







# Daily CURRENT AFFAIRS

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# The Rot Starts at the Top of the Aviation Ladder

#### Why in the News?

On June 12, 2025, Air India Flight Al171 met with a catastrophic accident just after taking off from Ahmedabad airport, en route to London Gatwick, resulting in the loss of over 300 lives, including passengers and residents.

 The accident has brought renewed attention to India's aviation safety ecosystem, exposing serious lapses in training, infrastructure, regulatory oversight, and systemic accountability.

#### **Background**

India has witnessed multiple major air crashes over the past three decades, including:

- IC605 (1990): Airbus A320 crash in Bangalore.
- CD7412 (2000): Alliance Air crash in Patna.
- IX812 (2010): Air India Express crash in Mangaluru.
- IX1344 (2020): Air India Express crash in Kozhikode.
- Despite these repeated tragedies, India's aviation authorities - including the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) - have failed to implement consistent safety reforms.
- This persistent complacency, lack of accountability, and politicisation of appointments have compounded systemic rot.



# Key Features of the Issue Institutional Complacency

- Following each crash, superficial responses are offered, but no structural overhauls are made.
- DGCA often violates international protocols, such as naming pilots prematurely, against ICAO norms.
- Accident investigators are often handpicked to deflect blame toward pilots rather than systemic flaws.

### **Lack of Professional Leadership**

- Crucial aviation bodies are frequently headed by bureaucrats or politically connected individuals rather than aviation experts.
- The Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC) lacks influence or continuity in policy enforcement.

# Safety Oversights and Infrastructure Failures

- Bird menace due to overgrown grass along runways, despite ICAO's mandates for regular mowing.
- Potential for foreign object damage (FOD), echoing the tragic Concorde crash in 2000.
- Poor urban planning: multi-storey buildings constructed dangerously close to take-off zones, due to political influence on land-use regulations.



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# **Pilot Training and Emergency Handling**

- Uncertainty over whether the first officer was under training and whether the training flight protocols were properly followed.
- The aircraft's landing gear remained deployed, increasing drag and reducing climb performance.
- The possibility of a dual-engine bird strike and resulting compressor stall that overwhelmed the crew.

#### International Scrutiny

 Involvement of global aviation bodies like the NTSB (U.S.) and AAIB (U.K.) in the investigation signifies the gravity of the incident and the need for global compliance.

## Challenges **Regulatory Failure**

- DGCA's weak enforcement of ICAO standards and selective transparency erodes public trust.
- Inadequate monitoring of airport conditions, pilot readiness, and incident preparedness.

# **Judicial Apathy**

 Post-Mangaluru crash, a PIL citing systemic violations was dismissed by the Supreme Court, further weakening public recourse mechanisms.

# **Training Gaps**

- Insufficient focus on pilot simulator hours, emergency protocols, and competency-based training assessments.
- Inexperienced or partially trained pilots reportedly involved in critical phases of flight under lax oversight.

# **Conflict of Interest and Cronyism**

 Political interference in granting No Objection Certificates (NOCs) for construction near flight paths.

 Continued presence of compromised leadership within regulatory institutions.

### **Public and Political Apathy**

 Despite repeated mass casualties, aviation disasters rarely create sustained public or political pressure for reform, unlike in other democracies.

## **Way Forward Independent and Accountable** Regulation

- Reform the DGCA into a truly autonomous statutory authority, free from bureaucratic interference.
- Appoint professional aviation experts as heads of DGCA and AAI.

# Strengthen Safety Audits and **Infrastructure Compliance**

- Regular third-party safety audits in all major and regional airports.
- Ensure runway maintenance, bird hazard mitigation, and ICAO compliance in every aspect.

# Transparent and Expert-led Crash **Investigations**

- Establish an independent Air Accidents Investigation Board with international observers.
- All investigation findings must be made public with clear accountability chains.

# **Overhaul Pilot Training Protocols**

- Mandate crew resource management (CRM) and line-oriented flight training (LOFT) for all Indian carriers.
- Every training flight must include a designated safety supervisor and strict documentation of control exchanges between the captain and copilot.



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#### **Legal and Judicial Reforms**

- Strengthen judicial oversight of aviation safety violations by mandating special aviation benches or technical advisors to the court.
- Fast-track cases involving regulatory failure to ensure accountability.

## **Urban Planning Around Airports**

- Review and revoke politically motivated NOCs for construction in airport take-off and landing zones.
- Implement zoning regulations in consultation with civil aviation and municipal authorities.

#### **Public Pressure and Media Vigilance**

- Encourage whistleblowing in aviation through secure channels.
- Foster media literacy on aviation safety to sustain pressure on regulators.

#### Conclusion

The fiery crash of Air India Flight Al171 is not an isolated event but the latest outcome of a systemic rot in India's aviation safety management. From complacent regulatory frameworks to compromised leadership and poor training oversight, every layer of the aviation ecosystem is implicated. Unless the rot at the top is addressed, India's ambition of becoming a global aviation hub will be nothing more than a pipe dream built on tragedy.

