



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

मंत्रिमंडल विस्तार पर चर्चा के बीच मोदी से मिले योगी प्रधानमंत्री मोदी को जेवर एयरपोर्ट और गंगा एक्सप्रेसवे के लोकार्पण समारोह का दिया न्योता

नई दिल्ली। उत्तर प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने सोमवार को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से मुलाकात की। करीब एक घंटे की इस मुलाकात के दौरान मुख्यमंत्री ने जेवर एयरपोर्ट और गंगा एक्सप्रेसवे के लोकार्पण का निमंत्रण दिया। यह मुलाकात ऐसे समय हुई है, जब प्रदेश भाजपा के नए अध्यक्ष की नियुक्ति के बाद मंत्रिमंडल विस्तार एवं मतदाता सूची गहन पुनरीक्षण (एसआईआर) पर सियासी सरगमी तेज है।

पीएम मोदी और योगी की मुलाकात गुनगुनी भूप में प्रधानमंत्री आवास के लॉन में हुई। इस दौरान योगी के हाथ में एक फाइल थी। बातचीत के बारे में कोई आधिकारिक जानकारी नहीं दी गई है, लेकिन माना जा रहा है कि संभावित मंत्रिमंडल विस्तार व एसआईआर पर बातचीत हुई। राज्य में अगले साल विधानसभा चुनाव होने हैं। कई मंत्री सांसद बन गए हैं। ऐसे में मकर संक्रांति के बाद मंत्रिमंडल विस्तार को लेकर चर्चा तेज है। वहीं, एसआईआर में राज्य में 2.89 करोड़ मतदाताओं के नाम कटने की संभावना है। इनमें ज्यादातर ऐसे शहरी



पीएम को राम मंदिर का प्रतीक चिह्न भेंट करते योगी।

शाह, नड्डा व नबीन से भी मिले

पीएम मोदी के बाद सीएम योगी ने गृह मंत्री अमित शाह, भाजपा अध्यक्ष जेपी नड्डा और कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष नितिन नबीन से भी मुलाकात की। सीएम ने उन्हें विकास कार्यों की जानकारी दी। सीएम के अलावा यूपी के दोनों डिप्टी सीएम केशव प्रसाद मौर्य और ब्रजेश पाठक भी दिल्ली में थे। पाठक ने भाजपा मुख्यालय में कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष नितिन नबीन और संगठन महासचिव बीएल संतोष से मुलाकात की।

खोटर हैं, जिन्हें भाजपा का अहम वोट बैंक माना जाता है। ब्यूरो



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

RoW conflict: Telcos, Navi Mumbai airport officials may meet in mid-Jan

FASTER RESOLUTION. Delay in terms of connectivity will hurt customer sentiment overall, say sources

Vallari Sanzgiri
Mumbai

Telecom bodies and Navi Mumbai airport authorities are likely to meet mid-January to continue discussions around the Right of Way (RoW) permissions and higher charges at the international airport, sources told *businessline*. Faster discussions would work in both parties' favour as delay in terms of connectivity will hurt customer sentiment overall, they said.

Cellular Operators Association of India is at loggerheads with the Adani group as well as other airport and metro authorities who have denied RoW to telecom operators in India.

According to Mahesh Upal, Director of Comm First (India), both sides would want to resolve the issue in the near future. "I think the

regulators, too, would want to facilitate a quick resolution. The TRAI has an obligation to ensure orderly growth and aviation authorities would want good connectivity," he said. With private entities paying significant fees for their licences, maximising revenue is important and negotiations are understandably tough, he explained.

Upal also agreed that such issues have persisted for at least 20 years, despite numerous attempts by TRAI (Telecom Regulatory Authority of India) and the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to resolve them. However, with land being a State subject, both TRAI and DoT have limited jurisdiction.

USERS AFFECTED
Upal proposed that future licences for both player types specify a methodology for



NETWORK ISSUES. The Navi Mumbai airport had asked to deploy its own telecom networks, including IBS infrastructure, to provide 4G and 5G connectivity within the airport

setting RoW prices in such cases.

Aside from the Navi Mumbai airport, telecom sources also talked about similar clashes with authorities at the Noida International Airport and metro lines such as the Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation wanting a third-party In-Building Solutions (IBS) provider. The result of these conflicts are public spaces where users are left

without effective connectivity.

The brunt of such disagreements and delays is thus borne by users and staff in the form of opportunity cost, said Faisal Kawoosa, Chief Analyst and Founder, Techarc. "Telecom is an essential service now. This idea of premium charge is not a sensible argument. If there's no connectivity, both airlines and customers will suf-

fer opportunity cost," he said.

In its response, the Navi Mumbai airport had asked to deploy its own telecom networks, including IBS infrastructure, to provide 4G and 5G connectivity within the airport. Kawoosa said that there would be service degradation since WiFi connectivity cannot support the lakhs of users at the premise.

As for the telco's call for government intervention, Amol Kulkarni, Director (research), CUTS International, suggested that such conflicts be treated as competition issues and be resolved through party-consultations. He suggested that the digital world replicate the RoW solutions figured by traditional sectors rather than dragging in government entities. "Let's keep the government out and hope that laws of economics prevail," he said.



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BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Navi Mumbai airport targets 50,000 daily passengers by Dec

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Navi Mumbai airport expects to handle 50,000 passengers a day by December with the expansion of domestic flights and start of international operations from March.

The airport began commercial operations on December 25 and over 30,000 passengers have used it in the first six days.

FLIGHT MOVEMENTS

Currently, the airport is functioning for 12 hours from 8 am to 8 pm with 40 flight movements daily.

The services are expected to double as the airport would be available for round-the-clock operations from February 1.

The Airports Authority of India has issued a notice to pilots and operators indicating the availability of airport



STRONG START. The airport launched commercial operations on Dec 25, with over 30,000 passengers using it within the first six days.

beyond 8 pm from January 24. "We are seeing both leisure and corporate traffic from Navi Mumbai. Demand from the airport is shaping up well," said an airline executive.

As of now IndiGo has opened bookings for its second daily flight to Delhi departing Navi Mumbai at 8.50 pm. Other airlines too are drawing up expansion plans. While Air India Express has said it will scale up its operations from Navi

Mumbai to offer reliable and value-driven connectivity, Akasa Air has described the airport as a key hub.

Last month, Akasa Air said it will progressively ramp up operations from Navi Mumbai, scaling up to 300 domestic and 50 international weekly departures.

