



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## AAI planning helicopter rides from Madurai to tourist spots

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is planning to introduce helicopter services from Madurai to help passengers travel quickly to important tourist spots and pilgrimage centres in southern districts, AAI Chairman M. Suresh has said. He told *The Hindu* that Madurai had immense potential to attract tourists from far-off cities. "Even if these flights are operated two or three days a week initially, it will help people from northern States to plan short trips," he said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

2 OCTOBER 2024

## AAI gets 52.18 acres for Purnea airport

**Aditya Nath Jha**

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**PURNEA:** The Bihar government has handed over 52.18 acres of land acquired for the construction of a civil enclave at Purnea airport to the Airport Authority of India (AAI), district magistrate (DM) Kundan Kumar said on Tuesday.

"The construction work will begin shortly. First would be boundary walls, for which estimates have been submitted by the building construction department," he said.

Sharing details, the DM said, "The airport is being designed keeping in view the likely foot-fall for the next 30 to 40 years. The airport will have five aero-bridges."

On June 5, 2023, a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the Bihar government and the AAI was signed for the transfer of 52.18 acres of land.

On August 24 this year, chief minister Nitish Kumar had held a meeting with officials of AAI, defence ministry and state government at Purnea on the issue.

The civil enclave is coming at the Indian Air Force's airport at Chunapur, 10 kilometres from Purnea town.

Local activist Vijay Kumar Shreevasatava, who has been leading the "Airport for Purnea" campaign for several years, welcomed the development but sought to expedite the acquisition of an additional 15 acres of land and road connectivity as demanded by AAI.

Purnea was included in the union government's regional air connectivity scheme UDAN in 2016.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

**FLIGHT OPS BY APRIL 17'**

## Noida Airport set for trial flight on November 30

**DIPIKA KIROLA**

**GREATER NOIDA:** The under-construction Noida International Airport in Jewar, Greater Noida, is set to achieve a significant milestone with its first trial flight scheduled for takeoff on November 30, 2024, three years after the foundation stone was laid.

The decision was made during a meeting between Yamuna International Airport Pvt. Ltd. (YIAPL) and the Directorate General Civil Aviation (DGCA). Following the trial, the airport is expected to commence commercial operations on April 17, said officials.

According to Arun Vir Singh, CEO, YEIDA, the trial period will continue until the start of commercial flights, and the airport's construction is progressing rapidly.

Airlines have already submitted applications for international destinations. But the approval of routes will depend on bilateral licencing agreements between the countries and airlines. The domestic allocation meeting with DGCA is scheduled for the middle of this month. Slots will be determined then," Singh said. He assured that at least one flight would depart for an international destination on the launch day.

The airport was initially planned to start operations

**The airport's first phase spans 1,334 hectares**

by the end of September this year, with up to 65 daily flights, including 62 domestic routes, two international destinations, and a cargo flight. Discussions have been initiated with IATA for international slots and DGCA for domestic routes.

During the trial, various aircraft, including small Airbus A320s and A321s from the AAI and commercial planes from IndiGo and Akasa, will assess the runway at Noida International Airport, with potential flights to Dubai and Singapore on the first day of international operations.

The airport's first phase is being built on 1,334 hectares, with rapid progress. Equipment installation for ATC, runway lights, and surveillance systems is nearly complete, and the Instrument Landing System (ILS) will be finished next week.

During trials, passengers will board planes after document verification and be seated alongside crew members. Airlines will land their planes multiple times, and AAI aircraft will also test the runway quality. The final operation date is expected in March, targeting April 17, though it may vary by 8-10 days.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पर 17 अप्रैल से शुरू होंगी उड़ानें

नई दिल्ली | दिल्ली-एनसीआर में बन रहे नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के पहले फेज का काम दिसंबर में पूरा हो जाएगा। 3.9 किमी लंबा रनवे तैयार है। टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग का ढांचा भी बन चुका है। यहां अगले साल 17 अप्रैल से घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमान सेवा का ऑपरेशन एकसाथ शुरू हो रहा है। टिकट बुकिंग फरवरी से होगी। शुरुआत में एक दिन में 60 से ज्यादा विमानों की आवाजाही हो सकेगी।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

2 OCTOBER 2024

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## **SVPI Airport wins award for energy efficiency**

**FPJ News Service**

**AHMEDABAD**

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPIA), Ahmedabad, managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, the flagship company of the globally diversified Adani Group, has been awarded the prestigious Platinum Award in the Airport Sector under Facility Category at the Society of Energy Engineers and Managers (SEEM) Awards held in New Delhi on 26 September.

Ahmedabad Airport received this award for numerous sustainable and energy-efficient initiatives like the installation of a new, highly efficient centrifugal chiller with a low energy consumption, resulting in 30% energy saving. Over 50 presence sensors were installed in offices to control lighting and lower power consumption.

## Man held with marijuana worth ₹1.34cr at airport

**Somendra Sharma**

MUMBAI

Mumbai Airport Customs officials have arrested an Indian passenger who arrived from Bangkok for allegedly smuggling marijuana with an estimated provisional value of Rs1.34 crore. According to the sources, on Monday, the officials intercepted a passenger and seized 1,346 grams of suspected ganja. The contraband was packed in vacuum-sealed packets and further concealed inside food packets, which were placed inside a trolley bag carried by the passenger, the sources said.

“This diligent effort culminated in the arrest of the passenger under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act for possession and attempted smuggling of narcotic substance. The Airport Customs Commissionerate remains committed to maintaining stringent security measures and ensuring the safety and

**The contraband was packed in vacuum-sealed packets and further concealed inside food packets**

well-being of the citizens by curbing such illegal activities,” an official said.

Last week, officials had arrested two passengers from Bangkok who were attempting to smuggle five juveniles of caiman crocodiles (*Caiman crocodylus crocodylus*), which were concealed inside a box that had been placed in a passenger’s trolley bag. The caiman crocodile is listed in Appendix - II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) and Schedule IV of the newly amended Wildlife (Protection) Act. All the crocodiles were later returned to the country of origin.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## दूसरे चरण में विमानन केंद्र विकसित होगा



ग्रैंटर नोएडा, वरिष्ठ संवादाता। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के विमानन और रखरखाव, मरम्मत और ओवरहाल

(एमआरओ) हब को विकसित करने की तैयारी शुरू हो गई है। एयरपोर्ट के दूसरे चरण को पूरा करने के लिए 1365 हेक्टेयर जमीन अधिग्रहीत की जानी है, इसके लिए जिला प्रशासन जल्द ही सेक्शन 11 लागू करेगा।

साथ ही एयरपोर्ट से दूसरे चरण से प्रभावित सात गांवों के किसानों को मॉडलपुर व फ्लैदा बांगर में विस्थापित

किया जाएगा। प्राधिकरण के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि पहले चरण में एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण कार्य लगभग पूरा हो चुका है। अब दूसरे चरण के तहत एयरपोर्ट के विस्तार को गति देने की दिशा में काम शुरू कर दिया गया है। दूसरे चरण में एयरपोर्ट के लिए भूमि रन्हेरा, कुरैब, करौली बांगर, दयानतपुर, वीरमपुर, व मुडरह समेत एक अन्य गांव की अधिग्रहित की जाएगी।

# Plane over train at Delhi airport: Close to 75% of it to be elevated

Saurabh.Sinha  
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New Delhi: Come 2028, aircraft taxiing on India's only elevated taxiway will have the country's only air train swishing on the road below them, along with vehicular traffic. TOI has accessed the route alignment of the proposed 7.7km automated people mover for which Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has issued a tender. To keep costs low, GMR Group-backed DIAL has not opted for an underground section connecting Terminal 2/3 on one side and T1 on the other, with the airport's backbone runway 28 between them.

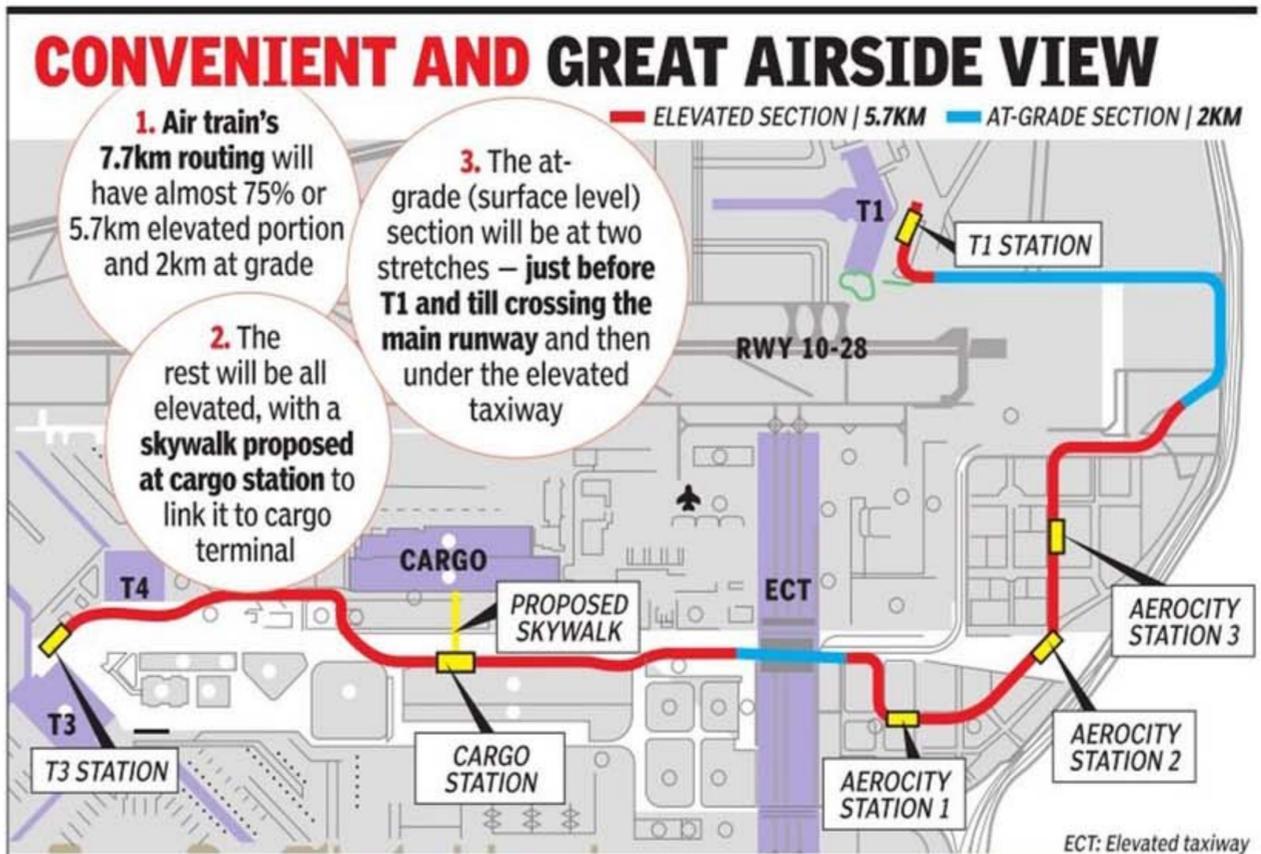
The air train's 7.7km routing will have almost 75% or 5.7km elevated portion and 2km at grade. The at-grade (surface level) section will be at two stretches — just before T1 and till crossing the main runway and then under the elevated taxiway. The rest will be all elevated, with a skywalk proposed to link it to the cargo terminal.

