



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

Adani Airport to Raise ₹1,950 Cr Via NCDs



MUMBAI Adani

Airport Holdings is raising ₹1,950 crore through non-convertible debentures (NCDs) primarily to provide inter-company loans to various airports, including Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Mangalore, Jaipur, Guwahati, and Thiruvananthapuram. The NCDs, with coupon rate of 9.35% per annum, will primarily cover payments to the Airport Authority of India related to prior-period regulatory assets approved by the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA). The NCDs are rated A+/Stable from both India Ratings and CRISIL Ratings. Axis Bank and Trust Investment Advisors Private are the arrangers for the issue which opens on September 30, 2024, with a tenor of 3 years, 11 months, and 7 days. – **Shilpy Sinha**

Laser beam interference continues to pose risk to flights at Chennai airport

Three instances of laser beam interference affecting pilots have been reported in the last three months; Directorate of Aviation Safety issues advisory stressing the need to report such incidents

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

In the last three months, three instances were reported of laser beam interference affecting the pilots when they manoeuvre the flight for landing at the Chennai airport.

Recently, the authorities from the Department of Environment and Climate Change wrote to the Home Department requesting them to take up the issue with the Tamil Nadu Director-General of Police.

The letter highlighted that pilots have reported some incidents of laser beam interference at lower altitudes and how it may cause temporary blindness to them. A pilot may lose control and this could impact safe aircraft opera-



Fraught with danger: The use of laser beams is a cause for concern as it could distract the pilot during take-off or arrival. FILE PHOTO

tions, the letter read.

According to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the dazzling effect caused by such laser lights can be of significant distraction to the pilot, especially during take-off or arrival.

Officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said that it has become pretty common for event management agencies to

use laser lights of late.

“It becomes dangerous when these lights hit the cockpit during a crucial phase of the flight’s movement. Only for a little more than a year now, this issue has been recurring at the airport. When compared to last year, the number of such incidents has come down; but the problem continues to persist,” a source said.

The AAI had raised the issue during the Airfield Environment Management Committee meeting. It had carried out an awareness campaign too. This issue was flagged in other airports such as Mysuru and Kolkata as well.

Advisory issued

In May this year, the Directorate of Aviation Safety, AAI, had also issued an advisory circular (AC) to the airport operation authorities highlighting the need to report such incidents.

“This AC is issued in response to the significant increase in the cases of unauthorised laser illumination of aircraft, as well as the proliferation and increased sophistication of laser devices available to the public and other parties,” the circular read.

Airport Metro rail ph-2 plan released

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC
HYDERABAD, SEPT. 29

In its final form, Phase 2 of the Hyderabad Metro Rail, which will also connect the Shamshabad airport, will stretch to 116.2 km, and cost about ₹32,237 crore to build. The planned line from the airport to the proposed Skill University in Fourth City will cost ₹8,000 crore and will run for 40 km, including a two-km underground section. The first phase, in contrast, ran about 70 km.

The Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited released the broad outlines of project on Sunday. Speaking at the event, HAML managing director N.V.S. Reddy said that the detailed project reports (DPRs) for all new corridors were nearing completion. HAML is awaiting comprehensive mobility plan—a traffic study report being prepared for the Hyderabad Metropolitan Area by HMDA. The traffic projections for Metro Rail corridors need to be cross-



checked with CMP, a mandatory requirement for seeking approval from the Centre.

Reddy said that the Airport Metro alignment was now being finalised via Aramghar and the New High Court location on National Highway 44

(Bengaluru Highway) to reach Shamshabad airport. This will travel via Mansanpally Road and the ORR stretch between Pedda Golconda and Raviryal exits.

The DPRs will be finalised in the next few weeks and submitted for approv-

al of the state government and forwarding to the Centre, Reddy said.

Reddy said that 36.6 km Corridor IV, the Airport Metro, will run from Nagole to the airport via LB Nagar, Karmanghat, Owaisi Hospital, DRDO, Chandrayangutta,

Mailardevpally, Aramghar, New High Court and Shamshabad Junction on NH 44. It will be connected to the existing Metro at Nagole, LB Nagar and Chandrayangutta respectively. About 1.6 km of the line will be underground, with 24 metro stations including one underground at the airport.

