



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

Pushta Road to be widened to 10 lanes for airport traffic

Vinod Rajput

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NOIDA: The Noida Authority on Friday said that the Yamuna Pushta road connecting Noida to Greater Noida will be expanded into a 10-lane corridor to handle rising traffic due to the upcoming Noida International Airport.

"Currently, the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway is the main road connecting Noida with Greater Noida and Jewar. However, traffic pressure will increase significantly once the airport becomes operational. The Yamuna Pushta road, which runs from Noida Sector 94 and connects Sector 150, will be redeveloped," said Krishna Karunesh, chief executive officer, Noida authority.

The road will be widened to 8-10 lanes to meet future demand, or at least six lanes initially with scope for expansion, the CEO added.



The move aims to handle the increased traffic pressure once the Noida airport begins operations.

NOIDA AUTHORITY CEO

The authority is also developing Chilla elevated road and a link road from Mahamaya Flyover to Pushta road to ease traffic pressure, said officials.

Last month, a team from the UP Expressways Industrial Development Authority and the irrigation department inspected the proposed elevated road to assess the project's feasibility and alignment, said officials.

The elevated corridor will

start from Okhla Barrage near Noida Sector 94 and run along the Yamuna embankment before connecting to the Yamuna Expressway near Gharbara village, opposite Gautam Buddha University, said officials.

The project is expected to provide direct connectivity from Delhi to the Noida International Airport, reducing travel time and easing congestion on the expressway, officials added.

According to the plan, a 31.2km six-lane elevated road will be developed from Sector 94, connecting Sector 150, crossing the Hindon, and merging with the Yamuna Expressway.

Almondz Global Infra has been hired for a feasibility study, and then a detailed project report will be prepared in three months. The project is expected to be completed in 24 months, with costs shared by the Noida, Greater Noida and Yamuna authorities, said officials.



Corporate Communications Directorate

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DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

6 electronic update boards set up at IGI

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi Traffic Police has installed three electronic boards, or mobile Variable Messaging Systems (VMS), in coordination with Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) at key points around the airport to provide live traffic updates, advisories, and wait-time information to commuters, police said on Friday.

Police have made it mandatory for taxis to operate strictly from authorised parking and halting areas, barring them from picking up passengers outside terminal buildings, said deputy commissioner of police (traffic) Shobhit Saxena.

"Passengers must use registered taxi counters or verified app-based services and board vehicles only from designated points. This is essential not just for smoother traffic flow but also for passenger safety," he said.

The measures are part of a



The boards will provide live traffic updates. HT

broader strategy rolled out by to improve traffic in-and-around Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, officials said.

To tackle parking violations, police have issued 13,717 e-challans for improper parking and towed 679 vehicles so far this year. A total of 14 automatic number plate recognition cameras have been installed at critical stretches, including Terminal-3 Road, Terminal-1 exit, and the UER-II corridor. Red light violation detection cameras have also been installed at key points.



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

Noida Int'l Airport set to boost connectivity, ease Delhi traffic

Focus on better road, metro links & supporting facilities

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NOIDA: The inauguration of Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport, along with the foundation laying of a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facility, brought together industry representatives, officials and stakeholders, who outlined the project's expected economic and logistical impact.

Bob Chi, CEO of Gateway Services at Singapore-based SATS Ltd., said the airport would enhance connectivity between Uttar Pradesh and global markets and could attract international investment. Film producer Boney Kapoor, associated with the proposed film city in the region, said the airport and related projects may contrib-



ute to the growth of a combined economic and cultural hub.

Subhash Goyal, chairman of the Aviation and Tourism Committee, noted capacity constraints at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, adding that the Jewar facility could ease pressure and improve connectivity for nearby regions. He also underlined the need for better road

and metro links, along with supporting infrastructure.

Lalit Thukral, president of the Noida Apparel Export Cluster, said the airport is expected to boost cargo operations and support export industries.

Officials said the project is likely to generate employment and drive ancillary development, with further phases planned.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

आंधी में फंसा विमान, वाराणसी से घूमकर प्रयागराज लौटा

प्रयागराज। संगमनगरी में शुक्रवार को मौसम के बदले मिजाज ने हवाई सेवाओं को रफ्तार पर ब्रेक लगा दी। दिल्ली से प्रयागराज आ रहा इंडिगो का विमान आंधी और खराब दृश्यता (विजिबिलिटी) के कारण लैंड नहीं कर सका। एटीसी की अनुमति नहीं मिलने पर पायलट ने विमान को वाराणसी के बाबतपुर एयरपोर्ट की ओर मोड़ दिया। डायवर्जन के कारण यात्रियों को करीब दो घंटे की देरी हुई। दिल्ली के इंदिरा गांधी इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से 176 यात्रियों को लेकर इंडिगो की फ्लाइट ने सुबह 10:47 बजे उड़ान भरी। ब्यूरो



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

60% free airline seat allocation directive put in abeyance

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 3 April

The government has put in abeyance its direction requiring airlines to offer at least 60 per cent of seats on flights without any additional charge. The move comes following industry representations over the likely impact on fares and the sector's pricing structure.

