



Work apace: Officials of the Airports Authority of India say that when the phase II modernisation work concludes, additional facilities will be available, and they would bring in some relief. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Chennai airport needs to connect more cities to attract more flyers

The airport has slipped to the fourth place in international passenger traffic. Passengers and travel agents feel that to put it back in the third spot, direct flights should be operated to destinations in the Far East and the West. AAI officials say they are trying to do it

CITY MATTERS

Sunitha Sekar

The Chennai airport may have slipped to the fourth place in international passenger traffic. But efforts are being made gradually to connect more destinations.

In what could be greatly beneficial to air passengers, direct flights have been added this year from Chennai to newer destinations, including Phuket, Brunei, Penang, and Mauritius. Direct flights to Hong Kong resumed from the Chennai airport after a long hiatus and additional flights to Bangkok began this year. But passengers and travel agents say that to put the Chennai airport back in the third spot, it should have direct connectivity to destinations in the Far East and the West, too. The data for November show that in the international passenger traffic, there was 1% decline at the Chennai airport.

The airport handled 4,74,623 passengers in November 2024, compared with 4,79,390 in the same period the previous year. While the focus should be on improving the airport's infrastructure, direct flight services, too, deserve attention.

Convenience matters

Vidyasagar J., a frequent flyer, says that when a traveller plans a holiday, he first considers how convenient the flights are. When people chalk out a holiday plan, they choose destinations that have direct flights because they want to save on travel time. "Flying to Australia has been on my bucket list. But we don't have a direct flight. Now, we have to travel through Singapore or Kuala Lumpur. Bengaluru has been lucky, and it has got flights by Qantas to Sydney," he points out.

He noted thousands of people fly to the United States from Chennai. "Those who work there are not the only fliers. Families often visit their kin and they would like to have direct flights. My in-laws travel to San Francisco, and for senior citizens who visit

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their children, it would be convenient to have direct flights to the U.S.," he says.

Travel agents say introduction of direct flights to Vietnam, Japan, the U.S., and Australia could give a boost to the Chennai airport.

More travel time

T. Devaki, chairperson of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI), says that new flights to destinations like Phuket, Penang, and Brunei are helpful as tourists are keen on travelling to these destinations. "South-east Asia has always been a favourite of tourists, largely because of proximity and affordability. We should consider direct flights to Vietnam. Many people are attracted to Vietnam as they can cover both Vietnam and Cambodia. Now, they travel through Singapore. This means more travel time, and more cost," she says.

As for business travellers, Ms. Devaki thinks that direct flights to Guangzhou and Tokyo will be particularly helpful and will have a good load factor. "Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we had direct flights to Japan. But it is unfortunate that these services have not resumed yet," she says.

S. Jeyasekaran, honorary treasurer, southern chapter of TAAI, says that direct flights to the Philippines and Spain from Chennai will also prove beneficial to tra-



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T. DEVAKI, chairperson, Travel Agents Association of India

vellers. The other destinations that are increasingly popular among tourists from Chennai are Bali and Azerbaijan.

"If the government takes the initiative, travellers from Chennai will have a great advantage. Private airports are able to have new flights. If there is a push from the State and Central governments, the Chennai airport will be back on the radar as one of the most popular airports and the passenger traffic will increase. We [the travel agents] have also placed a request with the government in this regard," he adds.

The dampener

Officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) say that when the phase II modernisation work concludes, additional facilities will be in place, and they would bring in some relief. They also note that they have been reaching out to some of the airlines as well as the government for more connectivity. "We certainly are eager to establish more connectivity from our airport and are working for it. But it depends on the government. Agreements have to be signed between two countries for connectivity. Also, there is a definite need to decrease the VAT on the Aviation Turbine Fuel. It is adding to the expenditure of an airline, and the airlines look at the VAT before connecting new destinations," an official says.



The cost factor: There is a need to decrease the VAT on the Aviation Turbine Fuel. The airlines look at the VAT before connecting new destinations, says an official. M. VEDHAN



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TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

1 JANUARY 2025

POV

Why our airports need some 'chai-samosa' love

Ramesh Bhai got it right. Hyderabad-based influencer Ramesh, that is: in the news as he turned *chaiwallah* aboard a domestic flight, serving tea to his passengers in small, disposable cups, from a steel flask. Exactly the Indian Railways way, mid-air at 30,000 feet. While debates were sparked on airline safety protocols, some passengers wanted a *samosa* with the tea.

We take travel snacking more seriously than on-time departure and maybe even comfortable seats. Which is why it is not uncommon to find large groups and families virtually hosting a picnic at departure lounges – *khakras*, *paratha* rolls, biryani and bananas. Anything that would otherwise come with a hefty price tag at airport eateries.

The snacking continues on-air, where we pay through

iStock



from the windows as local specialities and *kulhads* of *chai* are passed around.

Given that air travel no longer comes with the bells and whistles of its elitist origins, would you blame people if they expect the same *chai-samosa*

our noses for 'dehydrated delights' – noodles, *poha*, *rajma*, sandwiches. Mostly inedible, hugely overrated. But eat, we must. Even if it is a short flight. A legacy perhaps from our days of train travel where our elders would share home food with fellow passengers, and stories would be swapped over railway curries and tomato soup. Even now, every time long distance trains pull up at a platform, hands emerge

experience while flying?

In September 2024, P Chidambaram had raised concerns about the exorbitant prices of food and beverages at the Kolkata airport, where he was charged ₹340 for 'tea made of hot water and a tea bag'. In the winter session of Parliament, MP Raghav Chadha had flagged the issue of overpriced food and beverages at airports.

The government caught on. Last week, the ministry of civil aviation and the Airports Authority of India inaugurated the first UDAN Yatri Cafe of the country at the Kolkata airport, offering a budget-friendly menu (tea and water for ₹10). There is *samosa*, too – for ₹20 apiece.

In these times of mercurial brawls over delays and flight disruptions, an affordable cup of tea and hot *samosa* could go a long way in dealing with turbulence. Whether on ground or in the air.



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TIMES OF INDIA DELHI 1 JANUARY 2025

T2 may be closed for repair once T1 ready around April

Saurabh.Sinha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: The 1986-era terminal 2 (T2) of Indira Gandhi International Airport is likely to be closed for a few months around April 2025, when the ongoing repair and restoration of T1 — a part of which collapsed last June — is complete and it finally starts getting fully utilised.

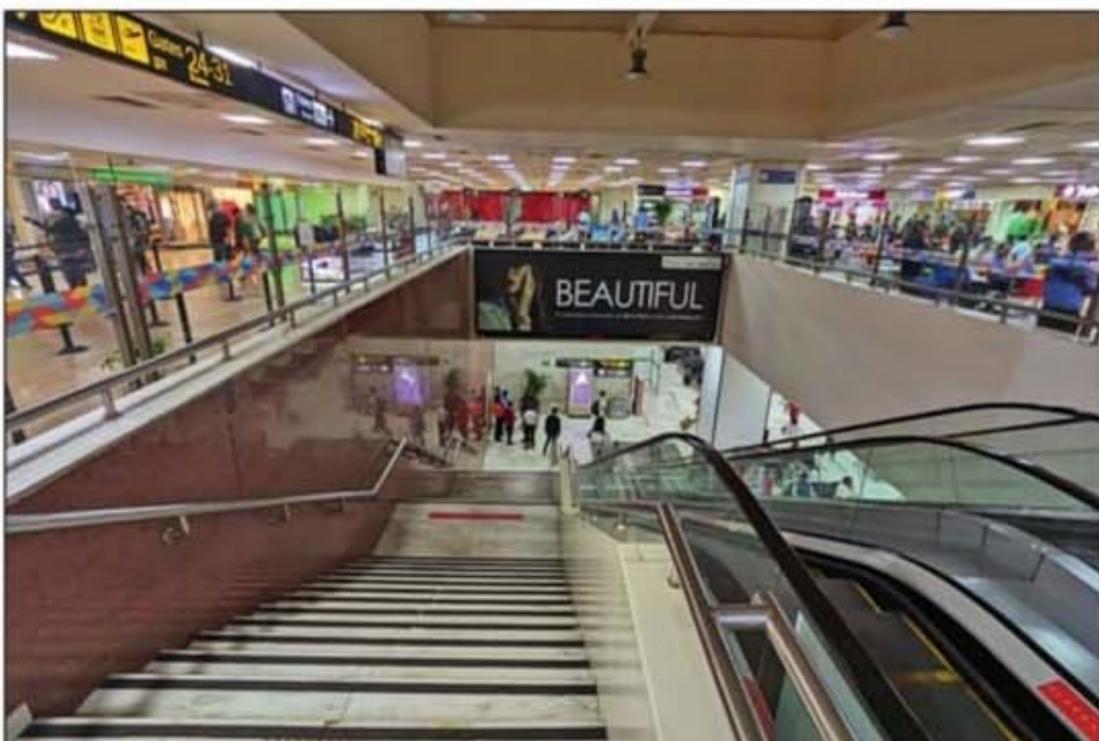
While sources say the repair at T2 involves “minor” work in the building and more on the apron side that should take about four-five months, the exact timing of its reopening could well be decided on what impact the upcoming Noida International Airport (NIA) has on traffic at IGIA. In the past also T2 has been mothballed at least twice as T1 and T3 were sufficient to meet the requirement.