#### Main question

Why does India's aviation sector continue to face recurring safety failures despite rapid growth, as highlighted by the Air India Al171 crash in 2025?

# Which of the following statements accurately reflects systemic issues in India's aviation sector as highlighted in the context of the Air India Al171 crash (2025)?

- 1.The DGCA's practice of naming pilots involved in accidents violates ICAO norms.
- 2. The Airports Authority of India mandates that grass height near runways remain above six inches during the monsoon season to reduce bird activity.
- 3. The judiciary in India has historically upheld public interest litigations against aviation regulators for safety violations.
- 4.ICAO norms require pilot experience to be publicly disclosed immediately after any crash investigation begins.

# Select the correct answer using the code below:

A. 1 only

B. 1 and 3 only

C. 2 and 4 only

D. None of the above

#### **Explanation:**

**Statement 1 Correct:** The DGCA's naming of pilots involved in accidents violates ICAO norms, which prohibit the disclosure of crew identities even in final reports. This was a major critique in the Al171 case.

**Statement 2 Incorrect:** The Airports Authority of India (AAI) mandates that grass be mowed to below three inches before monsoon to avoid bird attraction, not above six inches. The article explicitly states this as a preventive measure.

**Statement 3 is incorrect:** The judiciary has not historically upheld PILs against aviation regulators. The Supreme Court dismissed a detailed PIL after the Mangaluru crash and handed it back to the MoCA, a move criticised as undermining accountability.

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Statement 4 Incorrect: ICAO norms do not require pilot experience to be disclosed immediately after a crash. Public disclosure of such details is generally discouraged until formal reports are published.





# Endgame of a 2,611-Year-Old Enmity: The Israel-Iran Conflict and Its Global Reverberations

## Why in the News?

On June 13, 2025, Israel launched Operation Rising Lion, a sweeping and intense military campaign targeting Iran's nuclear and missile capabilities. This marks a historic escalation in the 2,611year-old conflict between Jewish and Persian civilisations, originating as far back as 586 BCE.

- The recent operation involved coordinated aerial strikes, targeted assassinations of Iranian military and scientific leadership, and cyber and kinetic attacks on strategic infrastructure.
- Amid a rapidly shifting West Asian geopolitical landscape, this conflict threatens to redraw regional alignments, spike oil prices, revive terrorism, and potentially draw in major powers like the United States.
- The operation is being interpreted as the climactic moment in an ancient rivalry, but its consequences could resonate well beyond the two nations involved.

# Background Historical Roots of Jewish-Persian Rivalry

- The roots trace back to 586 BCE, when the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar
   Il destroyed the First Jewish Temple.
- Ironically, it was Cyrus the Great of Persia who allowed Jews to return and rebuild the Second Temple in Jerusalem.



- In modern times, however, relations nosedived after Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution, where the anti-Zionist position became ideological.
- Iran has since positioned itself as the foremost regional adversary of Israel, backing militant groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthis.

### The October 7, 2023, Hamas Attack

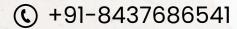
- A major inflexion point came with the Hamas attack on Israel, which Israel claims was backed by Iran.
- This initiated 21 months of proxy warfare, with Israel targeting Iranian allies in Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, Yemen, and even Iraq.
- Israel's ultimate aim became increasingly clear: to degrade Iran's strategic capacity, particularly its nuclear and missile programs.

#### **The Global Context**

- The United States, under Donald Trump's second term, amplified "maximum pressure" on Iran, backing Israel diplomatically and militarily.
- The 2025 IAEA resolution condemning Iran's nuclear noncompliance, passed a day before the attack, hints at premeditated coordination with Israel's campaign.



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 Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia and other Sunni states, though wary of both Iran and Israel, have remained cautiously silent, fearing both blowback and domestic unrest.

# **Key Features of Operation Rising Lion Tactical Objectives**

- Neutralise Iran's nuclear enrichment facilities and missile launch sites.
- Assassinate high-value Iranian figures, including:
- Chief of Armed Forces
- Revolutionary Guard Commanders
- Six top nuclear scientists
- Dismantle Iran's command-andcontrol systems via cyberattacks and airstrikes.

#### **Execution Strategy**

- Over 200 Israeli jets attacked more than 100 targets in a single day.
- The operation leveraged real-time intelligence, cyber warfare, and hypersonic precision weaponry.
- Target selection ensured both strategic gain and psychological deterrence.

#### **Geostrategic Preparation**

- Ouster of Assad in Syria-long an Iranian ally, opened Israel's eastern front.
- Offensive assets like bunker-busting munitions and satellite surveillance were upgraded.
- Multi-layered missile defence systems were installed to intercept Iranian retaliatory strikes.

## Challenges and Risks Iran's Retaliatory Capacity

- Iran retains asymmetrical warfare capabilities via its proxies in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen.
- Strait of Hormuz disruptions could endanger a fifth of global oil trade.



 Rising nationalism in Iran could galvanise internal support for the regime despite its failures.