DIAL is learnt to have steered clear of an underground section to prevent cost escalation. On average, the per km cost of elevated, at-grade, and underground metro lines in India is about Rs 250-300 crore; Rs 150-200 crore; and Rs 500-600 crore, respectively. This includes all costs, including the train, signal, electrical, and civil works, say people in the know.

Rough estimates based on these figures suggest the air train could cost up to Rs 1,500-1,600 crore. The Union aviation ministry in Modi 2.0 had not allowed the airport operator to levy additional charges on passengers to fund the project and asked it to first build the same and then recover the cost.

The operator has called for bids and will decide the winner on the basis of cost estimated by them and whether they offer revenue share (through advertising on this prime real estate that will grab the attention of lakhs of high purchasing power passengers) or seek viability gap funding.

Air trains globally are free to use for passengers to ensure seamless transit between terminals. However,



## WHY DIAL IS AVOIDING UNDERGROUND SECTION

- To prevent cost escalation
- On average, per km cost of elevated, at-grade and underground metro lines in India is about ₹250-300 crore; ₹150-200 crore; and ₹500-600 crore, respectively
- Rough estimates suggest air train could cost up to ₹1,500-1,600 crore



ELEVATED AIR TRAIN AT JFK

➤ Air trains are free to use for passengers to ensure seamless transit between terminals



➤ Cost is recovered through two means — aeronautical charges for airlines and user fees on passengers

their cost is recovered through two means — aeronautical charges for airlines and user fees on passengers. The user fees charged at Mumbai Airport, for instance, used to have a metro component of Rs 20 and Rs 120 per domestic and international departure, respectively. This component was levied from 2016 to February 2023 to raise Rs 518 crore for metro connectivity and was stopped when that target sum was raised.

Also, govt had asked DIAL to reduce the number of proposed stations from six to four to ensure expeditious intra-terminal transfers and foolproof

**The operator has called for bids and will decide the winner on the basis of cost estimated by them and whether they offer revenue share or seek viability gap funding**

security. Accordingly, the tender issued says the air train will have four stops — T2/3, T1, Aerocity and cargo city. The alignment shows three stations at Aerocity, which means subsequently, if allowed, the number of stops may be added

on the air train.

DIAL's air train tender document says: "DIAL proposes to implement an elevated cum at-grade APM system at Delhi Airport on a design, build, finance, operate and transfer (DBFOT) model. The APM system is intended to provide reliable, fast and seamless connectivity between T1 and T3/2 spanning a route length of around 7.7 km via Aerocity and Cargo city. In addition to providing required connectivity between terminals, the APM system will enhance passenger convenience, improve ASQ score and reduce carbon footprint."

## ‘MIAL needs to provide direct paths for transfers’

**M**MRCL has provided stations at the domestic and international terminals of the airport, and now it is up to Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) to provide direct access to the stations from the terminals. An MMRCL official said seamless underground passenger transfers at the airport will be possible only after “critical work within the airport area is completed by the airport’s operator”. “At both terminals, MIAL needs to undertake development. Once completed, there will be a forecourt area where entry and exit points will be provided,” said MMRCL MD Ashwini Bhide. At T1, two entry and exit points are planned — one leading directly to the terminal and the other across the road.

Till the direct connect is ready, passengers will have to cross the road after ascending from the station. At T2, the design features two elongated entry points with the station between them. Passengers will be able to walk to and from the terminal, aided by a walkway which is being constructed by MIAL. MMRCL director (planning and non-fare revenue) R Ramanna said, “We have also requested MIAL to provide a shuttle service or ensure that existing shuttles stop at the Metro stations for passengers with luggage who may not be able to walk the distance.” On amenities being arranged for passengers, Ramanna, said, “We will provide luggage carts at both stations.” Bhide highlighted that connectivity cannot yet be classified as “seamless”. —**Manthan K Mehta**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## सामान लौटाने में देरी पर 75,000 का भुगतान करेगी एतिहाद एयरवेज

नई दिल्ली। उपभोक्ता अदालत ने एतिहाद एयरवेज को एक यात्री का सामान खो जाने और कई दिनों बाद उसे लौटाने के लिए 75,000 रुपये का भुगतान करने का निर्देश दिया। अदालत ने एयरलाइन को सेवा में कमी के लिए उत्तरदायी ठहराया है। दिल्ली राज्य उपभोक्ता विवाद निवारण आयोग की अध्यक्ष संगीता ढींगरा सहगल और सदस्य जेपी अग्रवाल की समिति ने कहा कि यह स्पष्ट है कि शिकायतकर्ता का बैग, जो कि चेक-इन बैगेज था, खो गया था। 7 जून, 2016 को शिकायतकर्ता को दिल्ली में उसके दिए गए पते पर सौंप दिया गया था। हमें लगता है कि यह एतिहाद एयरवेज की ओर से सेवा में कमी है, क्योंकि इससे शिकायतकर्ता को उसके कपड़े आदि मिलने में देरी के कारण बहुत असुविधा हुई। शिकायतकर्ता आशा देवी ने आरोप लगाया कि 30 लाख रुपये नकद और 30 ग्राम सोने सहित कीमती सामान भी खो गया था। हालांकि, आयोग को इसमें कोई योग्यता नहीं दिखी, क्योंकि वह हवाई अड्डे पर पैसे और आभूषण सहित उच्च मूल्य की वस्तुओं की घोषणा करने में विफल रही थी। ब्यूरो



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## Air India asks crew to share hotel rooms, sparks a controversy

**Aneesh Phadnis**  
Mumbai

In a bid to save costs, Air India's new policy will entail its cabin crew to share hotel rooms during layovers.

Currently, cabin crew of Vistara share hotel rooms on layovers and now the policy is being extended to Air India in view of the impending merger of the two airlines.

Air India's new policy will come into effect from December 1. Only cabin supervisors and managers will be entitled to a single room during layovers.

### MOVE NOT WELCOME

Air India said the revised compensation and benefits are competitive and bench-



marked to industry standards, but the move is causing unease among flight attendants. Currently, Air India has around 8,000 cabin crew.

"Cabin crew will find it very difficult to digest the change. All individuals have different habits, sleeping patterns, etc. How is this going to be implemented?," asked a crew member.

"This has never happened

before in the history of Air India... The low-cost carrier culture is here to stay," aviation lawyer and author Sanjay Lazar remarked in a social media post.

He added that there are agreements and industrial tribunal awards which specify that airline crew are entitled to single rooms during layovers.

Air India is the only Indian carrier which operates ultra long-haul flights between India and the US/Canada.

"It seems the management is clueless about fatigue and safety," aviation safety expert Mohan Ranganathan remarked.

### 'HARMONISE POLICIES'

An airline spokesperson said the policies of Vistara and Air

India are being harmonised. Allowances paid on duty layovers on domestic and international flights are being increased.

Policy regarding gratuity offered to cabin crew has also been revised.

"Following Air India's acquisition, performance-linked compensation were rolled out in April 2023e," the airline said.

"With the merger of Air India and Vistara formalising, there is a need to harmonise these policies for employees of both organisations. We have communicated the changes to Air India employees. The revised compensation and benefits continue to be competitive and benchmarked to industry standards," it added.

