कि फ्यूल स्विच ऑफ का कारण चिप में गड़बड़ी हो सकती है। बर्किंघमशायर न्यू यूनिवर्सिटी के वरिष्ठ व्याख्याता और पूर्व पायलट मार्को चैन ने कहा कि फ्यूल कट-ऑफ टॉगल को गलती से स्विच ऑफ करने की संभावना लगभग शून्य होगी। भारत के विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो (एएआइबी) की रिपोर्ट के निष्कर्षों को पढ़ने से लगता है कि पायलट की गलती नहीं थी। यह चिप में गड़बड़ी की ओर इशारा कर रही है। एक चिप ठीक से काम नहीं कर रही थी और उसका संपर्क टूट गया। संपर्क टूट जाने पर सिस्टम फेल हो सकता है।

एएआइबी के पूर्व प्रमुख अरबिंदो हांडा ने कहा कि प्रारंभिक जांच रिपोर्ट से पायलटों की भूमिका पर निष्कर्ष निकालना जल्दबाजी होगी और अंतिम रिपोर्ट का इंतजार किया जाना चाहिए। हांडा कोझिकोड विमान हादसे सहित 100 से ज्यादा दुर्घटनाओं की जांच कर चुके हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि एएआइबी यह पता लगाने पर ध्यान केंद्रित करेगा कि स्विच ऑफ क्यों हुआ।

अहमदाबाद हादसे में दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुआ विमान।

अमरीकी एजेंसी ने भेजे सफाई संदेश

अमरीका के संघीय विमानन प्रशासन (एफएए) और बोइंग ने निजी तौर पर अधिसूचना जारी की है कि बोइंग विमानों पर ईंधन स्विच लॉक सुरक्षित हैं। एएआइबी की प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट के बाद नागरिक विमानन प्राधिकारियों को भेजे गए इस नोटिफिकेशन में कहा गया है कि वह ड्रीमलाइनर सहित सभी बोइंग विमानों में फ्यूल स्विच असुरक्षित नहीं मानता।

पायलट संगठन ने जताया विरोध

एएआइबी की रिपोर्ट में फ्यूल स्विच ऑफ और कॉकपिट में बातचीत से उठी आशंकाओं पर पायलटों के संगठन इंडियन कमर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन (आइसीपीए) ने आपत्ति की है। आइसीपीए ने रविवार को सार्वजनिक चर्चा और मीडिया के कुछ वर्गों में इशारों में पायलटों को दुर्घटना के लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराए जाने की निंदा की। संगठन ने कहा कि अधूरी और प्रारंभिक जानकारी पर आधारित ऐसा सुझाव लापरवाह और निराधार होने के साथ-साथ गैर-जिम्मेदाराना और बेहद असंवेदनशील भी हैं।

पिछले तीन बड़े हादसों की जांच में पायलट दोषी

देश में पिछले तीन प्रमुख विमान हादसों की अंतिम जांच में दुर्घटना के लिए पायलट की गलती मानी गई है।

■ **पटना क्रैश (17 जुलाई 2000), 60 लोगों की मौत:** कोर्ट ऑफ इन्क्वायरी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पायलट की गलती। सुरक्षित लैंडिंग को ऊंचाई कम करने के लिए 360 डिग्री घूमते समय लिफ्ट खो गया। विमान गिरा।

■ **मंगलूरु क्रैश (2010), 158 लोगों की मौत:** एयर मार्शल बी.एन.गोखले की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार पायलट की गलती से हादसा। विमान ने अस्थिर लैंडिंग की और रनवे पर इतना नीचे उतर गया कि सुरक्षित रूप से रुकना संभव नहीं था। विमान टेबल-टॉप रनवे से आगे निकल गया और टावर से टकरा कर खाई में गिर गया।

■ **कोझिकोड क्रैश (2020), 21 लोगों की मौत:** एएआइबी के अनुसार पायलट व संस्थागत सुरक्षा चूक से हादसा। विंडशील्ड वाइपर, कॉकपिट संचार व क्रू संसाधन प्रबंधन में खामियां थीं। एयर ट्रैफिक कंट्रोल ने हवा की गलत जानकारी दी। विमान टावरों से टकराता हुआ खाई में गिरा।

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पायलटों को अटकलों के आधार पर न करें बदनाम : एसोसिएशन