### **Potential Regional Fallout**

- Sunni-majority Arab states fear:
  - Shia unrest within their borders.
  - Terrorist attacks on oil infrastructure.
  - Collapse of fragile détente under the Abraham Accords
- Revival of ISIS or al-Qaeda due to instability is a serious threat.

## **Global Economic Impacts**

- Oil price surges, inflation spikes, and supply chain disruptions could compound economic slowdowns already caused by trade wars and climate crises.
- Financial markets have already reacted to volatility in West Asia.
- The U.S. and EU may be reluctantly drawn into a prolonged conflict they had hoped to avoid.

## **Unpredictability of Escalation**

- Like Operation Desert Storm (1991), Israeli planners hoped for a swift neutralisation of Iran's strategic threat.
- But if Iran proves resilient, it may expand the war, involving Pakistan, Afghanistan, or Central Asia.
- A full-scale West Asia war cannot be ruled out.

# Way Forward Diplomatic De-escalation

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- The United Nations Security Council must push for immediate ceasefire negotiations.
- Resurrecting elements of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) could offer a de-nuclearisation roadmap.
- Involvement of neutral intermediaries like India, Qatar, or Switzerland could help defuse tensions.



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### Middle East Strategic Security Dialogue

- A new regional forum including Israel, Iran, GCC nations, Egypt, and Turkey should be institutionalised.
- Shared concerns like climate change, cyber threats, and economic integration must be prioritised to offset militarised posturing.

#### **Addressing Root Causes**

- The sectarian divide between Sunni and Shia blocs must be tackled via interfaith dialogue and reform in political Islam.
- · Proxy groups like Hezbollah and Hamas must be brought into international accountability frameworks.

#### Non-Proliferation Enforcement

- IAEA's mandate must be expanded with enforcement powers.
- Both Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal and Iran's ambitions must be brought under a Middle East Nuclear Weapon Free Zone (MENWFZ) treaty.
- Al-powered verification mechanisms can ensure real-time compliance.

# **Economic and Civil Society** Engagement

- Sanctions have failed to deter Iran but have hurt its civil population.
- Constructive economic engagement, energy investments, and cultural diplomacy may be better tools for long-term stability.
- Youth and civil society groups on both sides should be encouraged to reject violent state ideologies.

#### Conclusion

The Airstrikes of June 13, 2025, mark a pivotal moment in the Jewish-Persian civilizational conflict

a rivalry steeped in theology, geopolitics, and historical trauma. While Israel may have achieved tactical success, the strategic and moral costs remain incalculable. Iran's nuclear ambitions may be set back, but regional peace remains elusive as long as proxy wars, ideological polarisation, and power politics continue to dominate West

#### **Main Question:**

What are the geopolitical, military, and economic implications of Israel's 2025 "Operation Rising Lion" against Iran, and how does it mark a critical turning point in the 2,611-year-old Jewish-Persian enmity?

### Which of the following statements best captures the complex geopolitical calculus underlying Israel's 2025 "Operation Rising Lion" against Iran?

A. The operation was a reactive strike following Iran's successful acquisition of nuclear weapons, with no prior diplomatic or military preparation.

B. The operation was an isolated military strike by Israel, carried out without any regional or international alignment or support.

C. The operation was a premeditated, multipronged offensive, enabled by 21 months of conflict, regional power shifts, Western diplomatic support, and strategic weakening of Iran's proxies and allies.

D. The operation was driven solely by economic motivations to control oil trade routes in the Strait of Hormuz and impose financial sanctions on Iran.

#### **Correct Answer:**

C. The operation was a premeditated, multipronged offensive, enabled by 21 months of conflict, regional power shifts, Western diplomatic support, and strategic weakening of Iran's proxies and allies.



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# Israel-Iran Conflict and Its Fallout on India's Energy and Trade Security

#### Why in the News?

The 2025 military escalation between Israel and Iran has sparked global concern over energy security, trade disruptions, and inflationary pressures. Following Israel's "Rising Lion" operation targeting Iran's nuclear and strategic facilities, oil prices surged by 8% in a single day, with analysts warning of long-term implications for energy-importing countries like India. India, which imports over 80% of its crude oil, faces not only higher energy bills but also significant disruptions in maritime trade routes, especially through the Strait of Hormuz, the Suez Canal, and the Red Sea. Export costs for Indian businesses may rise by 40-50%, compounding inflation and slowing economic growth.

## Background Historical Context of Israel-Iran Tensions

- Rooted in deep-seated ideological, religious, and geopolitical differences, the enmity between Israel and Iran spans centuries, with modern-day escalation following the 1979 Iranian Revolution.
- Iran opposes Israel's legitimacy, while Israel views Iran's nuclear ambitions as an existential threat.
- Proxy confrontations have intensified since the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack, leading to



Israel systematically targeting Iranianbacked groups and now directly engaging Iran.

### India's Energy Landscape

- India is the third-largest oil consumer globally and imports over 80% of its crude oil, primarily from the Gulf (Iraq, Saudi Arabia, UAE).
- Although direct imports from Iran have been minimal since 2019 (due to U.S. sanctions), global oil prices still impact India disproportionately due to its dependence on imports.
- The Strait of Hormuz is a critical chokepoint: nearly 20% of global oil passes through it, and any military escalation poses threats to global energy security.