In a communication issued on Thursday, the civil aviation ministry said the provision mandating free selection of at least 60 per cent seats would be kept in abeyance till further orders, pending a comprehensive review. The ministry noted that it had examined representations from the Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA) and Akasa Air, which highlighted operational and commercial implications, including concerns around fare structures and consistency with the deregulated tariff regime.

The directive, announced on March 18, had asked the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to ensure that a minimum of 60 per cent of seats on every flight be made available for selection without any extra charge from April 20. It had also proposed that passengers booked under the same PNR be seated together. Airlines had opposed the move soon after it was announced. In a letter dated March 19, the FIA — whose members include Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet — described the directive as a regulatory overreach into commercial aspects of airline operations and warned that it would lead to higher airfares and reduced affordability. The grouping argued that seat selection fees are a legitimate source of revenue, especially in a high-cost environment, and that airlines rely on ancillary streams such as baggage, meals and preferred seating to offset rising expenses, including fuel, maintenance, and airport charges.

It cautioned that any loss of such revenue would likely be recovered through an increase in base fares, affecting all passengers. Industry executives say airlines typically charge between ₹200 and ₹2,100 for seat selection depending on factors such as seat location and legroom. At present, around 20 per cent of seats are available without charge.

The FIA also pointed to legal and regulatory considerations where optional offerings are priced separately from the base fare.

विमान में मुफ्त सीट चुनने का निर्देश टला

दीपक पटेल
नई दिल्ली, 3 अप्रैल

सरकार ने अपना वह निर्देश रोक दिया है, जिसमें विमानन कंपनियों को किसी भी उड़ान में कम से कम 60 प्रतिशत सीटें बिना किसी अतिरिक्त शुल्क के देने के लिए कहा गया था। किराये और इस क्षेत्र की मूल्य-निर्धारण संरचना पर पड़ने वाले संभावित असर के संबंध में उद्योग जगत की शिकायतों के बाद यह कदम उठाया गया है।

गुरुवार को जारी बयान में नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय ने कहा कि कम से कम 60 प्रतिशत सीटों का मुफ्त चयन अनिवार्य करने वाले इस प्रावधान को व्यापक समीक्षा पूरी होने तक अगले आदेशों तक के लिए रोक दिया गया है। मंत्रालय ने कहा कि उसने फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एयरलाइंस (एफआईए) और अकासा एयर से मिली आपत्तियों की जांच की है। उन्होंने इसके परिचालन और वाणिज्यिक असर के बारे में बताया गया है। साथ ही किराए की संरचना और बिना नियमन वाली किराया व्यवस्था के साथ इसके तालमेल को लेकर चिंताएं जताई हैं।

18 मार्च को घोषित इस निर्देश में नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) से यह सुनिश्चित करने को कहा गया था कि 20 अप्रैल से हर उड़ान में कम से कम 60 प्रतिशत सीटें बिना किसी अतिरिक्त शुल्क के चयन के लिए उपलब्ध कराई जाएं। इसमें यह भी प्रस्ताव था कि एक ही पीएनआर के तहत बुक किए जाने वाले यात्रियों

को एक साथ सीटें दी जाएं।

इस कदम का जैसे ही ऐलान हुआ, विमानन कंपनियों ने इसका विरोध किया। 19 मार्च को लिखे पत्र में एफआईए ने इस निर्देश को किसी विमानन कंपनी के परिचालन के वाणिज्यिक पहलुओं में हद से ज्यादा नियामकीय दखल बताया और आगाह किया कि इससे हवाई किराये बढ़ेंगे और किफायती किरायों की उनकी क्षमता कम हो जाएगी। एफआईए के सदस्यों में एयर इंडिया, इंडिगो और स्पाइसजेट शामिल हैं।

संगठन ने तर्क दिया कि सीट चुनने के लिए ली जाने वाली फीस आय का वैध स्रोत है, खास तौर पर ऐसे माहौल में जिसमें लागत बहुत ज्यादा हो। उसने यह भी कहा कि विमानन कंपनियां ईंधन, रखरखाव और हवाई अड्डे के शुल्कों जैसे बढ़ते खर्चों की भरपाई के

विमानन कंपनियां आम तौर पर सीट की जगह और पैर फैलाने की जगह आदि के आधार पर सीट चयन के लिए शुल्क लेती हैं

लिए सामान, भोजन और पसंदीदा सीटों जैसे आय के अतिरिक्त स्रोतों पर निर्भर रहती हैं। उसने चेतावनी दी कि इस तरह की आय में किसी भी तरह की कमी होने पर उसकी भरपाई संभवतः मूल किराये में बढ़ोतरी करके की जाएगी, जिसका असर सभी यात्रियों पर पड़ेगा।

