



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

IATA against forced flights relocation to Navi Mumbai

Our Bureau
Mumbai

Airlines should be free to choose between Mumbai and Navi Mumbai airports, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has said while opposing the "forced relocation" of flights.

THE DIRECTIVE

IATA has sought the Civil Aviation Ministry's intervention after the Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) asked airlines to shift one-third of all international flights from its terminal 2 to the Navi Mumbai airport from October 1.

While the transition has not materialised, the Mumbai airport has told airlines they may choose to relocate operations to Navi Mumbai or suspend operations ef-

fective October 25 until the new terminal 1 of Mumbai is commissioned in FY30.

FREE TO CHOOSE

"IATA and the airline community remain fully supportive of the Navi Mumbai airport and the long-term development of the Mumbai dual airport system. However, this should be based on market forces and airlines' choice rather than mandated, forced relocations," said the association's Director-General Amitabh Khosla in a recent letter to the Ministry.

IATA has said the MIAL's communication created a confusion and a transition framework should be developed in collaborative consultation with airlines.

"Airlines require certainty that the broader operating ecosystem will be fully estab-

lished before any transition is implemented. This includes adequate ground handling capacity; airline engineering and line maintenance support; adequate catering services; cargo facilities; crew accommodation and transport arrangements; regulatory approvals, passenger connectivity solutions and associated service provider readiness," Khosla said.

In case of the Navi Mumbai airport, airlines have not been made aware whether the aircraft maintenance service provider possesses all necessary approvals to handle all types of aircraft. Similarly, the IATA said catering services, too, were not fully ready to handle meals meant for international flights.

"International airlines finalise schedules, aircraft de-



ployment, sales inventory and resource planning many months in advance of a flight. Significant changes should also be aligned with the relevant industry scheduling season and communicated sufficiently in advance to avoid disruption to passengers and airline operations," Khosla added.

THE OTHER SIDE

In a statement, the Mumbai airport said its terminal 1

is scheduled for demolition in line with Airport Economic Regulatory Authority order.

"While the demolition work was originally planned to commence in mid-2025, MIAL voluntarily deferred it due to the absence of an alternative operating facility for airlines. With the Navi Mumbai airport becoming operational, airlines now have an alternative option.

Stakeholders including airlines have been informed that terminal 1 redevelopment will commence in January 2027, hence they may choose to relocate operations or temporarily suspend them until the new terminal is commissioned in 2029-30. "This is a temporary transition, and MIAL will honour airlines' slot rights once the new terminal is operational," MIAL said.



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BUSINESS STANDARD

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1 OCTOBER 2026

Consult global carriers prior to Navi Mumbai shift: IATA

Mumbai Airport Terminal 1 reconstruction behind proposal: Adani group

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 30 September

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has asked the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) to intervene against Mumbai International Airport Ltd's (MIAL) proposal to forcibly shift around one-third of every international airline's international passenger and cargo operations to Navi Mumbai International Airport Ltd (NMIAL) from October 1, saying the plan was not developed in consultation with airlines.

The industry group, which has over 370 airline members from 120 nations, said airlines had received communication from MIAL about the proposed transition. Details of the plan were also reported in the media without consulting international airlines, it said.

This had created confusion among airlines and passengers, raising operational, commercial and regulatory concerns. Both MIAL and NMIAL are controlled by the Adani group.

No plan to shift passenger ops to Navi Mumbai: Air France-KLM

Air France-KLM does not plan to split its passenger flights between Mumbai Airport and Navi Mumbai International Airport, said Stefan Gumusell, general manager for India and the Middle East, on Wednesday.

In a press conference in New Delhi on the occasion of 70 years of KLM's operations in India, he said both the airports serve the same geographical passenger market, so it doesn't make much sense to split operations.

The airline currently plans to operate up to 20 weekly passenger frequencies from Mumbai in the winter schedule, up from 14 weekly frequencies in summer. While a cargo plane will be moved to Navi Mumbai, passenger services will continue from Mumbai. "Our position is that we will operate in one of the airports. So frequencies [from Mumbai], remain unchanged for the winter season," Gumusell noted.

DEEPAK PATEL

"IATA is fundamentally opposed to forced airline relocations. Any transfer of operations should be voluntary, commercially and operationally viable, and supported by a comprehensive operational readiness and airport transfer process (ORAT) — consulted

upon and agreed to by airline stakeholders," it stated in a letter to MoCA dated September 9. ORAT is the process through which an airport and its users test and prepare all operations before a major shift.

This had not been properly demonstrated for the proposed

move from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai airport, IATA said.

When asked about IATA's letter, an MIAL spokesperson told *Business Standard* that Terminal 1 at Mumbai Airport was scheduled for demolition and reconstruction in mid-2025, but the project was deferred as Navi Mumbai Airport was not ready by then.

The redevelopment of Terminal 1 will now begin in January. Airlines "may choose" to shift their flights to Navi Mumbai Airport or "temporarily suspend" them until 2029-30, when the new terminal is scheduled to be commissioned, the spokesperson added.

IATA in its letter also raised questions about whether Navi Mumbai airport has all the facilities required to handle international airline operations. These include ground handling, aircraft maintenance, catering, cargo facilities, crew transport and accommodation, regulatory approvals and passenger connectivity.

More on business-standard.com



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

आईएटीए का विरोध, केंद्र सरकार को लिखा पत्र आज से नवी मुंबई एयरपोर्ट शिफ्ट हो जाएंगी एक तिहाई अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें

दीपक पटेल | मुंबई

मुंबई के छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से 1 अक्टूबर 2026 से हर एयरलाइन की एक तिहाई अंतरराष्ट्रीय पैसेंजर और कार्गो उड़ानें नवी मुंबई एयरपोर्ट शिफ्ट होंगी।

अदाणी ग्रुप के स्वामित्व वाले मुंबई इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड के इस निर्णय का वैश्विक संगठन इंटरनेशनल एयर ट्रांसपोर्ट एसोसिएशन (आईएटीए) ने कड़ा विरोध किया है। 120 देशों की 370 से अधिक एयरलाइंस का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले इस संगठन ने नागरिक विमानन मंत्रालय को पत्र लिखकर तुरंत हस्तक्षेप की मांग

आपत्ति • सुविधाओं की कमी, यात्रियों की परेशानी बढ़ेगी

आईएटीए ने नए एयरपोर्ट पर ग्राउंड हैंडलिंग, मेंटेनेंस और क्रू ट्रांसपोर्ट जैसी सुविधाओं की कमी पर सवाल उठाए हैं। नवी मुंबई एयरपोर्ट पर फिलहाल सिर्फ पैकड स्नैक्स की सुविधा है। यह लंबी अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में गरम खाना परोसने के लिए काफी नहीं है।

की है। आईएटीए का कहना है कि बिना सलाह लिए इस फैसले से एयरलाइंस और यात्रियों के बीच भ्रम की स्थिति बन गई है। इससे उड़ानों के संचालन, बिजनेस और नियमों के पालन में बड़ी परेशानी होगी।

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

IndiGo weighs cutback in Navi Mumbai operations

AKBAR MERCHANT
Mumbai, September 30

INDIGO IS RECALIBRATING its operations at Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), with the airline planning to cut or shift capacity on several routes from October 25 as part of its Winter 2026 schedule, sources told FE.

The move comes even as the airport operator is encouraging airlines to expand services at NMIA ahead of the redevelopment of Terminal 1 at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA).

IndiGo currently operates around 325 weekly departures from NMIA. Under the revised schedule, services to at least three cities — Thiruvananthapuram, Siliguri-Bagdogra and Kannur — are likely to be temporarily suspended, while frequencies on several other routes are being recalibrated. Kochi and Madurai are also being considered for suspension for at least a month, sources said.

The changes reflect the airline's attempt to align capacity at the new airport with demand, slot availability and aircraft rotation requirements. However, the more significant shift is on routes to Visakhapatnam, Ghaziabad-Hindon and Jabalpur, which are likely to

WINTER SCHEDULE

■ Services to three routes — Thiruvananthapuram, Siliguri-Bagdogra and Kannur — likely to be temporarily suspended from NMIA

■ Kochi and Madurai also being considered for suspension for at least a month

■ Route to Jabalpur, Visakhapatnam, and Ghaziabad-Hindon likely to move to Mumbai international airport

■ IndiGo to retain three ATR aircraft at NMIA, serving five cities

■ Nagpur, Jodhpur and Lucknow likely to get additional frequencies



move from NMIA to CSMIA.