Corridor V is an extension of Blue Line from Raidurg to Kokapet Neopolis via Biodiversity Jn, Khajaguda Rd, Nanakramguda Jn, Wipro Circle, Financial District. This is an entirely elevated corridor with eight stations.

Corridor VI, the Old City Metro, is being built as an extension of the Green Line from MGBS to Chandrayangutta. This 7.5 km line will traverse from MGBS to Chandrayangutta via Darulshifa, Shalibanda, and Falaknuma. Though the corridor is 500 metres away from the Salar Jung Museum and Charminar, these names are retained as the station names due to their historical significance.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

तैयारी | रिटेल आउटलेट से लेकर कैफेटेरिया तक खोले जा रहे, बरेली, कानपुर हवाई अड्डे पर पहले से बेहतर संसाधन मुहैया होंगे

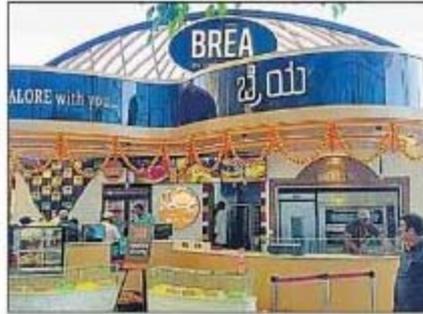
छोटे हवाई अड्डों पर यात्रियों को मिलेंगी बेहतर सुविधाएं

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता।
केंद्रीय उड्डयन मंत्रालय टियर-3 श्रेणी शहरों में स्थित यानी छोटे हवाई अड्डों पर यात्रियों को बेहतर सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराने की दिशा में काम कर रहा है। इन हवाई अड्डों पर रिटेल आउटलेट से लेकर कैफेटेरिया तक खोले जा रहे हैं। इसके लिए निविदाएं आमंत्रित किए जाने की प्रक्रिया भी शुरू हो गई है।

मंत्रालय की कोशिश है कि हर हवाई अड्डे पर यात्रियों को चाय-नाश्ते और खानपान की समुचित सुविधा मिल सके। साथ ही, यात्रियों को शॉपिंग की सुविधा भी एयरपोर्ट

180

दिनों में सभी एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों को रिटेल आउटलेट के जरिए खरीदारी से लेकर चाय-नाश्ते तक की सभी सुविधाएं मिलेंगी



पर ही उपलब्ध हो। खास तौर पर एयरपोर्ट पर स्थित दुकानों पर शहर के मशहूर उत्पादों को बिक्री के लिए

रखा जाए। इस कड़ी में बरेली एयरपोर्ट पर दो क्लब की सुविधा दी जानी है। इनमें चाय-नाश्ते की

कानपुर में मिठाई की दुकान खोलने की योजना

कानपुर एयरपोर्ट पर रिटेल आउटलेट भी खोला जाना है। इसमें मिठाई के साथ कन्फेक्शनरी की दुकान खुलेगी। मंत्रालय से जुड़े अधिकारी कहते हैं कि बड़े एयरपोर्ट पर सभी सुविधाएं उपलब्ध हैं, लेकिन छोटे शहरों में अभी सुविधाएं सीमित हैं। अब लोगों की सुविधा के लिए आउटलेट खोले जा रहे हैं।

सुविधा होगी। सुविधाओं को देखते हुए सुरक्षा क्षेत्र में इस काउंटर को खोला जाएगा। इसे लेकर पूरी तैयारी

महज पांच से छह महीने में सेवाओं का विस्तार होगा

अधिकारी का कहना है कि अगले पांच से छह महीने में सभी एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों को रिटेल आउटलेट के जरिए खरीदारी से लेकर चाय-नाश्ते तक की सभी सुविधाएं मिलेंगी। जिन एयरपोर्ट पर सुविधा पहले से है, उन्हें और बेहतर किया जाएगा। इन्हें चरणबद्ध तरीके से खोलने का काम चल रहा है।

कर ली गई है। योजना पर चरणबद्ध तरीके से काम चल रहा है और इसे जल्द पूरा करने की योजना है।

3 साल में और बड़ा हो जाएगा T3 डोमेस्टिक एयरपोर्ट से भी उड़ सकेंगी इंटरनेशनल उड़ानें

