

Power, Perception, Precision: Notes from Covering a Plane Crash

As national and international reporters landed in Ahmedabad to cover the Air India crash, volunteers swung into action to provide support during one of India's worst aviation tragedies in recent times. This presentation explores the human elements behind the headlines and the coordinated response that unfolded.



by OJAANK IAS



The Tragedy Unfolds

On 12th June, an Air India flight bound for London crashed into a medical college shortly after takeoff in Ahmedabad. The scale of the tragedy was immense - nothing prepares anyone to witness an accident site of that magnitude, with so many grieving families.

The crash made international headlines, drawing dozens of reporters from national and foreign media to Gujarat, the politically significant state governed by the BJP for decades and home turf of both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

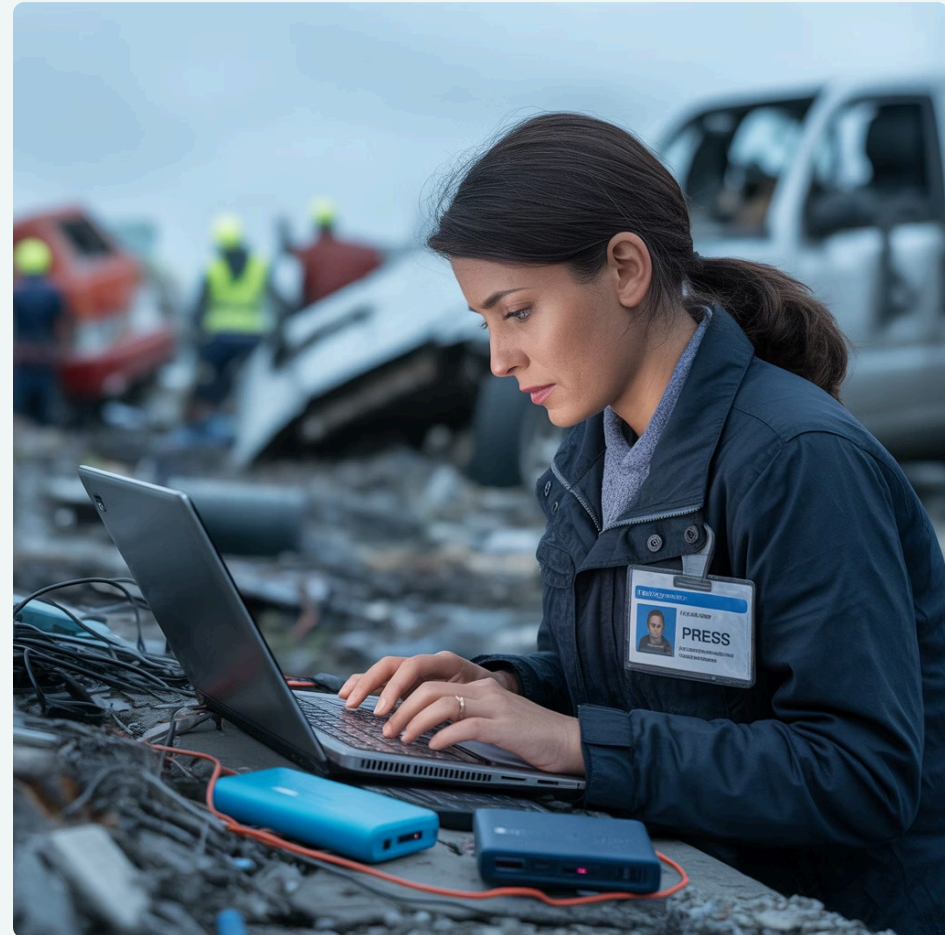


The Modern Reporter's Toolkit

In this age of technology, reporters are expected to provide updates in real time. Our most vital tool is not the pen and notepad, but the mobile phone. We use them to:

- **Mail stories to editors**
- **Shoot videos and photographs**
- **Make dozens of calls**
- **Coordinate with the newsroom**

Our biggest fear is that our phone battery will die, making power banks as essential as press cards. Many journalists carry multiple backups, some even carrying 50,000 mAh power bricks resembling mini-inverters.





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Unexpected Support Systems



Power Sources

Extension boards scattered across the hospital premises allowed everyone – grieving families, volunteers, and reporters – to recharge their devices and themselves during the long hours.



Volunteer Network

Volunteers from various Hindu organisations (RSS, VHP), local NGOs, and Muslim groups ensured continuous supply of food, buttermilk, cold drinks, and glucose-infused water at the hospital.