These routes have a relatively higher proportion of passengers using Mumbai as an international connecting point. With NMIA still having limited international connectivity, operating such services from CSMIA could allow IndiGo to better serve passengers connecting to its international network, sources said.

The reshuffle is therefore not a complete withdrawal from NMIA. IndiGo plans to retain three ATR aircraft at the airport from October 25, with the turboprops serving Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Kolhapur, Bhavnagar

and Diu. At the same time, Nagpur, Jodhpur and Lucknow are expected to receive additional capacity, with some days likely to have two daily flights.

When contacted, IndiGo did not comment on the matter. Queries from NMIA also went unanswered.

IndiGo is simultaneously trimming capacity on its Mumbai-Amsterdam service this winter as its wet-leased Boeing 787 Dreamliner are returned to Norse Atlantic. The route will be operated with Airbus A321XLR aircraft, with frequency reduced to three flights a week.

The proposed NMIA cuts

also highlight the tension between the airport's expansion plans and individual airline economics. Adani Airports has been pushing airlines to shift more services to NMIA ahead of the planned redevelopment of CSMIA's Terminal 1, which could take around three years.

However, IndiGo's latest schedule indicates that the shift of traffic from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai is unlikely to be uniform, with the airline continuing to assess routes based on demand, connectivity and aircraft deployment. Further changes to the winter schedule could follow, sources said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Mumbai airport targets 55/hr aircraft movement

NITIN KUMAR
Mumbai, September 30

MUMBAI'S CHHATRAPATI SHIVAJI Maharaja International Airport (CSMIA) plans to raise its aircraft movement capacity to 52-55 movements an hour by FY29 from around 46 currently, with the airport setting aside more than ₹2,000 crore for investing in taxiways, aircraft parking and other airside infrastructure to improve operational efficiency.

The capacity expansion will allow CSMIA to handle more aircraft within its existing footprint, which is constrained by its runway configuration and dense urban surroundings. The move comes as domestic airlines expand their fleets and seek additional capacity at major airports.

The increase in capacity will be supported by ground infrastructure upgrades, airspace optimisation, technology, and air traffic control procedure improvements, a senior airport official said.

CSMIA handled a record 1,036 aircraft movements in a 24-hour period last year, making it the world's busiest single-runway airport.

A key part of the pro-

RUNWAY EFFICIENCY

■ 52-55/hour aircraft movement capacity planned by FY29 against 46 currently



₹2,000 crore airside investment to cover taxiways, parking stands and other infra

■ CSMIA handled record traffic of **1,036 aircraft** movements in a single 24-hour period last year

gramme is the expansion and modification of taxiways and aircraft parking areas. The projects are aimed at reducing aircraft taxiing and waiting times and improving the movement of aircraft between runways, parking stands and terminal areas.

CSMIA has two intersecting runways that cannot be operated simultaneously as independent parallel runways. Improving the efficiency of the existing runway system, rather than adding a new runway, is therefore central to increasing throughput.

The airside programme includes additional aircraft parking stands, taxiway

extensions, rapid-exit taxiways, and an airside tunnel connecting different parts of the airport.

The airside expansion is being undertaken alongside terminal redevelopment as passenger traffic at CSMIA has reached its existing designated capacity. The airport handled 55.12 million passengers in FY25, up from 52.82 million in FY24.

CSMIA is focusing on improving the productivity of its existing runway and terminal assets, as Mumbai's aviation market enters a new phase with the ramp-up of the Navi Mumbai International Airport.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

विमानों की 68% सीटें अगस्त में खाली



■ आशीष धामा

ग्रेटर नोएडा। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से अगस्त में उड़ान भरने वाले प्रत्येक विमान की करीब 68 फीसदी सीटें खाली रहें। प्रति फ्लाइट औसतन 59 यात्रियों ने ही सफर किया।

जुलाई के मुकाबले अगस्त में यात्री संख्या भी 24 फीसदी तक कम रही।

हवाई अड्डे तक पहुंचने में कई चुनौतियां

- एकमात्र यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे से ही एयरपोर्ट तक पहुंचना संभव।
- नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से दिल्ली-मुंबई एक्सप्रेसवे का काम हरियाणा में अधूरा। इस कारण फरीदाबाद समेत हरियाणा के कई शहरों की कनेक्टिविटी नहीं हो पा रही।
- यमुना और ईस्टर्न पैरिफेरल एक्सप्रेसवे दीवाली तक जुड़ेगा। एनएचआई ने 80 फीसदी कार्य पूरा होने का दावा किया।
- जेवर लिंक एक्सप्रेसवे के लिए अब तक जमीन खरीद भी पूरी नहीं हो सकी है।

दूसरी ओर अकासा एयर गुरुवार से कोलकाता और बेंगलुरु के लिए सीधी उड़ानें शुरू करेगा। एयरपोर्ट पर 15 जून 2026 को हवाई सेवा शुरू हुई। 17 शहरों से उड़ानों के साथ शुरू हुआ सफर 20 दिन बाद 15 तक सिमट गया

था। एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया के मुताबिक जुलाई में 76,593 व अगस्त में 58,520 यात्रियों ने सफर किया। प्रबंधन ने बताया कि एयरपोर्ट तक कनेक्टिविटी पर तेजी से काम जारी है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

हमला

दुबई से तेल अवीव की उड़ान में खौफनाक आतंकी घटना, सह-पायलट ने स्मित को चाकू मारा

भारतीय पायलट ने 180 यात्रियों की जान बचाई

येरूशलम/ तेल अवीव। फ्लाईदुबई की उड़ान एफजेड-1073 में आतंकी हमले की साजिश को भारतीय पायलट स्मित मच्छड़ ने नाकाम कर दिया। 180 यात्रियों वाली उड़ान दुबई से तेल अवीव जा रही थी।

कैप्टन स्मित के साथ कॉकपिट में मौजूद ओमानी सह पायलट ने विमान हाईजैक या क्रेश कराने के इरादे से उन पर चाकू से हमला किया। बुरी तरह घायल स्मित ने दिलेरी दिखाते हुए सह-पायलट के मंसूबों को नाकाम किया। दोनों के बीच संघर्ष में पूरी कॉकपिट खून से सन गई, विमान नोजडाइव लगाते हुए डाई मिनट में 17 हजार फीट नीचे आ गया। विमान के अनियंत्रित



तबुक में आपात लैंडिंग के बाद यात्रियों ने राहत की सांस ली।

होते ही ऑफ-ड्यूटी पायलटों की टीम कॉकपिट में पहुंची और विमान की सऊदी अरब के तबुक एयरपोर्ट पर सुरक्षित लैंडिंग कराई। घायल कैप्टन स्मित व फर्स्ट ऑफिसर को अस्पताल ले जाया गया। स्मित

स्पाइसजेट में भी पायलट रह चुके हैं। हाईजैकिंग के डर से इस्त्राएल ने लड़ाकू विमान भी भेजे थे। इस्त्राएल के प्रधानमंत्री बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू ने बड़ा हादसा टालने के लिए लोगों का आभार जताया।

9/11 दोहराने का मंसूबा नाकाम

एक इस्त्राएली अधिकारी ने मीडिया को बताया कि एक पायलट ने दूसरे पायलट को चाकू मारा और 9/11 जैसी घटना को दोहराने की कोशिश की। यानी विमान को हाईजैक करने या उसे क्रेश करने की घटना टल गई।

■ यात्री मरियम ने बताया उसने चीखने-चिल्लाने की आवाज सुनी और देखा कि चाकू लिए एक आदमी ने पायलट को जमीन पर गिरा दिया। यात्रियों के चिल्लाने पर कुछ लोग अंदर गए और उस आदमी को पकड़ लिया

सह-पायलट की दोहरी नागरिकता का शक

जांचकर्ता पता लगा रहे हैं कि क्या ओमानी सह-पायलट के पास दो देशों की नागरिकता थी, जिस वजह से वह इस्त्राएल जाने वाली उड़ान में सवार हो पाया। वह एक साल से भी कम समय से एयरलाइन के लिए काम कर रहा था। यह भी जांच की जा रही है कि ओमानी पायलट को विमान उड़ाने की अनुमति कैसे मिली।



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Safe landing

DGCA must look into the Boeing issue

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the regulatory body in India handling primarily aviation safety, should urgently look into the software glitch that Boeing reportedly identified recently in certain 737 MAX flight computers. In India, Air India Express and Akasa Air fly 96 Boeing 737 MAX planes, out of more than 800 aircraft of all types operated by Indian airlines. The DGCA is yet to give any status update on the software glitch that may have been found in the aircraft concerned. Akasa, which is the latest entrant in aviation and operates only 737 MAX (43 of them), said in a statement that it was coordinating with Boeing and that there was no impact on the safety of its operations. Air India Express, the low-cost brand of Air India, which manages 53 of these jets, has not commented on the matter so far.

