

# **India: A Fortnight in Review (June 8 - June 15, 2025)**

## **I. Executive Summary**

This report provides a comprehensive overview of significant developments across India from June 8th to June 15th, 2025. The period was profoundly impacted by the tragic Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad, which led to extensive national mourning and a concerted investigation effort. Concurrently, Prime Minister Narendra Modi embarked on a crucial three-nation diplomatic tour, signaling India's evolving foreign policy and its engagement with global challenges. Domestically, the security situation in Manipur remained volatile, marked by protests and significant law enforcement actions. Furthermore, the release of the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET UG) 2025 results was overshadowed by a series of controversies, raising questions about the integrity of national examinations. These events collectively highlight the multifaceted challenges India is navigating, encompassing national crisis management, dynamic international relations, persistent internal security concerns, and the critical scrutiny of educational governance.

## **II. Key National Developments**

### **A. Air India Flight AI 171 Crash: Investigation and Aftermath**

A profound national tragedy unfolded on June 12, 2025, when Air India Flight AI 171, a London-bound Boeing 787-8 (Dreamliner), crashed shortly after its departure from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad. The aircraft plummeted into the nearby campus of BJ Medical College in Meghaninagar, resulting in a

devastating loss of life. Of the 242 passengers and crew members on board, 241 perished, along with an additional 29 individuals on the ground, including five MBBS students.<sup>1</sup> Amidst the devastation, one passenger miraculously survived the crash and is reported to be in a stable condition.<sup>1</sup> Among the victims was former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, whose DNA matching process was underway as of June 15.<sup>1</sup>

The aftermath saw extensive efforts focused on victim identification and support for affected families. Ahmedabad authorities initiated DNA testing to identify victims, many of whom were severely burned or damaged beyond recognition.<sup>1</sup> By June 15, 31 victims had been identified through DNA tests, with 12 families having claimed mortal remains.<sup>1</sup> Earlier, on June 14, DNA samples of 11 victims had been matched, and families of two deceased had arrived to collect remains.<sup>2</sup> To facilitate coordination, 230 teams were deployed to liaise with victims' families.<sup>1</sup> Recognizing the immense emotional toll, grief counsellors were provided to families to help them cope with the trauma.<sup>2</sup> In a significant move, Air India and its parent company, Tata Group, announced a joint financial assistance package exceeding ₹1.25 crore for the families of those killed, comprising ₹1 crore from Tata Sons and an interim ₹25 lakh from the airline.<sup>2</sup> The Indian Medical Association, Gujarat State Branch, also called for similar support for medical students injured or killed at the crash site.<sup>2</sup>

The government's response and the ongoing investigation underscore a heightened focus on aviation safety. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) was immediately mobilized, and the crucial black box was recovered, anticipated to offer vital insights into the events leading up to or during the crash.<sup>2</sup> Hostels of BJ Medical College that sustained damage are being vacated to facilitate the investigation.<sup>2</sup> A broader implication of the incident is the government's decision to urgently inspect all 34 Boeing Dreamliners in India, moving beyond a single accident investigation to a proactive, fleet-wide safety review.<sup>2</sup> This suggests a recognition of potential systemic vulnerabilities or a broader concern regarding the aircraft model, signaling a heightened focus on preventative measures and fleet integrity. Furthermore, a committee chaired by the Home Secretary has been constituted to investigate the crash and overall aviation safety, indicating a top-down review of national aviation protocols.<sup>2</sup> Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu chaired a critical meeting on June 14 to reassess safety measures.<sup>2</sup>

The comprehensive efforts for DNA identification, the provision of grief counsellors, and the substantial financial assistance package from Air India and Tata Group demonstrate a more holistic and compassionate approach to disaster management. This signifies an evolving standard of care in India for national tragedies, emphasizing not only immediate recovery but also long-term psychological and financial support

for affected families, setting a precedent for corporate accountability in such large-scale incidents.

