



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025



Air India bus catches fire at Delhi airport; no casualty

A CNG bus of the ground handling services provider - Air India SATS - caught fire at Terminal 3 of Indira Gandhi International Airport on Tuesday morning. Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI) Vichitra Veer, in a statement, said the bus was not carrying any passengers or luggage at the time of the incident. "Only the driver was present when the fire broke out. The blaze was promptly brought under control by fire officials. No injuries or casualties have been reported," the DCP said. In a statement, SATS said a probe is under way to determine the cause of the fire, and they are fully cooperating with the authorities. An aircraft was very close to the bus that caught fire. The fire spot was briefly cordoned off as a precautionary measure. *(With PTI inputs)*



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025



SHUTTLE BUS CATCHES FIRE AT DELHI AIRPORT

A shuttle bus parked at Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi caught fire on Tuesday afternoon. No casualty was reported as the Air India ground handling company's bus was vacant at the time of the incident. *ANI*



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THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

THEFT, BEGGARY ON RISE IN KOCHI AIRPORT AREA

Despite being one of the most secure travel hubs, the Kochi airport is facing rising concerns over individuals posing as lottery ticket sellers are allegedly engaging in begging and theft within its premises.

Busy IGI Getting Busier. Here's How

Delhi Likely To Surpass Pre-Covid Figure Of 1,500 Average Aircraft Movement This Season

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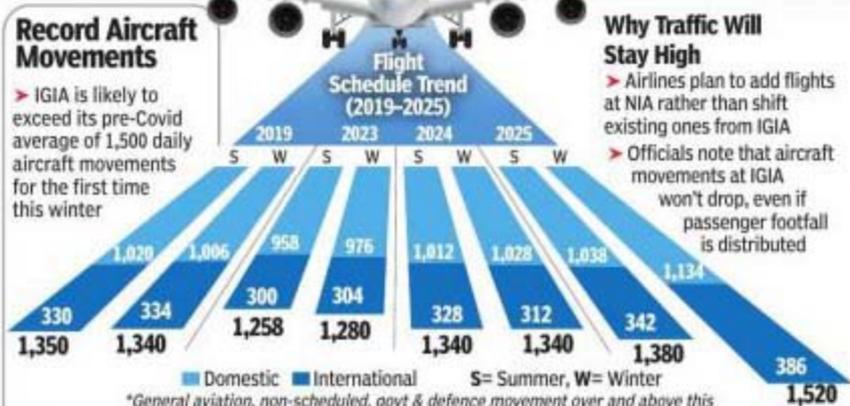
New Delhi: This winter, Delhi's IGI Airport could for the first time handle more flights than it did in pre-Covid 2019. While India's busiest aviation hub saw about 1,500 average aircraft movement in 2019, including all scheduled, non-scheduled, VIP, govt and other flights, the number was yet to be breached so far. That is likely to change soon.

India's second busiest hub — Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) — handles about 1,000 daily aircraft movement (950 scheduled and the rest non-scheduled) and the constrained airport had hit pre-Covid numbers about two years ago. In terms of passenger footfalls, both IGIA and CSMIA breached 2019 levels two-three years ago.

"After air traffic revived post-Covid, IGIA used to see an average of 1,450 daily aircraft movement. This winter, we are going to cross that figure for the first time," said senior air traffic control officials.

Even though the Noida International Airport (NIA) is set to be operational from Dec, no major airline is expected to give up slots. NIA's opening may lead to a fall in footfall at IGIA but not a drop in aircraft

DELHI AIRPORT IS SOARING AGAIN AND HOW



Record Aircraft Movements
 > IGIA is likely to exceed its pre-Covid average of 1,500 daily aircraft movements for the first time this winter

Why Traffic Will Stay High
 > Airlines plan to add flights at NIA rather than shift existing ones from IGIA
 > Officials note that aircraft movements at IGIA won't drop, even if passenger footfall is distributed

> The airport currently averages around 1,450 flights per day, but traffic is expected to cross that level during the upcoming winter schedule
 > Despite Noida International Airport (NIA) becoming operational in December, airlines won't give up slots at the slot-constrained IGIA

Airline	2024	2025	Change%
IndiGo	1,953	1,782	+10
Air India	1,658	1,537	+8
AI Express	437	336	+30
SpiceJet	245	250	-2
Akasa	175	118	+48
Foreign Airlines	616	495	+24
Others	56	81	+45
Total	5,140	4,599	+11

**Domestic & international flights together* (Source: DIAL)

The summer and winter of 2019 had a combined schedule of up to 1,350 domestic and international flights. After Covid, the combined schedule at IGIA remained between 1,258 and 1,380 till this summer

movement. "Airlines will add new flights to and from NIA. They are not going to shift flights from IGIA to NIA, as the former is highly slot-constrained," according to officials from various airlines.