According to media reports, Boeing detected a software issue in some 737 aircraft. It could result in disengagement of the automated flight-guidance system after a missed landing approach or during an aborted landing. This situation can be triggered if pilots alter the original approach path, aviation analysts have noted. In the case of such a scenario, pilots will have to temporarily revert to manual control. It is not clear as to how many aircraft have the flawed software. Even as the Washington DC-headquartered Federal Aviation Administration is investigating the issue through a corrective action review board (CARB) and has deferred certification to the upcoming variants of 737 MAX, the Indian authorities must act promptly based on the inputs from the global counterparts. Boeing has been under severe scrutiny over safety concerns related to 737 MAX since two fatal crashes in 2018 and 2019. Lion Air Flight 610 crashed into the Java Sea soon after takeoff in October 2018, and in March 2019, Ethiopian Airlines 302 crashed after takeoff, resulting in the worldwide grounding of Boeing 737 Max planes for more than a year. Based on these incidents, there have been allegations of cost-cutting and cover-ups at Boeing.

The latest software glitch is a global problem and several foreign airlines have told Boeing that they would reject any new aircraft fitted with the same version of the software. The Indian carriers should also proactively take an informed stand. The pilots' association must also look into the safety hazards involving such a glitch. It's been more than 15 months since the Air India crash in Ahmedabad, killing all passengers barring one, and there's no closure yet on the cause of the accident. Air India was flying a Boeing Dreamliner to London Gatwick. More recently, an Air India flight — Airbus A320neo — experienced a sudden altitude drop at 36,000 feet while flying Phuket-Delhi. Although a pilot on that flight was suspended after testing positive for marijuana, the failure of all three hydraulic systems was also detected. The final investigation report is not out yet. Against that backdrop, it's time for the regulator to assess the risk in the 737 MAX case and act in the right earnest. This is critical, especially as Boeing has reportedly said it informed all 737 operators last month itself about the software issue, which could disable the automated flight-guidance system during a case of specific landing.

इजरायली यात्रियों को जान बचाकर नायक बने भारतीय पायलट रिमित मछार

मछार के पास 13 साल से अधिक का अनुभव प्रसारित वीडियो फुटेज में यात्री रोते और घबराहट में चिल्लाते हुए दिखाई दिए

जागरण न्यूज नेटवर्क, नई दिल्ली

दुबई से तेल अवीव जा रही फ्लाईदुबई की उड़ान में बुधवार को काकपिट में हुई हिंसक झड़प के दौरान गुजरात के रहने वाले भारतीय पायलट कैप्टन रिमित मछार ने विमान पर नियंत्रण बनाए रखने में अहम भूमिका निभाई। उन्होंने घटना के बाद विमान को सऊदी अरब के तबुक की ओर मोड़कर सुरक्षित उतारा गया। हादसे के बाद मछार की भूमिका को लेकर उनकी वहादुरी की चर्चा तेज हो गई है। इजरायली यात्रियों की जान बचाकर भारतीय पायलट रिमित मछार नायक बन गए हैं।



भारतीय पायलट कैप्टन रिमित मछार। सौ: इंटरनेट मीडिया

आइएनएस के अनुसार, को-पायलट ने काकपिट में कैप्टन पर हमला किया और विमान का नियंत्रण लेने की कोशिश की। इस दौरान हवा में ही विमान दो मिनट में कई हजार फीट नीचे आ गया। चाकू के हमले से घायल मछार लहलुहान हो गए और हमलावर पायलट से संघर्ष करते रहे। लेकिन उन्होंने स्थिति को नियंत्रण से बाहर जाने से रोका। यात्री के रूप में बैठे पायलट और कुछ अन्य यात्रियों ने कलपूर्वक काकपिट में घुसकर ओमानी पायलट पर काबू पाया और विमान को सुरक्षित लैंड कराया। मछार पहले स्पाइसजेट में 11 साल कार्यरत थे। मीडिया रिपोर्टों के मुताबिक, उन्हें कमर्शियल विमान का

13 साल से अधिक अनुभव है और करीब 9,750 घंटे उड़ान भरी है। इनमें 6,400 से अधिक घंटे पायलट-इन-कमांड के रूप में बताए जाते हैं। स्पाइसजेट में 11 साल काम करने के दौरान वे वरिष्ठ कमांडर और बाद में लाइन ट्रेनिंग कैप्टन बने। जून 2022 में उन्होंने फ्लाईदुबई में कैप्टन के रूप में काम शुरू किया। मुंबई से एमवीए किया था। पिछले साल एक पांडकास्ट में बताया था कि एमवीए उन्होंने फैमिली विजनेस संभालने के लिए किया था। लेकिन उस दौरान एक एविएशन सेमिनार में पहली बार उन्हें कमर्शियल पायलट बनने का ख्याल आया।

प्रथम पृष्ठ से आगे

इंटरनेट मीडिया पर प्रसारित वीडियो फुटेज के अनुसार विमान के फर्श पर खून से लथपथ पड़े दो लोगों को यात्री आपात चिकित्सा देते हुए दिख रहे हैं, जबकि दो अन्य काकपिट की रखवाली कर रहे हैं। इस दौरान एक व्यक्ति हिब्रू भाषा में कहता है, "हम पायलट की सुरक्षा कर रहे हैं।" एक अन्य वीडियो में विमान के हिलने पर यात्री रोते और घबराहट में चिल्लाते हुए दिखाई दे रहे हैं। यात्रियों ने फोन पर इजरायल के चैनल-12 को बताया कि उन्होंने विमान के अगले हिस्से में बैठे लोगों की चीखें भी सुनीं, जिन्होंने पायलटों के बीच वहस सुनी थी और सऊदी अरब में उतरने से पहले विमान तेजी से नीचे की ओर आया था।

तबुक एयरपोर्ट के बयान के अनुसार, विमान के कैप्टन व को-पायलट घायल हो गए और उन्हें अस्पताल ले जाया गया। यात्रियों को भी चिकित्सा सहायता दी गई। 'फ्लाईदुबई' ने घटना की पुष्टि करते हुए कहा, "हमारी टीमों संबंधित अधिकारियों के साथ मिलकर काम कर रही हैं।" फ्लाईदुबई, एमिरेट्स एयरलाइंस के कम लागत वाली सहायक एयरलाइन है। एयरलाइन ने कहा कि सभी यात्री और कर्मी सुरक्षित हैं। उन्हें लाने-ले जाने के लिए तबुक में दो



सऊदी अरब के तबुक एयरपोर्ट पर उतरे फ्लाईदुबई के विमान से बाहर निकलते यात्री। विमान के रडर (पूछ के पास का हिस्सा) पर नुकसान दिखाई दे रहा है। उड़ान के दौरान इसी विमान में को-पायलट ने कैप्टन पर चाकू से हमला किया था। सौ: टाइम्स ऑफ इजरायल



इजरायली पीएम बेंजामिन नेतन्याहू बेंग गुरियन एयरपोर्ट पर यानीव से मिले। यानीव वही यात्री है जिन्होंने चाकू लिए हमलावर (ओमानी को-पायलट) को घायल करने में मदद की थी। सौ: @इजरायलीपीएम

रिफ्लेसमेंट विमान भेजे गए हैं। एयरलाइन के प्रवक्ता ने कहा, "इस घटना के पीछे के कारण और मकसद अज्ञात हैं और ये औपचारिक जांच का विषय हैं। जल्दबाजी में कोई अनुमान न लगाएं।"

सऊदी अरब ने विमान भेजने का

इजरायली अनुरोध टुकरावा : इजरायल ने फ्लाईदुबई के विमान में सवार यात्रियों को वापस लाने के लिए अपनी वायुसेना के सुपर हरक्यूलिस विमान को भेजने का प्रस्ताव किया था, जिसे सऊदी अरब ने टुकरा दिया। उल्लेखनीय है कि सऊदी अरब और इजरायल के बीच किसी तरह



फ्लाईदुबई के विमान में हुई घटना का बाद तेल अवीव के पास बेंग गुरियन अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर पहुंचते यात्री। एपी

के राजनयिक संबंध नहीं हैं। रायटर के अनुसार, सऊदी अरब में लगभग आठ घंटे बिताने के बाद इजरायली यात्री फ्लाईदुबई के एक अन्य विमान से इजरायल के लिए रवाना हुए।

इजरायल में होने वाले हैं चुनाव यह घटना इजरायल में चुनाव से कुछ हफ्ते

पहले हुई है। रायटर के अनुसार, सात अक्टूबर, 2023 को हमला के हमलों के बाद होने वाले पहले चुनाव में इजरायली लोग वोट डालने वाले हैं। चुनाव प्रचार में इजरायल की सुरक्षा एक अहम मुद्दा है, और इस घटना ने सुरक्षा को लेकर चिंताएं बढ़ा दी हैं।

Indian Pilot Braves Stabbing to Help Dubai Flight Land Safely

Netanyahu says
Flydubai incident an
attempt to hijack

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: An Indian pilot is said to have played a key role in thwarting what the Israeli government has described as the attempted hijacking of a Flydubai aircraft flying from Dubai to Tel Aviv on Wednesday, after his co-pilot allegedly attacked him in the cockpit and attempted to take control of the aircraft.