■ एनबीटी न्यूज, नई दिल्ली

यात्रियों की बढ़ती संख्या को देखते हुए दिल्ली इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड (डायल) अब टर्मिनल-3 का विस्तार करने की योजना बना रहा है। आने वाले समय में डोमेस्टिक एयरपोर्ट भी इंटरनेशनल उड़ानों को संभाल सकेगा। हालांकि अभी इसमें तीन साल का समय

यात्रियों की बढ़ती तादाद को देखते हुए होगा विस्तार

लग सकता है।

डायल ने काम शुरू करने के लिए सुरक्षा जैसे विभिन्न पहलुओं के लिए सरकार की मंजूरी

मांगी है। एयरपोर्ट के एक सीनियर अधिकारी ने बताया कि उनके अनुरोध पर विचार किया जा रहा है। हालांकि अभी काम शुरू होने में छह महीने का समय लग सकता है।

अधिकारी के मुताबिक, अभी एक साल में करीब 22 करोड़ यात्री एयरपोर्ट पर आते हैं। आने वाले समय में उनकी संख्या और बढ़ने वाली है। ऐसे में यात्रियों को बेहतर सेवा देने के लिए एयरपोर्ट का विस्तार करना जरूरी है। ऐसा माना

22 करोड़ के करीब यात्री हर साल आते हैं दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट



डायल ने काम शुरू करने के लिए केंद्र सरकार की मंजूरी मांगी है

जा रहा है कि इंटरनेशनल उड़ानों के लिए T3 में एक नया हिस्सा जोड़ा जाएगा। इस प्लान पर सीनियर अधिकारियों के बीच चर्चा भी हुई है।

एक अधिकारी के मुताबिक, T2 तैयार होने के बाद इसके अंतिम चरण में भी बड़ा विकास देखने को मिलेगा। इसके लिए 1986 में बने पुराने T2 को तोड़कर नए सिरे से बनाया जाएगा। दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट के तीनों टर्मिनलों को आपस में जोड़ने पर भी

काम किया जाएगा। इसके अलावा नोएडा एयरपोर्ट भी अगले साल 1.2 करोड़ यात्रियों की शुरुआती सालाना क्षमता वाले टर्मिनल के साथ खुलेगा।

दिल्ली की खबरों के लिए
टेलिग्राम पर फॉलो करें

t.me/nbtdilli

PLANNING A FESTIVE TRIP?

Get ready to smartly navigate the airport snarls like a pro

Yvonne Jacob

The festive season is a time for celebration, travel, and big family reunions, but it's also the peak time for airport congestion and unexpected delays. With the upcoming Navaratri, Dasara and Deepavali festivities, October is full of celebrations. This also means longer queues at security checks, packed flights and long layovers, besides delays caused by unpredictable weather. However, with a bit of pre-planning, you could navigate through the airport chaos smoothly. Here's how:



Pics: iStock



● The number of passengers affected due to flight cancellations and delays rose by **34%** during January to March 2024

● Over **9.5 lakh** passengers were affected due to cancellations and delays in the first three months of the year

(As per the Directorate General of Civil Aviation)

Preferably buy tickets directly from the airline

One of the many tips and tricks shared by author Christopher Schaberg in his book *The End of Airports* was to not try and save money by choosing third-party vendor ticket deals. "When delays and cancellations happen, if you have such a ticket, the airline will have less interest in aiding you. Buying tickets directly from the airline will help you get back in the air quicker," writes Christopher.

● The most important tip is to be patient. Delays and cancellations can't be controlled by airline employees or the airport staff, so it's only human to not inconvenience them or other passengers in case something unexpected happens

— Swati Hirudkar, travel enthusiast and marketing head at a Pune-based finance firm

Have a Plan B

Be prepared for things to not go as per plan during the festive rush. Try to keep a few hours between connecting flights to avoid the hassle. Another useful tip is to do your homework and research hotels close to the airport or connect with people you know from the same city so you can have a comfortable spot to rest.

Enjoy lounge access and other airport perks

The airport can be a fun place if you take some time to explore its perks. Yash Khilnani, co-founder of a manufacturing company, and a frequent flier, shares, "Getting stuck at airports for hours can be made easy if you explore bookstores, cafes or go for a quick spa treatment. If not, you can access a lounge to get comfortable seating and enjoy complimentary food, beverages, and Wi-Fi to catch up on work or a movie."