The summer and winter of 2019 had a combined schedule of up to 1,350 domestic and international flights. Covid broke out in winter 2019-20 and since then, the combined schedule for domestic and international flights at IGIA remained between 1,258 and 1,380 till this summer. Now, in the winter schedule that came into effect on Oct 26, the combined number, at 1,520, has decisively crossed the pre-Covid figure.

To be sure, the approved schedule is only an indication of how an airline being allo-

wed to operate up to those many flights and the actual number depends on several factors, like travel demand and the airline's ability to mount flights depending on aircraft availability. In recent years, among major scheduled airlines, IndiGo, the Air India group and Akasa have been among ones that operate close to their approved schedules.

"This is the first time in years that all four runways and three terminals at IGIA are operational. Hopefully, if airlines mount close to their approved schedules and there are no fresh infra bottlenecks, like terminal closing or no CAT III on the main runway that we saw in the past two-three years, Delhi will see fresh highs in aircraft movement," said an airline official.

IGIA can handle over 10 crore passengers annually; in 2024, it saw 7.8 crore. However, rating agency ICRA recently revised its overall airport passenger traffic growth projection in FY 2026 to 5-7% YoY — likely to be the lowest post-Covid — from the earlier 7-9% estimate. It stated: "This is a result of the cross-border tensions and lower aircraft availability owing to fleet inspections post the fatal aircraft crash in June 2025, that compressed passenger traffic growth during five months in FY2026."



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Fire breaks out in empty bus at T3

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A fire broke out in a bus at Terminal 3 of Delhi airport around noon on Tuesday. No one was injured.

An inquiry has been started to know what caused the fire.

The bus was operated by AISATS, one of the ground-handling agencies at the airport.

Police was alerted about the blaze around 1 pm. Fire tenders, cops, the CISF and other agencies soon reached the spot. "The bus was not carrying any passenger or luggage at the time. Only the driver was there. The fire was extinguished, and no injuries were reported," a police officer said.

Delhi Airport called it "a stray incident." "Our expert



An inquiry has been initiated

ARFF (Airport Rescue and Fire Force) team... extinguished the fire within a couple of minutes. The bus was stationary at the time of the incident. All operations continue to be normal," it added.

An AISATS spokesperson said the agency was "fully cooperating with the authorities."



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

DGCA expands pilot medical evaluation network, adds 10 centres

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

The aviation safety regulator has empanelled 10 new Aeromedical Evaluation Centres (AMECs) across the country to accelerate and enhance the efficiency of the medical certification process for pilots and air traffic controllers.

The move by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is aimed at boosting the capacity and accessibility of class 1, 2, and 3 medical examinations.

The new centres, the DGCA said, are strategically located to ensure nationwide coverage and faster turn-around times for medical assessments.

Earlier, only eight centres were authorised to conduct class 1 initial medical examinations.

APPROVED FACILITIES

Now, the newly approved facilities have been entrusted with the full spectrum of DGCA medical evaluations,



The centres will operate in addition to the existing Indian Air Force boarding centres

including special, post temporary unfit, and age-specific medicals.

Notably, the Apollo Group of Hospitals has been approved to operate AMECs at five locations — New Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Indore.

Other empanelled facilit-

ies include Nanavati Hospitals and VM Medical Care Centre in Mumbai, Ruby Hall Clinic in Pune, and Max Multi Speciality Centre, along with Medanta Medicity in New Delhi. These centres will operate in addition to the existing Indian Air Force boarding centres.

ENSURE COMPLIANCE

According to the DGCA, the empanelled hospitals are equipped with advanced diagnostic infrastructure and dedicated specialists required for aeromedical evaluation.

Each centre, as per the regulator, will adhere strictly to its updated protocols, ensuring compliance with both national regulations and international standards laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

Industry insiders pointed out that the expansion would help reduce administrative bottlenecks and ensure the timely renewal of medical licences, a critical factor in mitigating potential pilot shortages.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Air India Express tweaks services as it eyes leisure

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Air India Express is focusing on the leisure and SME segments with new comfortable seats and revamped menus, Chief Executive Officer Alok Singh said on Tuesday.

The airline unveiled its new product in a retrofitted Boeing 737 Max aircraft on Tuesday. Forty-nine other planes will undergo a makeover into a 189 seat all economy configuration (from dual class) by mid-2026. The new seats are light weight, have better cushioning and provide more leg room.

MAJOR MAKEOVER

The changes come close on the heels of a marketing campaign and network tweaks resulting in a stronger presence in Bengaluru.

"We are strengthening presence in Bengaluru offering way more connectivity than we offered before. The broad strategy at a group level is that the networks will



be linked at these hubs and via the network to the network code share agreement that we have with Air India," Singh said.

