

16th June DSC

Current Affairs 16th June 2025.

Black Box Found on Hostel Roof; PM Modi Surveys Crash Site

Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Disaster Management

Context & Background:

- **Flight Specifics:** The Air India Flight AI-171, operating internationally, went down near Meghaninagar, Ahmedabad, during its final descent.
- **Aircraft Info:** It was a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner—a wide-body aircraft used for long-haul travel.
- **Crash Details:** The disaster struck shortly before landing. Initial information points towards either a mechanical fault or structural breakdown.
- **Emergency Signal:** A Mayday call was reportedly sent by the crew, indicating a rapid emergency or potential onboard system collapse.
- **Historical First:** This represents the first deadly incident involving a Boeing 787-8 within Indian airspace.
- **Fatalities:** Over 240 passengers and crew lost their lives, making this one of the gravest aviation disasters in recent Indian history.
- **Lone Survivor:** Only one individual, Vishwas Kumar Ramesh, is confirmed to have survived and is currently receiving medical attention.

Investigation and Crash Details:

- **Casualties:** At least 241 lives were lost in the crash.
- **Ground Impact:** There is no conclusive data yet regarding fatalities on the ground.
- **Black Box Recovery:** The flight recorder was located atop a hostel roof and is expected to shed light on the accident's cause.
- **AAIB Probe:** The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau has initiated a formal investigation.
- **Police Action:** The Ahmedabad police registered an FIR for accidental death.

Government and Political Response:

- **Prime Minister's Visit:** PM Modi visited the site and later chaired a review meeting at Ahmedabad airport.
- **Official Remarks:** The Prime Minister expressed sorrow, calling the incident deeply distressing.
- **Victim Outreach:** He also interacted with survivor Vishwas Kumar and met others injured in the crash.

- **Diplomatic Coordination:** UK High Commissioner Lindy Cameron met with PM Modi. India and the UK are jointly working to determine the cause.

Casualty Management Efforts:

- **Bodies Recovered:** 265 bodies were transported to Ahmedabad Civil Hospital.
- **Identification Status:** Only six bodies have been identified and returned to their families.
- **DNA Matching:** Due to the extent of burns, DNA analysis is being conducted, which is expected to conclude within 72 hours.
- **Release Timeline:** Remaining bodies will be released once confirmation is obtained.

Security Involvement:

- **Agency Actions:** The NIA and other central intelligence agencies have assessed the crash site, leaving open the possibility of sabotage or foul play.

India Abstains from UNGA Gaza Ceasefire Vote

Relevance: GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Abstention Overview:

- On June 13, 2025, India chose not to vote on a UN General Assembly resolution advocating a ceasefire in Gaza. This marks India's fourth abstention in three years on similar matters.
- This decision departs from India's earlier December 2024 vote supporting a ceasefire, indicating a recalibration of its diplomatic approach.
- India referenced past abstentions (Dec 2022, Oct 2023, and early 2024) to maintain consistency, particularly where resolutions criticized Israel.

Diplomatic Repercussions:

- Among the BRICS, SCO, and South Asian bloc, India was the lone abstaining nation, highlighting a deviation from its usual alignments.
- This decision coincided with EAM S. Jaishankar's visit to Paris, where a joint France-Saudi peace summit on a two-state solution is planned (June 17–20).
- It remains uncertain whether India will join the conference, as MEA hasn't confirmed participation.

Details of the Resolution:

- Title: "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations."
- Proposed by Spain, the resolution passed with 149 nations in favour, 11 against, and 19 abstentions (including India, Albania, Ecuador, Dominica, etc.).
- The US and Israel opposed the motion, citing its failure to condemn Hamas.

India's Position:

- According to UN Ambassador Parvathaneni Harish, India is gravely concerned about Gaza's condition but chose abstention to support diplomatic engagement.
- India reiterated that a peaceful resolution is achievable only through negotiations.

Humanitarian Impact in Gaza:

- Over 55,000 have died, with nearly half the population facing severe hunger and health challenges.
- WHO and UN bodies have reported dozens of malnutrition-related child deaths post-ceasefire breakdown.
- The resolution demanded:
 - Immediate humanitarian aid access,
 - Return of hostages,
 - Adherence to international humanitarian law by both Israel and Hamas.