Prepare for unexpected baggage delays

Ritik Bansal, a videographer who frequently travels for work, suggests labelling your luggage with all possible details. "The best practice is to keep all your essentials in your carry-on luggage and label all your bags with your name, contact details, address, and alternate phone numbers and addresses of people from the connecting or arrival destination," adds Ritik.



Pack smart for layovers

A layover survival kit comes in handy for an unplanned stay. "Carrying an extra set of clothes, comfortable shoes, toiletries, medicines, and non-perishable snacks in your carry-on luggage can help you be comfortable in case of layovers. Download books, podcasts, or movies on your device to keep yourself entertained," suggests Chaarul Shrivastava, a Mumbai-based travel enthusiast.

Metro plans: Phase 2 blueprint out, alignment of airport line tweaked

'At-Grade' Metro Road-Level Line Longest In India

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad: Metro officials released the detailed phase 2 plan of the Metro expansion project on Sunday. The plan has revised the alignment of the airport metro, which will now go via Aramghar and the upcoming high court campus on NH-44 to reach RGIA.

Giving details of the airport metro line, officials said the project also involves construction of the longest 'at-grade' road-level metro rail line in India - 18-km stretch running between the Raviryal exit on the Outer Ring Road (ORR) to the proposed Skill University.

The final detailed project report (DPR) of the plan will be submitted to the Telangana govt by the end of October.

Speaking about the 'Fourth City' metro, Hyderabad Airport Metro Limited (HAML) managing director NVS Reddy said the line from RGIA will go to Pedda Gol-

HYD'S ₹32K CRORE METRO EXPANSION

54 metro stations to pop up along 116.2 km stretch

₹8,000Cr Cost of 'Fourth City' metro

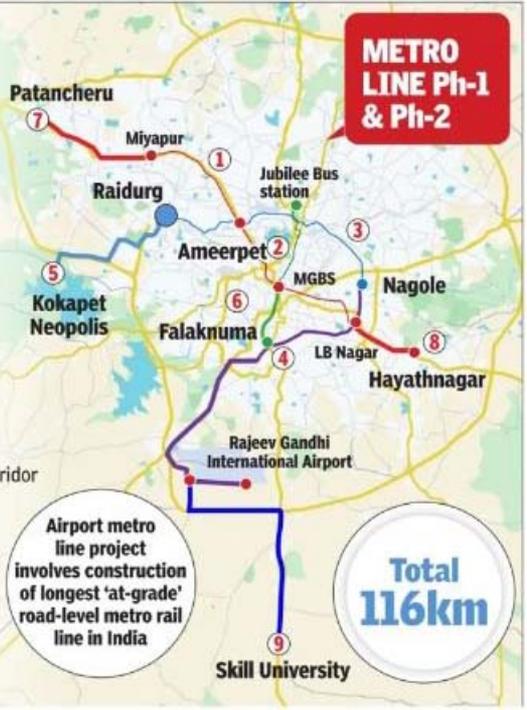
• Airport to have underground metro station



- RGIA TO SKILL UNIVERSITY**
- Nine stations
 - 2 km underground airport portion
 - 18 km road-level metro line on 300 ft greenfield road
 - 20 km elevated corridor

PROPOSED PH II CORRIDORS

- Corridor 4 | Nagole - Chandrayangutta - RGIA 36.6 km; 24 Stns
- Corridor 5 | Raidurg - Kokapet Neopolis 11.6 km; 10 Stns
- Corridor 6 | MGBS - Chandrayangutta 7.5 km; 6 Stns
- Corridor 7 | Miyapur - Patancheru 13.4 km; 10 Stns
- Corridor 8 | LB Nagar - Hayat Nagar 7.1 km; 6 Stns
- Corridor 9 | RGIA - Fourth City (Skill University) 40 km; 9 Stns



Airport metro line project involves construction of longest 'at-grade' road-level metro rail line in India

Total 116km

conda, from where it will connect the 'Fourth City' along the ORR over Tukkguda and Raviryal.

"The metro line will pass between the ORR and its service roads at ground level until the Future City," he added.

Of the total 40-km stretch, two km will run underground within the airport area while 20 km will be elevated.