In April, Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru accounted for about 62 per cent of the airline's total domestic departures. By November, this share is projected to increase significantly to around 74 per cent. Four destinations have been added from Bengaluru — Bangkok, Jeddah, Kuwait and Riyadh — in the winter schedule.

In 2026, the airline hopes to receive 20-24 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, Singh said. These are part of the 190 aircraft ordered in 2023.

दिल्ली में बारिश के लिए क्लाउड सीडिंग

संजीव मुखर्जी
नई दिल्ली, 28 अक्टूबर

दिल्ली सरकार ने कृत्रिम बारिश कराने के लिए आज क्लाउड सीडिंग यानी बादल तैयार करने का प्रयास किया। इसके लिए कानपुर से आए एक विमान ने आधे घंटे तक बुराड़ी और करोल बाग इलाकों के ऊपर आसमान में रसायनों का छिड़काव किया। इसकी देखरेख कर रहे आईआईटी-कानपुर ने कहा कि 15 मिनट से 4 घंटे के भीतर बारिश हो सकती है। मगर खबर लिखे जाने तक आधिकारिक तौर पर बारिश की सूचना नहीं मिली।

मौसम विभाग ने भी आज सुबह और सप्ताह के आखिर में हल्की बारिश का अनुमान जताया है, जिससे कृत्रिम बारिश के लिए जरूरी बादल तैयार करने में भी मदद मिल सकती है।

सरकार ने पिछले हफ्ते बुराड़ी में भी इस तरह की आजमाइश की थी, जिसमें सिल्वर आयोडाइड और सोडियम क्लोराइड का इस्तेमाल किया गया था। मगर उस समय बारिश कराने में कामयाबी नहीं मिली क्योंकि वायुमंडल में नमी 20 फीसदी से कम थी,



नई दिल्ली में मंगलवार को कृत्रिम वारिश के लिए पहले क्लाउड सीडिंग परीक्षण के लिए इस्तेमाल किया गया विमान। (दाएं) क्लाउड-सीडिंग परीक्षण के दौरान फ्लेयर छोड़ता विमान।

फोटो: पीटीआई

जबकि आम तौर पर इसके लिए 50 फीसदी नमी जरूरी होती है। कुछ वैज्ञानिकों ने बताया कि यह राजधानी में कृत्रिम बारिश कराने की तीसरी कोशिश है। इससे पहले 1957 के मॉनसून में और 1970 के दशक की सर्दियों में भी कोशिश की गई थीं मगर उस समय क्लाउड सीडिंग की समझ बहुत कम थी। सर्दियों में कृत्रिम बारिश कराने

का मकसद राष्ट्रीय राजधानी क्षेत्र में दीवाली के बाद बढ़ गए प्रदूषण का स्तर कम करना है। दीवाली पर लोगों ने सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के आदेश को ताक पर रखते हुए जमकर आतिशबाजी की थी।

दिल्ली सरकार ने आईआईटी कानपुर के साथ 5 क्लाउड सीडिंग परीक्षण के लिए 25 सितंबर को एक समझौता किया था। सभी

परीक्षण उत्तर-पश्चिम दिल्ली में करने की योजना है। नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय ने आईआईटी कानपुर को 1 अक्टूबर से 30 नवंबर के बीच क्लाउड सीडिंग करने की अनुमति दी थी। दिल्ली मंत्रिमंडल ने 3.21 करोड़ रुपये की लागत वाले इन 5 क्लाउड सीडिंग परीक्षणों के प्रस्ताव को हरी झंडी 7 मई को दी थी।

हालांकि कुछ विशेषज्ञ कहते हैं कि क्लाउड सीडिंग हवा में मौजूद प्रदूषण को स्थायी तौर पर कम करने में कारगर नहीं है। उनका कहना है कि क्लाउड सीडिंग से कुछ वक्त के लिए ही राहत मिल सकती है क्योंकि बारिश थमने के बाद प्रदूषण दोबारा बढ़ने लगता है। सरकार को क्लाउड सीडिंग से वायु प्रदूषण घटाने के बजाय इसके बुनियादी स्रोतों से निपटना चाहिए।

क्या है क्लाउड सीडिंग

पुणे के भारतीय उष्णदेशीय मौसम विज्ञान संस्थान (आईआईटीएम) के अनुसार क्लाउड सीडिंग की तकनीक में बादल बनाने वाले अणुओं का इस्तेमाल कर बारिश कराई जाती है।

(शेष पृष्ठ 6 पर)

दिल्ली में बारिश के लिए क्लाउड सीडिंग

पृष्ठ 1 का शेष

क्लाउड सीडिंग के लिए हाइड्रोस्कोपिक या ग्लेशियोजेनिक तरीके इस्तेमाल होते हैं। हाइड्रोस्कोपिक में भाप के साथ चलने वाले क्लाउड सीड को गर्म बादलों के नीचे से छोड़ा जाता है। ग्लेशियोजेनिक तकनीक में ठंडे बादलों के ऊपर सिल्वर आयोडाइड की बौछार कर वर्ष के कण बनाए जाते हैं, जिनसे आखिर में बारिश होने लगती है।