The recovery of the black box and official statements emphasizing its role in uncovering the truth were juxtaposed with political commentary. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut publicly questioned the crash, suspecting sabotage and a cyber attack, and raising concerns about maintenance contracts and the choice of Ahmedabad airport.<sup>2</sup> Conversely, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar rebuffed these conspiracy theories, urging a focus on facts.<sup>2</sup> This dynamic highlights the immediate battle for narrative control during a national crisis, illustrating the challenge for authorities to manage public perception and maintain trust amidst widespread speculation, underscoring the political dimension of disaster response. Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge urged the government to provide compensation to the victims' families and ensure accountability.<sup>2</sup>

**Table: Air India Flight AI 171 Crash: Key Statistics and Updates**

Detail	Description
Date of Crash	June 12, 2025

**B. Prime Minister's Diplomatic Engagements: Three-Nation Tour and Global Impact**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi commenced a significant five-day, three-nation diplomatic tour on Sunday, June 15, 2025. This tour marks his first foreign visit since India launched "Operation Sindoor," an anti-terror operation conducted from May 7 to 10, targeting terror infrastructures in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK).<sup>2</sup> The tour is also presented as an opportunity to thank partner countries for their support in India's fight against cross-border terrorism and to galvanize global understanding on tackling terrorism in all its forms.<sup>5</sup>

The tour itinerary includes:

- **Cyprus (June 15-16):** This marks the first visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Cyprus in over two decades. PM Modi is scheduled to meet President Nikos Christodoulides to discuss expanding bilateral ties in areas such as trade, investment, security, and technology.<sup>4</sup>

- **Canada (G7 Summit, June 16-17):** PM Modi will attend the G7 Summit in Kananaskis, Canada, at the invitation of Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney. He is expected to articulate India's position on key global challenges, including energy security, technology cooperation, and innovation.<sup>4</sup> This visit holds particular significance given the strained diplomatic relations between New Delhi and Ottawa over the Khalistani issue, and it countered earlier speculation that he might skip the summit.<sup>5</sup>
- **Croatia (June 18):** The final leg of his tour will take him to Croatia, a historic first-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister. He will meet President Zoran Milanovic and Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, aiming to open new avenues for bilateral cooperation.<sup>4</sup>

The visits to Cyprus and Croatia, marking the first in decades or ever for an Indian Prime Minister, illustrate a deliberate strategy of diplomatic diversification beyond traditional alliances. This suggests India's proactive pursuit of new economic, security, and technological partnerships in the Mediterranean and Europe, aiming to broaden its global influence and build a wider network of support for its counter-terrorism agenda, particularly in the context of Operation Sindoor.

A notable aspect of this diplomatic engagement is the impact of the ongoing Israel-Iran conflict on PM Modi's flight route. Air India One was compelled to take a significantly longer detour due to widespread airspace closures in West Asia.<sup>6</sup> The typical route through Pakistan, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Israel was deemed unsafe or shut.<sup>6</sup> Indian aircraft, including VIP flights, have already been restricted from using Pakistani airspace since Operation Sindoor.<sup>6</sup> This situation has led to extended flight durations (an additional 1-2 hours) and increased operating costs (nearly 12%) for airlines, with Indian carriers like Air India and IndiGo cancelling international flights.<sup>6</sup>

The decision to attend the G7 Summit despite strained bilateral relations with Canada over the Khalistani issue, coupled with the practical challenges of re-routing Air India One due to the Israel-Iran conflict, demonstrates India's pragmatic approach to foreign policy. It highlights a commitment to multilateral engagement and global responsibilities, even when faced with bilateral friction or regional instability, underscoring India's growing stature as a global player that must navigate complex and interconnected geopolitical realities.

The consistent referencing of "Operation Sindoor" as a backdrop and justification for PM Modi's foreign tour suggests a deliberate effort to link international engagements with domestic national security achievements. This indicates a strong domestic

messaging component, aiming to project strength, effectiveness in counter-terrorism, and a proactive foreign policy that directly serves national interests, thereby potentially bolstering public support for the government's actions on both fronts.