#### **Maritime Trade Dependencies**

- India's trade with Europe and North Africa heavily depends on the Suez Canal and the Red Sea route.
- Disruption in these corridors may force rerouting via the Cape of Good Hope, adding 15–20 days of delay and raising shipping costs by \$500–\$1,000 per container.

## Key Features of the Issue Oil Price Volatility and Domestic Inflation

• Immediate impact: An 8% jump in oil prices threatens to push retail inflation beyond the RBI's target zone (4% ±2%).



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- Sectors such as transport, agriculture, and manufacturing are particularly vulnerable to rising fuel costs.
- Higher import bills can worsen the current account deficit (CAD) and weaken the rupee.

### **Maritime Trade Disruption**

- Approximately 30% of Indian exports to Europe and North Africa transit the Red Sea-Suez route.
- Rerouting via the Cape of Good Hope increases:
  - Transit time by 15–20 days
  - Costs by 40–50%
- Indian exporters, particularly in engineering goods, textiles, and pharmaceuticals, may lose competitiveness.

#### **Gold Price Surge as a Hedge**

- Following the conflict, gold prices soared above ₹1 lakh per 10 grams, indicating market fear and the rise of gold as a hedge.
- This could lead to a surge in gold imports, adversely affecting India's trade deficit.

# Strategic and Diplomatic Dilemma for India

- India maintains strategic ties with both Israel and Iran:
  - Israel is a key defence and cybertech partner.
  - Iran is geopolitically crucial due to Chabahar Port and land access to Central Asia.
- Escalating conflict may force India to balance between its strategic autonomy and external pressures, especially from the U.S. and Gulf countries.

#### **Broader Global Economic Impact**

- Higher oil prices could lead to:
  - Imported inflation
  - Supply chain disruptions
  - Stock market volatility
  - Slowdown in global recovery

This could derail India's aim of achieving 7%+ GDP growth in FY26.
Challenges

### Overdependence on Oil Imports

- India's energy mix is still heavily fossil-fuel dependent, making it vulnerable to external price shocks.
- Strategic petroleum reserves (SPR) can cover only 9 - 10 days of consumption, insufficient for longterm crises.

## **Limited Transport Alternatives**

- The International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) and Chabahar have yet to reach full operational capacity.
- Land routes via Pakistan and Afghanistan remain non-viable due to geopolitical constraints.

## **Export Fragility Amid Logistics Crisis**

- Sectors like engineering goods (via EEPC), textiles, and gems & jewellery are highly price-sensitive.
- Prolonged delays and cost escalations may:
  - Trigger cancellation of export orders
  - 0
  - Increase insurance premiums
  - Force firms to lay off workers or reduce output.

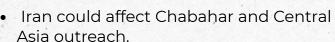
# Policy Tightrope: Diplomacy vs. Economics

 Taking a stance risks upsetting one party: condemning Israel might sour defence ties, while criticising



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 India's neutral, non-aligned diplomacy will be tested under global scrutiny.

#### **Domestic Political Repercussions**

- Rising fuel prices and inflation may trigger:
  - Public protests
  - Pressures on government subsidies
  - Impact on upcoming elections and fiscal priorities

# Way Forward Diversifying Energy Sources

- Accelerate procurement from non-Gulf countries (Russia, Latin America, Africa).
- Encourage long-term LNG contracts with diversified geographies.
- Push forward India's biofuel and ethanol-blending mission (20% by 2025 target).

## **Expanding Strategic Reserves**

- Enhance SPR capacity from the current
   5.3 million tonnes to at least 15–20 days' cover.
- Encourage private participation in SPR storage.

## Strengthening Alternative Trade Routes

- Expedite the full operationalisation of:
  - INSTC via Chabahar
  - India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)
- Strengthen ties with Central Asia and Africa to diversify trade dependencies.

## **Using Diplomacy to Mitigate Risks**

- Reinforce India's stance as a neutral actor advocating de-escalation and adherence to international maritime laws.
- Leverage platforms like BRICS, SCO, and G20 to push for collective regional security mechanisms.

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### **Domestic Policy Measures**

- Rationalise excise duty and state VAT on fuels to cushion consumers.
- Tighten monetary policy through calibrated rate hikes if inflation persists.
- Launch support schemes for MSME exporters impacted by logistics costs.

### **Hedging and Financial Preparedness**

- Encourage oil companies and importers to hedge against crude oil volatility.
- Maintain a strong forex reserve position to tackle currency depreciation.
- Promote gold monetisation schemes to reduce physical gold imports.

#### Conclusion

The Israel-Iran conflict is not just a West Asian geopolitical issue but a direct threat to India's energy and trade stability. As the global economy reels under inflation, wars, and climate shocks, India must adopt a multi-pronged, resilient strategy balancing foreign policy, enhancing energy security, and safeguarding its economic interests.

#### **Main Question**

How will the Israel-Iran conflict impact India's oil security, export competitiveness, and broader economic stability?