The reason: T2 has a capacity to handle 1.5 crore passengers annually (CPA). NIA at Jewar is slated to get operational around mid-2025 with an initial capacity of 1.2 CPA. Unlike Mumbai where the megapolis’ CSMIA is already handling passengers beyond its capacity and the Navi Mumbai Airport — which also opens around the same time as NIA — will get all additional flights, Noida Airport

is getting operational when IGIA still has a long way to go before it gets saturated. So the impact NIA has on its traffic is being keenly watched by Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) on both its passenger and cargo. It will accordingly determine the timing of the final stage of IGIA’s development — demolishing T2 to make way for a much larger T4 with a capacity of 4 CPA in its place.

“Repair at T1 has begun and is expected to be over by April. A few days after that happens and the expanded T1 is put to 100% use, T2 will be shut for repairs on the building and apron side. There could be a time lag between the two events to factor in any teething troubles at T1, which will be fully operational for the first time after its expansion work is completed,” say people in the know.

The revamped T1, which saw its capacity doubling to 4 CPA, was inaugurated in March and it was supposed to get fully operational within a couple of months. However, the collapse of a 2009-era canopy on June 28 saw T1 being fully set down and then only the new portion was partially opened a few months later. Now with the repair work targeted to be over by April 2025, that should finally happen this summer.



The revamped T1 at IGIA Airport was inaugurated in March

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TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

1 JANUARY 2024

After Covid lessons, India readying 13 new quarantine centres at int'l airports

DurgeshNandan.Jha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: India is readying 13 new quarantine centres at international points of entry (airports). These centres will be used for isolating people travelling from other countries who have symptoms of a disease with the potential to cause an outbreak.

According to health ministry sources, the building of quarantine centres is being funded by the PM Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission (PM-ABHIM), a special programme launched by PM Modi in 2021. "The measures under the scheme focus on developing capacities of health systems



ISOLATION INFRA

and institutions across the continuum of care at all levels viz. primary, secondary, and tertiary and on preparing health systems in responding effectively to the current and future pandemics/disasters," a ministry official said.

Quarantine is the separation and restriction of move-

ment or activities of persons who are not ill but who are believed to have been exposed to infection, for the purpose of preventing transmission of diseases.

Experts say the pandemic, in which hundreds of people travelling from countries affected by the disease outbreak had to be quarantined, underscored the need for strengthening quarantine facilities and developing protocols to prevent such diseases from spreading.

An expert group constituted by Niti Aayog to prepare a framework for future pandemic preparedness has also suggested enacting separate legislation to handle public health crises.

Fog season: Centre lists steps for airlines, airport operators to minimise flyers' pain

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Airlines should not keep passengers seated inside aircraft for more than 90 minutes in case of fog-related delayed departures and they need to cancel flights delayed by over three hours.

As peak winter fog season kicks in, the Union civil aviation ministry on Wednesday listed dos and don'ts for airlines and airport operators to minimise passenger inconvenience.

"The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security's (BCAS) circular for facilitating smooth re-entry of passengers in case of flight cancellations was operationalised and drills were organised by CISF with stakeholders. This would significantly reduce passenger inconvenience and ensure a smoother re-boarding process once flights resume," the Ram Mohan Naidu-headed ministry said in a statement.

Airlines have been "instructed" to proactively communicate with passengers about potential delays/cancellations due to visibility issues. "For this, airlines and booking agents (need) to ensure that correct passenger contact information is recorded during ticket booking."

The Met department (IMD) along

with Airports Authority of India (AAI) is expediting implementation of "advanced weather observation system" (AWOS) at Indira Gandhi International Airport and other fog-affected airports. This system will ensure accurate and timely weather information for pilots and air traffic controllers to enhance operational safety and efficiency. "IMD (is) committed to ensure all Met equipment function without disruption."

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), "in close coordination with airlines, has ensured deployment of adequate number of CAT II/CAT III-compli-

ant crew and aircraft to carry out low visibility operations efficiently during fog at affected airports. Three runways at the Delhi airport have activated CAT-III ILS systems, including the important runway 10/28 (the one between T1 and T2."

Airlines have been asked to ensure full staffing at check-in counters during peak hours to reduce passenger inconvenience. "Delhi airport has installed LED screens at prominent locations to provide real-time updates on visibility conditions. The airport has also scaled up the number of 'follow me' vehicles, which will guide and assist the pilots on the apron/taxiway during low visibility conditions ensuring better coordination on ground," the statement says.

Airlines have been told to sensitise their "operations control centres" and war-room representatives for closer coordination during adverse weather, especially fog, to "improve real time decision-making (and) allowing for more effective and timely responses to flight delays or cancellations." "AAI has implemented new standard operating procedures to effectively regulate air traffic at fog-affected airports and at the originating or destination airports," it added.



HAZY WAY



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MUMBAI

1 JANUARY 2025

Lessons from Covid-19: Int'l airports to get 13 new quarantine centres

New Delhi: India is readying 13 new quarantine centres at international points of entry (airports). These centres will be used for isolating people travelling from other countries who have symptoms of a disease with the potential to cause an outbreak.

According to health ministry sources, the building of the quarantine centres is being funded by the Pradhan Mantri Ayushman Bharat Health Infrastructure Mission, (PM-ABHIM), a special programme launched by the Prime Minister in 2021. "It focuses on developing capacities of health systems and institutions



These centres will be used for isolating people travelling from other countries who have symptoms of a disease with the potential to cause an outbreak

across the continuum of care at all levels viz. primary, secondary, and tertiary and on preparing health systems in responding effectively to the current and future pandemics/disasters," a senior official of the health ministry said, reports **Durgesh Nandan Jha**.

Experts say the pandemic underscored the need for strengthening quarantine facilities and developing protocols. An expert group constituted by Niti Aayog has suggested enacting separate legislation to handle public health crises. The report titled 'Future Pandemic Preparedness and Emergency Response - A Framework for Action' said learning from the experience of Covid-19, the experts have realised that responding in the first 100 days of an outbreak is crucial for effective management.



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AMAR UJALA

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

एअर इंडिया ने चुनिंदा उड़ानों में शुरू की वाई-फाई सुविधा

मुंबई। एअर इंडिया ने अपने वाइडबॉडी एयरबस ए350 और बोइंग 787-9 बेड़े के साथ-साथ चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321नियो विमानों पर धरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में वाई-फाई इंटरनेट



कनेक्टिविटी सेवाएं शुरू कीं।

एअर इंडिया भारत के भीतर उड़ानों पर ऐसी सेवाएं देने वाली

पहली एयरलाइन बन गई है। यह सेवा 10,000 फीट की ऊंचाई पर वाई-फाई-सक्षम डिवाइस जैसे लैपटॉप, टैबलेट और आईओएस या एंड्रॉइड ऑपरेटिंग सिस्टम वाले स्मार्टफोन इस्तेमाल करने वाले यात्रियों को एक साथ कई डिवाइस कनेक्ट करने की अनुमति देगा। विमानन कंपनी ने कहा कि धरेलू उड़ानों में शुरुआती अवधि के लिए वाई-फाई मुफ्त है। आने वाले समय में बेड़े के अन्य विमानों में भी यह सुविधा शुरू की जाएगी। एजेंसी

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BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Holiday season travel lifts jet fuel consumption to record high of 7,78,000 tonnes in December

Rishi Ranjan Kala

New Delhi

The country's aviation turbine fuel (ATF) consumption hit an all-time high record of 7,78,000 tonnes during December as the year-end holiday season boosted both international and domestic travel.

According to the latest provisional data from the Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC), India's ATF, or jet fuel, consumption rose by 4 per cent m-o-m and more than 8 per cent y-o-y.

Before this, jet fuel usage had hit a high of 7,57,000 tonnes during October and 7,58,000 tonnes during March.

In Q3 FY25, India's cumulative jet fuel consumption stood at an all-time high record of 2.28 mt, aided by higher usage that was generally driven by festival, marriage and vacation travel.

RISING AIR TRAVEL

A senior official with an oil

marketing company (OMC) said that historically also jet fuel consumption hits a high during vacations — both summers and winters.

“December sees a lot of foreign and domestic travel, particularly for vacations. Besides, some travel is also for year-end retreats by companies, which also boosts air travel.

“Last month witnessed a lot of travel, particularly after December 15-16 when major holiday season activity begins,” the official added.

More than 14.64 crore passengers flew domestically during January-November 2024, a growth of 6 per cent Y-o-Y.