**Table: PM Modi's Three-Nation Tour: Itinerary and Objectives**

Destination	Dates	Key Meetings/Events	Primary Objectives	Noteworthy Context
Cyprus	June 15-16, 2025	Meeting with President Nikos Christodoulides	Expand ties in trade, investment, security, technology	First Indian PM visit in over two decades
Canada	June 16-17, 2025	G7 Summit (Kananaskis), Invitation by PM Mark Carney	Articulate India's stance on energy security, technology cooperation, innovation	Significant despite strained diplomatic relations over Khalistani issue
Croatia	June 18, 2025	Meetings with President Zoran Milanovic and PM Andrej Plenkovic	Open new avenues for bilateral cooperation	First-ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister

**C. Manipur Security Situation: Protests and Law Enforcement Actions**

The state of Manipur continued to be a focal point of internal security challenges during the reporting period. On June 8, 2025, widespread protests erupted in Imphal following the arrest of an Arambai Tenggol leader.<sup>7</sup> In response to the unrest, the Manipur Government swiftly imposed a curfew and suspended internet services across Bishnupur and four other districts.<sup>7</sup> Reports from the ground indicated extreme desperation among protesters, with some resorting to pouring petrol on their heads and threatening self-harm, illustrating the severe psychological and social toll of the ongoing conflict on the local populace.<sup>7</sup> The following day, June 9, Manipur Police utilized tear gas to disperse protesters after the arrest of a Meitei leader.<sup>7</sup>

The continuous imposition of curfews and internet suspensions immediately following a Meitei leader's arrest and widespread protests, coupled with the subsequent discovery of a massive weapons cache, indicates that Manipur continues to grapple with a deeply entrenched and volatile internal security crisis. This suggests that the underlying ethnic tensions and law-and-order issues are far from resolved, requiring sustained, multi-pronged approaches beyond immediate containment, and highlighting the presence of well-armed non-state actors.

Further underscoring the severity of the situation, a massive weapons haul was seized on June 15 in a joint operation involving Manipur Police, CAPF, Army, and Assam Rifles. The forces recovered explosives and a significant cache of warlike stores from the outskirts of five valley districts. The items seized included 151 SLR rifles, 65 Insas rifles, 73 other kinds of rifles, 5 carbine guns, and 2 MP-5 guns.<sup>7</sup> The scale of the weapons recovered indicates a significant level of armed insurgency or organized violence, suggesting that the conflict involves more than just civilian protests and is a major internal security challenge requiring long-term intervention.

Beyond the immediate internal conflict, Manipur also faced the compounding impact of a national tragedy. The state mourned the loss of two young flight attendants from Manipur who were among the victims of the Ahmedabad plane crash on June 12.<sup>7</sup> This highlights how a region already under immense stress from internal conflict can be disproportionately affected by national tragedies, underscoring the interconnectedness of various crises and the compounding impact on vulnerable communities.

## D. National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET UG) 2025: Results and Controversies

The National Testing Agency (NTA) officially released the NEET UG 2025 results on June 14, 2025, as per its official information bulletin.<sup>8</sup> Out of more than 22 lakh candidates who appeared for the examination, over 12 lakh successfully qualified.<sup>8</sup> Notably, no candidate achieved the perfect score of 720/720 marks, with the highest score recorded at 686 marks.<sup>9</sup>

### NEET UG 2025: Key Statistics and Toppers

Metric	Details
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<b>Result Declaration Date</b>	June 14, 2025
<b>Total Candidates Appeared</b>	Over 22 lakh
<b>Total Candidates Qualified</b>	Over 12 lakh
<b>Highest Score Achieved</b>	686/720
<b>Top 5 Rank Holders</b>	
Mahesh Kumar	AIR 1, 686 Score, 99.9999547 Percentile (Rajasthan) <sup>8</sup>
Utkarsh Awadhiya	AIR 2 (Madhya Pradesh) <sup>8</sup>
Krishang Joshi	AIR 3, 99.9998189 Percentile (Maharashtra) <sup>8</sup>
Mrinal Kishore Jha	AIR 4 <sup>8</sup>
Avika Aggarwal	AIR 5 (Delhi, Female Topper) <sup>8</sup>

Despite the successful declaration of results, the NEET UG 2025 examination was marred by a series of controversies and administrative challenges. Complaints surfaced regarding significant question paper irregularities, including faulty booklets with jumbled page numbers in Sikar (Paper Code 47) and Jamnagar (Gujarati-medium Paper Code 48).<sup>10</sup> These issues caused students to waste crucial time and, in some cases, led to incorrect marking on answer sheets.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, examinees and coaching experts raised concerns about certain questions being out-of-syllabus, citing a calculus-based derivative question (Q38 of Code 47) typically found in engineering entrance tests.<sup>10</sup> While the NTA denied these claims, asserting all questions were from the prescribed syllabus, the concerns persisted.<sup>10</sup>