Smit Machchhar, an Indian national and former SpiceJet pilot, was the pilot in command of flight FZ1073, according to people aware of the matter.

Machchhar, who hails from Mumbai, joined Flydubai in June 2022 as a direct-entry captain after spending more than 11 years with SpiceJet, as per his profile.

ET broke the news online on Wednesday evening.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said the co-pilot tried to crash the plane after stabbing the captain. Machchhar managed to unlock the cockpit door, which allowed in passengers, who overpowered the co-pilot. A second set of pilots travelling aboard then helped secure the cockpit and land the plane in Saudi Arabia.

First Officer Arrested ►► 10

First Officer Arrested, Says Netanyahu

►► From Page 1

Flydubai said in a statement that there was an altercation in the cockpit but said the motive was still unknown and subject to investigation. The first officer has been arrested, Netanyahu said.

Machchhar's former colleagues described him as a pilot who followed the rule book religiously. His brother is also a commercial pilot and has previously flown for Akasa Air, they said.

In a podcast interview, Machchhar had spoken about his passion for flying Boeing aircraft, describing it as a dream. He also spoke about the enormous responsibility that comes with being in command of an aircraft and the need for pilots to remain conscious of the lives entrusted to them. That responsibility was put to an extraordinary test on Wednesday.

The Boeing 737 MAX 8 was carrying around 174 passengers, most of them Israelis, when the incident unfolded while the aircraft was flying toward Tel Aviv.

According to Reuters, the two pilots became involved in a physical altercation. The aircraft subsequently went into a rapid descent, losing nearly 14,000 feet in less than 30 seconds, according to flight-tracking data.

The aircraft, first transmitted the 7700 emergency code and later switched to 7300, the internationally recognised code for unlawful interference. The signals triggered a major security response in Israel, with the country's air force scrambling fighter jets as the plane diverted towards Saudi Arabia.

The aircraft landed safely at Tabuk in Saudi Arabia. Both pilots were injured and taken to hospital. Flydubai confirmed that the aircraft had experienced an incident en route to Tel Aviv and diverted to Tabuk, but said the reasons and circumstances remain subject to investigation.

Machchhar's career also highlights a broader trend in Indian aviation—experienced pilots

moving to West Asian carriers in search of higher remuneration and better employment conditions.

Large numbers of Indian pilots have moved to Gulf carriers including Emirates, Qatar Airways, Etihad and Flydubai over the years. The trend has intensified as West Asian airlines expand fleets and offer tax-free salaries and other benefits, creating a persistent challenge for Indian carriers trying to retain experienced commanders.

How Events Unfolded

0305 GMT

Flight FZ 1703 departs Dubai for Tel Aviv



0521 GMT

Aircraft goes from nearly 34,000 feet to below 17,000 feet in a minute



0531-0538 GMT

Emergency and hijacking alerts; Israel scrambles fighter jets



Mid-flight



Co-pilot allegedly stabs pilot while trying to seize control

Passengers overpower pilot, another crew member takes command



0645 GMT



Emergency landing in Tabuk

Around 1349 GMT

Replacement flight departs



Source: AFP



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Domestic air traffic falls 7.5% in Aug

FE BUREAU
Mumbai, September 30

INDIA'S DOMESTIC AIR passenger traffic fell 7.5% year-on-year in August, the sharpest decline among major aviation markets, as demand weakened far more than airlines cut capacity, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Revenue passenger kilometres (RPK) contracted 7.5% following a 5.2% decline in July, while capacity fell just 1.2%. The mismatch between demand and capacity pushed India's passenger load factor down 5.4 percentage points to 78.7%, the lowest among the six major domestic markets tracked by IATA.

India's contraction was among the key factors behind a 0.5% decline in global domestic passenger demand in August. Domestic capacity globally rose 0.7%, while the domestic passenger load factor fell 1.1 percentage points to 85.3%.

The broader global market also weakened, with passenger demand falling 0.8% year-on-year in August even as capacity increased 0.3%. The overall passenger load factor declined 0.9 percentage points to 85.1%.

Stabbed, Indian pilot stops junior from crashing plane

● Dubai-Tel Aviv
Flydubai flight
makes emergency
landing in Saudi;
passengers safe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Dubai/Jerusalem,
September 30

AN INDIAN CAPTAIN of a Dubai-Tel Aviv Flydubai flight fought off his co-pilot who allegedly attempted to crash the aircraft, which had to make an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia, Israeli media reports stated on Wednesday.

News website Ynet, citing Israeli officials, reported that the co-pilot was an Omani national and was suspected of trying to crash the aircraft. The Indian captain fought with him to prevent the aircraft from crashing, with Israeli passengers later helping subdue the co-pilot, the report said.

In a statement, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said one of the pilots stabbed the other and apparently attempted to crash the aircraft with passengers on board. Netanyahu said an Israeli passenger told him that the aircraft went into a spin and began descending, after which the passenger and a crew member managed to break into the cockpit and, together, they overpowered the pilot who had carried out the stabbing while he was attempting to sabotage the aircraft's systems.

According to Netanyahu,

MID-AIR SCARE



■ The co-pilot was an Omani national and was suspected of trying to crash the aircraft

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement one of the pilots stabbed the other

■ The Flydubai flight was carrying 174 passengers, including 27 children

■ Israeli's defence minister said it 'was a jihadist terrorist attack attempt'

another crew member then entered the cockpit and helped stabilise the aircraft. "I salute these heroes who demonstrated extraordinary resourcefulness and courage. They saved many lives and prevented a major disaster," he said.

The aircraft landed safely at Tabuk airport in Saudi Arabia and all passengers were out of danger, said Netanyahu, who met his security chiefs to discuss the situation. He also said the pilot who carried out the stabbing had been arrested and was being questioned by Saudi authorities.

The Flydubai flight FZ1073, travelling from Dubai to Tel Aviv, had transmitted emergency signals and made a sharp descent before diverting

to Tabuk in Saudi Arabia. The flight was carrying 174 passengers, including 27 children.

The airline said it was cooperating with the relevant authorities and that all passengers were safe. The airline has not released the identity or nationality of the pilots.

Tabuk airport authorities said the captain and first officer were injured and taken to hospital. Israeli authorities feared a possible hijacking and scrambled fighter jets. Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said the incident aboard the plane "was a jihadist terrorist attack attempt, which was thwarted only thanks to the bravery of several Israeli passengers who broke into the cockpit and overpowered the terrorist".



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

30 SEPTEMBER 2026

India seeks connectivity opportunities with 115 airlines, 55 countries: Naidu

India will use Routes Asia 2027 to engage with airlines and countries to unlock new regional and international connectivity opportunities, with more than 55 countries, 115 airlines, and 2,500 one-on-one business meetings expected at the three-day event, Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu stated.

Routes Asia 2027 will be held in Delhi from March 16-18, 2027, with the government looking to use the event to expand air links and support



trade, tourism, and broader economic activity.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the curtain-raiser event, Naidu stated that India has expanded its airport network and the next priority is to improve connectivity.