मुंबई (भाषा)। 'इंडियन कॉमर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन' (आईसीपीए) ने रविवार को कहा कि पिछले महीने दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हुए एआई171 उड़ान के चालक दल ने चुनौतीपूर्ण परिस्थितियों में अपने प्रशिक्षण और जिम्मेदारियों के अनुरूप काम किया तथा पायलटों को अटकलों के आधार पर बदनाम नहीं किया जाना चाहिए।

■ एआई-171 उड़ान की दुर्घटना की प्राथमिक रिपोर्ट आने के बाद आ रही अटकलों के बीच इंडियन कॉमर्शियल पायलट्स एसोसिएशन ने की अपील

एसोसिएशन ने कुछ हलकों में पायलट के आत्महत्या करने संबंधी अटकलों को सिरे से खारिज करते हुए कहा कि जब तक आधिकारिक जांच पूरी नहीं हो जाती और अंतिम रिपोर्ट नहीं आ जाती, कोई भी अटकलबाजी अस्वीकार्य है और इसकी निंदा की जानी चाहिए। 'एयरलाइन पायलट्स एसोसिएशन ऑफ इंडिया' ने भी एअर इंडिया विमान दुर्घटना की निष्पक्ष और तथ्य-आधारित जांच की मांग करते हुए शनिवार को दावा किया था कि हादसे की जांच की शैली और दिशा पायलट की गलती की ओर संकेत करने वाला पूर्वाग्रह है।

आईसीपीए टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली एअर इंडिया में 'नैरो बॉडी' वाले विमान बेड़े के पायलटों का संगठन है। वायुयान दुर्घटना अन्वेषण ब्यूरो (एएआईबी) ने 12 जून को बोइंग 787-8 विमान हादसे की अपनी प्रारंभिक रिपोर्ट जारी कर दी है, जिसमें कुल 260 लोग मारे गए थे। रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि एअर इंडिया के विमान के अहमदाबाद से उड़ान भरने के बाद दुर्घटनाग्रस्त होने से कुछ सेकंड पहले, इसके दोनों इंजनों के ईंधन नियंत्रण स्विच बंद हो गए थे।

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अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमानन एवं ड्रोन संस्थान का उद्घाटन

नई दिल्ली (एसएनबी)। भारत के विमानन एवं ड्रोन प्रौद्योगिकी क्षेत्र में एक महत्वपूर्ण उपलब्धि रविवार को प्रेस क्लब ऑफ इंडिया में अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमानन एवं ड्रोन संस्थान (आईएडीआई) के भव्य उद्घाटन के साथ दर्ज की गई। इस कार्यक्रम में प्रतिष्ठित गणमान्य व्यक्तियों, उद्योग जगत के दिग्गजों और विमानन क्षेत्र के उत्साही लोगों ने युवाओं को सशक्त बनाने और ड्रोन एवं विमानन प्रौद्योगिकियों को उन्नत बनाने की एक ऐतिहासिक पहल का जश्न मनाया। उद्घाटन समारोह में मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में राजस्थान के पूर्व राज्यपाल कलराज मिश्र उपस्थित रहे जो दशकों की सार्वजनिक सेवा के अपने विशाल अनुभव और ज्ञान के साथ कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित थे। उनके साथ मद्रास उच्च न्यायालय के पूर्व मुख्य न्यायाधीश और वर्तमान में मनी लॉन्ड्रिंग अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण के अध्यक्ष न्यायमूर्ति मुनीश्वर नाथ भंडारी भी शामिल हुए, जिन्होंने इस उभरते हुए क्षेत्र के नियामक परिदृश्य और कानूनी ढांचों पर बहुमूल्य जानकारी साझा की। आईएडीआई के मुख्य संरक्षक डॉ. एचसी गणेशिया ने विशेष संबोधन दिया। डॉ. गणेशिया ने विमानन और ड्रोन नवाचार में भारत के भविष्य को आकार देने में (आईएडीआई) जैसे संस्थानों की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका पर प्रकाश डाला। कार्यक्रम में एएएफटी के संस्थापक और कुलाधिपति डॉ. संदीप मारवाह द्वारा सम्मानित किया गया, जिनका शिक्षा और रचनात्मक उद्योगों में दूरदर्शी योगदान अगली पीढ़ी के पेशेवरों को प्रेरित करता रहेगा।