# एयर इंडिया समूह में कुछ नियमों में बदलाव

दीपक पटेल

नई दिल्ली, 2 अक्टूबर

एयर इंडिया समूह में विलय की प्रक्रिया तेज रफ्तार से आगे बढ़ रही है। इस प्रक्रिया को तेजी से अंजाम देने की कवायद के तहत समूह ने अपनी नीतियों में महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव किए हैं। बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड को मिली जानकारी के अनुसार समूह ने रूम शेयरिंग, लीशर ट्रेवल प्रायोरिटी लिस्ट, भत्तों, रीइंबर्समेंट, भोजन योजना और पायलटों एवं चालक दल के सदस्यों की ग्रैच्युटी से जुड़ी नीतियों में अहम बदलाव किए हैं।

ये सभी बदलाव समूह की तीनों विमानन कंपनियों एयर इंडिया, विस्तारा और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस पर लागू होंगे। विस्तारा का एयर इंडिया के साथ 11 नवंबर तक विलय होना है। 1 अक्टूबर को एआईएक्स कनेक्ट का एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस में विलय हुआ था जिससे एयर इंडिया की एक किफायती विमानन सहायक इकाई तैयार हुई थी।

पायलटों और चालक दल के सदस्यों ने कुछ नीतिगत बदलावों का स्वागत किया है जबकि कुछ संशोधनों पर उन्होंने नाखुशी का भी इजहार किया है। 'लीशर ट्रेवल पॉलिसी' के तहत पायलट और चालक दल के सदस्यों को ड्यूटी के बाद निजी यात्रा के लिए रियायती दाम पर टिकट खरीदने की सुविधा दी जाती है। इससे पहले एयर इंडिया समूह की हरेक विमानन कंपनी इन रियायती टिकटों के लिए अपने कर्मचारियों को वरीयता देती रही है।

मगर इस नीति में संशोधन किया गया है जिसके तहत पूरे समूह में एकीकृत प्राथमिकता सूची तैयार की जाएगी। यानी सभी पायलट एवं चालक दल के सदस्यों के साथ, वे किसी भी विमानन कंपनी के हों, समूह की विमान सेवा के रियायती टिकटों के लिए बराबर माना जाएगा। इसके लिए समूह की किसी भी उड़ान में सस्ते टिकटों की सुविधा के लिए एक ही सूची तैयार की जाएगी।

## उड़ान में कुछ नियम उड़े, कुछ जुड़े

■ पायलटों एवं चालक दल के सदस्यों के लिए एकीकृत लीशर ट्रेवल प्रायोरिटी लिस्ट बनेगी

■ चालक दल के सदस्यों के लिए कमरा साझा करनी की नई नीति 1 दिसंबर से लागू होगी

■ ग्रैच्युटी सीमा संशोधित, 12 नवंबर से 20 लाख रुपये से अधिक रकम के भुगतान की भी होगी अनुमति

■ 1 दिसंबर से बढ़ेगा इंटरनैशनल लेआवर अलाउंस

■ घरेलू उड़ानों में चालक दल के लिए 1 दिसंबर से तीन बार भोजन की सुविधा

पायलटों एवं चालक दल के सदस्यों ने इस नई नीति का स्वागत किया है मगर कमरा साझा करने से जुड़े नए नियमों पर नाखुशी जताई है। इस समय एयर इंडिया के चालक दल के सदस्यों को अलग-अलग कमरे दिए जाते हैं लेकिन 1 दिसंबर से यह बदल जाएगा और दो सदस्यों को एक ही कमरे में ठहरने के लिए कहा जाएगा।

एयर इंडिया समूह के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने कहा कि एयर इंडिया पूरी कोशिश करेगी कि एक ही उड़ान में साथ काम करने वाले चालक दल के सदस्यों को ही कमरा साझा करने दिया जाए।

एयर इंडिया समूह ने कर्मचारियों को यह भी बताया है कि 2025 से उन्हें 'मोबाइल हैंडसेट रीइंबर्समेंट' और 'वर्कप्लेस वेलेनेस रीइंबर्समेंट' नहीं दिए जाएंगे।

उन्होंने ग्रैच्युटी सीमा में संशोधन का स्वागत किया है। पहले यह सीमा 20 लाख रुपये थी मगर 12 नवंबर से नई विधि से ग्रैच्युटी की गणना की जाएगी। इसके तहत 20 लाख रुपये सीमा पार करने के बाद भी विमानन कंपनी पूरी रकम का भुगतान करेगी।

# Merger in full swing: Air India group plans uniform crew policy

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 2 October



As part of its ongoing merger process to create a unified entity with consistent policies, the Air India group is looking to introduce major changes to policies covering room sharing, leisure travel priority lists, allowances, reimbursements, meal plans, and gratuities for its cabin crew and pilots, *Business Standard* has learnt.

These changes are expected to apply to all three airlines within the group — Air India, Vistara, and Air India Express, airline executives mentioned. Vistara is set to merge with full-service carrier Air India by November 11. On October 1, AIX Connect was integrated into Air India Express, creating a single low-cost airline subsidiary under the Air India umbrella.

Responding to queries on these proposed changes, an Air India spokesperson said: "Following Air India's acquisition by the Tata group, a competitive, contemporary, and performance-linked compensation and benefits policy for all employees was rolled out in April 2023, after a comprehensive benchmarking exercise. With the merger of Air India and Vistara formalising, there is a need to harmonise these policies for employees of both organisations."

"As part of that exercise, we have communicated the changes applicable to Air India employees. The revised compensation and benefits continue to be competitive and benchmarked to industry standards," the spokesperson added.

Some of the proposed policies have been welcomed by pilots and cabin crew, while others have sparked criticism. One such change concerns the leisure travel policy, which allows pilots and cabin crew to access discounted tickets for personal travel while off duty. Previously, each airline within the Air India Group prioritised its own employees for these discounted tickets.

Under the proposed new unified policy, a single priority list will be implemented across the entire group. This means all pilots and cabin crew, irrespective of their airline, will be treated equally when it comes to access to discounted tickets on any carrier within the group.

## ON THE CHARTER

- Unified leisure travel priority list for pilots, cabin crew across the group
- Revised gratuity cap, allowing payments over ₹20 lakh from Nov 12
- Room sharing policy introduced for Air India cabin crew from Dec 1
- International layover allowance increased, with added domestic 'support allowance' from Dec 1
- All three meals to be provided for crew on domestic routes from Dec 1

## Vistara flight services to have 'AI2' prefix: A-I

**Air India on Wednesday said flights operated with Vistara aircraft** will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger while Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before. PTI

While the suggested changes in leisure travel policy changes have been positively received, Air India's cabin crew members have expressed discomfort over the upcoming revised room-sharing policy. Currently, Air India's cabin crew are provided with individual rooms during layovers. However, from December 1, two cabin crew members will be required to share a room.

A senior airline executive clarified that Air India will aim to ensure that only crew members working on the same flight share rooms. "The issue arises when one crew member has gone to sleep at 12 am, and another, coming from a different flight, arrives at 4 am and disturbs the first to enter the room. We will do our best to prevent this from happening".

Vistara's cabin crew have already been sharing rooms during layovers under their internal policy. "As part of the merger process, the group has now established a uniform policy regarding room sharing," the executive added.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## एयर इंडिया से मर्जर के बाद भी विस्तारा की 'सेवाएं' जारी रहेंगी

विजनेस संवाददाता | मुंबई

एअर इंडिया ने कहा कि अगले महीने 12 नवंबर को मर्जर के बाद भी विस्तारा के विमान, क्रू और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही बनी रहेंगी। 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआई2' से होगी। लेकिन एआई2एक्सएक्सएक्स उड़ान संख्या एयरइंडिया.कॉम के माध्यम से बुक

की जा सकेंगी।" दरअसल कुछ लोगों में इस बात को लेकर चिंता है कि क्या विस्तारा के यात्रियों को विलय के बाद भी अभी जैसी ही सेवाएं मिलती रहेंगी। क्योंकि एयर इंडिया को हाल ही में सेवा संबंधी समस्याओं से गुजरना पड़ रहा है। एअर इंडिया ने कहा कि हम यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए एक साल से कड़ी मेहनत कर रहे हैं कि विलय ग्राहकों और कर्मचारियों दोनों के लिए सहज हो।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

2 OCTOBER 2024

## AIRLINES SUSPEND FLIGHTS

**CONCERNS** over a wider conflict in the Middle East have prompted international airlines to suspend flights to the region or to avoid affected air space.

Below are some of the airlines that have adjusted services to and from the region:



**AIR INDIA** suspended flights to and from Tel Aviv until further notice.

**Air France** on Sept. 30 suspended Paris-Tel Aviv and Paris-Beirut flights until Oct. 8.

**KLM** has cancelled all flights to and from Tel Aviv until the end of this year.

Hong Kong-based **CATHAY PACIFIC** cancelled all flights to Tel Aviv until March 27, 2025.

US carrier **DELTA AIRLINES** paused flights between New York and Tel Aviv through Dec. 31.

**LUFTHANSA**, on Oct. 1, extended the suspension of flights to and from Tel Aviv until Oct. 31 and Beirut until Nov. 30.





# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा के विमान और सेवाएं बनी रहेंगी

नई दिल्ली: एयर इंडिया ने बुधवार को कहा कि अगले महीने विलय के बाद 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआइ2' से होगी। कंपनी ने कहा कि विस्तारा के विमान, चालक दल और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही परिचालन में बनी रहेंगी। टाटा समूह और सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस के संयुक्त उपक्रम विस्तारा का एयर इंडिया से विलय 12 नवंबर को होगा। (प्रेट्र)

LEISURE DESTINATIONS & HOMETOWNS IN DEMAND

# This Festival Season, More Indians Want to Get Away

Travel firms launch special packages, offers during Durga Puja and Diwali

**Anumeha Chaturvedi  
& Arindam Majumder**

**New Delhi:** More Indians are looking to get away for breaks around the festive dates this year compared to last year, compelling the travel industry to launch special packages and offers to lure more travellers, industry insiders said.

Airlines said this quarter will be their best, as demand for both hometowns and leisure destinations have seen travellers swelling during this festive season compared to the previous year.

"This year, people are looking to travel to holiday destinations during Durga Puja and Diwali. We expect this festive season followed by the winter travel season to be one of the best for the industry," said an executive of a private airline.

SD Nandakumar, country head for holidays at SOTC Travel, said what's 'particularly interesting' this year is the increase in holiday bookings beyond traditional hometown visits. "We anticipate higher numbers for getaway trips compared to last year, with destinations such as Azerbaijan, Georgia and

Vietnam getting more popular. Easy visa, short-haul destinations like Thailand, Malaysia, Dubai-Abu Dhabi and Indonesia are also seeing strong demand," he added.

Data from the ministry of civil aviation shows that as the festival days near, the numbers of passengers travelling domestically are shooting up. On September 23, airlines in India carried 472,943 domestic passengers and it was soon surpassed last Sunday when 479,170 travelled by air.

To cater to this surge in demand, airlines are enhancing their offerings, deploying larger aircraft to destinations that they expect will see high demand and rolling out offers.

"The upcoming peak season from October onwards, fueled by various travel segments like holidays, inbound foreign travel, and corporate traffic, paints a promising outlook for the next nine months. The sector's expansion is also bolstering international traffic, with Indian and foreign airlines ramping up capacities on international routes," said Sanjay Kumar, former CEO of Interglobe Technology Quotient, the travel technology firm of Interglobe Group.