The daily passenger traffic surpassed the five-lakh mark on four occasions in the last two months with the latest being on November 17 with 3,173 flights carrying around 5.05 lakh domestic passengers. During November 2024, around 1.43 crore passengers flew domestically compared to 1.27 crore a year ago. In October, do-

Refined petroleum products consumption

(Thousand tonnes)

Month/Year	Diesel	Petrol	Jet fuel
Jan-24	7,426	3,100	717
Feb-24	7,435	3,023	705
Mar-24	8,039	3,324	758
Apr-24	7,925	3,284	742
May-24	8,391	3,452	739
Jun-24	7,963	3,285	698
Jul-24	7,185	3,286	723
Aug-24	6,478	3,349	716
Sep-24	6,359	3,144	720
Oct-24	7,640	3,401	757
Nov-24	8,158	3,418	748
Dec-24	8,048	3,305	778

Source: PPAC

mestic passengers stood at 1.36 crore. December 2024 numbers are yet to come.

Domestic air traffic hit a record 154 million in FY24 propelling ATF consumption to 8.3 million tonnes (mt) in FY24 surpassing the previous high of 8.2 mt in FY19.

ATF consumption has been growing at a CAGR of 1.30 per cent between 2019 and 2024.

MARGINAL DROP

The consumption of key auto

fuel — petrol and diesel — registered a drop on a monthly basis. However, the consumption was higher year-on-year.

Diesel consumption rose by almost 6 per cent y-o-y to 8.05 mt during December 2024.

However, it fell marginally by 1.34 per cent on a monthly basis.

Diesel is the mainstay of the transport sector and accounts for more than 40 per cent share of domestic consumption of refined petroleum products in the country.

Similarly, petrol consumption grew by almost 11 per cent y-o-y to 3.31 mt last month.

On a monthly basis, the usage of the fuel, which is mainly consumed by personal vehicles, fell by over 3 per cent.

The usage of diesel has clocked a CAGR of 1.73 per cent between 2019 and 2024, while petrol consumption rose at a CAGR of 5.97 per cent during the same period.

17% fewer pilot licences issued in 2024

LEARNING TO FLY. DGCA issued only 1,342 commercial pilot licences against a record 1,622 in 2023

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has issued 1,342 commercial pilot licences (CPLs) in 2024, a reduction of 17 per cent over the previous year.

In 2023, it had issued a record 1,622 CPLs. This was almost 40 per cent higher than 2022, which saw the issuance of 1,165 licences.

The figures include certification of locally trained cadets and licence conversion of those trained overseas. Last year, 302 women obtained their CPLs compared to 292 in 2023.

The DGCA did not share reasons for issuance of fewer licences in 2024. According to aviation sector executives, a number of factors such as shortage of instructors and spare parts, disruption in aviation gasoline supply during March-April, among oth-



CRITICAL FACTORS. A shortage of instructors and spare parts and disruption in aviation gasoline supply during March-April slowed down training at flying schools GETTY IMAGES

ers, slowed down training at flying schools in the country. This, in turn, impacted the number of licences issued last year, they said.

BIGGEST BOTTLENECK
“The biggest bottleneck is the shortage of instructors. CPL holders need to

pass an examination and undergo check flights along with DGCA examiners to become flight instructors. In India, this process takes 8-10 months, more than twice the time taken in the US or Europe.”

“Almost 70 candidates are waiting for three months for

completion of their final check,” said Jati Dhillon, Managing Director of the Government Aviation Training Institute.

Flying training, which was hit during the pandemic, resumed in earnest in 2022 and 2023. Thus, the 2023 licence numbers also reflect the post-pandemic surge as candidates resumed their training.

“It takes around a year to complete CPL training in the West. In India, it takes double the time. India can actually cater to local demand and even foreign countries by adopting deregulation and best global practices,” said Hemanth DP, CEO, Asia Pacific Flight Training Academy.

Hemanth said this will help in speedy induction of training aircraft, which can take up to six months due to multiple NOCs and approvals from regulatory bodies.

“More slots and speedy clearance is also required for class I medical exams and certification,” he said.

Currently, there are 38 flying training schools operating at 56 locations across the country. While government run-Airport Authority of India eased norms for development of new flying schools at airports, certain administrative changes like monthly examinations (instead of quarterly) have helped too.

At present, aspiring pilots need to clear an examination for radio telephony proficiency conducted by the Department of Telecommunications. Now, the examination would be conducted by DGCA.

“The move will ease pilot certification processes and support the increasing demand for aviation professionals,” Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu said in an X post last month.

एयर इंडिया की घरेलू उड़ानों में मिलेगी वाई-फाई की सुविधा

दीपक पटेल

अब एयर इंडिया की कुछ घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में वाई-फाई से इंटरनेट का इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगे। यह सुविधा एयरबस ए350, बोइंग 787-9 और चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियो विमानों में मिलेगी। घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई के जरिए इंटरनेट देने वाली यह भारत की पहली एयरलाइंस बन गई है। पिछले साल जुलाई में विस्तारा ने पहली बार अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में यह सुविधा शुरू की थी। बीते नवंबर में विस्तारा का क्विलिय एयर इंडिया में हो गया था।

दूरसंचार विभाग ने नवंबर में कहा था कि विमान के 10,000 फुट की ऊंचाई पर पहुंचने पर यात्रियों को लैपटॉप और मोबाइल फोन आदि इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स डिवाइस के प्रयोग की इजाजत मिल जाएगी। एयर इंडिया ने कहा कि एयरबस ए350, चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियो और बोइंग बी787-



उड़ान के दौरान के 10,000 फुट से ऊपर पहुंचने पर यात्री मोबाइल फोन और लैपटॉप आदि डिवाइस में कर सकेंगे वाई-फाई का इस्तेमाल

9 विमानों में न्यूयॉर्क, लंदन, पेरिस और सिंगापुर जाने वाली अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में चल रहे वाई-फाई के शुरुआती कार्यक्रम को आगे बढ़ाते हुए घरेलू उड़ानों में भी यह सुविधा देने का फैसला लिया गया है।

एयरलाइंस ने कहा, 'घरेलू उड़ानों में अभी वाई-फाई मुफ्त रहेगी। समय के साथ

इस सुविधा को कंपनी के अन्य विमानों में भी शुरू किया जाएगा।' फ्लाइट के 10,000 फुट की ऊंचाई पर पहुंचने के बाद यात्री वाई-फाई से एक साथ कई डिवाइस को जोड़ सकेंगे। एयरलाइन ने कहा, 'वाई-फाई सुविधा शुरू होने के बाद यात्री उड़ते विमान में इंटरनेट से जुड़े रहेंगे और सोशल मीडिया के इस्तेमाल के साथ अपने कार्यालय से जुड़े कार्य कर सकेंगे या परिवार-दोस्तों से संदेशों का आदान-प्रदान कर सकेंगे।' एयर इंडिया के चीफ कस्टमर एक्सपीरियंस ऑफिसर राजेश डोगरा कहते हैं, 'आधुनिक युग में इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी यात्रा का जरूरी हिस्सा हो गई है। यात्रा के दौरान कुछ लोगों के लिए इंटरनेट से जुड़े रहना सुविधा और आराम का मामला है तो कुछ के लिए अपनी उत्पादकता एवं कार्यक्षमता का। इसका चाहे जो उद्देश्य हो, लेकिन हमें पूरा भरोसा है कि हमारे यात्री इसका आनंद लेंगे और इस पहल को सराहेंगे।'

A-I becomes 1st Indian airline to offer WiFi on domestic flights

The in-flight WiFi will allow flyers to connect multiple devices simultaneously when above 10,000 feet in the air

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 1 January

Air India announced on Wednesday that it has rolled out WiFi internet connectivity services on board domestic and international flights operated by its Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9, and select Airbus A321neo aircraft. This makes the Tata-owned airline the first to offer in-flight Wi-Fi internet connectivity on flights within India.

In July last year, Vistara became the first airline to offer WiFi services on international flights. Vistara was merged into Air India in November. In November, the Department of Telecom stated that in-flight passengers will be able to use internet services through WiFi only when electronic devices (mobile phones, laptops, etc) are permitted to be used in the aircraft after it attains an altitude of 10,000 feet in Indian airspace.

Air India said the deployment of Wi-Fi on domestic routes followed an ongoing initial programme on international flights operated by the Airbus A350, select Airbus A321 neo, and Boeing B787-9 aircraft to international destinations, including New York, London, Paris, and Singapore.

“As with the domestic offer, WiFi is complimentary for an introductory period. Air India will progressively roll out the service on other aircraft in its fleet over time,” it added.

The in-flight WiFi will also allow passengers to connect multiple



The service is rolled out for domestic and international flights operated by Air India's Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9, and select Airbus A321neo aircraft

devices simultaneously when above 10,000 feet. WiFi services will enable passengers to “stay connected to the internet during their flights, and to enjoy browsing, accessing social media, catching up on work, or texting friends and family”, the airline said.