■ **कार्यक्रम में उद्योग जगत व विमानन क्षेत्र की हस्तियां हुईं शामिल**

कार्यक्रम में वरिष्ठ पायलट अनिल शर्मा (सेवानिवृत्त), राजस्थान के भरतपुर की प्रथम महिला पायलट कैप्टन गरिमा गणेशिया और एस्टर नोरोन्हा थे, जिन्होंने विमानन और ड्रोन संचालन में महिलाओं व युवाओं की बढ़ती भूमिका पर जोर दिया। कार्यक्रम का आयोजन डॉ. राजेश कुमार, डॉ. पंकज सिंह, मनुज ठाकुर, परमजीत कौर (वरिष्ठ केबिन क्रू, कतर एयरवेज), दीपिका धवन, पूनम सेठी और राकेश छाबड़ा सहित एक समर्पित टीम द्वारा किया गया।

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THE TIMES OF INDIA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

AI pilots' assn lashes out at 'insinuation of suicide'

Chorus Grows Against Prelim Crash Findings

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Mumbai: A day after Airline Pilots' Association of India said Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's (AAIB) preliminary report on the Air India 171 crash led to the promoting of a "presumption of pilot guilt" even before the probe was complete, Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA), one of the Air India pilots' unions, Sunday slammed the "reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide" that has been doing the rounds since the report was made public on Saturday.

▶ **EDIT PAGE: Not AAIBly done/Report Crashlands**
▶ **AI scraps 'unfit' plane just before boarding, P 20**

> **To casually suggest pilot suicide in the absence of verified evidence is a gross violation of ethical reporting.** It is not only irresponsible, but also deeply insensitive to individuals and families involved. Until final report is published, **any speculation is unacceptable**
> — Indian Commercial Pilots' Association

AAIB had stated that both fuel switches on the Boeing 787 transitioned from "run" to "cut-off" three seconds after it took off from the runway, cutting off fuel supply to the engines. "In the cockpit voice recording, one of the pilots is heard asking the other, 'Why did you cut off (the fuel supply)?' The other responded he did not do so," according to the report. However, it didn't elucidate why the fuel control switches were cut off.

Soon after the report's release, pilots and aviation experts, in interviews and posts on social media, claimed one of the pilots had knowingly cut off the fuel supply switch.

▶ **Speculation..., P 20**

Fuel switch locks safe: Boeing, US aviation org

Fuel switch locks on all Boeing planes, including Dreamliners, are safe, US Federal Aviation Administration and Boeing stated in privately issued notifications Friday, according to a Reuters report. So Boeing hasn't recommended action on this issue. **P 14**

Until final report is out, any speculation unacceptable: Union

▶ **Continued from P 1**

The pilots of AI 171, which crashed in Ahmedabad on June 12 killing 270 people, acted in line with their training and responsibilities under challenging conditions, ICPA, one of the AI pilots' unions, said, adding the crew should not be vilified based on conjecture.

Referring to a 2018 safety bulletin issued by the US aviation regulator that instructed airlines to look out for a possible mechanical fault with the fuel control switches — which could cut off fuel supply to the engines without pilot input — the report said that Air India did not carry out the inspection as it was not deemed mandatory.

"In the aftermath of this incident, we are deeply disturbed by speculative narratives emerging in sections of the media and public discourse — particularly the reckless and unfounded insinuation of pilot suicide. Let us be unequivocally clear: there is absolutely no basis for such a claim at this stage, and invoking such a serious allegation based on incomplete or preliminary information is not only irresponsible — it is deeply insensitive to the individuals and families involved," said ICPA.

"Pilots undergo extensive psychological and professional screening, recurrent training, and operate under the highest standards of safety, responsibility, and mental fitness. To casually suggest pilot suicide in the absence of verified evidence is a gross violation of ethical reporting and a disservice to the dignity of the profession," it added.

"As aviation professionals, we trust and respect the rigorous investigative protocols established by competent authorities. These inquiries are designed to uncover facts methodically and without bias. Until the official investigation is concluded and the final report is published, any speculation — especially of such a grave nature — is unacceptable and must be condemned," ICPA said, calling on media and public commentators to act with restraint, empathy and respect for due process.