The airline is also set to ramp up to 10 parking bases by the end of FY27, with a focused international expansion into key West Asian and Southeast Asian markets.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BANGALORE MIRROR

BANGALORE

5 JANUARY 2026

B'luru airport sees spike in cases of laser interference

From just 16 in 2023, cases shot up to staggering 548 in 2024, highlighting need for stricter enforcement, public awareness and faster identification of offenders

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After recording no laser interference incidents for years, Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport witnessed a sudden and sharp spike in 2024, reporting 10 cases in a single year from zero until 2023, according to parliamentary data. Though the number dropped to one incident in 2025 so far, the sudden emergence of laser interference has raised serious safety concerns at one of India's busiest aviation hubs.

Aviation experts warn that even brief laser illumination can distract or temporarily blind pilots during critical phases of flight. The parliamentary data underlines the need for stricter enforcement, public awareness and faster identification of offenders, particularly in fast-growing cities like Bengaluru where air traffic continues to rise sharply.

The Bengaluru spike mirrors a nationwide trend. Across India, laser interference incidents at airports shot up from just 16 cases in 2023 to a staggering 548 in 2024, marking an increase of more than 3,300 per cent in absolute terms. While the total marginally declined to 534 incidents in 2025, the persistence of



high numbers suggests laser strikes have become a recurring aviation safety risk rather than a temporary phenomenon.

Beyond Bengaluru, other Karnataka airports have also reported incidents. Mysuru recorded three laser incidents in 2024 and two in 2025, while Mangaluru saw cases rise from nine in 2024 to 11 in 2025, signalling a growing problem along the coast. Kalaburagi, which had no incidents earlier, reported three cases in 2025.

Taken together, Karnataka airports reported over 30 incidents across 2024 and 2025, placing the state in the middle tier nationally but showing a widening spread beyond the capital. At the national level, Delhi topped the list with 113 incidents in 2024 and 105 in 2025, followed by Chennai and Hyderabad.

Prohibition on laser lights

Replying in Parliament, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said the issue is regulated under Rule 66 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, which prohibits the exhibition of false lights, including laser lights, in the vicinity of aerodromes if they pose a risk to aircraft safety or interfere with visual navigation aids. The minister added that the DGCA has laid down specific safeguards under Civil Aviation Requirements, which mandate protection of aircraft operations from the hazardous effects of laser emitters around airports. These include creation of protected zones to mitigate risks from laser emissions, while standard operating procedures are also defined in the aerodrome manuals of respective airports to monitor and control laser-related activities in airport surroundings.

First flight successfully lands at Bhogapuram Airport, major milestone for North Andhra

METRO INDIA NEWS | AMA RAWATI

In a landmark moment for Andhra Pradesh's aviation sector, the first aircraft successfully landed at the under-construction Bhogapuram International Airport on Sunday morning. A validation (test) flight from Delhi touched down on the runway at 10.15 a.m., signaling that the long-awaited greenfield airport has entered its final phase before commercial operations.

The Air India A320 validation flight carried Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu, Vizianagaram MP Kalliseti Appalanaidu, senior aviation officials, and representatives of the Airports Traffic Control (ATC). The aircraft landed safely on the 3.8-km-long runway, validating the performance of the runway, navigation aids, and safety systems.

According to GMR Group, which is developing the project under the PPP model, 96-97 percent of construction works have been completed. GMR Deputy Managing Director I. Prabhakar Rao said preparations were underway to officially inaugurate the airport on June 26, with commercial flight operations expected to begin from early July.



"This is a green, smart international airport designed to withstand extreme weather conditions. Even cyclones like Hudhud will not affect operations. The airport can withstand wind speeds of up to 275 kmph, and the drainage system can handle 27 cm of rainfall without waterlogging," Prabhakar Rao said.

The project is being developed at a cost of around Rs 4,600- Rs 4,725 crore in the first phase, with an initial capacity to handle 60 lakh passengers annually, scalable in future phases. The airport can accommodate 200 aircraft movements per day, provide parking for 18 aircraft at night, and facilitate 20,000 tonnes of cargo exports an-

Second airports allowed after capacity saturates: Ram Mohan Naidu

Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu on Sunday said the '150 km aerial distance' rule for greenfield airports does not apply once the capacity of an existing airport is saturated. Addressing the media after a validation flight at Bhogapuram Airport, he said the policy only guides initial airport development and does not restrict the

creation of a second airport when demand outgrows capacity. Naidu added that the Centre is encouraging states to develop second airports in metro cities to meet rising air traffic. He said the Noida International Airport at Jewar is close to completing licensing approvals and is likely to be inaugurated later this month or in

early February.

On the Ahmedabad Air India plane crash, the minister said the investigation is being conducted professionally with participation from multiple countries, adhering to global standards. He also said Bhogapuram Airport could be inaugurated by May or June, subject to the Prime Minister's availability.

ports from Andhra Pradesh. The terminal will feature 21

aerobridges, 14 immigration counters, and advanced facil-



Naidu said the airport would also host an aviation education hub in the future, an idea envisioned by IT and HRD Minister Nara Lokesh. He described the successful validation flight as a crucial step before full-scale operations. Reacting to the milestone, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu said the Bhogapuram airport was conceptualised and initiated during the 2014-19 NDA tenure under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He termed the successful test flight a new milestone in Andhra Pradesh's aviation journey and expressed confidence that the airport would transform the economic landscape of North Andhra.

"With Bhogapuram airport becoming operational from June, regional connectivity will strengthen and North Andhra's development will accelerate significantly," the Chief Minister said in a social media post, thanking the Centre for its continued support. Officials and regional leaders described the successful landing as a historic step that will reshape Vizianagaram-Vishakhapatnam as twin growth centres, with Bhogapuram emerging as a strategic gateway for the region over the next decade.

ities such as self check-in, self baggage drop, smart trolleys, and automated boarding systems. GMR officials said the airport is being developed as a smart airport with global standards, capable of handling 10-12 aircraft per hour.

The state government is simultaneously developing three major access roads to ensure smooth connectivity from Visakhapatnam and surrounding regions. Officials said about 33 percent of passengers are expected from Visakhapatnam, while the remaining 67 percent will come from North Andhra, Odisha, and Chhattisgarh, effectively positioning Bhogapuram as a regional aviation hub.

Union Minister Ram Mohan

Centre will allow multiple airports in major cities, says Civil Aviation Minister

K. Srinivasa Rao
VIZIANAGARAM

Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu said here on Sunday that the Union government would allow functioning of two or more airports each in major cities in view of increased air passenger traffic across the country.