"We have seen that it has become the third largest

domestic aviation market and we aspire to become the third largest aviation market globally. And for that connectivity is very, very important," he said. Naidu stated that Routes Asia 2027 would provide an opportunity to engage with airlines and countries on how India can make better use of its connectivity potential. "So our focus for Routes Asia 2027 is going to be to engage with airlines, to engage with the countries to see how do we unlock the connectivity opportunity that we have," he said. **-ANI**



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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

हवाई यात्रा की वैश्विक मांग अगस्त में 0.8 प्रतिशत घटी

जिनेवा, एजेंसी। पश्चिम एशिया और उत्तरी अमेरिका में मांग कमजोर रहने से अगस्त में हवाई यात्रा की वैश्विक मांग में सालाना आधार पर 0.8 प्रतिशत की गिरावट दर्ज की गई। वहीं, भारत में घरेलू मांग 7.5 प्रतिशत घट गई।

अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन संघ (आयटा) की बुधवार को जारी रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, पश्चिम एशिया को छोड़ दिया जाए तो अगस्त में शेष दुनिया में हवाई यात्रा की मांग 0.6 प्रतिशत बढ़ी है। वहीं, पश्चिम एशिया में 14.6 फीसदी की गिरावट दर्ज की गई। उत्तर अमेरिका में भी मांग 2.2 प्रतिशत घट गई। आयटा राजस्व यात्री-किलोमीटर के पैमाने पर मांग के आंकड़े जारी करता है। इसकी गणना राजस्व चुकाने वाले यात्रियों द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से तय की गई दूरी (किलोमीटर में) के आधार पर होती है।

लातिन अमेरिका में हवाई यात्रा की मांग में 5.3%, अफ्रीका में 4.4%, एशिया-प्रशांत में 1.4% और यूरोप में 0.7% की वृद्धि हुई है। शीर्ष छह देशों में भारत में मांग में 7.5% की सबसे तेज गिरावट रही, और वैश्विक घरेलू विमानन बाजार में देश की हस्तिता घटकर 1.7% रह गई।

{ XINJIANG OPTION }

India explores China route to bypass Pak airspace ban

Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: India is exploring an alternative air route over China's Xinjiang to reduce the impact of the continued closure of Pakistani airspace, civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Tuesday.

He was speaking at the curtain-raiser for Routes Asia 2027, the route development event for the Asia Pacific, which India will host next March.

"We are looking at other alternatives. Discussions on the Hotan route are going on between the two countries. Our external affairs ministry is engaging with their country [China]... let us see how it goes, but we are trying alternatives," Naidu said.

Naidu did not indicate a timeline for the route's opening, nor did he suggest that an agreement had been reached with China.

Pakistan closed its airspace to Indian airlines after the Pahalgam terror attack in April 2025, and its latest notice extends the closure to October 24. Since then, Indian airlines flying to Europe and North America from northern and western India have had to detour over the Arabian Sea towards Muscat. The detour adds between 45 minutes and two hours of flying time, and has driven up fuel burn and operating costs on several sectors.

"All Indian carriers from the

How closures hurt Indian airlines

Two flights on same route shows India's IndiGo flying an extra 1 hour 40 minutes because of the detour it has to take avoid Pakistani airspace



north and north west are following the L639 route to avoid the Pakistan airspace... which increases their flying time by 2 hours," a person aware of the matter said. L639 is one of the designated airways that carry the detour over the Arabian Sea.

The Delhi-Istanbul sector

shows how arduous the detour is. IndiGo's 6E-11 is scheduled to take 8 hours 39 minutes, according to flight-tracking data. Turkish Airlines' TK717, which is not covered by the Pakistani ban, is scheduled at 6 hours 45 minutes, almost two hours less.

Naidu said the proposed corri-

dor over Hotan, in southwestern Xinjiang, would offer a significantly shorter route.

If the discussions pan out, Indian airlines flying from Delhi and Mumbai would head towards Leh, enter Chinese airspace near Hotan, turn towards Kyrgyzstan, and then connect to existing routes to Europe, the UK and North America. "The route may lead to significant savings for destinations like Georgia, Baku, Central Asia, and northern Europe," the second person said.

The corridor would also take Indian aircraft into difficult and sensitive airspace. Reuters reported in November 2025 that the airspace falls within the Chinese People's Liberation Army's Western Theatre Command, whose responsibilities include responding to any conflict with India. The region is ringed by mountains as high as 20,000 feet (6,100m). International airlines generally avoid it, the report said, because an aircraft that loses cabin pressure must descend quickly to lower altitude, and there are few emergency airports to divert to. No non-Chinese airline had used Hotan airport in the previous 12 months, according to the report.

The detour has proved particularly costly for Air India, which relies heavily on western long-haul routes out of its Delhi and Mumbai hubs.

Terror in the air: Pilot stabs Indian captain in cockpit

Dubai-Tel Aviv flight diverted to Saudi; Israeli PM hails Capt Machchhar's heroics

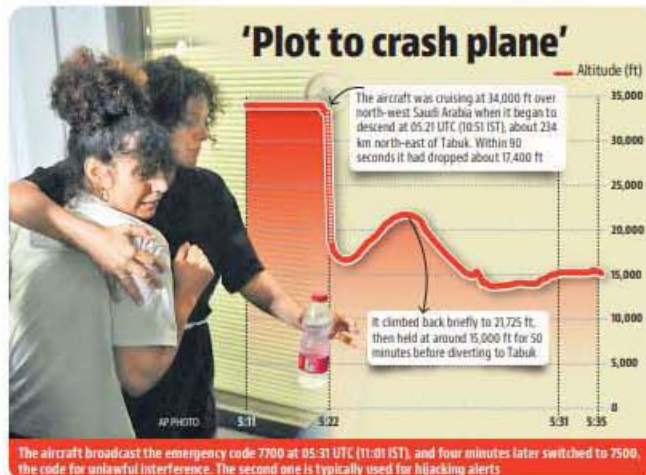
HTC and Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI/DUBAI: The co-pilot of a flydubai flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv allegedly stabbed the captain on Wednesday morning, triggering a battle in the cockpit during which the Boeing 737 MAX 8 plunged 14,300 feet in roughly 30 seconds over northern Saudi Arabia. The jet broadcast a hijack alert and diverted to Tabuk, where it landed safely, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu credited its wounded Indian captain with fighting back and opening the cockpit door so that passengers and crew could overpower the attacker.

The captain, Smit Machchhar, is from Ghatkopar East in Mumbai and was based in Dubai for work, people aware of the matter told HT. Both pilots were hospitalised, Tabuk Airport said. Machchhar underwent surgery and is stable, while the other pilot, whose name was not known at the time of going to press, was arrested by Saudi authorities.

In a post on X, Netanyahu saluted Machchhar's "extraordinary bravery". "Despite being stabbed and seriously injured, he fought back, resisted, opened the cockpit door, and enabled passengers and crew to overpower the attacker — preventing a catastrophic mid-air disaster," he wrote. "He saved the lives of 174 people, including Israeli citizens and other nationals."



Captain Smit Machchhar

Life-or-death fight amid a drop from 30,000 feet

JERUSALEM: When flydubai flight FZ1073 suddenly plunged from over 30,000 feet on Wednesday, passenger Almog Italic said it felt like the plane was passing through "massive turbulence" before he realised a life-or-death struggle had unfolded in the cockpit.

Italic described passengers running to the front of the cabin and commotion in front of the cockpit, where Israeli officials said the co-pilot had stabbed the

captain to try to crash the plane that was flying from Dubai to Tel Aviv with more than 170 Israelis on board.

"It was dropping like for 20, 30 seconds, and then balanced, and then started dropping again, and balanced again, and then we saw that (there) are people in the front, directly (in front of) the cockpit," he told Reuters. "Crew members and passengers from the front of the jet took over and got control of the two pilots."

FLYDUBAI STABBING

just Netanyahu's estimation of what transpired.

Israeli officials told Reuters the attacker was an Omani national.

The Indian embassy in Riyadh confirmed Machchhar was in a hospital in Tabuk city. "A full update on his health is awaited but he is reported to be in stable condition. We hope that he recovers from his injuries at the earliest. We are in touch with his family and assure them that we will continue to follow up on his health with Saudi authorities..."

Parag Shah, the Bharatiya Janata Party legislator from Ghatkopar East, said Machchhar's parents have left for Dubai, Shah said.

Machchhar grew up in Ghatkopar and studied in Mumbai, a family friend said. He joined flydubai's 737 fleet as a direct-entry captain in June 2022 after 11 years with SpiceJet in Mumbai, where he rose to senior commander and, from November 2020, trained and checked other pilots, according to his LinkedIn profile. The profile lists 9,750 flying hours and a business administration degree from the Welingkar Institute of Management. His brother is a pilot with Akasa Air, the people said.

A passenger on the flight — FZ1073 — Miriam Abukasis, heard screaming and saw a man with a knife force one of the pilots to the floor, with blood everywhere, her mother Yasmin told Reuters in Tel Aviv. In a video purportedly recorded by another passenger and carried widely by Israeli media, the passenger said one pilot was seriously hurt and the other slightly. The plane carried about 150 Israelis, Israeli media reported, and flydubai said all passengers were safe.