Lko-Hyd AI Express flight cancelled mins before boarding

Lucknow: An Air India Express flight, IX 2816, scheduled to depart from Lucknow to Hyderabad, was cancelled minutes before boarding on Sunday morning.

The pilot declared the Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft unfit for flight, prompting ground support crew to intervene, sources at Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in city said. The flight was scheduled to depart at 8.40am with nearly 150 passengers on board.

Earlier in the morning, the aircraft arrived from Hyderabad, landing 19 minutes ahead of schedule. It was then scheduled to return to Hyderabad and continue onwards to Goa, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, and finally back to its home base in Hyderabad.

"Passengers were informed of the cancellation shortly before boarding. The airline gave the opportunity for passengers to either seek refund or reschedule their journey and stay in the hotel at the airline's expense," an official said. The aircraft, registered as VT-BWP, is currently undergoing repairs by engineers at the airport.

Airline officials are yet to confirm when the aircraft will be cleared for service. The 178-seater aircraft first flew in June 2019 and was delivered to Air India Express that same year. TNN

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Crash report a 'cover-up', say AI 171 UK victims' families

Naomi Canton

London: Relatives of flyers who died in the June 12 Air India crash have slammed the preliminary probe as a "cover up" to protect the Tatas-owned airline, Boeing, and Indian govt.

"This report is wrong. We don't accept it," said Ameen Siddiqui, whose British brother-in-law and Gloucestershire resident Akeel Nanabawa, died alongside wife Hannaa Vorajee and their daughter Sara in the June 12 crash of the Ahmedabad-London flight.

Speaking to UK's The Telegraph from Surat, Siddiqui alleged that "they want to blame dead pilots who cannot defend themselves". Siddiqui added that he had rejected Air India's compensation offer and would take the airline to court for "killing" his family members.

UK law firms are already representing families of dozens of passengers who died in the AI 171 crash and considering legal action against Boeing and Air India.

Tushar Joge, whose cousin's in-laws Vallabh Nagji Agheda and wife Vinaben Vallabh Agheda, both in their 70s, died in the crash echoed the claim that the probe report was a "cover-up" for Air India and Boeing.

UK law firms are representing families of dozens of passengers who died in the AI 171 crash and considering legal action against Boeing and Air India

"We were preempting that they would start blaming the pilots. Why are they not looking for a mechanical fault? How qualified are people in Indian Air Accident Investigation Bureau? FAA (US aviation regulator) gave an advisory in 2018 to check potential disengagement of the fuel control switch locking feature. Shouldn't they have made this a mandatory requirement rather than an advisory?" Joge asked.

The Agheda couple were travelling to UK to spend time with their youngest daughter and her family in Reading. Speaking to **TOI** from Vadodara, their son-in-law said: "It does not look like it's the pilot's fault. It could be Boeing's design fault with the switches or it could be Air India's maintenance issues. Most of the families believe it's a problem with aircraft. Air India is helping us with compensation but we are more concerned about getting the right report. We want the truth to make sure another disaster doesn't happen."

Imtiyaz Ali Syed, whose London-based brother Javed, died with his wife and two children, lamented that the probe report was replete with "aviation jargon praising Boeing's systems" while saying "nothing conclusive". "Everyone — Air India, Boeing, Indian govt — has something to protect. But we have lost our entire families. How can we move on without the truth?" Imtiyaz asked.

Rafik, cousin of crash victim Faizan Rafik from Leicester, told BBC he did not trust Indian govt. "Until the airline provides the cockpit recording to us, I'm not going to believe the report," Rafik said.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

AI 171 Report Crashlands

Inquiry is disservice to airlines flying Dreamliners. It's also slanted so that attention focuses not on possible technical problems but, minus any real evidence, on pilots

Amit Singh

FORMER Chief of Safety, Air Asia & Chief of Training, IndiGo

On June 12, an Air India Boeing 787 took off from Ahmedabad and crashed moments later, killing all but one of its occupants. Exactly a month later, the official preliminary report was released. While it provides a basic sequence of events, it fails to answer the most critical question: When did the engines stop producing thrust?

This isn't a technical debate. It's the key to understanding what went wrong, and who or what was responsible. Instead of offering clarity, the report quietly steers readers toward the idea of pilot error, without saying it outright. This subtle shift leaves many, especially those unfamiliar with aviation systems, assuming the pilots made a mistake. That assumption is both **dangerous** and **unfounded**.