Rajeev Kale, president and country head for holidays, MICE

and visa at Thomas Cook (India), said online searches have gone up by approximately 25-30% for Durga Puja, Dussehra, and Diwali for both domestic and international destinations.

Rajesh Magow, co-founder and group CEO of MakeMyTrip, said while visiting friends and relatives remains a major driver, leisure travel is also on the rise, with Goa continuing to be the top destination. An ITC Hotels spokesperson said hotels in Goa, Rajasthan and the hills will be the chain's key focus for domestic travellers wanting to spend time away from home.

The Tata group's Air India is temporarily operating additional flights to Kolkata from four Indian cities to meet greater travel demand to the city during the upcoming Durga Puja festivities.

Starting 20 September 2024, Air India is flying daily, non-stop flights to Kolkata from Bengaluru. The airline has increased frequency on the Delhi-Kolkata route from 28 weekly flights to 35, and from 21 to 28 per week on the Mumbai-Kolkata route.

India's largest airline IndiGo ran a sale offer last week where it said tickets were available for as low as ₹1,111. "The festive season is around the corner and a popular time for travel, Great Runaway Fest is our way of offering exceptional value to kickstart your travel plans," said Vinay Malhotra, head of global sales at IndiGo.



**Leaving on a Jet Plane**

<b>AIR TRAVEL</b>	<b>4,72,943</b> Domestic fliers on Sept 23	<b>4,79,170</b> Travelled by air on Sept 29
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**AIRLINES SAY...** Demand for both hometowns and leisure destinations showing an increase

**ITC HOTELS** Properties in Goa, Rajasthan and the hills will be key focus for domestic travellers



## West Asia Strikes Sway Airlines, Vex Travellers

### Our Bureau

**Mumbai:** Air travellers are facing longer and pricier flights connecting India as airlines are forced to revise their flight plans following rising geopolitical tensions in West Asia.

Several Gulf carriers have altered their routes to prioritise passenger safety, while neighbouring countries in the region have closed their airspace, forcing airlines to navigate alternative routes to avoid the escalating conflict.

The government on Wednesday issued a travel advisory urging Indians to avoid non-essential travel to Iran. Tensions in West Asia have worsened after Iran's missile attacks on Israel which followed Tel Aviv launching a 'limited' ground operation in Lebanon targeting Hezbollah strongholds, and the death of Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in an airstrike in Beirut last week.

Airfares have surged drastically, with Google Flights reporting that the least expensive tickets to Tel Aviv typically range from ₹71,000 to ₹135,000. However, as of Wednesday, prices have escalated to over ₹2,22,000, with industry experts predicting further increases.

Affirming its commitment to safety, British Airways said, "Safety and security are always our highest priorities, and we continuously assess and adjust our operations accordingly."

Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS) has adjusted flight routes due to the latest developments in the Middle East. As a precautionary measure, the airline will "avoid the airspace over Iran, Iraq, and Jordan" until at least October 2, resulting in up to 15-minute longer flight times to Dubai, India, and Southeast Asia, it said. Additionally, SWISS will bypass "Israeli and Lebanese airspace" until October 31. The airline said it is "closely monitoring the situation" and staying in contact with relevant authorities.

An official from Air India said all flights are assessed daily for security risks, stating, "Adjustments are made, if required, to avoid areas of risk with minimal impact on our non-stop operations. The situation is being monitored closely."

In response to the ongoing conflict, several airlines have extended their suspension of flights to Israel and Lebanon. Dutch airline KLM has halted flights to Tel Aviv until the year-end, having previously suspended operations until October 26.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## Aviation sector grapples with rising tensions

**JOANNA PLUCINSKA**  
London, October 2

**RISING TENSIONS** IN the West Asia have created air travel chaos, with global airlines diverting or cancelling flights on Wednesday and regional airports, including Lebanon, Israel and Kuwait, showing long delays, accord-

ing to FlightRadar24 data.

Concern over travel disruption as the conflict intensifies also knocked shares in the travel and airline sectors, with shares in Europe's largest travel operator TUI down over 5% at 1227 GMT and Lufthansa down more than 4%. "At the outbreak of the Ukraine conflict and the

Israel-Gaza conflict last year there was a weakening of demand for travel across the board in Europe, which eased after a couple of weeks," said Andrew Lobbenberg, an analyst at Barclays.

On Wednesday, a few flights were seen over Iranian airspace, according to a FlightRadar24 map, including

from carrier flydubai, after Iran said its ballistic missile attack on Israel was over.

However, flights across the entire region were diverted or disrupted with little sign of broader normalisation, with some changing their routes to avoid certain airspace.

REUTERS



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## AIR INDIA BRINGS IN NEW POLICY FOR CABIN CREW



AIR INDIA IS introducing a revised policy for the cabin crew members of domestic and international flights, wherein certain sections of the members will have to share rooms during layovers, according to a source. The revised policy will not be applicable for Air India Express, which has merged AIX Connect with itself.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

2 OCTOBER 2024

## Additional direct flight for Chennai, Jaipur & Pune

All flights will be rolled-out from month-end by IndiGo

**Our Staff Reporter**

**INDORE**

Ahead of the onset of the festival season, there is good news for flyers from the city as they will be getting additional direct flights for Pune, Jaipur and Chennai from the month-end under the Winter Schedule. With the additional movement of six more flights, the total number of flight movements from Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport will rise to

96 flights per day.

Under the winter schedule, IndiGo, a leading private-sector airline, is going to roll out all the 3 flights. IndiGo had sent a proposal to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), to roll-out additional flights for these destinations from the city airport last month. DGCA has given approval to the proposal of starting the new flights on Tuesday.

### **Flights to Pune & Chennai from Oct 28**

Ullas Nair, proprietor of Vistaar Travels, informed here on Tuesday that the Indore-Pune-Indore flight will

commence operation on October 28. As per the schedule new flight 6E-6192 will depart from the city airport at 11.55 hours and reach Pune at 13.00 hours.

In return, the flight 6E-6191 will depart from Pune at 13.55 hours and land at the city airport at 15.05 hours. The flight will be convenient for travellers as it will be operated in day time as the current flight is being operated very late at night. The existing flight departs from the city for Pune at 23.55 hours and in return the flight departs from Pune at 2.50 hours.

The second direct daily flight for Chennai will also

start operation from the city on October 28.

Flight 6E-995 Indore-Chennai will depart from here at 15.40 hours and reach Chennai at 17.45 hours. In return, flight 6E-991 Chennai-Indore will depart from there at 9.15 hours and land at the city airport at 11.25 hours. It will be operated on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

### **Third direct and daily for Jaipur from Oct 27**

IndiGo is going to roll out its third direct daily flight for Jaipur from October 27. The new flight 6E-7109 Indore-Jaipur will depart from the city

at 16.10 hours and land at the Pink city at 17.30 hours. The return flight 6E-7154 Jaipur-Indore will depart from the capital city of Rajasthan at 11.20 hours and land here at 12.50 hours, Nair added.

### **Festival gift for travellers: Jose**

TK Jose, MD of Jose Travels, stated that in the last few months, a spectacular rise in the number of travellers from the city airport is being recorded. Therefore the airlines are tapping the opportunity. The roll-out of flights for Pune, Jaipur and Chennai is a great gift for travellers in the festival season.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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2 OCTOBER 2024

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## Qatar Airways flight diverted to Dabolim amid bad weather

**THE GOAN** | NETWORK

### VASCO

Having recently shifted its operations from Dabolim to Mopa airport, a Qatar Airways flight was diverted to Dabolim in the wee hours of Tuesday due to bad weather at Mopa.

Sources from Dabolim Airport confirmed that the international flight carrying 131 passengers landed safely at Dabolim airport at 2.21 am.

The unplanned landing, however, was managed by the airport's 24x7 yellow-black taxi services at Dabolim airport, ensuring that passengers reached their destinations without inconvenience.

Stakeholders from various sectors have now renewed calls to bring international flights back to Dabolim Airport, citing its central location, superior weather conditions, and excellent visibility.

"If not for Dabolim Airport, the nearest international airport for Goa would have been Mumbai, which would cause severe inconvenience to passengers," a source mentioned.

The unexpected diversion of the Qatar Airways flight has once again brought attention to the ongoing debate about the future of Goa's two airports and the importance of reliable infrastructure in ensuring passenger safety and convenience.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

2 OCTOBER 2024

## AI Express-AIX Connect merger complete

**PTI**

**NEW DELHI**

Aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday said the merger of AIX Connect with Air India Express has been completed that sets a new benchmark for future airline consolidation in the country.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted the requisite regulatory approval for the merger.

"Effective October 1, 2024, all aircraft of AIX Connect have been transferred seamlessly onto the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) of AIX,



ensuring that airline operations of the combined entity continue without disruption to ensure a safe and smooth passenger experience," DGCA said in a release.

The airlines are part of the Tata Group.

Meanwhile, the merger of AIX Connect with Air India Express is an important milestone in the transformation

journey of Air India Group and the merged entity will cater to the growing air travel demand, Campbell Wilson said on Tuesday.

Wilson is the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Air India as well as the Chairman of Air India Express.

The merged entity will operate under the 'Air India

Express' name and a unified airline code 'IX'.

With the merger completed, Air India Express will focus on a future growth and transformation agenda.

"About a year ago, we started the integration of AIX Connect and Air India Express, bringing the two organisations together behind a common brand.

"Alongside, we worked on the complex integration exercise culminating today in the operational and legal merger of the two organisations," Air India Express Managing Director Alok Singh said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

2 OCTOBER 2024

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## Bhopal, Indore direct flights to start soon

**Staff Reporter**

**PUNE**

In good news for Pune-kars wishing to travel to Madhya Pradesh, direct flights to Bhopal and Indore will commence from Oct 27 from Pune Airport. Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Mahesh Landge shared the update on X (formerly Twitter).