# Which of the following statements best explains the indirect impact of the Israel-Iran conflict on India's economy, despite minimal direct oil imports from Iran?

A. India's strategic oil reserves are sufficient to fully buffer against global crude price shocks for the next two years. B. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz can impact India's oil supply due to its reliance on suppliers like Iraq and Saudi Arabia.





C. Closure of the Suez Canal and the Red Sea will lower India's maritime export costs due to longer but safer alternate routes. D. Gold prices fell as oil prices rose, indicating an inverse correlation between energy and precious metals during conflicts.

**Correct Answer:** B. Disruption in the Strait of Hormuz can impact India's oil supply due to its reliance on suppliers like Iraq and Saudi Arabia.

**Explanation:** Even though India doesn't import significant oil directly from Iran, around 20% of global oil flows through the Strait of Hormuz, and India relies heavily on countries like Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, whose oil exports transit this route. Thus, geopolitical disruptions here can severely affect India's oil import costs and inflation.



# India's Abstention on **Gaza Ceasefire:** Diplomacy, Dilemmas, and the Changing **Contours of Foreign Policy**

#### Why in the News?

On June 13, 2025, India abstained from a UN General Assembly (UNGA) resolution calling for an immediate ceasefire in Gazathe fourth such abstention in three years, signalling a notable shift in India's traditional stance on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This comes amidst rising global condemnation of Israel's military actions in Gaza, where over 55,000 people have been killed.

- The resolution, titled "Protection of civilians and upholding legal and humanitarian obligations", was passed with overwhelming support- 149 in favour, 19 abstentions (including India), and 11 against (including the U.S. and Israel).
- India was the only country among South Asian, BRICS, and SCO members to abstain.

# **Background India's Historic Support for Palestine**

- India recognised Palestine in 1988 and has traditionally voiced support for a two-state solution.
- India voted in favour of several pro-Palestine UN resolutions over the decades, often backing humanitarian aid and opposing Israeli settlements.
- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) legacy shaped India's earlier pro-Palestine stance.





#### Shift in India-Israel Relations

- The transformation began in 1992 when India established full diplomatic ties with Israel.
- Bilateral ties deepened significantly under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who became the first Indian PM to visit Israel in 2017.
- Cooperation now spans defence, intelligence sharing, agriculture, cybersecurity, and innovation.

#### **UN Voting Pattern on Gaza**

- India abstained on key votes at the UN:
  - October 2023: Ceasefire resolution during the early stages of the Israel-Hamas conflict.
  - December 2022 and 2024: Resolutions criticising Israel's human rights record and referring cases to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- The only exception was a December 2024 vote, where India voted in favour of a ceasefire, making the current abstention notable for its reversal.

#### **Feature**

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#### The Resolution India Abstained From

- Introduced by Spain, the resolution called for:
  - Immediate ceasefire in Gaza.
  - Compliance with international humanitarian law by Israel and Hamas.



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- Protection of civilians and unrestricted humanitarian aid access.
- It was a non-binding UNGA resolution, yet it carried moral and political weight given the 149-member support.

#### India's Justification

- India's Permanent Representative P. Harish stated:
  - India is "deeply concerned" about the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.
  - Abstention was in continuation of its past positions on resolutions perceived to politically target Israel.
- India reiterated support for direct negotiations between Israel and Palestine and emphasised "a just, peaceful and lasting solution".

# India's Diplomatic Balancing Act India is trying to balance:

- Strategic ties with Israel, a crucial defence partner.
- Long-standing support for Palestine, rooted in NAM values and domestic sensitivities.
- Geopolitical expectations from:
  - The United States, a key strategic partner.
  - The Arab world, where India has energy dependencies and a large diaspora.

## **Geostrategic Factors**

- India's abstention comes ahead of a France-Saudi-led UN conference on the Two-State Solution (June 17–20).
- India's participation is uncertain amid a U.S. demarche discouraging recognition pledges for Palestine.
- The abstention could be interpreted as:
  - A hedging strategy to avoid antagonising Israel or the U.S.
  - A step toward an issue-based foreign policy, decoupled from bloc politics.

# Challenges Perception of Policy Inconsistency

- India's reversal from its December 2024 vote may signal inconsistency in its stand on humanitarian issues.
- Domestic critics and sections of the global South see this as retreating from moral leadership.

# **Erosion of NAM Legacy and Global South Leadership**

- Abstention distances India from the Global South, particularly African and Arab nations, most of whom supported the resolution.
- Undermines India's effort to be a voice for the voiceless and an advocate for a rules-based order.

## **Strategic Tightrope with West Asia**

- Arab countries may interpret the abstention as implicit support for Israel.
- Could strain relations with key partners like:
  - Saudi Arabia and the UAE, crucial for oil imports.
  - Egypt and Qatar, influential in Gaza diplomacy.

# Public Opinion and Political Sensitivities

- India's Muslim community and secular voices may view abstention as morally unacceptable.
- The decision may feed into domestic polarisation, especially around foreign policy and religious identity.