“The Centre will review the existing policy that bars the functioning of two airports within a 150-km radius,” Mr. Rammohan Naidu said after the successful first test flight at the new Alluri Sitharama Raju International Airport at Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram of Andhra Pradesh.

To a query, he said the Centre was already taking steps for the construction



Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu at the Bhogapuram airport near Visakhapatnam on Sunday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of new airports in Mumbai, Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh (located about 42 km from New Delhi), Bengaluru, Parandur near Chennai, and other cities.

“The government will accept the proposals for new airports when the ex-

isting airports reach saturation levels,” he said.

The Union government was according top priority to the aviation sector by promoting new airports, along with maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities, to spur economic

activity and ensure direct and indirect employment to many, Mr. Rammohan Naidu said.

Recalling the success story of the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad in Telangana that was established on 5,000 acres of land, the Minister lauded the initiative taken by N. Chandrababu Naidu when he was the Chief Minister of unified Andhra Pradesh between 1995 and 2003.

He said the government would accord equal priority to developing multiple access roads to all airports as they too would indirectly spur economic activity and industrial progress.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

5 JANUARY 2026

Trial flight lands at Bhogapuram; 96% work done, says operator

An Air India aircraft, with Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu and Vizianagaram MP Kalisetti Appala Naidu aboard, lands on the 3.8-km runway; Minister hopes that the airport will spur economic activity in north Andhra Pradesh

The Hindu Bureau
VIZIANAGARAM

A validation flight was successfully completed at the Bhogapuram International Airport in Vizianagaram district of Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

An aircraft of Air India, with Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu and Vizianagaram MP Kalisetti Appala Naidu aboard, landed on the airport's 3.8-km runway around 11.10 a.m. The aircraft was given a grand welcome with a water salute.

District Collector S. Ramsundar Reddy, Joint



Smooth touchdown: Air India's first trial flight landed successfully at the Bhogapuram International Airport near Visakhapatnam. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Collector Sedhu Madhavan, and representatives of the GMR Group welcomed the Minister and others.

Mr. Rammohan Naidu

said it was a historic day in the aviation sector and hoped that the new airport spurred the economic activity across the north And-

hra region. He exuded confidence that the GMR Group would adhere to the deadline of June 30 set for the full-fledged operations

of the airport. He said the government was taking steps to widen the roads to the airport.

GMR Visakhapatnam International Airport Ltd. (GVIAL) is constructing the greenfield airport, around 50 km from Visakhapatnam city, on 2,200 acres at an estimated cost of ₹4,725 crore. GMR Group deputy managing director I. Prabhakara Rao said 96% of the work on the airport had been completed.

According to him, 200 flights can be operated from the new airport daily. It can also handle 20,000 tonnes of cargo a year, and a cargo terminal is being built to export products.

सिंगापुर के चांगी एयरपोर्ट ने 2025 में तोड़े सभी रिकॉर्ड

- सिंगापुर के प्रतिष्ठित चांगी हवाई अड्डे ने 2025 में यात्री यातायात के मामले में न केवल पिछले साल के आंकड़ों को पीछे छोड़ दिया है

नई दिल्ली, लोकसत्य

वैश्विक विमानन उद्योग में महामारी के बाद की सुस्ती अब बीते कल की बात हो गई है। सिंगापुर के प्रतिष्ठित चांगी हवाई अड्डे ने 2025 में यात्री यातायात के मामले में न केवल पिछले साल के आंकड़ों को पीछे

छोड़ दिया है, बल्कि अपने इतिहास के सबसे उच्चतम स्तर को भी छू लिया है। इस ऐतिहासिक उछाल के बीच, सिंगापुर सरकार ने भविष्य के 'भेगा टर्मिनल' (टर्मिनल 5) के निर्माण को तेज करने का बड़ा फैसला लिया है,। कार्यवाहक परिवहन मंत्री जेफरी सियो ने सोमवार को एक

प्रदर्शनी के उद्घाटन के दौरान बताया कि चांगी हवाई अड्डे पर 2025 में कुल यात्री संख्या 7 करोड़ (70 मिलियन) तक पहुंच गई है। यह आंकड़े में 2024 में दर्ज किए गए 6.77 करोड़ (67.7 मिलियन) अंतरराष्ट्रीय यात्रियों की तुलना में एक



महत्वपूर्ण वृद्धि हुई है। ध्यान देने योग्य बात यह है कि 2025 का यह आंकड़ा एक ऑल टाइम हाई है। इसने कोविड महामारी से पहले 2019 में बनाए गए 6.83 करोड़ यात्रियों के पिछले रिकॉर्ड को भी पार कर लिया है जो विमानन क्षेत्र में पूर्ण और मजबूत रिकवरी का संकेत है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVODAYA TIMES

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

कोहरे से एयरपोर्ट पर फ्लाइट संचालन रहा प्रभावित, 68 कैंसिल, 115 डिले

नई दिल्ली, 5 जनवरी (नवोदय टाइम्स): आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट पर सोमवार को कोहरे के चलते फ्लाइट संचालन प्रभावित रहने से यात्रियों को परेशानी उठानी पड़ी। आधी रात से सुबह करीब चार बजे के बीच 68 फ्लाइट कैंसिल हुईं जबकि 115 देरी से उड़ी। देरी से उड़ने वाली फ्लाइट का औसत समय 25 से 45 मिनट



रहा। कुछ फ्लाइट एक से डेढ़ घंटे तक डिले रही। एयरपोर्ट अधिकारियों के अनुसार, आधी रात के बाद रनवे पर दृश्यता काफी कम होने की वजह से भी समस्या पैदा हुई। रनवे पर कोहरे से निपटने के लिए कैट 3 प्रणाली लागू थी बावजूद इसके दृश्यता

में काफी कमी आने से 68 फ्लाइट को सुरक्षा कारणों से कैंसिल करना पड़ा। दूसरे गंतव्य से आने वाली फ्लाइट में भी डिले की समस्या आई। इस दौरान धरेलू तथा इंटरनेशनल करीब 115 से अधिक फ्लाइट डिले रही।

दोपहर बाद जाकर फ्लाइट संचालन सामान्य रूप से चलने लगा। उधर, फ्लाइट डिले होने से एयरपोर्ट पर फंसे यात्रियों को काफी परेशानी उठानी पड़ी। उनकी मदद के लिए डायल तथा संबंधित एयरलाइंस के कर्मचारी मुस्तैद थे। यात्रियों की सुविधा के लिए विभिन्न एयरलाइन ने एडवाइजरी दी की थी कि फ्लाइट का स्टेटस चेक करते रहे।

Centre eases distance rules for new airports

Visakhapatnam: The rules that prohibit the construction of a greenfield airport within an aerial distance of 150km from an existing civilian airport will no longer apply if the capacity of the existing aerodrome is saturated, civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Sunday.