The 'At Grade' (road level) line will be designed as a part of the new greenfield 300 feet road.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

Air India has removed data silos: Official



New Delhi: Air India has created a data infrastructure without any data silos, providing it a huge competitive advantage, a senior official said on Monday, emphasising that the airline will be an artificial intelligence-infused company. Loss-making Air India was acquired by the Tata Group from the government. PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

DGCA to issue e-licences to air traffic controllers



New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is all set to issue licences to air traffic controllers in electronic form as it looks to go paperless in its functioning and embrace the digital future. The electronic licenses are designed to significantly improve operational efficiency, DGCA said in a statement. [PH](#)

Merger promises 'huge' digital upgrade for Vistara, says A-I

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 30 September

There is a need to upgrade Vistara's digital experience, and its employees and customers are in for a "huge" digital upgrade with the merger into Air India (A-I), said A-I's Chief Digital and Technology Officer Satya Ramaswamy on Friday.

Moreover, he revealed that A-I's generative artificial intelligence-powered chatbot, AI.g, has slashed customer service costs so "drastically" that the airline has completely scrapped plans for a

new customer service centre.

Vistara will operate its last flight on November 11 as part of its merger with Tata Group-owned A-I. It will continue to operate its fleet and maintain its schedule under its brand name until early 2025. Vistara is a 51:49 joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Speaking during the CAPA India Digital Aviation Summit on Monday, Ramaswamy said: "Our chairman (N Chandrasekaran) told me right at the beginning to focus first on fixing customer issues and removing their pain

points, while addressing the enterprise-related issues in parallel. It was also clear at that time that the transformation was going to happen not just at A-I."

"We realised that we also need to upgrade the Vistara experience from a digital perspective. The merger is set to happen soon, and Vistara's employees and customers are in for a huge digital upgrade with the merger into A-I," he said.

Regarding the digital focus, Ramaswamy highlighted the new A-I application (app), which has been rated 4.7 to 4.8 on app stores.



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THE DAILY GUARDIAN

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Ricky Kej slams Air India's poor service on Twitter again

TDG NETWORK
NEW DELHI

Three-time Grammy winner Ricky Kej has once again criticised Air India after experiencing two frustrating incidents with the airline, marking the fifth time in a year that he has encountered issues. The Indian-American composer took to his social media platform X (formerly Twitter) to express his grievances regarding the airline's service, sharing in detail the inconveniences he faced.

Kej explained that one incident occurred on September 14, 2024, when he was flying from Delhi to Bengaluru. According to him, he was flying business class and

had not slept for two days after performing at a concert in Delhi. At the airport's check-in counter, his bag was 6 kilograms overweight, and he immediately offered to pay the excess baggage fee. However, what ensued was a 50-minute ordeal. He was told to walk to a distant counter to make the payment, and after returning to the check-in counter, the staff was unhelpful. Kej even named the staff involved—Devilka, Ravi Kumar, Mukkeeta, and Neha—stating that they refused to accommodate his request to bring a wireless payment machine to the counter, which he claimed other airlines typically do. Frustrated, he was

directed to another counter where the staff member, Sunil, rudely dismissed him, refusing to look in his direction and even refusing to accept UPI payments—an action Kej found shocking for an Indian brand. After repeated attempts to resolve the issue, Kej was on the verge of missing his flight when, finally, on his insistence, Devilka called Sunil, who came to the counter with the wireless payment machine, and the transaction went through within seconds. Kej labeled this as a "systemic issue" with Air India, accusing the airline of not caring about loyal customers and bullying him through the ordeal.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

स्पाइसजेट एयरलाइन से हाई कोर्ट ने मांगी संपत्तियों की सूची

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली: दिल्ली हाई कोर्ट ने स्पाइसजेट एयरलाइन को उस याचिका पर जवाब दाखिल करने को कहा, जिसमें उसे तीन विमान इंजन बंद करने और उनके पट्टादाताओं को सौंपने के निर्देश देने वाले आदेश के निष्पादन की मांग की गई है। अदालत ने एयरलाइन से अपनी संपत्तियों की सूची के साथ हलफनामा दाखिल करने को भी कहा है। निष्पादन याचिका पर अगली सुनवाई 13 नवंबर को होगी।