“Connectivity is now an integral part of modern travel. For some, it is about the convenience and comfort of real-time sharing, while for others, it is about greater productivity and efficiency. Whatever one's purpose, we are confident that our guests will appreciate having the option of connecting to the web and enjoy the new Air India

experience on board these aircraft,” said Rajesh Dogra, Chief Customer Experience Officer, Air India.

Air India Group, which includes full-service carrier Air India and low-cost airline subsidiary Air India Express, has about 300 planes in its fleet. In October last year, AIX Connect (formerly known as AirAsia India) was merged into Air India Express. A month later, Vistara was merged into Air India.

A few weeks ago, Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson told reporters that the group plans to add about 100 more planes to its fleet in the next three years. In the last two years, the group has placed a huge order of 570 planes — narrow body as well as wide body — with European planemaker Airbus and American aerospace giant Boeing.

Govt issues advisory to airlines on fog

The Civil Aviation Ministry on Wednesday advised airlines to sensitise their Operations Control Centres and war-room representatives for closer coordination during adverse weather conditions, especially fog, even as it reiterated its earlier instructions to air operators to cancel flights if the delay is more than three hours.

PTI

एअर इंडिया की उड़ानों में शुरू हुई वाई-फाई सुविधा

प्रसून चौधरी (मिड-डे)

मुंबई: एअर इंडिया ने नए साल के पहले दिन से अपनी घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई की सुविधा शुरू कर दी है। यह इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी सेवा इसकी एयरबस ए350, बोइंग 787-9 और एयरबस ए321नियो विमानों द्वारा संचालित सभी उड़ानों में मिलनी शुरू हुई है। एअर इंडिया घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई की सुविधा देने वाली देश की पहली एयरलाइन बन गई है। फिलहाल यात्रियों को इसके लिए कोई अतिरिक्त शुल्क नहीं देना पड़ेगा।

एअर इंडिया के बयान के अनुसार, नई सेवा का उद्देश्य यात्रियों को उड़ान के दौरान संपर्क में बने रहने की सुविधा देकर उनकी यात्रा के अनुभव को बेहतर बनाना है। इससे यात्री उड़ान के दौरान न केवल इंटरनेट ब्राउज कर सकते हैं बल्कि इंटरनेट भीडिया का उपयोग कर सकते हैं। काम के बारे में अपडेट हो सकते हैं और मित्रों व परिवार के सदस्यों को संदेश भेज



- घरेलू उड़ानों में यह सेवा देने वाली पहली एयरलाइन बनी
- यात्रियों को नहीं देना होगा कोई अतिरिक्त शुल्क

सकते हैं। वे दस हजार फीट की ऊंचाई पर भी लैपटॉप, टैबलेट और स्मार्टफोन चला सकेंगे। यह एयरलाइन पहले से एक पायलट प्रोजेक्ट के तहत न्यूयार्क, लंदन और पेरिस समेत कुछ अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में वाई-फाई मुहैया करा रही है। एअर इंडिया ने कहा, 'उड़ान के दौरान वाई-फाई कनेक्शन सेटलाइट कनेक्टिविटी, रूट और सरकारी प्रतिबंधों जैसे कारकों पर निर्भर करता है।'

Corporate Communications Directorate

ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

DefMin Readies Plan to Streamline Procurement, Promote Partnerships

2025 DECLARED YEAR OF REFORMS Ministry will also focus on integrated theatre commands

Manu Pubby

New Delhi: The defence ministry has prepared a roadmap that will focus on streamlining procurement, promote integration between the services, encourage public-private partnerships and technology transfer.

At a meeting chaired by defence minister Rajnath Singh, 2025 has been declared as the year of reforms with several initiatives set to be rolled out in the coming months. Officials said that among the areas that have been identified for focused intervention is the acquisition procedure, which has often been marred by delays and time overruns.

"Acquisition procedures need to be made simpler and time-sensitive to facilitate swifter and robust capability development," they said. Sources added among the new initiatives being placed is an accelerated procurement procedure that will be on the lines of

emergency procurements done by the services over the past four years. Such a procedure will drastically cut down selection time as well as delivery of weapons systems to the armed forces.

Another focus area is going to be improving ease of doing business, with the ministry looking to promote technology transfer and public-private partnerships in the defence sector. It is known that public sector entities have a lot of manufacturing infrastructure and expertise but have been unable to fully absorb technology due to constraints like hiring and rewards policies. The government is likely to encourage public sector units to enter into partnerships with the private sector.

Officials said that the idea is to position India as a credible exporter of defence products and focus on research and development partnerships between domestic companies and foreign original equipment manufacturers. For example, the partnership



MANY STEPS PLANNED

At a meeting chaired by Rajnath, min has decided to roll out several initiatives in coming months

between Tata and Airbus to manufacture C295 transport aircraft in India is expected to bring in key aviation

technologies to the private sector.

The reforms will also focus on collaboration across various stakeholders and effective civil-military coordination to eliminate inefficiencies. Besides, they will promote jointness by facilitating establishment of integrated theatre commands. Some domains that have been chosen for particular focus are cyber and space, emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, machine learning, hypersonics and robotics.



Corporate Communications Directorate

ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

ATF Price Cut by 1.5%, Commercial LPG Rates Down ₹14.50 per Cylinder

New Delhi: The price of jet fuel, or ATF, on Wednesday was reduced by 1.5% and rates of commercial LPG that

is used in hotels and restaurants was cut by ₹14.50 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with

benchmark international prices.

The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by

₹1,401.37 per kilolitre, or 1.52%, to ₹90,455.47 per kl in the national capital—home to one of the busiest airports

in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

The rate cut follows two rounds of monthly increases. Prices were increased by ₹2,941.5 per kl (3.3%) on November 1, and by Rs 1,318.12 per kl (1.45%) on December 1, 2024. —PTI

Govt cuts jet fuel price by 1.5%, commercial LPG by ₹14.5/cylinder

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, January 1

THE PRICE OF jet fuel, or ATF, on Wednesday was reduced by 1.5% and the rate of commercial LPG that is used in hotels and restaurants was cut by ₹14.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with benchmark international prices.

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The rate cut follows two rounds of monthly increases. Prices were increased by ₹2,941.5 per kl (3.3%) on November 1, and by ₹1,318.12 per kl (1.45%) on December 1, 2024. The ATF price in Mumbai has been reduced to ₹84,511.93 from ₹85,861.02 per kl previously.

Oil firms also reduced the price of commercial LPG by ₹14.5 to ₹1,804 per 19-kg cylinder in the national capital. This is the first reduction after fifth straight monthly hikes in commercial LPG price. Rates were hiked by ₹16.5 per 19-kg cylinder at the last revision on December 1. In five price increases, commercial LPG rates had been hiked by ₹172.5 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs ₹1,756 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, ₹1,911 in Kolkata, and ₹1,966 in Chennai. Prices of ATF and LPG differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes including VAT. The rate of cooking

MONTHLY REVISION



ATF prices for domestic airlines (₹/kilolitre)

Applicable from January 1, 2025

METRO PRICES

Delhi	90,455.47
Kolkata	93,059.79
Mumbai	84,511.93
Chennai	93,670.72

■ A 19-kg commercial cylinder now costs ₹1,804 in Delhi, ₹1,756 in Mumbai, ₹1,911 in Kolkata, and ₹1,966 in Chennai

■ Domestic cooking gas rate remains unchanged

gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at ₹803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.



Air India set for major global expansion, says CEO Wilson

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi, January 1

AIR INDIA HAS covered a lot of ground since privatisation and its global coverage will further increase in the years ahead, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson said on Wednesday.

He also said the interior refit of the single-aisle fleet, serving domestic and short-haul international destinations, is underway, and will be completed by mid-2025.

Loss-making Air India was acquired by the Tata Group from the government in January 2022, and is undergoing an ambitious five-year transformation plan.

In 2024, Air India completed the merger of Vistara with itself as well as integration of Air India Express and AIX Connect was also done.

In his New Year message, Wilson said these mergers and new aircraft deliveries have taken Air India Group's fleet to 300 aircraft, allowing it to expand to over 100 domestic and international destinations.

"Air India's global coverage will further increase in the years ahead, not least because of the recent addition of 100 aircraft to our order book, augmenting the earlier commitment for 470 made in 2023," he said.

The Air India CEO and MD also said these new aircraft will be supported by a brand-new 12-bay maintenance facility and maintenance training school in Bengaluru (Karnataka), a new 34-aircraft flight school in Amravati (Maharashtra) and the training academy in Gurugram (Haryana).