Addressing the media after landing at Bhogapuram airport near Visakhapatnam on a validation flight, the minister said the civil aviation ministry was encouraging states to develop second airports in metro cities to meet growing demand.

"The 150km radius policy guides the initiation of airport development. Once capacity is saturated, the clause no longer applies. There is an opportunity for the state to cater to a second airport," Naidu said.

"So, the policy ensures the operational stability of the first airport, but it does not restrict the development of another airport once capacity has been saturated," he added.

Under the existing rules, no greenfield airport is permitted within an aerial distance of 150km of an existing civilian airport.

If a greenfield airport is



Ram Mohan Naidu

proposed within a 150km radius, its impact on the existing aerodrome is examined on a case-by-case basis.

The minister said there had been a concerted effort to create airports not only for current operations but also for future needs, especially in Tier 2 and 3 cities, island regions and the northeastern states.

Naidu said the probe into the Air India plane crash in Ahmedabad was proceeding in a thorough and highly professional manner with the participation of several countries.

He said all countries concerned were participating

in the investigation, and it was important to adhere to global and international standards in accident investigation practices.

"This has been a priority for us, and we are doing a very good job in that regard. From the ministry to the investigation team, we are providing all necessary support to ensure there is no shortage of resources," he said.

Naidu said Noida International Airport at Jewar was on the verge of completing licensing approvals, and the government was targeting its inauguration later this month or in early February.

Asked about the inauguration of Bhogapuram airport, Naidu said it could take place in May or June, and the Andhra Pradesh government was trying to secure Prime Minister Narendra Modi's date for the event.

On Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu's proposal for a new greenfield international airport at Amaravati, the aviation minister said it reflected his vision of creating a world-class, futuristic and tech-savvy capital for the state.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Tata Group begins scouting for Air India's new chief executive

Mumbai, Jan. 5: The Tata Group has started scouting for a new chief executive officer (CEO) for Air India as it grows impatient with the carrier's slow recovery after a deadly crash that killed over 241 passengers and crew last year, people familiar with matter said.

Current CEO Campbell Wilson, whose contract expires in mid-2027 will not be offered an extension, the people said, asking for anonymity to discuss private decisions.

Tata chairman N. Chandrasekaran has had initial discussions with potential CEO candidates who have experience running large airlines, including those with sizable domestic operations, one of the people said.

Air India is unlikely to meet a target date of March 31 to break even operationally, a key factor in Wilson's ouster, the people said. The carrier's turnaround plan was dealt a blow when a Boeing 787 Dreamliner crashed in Ahmedabad in June.

There's instability at both of India's top airlines right now, as larger rival IndiGo awaits the regulatory fallout after mass cancellation of its flights

JOB VACANCY

- Current CEO Campbell Wilson, whose contract expires in mid-2027, will not be offered an extension.
- Tata chairman N. Chandrasekaran had initial discussions with potential CEO candidates.
- Air India is unlikely to meet the target date of

March 31 to break even operationally, a key factor in Wilson's ouster.

- Air India, Indigo account for nearly 9 out of 10 domestic seats in India's aviation market.
- Tata Group bought Air India from the government in 2022.



last month, triggered by pilot shortages and software glitches, stranded half a million passengers.

The troubles at the two carriers, which together account for nearly 9 out of 10 domestic seats in the world's third-largest domestic aviation market, is raising concern that India's infrastructure and regulatory apparatus is not ready for rapid growth in air travel.

External challenges - like supply chain issues that are affecting aircraft deliveries, and Pakistan's airspace closure to Indian carriers that have meant longer flying routes -

have impacted AirIndia's financial performance.

Current CEO Wilson, 53, joined Air India in July 2022 from Scoot Airlines.

Wilson was given the targets of improving the on-board experience for fliers — better seats, in-flight entertainment and food service — plus reposition the airline for profitability and growth after the Tata Group bought it over from the government in 2022.

Air India is 25.1 per cent owned by Singapore Airlines Ltd., which has seen its net income pulled down by India carrier's woes. — Bloomberg



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

एअर इंडिया के खराब प्रदर्शन से टाटा समूह ने शुरू की नए सीईओ की तलाश, हटेंगे विल्सन

नई दिल्ली। टाटा समूह ने विमानन कंपनी एअर इंडिया के वर्तमान प्रमुख कैपबेल विल्सन की जगह नए सीईओ की तलाश शुरू की दी है। 2027 में कार्यकाल खत्म होने से पहले भी विल्सन को हटाया जा सकता है। पिछले साल जून में हुए घातक विमान हादसे के बाद एयरलाइन पर कड़ी निगरानी रखी जा रही है। इससे समूह अब नए हाथों में एअर इंडिया कमान सौंपना चाहता है।

जून में एअर इंडिया विमान हादसे के बाद नियामकों ने आपातकालीन उपकरणों की जांच के बिना विमान उड़ाने से लेकर इंजन के पुर्जों को बदलने में देरी, जालसाजी और चालक दल की

कार्यकाल खत्म होने से पहले ही हटाने की तैयारी



सूत्रों के मुताबिक, विल्सन का कार्यकाल समाप्त होने से पहले ही एअर इंडिया को नया कप्तान मिल सकता है। बताया जा रहा है कि टाटा समूह के चेयरमैन एन चंद्रशेखरन ने कुछ महानों में विल्सन के साथ प्रदर्शन समीक्षा पर नियमित चर्चा की है।

■ चंद्रशेखरन ने विल्सन के उत्तराधिकारी के रूप में ब्रिटेन की दो प्रमुख और अमेरिका स्थित अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमानन कंपनियों के सीईओ से बात की है। इनके मुताबिक, चंद्रशेखरन जमीनी स्तर पर कार्यों और सुधारों को धीमी रफ्तार से असंतुष्ट हो गए हैं।

थकान के प्रबंधन में खामियों समेत कई प्रकार की कमियों को उजागर किया है। विल्सन ने जुलाई, 2022 में एअर इंडिया के सीईओ एवं एमडी का पदभार संभाला था। इसके अलावा,

समूह की कम लागत वाली एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस में भी नेतृत्व परिवर्तन हो सकता है। इसके वर्तमान सीईओ आलोक सिंह का कार्यकाल भी अगले साल यानी 2027 में खत्म होगा। व्यूरो

Air India's turnaround faces delivery test as leadership questions surface

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The buzz around a possible change at the top level of Air India has grown louder as doubts deepen over whether the Tata Group-led revival has delivered on its promise of operational excellence and customer-centric transformation.

