# Indian community in London holds vigil as calls for Boeing accountability grow after Air India crash



As the sun cast a warm glow over a small square behind the Indian High Commission in London, a poignant gathering unfolded on 15 June 2025. Approximately 200 individuals came together to honour the victims of the catastrophic Air India disaster that claimed the lives of at least 270 people earlier that week. This vigil was among several held across the UK, particularly by members of the Gujarati community, who sought solace in shared grief during a profoundly unsettling time.

Candles lit beneath a bust of Jawaharlal Nehru provided a backdrop to the moment, as speakers included inter-faith leaders and community members. Students Ridhi Sarmah-Kapoor and Olivia Gearson, whose fathers recently made the journey from Gujarat to London, represented a younger generation intimately aware of the tragedy's implications. Sarmah-Kapoor shared, “My dad frequently goes back and forth to India and he uses Air India. It gives it a personal connection – it’s like these people are my family.” Gearson echoed this sentiment, noting the emotional weight of the incident, particularly as it involved individuals returning for significant life events, such as graduations.

The gathering highlighted the remarkably tight-knit nature of the Gujarati community in the UK, with many attendees expressing a profound sense of personal loss. Organiser Mayur Shikotra emphasised the need for a space to grieve, stating, “We needed somewhere to mourn.” His co-organiser, Pranav Bhanot, added that the tragedy felt especially personal, as the limited number of direct flights from Gujarat meant that “it really could have been anyone.” This sentiment resonated deeply among community members, as they reflected on their connections to those lost.

The impact of the disaster extended beyond personal grief into a call for accountability. Many at the vigil expressed a desire for Boeing, the aircraft manufacturer, to be held responsible should investigations reveal negligence. “My first thought is the Boeing 787," said Narendra Thakerar, who recently flown on Air India. The Indian government has since ordered inspections of the Boeing 787 fleet, which had previously maintained a solid safety record with over 1,100 of these aircraft in operation worldwide.

In the days following the crash, investigations ramped up, with U.S. officials and India's aviation regulatory body involved in examining possible technical failures that may have contributed to the disaster. Reports indicated that the Air India flight experienced a tragic descent mere moments after takeoff, hitting a residential area and subsequently igniting into flames. One only survivor, Vishwash Kumar Ramesh, was thrown from the wreckage, underscoring the sheer brutality of the event.

As authorities in Ahmedabad began to identify and return the remains of victims, families faced the agonising reality of prolonged uncertainty. With many bodies found in unrecognisable conditions, DNA matching became a slow yet vital process. Approximately 32 victims had been identified at the time of the vigil, yet frustrations pervaded as families awaited news of their loved ones. Mahesh Patel, attending the vigil, remarked on the profound impact of ageing aircraft: “The problem is when you’re dealing with old planes that have been sold and resold.”

As the community held its vigil, they equally looked towards the future with hope for systemic change in aviation safety and a heartfelt recognition of the loss suffered. Amidst this sorrow, a sense of resilience emerged as community members vowed to ensure that the memories of those lost would not be forgotten. “It’s really important that we find out what happened,” Bhanot emphasised, underscoring the need for justice that, while it may not bring back the departed, acknowledges the depth of collective sorrow experienced.

### 📌 Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims), [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims), [[5]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/us-officials-survey-air-india-crash-site-families-continue-wait-bodies-2025-06-15/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[2]](https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims), [[4]](https://apnews.com/article/b44556b7c0e9e04adcece615262e439e)
* Paragraph 4 – [[3]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/in-shock-british-indians-mourn-crash-victims-london-vigil-2025-06-14/), [[6]](https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/air-india-crash-canteen-worker-hopes-second-miracle-2025-06-15/)
* Paragraph 5 – [[7]](https://apnews.com/article/cad8dad5cd0e92795b03d357404af5f8)