उद्योग के अधिकारियों का कहना है कि विमानन कंपनियां आम तौर पर सीट की जगह और लेगरूम (पैरों के लिए जगह) जैसे कारकों के आधार पर सीट चयन के लिए 200 रुपये से लेकर 2,100 रुपये तक शुल्क लेती हैं। वर्तमान में लगभग 20 प्रतिशत सीटें बिना किसी शुल्क के उपलब्ध होती हैं।

जयपुर से लखनऊ की 1 और फ्लाइट, अब सुबह जाकर रात को लौट सकेंगे

भास्कर न्यूज़ | जयपुर

जयपुर से लखनऊ जाने वाले हवाई यात्रियों के लिए राहत की खबर है। इंडिगो ने करीब एक साल बाद इस रूट पर दूसरी फ्लाइट शुरू कर दी है। अब यात्रियों को सुबह और दोपहर, दोनों समय उड़ान का विकल्प मिलेगा। इससे समय की बचत होगी और कनेक्टिविटी भी बेहतर होगी।

नई फ्लाइट 6E-7651 सुबह 8:45 बजे जयपुर से रवाना होकर लखनऊ पहुंचेगी। वापसी में फ्लाइट 6E-7652 रात 9:55 बजे लखनऊ से जयपुर आएगी। इस रूट पर पहले से संचालित दूसरी फ्लाइट दोपहर 2 बजे जयपुर से लखनऊ जाती है और शाम 5:45 बजे जयपुर लौटती है। ऐसे में अब यात्री लखनऊ जाकर उसी दिन वापसी की योजना भी बना सकेंगे।

पिछले साल अप्रैल से इस रूट पर केवल एक ही फ्लाइट उपलब्ध थी। इससे खासकर बिजनेस ट्रेवलर्स और कनेक्टिंग

नई फ्लाइट

रोज सुबह : 8:45 बजे जयपुर से रवाना होकर लखनऊ जाएगी।

रात : 9:55 बजे लखनऊ से जयपुर आएगी।



पुरानी फ्लाइट

दोपहर : 2 बजे जयपुर से जाएगी।

शाम : शाम 5:45 वापस आएगी।

फ्लाइट पकड़ने वाले यात्रियों को सीमित विकल्प मिलते थे। अब दो फ्लाइट्स के संचालन से यात्रियों को ज्यादा सुविधा मिलेगी। एविएशन एक्सपर्ट्स के अनुसार जयपुर-लखनऊ रूट पर यात्री भार लगातार बढ़ रहा है। ऐसे में फ्लाइट्स की संख्या बढ़ाना यात्रियों के साथ एयरलाइन के लिए भी फायदेमंद माना जा रहा है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

3 APRIL 2026

फ्लाइट में 60% सीटें फ्री देने के फैसले पर रोक

मुंबई | केंद्र ने एयरलाइंस को फ्लाइट में 60% सीटें बिना अतिरिक्त शुल्क के चुनने देने वाले निर्देश को अस्थायी रूप से रोक दिया है। यह नियम 20 अप्रैल से लागू होना था, लेकिन अब इसे अगले आदेश तक स्थगित कर दिया गया है। नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय ने 15 दिन पहले 18 मार्च को कहा था कि डीजीसीए को निर्देश दिए गए हैं कि किसी भी फ्लाइट में सीट चयन के लिए न्यूनतम 60% सीटें बिना चार्ज उपलब्ध कराई जाएं।

मंत्रालय के अनुसार, इस मुद्दे की समीक्षा के दौरान फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एयरलाइंस और अकासा एयर की ओर से भेजे गए प्रतिवेदन देखे गए। इनमें ऑपरेशनल और कमर्शियल असर, किराया संरचना पर संभावित प्रभाव और मौजूदा डिरेगुलेटेड टैरिफ व्यवस्था से तालमेल जैसे मुद्दे उठाए गए।

IndiGo pilot shares Tirumala moment

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, APRIL 2

A routine Ahmedabad-Chennai passenger flight on March 30, a video of which has gone viral on social media, was a personal milestone for the pilot of the airline.

The moment came to the limelight after a video of the Tirumala Hills recorded by a passenger in the aircraft went viral, showing the plane orbiting the sacred seven hills without flying over them,



Captain Manjeet Singh, who piloted the Ahmedabad-Chennai IndiGo flight that briefly circled near Tirumala hills.
— BY ARRANGEMENT

ahead of landing at Tirupati. Sharing his experience on social media, Captain Manjeet Singh recalled his first visit to Tirupati years



ago, when he had aspired to become a pilot with no resources or clarity. "Years ago, I stood at Tirupati for the first time, with nothing but a dream of becoming a pilot. And today I got to see Tirumala from the sky. It feels like my life has become a full circle", the captain said. The pilot said that passengers on board experienced a sense of calm as the plane circled over Tirumala, without flying over the temple. Captain Manjeet Singh also clari-

fied that the aircraft did not fly over the temple. It had maintained a safe distance at an altitude of around 15,000 feet.