Flight data from Flightradar24 and ADS-B Exchange, analysed by HT, show the plane took off from Dubai at 7:05am local time and cruised west over Saudi Arabia at 34,000 feet. At 8:21am Saudi time (10:51am IST), a little over two hours into the flight and about 235km north-east of Tabuk, it began to descend. Between two readings 37 seconds apart it fell from 33,225 feet to 18,925 feet, about 23,000 feet a minute. At a typical 2,000 feet a minute, an airliner would take seven minutes to lose that height.

Photographs of the aircraft at Tabuk appear to show the rudder torn from its tail. That kind of damage can occur when control surfaces are moved too hard at high speed, and it would fit a dive as violent as the one the flight data record. HT could not independ-

ently verify the authenticity of the photographs.

The plane bottomed out at 16,600 feet as its ground speed peaked at 598 knots (1,107km/h), then climbed more than 5,000 feet, fell again to 13,675 feet by 8:27am and levelled off at about 15,000 feet. Receivers lost its position for nine minutes. When the track resumed at 8:31am, the transponder showed 7700, the general emergency code, and at 8:35am it switched to 7500, the hijack code. It was not clear who set the codes.

The plane flew on northwest into Jordan, turned back and was over Saudi territory by 8:45am.

Reports that the plane approached the speed of sound rest on ground speed, the only speed the public data record for the dive.

The closest precedent is EgyptAir Flight 990, a Boeing 767 that crashed into the Atlantic in October 1999 after its relief first officer deliberately put it into a dive, according to US investigators at the time. The plane fell from about 33,000 feet to about 16,000 feet in roughly 36 seconds as the captain, who had returned to the cockpit, tried to pull it out. It climbed briefly before breaking up, killing all 217 people on board. Egypt rejected the American finding.

Three months earlier, a hijacker on an All Nippon Airways Boeing 747 stabbed the captain to death and let the jet descend to within a few hundred metres of the ground near Tokyo, before crew and an off-duty pilot overpowered him and recovered the aircraft.

Doron Spielman, a spokesperson for Netanyahu, first ruled out a hijacking and two hours later said that assessment had changed, according to Bloomberg. Netanyahu held security consultations and cleared his schedule for the day, an Israeli official told Reuters. His office said all measures were being taken to bring the Israeli passengers home, and the transport ministry said Emirati authorities were working on their return.

Israel's far-right national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir wrote on X: "Terrorism is a devil with whom no agreement must be reached." The incident comes weeks before Israel's first election since the Hamas-led attack of October 7, 2023, in a campaign where security has figured prominently.

Israel has no diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia. It has built close security and economic ties with the UAE since 2020, and Netanyahu met UAE President

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Sunday. The UAE has not commented. Flydubai, Emirates's sister carrier, has said only that the flight had an incident and diverted to Tabuk. The airline has flown between Dubai and Tel Aviv since late 2020 and runs 70 flights a week on the route.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Pilot injured in the flydubai 'altercation' identified as Indian

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

The captain who was attacked during an altercation inside the cockpit of a flydubai flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv on Wednesday is an Indian national, Captain Smit Machchhar.

Mr. Machchhar was previously employed with SpiceJet. Official confirmation is awaited.

In a press statement, flydubai has called the incident aboard FZ 1073 "an altercation".

"At this early stage, the underlying reasons and motives behind this event are unknown and remain subject to a formal investigation," flydubai said.

The airline said that the



Captain Smit Machchhar

aircraft was successfully secured by on-duty flydubai crew travelling on the flight, who diverted and landed the aircraft safely at Tabuk Airport (TUU) in Saudi Arabia, and that all passengers and crew were safe and accounted for.

Passengers received medical attention from local authorities, according to a regional official.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Air France-KLM against plan to shift flights to Navi Mumbai

Abhishek Law & Dipali Banka
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

Air France-KLM, one of the largest foreign airline groups operating in India, is resisting Adani Airport's push to shift airline capacity to Navi Mumbai, saying it will not split its long-haul passenger operations between the two airports. The stance deepens an ongoing stand-off between Adani Airport and airlines, as the country's second-largest airport operator prepares to redevelop Mumbai's existing airport and seeks

to redistribute capacity. Operating long-haul flights from two airports serving the same "catchment area" would undermine operational efficiency, said Stefan Gumuseli, general manager, India and Middle East, Air France-KLM. "We are an airline that operates on efficiency. In one city, we cannot operate to two different airports, especially on long-haul," Gumuseli said in response to a question from *Mint* in Delhi on Tuesday. "If it is in the same catchment area, it will be impossible operationally to operate in two airports," he said.

The comments come as KLM-Air France marks 70 years of operations on the Delhi-Amsterdam route and prepares to expand its India operations. It plans to operate 20 weekly flights between Mumbai and its two hubs, Paris and Amsterdam, during the winter schedule beginning November, compared with 14 now.

The group is also increasing its India-wide capacity. From November, Air France-KLM plans to operate 54 weekly flights from India, up from 42 currently, with an equal split between Air France and KLM.



The airline plans to raise Mumbai flights to 20 a week from 14, starting with the winter schedule in November.

India has also emerged as an important growth market for the group. Air France-KLM reported revenue of €16.8 billion in the first half of 2026, up 8% from a year earlier. During the group's July earnings call, group chief executive Benjamin Smith said the positive momentum across its global network included "standout performances in India, Asia and the Americas". It does not share India-specific numbers. There are nearly 80 foreign carriers operating out of India.

The multinational carrier also operates cargo services to Mumbai via Air France and expects to move the operations to Navi Mumbai. It didn't specify when the shift will take

place. For passenger operations, however, the airline's position is clear. "Our wish will be to remain where we are today, and splitting anyway is not an option," Gumuseli said.

The airline would consider moving its entire operation if redevelopment resulted in the existing airport shutting or its capacity falling to an operationally unviable level. "If the airport says they are closing because of renovation, or they

will reduce the capacity to an inoperable level, then we will move. There is no doubt."

That distinction could be important as Adani Airport prepares to redevelop Mumbai airport from 2027. The airport operator has asked airlines to shift at least one-third of their operations to Navi Mumbai, about 50 km from the existing airport, beginning October, as redevelopment progresses.

For airlines, however, shifting operations is not a matter of moving aircraft between airports. Splitting operations will require additional ground teams, handling arrangements and other operational infrastructure, while potentially complicating passenger connections and access.

"We have teams on the ground, we need to split, we need to add new teams. We have ground handling companies who are already operating in Mumbai airport. So there would be more challenges—to train (personnel), to split (operations)," Gumuseli said.

He said a two-airport strategy could work when airports serve distinctly different catchment areas, citing Tokyo as an example. That, he suggested, was not the case here.

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For an extended version of this story, go to [livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com).



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Windfall tax on diesel, ATF exports slashed

MPOST BUREAU

New Delhi, September 30

The government on Wednesday cut the windfall gains tax on the export of diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF), while retaining it at the same level for petrol for the fortnight beginning October 1.

The rate of special additional excise duty (SAED) along with road and infrastructure cess on the export of diesel will now be Rs 16 per litre, down from Rs 20 a litre. SAED on

export of ATF is set at Rs 10.5 per litre, as against Rs 15 per litre currently.

Duty on petrol exports has been retained at Rs 0.5 per litre for the next fortnight. The finance ministry, in a notification, said the duty cuts will be effective from October 1.

Amid escalating tensions in West Asia, the government had imposed an export duty on diesel and ATF on March 27 and revised the rate every fortnight. Beginning May 16, the levy was imposed on

petrol exports.

The ministry also said that there was no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

The windfall tax was levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia. It was also aimed at preventing exporters from taking undue advantage due to price differences, as global crude oil prices had risen since the war began.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

India's domestic air passenger traffic fell 7.5% in August: IATA

India recorded largest traffic decline among major domestic markets

MPOST BUREAU

New Delhi, September 30

India's domestic air passenger volume dropped 7.5 per cent in August on an annual basis, recording the largest traffic decline among the major domestic markets, according to global airlines' grouping IATA.

In its air passenger market analysis report for August, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) on Wednesday said industry-wide RPK slipped back into contraction, falling 0.8 per cent year-on-year (YoY) after registering a marginal growth of 0.3 per cent in July.

Revenue Passenger Kilometres (RPK) is an indicator of passenger volumes.