Landge wrote, "Pune Airport Update: A much-needed boost to #Pune - #MadhyaPradesh connectivity! Daily flights to #Bhopal and an additional afternoon

flight to #Indore will commence, thanks to the efforts and follow-up by Pune MP and MoS Civil Aviation Minister @mohol\_murlidhar." The Bhopal MLA informed that domestic carrier IndiGo will operate these flights. "This enhanced connectivity is a significant step forward for both industrial corridors, fostering greater business and growth," he added.

Meanwhile, direct flights to Sindhudurg have also commenced from Pune Airport. FLY91.

KEY MYTHS }

# Lessons for aviation sector from IndiGo's new financial results

Anjali Bhargava



India's largest private airline declared impressive profits of ₹1,894 crore for the fourth quarter of FY 2024 and for the first quarter of the present financial year, busting two myths that surround the airline business in India while establishing a couple of maxims.

## Myth One: Airlines are a loss-making business in India

ModiLuf, Damania, East West, MDLR, Paramount, Kingfisher, Sahara, Jet Airways, Go First — by no means is this a comprehensive list — are among the airlines that have run into financial trouble ever since India permitted private airlines to operate.

It is widely believed that running an airline is a bad business, not one to deliver strong returns on investment. This is widely believed globally as well, with many quoting Richard Branson's oft repeated statement: the best way of becoming a millionaire is to start off as a billionaire, and go into the airline industry.

The Center for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA), a consultancy

operating in India, has in its reports over the past 15 years been consistently reporting every year's losses and the picture they have recorded over the years is that the airline business in India is mostly a loss making proposition, with red ink all over the books.

And while all of the above is true, the quarter after quarter of profits by the market leader IndiGo have put paid to this constant refrain one hears in India's aviation circles: that the airline business is mostly loss making.

A detailed analysis of IndiGo's performance will debunk this myth. The airline has made profits for much of its 17-year existence (albeit, very small ones in the initial years).

The airline launched flights in August 2006 and as is to be expected made losses in that and subsequent years of flying. In 2009-10, the airline earned a profit of around ₹80 crore and all the way from then to 2019-2020, the airline was profitable. The large losses during and after the pandemic wiped out a large portion of the accumulated profits. In FY 2020-21, the airline recorded a loss of ₹5,500 crore followed by a further loss of ₹5,800-odd crore in FY 2021-22.

Things began to look up in 2022 and the year ended with a small loss of ₹300 crore for the carrier but by March 2023, air travel was back with a bang. India's largest private airline by market share made bumper profits amounting to ₹8,100 crore for the year ended March 2024. The present financial year too is expected to be handsomely profitable.

Against IndiGo's bumper profits, the combined losses of the remaining airlines — Air

India, Vistara, AirAsia India, Air India Express, Akasa, SpiceJet et al — are in excess of ₹11,000 crore (US\$ 1.4 billion by one estimate). Naturally, this leads most to conclude that this is a bad business per se but clearly the market leader is defying this maxim.

Some analysts disagree, as does this writer, who has tracked the industry for over 25 years: there is nothing wrong with the airline business per se, barring badly run companies and poor management and execution. Although the market leader has its own set of present problems presently, the fact that it is aggressively profitable speaks volumes for the airline business in India. As experts and analysts of the sector argue,



The airline has made profits for much of its 17 years, albeit, very small ones in the initial years. HT PHOTO

many of the players are unable to make profits for reasons that go beyond the general market conditions with poor management being the biggest culprit.

## Myth Two: The govt is not doing its bit to help Indian airlines thrive

This also debunks this myth that has been built over the years by a struggling sector. No matter which aviation forum, conference, discussion or meeting one attends or reads about, there is a constant refrain or rather complaint that one hears from the Indian carriers: the government does not provide a level playing field and this is the primary reason why airlines in India have

either shut down or have been making losses consistently.

The performance of at least two airlines in India — the late Jet Airways and IndiGo — proves this is a fallacy.

For a long time and well before the Ukraine war wreaked havoc on oil prices, the industry has been asking that the government bring aviation turbine fuel (ATF) under GST. The sector has been seeking parity for the fuel with petrol and diesel, so that such that the tax rate on ATF is fixed and not ad valorem as at present. Even though international flights are exempt from excise and VAT, they argue that the current regime makes them uncompetitive vis a vis the

global carriers as they typically make losses at home.

But former and present government and ministry of civil aviation officials say that this is only a partial truth. One of the reasons why the government remains quite unmoved by the pleas of the sector is that they are not convinced that the industry is as "loss making or beleaguered" as it claims. These officials believe that most of the airlines that have gone bust in the past have done so more because of mismanagement by the founders/promoters/management, mal-intent or even a faulty model, rather than a hostile operating environment. They point to IndiGo's success to buttress their point. Jet operated in virtually a no competition era so taking its example might not be ideal but IndiGo has amply demonstrated how an airline can make money and build a strong business even when there are reasonably strong competitors.

A senior MOCA official who asked not to be named points to three or four facts observed by them over the years. He argues that in good times, airlines can and do make good money and in a fairly debt-free and easy manner. For one, through sale and lease back, airlines that go in for large aircraft orders and straight away book a large profit

as there is almost a discrepancy of US \$ 5-8 million per aircraft between the price at which the airline buys the plane from the manufacturer and at which it sells to and leases back the asset from the leasing company. If the airline chooses to bring that money back into the company's books, it has a good buffer to begin with as IndiGo did with its very first 100 aircraft order at the time of launch. This is what many argue gave the airline a headstart over others to begin with.

Another reason why government officials say they are not convinced about the sorry plight of airlines is because unlike most other businesses airlines do not need working capital loans as once they open flights for bookings, fares are collected in advance.

Therefore, revenues flow in prior to the service delivery. This is a big advantage which few other businesses offer. Further, debt is usually not a concern for most airlines as aircraft financing is also well established and does not reflect on the airline's liabilities as such. Unlike debt of say infrastructure companies and other similar businesses, there is no real gestation period for the asset (the aircraft) to begin to offer returns. The moment the aircraft begins to fly, it delivers

returns.

Three, most airlines — both in India and globally — earn revenues through ancillary businesses and this can be a significant portion of their total revenues. In other words, as has been demonstrated by airlines such as IndiGo in the past, the business can be profitable and quite remunerative even when the macro environment is not wholly favourable. It is argued that even if the airline loses some money through its core operation of flying, it can in part be made up through other avenues.

The broader question the authorities ask is this: if the airline business is consistently loss making, why would many of the players continue in it since in most cases the sector has seen many pretty shrewd businessmen (the Wadias for instance)? Moreover, why would new entrants like Akasa and others continue to come in and start operations? After the initial losses of starting up are recovered, the entrants clearly expect to chart out a profitable course.

The officials argue that to make a business successful, the founders have to have the right intentions and not look to make quick money or enrich themselves, as has sometimes been the case with some of the airlines that have shut shop.

# 2 pilots among 3 killed as pvt copter crashes in Pune

**Nadeem Inamdar  
and Yogesh Naik**

htmumbai@hindustantimes.com

**PUNE/MUMBAI:** Two pilots of a private helicopter and an engineer on board died after it crashed and caught fire in the Bavdhan hills near Pune city on Wednesday morning, police said. The helicopter was hired by the Ajit Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) for campaigning ahead of the assembly elections in Maharashtra, party's state chief Sunil Tatkare said.

The deceased have been identified as pilot Paramjeet Singh (62), co-pilot GK Pillai (57) — both retired from the Indian Air Force — and aircraft maintenance engineer Pritam Kumar Bhardwaj (53), police said, add-



Wreckage of the helicopter found in Pune on Wednesday.

PTI

ing no one else was on board at the time of the incident.

While the reason for the crash is yet to be ascertained, senior police officers said dense fog in the area may have led to the accident. The chopper took off from

Oxford County Golf Course helipad in Bavdhan near Pune and was heading to Juhu in Mumbai when it crashed in the hilly terrain at 7.40 am, barely 10 minutes after taking off, police said.

The AgustaWestland AW109

helicopter, with the registration number VT EVV, belonged to Heritage Aviation, a Delhi-based company.

Senior NCP leader Tatkare, who flew in same helicopter to Beed, said he was supposed to use it on Wednesday for poll campaigning. "I am deeply saddened by the incident. Our party had booked this chopper for our election campaign which I used just yesterday to travel in. I was supposed to go to Raigad today but unfortunately, this incident happened," he said.

Pimpri Chinchwad police commissioner Vinaykumar Choubey said all three people on board died instantly as the helicopter caught fire after crashing. "Our teams, along with the fire department, reached the spot and have gathered some details based on which

a probe is on," said Choubey.

Four water tankers and a fire tender were rushed to the spot, according to fire brigade officers.

Pimpri Chinchwad joint commissioner of police, Shashikant Mahavarkar said dense fog in the area is likely to have caused the accident. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has also launched an investigation into the crash.

As per reports, this is the third helicopter crash in Maharashtra in the last five months. On August 24, a private helicopter flying from Mumbai to Hyderabad crashed in Pune, injuring four people. On May 3, a helicopter crashed while landing at Mahad in Raigad, injuring the pilot. The helicopter was scheduled to fly Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sushma Andhare, who was in Mahad for campaigning.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

2 OCTOBER 2024

## AI Express takes off with AIX Connect merger

**Neha LM Tripathi**

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**NEW DELHI:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has approved the merger of AIX Connect (AIXC), formerly known as AirAsia, with Air India Express (AIX), the regulator said in a statement on Tuesday. All aircraft of AIXC were transferred onto AIX Air Operator Certificate, ensuring operations of the combined entity continued without disruption.

DGCA director general Vikram Dev Dutt said the merger sets a new benchmark for future airline consolidation, highlighting the importance of strategic regulatory oversight. "Air India Express Connect and Air India Express have demonstrated that this merger will create a more resilient and innovative airline, capable of competing effectively in the global market."