"As the distance between Tirupati and Chennai is relatively short, the plane starts descending from around 22,000 feet with Air Traffic Control clearance with a brief orbit of about three to four minutes to safely reduce the altitude," the captain explained. The passenger's video drew mixed reactions online.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

3 APRIL 2026

Jazeera Airways to operate Kuwait-M'luru chartered flights

MANGALURU, DHNS: Jazeera Airways will operate special biweekly charter flights between Kuwait and Mangaluru via Dammam starting April 8. The Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has accorded permission for the special operations. The flights will operate on Wednesday and Sunday.

The airline will ferry passengers from Kuwait to Dammam, an approximately six-hour journey, and stop at Saudi border for mandatory checks before going straight to Dammam airport. The same process will be followed on the return leg from Dammam with stop at Kuwait border for mandatory checks.

Flight J9 3417 will depart Kuwait at 8.40 am local time there and reach Mangaluru at 4.10 pm IST.

Flight J9 3418 will depart Mangaluru at 4.55 pm IST and reach Kuwait at 7.40 pm, local time there.

Seat Fees are Not the Real Problem



Amit K Bardhan

Airfares are easy to compare. A quick online search reveals the lowest base fare across airlines. But the final price is often much higher. Thanks to unbundled pricing, airlines separate cost of transportation from a menu of optional extras: checked baggage, priority boarding, lounge access, onboard meals and seat selection.

On most Indian carriers, about 20% of seats can be selected without an additional fee. Preferred positions like window seats, front rows, and exit rows with extra legroom carry charges between ₹200 and ₹1,100. Passengers have long resented these add-ons.

Last month, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had directed domestic airlines to make at least 60% of seats on every flight available free of charge, along with requiring passengers on the same booking to be seated together wherever possible. The intent was fairness, ensuring that ordinary passengers are not forced to pay extra to choose their seats.

GoI has now placed this directive in abeyance pending a more comprehensive review. This pause is welcome. It creates space for a more careful consideration of passenger interests, regulatory priorities and financial health of the aviation sector. The decision also comes amid broader pressures, including recent measures to limit sharp increases in ATF prices following global disruptions.

Airline operations remain notoriously capital-intensive, with low margins and high fixed costs—fuel, leasing, maintenance and airport charges, which are largely beyond management control. To survive and invest in expansion, carriers have turned to product innovation and unbundled pricing to generate additional revenue.

Global numbers make this clear: In 2024, ancillary revenue reportedly hit a record \$148.4 bn. This represents nearly 15% of total airline revenue, a significant increase from around 9% in 2016. Ultra-low-cost carriers derive 50-60% of revenue from such fees, while even network carriers now count on 10-20%.

In India, the share remains below global average, but is growing quickly. IndiGo, market leader with about 64% of domestic capacity, has expanded its ancillary revenues at double-digit annual rates. In March 2025 quarter, ancillary revenues of ₹21,525 mn represented about 11% of



Kissa kursi ka

ticket revenue. Air India Express has been more aggressive, pushing ancillary contribution higher with explicit ambitions to increase it further. Ancillary earnings help balance low yields while financing fleet and network expansion.

The now-paused directive targeted one of the most visible of these revenue streams. Airlines had warned that restricting seat-selection fees would likely lead to higher base fares. This concern is economically well-founded. While assigning a seat has negligible marginal cost, revenues from such charges cross-subsidise lower ticket prices. For price-sensitive travellers, higher base fares are a worse outcome than the optional seat fees they could choose not to pay.

At the same time, the underlying passenger concern is real. Few travellers like being charged for something as basic as choosing where to sit. That concern deserves a policy response, but one that preserves ch-

oice rather than eliminates it.

The US and the EU have focused not on removing seat fees but on mandating transparency, clear disclosure and prohibiting genuinely deceptive practices, such as pre-ticked boxes, rather than outlawing the fees themselves. The distinction matters. A passenger who can see the full cost of a journey before clicking 'book' can make an informed choice. A passenger facing a higher base fare from which no opt-out is possible has no such choice.

There is a related, more serious concern DGCA should address: unregulated dynamic pricing. Airlines now use sophisticated algorithms to estimate individual willingness-to-pay and adjust fares in real time. In February, a Supreme Court bench described steep fare hikes during peak periods as 'exploitation' and sought a government response on regulating ancillary charges.

Dynamic pricing of base fares, often opaque and increasingly personalised, poses a far greater long-term risk to consumers than a transparent seat-selection fee. GoI and DGCA would achieve more by mandating clear disclosure of how fares are constructed and updated, than by micromanaging individual ancillary components.

TO START TALKS

Govt Eyes SE Asia for Deals to Step Up Flight Operations

Move follows fewer opportunities for Indian carriers to expand due to West Asia conflict

Arindam Majumder & Anumeha Chaturvedi

New Delhi: India is set to commence talks with Southeast Asian nations including Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia to increase flights, as the West Asia conflict has narrowed expansion opportunities for Indian carriers. International flying rights are granted on a bilateral, reciprocal basis by governments and airlines cannot deploy more capacity than allowed.