Nearly three years after Air India's return to the Tata Group, persistent disruptions, uneven service quality and slow-moving reforms have triggered an internal reassessment of leadership, industry insiders told *businessline*.

CEO Campbell Wilson inherited an airline weakened by years of underinvestment, labour challenges and an ageing fleet. Early allowances for these legacy constraints were broadly accepted. But as the Tata-led management approaches its third year, those allowances are wearing thin. Critics increasingly question whether the current leadership has the operational clarity and bandwidth to carry the turnaround into its most demanding phase.

Mark D Martin, Founder and CEO of Martin Consulting, said it was "too coincidental and uncanny" that Wilson's exit is being discussed at a time when the final report on the AI171 incident is expected from the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau.



What worked

- Strategic framework for turnaround (Vihaan.AI programme)
- Fleet renewal with an order of 470-aircraft
- Network rebuild with routes to Europe, North America and Australia
- New brand identity

What did not work

- Problems with operational reliability, related to aircraft availability, crew shortages and legacy issues
- Mixed customer satisfaction due to uneven service standards
- Merger issues with integration of Vistara complicating operations
- Slow organisational mindset change on the back of cultural and workforce transformation issues

"It is widely known that Wilson's allegiance and loyalty to the Singapore Airlines Group led to Singapore Airlines' agenda being kept paramount, resulting in a remote-control approach to Air India while suppressing the Tata Group's objectives," he said.

STRUCTURAL MOVE

Wilson's early tenure was marked by decisive structural moves. The Vihaan.AI transformation programme laid out a revival framework, while the order for 470 aircraft from Airbus and Boeing reset Air India's long-term ambitions. Network expansion to Europe, North America and Australia helped restore some credibility to its global aspirations.

Execution, however, has lagged intent. Operational

performance has improved only incrementally, with recurring disruptions linked to aircraft availability, crew shortages, training backlogs and other constraints.

Customer experience remains uneven. While a new brand identity, refreshed cabins on select aircraft and improved digital interfaces have helped shift perception, wide variation across fleet types continues to undermine passenger confidence. Ultimately, the debate has shifted from vision to delivery. The architecture of Air India's revival is largely in place; whether the current or a future leadership can translate it into reliable operations, consistent service and financial discipline will determine whether the Tata Group's promise of excellence is finally realised.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Received additional info about Air India crash: Cong MP to minister

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 5 January

Congress MP Karti P Chidambaram on Monday told Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu that he has received additional information on the Air India AI171 plane crash, which has been "formally" forwarded to the Civil Aviation Ministry for review.

In the letter dated January 5, the Congress leader told Naidu: "Additional information and material inputs have emerged subsequent to the issuance of preliminary findings (in July 2025). The said information has been formally shared with my office, and is being forwarded to the ministry for due consideration."

Keeping in mind the gravity of the incident and the scale of loss involved, he said, it was imperative that the ministry and the concerned authorities examine the information received and undertake any further investigation.

He asked the ministry to inform "whether any further investigation, review, or reassessment has been initiated" and "whether any additional committees, expert groups, or oversight mechanisms have been constituted".

The Congress MP also sought that "a comprehensive and updated status report, supported by findings and material examined, be placed on record in the interest of transparency, accountability, and public confidence".

Air India's AI171 flight, bound for London, crashed shortly after takeoff from Ahmedabad airport on June 12 last year, killing 241 people on board and 19 on the ground, with only one survivor.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau's preliminary report said fuel supply to both engines was cut off shortly after take-off after the fuel control switches were moved to the "cutoff" position in quick succession.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

5 JANUARY 2026

Pradeep S.
Mehta



The IndiGo mess and the misplaced narrative over competition law

Flight cancellations, capacity shortages and abnormally high surge in airfares have once again brought India's aviation sector under scrutiny, with IndiGo at the centre of the debate. Having scrapped nearly a quarter of its 17,000-plus domestic flights in the first week of December, the situation has triggered renewed calls for competition law action against IndiGo. However, framing this episode as a competition law issue is conceptually flawed. What transpired was not an abuse of dominance under the Competition Act 2002, but a failure of regulatory compliance and, more fundamentally, a breakdown in competition policy implementation. Treating every market disruption as an antitrust problem risks diluting competition law and obscuring deeper institutional shortcomings.

The immediate trigger was IndiGo's non-compliance with the DGCA's revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms, introduced nearly two years ago to align Indian aviation safety standards with global benchmarks and address persistent pilot fatigue. These rules, which increased weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours and reduced permissible night landings from six to two, were backed by a phased implementation timeline with clear deadlines in June and November. While some carriers, including Air India, indicated compliance, IndiGo admitted it could not fully implement the norms reflecting its ability, by virtue of scale and market position, to

operate relatively independently of competitors. IndiGo apparently had a shortage of pilots and was therefore making the existing pilots work overtime.

The more serious question, however, is how the regulator allowed this situation to escalate. The transition was foreseeable, yet enforcement remained weak until disruptions became alarming. This concern was echoed by the Delhi High Court, where a bench comprising Justices Devendra Kumar Upadhyaya and Tushar Rao Gedela questioned the regulator's role, noting that the authorities appeared to let the situation precipitate. Beyond operational chaos, such regulatory lapses impose real economic costs disrupting travel, business activity and consumer confidence.

Much public outrage focused on "opportunistic" or "surge" pricing. Yet, such pricing is not inherently anti-competitive. Competition law does not prohibit firms from responding to demand-supply imbalances by adjusting prices, even sharply. Opportunistic pricing becomes problematic only when it is enabled or sustained by exclusionary conduct or market foreclosure. In this case, the price hike was a market response to a regulatory-induced supply disruption. Treating surge pricing, by itself, as evidence of abuse would stretch the scope of Section 4 of the Competition Act.

Indeed, Section 4 targets conduct that is exploitative or exclusionary such as denial of market access, imposi-

tion of unfair conditions, or price manipulation decoupled from market fundamentals. IndiGo's conduct does not fall within this framework. There is no evidence that it used its dominance to foreclose competitors or to impose unfair pricing unrelated to supply constraints.