आईआईटीएम ने 1970 के दशक में भारत में हाइड्रोस्कोपिक सीडिंग की कोशिश की थी। बाद में महाराष्ट्र और कर्नाटक जैसे कई राज्यों ने भी कृत्रिम बारिश कराने की कोशिश की, लेकिन सफलता कम ही मिली। हाइड्रोस्कोपिक क्लाउड सीडिंग विधि मॉनसून के दौरान बारिश बढ़ाने में काफी कारगर साबित होती है क्योंकि बादल में वायुमंडल की नमी पहले ही बहुत ज्यादा होती है।

पृथ्वी विज्ञान मंत्रालय के पूर्व सचिव माधवन राजीवन ने क्लाउड सीडिंग के कई परीक्षण कराए हैं। उनका कहना है कि सबसे सामान्य क्लाउड सीडिंग में विमान के जरिये बादलों के बीच कुछ रसायन छिड़के जाते हैं। उन्होंने कहा, 'रेडार से बादल देखे जाते हैं और उन्हें पहचानने के बाद पायलटों को बता दिया जाता है। पायलट तुरंत बादल के बीच पहुंचकर रसायन छिड़कने लगते हैं।' उन्होंने कहा कि जैसे ही हवा ऊपर उठती है, रसायन उसके साथ बादलों के भीतर पहुंच जाते हैं और बारिश की बूंदें बढ़ाने का काम



शुरू हो जाता है।

दुनिया भर में प्रचलित

आईआईटीएम ने पिछले साल एक व्यापक जांच के निष्कर्ष जारी किए थे। उसे बाद में अमेरिकन मेटियोलॉजिकल सोसायटी के जर्नल बुलेटिन में प्रकाशित किया गया। आईआईटीएम की एक रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि ऑस्ट्रेलिया, चीन, रूस, थाईलैंड, यूएई और अमेरिका सहित 56 से अधिक देशों में कृत्रिम बारिश के लिए क्लाउड सीडिंग की जाती है। भारत में इसके नतीजे मिले-जुले रहे हैं।

यह प्रयोग क्लाउड एरोसॉल इंटरैक्शन ऐंड प्रेसिपिटेशन एनहांसमेंट एक्सपेरिमेंट (कैपीक्स) के चौथे चरण का हिस्सा है। यह परीक्षण 2018 और 2019 में मॉनसून के दौरान महाराष्ट्र के सोलापुर में किया गया था। पिछले चरण 2009, 2010-11 और 2014-2015 में हुए थे। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक कैपीक्स के चौथे चरण से पता चला कि कुछ जगहों पर बारिश करीब 46 फीसदी (13 फीसदी कम या ज्यादा) बढ़ाई जा सकती है। सोलापुर में 100 वर्ग किलोमीटर

क्लाउड सीडिंग प्रयोग तैयार करने में मदद की। रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक परीक्षण के नतीजे से पता चलता है कि उपयुक्त परिस्थितियों में की गई क्लाउड सीडिंग किसी क्षेत्र में बारिश बढ़ाने का कारगर तरीका है।

प्रदूषण नियंत्रण में कितना कारगर

राजीवन के अनुसार कृत्रिम बारिश कराने के लिए कुछ दिनों तक क्लाउड सीडिंग की जा सकती है। मगर इसके बाद प्रदूषण दोबारा नहीं होने की कोई गारंटी नहीं है। उन्होंने हाल में बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड से कहा, 'यह भी याद रखें कि कृत्रिम रसायनों के उपयोग वाली सभी क्लाउड सीडिंग से बारिश होना जरूरी नहीं है।' राजीवन ने कहा, 'इसलिए मेरी सलाह यही है कि दिल्ली जैसे महानगरों में कृत्रिम बारिश कराने के लिए क्लाउड सीडिंग जैसे अल्पकालिक उपायों के बजाय वायु प्रदूषण के स्रोतों से निपटने पर ध्यान दिया जाए जिसमें वाहन प्रदूषण, कारखानों से निकलने वाला प्रदूषण आदि शामिल हैं।'

साउथ एशिया नेटवर्क ऑन डैम्प, रिवर्स ऐंड पीपल (संड्रप) के समन्वयक हिमांशु ठक्कर ने भी कहा कि कृत्रिम बारिश कराने के लिए क्लाउड सीडिंग जैसी तकनीक प्रदूषण की समस्या को दूर करने का महज एक अस्थायी समाधान है। उन्होंने कहा कि क्लाउड सीडिंग के बजाय प्रदूषण के स्रोत पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाना चाहिए। संड्रप जल क्षेत्र से जुड़े मुद्दों पर काम करने वाले संगठनों और व्यक्तियों का अनौपचारिक नेटवर्क है।

एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के बेड़े में दो दर्जन विमान शामिल होने की उम्मीद

विमानन कंपनी एयर इंडिया के प्रबंध निदेशक आलोक सिंह ने मंगलवार को कहा कि उसकी किफायती सेवा एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के बेड़े में अगले कैलेंडर वर्ष में 20 से 24 विमान शामिल किए जा सकते हैं। एयर इंडिया के बेड़े में फिलहाल 110 विमान हैं जिनमें एयरबस 320/321, बोइंग 737 व 737 मैक्स शामिल हैं। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के पहले रेट्रोफिटेड विमान के प्रदर्शन के लिए यहां आयोजित कार्यक्रम में सिंह ने कहा, 'हम अगले कैलेंडर वर्ष में 20 से 24 विमान लाने की योजना बना रहे हैं।' उन्होंने कहा कि हालांकि यह आपूर्ति श्रृंखला और बोइंग विनिर्माण सुविधा में उत्पादन की प्रगति पर निर्भर करेगा। सिंह ने कहा कि एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस अब घरेलू बाजार में अपनी उपस्थिति मजबूत करने की कोशिश कर रही है।

भाषा

Delhi seeds the clouds, but forecast still doubtful

SANJEEB MUKHERJEE
New Delhi, 28 October

The Delhi government on Tuesday carried out another cloud-seeding attempt to induce artificial rain, using an aircraft from Kanpur that dispersed eight fire flares over Burari, Karol Bagh, and Mayapuri during a half-hour operation before landing at Meerut airfield. The Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur (IITK), which is overseeing the exercise, said rainfall could occur within 15 minutes to four hours.

However, at the time of going to press, there was no official confirmation that the cloud-seeding attempt had led to rainfall.

The India Meteorological Department had predicted light rain for Tuesday morning and later in the week, weather conditions favourable for the formation of clouds suitable for seeding.

Tuesday's operation was the Delhi



An aircraft was used for the cloud-seeding trial in New Delhi. It dispersed eight fire flares during a half-hour operation. PHOTO: PTI

Bharatiya Janata Party government's second attempt. The first, conducted last week over Burari using small quantities of silver iodide and sodium chloride, failed to produce rain because of low atmospheric moisture

— less than 20 per cent against the 50 per cent typically required.

"A Cessna aircraft took off from Kanpur and released eight fire flares, each weighing 2 to 2.5 kilograms. The trial lasted for half an hour; each flare

burnt for two to two and a half minutes. The clouds had a humidity of 15 to 20 per cent. The flares were released for about 17 to 18 minutes," Environment Minister Manjinder Singh Sirsa said in a video statement.

The Delhi government claimed the artificial rain would help wash away the after-Dussehra smog, which thickened after residents ignored in defiance the Supreme Court's firecracker restrictions on both type and timing.

The Delhi government signed a memorandum of understanding with IITK on September 25 to conduct five cloud-seeding trials, all planned in northwest Delhi.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation earlier granted permission to IITK to conduct the trials anytime between October 1 and November 30.

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Delhi seeds the clouds, but forecast still doubtful

Clearances have also been secured from more than 10 central and state departments, including the Union ministries of environment, defence, and home affairs; the Uttar Pradesh government; the Airports Authority of India; and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, among others.

The Delhi Cabinet on May 7 approved a proposal to conduct five cloud-seeding trials at a total cost of ₹3.21 crore.

Some experts, however, question the effectiveness of cloud seeding as a sustainable way to curb air pollution. They argue it is, at best, a temporary fix, since pollution levels inevitably return once the rain stops. Instead, they say, the government should focus on the main sources of pollution rather than rely on short-term measures like artificial rain.

Making clouds sweat

Cloud seeding is a technique that uses microscopic cloud-

forming particles to increase rainfall, according to the Pune-based Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM).

This can be done in two ways: hygroscopic and glaciogenic. In the first method, seeding is done at the base of warm clouds using particles that attract water vapour. The glaciogenic method is used in cold clouds by seeding near the top with silver iodide pellets, which help form ice particles that later turn into rain.

Hygroscopic seeding was first attempted in India in the 1970s by IITM. Since then, Maharashtra and Karnataka have occasionally experimented with artificial rain, but with limited success.

During the monsoon season, hygroscopic (cloud-base) seeding tends to be more effective since the clouds already contain higher moisture content.

The chemistry of fake rain

Madhavan Rajeevan, former secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences and a key figure behind several cloud-seeding experiments, explained that the most common method involves spraying chemicals at the base of clouds using aircraft. "The clouds are spotted using radars, and once one is identified, the pilots are informed. They immediately fly to the cloud base and pump in the chemicals," he said.