# Diplomatic Isolation in Multilateral Forums

 India's solitary abstention in the SCO, BRICS, and South Asia raises concerns about diplomatic isolation on issues of global conscience.



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## Way Forward Reassert Commitment to Two-State Solution

- India must clearly articulate its support for a sovereign Palestine and secure Israel.
- Can revive support by participating meaningfully in the upcoming Paris-Saudi UN conference on Palestine.

### **Engage in Humanitarian Diplomacy**

- India can:
  - Increase medical aid and relief efforts to Gaza.
  - Champion non-political humanitarian causes to balance abstentions with visible empathy.

# **Crafting a More Transparent Voting Doctrine**

- India must adopt and communicate a consistent doctrine for UN votes, particularly where humanitarian issues are involved.
- Avoid vagueness that erodes credibility and soft power.

#### **Multilateral Engagement and Mediation**

- Leverage India's global credibility to offer neutral mediation between Israel and Palestine.
- Can collaborate with France, Egypt, and Jordan to broker humanitarian truces or ceasefires.

## **Institutionalising Middle East Policy**

- Establish an India–West Asia Strategy Task Force under MEA to:
  - Handle emerging crises systematically.
  - Integrate defence, diaspora, energy, and diplomacy concerns into cohesive decision-making.

#### Conclusion

India's abstention from the UNGA Gaza ceasefire resolution reflects the growing realism and pragmatism in its foreign policy. However, abstaining from a vote that commanded overwhelming global support for humanitarian protection raises difficult questions about India's moral leadership in multilateral diplomacy. As the conflict deepens and the civilian toll rises, India must recalibrate its stance to retain its global stature, regional goodwill, and domestic balance.

#### **Main Question:**

How does India's repeated abstention from UNGA resolutions on the Gaza ceasefire reflect its evolving foreign policy priorities, and what are the strategic and moral implications of this stance for its global image and regional interests?

# Q. About India's voting pattern at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on resolutions related to the Gaza conflict, consider the following statements:

- 1. India has consistently voted in favour of all UNGA resolutions calling for a ceasefire in Gaza since 2022.
- 2.India's abstentions have primarily been due to concerns over resolutions that explicitly criticised Israel.
- 3. In 2024, India voted in favour of a UNGA resolution that referred the Israeli bombardment of Gaza to the International Court of Justice (ICJ).
- 4. India is among the countries that have officially recognised the State of Palestine.







## Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

A. 1 and 3 only B. 2 and 4 only C. 1, 2 and 4 only D. 2, 3 and 4 only

Answer: B. 2 and 4 only

#### **Explanation:**

• Statement 1 is incorrect: India abstained from several ceasefire resolutions since 2022; it did not vote consistently in favour.





# **Black Boxes in Aviation: Silent** Witnesses to Air Crashes

#### Why in the News?

Authorities recently recovered the black box from the site of a tragic aircraft crash in Ahmedabad. The device is expected to play a crucial role in deciphering the causes behind the incident.

 This highlights the indispensable role of flight data recorders in aviation safety and investigation.

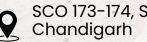
#### **Background**

- The concept of flight data recording emerged in response to increasing air travel incidents post-World War II.
- Dr. David Warren, an Australian scientist, developed the first practical Flight Data Recorder (FDR) in 1954 after investigating unexplained aircraft explosions.
- Although called "black boxes," these devices are painted bright orange for easier identification in crash debris.
- Over time, international civil aviation authorities, including the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation), have made black boxes mandatory on commercial flights.

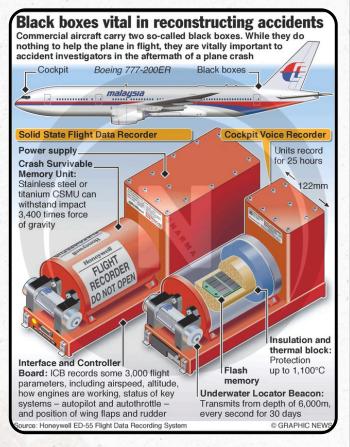
## **Key Features of Black Boxes Types of Black Boxes:**

Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR): Records the last 2 hours of cockpit audio in a continuous loop.

Captures pilot conversations, radio calls, alarms, and ambient sounds.



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## Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR):

Records up to 25 hours of flight parameters like speed, altitude, engine performance, and control movements.

#### **Technical Characteristics:**

- Usually installed in the tail section of the aircraft, as it's most likely to survive a crash.
- Built using solid-state memory chips enclosed in crash-resistant titanium or stainless-steel casings.
- Can withstand:
  - Impact of up to 3,400 Gs (gravitational forces),
  - Temperatures up to 1,100°C for one
  - Water pressure at 20,000 feet.

#### Locator Beacon:

 Each device includes an Underwater Locator Beacon (ULB) that emits acoustic pings for up to 30 days to assist in recovery from submerged sites.





#### Use in India:

- Managed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) under the Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- In April 2025, India launched its first indigenous Flight Recorders Laboratory in New Delhi, enabling quicker and localised data analysis.

### Challenges

# **Data Recovery in Harsh Conditions:**

 In cases of high-impact crashes or fires, memory modules may get damaged, complicating data extraction.