Equally important is the labour dimension of the crisis. One argument advanced is that IndiGo could have hired foreign pilots to cope with the shortage of pilots, like the now-defunct Jet Airways and Kingfisher. The Indian labour market has structural rigidities. Pilots in India typically operate under notice periods ranging from six to twelve months, an unusually long duration that significantly hampers workforce mobility and timely capacity adjustments. Such restrictions are not conducive to a competitive environment and merit reassessment. However, these are labour and sectoral policy issues, not competition law violations, though there is currently some talk globally on labour conditions and competition law. Currently, the responsibility for addressing such constraints lies primarily with DGCA.

That said, the episode raises serious competition policy concerns. Competition policy operates at a broader level, focusing on how regulatory design, enforcement consistency and institutional coordination affect competitive outcomes. Here, the failure lies in delayed enforcement and regulatory retreat. The FDTL norms were foreseeable and announced well in advance.

IndiGo's claim that the disruption was "unforeseeable" is difficult to accept.

Instead, as the disruptions worsened, IndiGo was granted a one-time exemption, which was then followed by a broader postponement of the norms until February 2026. Rolling back safety-focused regulations in response to market instability weakens regulatory credibility and creates clear moral hazard, especially in an industry where fatigue can have serious, even fatal consequences. It also sends a troubling signal that size can soften accountability, a message that ultimately harms both competition and safety.

This is where competition policy, rather than competition law, must intervene. Competition policy works upstream: it shapes the structure of the market, not punishing firms after the effect. If a single airline's compliance failure can disrupt the entire sector, it points to deeper policy weaknesses: high entry and expansion barriers, rigid labour rules and limited avenues for new or smaller players to scale up quickly. By easing regulatory and technical barriers, encouraging broader participation and making the market less dependent on a few large incumbents, competition policy can improve resilience without diluting safety standards.

Pradeep S. Mehta is the secretary-general of CUTS International, a leading public policy research group



Corporate Communications Directorate

RS DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

एअर इंडिया और एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के लिए नए प्रमुखों की तलाश

मुंबई प्रेड: टाटा समूह ने एअर इंडिया के लिए नए नेतृत्व की तलाश शुरू कर दी है, क्योंकि मौजूदा मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी और प्रबंध निदेशक कैपबेल विल्सन का कार्यकाल अगले साल समाप्त होने वाला है। टाटा समूह एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के लिए भी नए प्रबंध निदेशक की नियुक्ति पर विचार कर रहा है, क्योंकि वर्तमान एमडी आलोक सिंह का कार्यकाल 2027 में पूरा होगा।

एक सूत्र ने बताया कि विल्सन और टाटा समूह दोनों ही 2027 के बाद अनुबंध के नवीनीकरण के इच्छुक नहीं हैं, ऐसे में उपयुक्त उम्मीदवार की खोज स्वाभाविक है। हालांकि इस विषय पर टाटा समूह ने आधिकारिक टिप्पणी नहीं की है। नए प्रमुख के चयन की प्रक्रिया में तीन से छह माह लग सकते हैं। उन्होंने यह भी संकेत दिया कि यदि मौजूदा और आने वाले प्रमुख कुछ समय तक साथ काम करते हैं, तो नेतृत्व परिवर्तन की प्रक्रिया अधिक सहज हो सकती है। इस बीच, एअर इंडिया से जुड़े बोंग 787-8 विमान दुर्घटना की अंतिम रिपोर्ट जून के आसपास आने की उम्मीद है। टाटा समूह ने जनवरी 2022 में सरकार से एअर इंडिया का अधिग्रहण किया था।

Airline Miles Could Take You from Runway to Red Carpet

Loyalty programs come with members-only experiences like backstage tours, VIP access

The New York Times

Interested in a Broadway backstage tour, hard-to-get sports tickets or dinner at a booked-solid Michelin-starred restaurant, but don't have deep pockets or connections?

Well, how many airline miles or credit card points do you have?

Airlines, banks and hotels are transforming formerly bread-and-butter loyalty programs, allowing members to spend points or miles to gild their lives with experiences that money alone can't always buy.

Members can score coveted World Cup soccer tickets using American Airlines miles, book backstage tours at sold-out Broadway shows with Delta Air Lines miles or attend exclusive parties at film festivals with Chase points. They can get a seat at intimate multicourse dinners cooked by star chefs and pay for them with Capital One points or United Airlines miles.

Experts say that companies are betting big on experiences to help capture increasingly fickle travelers in a complex loyalty landscape. Customers can now choose from a wide range of programs and methods of earning points as well as book travel in more ways than ever before, including directly through credit card portals. At the same time, some programs have devalued points and cut benefits, souring members' loyalty.



People scan a QR code for an Olivia Rodrigo concert hosted by American Express for holders of its Platinum card, in Manhattan

Experiences can help reel in new or wavering members by delighting them and offering them the chance to feel like VIPs, while giving them more opportunities to use their points along the way.

"Travel brands and banks are shifting toward lifestyle positioning," said Erifil Gounari, the CEO and founder of the ZLink, a marketing agency for younger generations. "Not just 'Fly with us' or 'Bank with us', but 'Here's how we help you live well, explore more and access the world'."

WOING TRAVELLERS

The chance to enjoy a high-end experience drew Jen Espinal, 41, to a Chase Sapphire Reserve-sponsored roller-skating party in October in New York City. For under 10,000 points, Espinal and other card members joined celebrities like Cher and dance pop duo Sofi

Tukker at Faena, a new hotel in the meatpacking district.

"It gets you adjacent to the places that aren't in our everyday life," said Espinal, who is from New Jersey, as she sipped Champagne with a friend in the cordoned-off VIP area. "This helps you experience a city in a different way even if you're a local person."

Miles- and points-based loyalty programs began with airlines after deregulation of the industry, in the 1970s. American Airlines started AAdvantage, one of the first frequent-flier programs, in 1981. Rewards for members of the program, which was then by invitation only, included a first-class ticket to any of American's destinations. Hotels followed suit; Holiday Inn started the first hotel loyalty program in 1983, offering members points for stays.

Today, members can rack up

points for a range of activities that have little to do with flights or hotel stays. In addition to earning points for everyday purchases on credit cards, travelers can, for example, collect Marriott Bonvoy points for ordering Uber Eats.

