STUDY NOTES · BASIC CONCEPT

Which all Indian prominent personalities have died in air crashes in the past?

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Several prominent Indian leaders have tragically lost their lives in plane and helicopter crashes over the years. This includes recent incidents involving high-profile figures such as Ajit Pawar and General Bipin Rawat. Here is a list of some top Indian leaders who died in deadly plane and helicopter crashes:

Recent Tragedies:

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Ajit Pawar (2026):

Maharashtra's Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar died in a plane crash on January 28, 2026, while landing at Baramati airport. All five people on board, including Pawar, the pilot, and crew, were killed. This incident led to three days of mourning in Maharashtra.

Vijay Rupani (2025):

Former Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani was among the 241 fatalities when Air India Flight AI-171 crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad Airport on June 12, 2025, while en route to London.

General Bipin Rawat (2021):

India's first Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, along with his wife and 11 others, died in an Mi-17 V5 helicopter crash near Coonoor, Tamil Nadu, on December 8, 2021. They were en route from Sulur to Wellington.

Dorjee Khandu (2011):

The then Chief Minister of Arunachal Pradesh, Dorjee Khandu, was killed in a helicopter crash on April 30, 2011, in the remote Himalayan terrain near Tawang district. The wreckage was found after a five-day search, and investigations pointed to poor weather and challenging topography as major factors.

Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (2009):

Former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy (YSR), died on September 2, 2009, when his Bell 430 helicopter crashed in the dense Nallamala forest due to bad weather. The crash killed all five people on board.

Om Prakash Jindal and Surender Singh (2005):

Haryana's Power Minister and industrialist, Om Prakash Jindal, and the state's Agriculture Minister, Surender Singh, died in a helicopter crash near Saharanpur, Uttar Pradesh, on March 3, 2005. The crash was attributed to technical failure and poor visibility.

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Cyprian Sangma (2004):

Meghalaya's Rural Development Minister Cyprian Sangma died along with nine others when their Pawan Hans helicopter crashed near Barapani Lake on September 22, 2004, due to poor weather conditions.

G.M.C. Balayogi (2002):

The then Speaker of the Lok Sabha, G.M.C. Balayogi, died in a Bell 206 helicopter crash on March 3, 2002, in the Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. Poor weather conditions and bad visibility were cited as major factors.

Madhavrao Scindia (2001):

Senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Madhavrao Scindia was killed in a Cessna aircraft crash on September 30, 2001, near Mainpuri, Uttar Pradesh, while en route to a rally in Kanpur. Engine failure compounded by weather conditions was the likely cause.

Sanjay Gandhi (1980):

Son of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Sanjay Gandhi, died at the age of 34 when a small plane he was flying crashed shortly after taking off from Safdarjung Airport in Delhi on June 23, 1980. The accident was attributed to pilot spatial disorientation in poor weather.

Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose (1945):

Though the circumstances are still debated, freedom fighter Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose is widely believed to have died in a plane crash on August 18, 1945, while traveling from Taipei to Manchuria.

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