Administrative glitches also plagued the examination process. Numerous candidates reported issues with biometric verification, including fingerprint mismatches and system errors, causing delays and confusion at exam centers.<sup>11</sup> A major controversy erupted in Kalaburagi, Karnataka, where Brahmin candidates accused exam authorities of religious discrimination after being asked to remove their sacred threads (janeu) before entering the examination hall, leading to protests.<sup>11</sup> Additionally, several exam centers in Indore, Madhya Pradesh, experienced power outages due to heavy rainfall, forcing over 600 students to complete their exams in dim lighting with inadequate emergency lamps.<sup>11</sup>



The NTA had also reverted to the pre-COVID exam format earlier in the year, removing the optional Section B, which made all 180 questions mandatory without additional time. This change faced criticism for increasing pressure on students.<sup>11</sup> Although not directly related to the 2025 exam conduct, the National Medical Commission (NMC) took strict action against over 250 medical aspirants for alleged paper leaks and cheating in the NEET UG 2024 exam, including admission cancellations and bans, highlighting ongoing concerns about exam integrity within the system.<sup>11</sup>

The sheer volume and variety of controversies surrounding NEET UG 2025—ranging from fundamental issues like faulty question papers and jumbled pages to administrative failures like biometric glitches, power cuts, and religious discrimination—collectively point to a significant challenge to the integrity and fairness of India's high-stakes national examinations. Despite NTA's stated security measures, the persistence of these issues suggests deep-seated systemic flaws in execution, potentially eroding public and student trust in the reliability and equity of the examination system.

The combination of a significant exam pattern change, which inherently increased pressure, with the operational failures and controversies, likely created an exceptionally stressful and potentially inequitable testing environment for millions of students. This highlights how administrative and policy decisions in high-stakes examinations, when poorly executed, can have profound psychological impacts and disproportionately affect students, potentially exacerbating existing inequalities in access to fair opportunities.

### III. Regional Highlights and Other Significant Events

Beyond the major national developments, the period from June 8th to 15th, 2025, saw a range of significant regional events and other notable happenings across India, reflecting the nation's vast geographical and socio-economic complexity.

In terms of **accidents and disasters**, a British F-35 fighter jet made an emergency landing at Thiruvananthapuram airport on June 14 due to low fuel, landing safely after airport authorities declared an emergency.<sup>12</sup> A fatal road accident occurred on June 15 in Uttar Pradesh's Amethi district, where five people were killed and one seriously injured after an ambulance collided with a pick-up vehicle on the Purvanchal Expressway.<sup>12</sup> On the same day, the bodies of five Keralites, including two children,



who died in a bus accident in Nairobi, Kenya, on June 9, were repatriated to Kerala via a Qatar Airways flight.<sup>12</sup> In Uttarakhand, a helicopter carrying seven people en route to Kedarnath crashed between Gaurikund and Sonprayag on June 15, killing all seven onboard. This was reported as the fifth such incident in six weeks in the region.<sup>4</sup>

**Weather conditions** presented challenges, particularly in Mumbai, which experienced heavy overnight showers on June 15. The India Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a 'yellow alert' for the city and suburbs, with 'orange alerts' for neighboring Thane, Raigad, and Palghar districts, indicating the likelihood of heavy to very heavy rainfall.<sup>12</sup> Earlier in the week, on June 14, parts of North India continued to experience heatwave conditions, with Rohtak recording 44.3 degrees Celsius, Narnaul 42.3 degrees, Gurugram 41 degrees, and Ambala 42.8 degrees.<sup>2</sup>