As rising air pushes the chemicals into the cloud, droplet formation begins.

Cold clouds, which typically hold supercooled liquid water, are injected with silver iodide, prompting the water to attach to it and form snowflakes that later melt into rain.

Warm clouds — which contain tiny water droplets too small to coalesce naturally — are seeded with sodium chloride (salt), which draws moisture and helps create larger drops. But here's the catch: there must already be moisture-laden clouds for seeding to work. Without that, the process cannot even begin.

The world's been at it — India's catching up

Cloud seeding is now practised in more than 50 countries, including Australia, China, Russia, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and the US, primarily for weather modification and rainfall enhancement, according to an IITM report. In India, results have been mixed. The experiments were part of the Cloud Aerosol Interaction and Precipitation Enhancement Experiment (CAIPEEX) Phase-IV, with earlier phases conducted in 2009, 2010–11, and 2014–15. Phase-IV was carried out in Solapur, Maharashtra, in the summer monsoon months of 2018 and 2019.

The report found that

during CAIPEEX-IV, rainfall increased by up to 46 per cent in some areas, and by an average of about 18 per cent across a 100-square-kilometre stretch in Solapur's rain-shadow region — roughly 8.7 millimetres of extra rain, enough to justify the experiment in cost-benefit terms.

Between 2017 and 2019, IITM scientists evaluated 276 clouds using a network of automatic rain gauges, radars, radiometers, and aircraft.

The report observed "robust statistical significance above a 95 per cent confidence level" and said the experiment helped document cloud and rainfall processes and develop seeding protocols.

The findings suggest that cloud seeding can be an effective strategy for enhancing rainfall in the right conditions.

A short fix for a long crisis?

Rajeevan cautioned that cloud seeding can produce rain only for a few days and cannot ensure that pollution won't return. "Also remember: not every seeded cloud will produce rain," he said. "My advice would be to target the real sources of urban pollution — vehicles and factories — instead of short-term fixes like cloud seeding."

Himanshu Thakkar, coordinator of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People, echoed the sentiment. He said cloud seeding is a temporary measure and that efforts should focus on addressing pollution at its source.

The price of playing rainmaker

IITM's cloud-seeding experiment reportedly cost around ₹200 crore. Officially, the report pegged the operating cost at about ₹15 lakh per seeding flight.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

DGCA's duty time change wilful disobedience of HC orders: Pilots' body

The Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) on Tuesday said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA's) reported relaxation of night duty limits for pilots under the new flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms is "wilful disobedience" of the Delhi High Court's orders and violates the regulator's own affidavit and undertaking before the court. The new norms, scheduled to take effect from November 1, originally limited pilots to two landings between midnight and 6 am, with a maximum duty period of 10 hours during this window. However, the DGCA has now reportedly allowed three landings if a pilot's duty period falls between midnight and 1:55 am or between 5 am and 6 am, provided the pilot is subsequently rested for a period double the length of duty hours. The change is said to have been made after airlines cited operational constraints. The union said this relaxation amounts to contempt of court, as the DGCA had earlier committed before the Delhi HC that the Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) 2024 rules would be implemented strictly as approved. "The DGCA is bound by its own solemn undertaking and the directions of the Court. Any decision to extend, defer, or modify the implementation of CAR 2024 without the leave of the Honourable HC, would be contrary to law, in breach of judicial assurance, and tantamount to wilful disobedience of the Court's orders," the FIP said.

BS REPORTER



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Air India Express in Expansion Mode Amid Rising Competition

To add 20-24 planes by 2026, retrofit 50 Boeing 737-8s; local network growing at faster pace: MD

Forum Gandhi



Mumbai: Air India Express would add 20-24 aircraft to its fleet in CY26, its chief executive said on Tuesday. The Tata-owned low-cost carrier would also retrofit 50 of its Boeing 737-8 aircraft, as competition in the budget end of the aviation industry intensifies.

"By calendar year 2026, we expect to have added between 20 and 24 aircraft to our fleet," Alok Singh, Air India Express managing director said.

According to sources, over the past six months alone, Air India Express has inducted 15 aircraft, taking its fleet size to 115. The carrier has added Airbus 320/321, Boeing 737 and 737 Max planes to its fleet. The carrier would also retrofit, by mid-2026, its 50 Boeing 737-8 aircraft. The retrofitting involves installing ergonomically designed synthetic leather seats with thicker armrests and improved legroom, in-seat USB-C charging ports, ovens for hot meals, new carpets, and advanced Boeing Sky Interior mood lighting.

"The first aircraft with the new line-fit configuration will be delivered in December," Alok Singh said.

The line-fit exercise would involve equipping the aircraft with Collins Aerospace seats that would be fitted during the aircraft's production, meaning these would come standard from the factory instead of being retrofitted with the other amenities cited above.