The decision to initiate government-level discussions was made at an inter-ministerial meeting in March, officials aware of the development said. India's civil aviation authority will now begin talks with its counterparts in those countries and airlines. Indian airlines are hit hard by the West Asia conflict as multiple major airports in the region are either shut or operating with heavily curtailed capacity. The region is a critical one for airlines like IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet, as around 40% of their international capacity is deployed there.

"Due to the situation in Gulf, Indian carriers will be unable to deploy their planes this summer season. As the peak summer holiday season approaches, passengers will have more options to fly to Southeast Asia. More flights will keep fares in check," a government official said.

Southeast Asia has emerged as a top tourist destination for Indians with multiple countries in the region easing visa regulations for Indian visitors. The travel demand is so high that airlines from both sides have either

exhausted or are close to exhausting the allotted seat quota, despite an increase in the numbers over the last two years.

A new agreement signed last year allows airlines from India and Indonesia to deploy 9,000 seats per week from each side, connecting Jakarta and Denpasar (Bali) with Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. India and Vietnam signed a similar pact earlier, raising the number of flights from each country to 42 a week from 28. With Thailand, the capacity was increased by 43% to 14,000 seats per week for both sides.

Buckle Up INDIAN TOURISTS TO SOUTHEAST COUNTRIES

			
	Thailand	Vietnam	Indonesia
2025	306,974	746,480	734,490
2024	285,720	501,427	710,207
Growth (%)	7.4	48.8	3.4

Source: Tourism boards of Thailand, Vietnam & Indonesia



Under the National Civil Aviation Policy, bilateral expansion talks can begin only once the utilisation of the approved capacity from the Indian side reaches 80%.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

फ्लाई-91 की 12 शहरों तक विस्तार की योजना

मुंबई। गोवा स्थित क्षेत्रीय एयरलाइन फ्लाई-91 ने शुक्रवार को अपने नेटवर्क विस्तार के तहत राजमुंदरी, विजयवाड़ा और हुबली के लिए उड़ान शुरू करने के साथ पांच नए क्षेत्रों में भी सेवाएं शुरू करने की घोषणा की। विमानन कंपनी ने एक बयान में कहा कि ये नई उड़ान सेवाएं 10 अप्रैल से 17 अप्रैल के बीच अलग-अलग चरणों में शुरू होंगी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

3 APRIL 2026

Centre rolls back 60% free flight seat allocation order

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: The civil aviation ministry on Thursday suspended a directive requiring airlines to let passengers select at least 60% of seats on any flight without a seat-selection fee, less than three weeks after announcing the rule as part of a passenger rights push.

The ministry of civil aviation said the provision would be kept

"in abeyance till further orders" pending a "comprehensive examination of the issue," according to a letter dated April 2 addressed to the Director General of Civil Aviation.

The ministry said the rollback followed representations from the Federation of Indian Airlines and Akasa Air, which flagged the rule's potential impact on fare structures and its consistency with India's deregulated tariff

continued on →9

FLIGHT SEAT ALLOCATION

regime. The government separately announced it will cap monthly increases in aviation turbine fuel prices for domestic flights at 25%, with both measures seemingly linked to the financial turbulence caused by surging oil prices and route restrictions linked to the West Asia conflict.

The original March 17 circular had directed scheduled airlines to allocate a minimum 60% of seats without a selection charge on every flight, and to seat passengers sharing a booking together, preferably in adjacent seats. The

ministry had framed the measures as a step toward strengthening passenger convenience and standardising practices across the sector.

Thursday's order does not affect other provisions of the March 17 circular. The DGCA has been asked to continue enforcing rules on co-seating of passengers on the same PNR, transparent policies for carriage of sports equipment, musical instruments and pets, and clear disclosure of applicable charges.

Indian carriers currently charge ancillary fees for seat selection during web check-in, with only between 5% and 15% of seats on a typical flight available without an additional charge. Seats toward the front of the aircraft and window seats are usually priced higher.

The FIA, whose members include Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, wrote to the ministry on March 19 arguing the directive would backfire on passengers. It warned airlines would simply recover lost ancillary income through higher base fares.

Airlines cannot bypass weekly rest for pilots, DGCA tells HC

Shruti Kakkar

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NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has informed the Delhi high court that its decision permitting airlines to count a pilot's 48-hour earned leave as weekly rest while rostering them does not give airlines a free hand to bypass or suspend the mandatory weekly rest requirements under the revised FDTL norms.

The DGCA on December 5 last year had withdrawn an earlier rule issued in November 2025 that prevented airlines from counting pilot leave as weekly rest.

The revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms, implemented from November 1 last year, significantly reduced pilot workload by increasing weekly rest from 36 to 48 continuous hours, expanding night duty from midnight-5 am to midnight-6 am, limiting consecutive night duties to two, capping night landings at two per week, and reducing monthly flying time from 125 hours to 100 hours in 28 days.

"That the withdrawal of the advisory (issued in November) on 5.12.2025, does not dilute or compromise the requirement of providing the mandated weekly



DGCA said the Dec 5 decision was taken after representation was received from IndiGo and Air India Express. REUTERS

rest strictly in accordance with the FDTL CAR. Operators remain fully responsible for ensuring compliance with all applicable regulatory provisions," the affidavit filed through advocate Anjana Gosain in March stated.