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets and efforts are being made to make the country a global aviation hub with Indian carriers providing

CAMPBELL WILSON, CEO & MD, AIR INDIA

All 30,000 Air Indians are fully committed to improving the quality and consistency of our services, in all areas, so that Air India becomes the world-class airline we all want it to be



AI first airline to roll out Wi-Fi on domestic fleet



PRIVATE CARRIER AIR India on Wednesday rolled out Wi-Fi internet connectivity services on board domestic and international flights on its widebody Airbus A350 and Boeing 787-9 fleet as well as on select Airbus A321neo aircraft.

This makes Air India the first airline to offer such services on flights within India, the airline said.

Accessible on Wi-Fi-enabled devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones with iOS or Android operating systems, the in-flight Wi-Fi will also allow guests to connect multiple devices simultaneously

when above 10,000 feet, it said.

The deployment of Wi-Fi on domestic routes follows an ongoing pilot programme on international services operated by the Airbus A350, select Airbus A321neo and Boeing B787-9 aircraft serving international destinations including New York, London, Paris and Singapore. As with the domestic offer, Wi-Fi is complimentary for an introductory period, Air India said.

Air India said it will progressively roll out the service on other aircraft in its fleet over time.

PTI

direct flights to international destinations.

"Air India has covered a lot of ground in the period since privatisation; we acknowledge there's much more to be done.

"All 30,000 Air Indians are fully committed to improving the quality and consistency of our services, in all areas, so that Air India becomes the world-class airline we all want it to be," he said.





Corporate Communications Directorate

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Ministry issues fog advisory to airlines

THE CIVIL AVIATION ministry on Wednesday advised airlines to sensitise their operations control centres and war-room representatives for closer coordination during adverse weather conditions, especially fog, even as it reiterated its earlier orders to air operators to cancel flights if the delay is more than three hours. Passengers should not be held up inside delayed aircraft for more than 90 minutes as this would significantly reduce passenger inconvenience. PTI

FLY BIG AIRLINES EXPANDS INTER-CITY FLIGHTS

Staff Reporter

BILASPUR

In a move to promote air travel in Chhattisgarh, Fly Big Airlines has expanded its air service between Raipur, Bilaspur, and Ambikapur. Initially operating three days a week (Thursday, Friday, and Saturday), the service will now run six days a week, from Monday to Saturday.

As per the new flight schedule, Raipur to Ambikapur: Departs at 9:00 AM, arrives at 10:15 AM, Ambikapur to Bilaspur: Departs at 10:40 AM, arrives at 11:35 AM, Bilaspur to Ambikapur: Departs at 12:00 PM, arrives at 12:55 PM and Ambikapur to Raipur: Departs at 1:20 PM, arrives at 2:30 PM.

The first flight under the new schedule landed at Bilas-



pur Airport on Monday, but both legs of the Ambikapur-Bilaspur route flew without passengers due to insufficient publicity about the schedule expansion.

The Air Suvidha Jan Sangharsh Samiti welcomed the increased frequency but raised the following suggestions, extending the Ambika-

pur flight further to Banaras, making it a round trip via Ambikapur to Raipur by evening. Station aircraft at Bilaspur Airport instead of Raipur Airport to enable more flights from Bilaspur. The committee has also urged passengers to book tickets and utilize the service to ensure its sustainability.

Economic Turbulence

Airfares to Kashmir more expensive than trip to Dubai

Mukeet Akmal
Srinagar, Dec 31

Astonishingly, travelling from Delhi to Dubai is much cheaper than travelling from the national capital to Srinagar as airfares to Kashmir have skyrocketed.

A cursory look at the airfares for Delhi to Dubai on December 31 showed tickets hovering around Rs 10,000 to 13,000 per passenger, while air tickets from Delhi to Srinagar airport cost Rs 21,623 on the same date.

Similarly, airfares from Mumbai to Srinagar were listed at Rs 21,843, and from Bangalore, they exceed Rs 20,000.

The rise in airfares is attributed to two main factors: the closure of the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway for the last two days due to New Year's Eve celebrations, which have increased the number of tourists visiting Kashmir.

The expensive airfares are severely impacting patients, students, and tourists who have to travel between Srinagar and Delhi.

A senior civil aviation official said, "Due to high demand and limited supply, airfares from Delhi to Sri-



Airfares from Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore to Srinagar exceed **Rs 20,000**

High fares **deter tourists**, impacting Kashmir's peak season footfall

Patients, students, families **bear brunt** of steep airfare hikes

Calls for Govt intervention to **cap airfares** grow louder

Airfares to Kashmir...

local populace. A mechanism to cap airfares must be put in place to prevent issues for everyone. Not only do tourists fly, but students, patients, and businesspeople make up the majority of those leaving Srinagar and bearing the brunt of this arbitrary price increase."

Irshad Ahmad, a Srinagar resident, shared his ordeal, "I paid Rs 21,000 per passenger airfare from Delhi to Srinagar. We were 10 family members and my total cost of air tickets was Rs 2.10 lakh because we travelled to Delhi for my father's critical surgery and had our children with us as there was nobody here to look after them."

A parliamentary panel has highlighted that escalating fares during the peak season are a major deterrent to increasing tourist footfall in Kashmir.

In its report, the Department-Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture said, "Exorbitant price of air tickets is a major dampener. Escalating airfares of 'low cost' carriers during the peak season is a major deterrent to increasing footfall in the region. The airfares are equivalent to that of nearby foreign destinations and given the sensitivity of the region, tourists would prefer to visit nearby foreign destinations at the same airfare rather than visit J&K."

In response to these observations, the Ministry of Tourism has engaged with the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA).

However, the MoCA has informed us that, at present, airfares are not controlled by the government, leaving the issue of high airfares unresolved for the moment.

nagar and Mumbai to Srinagar have seen a significant increase."

Bashir Ahmad, a travel agent said, "The government should take harsh action against individuals responsible for exorbitantly rising airfares, which are shooting away tourists and causing problems for the

» See **Airfares**...on Pg-08



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

एयर इंडिया की उड़ान में वाई-फाई सुविधा

नई दिल्ली, एजेसी। टाटा ग्रुप की एयरलाइन एयर इंडिया ने घरेलू उड़ान मार्गों पर वाई-फाई सेवा शुरू कर दी है। यह जानकारी एयर इंडिया द्वारा बुधवार को दी गई। एयर इंडिया द्वारा बताया गया कि यात्री घरेलू मार्गों पर एयरबस ए350, बोइंग 787-9 और चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियो विमानों में वाई-फाई इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी सेवा का लाभ उठा सकते हैं।

एयर इंडिया देश में इन-फ्लाइट वाई-फाई सर्विस देने वाली पहली एयरलाइन बन गई है। इसके जरिए ग्राहक 10,000 फीट से अधिक की ऊंचाई पर एक साथ कई डिवाइस का आनंद उठा सकते हैं। घरेलू मार्गों पर वाई-फाई की सुविधा एयरबस ए350, चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियो और बोइंग बी787-9 विमानों द्वारा संचालित अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाओं पर चल रहे पायलट कार्यक्रम के बाद की गई है। एयर इंडिया द्वारा वाई-फाई सेवा निःशुल्क प्रदान की जा रही है।

S Korea to send Jeju Air crash black box to US

Agence France-Press

letters@hindustantimes.com

SEOUL: South Korean investigators probing a Jeju Air crash which killed 179 people in the worst aviation disaster on its soil said on Wednesday they will send one of the retrieved black boxes to the United States for analysis.

The Boeing 737-800 was carrying 181 people from Thailand to South Korea, on Sunday, when it issued a mayday call and belly-landed before hitting a barrier and bursting into flames, killing everyone aboard except two flight attendants pulled from the burning wreckage.

South Korean and US investigators, including from Boeing, have been combing the crash site in southwestern Muan since the disaster to establish a cause.

"The damaged flight data recorder has been deemed unrecoverable for data extraction domestically," said South Korea's deputy minister for civil aviation, Joo Jong-wan.

"It was agreed today to transport it to the United States for analysis in collaboration with the US National Transportation Safety Board." Joo earlier said both of the plane's black boxes were retrieved, and for the cockpit voice recorder "the initial extraction has already been completed".

"Based on this preliminary data, we plan to start converting it into audio format," he said, meaning investigators would be able to hear the pilots' final communications.

The second black box, the flight data recorder, "was found with a missing connector", Joo said. Officials initially pointed to a bird strike as a possible cause of the disaster, but they have since said the probe was also examining a concrete barrier at the end of the runway, which dramatic video showed the plane colliding with before bursting into flames.

A special inspection of all Boeing 737-800 models operated by local carriers was examining their landing gear after it "failed to deploy" in this case, said the director general for aviation safety policy, Yoo Kyeong-soo.

South Korean authorities vow to execute ousted president Yoon arrest warrant

SEOUL: South Korean investigators said on Wednesday they would execute an arrest warrant for Yoon Suk Yeol over his declaration of martial law by the deadline of January 6, as the impeached leader vowed to fight to the bitter end.