### **Limited Recording Duration:**

CVRs store only 2 hours of cockpit audio. In long-haul flights, crucial information from earlier segments may be lost.

### **Beacon Signal Limitation:**

 ULBs emit signals only for 30 days. Deep-sea recovery operations can sometimes take longer.

#### **Technological Gaps in India:**

Despite the new lab, India still relies on foreign expertise for complex decoding and analysis in certain scenarios.

#### **Privacy and Legal Issues:**

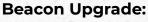
 Use of voice recordings from CVRs can raise ethical concerns regarding the privacy of pilots and crew, especially in court proceedings or public reports.

# **Way Forward Enhancing Recording Capacity:**

 ICAO and aviation manufacturers should move toward expanding CVR storage from 2 to 25 hours, as proposed.

#### Real-time Data Streaming:

 Adoption of cloud-based real-time flight data transmission for critical parameters to reduce reliance on physical recovery.



 Development of beacons with extended battery life (up to 90 days) and GPS-enabled distress alerts.

## Strengthening Indigenous Capabilities:

· Investment in R&D to make India self-sufficient in black box manufacturing, data decoding, and crash analytics.

#### **International Collaboration:**

 Partnerships with ICAO and global aviation safety bodies for technology transfer and knowledge sharing.

#### **Wider Public Awareness:**

 Educating the public on the purpose of black boxes can reduce speculation and misinformation following air crashes.

#### Conclusion

 Black boxes are a cornerstone of aviation safety, providing crucial insights that drive improvements in aircraft design, pilot training, and flight operations. As India modernises its aviation infrastructure, enhancing black box technology and crash investigation protocols is essential for ensuring safer skies.

## **Main Question**

How do black boxes contribute to aviation safety, and what are the key challenges and developments in their use and analysis, particularly in the Indian context?

## Which of the following statements about aircraft black boxes is/are correct?

1. They are painted black to avoid reflection during retrieval.



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- 2. They consist of a Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and a Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR).
- 3. They are typically installed in the nose section of an aircraft.

# Select the correct answer using the code below:

- a) 1 and 2 only
- b) 2 only
- c) 2 and 3 only
- d) 1, 2 and 3

Answer: b) 2 only

### **Explanation:**

They are painted black to avoid reflection during retrieval."

Despite being called "black boxes," they are painted bright orange with reflective material to enhance visibility in crash debris, especially underwater or in rough terrain.

"They consist of a Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and a Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR)."

Aircraft typically carry these two devices:

- CVR records cockpit audio (conversations, alarms, etc.).
- DFDR records flight performance data (speed, altitude, engine data, etc.).

They are typically installed in the nose section of an aircraft."

Black boxes are installed in the tail section of the aircraft because it is statistically more likely to remain intact in a crash.





# **Centre Sanctions** First-Ever FRA Cells to **Accelerate Forest Rights Implementation**

#### Why in the News?

For the first time since the enactment of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, the Union Ministry of Tribal Affairs has sanctioned and is funding over 300 Forest Rights Act (FRA) Cells across 18 States and Union Territories.

These cells are being established under the Feature: What Are the New FRA Cells? Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan (DAJGUA) to facilitate faster and more structured implementation of FRA provisions.

### **Background**

The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, or Forest Rights Act, 2006, was enacted to correct the historical injustice done to forest-dwelling Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers by recognising their rights over forest land and resources.

Implementation of the FRA has historically been the sole domain of State governments, as the Act mandates States to constitute:

- Gram Sabha-level Forest Rights Committees (FRCs)
- Sub-Divisional Level Committees (SDLCs)
- District Level Committees (DLCs)
- State Monitoring Committees (SMCs)
- However, progress has been patchy:
- As of March 2025, 14.45% of the 51.11 lakh claims were still pending.



 Among the disposed claims, over 42% were rejected, raising concerns about unjustified exclusions and procedural opacity.

- 324 district-level FRA cells and 17 Statelevel cells have been sanctioned in 18 States/UTs.
- These are being implemented under the DAJGUA programme, not directly under the FRA statute.
- Funding: Provided by the Centre under Grants-in-Aid General, with:
- ₹8.67 lakh per district-level cell
- ₹25.85 lakh per State-level cell

#### **Role of FRA Cells:**

- Assist claimants and Gram Sabhas with paperwork and documentation.
- Facilitate data management for FRA claims.
- Expedite pending cases, especially those already cleared by DLCs.
- No adjudicatory powers do not interfere with Gram Sabha or statutory FRA committees.

#### Top beneficiaries:

- Madhya Pradesh (55 cells)
- Chhattisgarh (30)
- Telangana (29)
- Maharashtra (26)
- Assam (25)
- Jharkhand (24)

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#### **DAJGUA Programme:**

- Launched in October 2024, covering 68,000 tribal-majority villages.
- Integrates 25 interventions across 17 Union Ministries.
- · Aims for holistic tribal welfare, with one vertical focused on forest rights.

