

Air India's flight crashes in Ahmedabad, country's other deadliest air disasters

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Dhaka : On June 12, 2025, a routine international flight turned into horror when Air India Flight 171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad Airport en route to London Heathrow.

All 241 people on board were killed, along with 24 individuals on the ground, as the plane crashed into a medical college in Ahmedabad, marking it as one of the worst modern aviation disasters in India.

The exact cause is under investigation, but preliminary reports point to a mechanical failure shortly after takeoff.

India has witnessed some of the world's most harrowing aviation tragedies. From cockpit confusion to catastrophic collisions, each incident has left a deep imprint on the nation's aviation history.

Here is a look at four other deadliest plane crashes on Indian soil, each reshaping the safety and regulatory framework that governs Indian airspace today.

1. Charkhi Dadri Mid-Air Collision (1996)

On November 12, 1996, the skies over the village of Charkhi Dadri, about 100 km west of Delhi, turned fatal when Saudi Arabian Airlines Flight 763, a Boeing 747, collided mid-air with a Kazakhstan Airlines Ilyushin Il-76. The Saudi flight was en route from Delhi to Dhahran, while the Kazakh aircraft was descending into Delhi.

The cause: pilot error by the Kazakhstan crew, who descended below their assigned altitude. The result: a catastrophic collision that killed all 349 people aboard both aircraft, making it the deadliest mid-air collision in aviation history.

2. Air India Express Flight 812 Crash in Mangalore (2010)

On May 22, 2010, Air India Express Flight 812, flying from Dubai to Mangalore, overshot Runway 24 at Mangalore International Airport and plunged into a gorge. The Boeing 737-800 burst into flames upon impact.

Only eight people survived. The crash, India's deadliest in the 21st century, was attributed to pilot fatigue and failure to execute a go-around despite warnings.

3. Air India Flight 855 Crash off Bombay Coast (1978)

On New Year's Day, 1978, Air India Flight 855 crashed into the Arabian Sea minutes after taking off from Bombay (now Mumbai) en route to Dubai. A critical instrument failure caused the captain to become spatially disoriented, leading to a fatal plunge.

All 213 people on board perished. The crash exposed the dangers of instrument dependency and human error under stress, prompting reviews in cockpit training protocols.

4. Indian Airlines Flight 113 Crash in Ahmedabad (1988)

On October 19, 1988, Indian Airlines Flight 113, a domestic flight from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, crashed during final approach to Ahmedabad

Airport. The aircraft struck trees and a high-tension power line before slamming into the ground.

The reason: pilot error, specifically failure to respond to proximity warnings and poor visibility conditions. Only 2 of the 135 people on board survived, making it one of India's worst peacetime domestic air tragedies.

Lessons from loss

These tragedies have forced India to upgrade aviation infrastructure, enforce stricter pilot training standards, and enhance air traffic control protocols. These incidents are a sobering reminder of what is at stake when precision and vigilance falter.