The Corruption Investigation Office (CIO) requested the warrant after Yoon failed to report for questioning a third time.

However, it has been unclear whether they could execute it as the Presidential Security Service have previously refused to comply with search warrants. **AFP**

Local media reported the landing gear had deployed properly on Jeju Air Flight 2216's first failed landing attempt at Muan airport before failing on the second. The issue "will likely be examined by the Accident Investigation Board" through a review of testimony and evidence, the ministry of land, which oversees civil aviation, said at a briefing.

All victims identified

At Muan airport, relatives of the victims were allowed to visit the site, on Wednesday, for the first time since the crash.

Families were taken to see the runway and the cement wall that the plane hit, according to the ministry of land.

Hundreds of people also queued up to pay their respects at a memorial altar set up to honour the victims.

So many people came to the memorial that the queue stretched for hundreds of metres and the local cell phone network was overloaded, local media reported. Other altars for the victims have been set up nationwide.



Officials probe the site where a Jeju Air aircraft crashed, at Muan International Airport, in Muan, South Korea, on Wednesday. **AFP**



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Commercial LPG, ATF prices cut for first time in 6 months

Rituraj Baruah

rituraj.baruah@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: In a New Year gift to the people, government-owned oil marketing companies (OMC) reduced prices of commercial cooking gas for the first time in six months on Wednesday with immediate effect. The price cuts ranged from ₹14 to 16 per cylinder.

OMCs also reduced aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, which may lead to cheaper air fares.

In the national capital, the price of a 19kg commercial cooking gas cylinder was lowered by ₹14.50 to ₹1,804 per cylinder. Prices were previously revised to ₹1,818.50 on 1 December, when they were raised by about ₹16 per cylinder.

Prices in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai stood at ₹1,911, ₹1,756 and ₹1,966, respectively, lower by ₹16, ₹15 and ₹14 per cylinder, according to data on the website of Indian Oil Corp. Ltd. Commercial LPG is largely used in the hospitality and food



In Delhi, the price of a 19 kg commercial LPG was lowered by ₹14.50 to ₹1,804 per cylinder.

SHUTTERSTOCK

& beverage space. This price reduction may ease the expenses of hotels and restaurants. Commercial LPG prices had been increased for five consecutive months since August. Prices of domestic cooking gas, however, were left unchanged.

ATF prices were cut on

Wednesday after they were increased for two consecutive months.

In New Delhi, jet fuel prices were reduced by ₹1,401.37 to ₹90,455.47 per kilolitre. ATF prices in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai were lowered by ₹1,491.84, ₹1,349.09 and ₹1,560.77 to ₹93,059.79, ₹84,511.93 and ₹93,670.72 per kilolitre, respectively. Fuel costs account for about 40% of an airline's expenses.

The price reductions come amid tepid international oil prices.

Crude oil prices have largely been below the \$75 per barrel mark for the past couple of months, largely due to demand and slowdown concerns globally.

The March contract of Brent was at \$74.64 per barrel on Wednesday. Although commercial LPG and ATF prices have been cut, there is no relief in petrol and diesel prices, which were last cut by about ₹2 per litre in March, ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

AIR INDIA PLANS TO EXPAND IN 2025, SAYS CEO CAMPBELL WILSON

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Air India's chief executive officer Campbell Wilson in an internal mail on Wednesday announced that the airline has expansion plans in 2025 and that it is set to grow remarkably in the years to come.

"More than 100 new aircraft have been deployed, including India's first Airbus A350 aircraft now flying from Delhi to London and New York. These are part of the one-third of our twin-aisle fleet... with the remainder of the fleet progressively undergoing similar upgradation over the next two years. Interior refit of the single-aisle fleet, serving domestic and short-haul international destinations, is already well underway, and will be complete by mid-2025," Wilson said while extending new year wishes to the employees.

The merger of the four Tata airlines into one full-service airline, Air India, and one low-cost carrier, Air India Express, was completed in late 2024, and the erstwhile Vistara aircraft are now deployed on metro-to-metro domestic routes and to key international destinations such as Frankfurt and Singapore.

"These mergers and new aircraft deliveries have taken the Air India Group fleet to 300 aircraft. Air India's global coverage will further increase in the years ahead, not least because of the recent addition of 100 aircraft to our order book, augmenting the earlier commitment for 470 made in 2023," Campbell said.

"These new aircraft will be supported by a brand-new 12-bay maintenance facility and maintenance training school in Bengaluru, a new 34-aircraft flight school in Amravati, and the aforementioned training academy in Gurugram, underscoring our commitment to strengthening India's aviation ecosystem, not just our airline," he added. The airline has deployed customer-facing initiatives, including upgraded inflight catering, new amenities, and the rolled out of streaming entertainment on all aircraft.



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INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Air India first airline to roll out Wi-Fi for select flights in country

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 1

AIR INDIA on Wednesday rolled out Wi-Fi internet connectivity services on board domestic flights operated by select aircraft in its fleet — Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9 and some Airbus A321neo. The Tata Group-owned airline was already offering internet connectivity on international flights operated by these aircraft as part of a pilot programme.

Air India is the first Indian airline to offer internet connectivity on domestic flights.

In a statement, the airline said Wi-Fi will be offered free of charge for a limited introductory period, but did not specify the duration.

"The deployment of Wi-Fi on domestic routes follows an ongoing pilot programme on international services operated by the Airbus A350, select Airbus A321neo and Boeing B787-9 aircraft serving international destinations including New York, London, Paris and Singapore. As with the domestic offer, Wi-Fi is complimentary for an introductory period. Air India will progressively roll out the service on other aircraft in its fleet over time," the airline said in a statement.

On-board internet services are fast becoming a standard offering, particularly among major full-service carriers globally. Air India has ambitions to be counted among the world's foremost full-service carriers.

Besides the new A350 planes, which Air India started operating in 2024, the other aircraft are understood to be those of erstwhile Vistara, which merged with Air India in November. All these aircraft are equipped with special hardware that is required to offer internet connectivity on board. Vistara had been offering internet connectivity on select international flights prior to the merger.

• Air India first airline to roll out Wi-Fi on some domestic routes

Internet connectivity on board the Vistara aircraft was facilitated by another Tata Group company — Nelco — in partnership with Panasonic Avionics Corporation. The same service is being extended to Air India's domestic flights operated by the select fleet, it is learnt.

Accessible on Wi-Fi-enabled devices such as laptops, tablets and smartphones with iOS or Android operating systems, the in-flight Wi-Fi will also allow guests to connect multiple devices simultaneously. According to the airline, passengers will have to select the "Air India Wi-Fi" network on their devices, after which they will be redirected to the Air India portal on the device's default browser. After entering their details, including PNR and last name, the device will be connected to the Wi-Fi network.

"Connectivity is now an integral part of modern travel. For some, it is about the convenience and comfort of real-time sharing, while for others, it is about greater productivity and efficiency. Whatever be one's purpose, we are confident that our guests will appreciate having the option of connecting to the web and enjoy the new Air India experience on board these aircraft," said Air India's Chief Customer Experience Officer Rajesh Dogra.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Commercial LPG, ATF prices lowered

Rituraj Baruah

rituraj.baruah@livemint.com

NEW DELHI

In a New Year's gift, government-owned oil marketing companies (OMC) reduced prices of commercial cooking gas for the first time in six months on Wednesday with immediate effect. The price cuts ranged from ₹14 to ₹16 per cylinder.

OMCs also reduced aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, which may lead to cheaper air fares.

In the national capital, the price of a 19kg commercial cooking gas cylinder was lowered by ₹14.50 to ₹1,804 per cylinder. Prices were previously revised to ₹1,818.50 on 1 December, when they were raised by about ₹16 per cylinder.

Prices in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai stood at ₹1,911, ₹1,756 and ₹1,966, respectively, lower by ₹16, ₹15 and ₹14 per cylinder, according to data on the website of Indian Oil Corp.

Ltd. Commercial LPG is largely used in the hospitality and food & beverage space.

This reduction may ease the expenses of hotels and restaurants. Commercial LPG prices had been increased for five consecutive months since August. Prices of domestic cooking gas, however, were left unchanged.

ATF prices were cut on Wednesday after they were increased for two consecutive months.

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In New Delhi, jet fuel prices were reduced by ₹1,401.37 to ₹90,455.47 per kilolitre. ATF prices in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai were lowered by ₹1,491.84, ₹1,349.09 and ₹1,560.77 to ₹93,059.79, ₹84,511.93 and ₹93,670.72 per kilolitre, respectively. Fuel costs account for about 40% of an airline's expenses.

The price reductions come amid tepid international oil prices.

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

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MINT

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025



Air India chief Campbell Wilson says the airline has covered a lot of ground since privatisation. MINT

'Air India will raise its global coverage'

Air India has covered a lot of ground since privatisation and its global coverage will further increase in the years ahead, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson said.