न्यायमूर्ति मनमोहन प्रीतम सिंह अरोड़ा की पीठ ने नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) को भी नोटिस जारी कर उसके सक्षम अधिकारी को 13 नवंबर को अदालत में उपस्थित रहने का निर्देश दिया है। इसके साथ ही पीठ ने 14 अगस्त के आदेश के अनुपालन की पुष्टि करने वाली स्थिति रिपोर्ट भी पेश करने को

अदालत ने स्पाइसजेट से विमान इंजन वापस करने को लेकर पट्टादाताओं की निष्पादन याचिका पर मांगा जवाब

कहा। अदालत ने कहा कि अपनी स्थिति रिपोर्ट में डीजीसीए इंजनों की पुनः डिलीवरी की स्थिति का उल्लेख करेगा। अदालत ने पट्टेदारों को इंजन स्टैंड खरीदने की स्वतंत्रता दी। स्पाइसजेट की ओर से पेश अधिवक्ता अमित सिब्बल ने कहा कि इंजन सौंपने के लिए तैयार हैं, लेकिन पहले उन्हें वापस करने के लिए, इंजन स्टैंड उपकरण की खरीद करने की आवश्यकता है। सिब्बल ने कहा स्पाइसजेट इंजन का उपयोग नहीं कर रहा है, लेकिन उसे इंजन स्टैंड को खरीदने में लगभग 30 दिन लगेगे।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

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1 OCTOBER 2024

AI-VISTARA MERGER: INTEGRATION PROCESS UNDERWAY

A COMPREHENSIVE ENTERPRISE assessment of all systems has been completed and the integration process is going on as part of the upcoming merger of Vistara with Air India, a senior official said on Monday. Vistara, a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines, is set to be merged with Air India in November.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2024

कोर्ट ने स्पाइसजेट से जवाब मांगा

नई दिल्ली, प्र. सं.। दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय ने सोमवार को कम लागत वाली एयरलाइन स्पाइसजेट से उस याचिका पर जवाब मांगा है, जिसमें उसे विमान के तीन इंजन बंद करने और उन्हें पट्टादाताओं को सौंपने के आदेश के निष्पादन की मांग की गई है। पीठ ने एयरलाइन से अपनी संपत्तियों की सूची के साथ हलफनामा दाखिल करने को भी कहा एवं निष्पादन याचिका पर अगली सुनवाई 13 नवंबर को तय की।

न्यायमूर्ति मनमोहन प्रीतम सिंह अरोड़ा की पीठ ने नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय को भी एक कोर्ट नोटिस जारी किया, जिसमें उसके सक्षम अधिकारी को 13 नवंबर को कोर्ट में उपस्थित रहने का निर्देश दिया गया है।



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1 OCTOBER 2024

एयर इंडिया में एआई का होगा इस्तेमाल

नई दिल्ली। एयर इंडिया के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने सोमवार को कहा कि संस्थान ने एक सुरक्षित बुनियादी डाटा ढांचा तैयार किया है। इससे प्रतिस्पर्धा में बड़ा लाभ मिला है। उन्होंने जोर दिया कि कंपनी में जल्द ही कृत्रिम बुद्धिमत्ता (एआई) का भी इस्तेमाल होगा। टाटा और सिगापुर एयरलाइंस के संयुक्त उद्यम विस्तारा का नवंबर में एयर इंडिया में विलय होना है।

'15' AIRLINE DESIGNATOR CODE TO FLY INTO SUNSET

Air India Express-AIX Connect merger in October first week

The merger of Vistara with Air India is scheduled in November

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: AIX Connect as well as airline designator code '15' will fly into the past in the first week of October as the merger of the no-frills carrier with Air India Express becomes a reality.

AIX Connect, which was earlier known as AirAsia India, will cease to exist after flying for 11 years.

The aircraft registered under its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will be transferred to the AOC of Air India Express under the legal merger that is to come into effect in the first week of October, an official said.

Currently, Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the operations are set to expand in the coming months.

It has a fleet of 88 planes, including 61 Boeing 737 NGs and MAXs, and 27 A320 ceos and neos.

With the legal merger, all flights of erstwhile AIX Connect will be operated with the airline designator code of Air India Express — 'IX' and the code '15' will not be there, the official said.



The aircraft registered under its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will be transferred to the AOC of Air India Express under the legal merger that is to come into effect in the first week of October, an official said

A war room has been functioning for the last three months to ensure a smooth merger as the process involves multiple stakeholders, including lessors and airports, the official said and added that the process will also be a template for the future.