The affidavit was filed in response to a petition by former aircraft engineer Sabari Roy challenging the DGCA's December 5 decision. On January 30, the high court had directed the regulator to submit an affidavit explaining the rationale behind its decision.

The 5-page affidavit added that the decision was taken in view of multiple flight disruptions, including instances affecting IndiGo operations, to prevent further disruptions, stabilise schedules, minimise

passenger inconvenience, and restore necessary roster flexibility, after it received representations from several operators.

"That in the initial days of December 2025, multiple flight disruptions were reported to the regulator, including instances in IndiGo operations. Representations were also received from several operators stating that the said advisory had resulted in reduced roster flexibility and operational challenges," the affidavit stated.

It added, "Accordingly, without deviating from the provisions of the FDTL CAR dated 26.03.2024, concerning weekly rest, and with a view to avoid further disruptions, stabilize airline operations, minimize passenger inconvenience, and restore necessary roster flexibility-while ensuring adherence to the intent of managed weekly rest the aforesaid advisory was withdrawn on 05.12.2025 and the same was communicated to all operators. The representation was received from IndiGo and Air India Express."

To be sure, although the matter was listed before a bench comprising chief justice DK Upadhyaya and justice Tejas Karia on Thursday, no hearing took place due to paucity of time, and the case was adjourned to July 29.

European airlines race for Asia's direct traffic

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

As geopolitical tensions ripple through West Asia, reshaping passenger preference away from efficient, lower-cost Gulf hub connections toward the certainty of non-stop travel, global carriers such as Lufthansa, Air Canada and British Airways are redrawing networks by adding frequencies to India along with South East Asian and East Asian destinations.

The most significant frequency boost has come from the Lufthansa Group where it stepped-up frequencies across four Indian routes.

Frankfurt-Chennai will increase from five weekly flights to daily service from April 24 through the end of May; Frankfurt-Hyderabad will rise from five to six weekly flights in May and June; Frankfurt-Delhi will be upgraded from five weekly services to a daily operation for June; and Munich-Bengaluru will see frequencies climb from five to six flights per week.

"This measure enables Lufthansa and other airlines of the Group to respond flexibly to the changed booking behaviour of travellers, influenced by geopolitical developments," Lufthansa said in a press statement.

Lufthansa subsidiary Swiss International Air Lines has doubled capacity between Delhi and Zurich.

Air Canada, with a daily Toronto-Delhi flight, will add 13 more in April and seven more in May.

British Airways announced a third daily service from Delhi to London from April 7 and a third daily flight from Mumbai to London from May 15.

Key Asian hubs such as Singapore, Hong Kong,

Premium attached to non-stop travel with strong demand is pushing fares to almost double

and Bangkok too have seen a capacity ramp up, but Lufthansa's most significant capacity addition has been to India.

On further addition of flights from Lufthansa, Senior Director - Regional Sales, South Asia, Kevin Markette, told *The Hindu*, "We are looking at it dynamically to see where to optimise and where we have spare aircraft and rights available to add more flights".

There is, of course, a premium attached to non-stop travel – a Delhi-Frankfurt ticket for travel 25 days out is now priced at about ₹62,000.

"While airfares are driven by demand for these flights, the new flights offer competitive fares for customers looking for better value," Markette said.

That was a reference to Air India, which has added over 100 flights to Europe and North America since February 28, but faces longer routings, with journeys extended by 60 to 90 minutes to Europe and nearly five hours to North America due to a Pakistan airspace ban that applies only to Indian carriers, in addition to the need to avoid Iranian airspace that all airlines are skirting.

These factors present an opportunity for not only European carriers to recapture passenger traffic from India but also for Europe to strengthen its position as a transit hub with industry estimates suggesting nearly 30% Indian travellers connect onward within Europe.



Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

उड़ानों में 60 फीसद सीटों के मुफ्त चयन पर बदला गया फैसला

नई दिल्ली, 3 अप्रैल (ब्यूरो)।

किसी भी उड़ान में न्यूनतम 60 फीसद सीटें बिना किसी अतिरिक्त शुल्क देने के निर्देश को सरकार ने फिलहाल टाल दिया है। इससे यात्रियों को अपनी पसंदीदा सीटों (20 फीसद के अलावा) पर सफर करने के लिए अतिरिक्त शुल्क का भुगतान करना पड़ेगा। नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय ने नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) को भेजे एक संदेश में बताया है कि फेडरेशन आफ इंडियन एअरलाइंस सहित दूसरे एअरलाइंस से प्राप्त हुए आवेदनों के बाद इस मामले की समीक्षा की गई। इसमें परिचालन और वाणिज्यिक प्रभावों को लेकर चिंता जताते हुए यात्री किराए की संरचना जैसे मुद्दे शामिल थे।

