

PASTOR'S THOUGHTS

15 .06 . 2025

God amid disaster

On Friday, 13 June 2025, Air India Flight 171, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner (registration VT-ANB), crashed just 30 seconds after departing Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Airport, igniting devastating scenes in the Meghani Nagar residential area. The aircraft, bound for London Gatwick with 230 passengers and 12 crew, plunged into the B.J. Medical College hostel block, killing 241 onboard and at least 33 on the ground—making it among the deadliest aviation disasters in recent memory.

Eyewitnesses reported hearing a mayday call followed by multiple explosions as the heavily-fuelled aircraft, carrying around 125,000 litres of fuel, burst into flames on impact. Despite the tragedy, remarkable survival instincts shone through: 40-year-old British-Indian passenger seated in 11A Vishwash Kumar Ramesh escaped through an emergency exit and remains the sole survivor. Cameras around the world saw him walking almost dazed as the only surviving person able to fully recount what actually happened inside the flight.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau, aided by the UK Air Accidents Investigation Branch and the US NTSB, has retrieved the plane's flight data recorder and one black box. Preliminary investigations focus on engine thrust, wing flaps and landing gear configuration, as the Dreamliner failed to climb adequately.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah visited the site, describing the horrific scene created by intense burning fuel and extreme heat that left no chance for rescue teams. DNA testing has begun to assist identification of victims, some of whom suffered severe burns.

Air India, now owned by Tata Group, has initiated compensation efforts and promised full cooperation towards inquiry. The DGCA has also ordered immediate maintenance inspections of all Boeing 787-8/9s in the fleet ahead of mid-air safety assurances.

Communities in both India and the UK grieve over the loss of families, professionals and community leaders. As investigators piece together the flight recorder data, hopes hinge on it revealing whether mechanical failure, human error—or both—contributed to this calamity.

Among those tragically lost was Dr. Sameer Kaul, a respected paediatrician from Derby, who was travelling with his wife Ayesha and their two young children, aged 6 and 9. Dr. Kaul had been attending a global health summit in India and was returning home to celebrate his son's birthday. Tributes have poured in from colleagues at Royal Derby Hospital, describing him as 'a deeply compassionate doctor' and 'a pillar of the community'. The family's loss has sent shockwaves through the local area, where neighbours and patients alike remembered them as kind, humble and generous-hearted.

We can only but pray for those and for words of comfort remember Gods words to us as it states that "The Lord is close to the broken-hearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit." – Psalm 34:18.