When asked about the market share, Singh said, on a group level Air India is at about 30% of the market share. "Air India Express today is at about 11-12% domestic share," Air

India Express began a network optimisation exercise in September 2025 to enhance connectivity, strengthen hubs, and increase frequency on key routes. Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru accounted for 62% of domestic departures in April 2025, a share expected to rise to about 74% by November 2025.

From Bengaluru, the airline has added Bangkok, Jeddah, Kuwait, and Riyadh to its short-haul international network for the Winter 2025 schedule.

By the end of the season, most of the realignment will be complete. Overall, Air India Express will op-

erate over 2,700 weekly domestic flights on 114 routes and about 780 international flights on 70 routes—an increase of more than 25% over Winter 2024, with 48 new domestic and 10 new international routes.

"About two years ago, Air India Express' network was split roughly 60% short-haul international and 40% domestic. Today that mix is closer to 50-50. While the airline has continued to grow its short-haul international operations, its domestic network has been expanding at a faster pace. Over the next couple of years, Air India Express expects to continue on this growth trajectory," Singh said.

BRAND CAMPAIGN

The airline has rolled out a brand campaign—'Xplore More, Xpress More'—showcasing its offerings. "Two years ago, we launched our new brand identity as India's most vibrant and inclusive airline," said chief marketing officer Siddhartha Butalia. "With a growing network and a modern fleet, we're now positioned to offer a distinct flying experience that is... true to our promise of helping travellers explore more and express more."





Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

DGCA Flags Regulatory Lapses at Akasa Air

NEW DELHI: Aviation watchdog DGCA has flagged various regulatory non-compliances at Akasa Air, including repetitive procedural lapses, and has asked the airline to take remedial actions, according to sources.

The observations have been made by the DGCA after a comprehensive review of surveillance data of the airline for the April-September period. In a statement, Akasa Air said it "always submits comprehensive responses to all observations raised within the prescribed timelines." —PTI

AIRLINE SHARPENING DOMESTIC FOCUS, SAYS MD

AI Express to add 20-24 jets in 2026

URVI MALVANIA
Mumbai, October 28

AIR INDIA EXPRESS expects to induct 20-24 new aircraft into its fleet in 2026, Managing Director Alope Singh said on Tuesday.

The expansion, part of Tata Group's ongoing transformation of the airline, will further strengthen Air India Express's growing presence in the domestic market, the company said.

AI Express currently operates a fleet of 110 aircraft comprising Airbus A320/A321s and Boeing 737s, including the 737 MAX. Singh said the pace of inductions next year will depend on the supply chain and progress at Boeing's manufacturing facility. "Subject to the supply chain, and how the production line progresses, we are looking at about 20-24 aircraft in next calendar year," he said.

Over the past 20 months, the carrier has been adding 3-3.5 aircraft a month, according to Singh. He added that the carrier expects the entire 737 order placed with Boeing to be delivered by 2030.

Singh was speaking at an event to introduce the new interiors and hot meals launched by AI Express.

The fresh induction will build on the 50 white-tail Boeing 737 MAX aircraft and 16 A320/A321 planes that joined the fleet over the past two years. All the aircraft have been painted in AI Express's refreshed livery, introduced in October 2023, featuring regionally

SPREADING WINGS

■ New aircraft part of a 50-plane white-tail Boeing 737 MAX acquisition & 16 A320/A321s added over last 2 years

■ The airline currently operates 110 aircraft, including Airbus A320/A321s and Boeing 737s

■ Over past 20 months, it has been adding 3-3.5 aircraft a month

■ The full Boeing 737 order is expected to be delivered by 2030



ALOPE SINGH,
MD, AIR INDIA
EXPRESS

The domestic network will be growing faster than the short-haul international network

inspired tail designs and upgraded interiors.

According to Singh, AI Express is now sharpening its domestic focus. "About two years ago, as much as 60% of the network was short-haul international and 40% domestic. Today, it is about 50-50. We have been growing international short-haul as well, but we've been growing faster in the domestic market," he said.

Over the next few years, the airline intends to continue this trajectory. "The domestic network will be growing faster than the short-haul international network. On the domestic network, the strategy broadly is depth before spread," Singh said, adding that the airline aims for a meaningful presence on city-pairs and roughly a third of the market share.

Nearly 80% of AI Express's

domestic capacity currently connects metros to tier 2 and 3 cities — the largest and fastest-growing segment of the Indian aviation market.

"Air India focuses on metro-to-metro routes and those with a greater composition of business traffic, and of course, long-haul international. Air India Express focuses on the leisure markets, the visiting friends and relatives market, the SME market, and the value-conscious traveller," Singh said.