He also said the interior refit of the single-aisle fleet, serving domestic and short-haul international destinations, is underway, and will be completed by mid-2025.

Loss-making Air India was acquired by the Tata Group from the government in January 2022, and is undergoing an ambitious five-year transformation plan.

In 2024, Air India completed the merger of Vistara with itself as well as integration of Air India Express and AIX Connect was also done.

In his New Year message, Wilson said these mergers and new aircraft deliveries have taken Air India Group's fleet to 300 aircraft, allowing it to expand to over 100 domestic and international destinations.

"Air India's global coverage will further increase in the years ahead, not least because of the recent addition of 100 aircraft to our order book, augmenting the earlier commitment for 470 made in 2023," he said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLANIUM POST DELHI 2 JANUARY 2025

Air India rolls out Wi-Fi service on select aircraft

Air India rolls out Wi-Fi...

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI: Air India on Wednesday announced the launch of in-flight Wi-Fi services across its wide-body Airbus A350 and Boeing 787-9 fleet, as well as select Airbus A321neo aircraft, for both domestic and international routes.

With this move, Air India has become the first airline in the country to offer Wi-Fi



connectivity on flights within India, the airline stated.

The service, compatible with Wi-Fi-enabled devices such as laptops, tablets, and smartphones running iOS or Android, allows passengers to connect multiple devices simultaneously once the aircraft reaches an altitude of 10,000 feet.

The rollout on domestic routes builds upon an ongoing pilot **Continued on P4**

Continued from P1
Programme for international flights operated by Airbus A350, select Airbus A321neo, and Boeing 787-9 aircraft, serving destinations such as New York, London, Paris, and Singapore.

During the introductory phase, the Wi-Fi service will be offered free of charge, Air India confirmed.

The airline further announced plans to gradually extend the service to additional aircraft in its fleet over time.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Air India rolls out in-flight Wi-Fi connectivity

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AIR INDIA has rolled out Wi-Fi internet connectivity services onboard domestic and international flights operated by Airbus A350, Boeing 787-9 and select Airbus A321neo aircraft. With this, the Tata Group airline has become the first player to offer in-flight Wi-Fi internet connectivity on flights within India.

Air India will roll out the service on other aircraft in its fleet over time. As with the domestic offer, Wi-Fi is complimentary for an introductory period. This service will be



available to devices like laptops, tablets, and smartphones with iOS or Android operating systems. The in-flight Wi-Fi will allow guests to connect multiple devices simultaneously when above 10,000 feet. "Connectivity is an integral part of modern travel. For some, it is about convenience and comfort

of real-time sharing, while for others, it is about greater productivity and efficiency.

"We are confident that our guests will appreciate having option of connecting to web and enjoy the new Air India experience on board these aircraft," said Rajesh Dogra, chief customer experience officer, Air India.

The deployment of Wi-Fi on domestic routes follows an ongoing pilot programme on international services operated by Airbus A350, select Airbus A321 neo and Boeing B787-9 aircraft

servicing international destinations including New York, London, Paris and Singapore.

The in-flight Wi-Fi connections depend on factors like satellite connectivity, bandwidth usage, routes and government restrictions.

Air India has placed an order for 34 trainer aircraft as it prepares to start training of pilots at South Asia's largest Flying Training Organisation (FTO) coming up in Amravati, Maharashtra by the second half of 2025, post regulatory approvals.





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MORNING STANDARD DELHI 2 JANUARY 2025

OMCs slash price of ATF, commercial LPG cylinder

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

STATE-owned oil marketing companies (OMCs) have reduced price of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) by 1.5% and also lowered the cost of commercial LPG used in hotels and restaurants by ₹14.5 per 19-kg cylinder.

According to the notification, in Delhi, the price of ATF was cut by ₹1,401.37 per kilolitre (kl), or 1.5%, bringing the new price to ₹90,455.47 per kl. This reduction follows two consecutive price hikes. On November 1, 2024, ATF prices were increased by ₹2,941.5 per kl (3.3%), and again on December 1, 2024, by ₹1,318.12 per kl (1.45%).

In Mumbai, the price of ATF

has been reduced to ₹84,511.93 per kl from ₹85,861.02 per kl previously.

The OMCs also reduced the price of commercial LPG by ₹14.5, bringing the price of a 19-kg cylinder in Delhi to ₹1,804. This marks the first reduction after five consecutive

monthly hikes in commercial LPG prices. The last increase on December 1, 2024, was ₹16.5 per 19-kg cylinder, which followed a total hike of ₹172.5 per cylinder over the previous

five months. Commercial LPG now costs ₹1,756 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, ₹1,911 in Kolkata, and ₹1,966 in Chennai. Meanwhile, the price of cooking gas for domestic households remains unchanged at ₹803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.



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NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

घरेलू उड़ानों में Wi-Fi सेवा देने वाली पहली एयरलाइंस बनी एयर इंडिया

■ NBT रिपोर्ट, नई दिल्ली

अगली बार आप जब भी एयर इंडिया की फ्लाइट से टेकऑफ़ करेंगे तो आप अपने मोबाइल फोन, लैपटॉप और टैबलेट जैसे किसी भी डिवाइस से वाई-फाई का इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगे। जी हाँ, एयर इंडिया ने नए साल से अपने कुछ घरेलू विमानों में वाई-फाई सिस्टम शुरू कर दिया है। फिलहाल यह सर्विस चुनिंदा घरेलू और इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट्स में प्रे में दी जा रही है। हालाँकि, कुछ दिनों बाद दायरा बढ़ाते हुए यंत्रियों से इसका चार्ज लेना शुरू कर दिया जाएगा।

एयर इंडिया के चीफ कस्टमर एक्सपीरियंस ऑफिसर राजेश डोगरा ने बताया कि सर्विस का फायदा प्लेन के जमीन से 10 हजार फीट की ऊँचाई पर



फह्रचने के बाद से ही मिलना शुरू होगा। फ्लाइट जब टेक ऑफ़ और लैंड कर रही होगी, तब वाई-फाई कनेक्ट नहीं होगा। इसी के साथ ही तमाम भारतीय एयरलाइंस में एयर इंडिया, फ्लाइट में वाई-फाई सर्विस शुरू करने वाली पहली एयरलाइंस बन गई है। एयर इंडिया का कहना है कि वाई-फाई सर्विस से बिजनेसमैन, सर्विस क्लास और अन्य सभी तरह के यंत्रियों को फायदा मिलेगा। वह हवा में रहते हुए भी हर वक्त अपने परिवार,

यार-दोस्तों, ऑफिस और बिजनेस से कनेक्ट रह सकेंगे। एयर इंडिया के मुताबिक, अभी यह सर्विस उसके 300 से ज्यादा एयरक्राफ्ट के बेड़े में से कुछ ही एयरक्राफ्ट में शुरू की गई है। इनमें छह A-350, सात बोइंग-787-9 और दस A-321 नियो विमान शामिल हैं। जिन डोमेस्टिक और इंटरनेशनल रूट पर A-350 और B-787-9 एयरक्राफ्ट टेक ऑफ़ करेंगे, उन सभी रूट पर वाई-फाई सर्विस मिलेगी। अभी सभी A-321 नियो वाले रूट पर यह सर्विस नहीं मिलेगी। कंपनी का कहना है कि उसकी कोशिश है कि दिल्ली-मुंबई, हैदराबाद, चेन्नै और बैंगलुरु रूट पर वाई-फाई सर्विस मिले। वहीं, न्यूयॉर्क, पैरिस, लंदन, सिंगापुर और सैन फ्रांसिस्को जैसे इंटरनेशनल रूट पर यह सर्विस मिलेगी।



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NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

ATF की कीमत में 1.5% की कटौती

AI Image



■ पीटीआई, नई दिल्ली : विमान ईंधन (एटीएफ) की कीमत में 1.5% की कटौती की गई है। अब दिल्ली में इसकी कीमत 90,455.47 रुपये प्रति किलोलीटर होगी। मुंबई में भी एटीएफ की कीमत 85,861.02 रुपये प्रति किलोलीटर से घटकर 84,511.93 रुपये प्रति किलोलीटर हो गई है। ये बदलाव अंतरराष्ट्रीय कीमतों में बदलाव के हिस्से से किए गए हैं।

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NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

इंडिगो के दिल्ली-इस्तांबुल प्लेन में फिर आई खामी

Maneesh.Aggarwal@timesofindia.com

■ नई दिल्ली: साउथ कोरिया में 29 दिसंबर को बजट एयरलाइंस Jeju Air की बोइंग एयरक्राफ्ट वाली फ्लाइट क्रेश होने के बाद दिल्ली से इस्तांबुल जाने वाली इंडिगो की बोइंग-777 एयरक्राफ्ट वाली फ्लाइट लगातार कैसल की जा रही है। इस एयरक्राफ्ट की जगह इंडिगो अपना जो दूसरा एयरक्राफ्ट लगा रहा है, उसमें भी वह कम कैपेसिटी का हवाला देकर सभी को जगह नहीं दे पा रहा है। इससे कुछ यात्री दिल्ली में ही अटक जा रहे हैं।