REWARDS DRIVE REVENUE

Loyalty has turned out to be lucrative. Revenue from these programs provides a major source of profit for airlines, which sell their miles to banks. In 2024, American and Delta each received about \$7 bn from frequent-flier programs, according to an analysis of financial filings by Jay Sorensen, who runs IdeaWorks Company, an airline consulting firm.

While companies can be coy about membership figures, major loyalty programs count hundreds of millions of members worldwide. Marriott's Bonvoy program has nearly 260 million members, the company said in its most recent financial earnings. Delta reported in 2023 that it had more than 130 million SkyMiles members.

With the stakes so high, airlines around the world, hotels, online travel agencies and banks are all vying to differentiate themselves. "Travelers are being wooed on all fronts," Sorensen said in a statement. "The competition is creating better rewards, more lounges and new travel booking options, but it's also reshaping the balance of power in the travel industry."

QUESTION NOT ABOUT INDIVIDUAL CAPABILITY, BUT ABOUT STRUCTURE

Why India's airlines keep importing their CEOs

YARUQHULLAH KHAN
New Delhi, January 5

REPORTS THAT TATA Sons is scouting for a successor to Campbell Wilson at Air India have once again drawn attention to a familiar pattern in Indian aviation: the industry's biggest airlines continue to turn to expatriate leaders even as India produces world-class executives across most other sectors.

Group chairman N Chandrasekaran, according to industry chatter, has approached senior executives at leading British and American carriers for the top job at India's second-largest airline.

The question this raises is not about individual capability, but about structure. Why do Indian carriers repeatedly look overseas for leadership, long after liberalisation and decades into the industry's growth?

The roots of this dependence lie in how Indian aviation evolved. After the government nationalised the sector in 1953, creating Air India and Indian Airlines as state monopolies, the industry spent four decades under bureaucratic control.

Decision-making was slow, political interference was routine and staffing levels ballooned. By the late 1980s, Air India had become a textbook case of how state control erodes competitiveness – burdened with debt, ageing aircraft and limited commercial agility.

When India liberalised its economy in 1991 and repealed the Air Corporations Act in 1994, aviation was suddenly opened up – but without the managerial depth required to sustain it. Private carriers such as Jet Airways, Air Sahara, Kingfisher, SpiceJet and IndiGo entered the market almost simultaneously. The problem was immediate and stark: India simply did not have enough senior airline executives to run them.

"The general perception was that limited airline leadership talent was available in India," said K Sudarshan, direc-

GLOBAL FRONT



■ Tata Group Chairman N Chandrasekaran has approached senior executives at leading British and American carriers to find a successor to Campbell Wilson as Air India CEO



■ Research by management consulting firm Egon Zehnder shows that airlines globally struggle with narrow internal talent pools

■ Talent matters more than nationality in a globally interconnected business like aviation

■ Aditya Ghosh, who led IndiGo from 2008 to 2018, showed that Indian executives can build globally competitive airlines



■ Alope Singh has steered Air India Express through its post-pandemic recovery, drawing on deep experience

tor at executive search firm EMA Partners. "Even Jet Airways, in its early years, relied on expatriate CEOs or COOs. It was largely a function of choice – or the lack of it."

The gap was not just in numbers, but in skills. While India had engineers and operations staff in abundance, expertise in aircraft leasing, network planning, manufacturer negotiations and global regulatory engagement was scarce.

According to Narayan Hariharan, former head of human resources at Jet Airways, the prevailing belief was simple: expatriates brought global networks and credibility with bodies such as International Civil Aviation Organization and International Air Transport Association.

That thinking has persisted – partly because Indian airlines have failed to build leadership pipelines. Cross-functional exposure remains limited, and commercial, operational and strategic roles rarely converge into a structured path to the CEO's office.

"Yes, talent exists in India and can be nurtured to compete in a cut-throat industry

like aviation," Hariharan said. "But the mindset of aatmanirbharta has not been fully internalised."

This is not an India-specific problem. Research by management consulting firm Egon Zehnder shows that airlines globally struggle with narrow internal talent pools shaped by siloed career paths, leaving few candidates equipped for the breadth and complexity of the CEO role.

"Talent matters more than nationality in a globally interconnected business like aviation," said Jitender Bhargava, former executive director of Air India. "Indian airlines will eventually have to decide whether they want to invest in developing domestic leaders or continue importing executives when-ever pressure mounts."

There are signs of change. Aditya Ghosh, who led IndiGo from 2008 to 2018 and now heads Akasa Air, demonstrated that Indian executives can build globally competitive airlines. Alope Singh has steered Air India Express through its post-pandemic recovery, drawing on deep experience across

strategy, network planning and commercial operations. Regional carriers such as Fly91 are also being led by executives rooted in India's aviation ecosystem.

Critics argue that the supposed "network advantage" of expatriates is overstated. "What additional connections do expats really bring when aircraft manufacturers, lessors and technology vendors are common across the industry?" asked Arun Kumar Singh, former CEO of IndiaOne Air.

Global precedents further weaken the case for importing airline veterans by default. British Airways was turned around in the 1980s by Lord King, a businessman with no aviation background. Japan Airlines recovered under Kazuo Inamori, founder of Kyocera, who had never worked in the sector.

India's reliance on foreign airline chiefs, then, may say less about necessity and more about institutional confidence. Until carriers invest seriously in leadership development – and trust it – the cockpit will continue to be flown from abroad.





Corporate Communications Directorate

GREATER KASHMIR

SRINAGAR

5 JANUARY 2026

DGCA bans use of power banks for charging devices during flights

IANIS

New Delhi, Jan 4

The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Sunday clarified that passengers are not allowed to use power banks to charge mobile phones or any other electronic devices during flights, citing serious safety concerns linked to lithium batteries.

In a statement, the aviation regulator said power banks cannot be used for charging gadgets at any time during a flight, including through aircraft seat power outlets.

The move comes after several incidents worldwide in which lithium batteries overheated or caught fire on

board aircraft.

The Director General of Civil Aviation had earlier, in November, issued a Dangerous Goods Advisory Circular that allowed power banks and spare lithium batteries only in hand baggage. These items are strictly prohibited from being stored in overhead compartments, as fires in overhead bins are difficult to detect and control.

According to the advisory, the increasing use of lithium batteries in rechargeable devices has led to a sharp rise in passengers carrying power banks and spare batteries during air travel. The DGCA warned that such devices can act as ignition sources and may trigger fires on board, posing a serious

risk to flight safety.