# **Challenges and Concerns** Legal Overlap and Parallel Mechanisms

- Activists warn of the creation of a parallel bureaucracy outside the FRA's statutory mechanisms.
- The rules guiding these cells stem from DAJGUA, not the FRA itself, risking dilution of the Act's original intent.

### **Ambiguity in Functional Authority**

· While officials claim the FRA cells won't override decisions of Gram Sabhas or statutory committees, the lack of legal clarity could lead to functional overlaps or procedural confusion.

#### **High Rejection Rates**

Rejection of 42% of disposed claims suggests systemic issues in claim verification and documentation, which these cells are expected to fix, but without guaranteed authority.

# **Uneven FRA Pendency Across States**

States like Assam (60% pending) and Telangana (50.27%) have high pendency, yet many FRA cells are being sanctioned in States with relatively low pendency, raising concerns over allocation logic.

#### **Centre-State Dynamics**

FRA is a State-implemented law. Direct Central funding, even for facilitative structures, could be interpreted as encroachment into State functions, unless tightly coordinated.

# **Way Forward Codify Supporting Structures**

· The role of these new FRA cells should be legally harmonised with the FRA, either via amendment or rules under the Act, to avoid ambiguity.

#### **Focus on Capacity-Building**

 Besides facilitating paperwork, the FRA cells should be tasked with training claimants, digitising records, and supporting Gram Sabhas in leadership and legal literacy.

#### **Monitor and Audit Outcomes**

 Independent social audits and thirdparty evaluations should be instituted to assess whether these cells are genuinely expediting only claims.

## **Strengthen Community Institutions**

 Gram Sabhas must remain the core decision-making unit. Empowering them through FRA cell support - not substitution - should be the guiding principle.

### **Prioritise High-Priority States**

 Future expansion of FRA cells must be data-driven, targeting areas with the highest pendency and rejection rates.

### **Improve Grievance Redress** Mechanism

 FRA cells should help claimants navigate the appeals process, especially for rejected claims, and liaise with DLCs for timely reconsideration.



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#### Conclusion

The Centre's decision to sanction and fund dedicated FRA cells marks a significant shift in the administrative architecture of forest rights governance. If implemented transparently and with respect for existing statutory processes, these cells can catalyse long-overdue justice for millions of forest dwellers. However, their legitimacy, utility, and impact will hinge on how well they work with, and not around, the structures laid down in the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

#### **Main Question**

Critically examine the implications of the Centre's decision to establish FRA cells for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006.

# Q. Which of the following schemes is associated with the recent sanctioning of FRA Cells by the Centre?

- a) Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana
- b) Mission Tribal Rights
- c) Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan
- d) Forest Development Mission

Answer: c) Dharti Aba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyaan

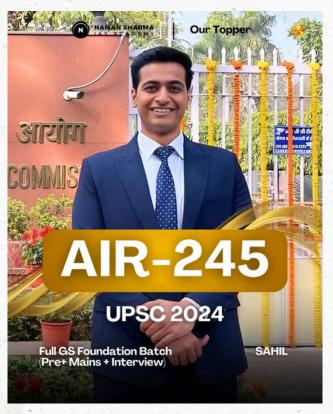
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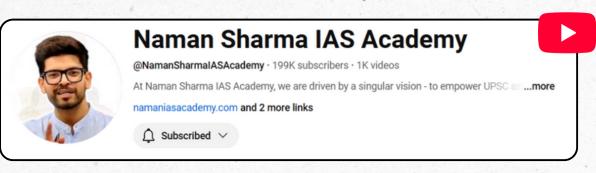
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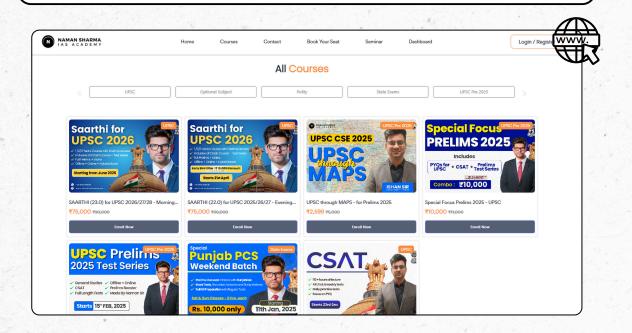






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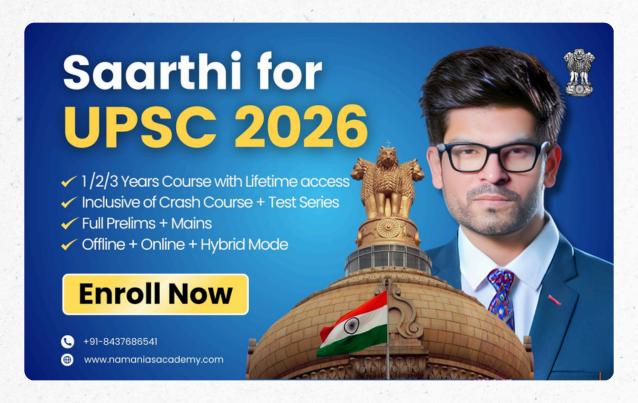
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