इस तरह की घटना भोपाल से आए शुभम के साथ भी हुई, जिनकी दिल्ली से इस्तांबुल और फिर इस्तांबुल से बॉस्टन के लिए कनेक्टिंग फ्लाइट थी। उनकी 30 दिसंबर को दिल्ली से इस्तांबुल के लिए फ्लाइट थी लेकिन जब



वह यहां दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट के टी-3 पर पहुंचे तो उन्हें बोर्डिंग पास जारी करने के बाद फ्लाइट में कम क्षमता का हवाला देकर रोक दिया गया। 31 दिसंबर को भी ऐसा हुआ था, जब इंडिगो ने पांच-छह यात्रियों को बिना कुछ वैलिड रीजन बताए ऐन वक्त पर फ्लाइट में बैठने से रोक दिया। 28 और 13 दिसंबर को भी बोइंग के इस 777 एयरक्राफ्ट के साथ ऐसी समस्या हुई थी।

NBT
Lens
समझिए खबरों के
अंदर की बात

**क्या इंडिगो के बोइंग-777
एयरक्राफ्ट में कुछ कमी है?**

इंडिगो ने दो वाइड बॉडी बोइंग-777 एयरक्राफ्ट लीज पर लिए हैं। इन दोनों का इंडिगो भारत से इस्तांबुल के लिए इस्तेमाल कर रही है लेकिन पिछले कुछ समय से इन एयरक्राफ्ट में लगातार तकनीकी खामी आ रही है। ऐसे में सवाल है कि क्या इंडिगो फाल्टी एयरक्राफ्ट का यूज कर रहा है? हालांकि, इंडिगो का कहना है कि वह सुरक्षा से समझौता नहीं कर रही है। जैसे ही उसे एयरक्राफ्ट में किसी तरह की खामी के बारे में पता लगता है, कैसे ही वह उसकी जगह दूसरे प्लेन का इस्तेमाल कर रही है।

Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

कोहरे के बीच उड़ान सेवाओं पर नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय सतर्क, बेहतर समन्वय के निर्देश

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): सर्दियों में कोहरे के कारण उड़ान सेवाओं पर पड़ रहे प्रभाव को देखते हुए नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय ने नियमित समीक्षा शुरू कर दी है। मंत्रालय ने नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए), भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण (एएआई), भारतीय मौसम विज्ञान विभाग (आईएमडी), और केंद्रीय औद्योगिक सुरक्षा बल (सीआईएसएफ) समेत सभी संबंधित एजेंसियों को निर्देश दिया है कि वे आपसी समन्वय के साथ काम करें, ताकि यात्रियों को कम से कम असुविधा हो और यात्रा सुगम बनी रहे। कोहरे से प्रभावित दिल्ली समेत अन्य प्रमुख हवाई अड्डों पर विशेष प्रबंध किए गए हैं। भारतीय मौसम विज्ञान विभाग (आईएमडी) ने उन्नत मौसम अवलोकन प्रणाली (एडब्ल्यूओएस) को तेज गति से लागू करने की प्रक्रिया शुरू कर दी है। इससे पायलटों और हवाई यातायात नियंत्रकों को सही समय पर सटीक मौसम जानकारी मिल सकेगी, जिससे परिचालन सुरक्षा और



दक्षता में वृद्धि होगी। दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर कम दृश्यता की स्थिति में टैक्सी-वे पर पायलटों का मार्गदर्शन करने के लिए फॉलो-मी वाहनों की संख्या बढ़ाई गई है। साथ ही, एयरलाइंस कंपनियों ने यात्रियों को सुविधाजनक अनुभव देने के लिए व्यस्त समय के दौरान चेक-इन काउंटरों पर अतिरिक्त स्टाफ नियुक्त किया है। इससे यात्रियों के चेक-इन में लगने वाले समय को कम किया जा रहा है।

भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण ने सही तरीके से हवाई यातायात प्रबंधन के लिए नई मानक संचालन प्रक्रिया

(एसओपी) लागू की है। इसमें एयर टैफिक कंट्रोल (एटीसी), एयरपोर्ट ऑपरेशन कंट्रोल रूम (एओसीसी), सेंट्रल एयर टैफिक फ्लो मैनेजमेंट (सीएटीएफएम), और एयरलाइन ऑपरेशन कंट्रोल सेंटर (ओसीसी) के बीच बेहतर तालमेल पर जोर दिया गया है। मंत्रालय ने स्पष्ट किया है कि कोहरे के बावजूद उड़ान सेवा को सामान्य बनाए रखने और यात्रियों को अधिकतम सुविधा देने के लिए हरसंभव कदम उठाए जा रहे हैं। उन्नत तकनीकी साधनों और समन्वित प्रयासों के जरिए परिचालन में सुधार किया जा रहा है।



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RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

सुहाना सफर: फिलहाल कुछ विमानों में मिलेगी, समय के साथ होगा विस्तार अब घरेलू उड़ानों में भी वाई-फाई की सुविधा, एयर इंडिया का सेवाएं शुरू करने का ऐलान

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नई दिल्ली. अब यात्री घरेलू उड़ानों के दौरान वाई-फाई का इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगे। एयर इंडिया ने बुधवार को एयरबस ए-350, बोइंग 787-9 और चर्निदा एयरबस ए-321 नियोजित विमानों को घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई इंटरनेट कनेक्टिविटी सेवाएं शुरू करने की घोषणा की। वह घरेलू उड़ानों में यह सुविधा देने वाली पहली भारतीय एयरलाइन बन गई है।

पिछले साल जुलाई में विस्तार एयरलाइन ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों में

कनेक्टिविटी जरूरी

एयर इंडिया के चीफ कस्टमर एक्सपीरियंस अधिकारी राजेश डोगरा ने कहा, कनेक्टिविटी आज यात्रा का अंग बन चुकी है। नई सुविधा उड़ानों के दौरान इंटरनेट से जुड़े रहने, दोस्तों और परिवार को मैसेज करने में मदद करेगी।

वाई-फाई सेवा की शुरुआत की थी। नवंबर में विस्तार का एयर इंडिया में विलय हो गया। एयर इंडिया ने कहा कि घरेलू मार्गों पर वाई-फाई की सेवा देने के लिए उसकी अंतरराष्ट्रीय

इतनी ऊंचाई के बाद...

भारतीय दूरसंचार विभाग कह चुका है कि विमान में यात्री वाई-फाई से इंटरनेट सेवाओं का इस्तेमाल तभी कर पाएंगे, जब विमान भारतीय क्षेत्र में 10,000 फीट की ऊंचाई पर पहुंचेगा। इसके बाद यात्री मोबाइल व लैपटॉप का इस्तेमाल कर सकेंगे।

उड़ानों में पहले से दी जा रही सुविधा को फॉलो किया गया है। घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई की सुविधा फिलहाल कुछ विमानों में मिलेगी। बाद में अन्य विमानों में इसे शुरू किया जाएगा।



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Corporate Communications Directorate

RASTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

एयर इंडिया की घरेलू उड़ानों में इन-फ्लाइट इंटरनेट सुविधा शुरू

हैदराबाद (वार्ता)। एयरलाइन एयर इंडिया ने बुधवार को एयरबस ए350, बोइंग 787-9 और चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियोजित विमानों की ओर से संचालित घरेलू उड़ानों में वाई-फाई इंटरनेट की शुरुआत करने की घोषणा की। एयरलाइन ने कहा कि अब यात्रियों को उड़ान के दौरान निशुल्क इंटरनेट का उपयोग करने का मौका मिलेगा, जिससे वे अपने मोबाइल फोन, लैपटॉप या अन्य उपकरणों के माध्यम से इंटरनेट पर ब्राउज़िंग, ईमेल भेजने, और अन्य ऑनलाइन सेवाएं प्राप्त कर सकते हैं। यह सुविधा एयरबस ए350, बोइंग 787-9 और चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियोजित विमानों की ओर से संचालित होने वाली घरेलू उड़ानों में मिलेगी।

एयर इंडिया के मुख्य ग्राहक अनुभव अधिकारी राजेश डोगरा ने कहा, 'हमें विश्वास है कि हमारे मेहमान वेब से जुड़ने के विकल्प की सराहना करेंगे। घरेलू मार्गों पर वाई-फाई की तैनाती एयरबस ए350, चुनिंदा एयरबस ए321 नियोजित और न्यूयॉर्क, लंदन, पेरिस और सिंगापुर सहित अंतरराष्ट्रीय गंतव्यों की सेवा करने वाले बोइंग बी787-9 विमानों की ओर से संचालित अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाओं पर चल रहे पायलट कार्यक्रम के बाद की गई है।