"Higher demand in China, Brazil and Australia contrasted with declines in Japan, the US and India. Despite growth across several major markets, overall domestic traffic remained slightly below its level a year earlier," IATA said.

IATA's Senior Vice President Sustainability and Chief Economist Marie Owens Thomsen said the coming months will reveal



whether travellers, whose purchasing power has been reduced by higher energy prices, are adjusting their travel budgets, and might be discouraged from travelling due to the prevailing geopolitical instability.

"India recorded the largest traffic decline among the major domestic markets. Domestic RPK fell by 7.5 per cent YoY, following a 5.2 per cent decrease in July. Capacity contracted by 1.2 per cent, substantially less than the fall in demand, resulting in a 5.4 percentage point reduction in the PLF to 78.7 per cent," IATA said.

The grouping, which represents over 370 airlines globally including Indian carriers, said India's was the lowest PLF and the largest drop in the load factor among the six markets.

PLF refers to the Passenger Load Factor. Asia Pacific airlines recorded a

0.1 per cent year-on-year decrease in demand in August.

"Capacity decreased 0.9 per cent year-on-year and the load factor was 85.6 per cent (+0.7 ppt compared to August 2025). Traffic on routes within Asia fell 2.0 per cent and capacity declined for the fourth month in a row. By contrast, traffic on the Asia-North America corridor grew by 2.5 per cent," IATA said.

Thomsen said the recovery trajectory for carriers in the Middle East was interrupted and the region's carriers reported that in August demand was 14.6 per cent lower year-on-year, reversing an improving trend.

"Excluding the Middle East carriers, demand for air travel grew by 0.6 per cent year-on-year in August, half the pace seen in July. With some important exceptions such as domestic China, global connectivity was generally weaker in August," she said.

She also noted that forward schedules for October are showing cautious optimism with 2 per cent growth in available seats.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

1 OCTOBER 2026

Air France to increase flights from India

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AIR France – KLM will increase its operations in India to 54 weekly flights in the upcoming winter schedule, up from the current 42 weekly flights. KLM will operate up to 27 flights a week, with the remaining 27 operated by Air France.

"India is the world's fastest-growing aviation market and is incredibly important for Air France – KLM. We consider India as one of our strategic destinations," said Stefan Gumuseli General Manager India & Middle East at Air France-KLM. He expects robust demand from India to continue on the back of robust infrastructure growth, new travellers and new passport holders exploring international destinations.

Laure Daynie, country manager, Air France – KLM, India said demand in the premium segment, including business class and newly introduced premium comfort class, has seen a sharp growth and the airline will increase its offering across categories. The airline group currently operates from Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, and has a codeshare agreement with IndiGo, India's largest airline, connecting dozens of Indian cities with major European hubs.

Air France – KLM's decision to increase operations from India comes at a time when Indian airlines have slashed their frequency across Europe as part of their cost reduction effort in the aftermath of the West Asia crisis and inability to access the Pakistan airspace.

Air India to resume direct Delhi-Tel Aviv flights from December 1

ASHOKE RAJ
■ New Delhi

Air India will resume direct flights between Delhi and Tel Aviv from December 1, restoring a non-stop air link between India and Israel after the suspension of services amid the ongoing war and security situation in the region.

The airline will operate five weekly flights from Sunday through Thursday using Boeing 777 aircraft. With the resumption, Air India is set to be the only airline operating non-stop flights between India and Israel.

Air India will operate flight AI139 from Delhi, departing at 5:00 am and arriving in Tel

Aviv at 8:30 am. The return service, AI140, will depart Tel Aviv at 10:30 am and arrive in Delhi at 7:45 pm. The flight time will be approximately seven hours from Delhi to Tel Aviv and around five hours and 45 minutes on the return journey.

Air India and other airlines had suspended or disrupted services to Tel Aviv during the ongoing conflict, affecting direct air connectivity between India and Israel. The restoration of the Delhi-Tel Aviv route comes as air links to Israel gradually resume amid changes in the regional security environment.

The return of the direct route also comes as the Israeli Ministry of Tourism



strengthens its engagement with the Indian travel market and expands efforts to showcase the destination beyond its established appeal for pilgrimage and spiritual tourism.

The ministry is placing

greater emphasis on leisure and family travel, MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions), luxury and experiential tourism.

Welcoming the announcement, Galit Hoffman, Consul

for Tourism Affairs at the Israel Ministry of Tourism in India, said the restoration of direct connectivity would make travel between the two countries more convenient.

"The return of Air India's

direct flights is an important development for tourism between India and Israel. For Indian travellers, the restoration of a regular non-stop connection makes the journey more convenient and gives them greater flexibility when planning a visit to Israel. India remains an important market for us, and direct air connectivity has a significant role to play in supporting the growth of travel between our two countries."

Hoffman also highlighted the range of experiences the destination offers to Indian travellers beyond pilgrimage and spiritual tourism.

"We would like more Indian travellers to discover the many different sides of

Israel, beyond its longstanding appeal for pilgrimage and spiritual travel. From Jerusalem and the beaches, culinary experiences and vibrant city life of Tel Aviv, to the Dead Sea, the desert, Galilee and Eilat on the Red Sea, Israel offers an extraordinary variety of experiences within a relatively compact destination."

She added that the return of the Delhi route would provide an opportunity to increase awareness of Israel's broader tourism offering among Indian travellers.

India was a significant source market for Israel before the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly 70,000 Indian visitors travelling to

the country annually, according to the Israel Ministry of Tourism.

Alongside the restoration of direct air connectivity, the ministry is expanding its engagement with India's travel trade through destination training, webinars, familiarisation programmes for travel agents and media, and promotional initiatives highlighting Israel's varied tourism experiences.

The resumption of Air India's Delhi-Tel Aviv service is expected to strengthen air connectivity between the two countries and provide Indian travellers with a direct option for reaching Israel, while giving fresh momentum to tourism ties between the two markets.

Indian pilot helps avert disaster

The pilot was reportedly stabbed as Israeli officials said the co-pilot allegedly tried to crash the aircraft

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

An Indian pilot of a Tel Aviv bound flight was stabbed by the aircraft's copilot on Wednesday after the latter allegedly tried to crash the plane, Israeli officials said. The confrontation triggered fears of a possible hijacking, prompting an emergency diversion to Saudi Arabia.

Captain Smit Machchhar flying a FlyDubai flight from Dubai to Tel Aviv, was reportedly attacked inside the cockpit after his Omani co-pilot allegedly attempted to interfere with the aircraft's controls or systems. The captain is said to have resisted the attack despite sustaining stab wounds during the struggle.

The aircraft, carrying 180 passengers and crews, issued an emergency alert and underwent a sudden descent. Flight-tracking data reportedly showed the aircraft losing about 16,000 feet in roughly one minute before changing course and entering Saudi Arabian airspace. The aircraft was subsequently diverted to Tabuk in northwestern Saudi



The FlyDubai aircraft, which made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia, parked at Ben Gurion International Airport, near Tel Aviv on Wednesday

AP

Arabia, where it made an emergency landing.

Accounts cited by Israeli media said other crew members and passengers became aware of the confrontation and helped subdue the co-pilot and secure the cockpit. The intervention allowed the aircraft to continue safely toward its emergency landing.

Captain Machchhar was

reportedly left injured and covered in blood following the altercation. Images circulating in Israeli media purportedly show passengers and crew members assisting him after the aircraft landed. The authenticity and provenance of those images have not been independently verified.

Both pilots were reportedly taken to hospital in Tabuk following the emergency landing.

The incident initially raised fears that the aircraft had been hijacked. Israeli authorities reportedly scrambled fighter jets as a precaution while security officials sought to determine what was happening aboard the flight.

Israeli officials have reportedly described the incident as a possible terror-related event. However, the circumstances surrounding the confronta-

tion, including the co-pilot's intentions and motive, remain unconfirmed.

Authorities are expected to examine cockpit recordings, flight-data records and witness accounts as part of the investigation. The precise sequence of events inside the cockpit has not yet been publicly established.

The incident has also created difficulties for passengers stranded in Tabuk. FlyDubai has reportedly arranged alternative flights to transport passengers onward to Tel Aviv, while some Israeli passengers have expressed reluctance to continue their journey on another commercial flight and have sought an Israeli-operated evacuation.

The episode remains under investigation, with Captain Machchhar's reported actions forming a central part of accounts of how the cockpit confrontation was brought under control. Authorities have yet to release a definitive account of what happened aboard the flight or establish the motive behind the alleged attack.