Global Reactions:

- **US:** Opposed resolution for not naming Hamas.
- **Russia:** Supported ceasefire, blaming Israel for starvation and civilian casualties.
- Broad support exists globally for urgent aid and renewed peace talks.

Centre Approves Over 300 FRA Cells to Streamline Forest Rights Implementation

Relevance: GS Paper 3 – Environment & Ecology

Background:

- The Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 grants forest land and resource rights to Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (OTFDs).
- Till now, implementation has been under the purview of State and Union Territory administrations.

Recent Developments:

- For the first time, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs has authorized 324 district FRA cells and 17 state-level cells in 18 States/UTs.
- These are launched under the *Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan* (DAJGUA), initiated in October 2024, focused on tribal empowerment.

Functionality of FRA Cells:

- **Supportive Nature:**
 - Aid claimants and Gram Sabhas with FRA-related documentation.



- Assist with data processing and record-keeping.
- Help in speedy resolution of pending claims, especially after DLC approval.
- **Non-Interventionist Role:**
 - Cells will not influence decisions by Gram Sabhas, SDLCs, DLCs, or State departments.

Concerns Raised:

- **Activists' Viewpoint:**
 - Fear that these units may act as a parallel bureaucracy undermining community-led systems.
 - The fact that they're framed under DAJGUA and not FRA raises concerns over their legal authority.

Structure and Financing:

- **Funding Source:** Central grants-in-aid.
- **Budget Allocation:**
 - ₹8.67 lakh for each district cell.
 - ₹25.85 lakh for each state-level cell.
- **Operational Oversight:** Cells will function within existing State administrative structures.

FRA Claim Status (as of March 2025):

- Total claims: ~51.11 lakh across 21 States/UTs.
- Disposed claims: ~43 lakh.
- Rejections: Over 42%.
- Pending cases: ~14.45%, with high backlog in Assam (60%+) and Telangana (~50.27%).

Top States with FRA Cells:

State	District FRA Cells
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Madhya Pradesh	55
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Chhattisgarh	30
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Telangana	29
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Maharashtra	26
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Assam	25
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State District FRA Cells

Jharkhand 24

Importance:

- Signifies a shift from the Centre's earlier passive role to active structural support.
- Could improve FRA processing and reduce delays.
- However, caution is needed to ensure grassroots institutions are not bypassed.

Israel-Iran Conflict Threatens India's Oil Security and Export Economy

Relevance: GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Energy Dependency:

- India sources around 80% of its crude oil from foreign suppliers.
- Escalation between Israel and Iran has triggered an ~8% surge in global oil prices in one day.
- Although India doesn't import large volumes from Iran directly, global disruptions increase total import costs.

Vulnerable Supply Routes:

- **Strait of Hormuz:** Conduit for about 20% of global crude shipments.
 - Disruptions here could affect imports from major partners like Iraq, UAE, and Saudi Arabia.
- **Red Sea & Suez Canal:**
 - Continued hostilities may force export rerouting via Cape of Good Hope.
 - This adds 15–20 days of shipping time and hikes per-container costs by \$500–\$1,000.
 - Resulting freight cost increase estimated at 40–50%.

Sectoral Fallout:

- **Fuel and Inflation:**
 - Elevated crude prices push fuel, transport, and consumer prices up.
 - May compel RBI to revise its inflation outlook.
- **Export Challenges:**
 - Engineering and time-sensitive sectors face delays and losses.
 - Could reduce India's export competitiveness.

- **Precious Metals:**

- Gold prices breached ₹1 lakh/10g, reaffirming its role as a safe investment.
- Demand is also driven by inflation concerns and central bank purchases.

Expert Observations:

- **Amit Kumar (Grant Thornton):** Even indirect blockages at Hormuz impact Indian supply due to global chain reactions.
- **Pankaj Chadha (EEPC):** Disruption of the Suez route severely affects Indian exporters.
- **Norbert Rücker (Julius Baer):** Views the oil spike as temporary, expecting market correction.
- **Amit Jain (Ashika Global):** Sees gold demand as part of a broader structural trend, not just crisis-driven.