एक महीने में घट गए 1 लाख 33 हजार घरेलू हवाई यात्री

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■ नई दिल्ली : जंग के दौरान देश में हवाई यात्रा करने वाले घरेलू यात्रियों की संख्या में भारी कमी दिखाई दे रही है। एक महीने के अंदर ही देश में घरेलू यात्रियों की संख्या में सवा लाख से अधिक की कमी आई है। इसकी मुख्य वजह फ्लाइटों के महंगे होते

टिकटों को माना जा रहा है। इसी दौरान इंटरनेशनल यात्रियों में 35 हजार से अधिक की बढ़ोतरी हुई है।

नगर विमानन मंत्रालय ने गुरुवार को डीजीसीए को आदेश दिया था कि फ्लाइटों में मनफसंद 60 फीसदी सीटों पर एयरलाइंस द्वारा वसूले जाने वाले अतिरिक्त चार्ज न लेने वाली लगी कैप को हटा दिया है। इससे पहले से महंगे होते जा टिकट और महंगे हो जाएंगे। पिछले महीने 1 मार्च को देश में 6494 डोमेस्टिक फ्लाइटों में 10 लाख 11 हजार 909 यात्रियों ने सफर किया था। एक



AI Image

महीने बाद 2 अप्रैल को 6450 डोमेस्टिक फ्लाइटों में आठ लाख 78,391 यात्रियों ने सफर किया। यानी एक महीने में ही घरेलू यात्रियों में एक लाख 33 हजार 518 की कमी आ गई जबकि इस दौरान फ्लाइट केवल 44 ही कम हुईं। इंटरनेशनल पैसेंजर में बढ़ोतरी हुई है। इसी समय

अर्बि के दौरान 193 इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट और 36 हजार 379 अंतरराष्ट्रीय यात्रियों की संख्या में बढ़ोतरी हुई है। जानकारों का कहना है कि डोमेस्टिक सेक्टर में एक महीने में ही यात्रियों की संख्या में आई इतनी बड़ी गिरावट देश के एविएशन सेक्टर के लिए ठीक नहीं है।

NBT
Lens

खबरों के
अंदर की बात

राहत दे सकती है सरकार

फ्लाइटों के टिकट बहुत महंगे ना हो, इसके लिए विमानन मंत्रालय और डीजीसीए एयरलाइंस से मीटिंग कर रहे हैं। आने वाले समय में सरकार एयरलाइंस को कुछ और राहत दे सकती है। लोगों को कुछ रूटों पर फ्लाइटों के बंद किए जाने का भी सामना करना पड़ सकता है जिसमें गाजियाबाद में हिंडन एयरपोर्ट से कुछ ही दिनों में एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने अपनी सभी रूटों पर उड़ने वाली फ्लाइटों को बंद कर दिया। इंडिगो ने भी इसमें कटौती करती जा रही है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

4 APRIL 2026

Indian airlines begin partial resumption of Middle East flights amid ongoing conflict

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

Domestic carriers such as IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet have initiated a phased restoration of flight operations to and from the Middle East, even as widespread disruptions persist due to airspace restrictions linked to the ongoing US-Israel conflict involving Iran.

The resumption remains limited, with airlines operating select routes while closely monitoring the evolving security situation.

Thousands of flights continue to be cancelled across the region, reflecting the

scale of disruption to global aviation networks.

IndiGo announced that it would operate 17 departures, covering 34 flight sectors, to eight destinations in the Middle East on Friday. The airline said it is working in coordination with relevant authorities to progressively reinstate more services while ensuring passenger safety.

Similarly, Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express confirmed the resumption of flights to key destinations such as Jeddah and Muscat after authorities reopened the airspace over Saudi Arabia and Oman.

SpiceJet, meanwhile, has scheduled special evacuation-oriented flights from the United Arab Emirates to India on March 6 and 7, with additional services planned for March 8.

These flights are aimed at assisting passengers affected by cancellations and travel uncertainty across the region.

Airlines have urged passengers to remain cautious and follow official communication channels.

IndiGo specifically advised travellers to wait for direct notifications regarding their flight status before heading to airports, given the fluid situ-



ation. Air India also announced ad-hoc repatriation flights from major regional hubs including Dubai, Ras Al Khaimah and Fujairah on March 6, subject to regulatory clearances.

However, the airline clarified that scheduled services to several other West Asian destinations will remain suspended until March 10.

To ease passenger inconvenience, Air India has offered flexibility in ticket changes.

Travellers holding tickets issued until March 4 for journeys between February 28 and March 8 can reschedule their travel within one month

without incurring additional charges or fare differences.

The aviation sector continues to face significant operational challenges.

Traffic at Dubai International Airport showed signs of recovery on Thursday, nearly doubling from the previous day, though it still stood at only about a quarter of normal levels.

Industry data underscores the magnitude of disruption: more than 44,000 flights were scheduled across the Middle East between February 28 and March 5, but over 25,000 have been can-

celled so far due to the crisis.

India's aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, said it is actively coordinating with airlines and other stakeholders.

A dedicated Passenger Assistance Control Room has been set up to support stranded travellers and address grievances.