Captain capable

It's important to begin with the man at the controls. The captain of AI 171 was not only a seasoned Boeing 787 pilot but also a **certified trainer** entrusted to teach and evaluate others. As part of the selection process to become a trainer, he had undergone detailed psychological screening, including by professionals trained to assess stress-handling, decision-making, and mental fitness. He was the pilot you'd want in the cockpit on a bad day.

Yet, certain foreign media outlets have floated **malicious theories**, suggesting pilot error or intentional action. Shockingly, one Indian "safety expert" repeated these ideas without evidence. The report does not support these theories, and they insult the memory of a competent professional who can no longer defend himself.

Let us be clear: no factual basis exists **to blame the crew**. The available evidence points to more profound, more technical questions that the report avoids addressing.

Noise & silence

The report says the aircraft's two engines stopped responding three seconds after takeoff. It also says the pilots tried to restart them about 10 seconds later. By then, the plane was flying too low and too slow to recover.

It also notes that two necessary switches, used to control the engine fuel supply, were moved to the 'off' position. These switches are designed to be hard to move accidentally, and they have locks to prevent that. The report includes a short voice recording from the cockpit without clear attribution:

Pilot 1: "Why did you cut off?"

Pilot 2: "I didn't do it."

That's it, no further transcript. No context. The words are used to hint that **maybe one of the pilots turned off the engines**. But there's no follow-up. No analysis. No explanation for how these switches might have moved on their own, **which is entirely possible**, based on earlier warnings issued by safety regulators about this exact type of switch used in another Boeing plane – the 737.

Big contradiction

CCTV footage from June 12 shows the aircraft in the air, landing gear down, and a small emergency device called a **Ram Air Turbine (RAT)** already extended. This turbine is like a small windmill that pops out when both engines fail, helping to power basic flight controls.

The issue is that this turbine doesn't deploy instantly. It takes a few seconds to come out **after** both engines stop. Yet, in images, it's already visible when the aircraft is barely a few storeys off the ground. That means the engines must have failed before the time mentioned in the report.

So, which is wrong, camera images or the AAIB report's timeline?

Silent beacon

Additionally, the aircraft's **emergency locator beacon** – which should have started transmitting distress signals on impact – stayed silent. Was it damaged? Not armed? Not working? Once again, the report gives no answers, nor recommends checking other aircraft for similar issues.

No flag raised

A good preliminary report is not meant to assign blame; it should highlight urgent risks so other flights can be safer. That didn't happen here.

Despite known concerns about the fuel control switches, the report doesn't call for any checks across the Boeing fleet, doesn't advise reviewing the emergency response systems, and doesn't confirm that all the flight data and voice recordings were recovered.

Compare this to other major accidents – like the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March 2019 – where early reports included technical diagrams, full transcripts, and multiple safety recommendations. The contrast is stark.

Final thought

This isn't about one flight. It's about how we investigate air accidents in India, treat our professionals, and protect public confidence in aviation safety.

The captain of AI171 was a respected trainer and a trusted professional. His actions in the final seconds cannot be judged by a single voice quote taken out of context. They must be understood in light of the systems around him – the ones that may have failed first.

The real questions are these: **when did the engines stop working – and why?** That's what the public deserves to know. That's what the final report must answer.

The writer is an aviation professional with over 35 years' experience

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THE TIMES OF INDIA DELHI 14 JULY 2025

Not AAIBly Done

Why the unsigned AI 171 accident report patently fails to meet the test of credibility

If the sole purpose of investigations is to meet deadlines, Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has done well. International rules gave it 30 days to submit a preliminary report about June 12's AI 171 Dreamliner crash, and it pushed 15 pages past the finish line on Saturday. Unfortunately, most experts have assessed the report to be short on substance. Preliminary reports cannot be conclusive, but they should begin to shed light. Families of the 260 deceased and the rest of humanity are none the wiser.

The report's authors admit: "At this stage…no definitive cause has been determined." All we know for sure now is that three seconds after take-off, fuel supply to both engines stopped. Two possibilities arise. A pilot cut it off by flipping two switches – one for each engine. Or that the switches were faulty. Without facts, plausibility is a matter of preference. Are humans more fragile than mechanical devices? Deliberately switching off engines at 650ft is suicidal, yet some would subscribe to this view. The issue with AAIB's report is that it *appears* to push this possibility. It says one pilot asked the other why he had flipped the switches, and the other replied he hadn't.