Israel-bound flight diverted to Saudi Arabia after pilot stabbed

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA
Tel Aviv, 30 September

A FlyDubai passenger aircraft bound for Israel from the United Arab Emirates made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia on Wednesday after transmitting emergency signals, including a code associated with a possible hijacking.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later said that one of the pilots stabbed another and then apparently tried to crash to aircraft, which was carrying dozens of Israelis.

Passengers and crew subdued the attacker and the plane eventually made an emergency landing in Saudi Arabia.

The captain of the aircraft, who was stabbed, is identified as an Indian national, Captain Smit Machchhar (*photo, inset*), while the second officer is said to be an Omani national.

Flight-tracking data showed



that the aircraft initially transmitted squawk code 7700, the internationally recognised signal for a general emergency. It later switched to 7500, a code used to indicate unlawful interference, including a possible hijacking, before reverting to 7700.

Israeli fighter jets were scrambled after the emergency signal was sent, a military spokesperson said.

The Boeing 737 MAX 8, operating as flight FZ1073 from Dubai International Airport to Ben Gurion Airport,

was carrying more than 100 passengers, including a large number of Israelis. The aircraft landed at Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Airport in Tabuk, Saudi Arabia.

A passenger on board the FlyDubai flight told Israel's i24 channel that one of the pilots on the flight was stabbed and there were moments when she believed she was going to die.

"We just heard screams, and then the cockpit door opened, and we saw a huge amount of blood," the passenger,

identified only as Miriam, told the channel.

"The aircraft has landed safely in Tabuk (TUU), and all passengers are safe and accounted for," the airline said in a statement. "Our teams are working closely with the relevant authorities. Further updates will be issued as additional confirmed details become available."

According to reports citing Israeli security officials and passengers, the emergency followed a violent confrontation between two pilots in the cockpit. The reports said one pilot stabbed another with a knife, while passengers and other crew members intervened and helped restrain the attacker.

The aircraft also lost a significant amount of altitude during the incident. CNN, citing flight data, reported that the plane descended from about 34,000 feet to approximately 17,400 feet in less than two minutes.

Israeli authorities believe

the incident could have been "a terror attack attempt," according to officials.

An Israeli passenger quoted by The Jerusalem Post said passengers near the front of the aircraft rushed toward the cockpit after hearing the shouting. The passenger said they helped remove the attacker from the cockpit, allowing another pilot to regain control of the aircraft.

The incident prompted the Israeli Air Force to scramble fighter jets as a precaution, according to Israeli media reports. Israeli airspace was also temporarily closed before being reopened after the aircraft landed safely in Saudi Arabia.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu held consultations with defence officials as the situation unfolded. "The incident is under control, and all measures are currently being deployed in order to return the Israeli passengers safely to Israel," the Prime Minister's Office said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

30 SEPTEMBER 2026

Flyer caught with 973g of marijuana

Ahmedabad: Based on passenger profiling, the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) of Ahmedabad customs at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPI) intercepted a passenger with 973g of hydroponic marijuana on Tuesday.

The male passenger, a resident of Surat, had arrived from Bangkok, said investigators.

During examination of one paper carry bag in his cabin baggage, officers recovered green-coloured substance concealed inside two plastic bags containing total 30 small printed packets said to contain 'dehydrated guava'. On preliminary testing with the NDPS field test kit, the substance tested positive for ganja (marijuana).

The total weight of the recovered contraband is 973.23g,' according to a release by the department.

The contraband has been seized and the passenger arrested under NDPS Act. **TNN**



The drug was hidden in packs labelled as dehydrated guava

Stabbed by co-pilot, Indian capt prevents Israel jet crash

Flyers Subdued
Attacker As
Plane Plunged

Tel Aviv: The co-pilot on a flight from UAE to Israel stabbed the pilot, an Indian, Wednesday and then apparently tried to crash the jetliner carrying around 170 people, Israel's PM Benjamin Netanyahu said. Passengers and crew subdued the attacker, and the plane landed safely in Saudi Arabia. As some passengers screamed, the flydubai flight issued an emergency alert and abruptly descended thousands of feet. Israel scrambled warplanes amid concerns about a possible hijacking.

As a plane carrying passengers from the flight landed Wednesday evening in Israel, it was not clear what motivated the attack. "We are guarding the pilot," one person

2 OFF-DUTY PILOTS LANDED PLANE



Video footage showed 2 men on plane's floor, bloodied & wounded. Two people appeared to be giving medical treatment, while 2 others guarded the cockpit

“My salute to Indian pilot Captain Smit Machchhar for his extraordinary bravery. Despite being stabbed and seriously injured, he fought back, opened cockpit door & enabled passengers and crew to overpower the attacker – preventing a catastrophic mid-air disaster. He saved lives of 174 people. He is a true hero — Israel PM Netanyahu

said in Hebrew. In another video, passengers wept and cried out as the aircraft shook.

Those who intervened “saved many lives and prevented a major disaster,” Netanyahu said, adding that Saudi Arabia arrested a pilot whose identity was not immediately shared by authorities.

Saudi Arabia had no immediate comment. The plane's captain and first officer were injured, according to a statement by Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz International Airport in Tabuk, carried by state-run Alekhabriya TV. **AP**

► From 33k to 17k ft, P 22

Left SpiceJet in
2023, trained
in Gurgaon

A Mumbaier who completed his pilot training in Gurgaon, flydubai flight Captain Smit Machchhar managed to regain control of the aircraft despite being injured.

Machchhar, who worked in SpiceJet for about a decade till 2023, is learned to be stable. Friends and colleagues say he is a “great guy”, reports Saurabh Sinha.

“He did his commercial pilot licence training from New Zealand,” said a senior pilot who trained him.

Smit's pilot brother also flies for flydubai.



Plane fell from 33,000ft to 17,000ft in a minute, says flight tracker site

► Continued from page 1

Passengers received medical attention from local authorities, according to a regional official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official was not authorised to brief the media.

Netanyahu warned in recent days of unspecified, heightened security threats. The country is a week away from the anniversary of the Hamas-led Oct 7, 2023, attack on Israel, which has triggered a series of wars, and is weeks away from an election.

Netanyahu's office said around 160 people on the plane were from Israel.

An Israeli official said a fight broke out between the two pilots, one of whom was armed with a knife. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the incident was under investigation.

Around two and a half hours after leaving Dubai, the flight descended from 33,000 feet to 17,000 feet in about a minute, before making an erratic circle close to the Jordanian border and landing in Tabuk about an hour later, according to Flightradar24. As the plane began to dive, a passenger and a crew member broke into the cockpit, Netanyahu said, citing a passenger he spoke to. Other crew members took over flying the plane.

Among the passengers who intervened were members of the Israeli security forces and air marshals, according to a person familiar



A flydubai passenger being welcomed at the Ben Gurion International Airport, near Tel Aviv, Israel, on Wednesday

with a probe by Saudi Arabia and regional partners.

The airline confirmed that an “altercation occurred in the flight deck” and the aircraft was secured by on-duty crew “who diverted and landed the aircraft safely”.

An official confirmed that Israel had scrambled warplanes, fearing a hijacking. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the incident was under investigation.

Yasmin Abukasis said her daughter, who was on the plane, told her in a phone call that she could hear someone screaming “Help!” Her daughter said the crew started to lose control of the jet, causing passengers to scream, but eventually two people were able to wrest control of the plane while others attempted to subdue the attacker.

Former United Airlines pilot and aviation safety ex-

Israel PM meets
flyers at airport

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu met on Wednesday evening passengers of the flydubai flight diverted earlier in the day, a spokesman for the PM said. A video shared by his office showed Netanyahu at airport meeting a man named Yaniv and his family, describing him as one of the flyers who broke into the aircraft's cockpit. “I see a lion, I see a great hero,” Netanyahu said after hugging the man, who identified himself to the press as Yuval Hayun. **AFP**

pert Steve Arroyo said he was surprised that the plane was able to land safely after most of the rudder was ripped off the tail during the extreme descent. “That was a serious descent and strong aerodynamic forces on that rudder for that to happen. I’m just amazed the aircraft didn’t come apart,” Arroyo said.

Saudi Arabia turned down a request by Israel to allow its military planes to bring back Israeli passengers from a flydubai flight that made an emergency landing in the kingdom, two security sources said on Wednesday. Saudi has no diplomatic relations with Israel.

Flydubai, the sister carrier of Emirates, started daily flights between Tel Aviv and Dubai in late 2020 with daily flights and has since ramped up operations to 70 weekly flights. **AP, AFP**