Regarding **law and order and security operations**, internal security challenges continued in various parts of the country. On June 14, four Naxalites, including three women, were neutralized in an encounter in the hilly area of Pachama Dadar of Bithli police station in Balaghat, Madhya Pradesh. A hand grenade, a rocket launcher, and a rifle were recovered from the site.<sup>2</sup> Separately, a CRPF jawan, ASI/GD Satyaban Kumar Singh, succumbed to injuries from an improvised explosive device (IED) blast during a joint operation in Odisha.<sup>2</sup> These Naxalite encounters demonstrate that internal security challenges, distinct from the Manipur situation, continue to be a significant concern in other parts of India, indicating persistent, low-intensity conflicts across various regions, often away from mainstream media focus. Other incidents included the booking of two drug peddlers and one cattle smuggler under the Public Safety Act (PSA) in Jammu & Kashmir, and the apprehension of an area commander and four members of a banned outfit in Hazaribagh.<sup>3</sup> A 'Pakistan-born' woman was also booked in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly for allegedly procuring fake Aadhaar and ration cards.<sup>3</sup>

In **sports administration**, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) announced on June 14 the formation of a three-member committee to formulate guidelines for victory celebrations in the future, following a stampede in Bengaluru.<sup>2</sup> The BCCI also decided to implement a tweaked format for the 2025-26 Ranji Trophy, scheduled from October 15 to February 28 in two phases, which will include the promotion and relegation of one team from the plate group.<sup>2</sup>

**Local events and lifestyle** also featured in the news. HT City Delhi Junction on June 8 highlighted various cultural events in Delhi-NCR, including the NSD's Summer Theatre Festival, a qawwali performance, and the EcoReels Film Festival celebrating World Environment Day.<sup>13</sup> Local news from Pune included reports of 41 new Covid cases, the city's Pride Walk, the launch of a tree ambulance by the Pune Municipal

Corporation, and concerns over delays in the CET admission process for undergraduate courses.<sup>14</sup> The array of events, from a high-profile military jet landing and fatal road accidents to localized Naxalite encounters and urban weather alerts, underscores the highly diverse and often localized nature of challenges and daily life across India. This reinforces that while national headlines capture major events, the cumulative impact of numerous regional incidents significantly shapes the lived experiences of citizens.

## **IV. Conclusion and Outlook**

The week of June 8-15, 2025, was a period of intense activity and significant developments across India. The tragic Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad cast a somber shadow, prompting a comprehensive national response focused on victim identification, support, and a rigorous investigation into aviation safety. The government's decision to inspect all Boeing Dreamliners and establish a high-level committee underscores a proactive approach to systemic safety concerns, while the extensive support for victims' families reflects an evolving standard of disaster management and corporate accountability. The public discourse surrounding the crash also highlighted the immediate battle for narrative control amidst speculation.

Concurrently, Prime Minister Modi's three-nation tour to Cyprus, Canada, and Croatia signaled a strategic diversification of India's diplomatic engagements, aiming to forge new partnerships in trade, security, and technology. His participation in the G7 Summit, despite bilateral frictions with Canada, demonstrated India's pragmatic commitment to multilateral platforms. The tour was also framed domestically through the lens of "Operation Sindoor," linking international diplomacy to national security achievements. The impact of the Israel-Iran conflict on flight routes further illustrated the interconnectedness of global geopolitical events with India's foreign policy execution.

Domestically, the security situation in Manipur remained volatile, with protests, internet suspensions, and a significant weapons haul indicating a persistent and deeply entrenched internal conflict. The human cost of this ongoing crisis was evident in reports of extreme desperation among protesters, and the region's mourning of its residents lost in the Ahmedabad crash underscored how existing vulnerabilities can be exacerbated by broader national tragedies.

Finally, the release of the NEET UG 2025 results, while providing clarity for millions of students, was overshadowed by numerous controversies. Issues ranging from faulty question papers and out-of-syllabus questions to administrative failures like biometric glitches, religious discrimination, and power cuts, collectively challenged the integrity and fairness of this high-stakes national examination. These issues raise concerns about the erosion of public trust in the examination system and the compounding stress and equity concerns for students.

The events of this week collectively underscore India's dynamic and multifaceted challenges. The nation is simultaneously managing complex internal issues—ranging from security and disaster response to educational governance—while actively pursuing its strategic interests on the global stage. The ongoing investigations into the Air India crash, the outcomes of PM Modi's diplomatic engagements, the evolving situation in Manipur, and the response to the NEET controversies will likely continue to shape national discourse and policy in the coming weeks and months, demanding sustained attention and adaptive governance.

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