We don't know the pilots' exact words, nor who asked and who answered. We don't know what was said before and after. Just two cherry-picked sentences paraphrased in a way that they slyly implicate the two pilots who cannot defend themselves anymore. If pilot dialogue is material to the probe, so is the fact that seven years ago the US aviation regulator found fuel control switches used in some Boeing 737s – similar to those in Dreamliners – had been installed with their locking feature disengaged. VT-ANB – the lost Dreamliner – was built four years before that discovery.

AAIB's report acknowledges this possibility, but doesn't buttress it like the alternate possibility of deliberate pilot action. The fact that no active airline pilots were involved in the investigation, and that the report was submitted unsigned, raises more questions. As does Western media's access to these findings two days before their official release. AAIB has met its deadline and may consider its job done, but considering how its "narrative" – the "findings" are ambiguous – has injured the reputations of AI 171's pilots, it should reveal its findings in detail.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA AHMEDABAD 13 JULY 2025

AIR FARE SOARS AS GUJARATIS GEAR UP FOR A RARE FOUR-DAY AUG BREAK

This I-Day weekend, Goa flights from Ahmedabad 33% costlier than Dubai

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: After a rather quiet summer travel season, Gujaratis are making the most of a back-to-back holiday bonanza this Aug. With Independence Day falling on a Friday, followed by Janmashtami on Saturday and Sunday rounding off the week, the three-day window from Aug 15-17 is proving irresistible for a quick getaway. However, even if you plan a month before, a round-trip flight to a nearby destination might just burn a hole in your pocket. At the top of the price charts is Goa, with return fares from Ahmedabad between Aug 14 and 18 averaging around Rs 28,000 on direct flights.

Surprisingly, return air fare to Dubai are hovering around Rs 21,000, which is 33% less for the same dates. Even other domestic routes like Dehradun (Rs 17,000), Chennai (Rs 10,000), Mumbai (Rs 10,000), and Jaipur (Rs 9,000) are offering little relief. According to travel agents, the Aug rush comes against the backdrop of a relatively quiet summer vacation season, with many families skipping May-June holidays.

"Domestic bookings nosedived after the India-Pakistan border tensions escalated and the ill-fated terror attack on tourists in Pahalgam. In fact, there were ample cancellations too. That apart, airspace closure and other concerns also impacted international travel plans of many. This is the first real opportunity for a short escapade after months, and people are booking their holidays in large numbers, especially families and young working couples. That's pushing fares up sharply," said Virendra Shah, ex-chairman, Travel Agents' Association of India (TAAI) Gujarat chapter.

"Many travellers scrambled to cancel or rebook both international and domestic tickets, often at exorbitant last-minute rates. The rush to find alternate routes or destinations only intensified the price pressure," he added.

Offering the best of both worlds, including the hills and the seas, lush forests and waterfalls, Goa remains the top pick for many travellers from Gujarat, owing to its proximity with direct flight connectivity, monsoon charm, beach-side properties, and vibrant local culture. Traditionally, the coastal state also draws visitors from Gujarat who tend to go gambling on Janmashtami.

"Interestingly, the traction for international destinations is also good. People are adjusting their leaves on 13/14 or 13 and 17 or 17/18 and flocking to Southeast Asian spots like Maldives, Krabi, and Bali, among others. Even Sri Lanka bookings have seen a good uptake," said Manish Sharma, a travel industry expert based in Ahmedabad.

"With flights out of reach for many, road trips are also picking up strongly. While Udaipur, Mount Abu, the Polo Forest region, and even heritage stays in Kutch and Saurashtra are seeing strong demand, particularly for self-drive holidays and quick family packages. Travel platforms are reporting a surge in last-minute searches for staycations and drivable destinations from Ahmedabad. We have already witnessed an uptick in property prices in Udaipur," Sharma further explained.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA AHMEDABAD 13 JULY 2025

13 AI flyers left without seats at Bhuj

Smaller Aircraft Arrived To Operate Mumbai Flight

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Rajkot: Tempers flared at Bhuj airport on Saturday morning when 13 passengers were not allowed to board an Air India flight to Mumbai. The passengers, many of whom had travelled from remote parts of Kutch with luggage, were suddenly left stranded.