**Air India chief Campbell Wilson described the integration as an "important milestone" in the transformation journey.** REUTERS

He said rigorous review ensures that the merger serves the public interest by fostering safe air operations while enhancing the overall travel experience for consumers. "The insights gained from this experience will prove valuable for the upcoming merger of Air India and Vistara, which is currently in progress." The merger of Air Asia

India/AIX Connect with AIX to create a low-cost carrier was announced in 2022. The National Company Law Tribunal approved the merger on June 12.

DGCA said that the approval process for the merger involved a review of organisational structures and approvals, ensuring a seamless transfer of aircraft and personnel, and safeguarding the safety of operations. The merger required the alignment of facilities, personnel, procedures, and fleet assets spread across multiple locations. Typically such mergers require grounding the fleet during the transfer of aircraft which often inconveniences passengers and causes financial strain.

DGCA said a dedicated team was constituted to maintain the highest safety standards while simultaneously ensuring a smooth transition without the grounding

of aircraft.

AIXC and AIX worked under DGCA to develop a unified set of processes, systems, and procedures that complied with regulations and incorporated efficient practices. "Once the harmonised operating manuals were in place, both airlines operated under common procedures and conducted the necessary bridge training for their personnel under DGCA's oversight. After a successful demonstration of the harmonised procedures, the integrated manuals were approved by DGCA. In addition, the organizational structure and mandatory post holders were reviewed and approved for the merged entity," DGCA said.

The regulator evaluated the personnel needs of the merged airline so that the workforce was appropriately trained and distributed to meet the demands of the

expanded fleet, which is critical for maintaining safety and operational efficiency. It said that it reviewed aircraft lease agreements and insurance documentation to ensure compliance with domestic and international aviation regulations. DGCA created a live tracker for real-time monitoring of progress at a granular level.

AIX managing director Alope Singh said about a year ago, they started the integration, bringing the two organisations together behind a common brand.

AIX chairman Campbell Wilson said the merged entity will cater to the growing demand for air travel around India and in the region, especially among the country's aspirational youth looking for fresh and more appealing value products. "This merger will be followed by the merger of Vistara into Air India on 12 November."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

2 OCTOBER 2024

## AI Express takes off with AIX Connect merger

Press Trust of India

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**NEW DELHI:** Marking a significant consolidation in the Indian airline space, Air India Group on Tuesday completed the merger of low-cost carrier AIX Connect with Air India Express and the merged entity's fleet is expected to cross 100 planes by the end of March next year.

The merger—completed in less than a year, will see the entity operating under the name 'Air India Express' and airline code 'IX'—and Air India chief Campbell Wilson described the completion of the integration as an "important milestone" in the transformation journey.

Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday said the merger of AIX Connect with Air



**Air India chief Campbell Wilson described the integration as an "important milestone" in the transformation journey.** REUTERS

India Express sets a new benchmark for future airline consolidation in the country.

"Effective October 1, 2024, all aircraft of AIX Connect have

been transferred seamlessly onto the Air Operator Certificate (AOC) of AIX, ensuring that airline operations of the combined entity continue without

disruption to ensure a safe and smooth passenger experience," DGCA said in a release.

Both airlines are part of Tata Group, which will also be merging Vistara with Air India next month.

The merged entity's fleet, which currently stands at 88 planes, is expected to cross 100 aircraft by the end of this financial year.

"The number of routes AIX operates has risen from 74 to 171, and passenger carriage has increased by over 400 per cent since the take over of Air India by Tata group in early 2022," Air India Group said in a release.

The merger involved the harmonisation of operational manuals across the two low-cost carriers and, the transfer of aircraft, besides operational, safety and maintenance approvals.

Wilson said the integration of AIX Connect with Air India Express is an important milestone in Air India's Vihaan.ai transformation journey and that the merged entity will cater to the growing demand for air travel around India and in the region.

He is the managing director and chief executive officer of Air India and the chairman of Air India Express.

"About a year ago, we started the integration of AIX Connect and Air India Express, bringing the two organisations together behind a common brand.

"Alongside, we worked on the complex integration exercise culminating today in the operational and legal merger of the two organisations," Air India Express managing director Alok Singh said.

# DGCA to issue safety advisory after warning on Boeing rudder system

**Jagriti Chandra**

NEW DELHI

Following the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board's (NTSB) warning about a jammed rudder control system on some Boeing 737 planes, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is expected to issue an advisory to Indian airlines about the mitigation measures pilots may adopt.

A senior official said that as an "interim measure", it will ask Indian operators to notify their crew that the rudder control system might get jammed inflight or during landing due to moisture that could accumulate and freeze in the actuator. Further, the crew



Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa have the Boeing 737 planes in their fleet.

will be advised to refer to the flight manual called Quick Reference Handbook.

Among the Indian airlines, Air India Express, SpiceJet, and Akasa have the Boeing 737 planes in their fleet. However, the problem pertains specifically to actuators manufac-

tured by Collins Aerospace.

On Monday, the NTSB said more than 40 foreign operators of Boeing 737 airplanes, including the 737 MAXs, maybe using planes with rudder components that could pose safety risks. The NTSB did not identify the airlines.

Last week, the U.S. body issued urgent safety recommendations about the possibility of jammed rudder control on some 737 airplanes following an enquiry into a February incident involving a United Airlines flight.

It warned Boeing and U.S. aviation safety watchdog, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), that the instructions contained

in the QRH manual, which require pilots to exert maximum force on the rudder pedal in case of a jammed system, including a combined effort of both pilots, may lead to loss of control or departure from a runway because of a large input to the rudder pedals.

It recommended that Boeing "determine appropriate flight crew responses besides applying maximum pedal force" for such situations in flight or during landing.

Additionally, the NTSB recommended that the U.S. aviation safety regulator FAA determine if actuators with incorrectly assembled bearings should be removed from airplanes.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## Two pilots, flight engineer die as pvt chopper on way to Mumbai crashes in Pune

*Pune:* Three persons — two retired Indian Air Force (IAF) pilots and a flight engineer who had retired from the Indian Navy — were killed when their helicopter crashed on Wednesday morning in the Bavdhan area of Pune amid dense fog minutes after taking off. The helicopter, operated by a Delhi-based private firm, had taken off from a private helipad in Bavdhan for Mumbai, from where it was to fly NCP state president Sunil Tatkare to Raigad.

Some parts of the chopper caught fire after the crash. Officials from Pimpri Chinchwad police and district disaster management cell intimated the authorities at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The crash site was cordoned off by the police for the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) of the DGCA to take over the investigation. On Wednesday evening, a team from the AAIB launched a probe at the crash site, a police officer said. **ENS**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## कोल्डप्ले, दिलजीत के कार्यक्रमों ने बढ़ा दी हवाई टिकट की बुकिंग

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो  
नई दिल्ली, 2 अक्टूबर।

विदेशी बैंड 'कोल्डप्ले' के मुंबई और भारतीय गायक दिलजीत दोसांझ के चंडीगढ़ एवं अन्य शहरों में होने वाले संगीत कार्यक्रमों में शामिल होने की प्रशंसकों की चाहत से हवाई टिकटों की बुकिंग 300 फीसद बढ़ गई है। आनलाइन ट्रेवल एजेंसी 'इक्सिगो' ने बुधवार को एक रपट में यह जानकारी दी।

गैमी पुरस्कार विजेता बैंड कोल्डप्ले अपने 'म्यूजिक ऑफ द स्फीयरस' वर्ल्ड टूर के तहत 18-21 जनवरी के दौरान मुंबई के डीवाई पाटिल

स्टेडियम में अपना कार्यक्रम पेश करने वाला है। पंजाबी संगीत के लोकप्रिय गायक दिलजीत भी अपने 'दिल-उमिनाती' इंडिया टूर के तहत इस साल दिसंबर में चंडीगढ़ में एक कंसर्ट में हिस्सा लेंगे।

इन दोनों संगीत कार्यक्रमों में शामिल होने और अपने पसंदीदा कलाकारों को सुनने के लिए देशभर से प्रशंसकों के बीच यात्रा बुकिंग में उछाल देखा जा रहा है।

विमानों के अलावा ट्रेन और बस बुकिंग से जुड़े आनलाइन खोज में तेज वृद्धि देखी गई है। रिपोर्ट कहती है कि

मुंबई में उड़ान बुकिंग में सालाना आधार पर 350 फीसद की जबरदस्त वृद्धि देखी गई है। वहीं दिलजीत के कंसर्ट

बाकी पेज s पर

## कोल्डप्ले, दिलजीत के कार्यक्रमों ने बढ़ा दी हवाई टिकट की बुकिंग

के लिए चंडीगढ़ की हवाई बुकिंग में 300 फीसद का उछाल आया है। दिलजीत के अन्य कंसर्ट दिल्ली, अहमदाबाद और इंदौर जैसे शहरों के लिए भी हवाई टिकटों की बुकिंग में औसतन 100 फीसद की वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है।

इक्सिगो ग्रुप के मुख्य कार्यपालक

अधिकारी (सीईओ) आलोक वाजपेयी ने कहा, 'हमने भारतीय यात्रियों की प्राथमिकताओं में महत्त्वपूर्ण बदलाव देखा है। अधिक लोग संगीत समारोहों और त्योहारों पर खर्च करने को तैयार हैं। सजीव कंसर्ट में शामिल होने का जुनून प्रशंसकों को यात्रा करने के लिए प्रेरित कर रहा है।'

# विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा की सेवाएं बनी रहेंगी : एयर इंडिया

नयी दिल्ली, एजेंसी। एयरलाइन कंपनी एयर इंडिया ने कहा कि अगले महीने विलय के बाद 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआई2' से होगी। कंपनी ने कहा कि विस्तारा के विमान, चालक दल और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही परिचालन में बनी रहेंगी। टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली एयरलाइन ने जोर दिया कि विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा का अनुभव बरकरार रहेगा। टाटा समूह और सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस के संयुक्त उपक्रम विस्तारा का एयर इंडिया से विलय 12 नवंबर को होगा।