The merger of Vistara with Air India, both part of the

Tata Group, is scheduled in November.

With the legal merger of Air India Express and AIX Connect, there will also be a single rostering system for the crew of both carriers, a senior pilot at Air India Express said.

Already, the two airlines have a common website, distribution system and customer

Highlights

» Currently, AI Express & AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and operations are set to expand in coming months

» It has a fleet of 88 planes, including 61 Boeing 737 NGs and MAXs, and 27 A320 ceos and neos

» With the legal merger, all flights of erstwhile AIX Connect will be operated with airline designator code of Air India Express — 'IX' and the code '15' will not be there, the official said

human resources and flight network. All said, certain challenges, including those pertaining to a section of cabin crew of Air India Express, remain.

In terms of manpower, there are around 6,000 employees, including 1,500 cockpit crew. The cabin crew strength, including about 1,000 from AIX Connect, will be more than 4,000.

AirAsia India, that took off as a budget carrier jointly owned by Tatas and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad in 2014, was rechristened as AIX Connect in December 2022 following the exit of the Malaysian carrier from the venture.

Air India Express, which commenced operations in 2005, was earlier steered by the government and is now a subsidiary of Tata Group-owned Air India.

After the name change, the tails of aircraft of erstwhile AirAsia India was painted red and going forward, those tails will slowly embrace Air India Express's tail art whose theme is patterns of India.

And the merger too will leave a unique trail of consolidation in the fast growing Indian civil aviation market.

care, among others.

In July 2023, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approved operations of AIX Connect under the Air India Express brand. And in October last year, the airline unveiled a unified brand.

Over the last many months, the integration process has covered various areas, including



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THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Can the Tata's pull off their aviation plan?

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

At midnight between 11-12, November Air Vistara will cease to function as an independent entity as the merger of Air India and Air Vistara will be solemnised. While it is certain that several of the 60-plus aircraft in Air Vistara's fleet will continue to operate in the airlines' famous aubergine livery for a few years, the Vistara flight code UK will be retired and it is certain that Air India will rationalise routes and services between the two airlines, a process that will not be easy. To be fair, Tata Sons has already managed an airline merger, that of the former Air Asia India and Air India Express. However, that was much easier as both airlines were low-cost single-class operators, even though they operated different aircraft, Air Asia India, the Airbus A320 and Air India Express, the Boeing 737. But as the leases on older Airbus aircraft end, it is likely that the airline will move to a single fleet of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. Things are much more



complex for the Air India and Vistara merger even though there is largely a single-type, the Airbus A320-family of aircraft. This is because of different aircraft configurations as well as different service and training standards. Many frequent flyers, including this writer, particularly on routes out of Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are unhappy about small things like Air India's new domestic catering options. On a recent flight between Delhi and Kochi at lunchtime, the meal provided was wholly inadequate with a sandwich and stuffed bread roll, unlike Vistara's continuing proper meal service.

There is no need for airlines to offer a meal service, but if they claim to be 'full-service' carriers they should offer a proper meal or at least offer a decent 'Buy on Board' service. The largest airline in India does not pretend to offer 'full service'; but has a 'Buy on Board' service. However, as a frequent flyer, I sincerely recommend that flyers either bring their own food onboard or eat at an airport, no matter how overpriced the latter option is.

That said, consolidation of Air India and Vistara into one large airline is a huge opportunity for Tata Sons and Indian aviation to develop India into a proper global aviation hub and compete

with middle-eastern airlines such as Emirates and Qatar Airlines. Particularly as the Indian diaspora across the world grows and will travel back to their home, as well as growing the international inbound tourism market. India is also going to grow domestic aviation at an incredible rate with an estimated 250 million flyers annually by 2028.

But if the merger stalls for any reason, Tata Sons ought to be worried as IndiGo which has built themselves up into a massive presence in India, controlling half the domestic market, will certainly make an international and premium passenger play. On the latter front they have already announced that they will be starting a 'premium' class offering from later this winter as well as a new Frequent Flyer program called 'Blu-Chip'. And with an order for 30 new Airbus A350-900 wide-body aircraft and the new Airbus A321XLR entering service next year, IndiGo can potentially threaten Air India's global expansion plans as well.