Under its winter 2025 schedule, AI Express will operate over 2,700 weekly domestic flights and 780 short-haul international ones, a 25% expansion over last year. With new routes, including Delhi-Port Blair, Bengaluru-Udaipur and Bengaluru-Bangkok, it aims to position itself as the country's leading value carrier.





Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Pilots' body slams move to dilute High Court order

On the day Air India informed its cockpit crew of a diluted version of the rest and duty norms mandated by the Delhi High Court in April, and documents showed the DGCA had granted exemptions to some airlines, a pilots' group called the move a "breach of law" and sought its immediate withdrawal. "The reported grant of extension to airlines amounts to a deliberate departure from the timeline affirmed before the Hon'ble Court, undermining the sanctity of judicial proceedings and eroding the confidence of stakeholders in the regulator's adherence to the rule of law," the Federation of Indian Pilots wrote in its letter to the DGCA.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Air India Express to strengthen local network

Lalatendu Mishra
MUMBAI

Air India Express, the low cost subsidiary of Air India, will boost presence in the local market for market share with the segment likely to grow faster than the global network, MD & CEO Alope Singh said.

"About two years ago, as much as 60% of the network was short-haul international and rest domestic. Today, it is about 50-50. We have been growing international short-haul as well. But, we have been growing faster in the local market and this trend would continue," he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Saudi's Flyadeal to fly into India next year

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Saudi Arabian low-cost carrier (LCC) Flyadeal will launch operations into India with 'four to five' destinations in the first 12 months of 2026, CEO Steven Greenway said.

"We would have liked to have been here earlier, if not for aircraft delivery delays plaguing the industry," Mr. Greenway told *The Hindu* in an interview.

The airline will be flying to India from all its four hubs viz. Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam and Medina – the last of which will be opened early next year.

Unveiled in 2017, Flyadeal is the sister airline of

full-service national carrier Saudia. On whether there were demands for more seats Saudi carriers could fly into India and access to more destinations, he echoed India's demands for curtailing movement of passengers via hubs such as Dubai and Doha to support local airlines.

"Carriers from other nations have been taking our customers from each country and routing them via a third country. We're not saying it should stop, but we should get a fair share of direct traffic between both countries," Mr. Greenway said, adding the airline was focused on direct traffic between India and Saudi Arabia.



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

India to set up aviation safety training centre, says official

New Delhi: India will set up a national aviation safety centre modelled on global best practices to train aircraft accident investigators and aviation professionals, a senior government official said on Tuesday. Mentioning about various steps being taken to boost the country's civil aviation space, civil aviation secretary Samir Kumar Sinha said the number of professionals in regulatory and investigation roles is being doubled.

PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Fire breaks out in Air India bus near IGIA's Terminal 3

PRAJYOT DEOGHARE

NEW DELHI: A fire broke out in an Air India bus parked near Terminal 3 of Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport around 1 pm on Tuesday, officials said. The police were alerted through a PCR call received at the IGI Airport Police Station, following which multiple emergency teams were dispatched.

Fire tenders from the Delhi Fire Service, along with personnel from the Central Industrial Security Force and local police, rushed to the spot and swiftly brought the flames under control.

Their prompt response prevented any major damage or disruption to airport operations.

According to officials, the bus was empty at the time of the incident, with only the driver on board. He managed to escape safely before the vehicle was engulfed in flames. "The fire has been completely doused, and there have been no injuries," a senior police officer said.

Airport authorities confirmed that flight operations remained unaffected as the bus was parked in a restricted service area away from passenger movement zones. The damaged vehicle has since been removed for inspection. Police said a technical examination would be conducted to ascertain the cause of the fire, suspected to be due to an electrical or mechanical fault.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

29 OCTOBER 2025

Duty hours: Pilots' body warns of legal action against DGCA



S LALITHA @ New Delhi

THE Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) has written to the Prime Minister's Office and Civil Aviation Ministry warning of legal action against the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for modifying Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL).

Stating that these actions amount to a contempt of court, the body has threatened to sue the regulator if it does not withdraw its orders immediately.

FIP is a public trust representing 6,000 pilots and aviation professionals across India.

The DGCA recently extended Flight Duty Periods for eight Boeing 787 flights to 14 hours and increased flight time to 10.5 hours, citing rerouting due to Pakistani airspace closure.

FIP president Captain C S Radhawa said the DGCA had sought exemption from the Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) 2024 to relax these rules for the airlines. He said the move lacked justification as pilots are flying 45 to 50 hours monthly against the permitted 80. The notice demanded withdrawal of the relaxation orders within 48 hours and reaffirmation of compliance with the court's directives.

Contempt of court, says FIP in notice

Stating that these actions amount to a contempt of court, the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP) has threatened to sue the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) if it does not withdraw its orders immediately. A day earlier, another pilot body, the Airlines Pilots Association of India had called upon the DGCA to withdraw its orders on flight duty.