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## Bibliography

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/jun/15/we-needed-somewhere-to-mourn-indian-community-in-london-keep-vigil-for-victims> - On 15 June 2025, a vigil was held in London to honour the victims of the Air India disaster. Approximately 200 people gathered behind the Indian High Commission, placing candles beneath a bust of Jawaharlal Nehru. Attendees, including students Ridhi Sarmah-Kapoor and Olivia Gearson, laid flowers outside India House in Holborn. The vigil was part of nationwide gatherings by Gujarati communities to commemorate the over 270 victims of the crash in Ahmedabad, one of the worst air accidents in Indian history.
3. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/in-shock-british-indians-mourn-crash-victims-london-vigil-2025-06-14/> - On 14 June 2025, British Indians gathered at the Siddhashram Hindu temple in Harrow, London, to mourn the victims of the recent Air India crash. The vigil included prayers and chants from leaders of diverse faiths, and a message from King Charles was read aloud. Harrow Mayor Anjana Patel, who lost a family member in the crash, emphasised the emotional toll and said counselling was being provided. The tragedy deeply affected the sizeable British Indian community, which numbers nearly 1.69 million people.
4. <https://apnews.com/article/b44556b7c0e9e04adcece615262e439e> - Authorities in Ahmedabad, India, have begun handing over the remains of victims from the devastating Air India crash that claimed at least 270 lives. The London-bound Boeing 787 crashed shortly after takeoff on Thursday, hitting a medical college hostel and killing 241 people onboard and at least 29 on the ground. Only one passenger survived. Due to the severe condition of the victims' bodies, many remained unidentifiable, prompting authorities to rely on DNA mapping for identification. So far, 32 victims have been identified, with remains of 14 already returned to their families, though many relatives expressed frustration over delays in the process.
5. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/us-officials-survey-air-india-crash-site-families-continue-wait-bodies-2025-06-15/> - U.S. and Indian officials are investigating the Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crash that occurred in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, killing at least 271 people, including around 30 on the ground. The plane, en route to London Gatwick, crashed shortly after takeoff, erupting into a fireball after hitting buildings. The disaster, the deadliest in global aviation in a decade, has prompted assistance from the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB), Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Boeing, and GE. Officials are examining potential technical issues such as engine thrust, flap deployment, and landing gear status. India's aviation regulator has mandated inspections of all locally operated Boeing 787s. Meanwhile, families continue to wait for the identification of charred bodies, with successful DNA matching achieved for 32 victims so far. The crash represents a significant setback for Air India’s fleet renewal efforts and Boeing’s ongoing efforts to restore public confidence.
6. <https://www.reuters.com/business/aerospace-defense/air-india-crash-canteen-worker-hopes-second-miracle-2025-06-15/> - Ravi Thakor, a hostel canteen cook in Ahmedabad, India, is clinging to hope after an Air India Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner crashed into the hostel where he worked. Having left shortly before the crash to deliver lunchboxes with his wife, Thakor's two-year-old daughter and his mother, who stayed behind, are now missing. Despite the overwhelming tragedy—which claimed the lives of all but one of the 242 individuals on board, along with numerous people in the hostel—Thakor remains optimistic for a 'second miracle' like the survival of sole passenger Viswashkumar Ramesh. Efforts to identify victims have been slow, with DNA matches confirmed for only 32 deceased individuals so far. Thakor and his wife have submitted DNA samples but received no news. The crash site remains eerily intact with uneaten meals and disrupted daily life, reinforcing the suddenness of the disaster. Police are handling Thakor’s case as a missing persons investigation. Amid grief and uncertainty, Thakor continues to search for his family, refusing to abandon hope.
7. <https://apnews.com/article/cad8dad5cd0e92795b03d357404af5f8> - A catastrophic Air India crash occurred in Ahmedabad, India, on 12 June 2025, when a Boeing 787 Dreamliner en route to London Gatwick crashed into a residential area shortly after takeoff, killing 241 people on board. The only survivor was identified as Vishwashkumar Ramesh, a British national of Indian origin, who was thrown from the plane as it split apart. Among the casualties were five medical students on the ground, and many others were injured or feared trapped. This represents the first-ever crash of a Boeing 787, a model introduced in 2009. The crash site showed extensive wreckage and fire damage, with the aircraft's tail cone embedded in a building. Eyewitnesses reported seeing the plane descend rapidly before exploding. India's aviation authorities confirmed the crew issued a mayday call, after which communication was lost. Investigators will analyze the flight data recorder for further insights. British Prime Minister Keir Starmer and King Charles III extended condolences and support, as the U.K. maintains close ties with India. Air India has pledged to prioritise support for victims' families. The tragedy marks one of the deadliest aviation incidents in recent Indian history.