According to sources at the airport, the Air India flight was to leave for Mumbai at 8.55am. During the boarding process, several passengers were made to wait while others were allowed to board. Confusion grew when the airline workers disappeared from the counter.

By 8.15am, the frustrated passengers began questioning why they weren't given their boarding passes. Airport security tried to manage the situation and as the passengers grew angrier, they called in the airline staff.

The airline staff initially told the passengers that they had been late. The arguments continued as many asserted that they had arrived on time.

In-charge airport director Anurag Vaishnav said, "Air India officials will be able to explain what happened. What I do know is that they made alternative travel arrangements for the affected passengers."

Meet Thakkar, one of the affected passengers, said he arrived at the airport with his wife, two-year-old son, brother, and sister-in-law. "We all reached together. My brother and sister-in-law had done their web check-in and were allowed to board. I was refused a boarding pass at the airport counter. The staff later admitted that the aircraft that had arrived from Mumbai was smaller and had fewer seats than the number of tickets booked," he told TOI.

TOI

The waiting passengers at Bhuj airport on Saturday

Thakkar said the airline offered a car to Ahmedabad and and an evening flight to Mumbai, but he declined the offer due to time constraints. "I needed to reach Mumbai today. I spent my own money to book a flight from Kandla and made it on time," he said.

Many of the other passengers missed connecting flights from Mumbai and lashed out at the airline for mismanagement and poor communication.

An Air India spokesperson told TOI: "The aircraft scheduled to operate AI609 from Bhuj to Mumbai on Saturday was downgraded from an A321 to A320 due to operational reasons. A few passengers could thus not board the flight. Our team at Bhuj arranged alternatives for the affected passengers, including rebooking them on other flights to their destinations according to individual preferences. We regret the inconvenience caused to the affected passengers and thank them for their understanding."

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THE TIMES OF INDIA MUMBAI 13 JULY 2025

Navi Mum airport to have world's fastest baggage claim system: CM

B B Nayak, Nisha Nambiar & Anurag Bende | TNN

Pics: K K Choudhary

IN PHASE 1, AIRPORT WILL HANDLE 20 MN PASSENGERS ANNUALLY

INITIAL OPERATIONS

- Navi Mumbai airport to begin with limited flights
- Operating hrs: **8 am to 8 pm** (12-hr window)
- Will expand to 24/7 operations when int'l flights begin
- Inauguration ceremony currently planned for Sept end
- Airline passenger flights to start later

AIRLINE PLANS

INDIGO
- First airline to announce NMIA operations
- Day 1: **36 domestic flights** connecting 15 cities
- Later to increase to **79 daily departures** (158 flights including arrivals)
- Will include 14 international departures

AKASA AIR
- Will operate from Day 1 of NMIA
- Initial phase: **15 daily domestic flights**
- Expansion next year: **40+** domestic and 8-10 international flights
- Plan to base 10 aircraft at NMIA by FY 2027

AIRPORT CAPACITY (ANNUALLY)

	PASSENGERS	CARGO HANDLING
PHASE 1	20 mn	0.5 MMT
FINAL PHASE	90 mn	3.2 MMT

CURRENT STATUS

- Runway non-functional until Aug 6, notice on runway closure likely to be extended till Sept end
- Existing Mumbai airport continues operations with about 950 flights daily
- Passengers will have choice between two airports once bookings open

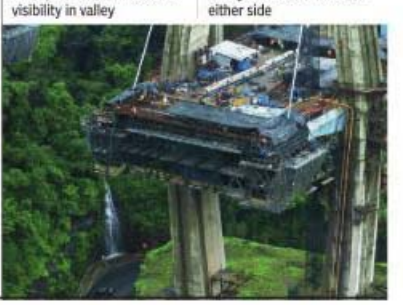
MUMBAI TO PUNE: MISSING LINK

THE PROJECT
13.5 km tunnel-bridge-road section from under Lonavala ghats

WHAT IT WILL DO
Save over half-an-hr's travel by bypassing 20 km ghats which witness long pile-ups

STATUS
- Both tunnels, including the one which is 9 km long and widest in world at 24 meters, are complete, so is another bridge
- However, the crucial cable-stayed bridge (set to be India's tallest) across Tiger Valley is under construction