यह एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के साथ एआईएक्स कनेक्ट के विलय के बाद भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र में एक बड़ा सौदा होगा। कुछ लोगों में इस बात को लेकर चिंता है कि क्या विस्तारा के यात्रियों को विलय के बाद भी अभी जैसी ही सेवाएं मिलती रहेंगी, क्योंकि परिवर्तन के दौर से गुजर रही एयर इंडिया को हाल के दिनों में कुछ सेवा संबंधी समस्याओं



■ एयर इंडिया ने कहा कि अगले महीने विलय के बाद 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआई2' से होगी। कंपनी ने कहा कि विस्तारा के विमान, चालक दल और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही परिचालन में बनी रहेंगी। एयरलाइन ने जोर दिया कि विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा का अनुभव बरकरार रहेगा।

का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।

एयर इंडिया के प्रवक्ता ने बुधवार को कहा कि एयर इंडिया और विस्तारा की टीमों यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए एक साल से अधिक समय से कड़ी मेहनत कर रही हैं कि

इनका विलय ग्राहकों और कर्मचारियों दोनों के लिए सहज हो। प्रवक्ता ने बयान में कहा, "हालांकि, कानूनी संस्थाएं और हवाई परिचालन प्रमाण-पत्र 12 नवंबर को एक हो जाएंगे, लेकिन विस्तारा का

अनुभव बना रहेगा।" उन्होंने कहा, "विस्तारा विमान, चालक दल और सेवाएं पहले की तरह संचालित होती रहेंगी, लेकिन एआई2 एक्सएक्सएक्स उड़ान संख्या एयरइंडिया.कॉम के माध्यम से बुक की जा सकेंगी।

पंजाब, हरियाणा में 58286 टन से अधिक धान की खरीद

चंडीगढ़, एजेंसी। हरियाणा और पंजाब में राइस मीलियों की हड़ताल के बावजूद न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य (एमएसपी) पर अब तक 58286 टन से अधिक की धान की खरीद सरकारी एजेंसियों की ओर से की जा चुकी है। यह जानकारी खाद्य एवं आपूर्ति विभाग के प्रवक्ता ने बुधवार को देते हुए बताया कि बुधवार तक राज्य की 241 मंडियों में कुल 58286 टन धान की आवक हुई है। 17 फीसदी तक की नमी वाली 58286 टन धान की सरकारी एजेंसियों ने खरीद की है तथा 4445 टन धान का उठान किया है।

किसानों को समय पर भुगतान भी सुनिश्चित किया जा रहा है और अब तक दो करोड़ रुपये सीधे किसानों के बैंक खातों में वितरित किए गए हैं, जिससे सात हजार 500 से अधिक किसान लाभान्वित हुए हैं।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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MINT

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## Vistara services to have 'AI2' prefix: AI

**A**ir India (AI) on Wednesday said flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger next month while Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before. The Tata group-owned full service carrier also emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post merger.

The merger of Vistara—a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines—with Air India is scheduled for 12 November that will mark a major consolidation in the Indian aviation space after the integration of AIX Connect with Air India Express.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in recent times.

PTI



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

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## **Air India introduces new policy for cabin crew**

New Delhi: Air India is introducing a revised policy for cabin crew members of domestic and international flights, wherein certain sections of the members will have to share rooms during layovers. Revised policy will not be applicable for AI Express. *PTI*



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## Air India to use 'AI2' prefix for Vistara flights post-merger

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Wednesday said flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger next month while Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before. The Tata Group-owned full service carrier also emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post merger.

The merger of Vistara -- a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines -- with Air India is scheduled for November 12 that will mark a major consolidation in the Indian aviation space after the integration of AIX Connect with Air India Express.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in recent times.

An Air India spokesperson on Wednesday said the teams of Air India and Vistara have



been working hard for over a year to ensure that the merger of the legal and regulated entities is seamless for both customers and staff.

"Though the legal entities and Air Operator Certificates will become one on 12 November, the Vistara experience will remain.

"Vistara aircraft, crew and service will continue to operate as before, but with AI2XXX flight numbers bookable via [airindia.com](http://airindia.com)," the spokesperson said in a statement to PTI.

Air India's airline code is 'AI' and that of Vistara is 'UK'. The latter will fly into the sunset after the merger.

Among other elements, Vistara's catering is being extended to Air India.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## Air India updates cabin crew policies, allowances

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Air India is introducing a revised policy for the cabin crew members of domestic and international flights, wherein certain sections of the members will have to share rooms during layovers, according to a source.

The revised policy will also be applicable for Air India Express, which has merged AIX Connect with itself.

Among other changes, the source in the know said the allowances for cabin crew of international flights will be increased from USD 75-125 bracket to USD 85-135 bracket.

There is no change in the allowances for the cabin crew of domestic flights.

An airline spokesperson said that with the merger of Air India and Vistara formalising, there is a need to



harmonise these policies for employees of both the organisations.

"As part of that exercise, we have communicated the changes applicable to Air India employees. The revised compensation and benefits

continue to be competitive and benchmarked to industry standards," the spokesperson told PTI in a statement.

Under the revised policy, cabin crew members, excluding in-flight managers

and executives, will have to share rooms during layovers, the source said.

In-flight managers and executives are generally senior people with at least 8-9 years of experience.

While room sharing for

cabin crew is already there at Air India Express and Vistara, this will be the first time such a practice will be introduced at the Tata Group-owned loss-making Air India.

The changes in the policy also comes against the backdrop of a section of Air India Express cabin crew members seeking redressal of their HR issues under the labour law. The case is in progress before the Central Labour Commissioner.

Meanwhile, the Air India spokesperson also mentioned about the airline introducing a performance-linked compensation and benefits policy for all employees in April 2023.

The merger of AIX Connect with Air India Express was completed on October 1 while the integration of Vistara with Air India will be completed next month.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

RASHTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

## विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा में क़ू मेम्बर व सेवाएं बनी रहेंगी

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

एयर इंडिया ने बुधवार को कहा कि अगले महीने विलय के बाद 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआई2' से होगी। कंपनी ने कहा कि विस्तारा के विमान, चालक दल और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही परिचालन में बनी रहेंगी। टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली एयरलाइन ने जोर दिया कि विलय के बाद भी विस्तारा का अनुभव बरकरार रहेगा।

टाटा समूह और सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस के संयुक्त उपक्रम विस्तारा का एयर इंडिया से विलय 12 नवम्बर को होगा। यह एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के साथ एआईएक्स कनेक्ट के विलय के बाद भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र में एक बड़ा सौदा होगा। कुछ लोगों में इस बात को लेकर चिंता है कि क्या विस्तारा के यात्रियों को विलय के बाद भी अभी जैसी ही सेवाएं मिलती रहेंगी, क्योंकि परिवर्तन के दौर से गुजर रही एयर इंडिया को हाल के दिनों में कुछ सेवा संबंधी समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है।

एयर इंडिया ने कहा कि हम यह सुनिश्चित कर रहे हैं कि विलय ग्राहकों और कर्मचारियों दोनों के लिए सहज हो।

## केबिन क्रू स्टाफ के लिए नई नीति ला रही एयर इंडिया

■ अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों के दौरान केबिन क्रू के भत्तों में किया जाएगा इजाफा

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

एयरलाइन कंपनी एयर इंडिया घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों के चालक दल के सदस्यों (केबिन क्रू) के लिए एक संशोधित नीति पेश कर रही है। एक सूत्र ने कहा कि इसके तहत कुछ वर्गों के सदस्यों को विश्राम के दौरान कमरे साझा करने होंगे।

संशोधित नीति एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस पर लागू नहीं होगी, जिसने एआईएक्स कनेक्ट का अपने साथ विलय कर लिया है। सूत्र ने कहा कि अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों के केबिन क्रू के भत्ते को 75-125 डालर से बढ़ाकर 85-135 डालर किया जाएगा। घरेलू उड़ानों के केबिन क्रू के भत्ते में कोई बदलाव नहीं किया गया है। एयरलाइन के प्रवक्ता ने कहा कि एयर इंडिया और विस्तारा के विलय की औपचारिकता पूरी होने के साथ दोनों संगठनों के कर्मचारियों के लिए इन नीतियों में सामंजस्य स्थापित करने की आवश्यकता है।

प्रवक्ता ने कहा, 'इसके तहत हमने एयर इंडिया कर्मचारियों पर

लागू होने वाले परिवर्तनों के बारे में जानकारी दे दी है। संशोधित वेतन और लाभ प्रतिस्पर्धी बने रहेंगे और उद्योग मानकों के अनुरूप होंगे।' सूत्र ने बताया कि संशोधित नीति के तहत, उड़ान के दौरान प्रबंधक और अधिकारियों को छोड़कर केबिन क्रू के सदस्यों को विश्राम के दौरान कमरे साझा करने होंगे। उड़ान प्रबंधक और अधिकारी आमतौर पर कम से कम आठ-नौ साल के अनुभव वाले वरिष्ठ लोग होते हैं।



हालांकि, एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस और विस्तारा में केबिन क्रू के लिए कमरा साझा करने की व्यवस्था पहले से ही है। हालांकि, यह पहली बार होगा जब टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली घाटे में चल रही एयर इंडिया में ऐसी व्यवस्था शुरू की जाएगी।

नीति में यह बदलाव एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के केबिन क्रू सदस्यों के

एक वर्ग द्वारा श्रम कानून के तहत अपने मानव संसाधन मुद्दों के समाधान की मांग के बीच किया गया है। यह मामला केंद्रीय श्रम आयुक्त के समक्ष विचाराधीन है। इस बीच, एयर इंडिया के प्रवक्ता ने बताया कि एयरलाइन ने अप्रैल, 2023 में सभी कर्मचारियों के लिए प्रदर्शन-आधारित मुआवजा और लाभ नीति पेश की थी।

# Recall Tom Hanks' 'Terminal'? Many may face similar plight

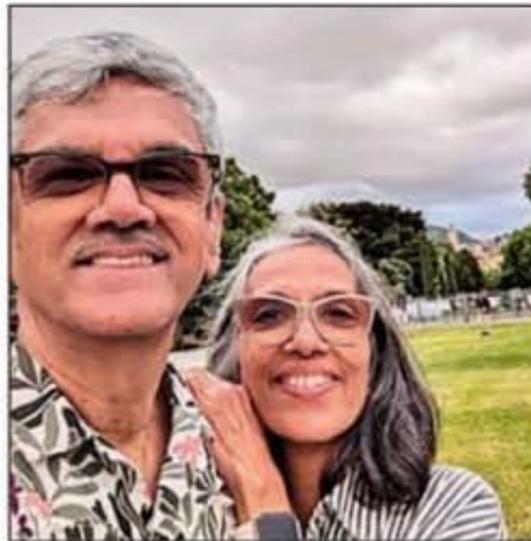
**Saurabh.Sinha**  
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**New Delhi:** Just over three hours into Lufthansa's Frankfurt-Mumbai flight on Tuesday, there was a sudden buzz onboard the Airbus A340 while it was in Turkish airspace. Half-sleepy post-lunch, passengers watching the live route map realised the aircraft had turned back and was again heading towards the Black Sea, which it had crossed not so long back.