Immaculate Maintenance

Housekeeping staff appeared seemingly out of nowhere to clear waste. Every piece of trash was disposed of within minutes, regardless of how crowded or chaotic the situation.

Human Moments Amid Tragedy

One scorching afternoon, while I was outside the morgue, a man tapped my shoulder and insisted that I drink glucose water.

That small gesture and many others like it revealed the depth of the coordinated relief effort. Despite the overwhelming grief and chaos, these moments of human connection provided brief respite for everyone involved.



Precision in Crisis Management

The worst aviation tragedy in recent times in India was being handled on the ground with remarkable precision and thoughtfulness. Every aspect of the response seemed meticulously planned and executed.

- ☐ **Coordinated Relief**
Multiple organizations working together seamlessly to provide support to families and responders
- ☐ **Immaculate Facilities**
Hospital premises kept spotlessly clean despite the crowds and chaos
- ☐ **Continuous Support**
Round-the-clock provision of refreshments and necessities for everyone at the site





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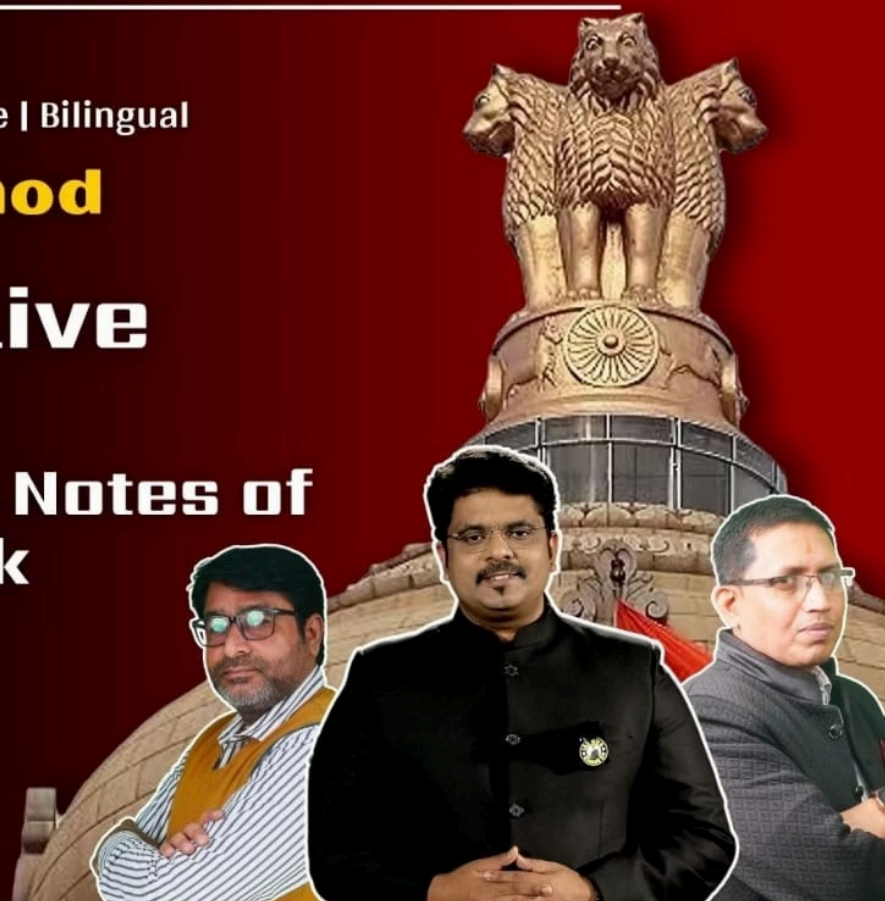
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The Politics of Perception

In retrospect, the meticulous management was not surprising. Gujarat's political significance as the home state of Prime Minister Modi and Home Minister Shah meant that every aspect of the response was under scrutiny.

Any photograph or video clip of unattended waste in one of Asia's largest public hospitals could have easily gone viral and become a political statement. This was clearly a risk no one was willing to take.





Lasting Impressions

Some assignments outlast deadlines. The Air India crash will remain etched in memory not only because of the scale of the tragedy but also for the response it elicited.

What stayed with me was not just the sorrow of the families, but also the manner in which the tragedy was handled. Even amid the grief, the quiet control being exercised was unmistakable.

The crash revealed not only the depth of human suffering but also the capacity for organized compassion and the ever-present undercurrent of political awareness that shapes public response to tragedy in India.



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