Authorities also emphasised that airfares are being closely monitored to prevent any unreasonable surge during the crisis period, as efforts continue to stabilise operations in one of the world's most critical aviation corridors.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

3 APRIL 2026

IndiGo to deploy second A321XLR aircraft on Delhi-Istanbul route from 19 April

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, 2 April

IndiGo will deploy its second Airbus A321XLR aircraft on the Delhi-Istanbul route from 19 April, as part of its international expansion.

The airline said the route will support onward connectivity to more than 50 international destinations through its codeshare partnership with Turkish Airlines.

The airline will introduce a dual-class configuration on this route for the first time, with 183 economy seats and 12 IndiGoStretch seats, its business offering. Passengers in both cabins will be served complimentary hot meals and beverages, with vegetarian



options provided by default and non-vegetarian meals available through pre-booking. Alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase in economy or through pre-booking, while IndiGoStretch passengers will receive them as part of the service. The aircraft will also feature a digital inflight entertainment system that

allows passengers to stream content, including films, television shows and games, on their personal devices.

The Delhi-Istanbul route is a key part of IndiGo's international network as it enables connections to multiple destinations through

its partnership with Turkish Airlines.

The airline said the deployment of the A321XLR will help expand its long-haul operations.

Earlier this year, IndiGo became the first Indian carrier to induct the Airbus A321XLR and started operations to Athens, marking a step in its international expansion plans.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

3 APRIL 2026

Airline fare cap directive put on hold

Mumbai: The government on Thursday "put in abeyance" its earlier direction to airlines to offer at least 60 per cent of seats in a flight without levying any additional charge from April 20, according to sources.

On March 18, the civil aviation ministry announced that directions have been issued to the Directorate general of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight, free of any additional charges, to ensure fair access for passengers.

"The matter has been reviewed in light of representations received from the Federation of Indian Airlines and Akasa Air, highlighting oper-

ational and commercial implications of the above provision, including its potential impact on fare structures.

"In view of the above, and pending a comprehensive examination of the issue, it has been decided that the provision relating to offering at least 60 per cent of seats free of charge shall be kept in abeyance till further orders," the civil aviation ministry said.

At present, 20 per cent of the seats can be booked free of charge, while the rest are paid.

Generally, airlines charge ₹200 to ₹2,100 for choosing seats, depending on various factors, including front rows and extra leg room, a travel industry executive had said last week.

The move to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight came against the backdrop of rising complaints that airlines were levying high charges for various services, including seat selection. **PTI**

Int'l airfares from India see sharp route-specific spikes

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: As the summer of 2026 heats up, Indian travellers are discovering that not all flight routes are created equal. While some international sectors have seen dramatic month-on-month fare spikes, others remain surprisingly stable, offering opportunities for budget-conscious holidaymakers, if they book now for travel 3-4 weeks down the line.

International airfares from India have witnessed route-specific increases ahead of the peak season, influenced by rising Aviation Turbine Fuel costs and the ongoing West Asia-related disruptions, said ixigo.com. Its data showed the highest surge on the Mumbai-Kuala Lumpur route, where one-way average fares for April jumped 110% compared to March.



Travel to some popular destinations remains surprisingly stable, offering opportunities for budget-conscious holidaymakers

“However, several popular destinations continue to be relatively stable and affordable for Indian travellers; routes such as New Delhi-Colombo, New Delhi-Male, New Delhi-Bangkok and Mumbai-Singapore have seen only marginal fare increases month-on-month, making them attractive options for travellers looking to plan international trips without a significant impact on budget,” said an ixigo spokesperson.

Domestic pilot training expands, but Indians prefer foreign centres

SHEKHAR SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 3

Even as India ramps up domestic pilot training capacity with 41 DGCA-approved Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) and a sharp rise in enrolments, over 600 cadets went abroad for training in 2025, underlining a persistent gap in the country's aviation training ecosystem.

According to Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) data, 615 Commercial Pilot Licences (CPLs) were issued to candidates trained at foreign FTOs in the last financial year, even as domestic Student Pilot Licence (SPL) issuance surged to 2,309 in 2025.

The data points to a clear trend, rising demand but constrained capacity. SPL issuance has nearly doubled over five years, from 1,173 in 2021 to a peak of 2,364 in 2024, before stabilising slightly in 2025. The growth reflects a strong pipeline of aspiring pilots amid rapid expansion in the aviation sector.

Currently, 41 DGCA-approved FTOs are operating across 63 flying bases in the country, forming the backbone of domestic pilot training. However, the continued outflow of cadets to foreign training schools indicates challenges around capacity, cost efficiency and training timelines.

To address quality concerns, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has introduced a ranking framework for FTOs from October 1, 2025. Training institutes placed in the lowest 'C' category have been issued notices along with detailed scorecards and are required to submit corrective action plans, which are being reviewed by the regulator.

The government has also tightened oversight through annual surveillance, safety audits, regulatory inspections and surprise checks to ensure compliance with operational standards.