The mystery was solved in a few minutes when the pilot announced that the Iran-Israel conflict had led to Iranian airspace being shut for commercial airliners and that they had no option but to return to Frankfurt, recalled Mumbai-based Lovaii Navlakhi and his wife Arwa, who were on this flight.

Around the same time, Iran's missile attack had led to several other flights like Lufthansa's Frankfurt-Hyderabad and Air France's Paris-Mumbai returning to their origin as airspaces of countries on the way, like Jordan and Iran, were closed.

The Mumbai-bound LH



The Navlakhis said Lufthansa and passengers handled the situation well when their Frankfurt-Mumbai flight turned back just before entering Iran airspace

756 was about half an hour away from entering Iranian airspace when it turned back. "The pilot's announcement was detailed and matter of fact. It said we need to return due to a situation that was beyond their control and for our safety. There was not much hue and cry in the aircraft. The crew said there would be ground staff at Frankfurt to make alternative travel and hotel arrangements. That an email with alternative flights should be in the inbox when we land," Lovaii Navlakhi, who owns a wealth management company and

was returning after a holiday in France, told TOI from Frankfurt on Wednesday.

The most concerned were passengers who were transiting via Frankfurt to return to India and did not have Schengen visas or those whose short-term Europe visas had either expired or were about to expire. "The crew said such passengers will need to stay at the airport. And that while beds would be provided at the airport in a separate area, they should take blankets and pillows from the aircraft on landing," Lovaii added.

On return to Frankfurt almost seven hours after taking off from there, passengers lined up for their hotel and breakfast vouchers and to learn about alternative flights.

With Oct 2 being a holiday in India, some passengers allowed those in a hurry to fly on priority when Lufthansa began sending back people on other airlines, including Vistara. The Navlakhi couple were rebooked to fly back on Oct 3 via Munich to Mumbai.

"We have no reason to complain. The situation was handled well both by the airline and flyers," Arwa said.

# How AI is changing airline & hotel businesses, our travel experiences

Sabre's India centre is driving many of these innovations

Akhil George & Sujit John | TNN

**W**e got an opportunity recently to sit with Kurt Ekert, CEO of Sabre, and his senior-most technology leaders – Garry Wiseman, chief product & technology officer, and Joe DiFonzo, CIO. Sabre, alongside Amadeus and Travelport, is a leading technology provider to the global travel industry. Cloud and AI are now dramatically transforming this business, including travel experiences. And Sabre's Bengaluru development centre, home to about 1,200 employees, has evolved from a customer care centre to a powerhouse of innovation.

"This centre is key to what we want to do strategically," Kurt tells us.

Sabre's AI ambitions span the entire travel journey – from an airline dynamically pricing seats using machine learning, to a hotel using genAI-based chatbots for customer service.

In airline revenue management, the results are already stark. Sabre's product that allows airlines to dynamically price seats using machine learning and multivariate testing, has raised airline revenues by up to 3%. "This is significant when you think about the margins on airline tickets," Kurt says.

Earlier, pricing changes were based on set rules. Now, Garry says, machine learning understands how often people are searching for a particular ticket, how often people are buying it, etc, and updates prices far more regularly. "The manipulation of data through AI is getting to an exponentially different level," he says.

Hotels are benefiting too. One of Sabre's platforms uses AI to optimise hotel revenue, while another automates customer ser-



Sabre's techies in India with CEO Kurt Ekert

## AI IS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGING HOW CONSUMERS BUY TRAVEL

**“**Bengaluru is one of the most strategically important centres for Sabre globally. It's an epicentre for our technology, product, and software engineering. The way consumers research and buy travel is fundamentally changing, with machine learning and AI as the pivot point. We've developed a retail intelligence suite infused with Google's Gemini AI technologies. This allows us to create real-time offers by analysing vast amounts of data, giving airlines and travel agencies a powerful toolkit to engage with consumers in a much more dynamic way.

**Kurt Ekert** | PRESIDENT AND CEO

**“**Our Multi-source Content Platform integrates various forms of travel content into a single, unified system. It's like the evolution from cable TV to streaming for the travel industry. When you go through a traditional airline channel, you only see their offers. But through our platform, you can see all airlines' offers together, regardless of whether they come from traditional channels, NDC (new distribution capability), or even bespoke channels. It gives customers a comprehensive view and allows them to choose whatever they like.

**Garry Wiseman** | CHIEF PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

**“**We now have over a thousand developers using generative AI tools to help write software every day. We're using these tools to help us operate the business and manage the web of complex systems. It helps us identify faults quickly in our network and fix them. This is all enabled by our cloud migration – we've essentially moved more than 99% of our compute to the cloud environment. We couldn't have developed these capabilities internally or operated them in our old data centres.

**Joe DiFonzo** | CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER

vice. "We've seen two things – massive productivity improvement in our customer care opera-

tion, and an improvement in customer satisfaction scores," says Kurt.



(L-R) Joe DiFonzo, Kurt Ekert, Garry Wiseman in Bengaluru

Another AI tool helps corporate travellers understand the carbon footprint of their flights

and hotels. This helps particularly when a company has carbon emission targets to fulfil. Yet another uses vast amounts of data to predict which flights are more likely to be cancelled or delayed. "That can feed into online travel agencies, so that when an agent is going to book for a customer, they can give them a warning like, 'Would you rather have this flight instead? Because this flight has some probability of being delayed?'," says Garry.

The company is also using genAI tools internally to boost developer productivity. Joe says they now have over a thousand developers using these tools to help write software every day. "We're using these tools to help us operate the business and manage the web of complex systems. It helps us identify faults quickly in our network and fix them," he says.

### India's central role

A lot of this work is happening in the Bengaluru development centre. "There's just an infusion of really excited young engineers that want to make a difference," Kurt says about the centre.

One of the centre's key projects is the development of Sabre Mosaic, a cloud-native, open-architecture platform that Kurt describes as "AI-infused." This platform aims to revolutionise how airlines manage their operations, from sales and reservations to airport logistics.

A robust internship programme acts as a talent pipeline for the centre, with over 80-100 interns joining each year from top engineering colleges. Kurt notes that the diversity is incredible – "In this year's group of interns, it was 50:50 male and female."

As Sabre looks to the future, Kurt is clear that the India centre will play an increasingly pivotal role. "We have leadership, both in technology operations and in software engineering here. In fact, our software engineering leader here runs half of our software engineers around the world."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

2 OCTOBER 2024

## First flight to take off from Noida airport on April 17

**Noida:** Noida International Airport is set to start commercial flight operations to both domestic and international destinations from April 17 next year.

The decision was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Noida International Airport Ltd (NIAL) — the govt's special purpose vehicle for the project — on Tuesday. A detailed timeline outlining key clearances for the airport's launch was presented by Yamuna International Airport Ltd (YIAPL), a subsidiary of Swiss airports major Zurich AG.

"The concessionaire has submitted a plan to start commercial operations by April 17. But we will try to bring the launch date forward. The timeline is crucial because any deviation from the April 17 deadline could result in a further six-month delay," said Arun Vir Singh, the NIAL CEO.

The airport — the second such facility in Delhi-NCR — was initially scheduled to begin operations by the end of Sept this year, with plans for up to 65 daily flights — 62 on domestic routes, two for international destinations and a cargo flight. **TNN**

## Iran-Israel conflict: Germany to Hyd & Mumbai flights turn back

Saurabh Sinha | TNN

**New Delhi:** With Iran launching missile attacks on Israel late Tuesday night (India time) and the conflict set to worsen, airlines that used to overfly the region are scurrying for safety. Lufthansa's Tuesday flights from Frankfurt to Hyderabad and Mumbai returned to Germany as the airline decided not to venture in the war zone for safety reasons.

Lufthansa's Frankfurt-Hyderabad LH 752 and Frankfurt-Mumbai LH 756 were over Turkey when Iran launched missile attack on Israel. The aircraft turned back to Frankfurt. Consequently the return flights on these two sectors (India-Germany that these planes would have operated) early Wednesday have been cancelled.

SWISS is avoiding the airspace over Iran, Iraq and Jordan. "This will increase flight times by up to 15 minutes on



Source: Flightaware

Lufthansa LH 756 flight from Frankfurt to Mumbai returned to Germany from over Turkey after Iran launched missile volley at Israel on Tuesday

our Dubai, India and Southeast Asia services. Regardless of this short-term adjustment, Israeli and Lebanese airspace will be bypassed up to and including Oct 31," SWISS said in a statement. Tuesday's Zurich-Dubai flight diverted to Antalya in Turkey due to the longer route required to be taken. The aircraft will refuel in Antalya and continue its journey to Dubai outside the affected airspace.

A Lufthansa spokesper-

son said, "Due to the current security situation, we are no longer flying through the airspace's of Iraq, Iran and Jordan." Tuesday's Munich-Mumbai was able to operate.

An Air India official said: "All our flights are assessed daily for any potential security or safety risks whether it is in the Middle East or any other part of our route network. Adjustments are made, if required, to avoid areas of risk with minimal impact on our non-stop operations."