THE HURDLE
- Constructing cable-stayed bridge with four 182m-tall pylons (equal to 60-storey buildings each) against severe wind pressure in valley is a challenge
- Other than that, project faced delays due to Covid, monsoon winds and visibility in valley
- Getting skilled workers to reach such a height and install cables and slabs also difficult
- Ongoing cabling will create a 1,000-ft slab in the middle of the 650-m bridge to connect Tiger Valley with two tunnels on either side



Navi Mumbai/Pune: After reviewing progress at the under-constrction Navi Mumbai airport with Dy CM Eknath Shinde, CM Devendra Fadnavis said on Saturday the new airport would have the world's 'fastest baggage claim system'. The airport's initial phases will accommodate 20 million passengers and 0.8 mn metric tonnes of cargo annually from Sept 2025, he added. He expressed satisfaction that PM Modi, who performed the ground-breaking ceremony for the airport in 2018, will also inaugurate the facility in Sept.

He said, "Currently 13,000 to 14,000 workers are involved in the work daily, and we have asked authorities to increase their strength by one-and-a-half times or double by Sept 30, because other licences are complete, but for commercial operations, all work has to be finished."

On Oct 11, 2024, an IAF C-295 transport aircraft completed the inaugural landing at the airport. Subsequently, on Dec 29, 2024, an IndiGo Airlines Airbus A320 made the first commercial landing.

Connectivity to the airport is also a major focus, the CM said. "We have prepared a big connectivity plan. The linking of Atal Setu to Coastal Road is expected to be completed by March next year. From Thane, a direct elevated road has been suggested and that work will also start soon," he said.

Arrangements are being made for connecting the airport from four directions with all modes of transport, including suburban railway, metro or water transport, so that it will be easy for passengers to reach, he said.

On the 'missing link' project, Fadnavis said in Pune, "The Navi Mumbai airport is nearing completion and once the missing link gets ready, Pune residents will be able to reach Navi Mumbai airport in a little more than an hour. The missing link project will help them avoid 6 km of the expressway and save half an hour of travel time." The 'missing link' project – a 13.5 km tunnel-bridge-road section from under the Lonavla ghats – has missed three deadlines: July and Dec 2024 and July 2025. The Rs 6,695 crore project is expected to cut travel time between Mumbai and Pune by half an hour by bypassing the congested ghat section. It aims to ease traffic, reduce accidents, improve fuel efficiency, and offer seamless connectivity between the two cities.

"While MSRDC set a Dec 2025 deadline, we are hoping for Oct-Nov completion," Fadnavis said.

When the other planned or under-construction augmentation projects such as Chowk (Pune-Eway)-Pagote (JNPT) 30 km road, Sewri-Worli connector and smaller flyovers towards the expressway are completed, travel time between the two cities will reduce by an hour. Eighty-five per cent of the Expressway's current traffic is projected to use the new route.

At the site after reviewing the 'missing link' project, Fadnavis described it as an engineering marvel, noting that it features India's longest road tunnel and highest cable-stayed road bridge under construction over the scenic Tiger Valley.

"Pune is the cultural capital of the state, but now it has also developed as the manufacturing and technology capital. Therefore, these projects are important for all of Maharashtra," the CM said.

Shinde called the project a "game-changer." - *With inputs from agencies*

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THE TIMES OF INDIA MUMBAI 13 JULY 2025

Start flights from Navi Mum airport by end of Sept: CM

'Open Eway Link Before Dec Deadline'

B B Nayak, Nisha Nambiar & Anurag Bende | TNN

Navi Mumbai/Pune: Stating that 94% of the work on the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) was over, CM Devendra Fadnavis on Saturday said the remaining work should proceed in such a way that the first passenger flight can start operations by end of Sept. He said airport authorities had been asked to increase the numerical strength of workers to meet this target. Along with the airport, the Mumbai-Pune Expressway 'missing link' project will help the state govt develop an economic corridor comprising Mumbai, Mumbai Metropolitan Region and Pune, he said.

For the 'missing link' project too, though MSRDC has set a Dec 2025 deadline, the CM said he was hoping for completion in Oct-Nov.

On his way to Pune by road, Fadnavis reviewed the progress of the airport and 'missing link' work with deputy CM Eknath Shinde.

▶'Fastest luggage claim', P 2