Overall Impact on India:

- **Immediate:** Inflationary pressure, CAD expansion, and greater fiscal burden on fuel subsidies.
- **Mid-Term:** Export margins could decline. Strategic reserves and diversification may need re-evaluation.
- **Geopolitically:** Reinforces India's vulnerability due to energy dependence and trade route exposure.

Israel's Airstrikes on Iran: Strategic Calculations and Fallout

Relevance: GS Paper 2 – International Relations

Nature and Scope of Attack (June 13, 2025):

- Israel launched large-scale air raids on Iran's nuclear facilities like Natanz, missile bases, senior generals' homes, and over 24 nuclear scientists.
- This is the most intense attack since Iran's 1979 revolution.
- Follows past Israeli covert actions, including the 2020 assassination of scientist Mohsen Fakhriyadeh and 2014 bombing of Iran's embassy in Damascus.

Strategic Environment Facilitating the Strike:

- Israel has long considered Iran's nuclear programme an existential threat.
- Earlier, U.S. administrations discouraged direct attacks to avoid escalation.
- Strategic balance changed post:
 - Hamas's October 2023 attack weakened Iran's deterrent.
 - Fall of Assad's Syrian regime (Dec 2024), breaking Iran–Hezbollah–Syria alliance.

- Israel took advantage of this to strike.

Escalation Timeline:

- Launched a “regional mini-war” with:
 - Gaza (Hamas),
 - Lebanon (Hezbollah),
 - Syria.
- October 2024 attacks on Iran’s missile defenses paved the way for exposing nuclear facilities.

US Involvement & Trump’s Role:

- President Trump initially delayed Israeli action in May 2025, hoping for diplomacy.
- His approach was pressure-based, demanding Iran fully dismantle its nuclear arsenal.
- Talks failed, and Trump appeared to endorse Israeli strikes.
- Through social media, he warned of future attacks and hinted at resumed diplomacy in Muscat.

Iran’s Options:

1. **Full Retaliation:** Risk of large-scale conflict involving the US.
2. **Accept Deal:** Politically damaging; weakens Iran’s position.
3. **Limited Engagement:** May not deter further Israeli offensives.

Global Consequences:

- **Conflict Escalation:** Any miscalculation may trigger U.S. or Gulf involvement.
- **Economic Impact:** Oil supply disruptions could spike global prices.
- **Diplomatic Vacuum:** Lack of mediation may prolong instability.

Conclusion:

Israel-Iran hostilities have shifted from shadow operations to direct warfare. With Iran’s regional influence diminished and the U.S. backing Israel, Tehran’s next move could reshape West Asian geopolitics—through war, diplomacy, or deterrence.

16th June 2025: Static MCQS

1. Consider the following statements:

- I. With reference to the Constitution of India, if an area in a State is declared as Scheduled Area under the Fifth Schedule
- II. The state government loses its executive power in such areas and a local body assumes total administration

- III. The union government can take over the total administration of such areas under certain circumstances on the recommendations of the governor

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

1. I only
2. II only
3. Both I and II
4. Neither I and II

Correct Option: (d)

2. With reference of India, consider the following pairs:

Organization

Union Ministry

- I. The National Automotive Board : Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- II. The Coir Board : Ministry of Heavy Industries
- III. The National Centre for Trade Information : Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. All the three
- d. None

Correct Option: (d)

3. Consider the following subjects under the Constitution of India:

- I. List I-Union List, in the Seventh Schedule
- II. Extent of the executive power of a State
- III. Conditions of the Governor's office

For a constitutional amendment with respect to which of the above, ratification by the Legislatures or not less than one-half of the States is required before presenting the bill to the president of india for assent?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (a)

4. With reference to the India polity, consider the following statements:

- I. The governor of a state is not answerable to any court for the exercise and performance of the powers and duties of his/her office.
- II. No criminal proceedings shall be instituted or continued against the governor during his/her term of office.
- III. Members of a state legislature are not liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said within the house.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- a. I and II only
- b. II and III only
- c. I and III only
- d. I, II and III

Correct Option: (d)

5. Consider the following activities:

1. Production of crude oil
2. Refining, storage and distribution of petroleum
3. Marketing and sale of petroleum products
4. Production of natural gas

How many of the above activities are regulated by the petroleum and natural gas regulatory board in our country?

- a. Only one
- b. Only two
- c. Only three
- d. All the four

Correct Option: (b)