The regulator explained that lithium batteries kept in overhead stowage bins or inside carry-on bags may remain hidden from view, making it harder for passengers or crew members to notice early signs of smoke or fire. This can delay emergency response and increase the danger during a flight.

The DGCA has directed all airlines to review their existing safety risk assessments related to lithium batteries carried by passengers. Airlines have been asked to strictly enforce stronger safety measures to prevent battery-related fire incidents.

The aviation watchdog has also stressed the impor-

ance of improved training for cabin crew so they can quickly identify signs of fire and take appropriate action. Airlines have been instructed to ensure that adequate firefighting equipment and protective gear are available on board all aircraft.

In addition, airlines have been told to clearly inform passengers about the updated rules through in-flight announcements and other communication channels to ensure awareness and compliance.

The DGCA said these steps are necessary to strengthen passenger safety and reduce the risks associated with lithium battery fires during air travel.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Tata Group starts hunt for Campbell's Air India successor

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Tata Group has begun identifying a successor to Air India chief executive Campbell Wilson, whose contract is set to expire next year, according to multiple people aware of the development.

Wilson joined the airline in March 2022 after Tata Group acquired Air India from the government earlier that year. Separately, people familiar with the matter said Tata Group's low-cost arm, Air India Express, is also expected to see a leadership change, with the tenure of its current chief executive officer (CEO) Alok Singh set to end around March 2027. The news of the search was earlier reported by *The Economic Times*.

An Air India spokesperson did not comment on the matter.

These people said preliminary discussions have already started. "The process will take time and could be concluded in the second half of the year," one of them said, adding that any leadership transition is likely to be visible only towards the end of the year.

"CEO Campbell Wilson is expected to handover the charge to the new appointee before he exits the system," this person said.

The development has triggered several internal discussions, including speculation over the Tata Group's dissatisfaction with the pace of the airline's turnaround. While Air



Air India chief executive officer Campbell Wilson's contract expires next year. REUTERS

India had set ambitious targets to upgrade its fleet and product, these have not been fully met, largely due to global supply chain disruptions, airline officials said.

"Air India's performance has fallen short of the expectations set by the Tata Group and its chairman N. Chandrasekaran. The aim was to achieve operational profitability by March this year, but that has proven difficult, and performance continues to be a concern," an official familiar with the matter said.

A former senior airline executive, however, said turning profitable remains challenging amid persistent global headwinds. "The airline industry worldwide has been grappling with severe supply chain issues, which have significantly affected recovery," the person said, adding that Wilson had managed to make visible changes to the airline, despite the issues.

106 more planes this year to boost civil aviation: Minister

Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: India will add 106 aircraft to its current fleet of 843 in 2026, civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Sunday. The country added 80 aircraft in 2025, the minister said, adding that adding 100 aircraft is going to be a stable number for the next 15 years.

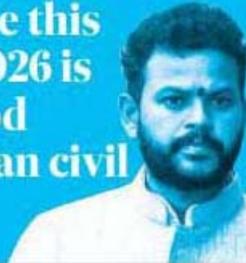
"I would like to share the fact that 80 new planes have come in the year 2025 which we have just finished. And our expectation for this year is 106 planes that are going to come in this next year. This 100 is going to be a stable number for the next 10 to 15 years. That is the kind of order India is having today," Naidu said.

"The year 2026 is going to be a very good year for Indian civil aviation," he added.

"This (civil aviation) is going to be a continuously growing sector for the next 10 to 20 years. What we are trying to do on behalf of the ministry of civil aviation (MoCA) or the central government is to cater for that demand, create the infrastructure that is needed, create the skilling and training that is needed and create the right policy

[RAM MOHAN NAIDU] CIVIL AVIATION MIN

...And our expectation for this year is 106 planes that are going to come this year. The year 2026 is going to be a good year for Indian civil aviation.



making that is needed that India is no longer seen as a strong domestic aviation market but as a global aviation market," the aviation minister said.

Speaking about the number of airports that are being operationalised, Naidu said, "Every 45 to 50 days we are having one airport launch. Either it is a new airport or it is an airport where we have expanded the capacity. In the last 18 months itself we have done many (launches). The most pres-

tigious of them has been the Navi Mumbai airport which has also been pending for many decades."

Speaking on commencing flight operations from Noida International Airport Jewar, the minister said, "We are going to open the Noida airport very soon. It is also on the verge of completion."

"We are on the verge of completion of all the necessary license approvals, we are in the last stage,

continued on →7

106 MORE PLANES

so it is going to be happening anytime, especially we are targeting this month or early of next month, to complete the operations and inaugurate the airport," Naidu said.

He was speaking after a validation flight was successfully conducted at the upcoming Bhogapuram Airport on Sunday morning.

One being asked about action against IndiGo on the basis of a detailed investigated report by the civil aviation regulator- the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), after it failed to comply with the new flight duty time rules that led to cancellation of more than 5000 flights in the first ten days of December, Naidu said, "We are exploring the report now,". He said that the ministry was taking some comments from the DGCA and "will soon come out with an action."

The DGCA, which formed a four-member-committee, had submitted its report on IndiGo operations to the government on December 26.

Indian aviation safety, its dangerous credibility deficit

On March 20, 2006, the Chairman of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), Assad Kotoite, delivered this message in Montreal while addressing the Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference on Global Aviation Safety Strategy: “It must be a strategy that recognizes that a weakness in one is a weakness in all. And the thread that must run through this strategy is transparency. By being transparent and freely sharing information with each other and the public, you recapture the ability to act as one, to reinforce each others’ actions, and to strengthen public confidence.

“You will be better able to stand united against those who compromise aviation safety... For me, one accident was always one too many, and the loss of even one life, was one too many. Like all of you here, I was entrusted with a noble mission, to protect the lives and well-being of the travelling public. We have done and must continue to do everything within our power to make sure they get to their destination safely and unharmed, and that no one on the ground will be killed or injured because of an aircraft accident.”

On, June 12, 2025, Air India flight 171 crashed at Ahmedabad, Gujarat within a minute of its take-off. Out of the 242 passengers, there was one survivor, while 19 people were killed on the ground.

India is a signatory of ICAO and has to comply with ICAO Annex 13 Standards for Aircraft Accident and Incident Investigation. The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) of the United States and the Air Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) of the United Kingdom were participants in the investigation. The Cockpit Voice Recorder (CVR) and the Digital Flight Data Recorder (DFDR) were recovered by June 16 and the NTSB’s help was taken in downloading and decoding the contents of the two recorders as the Indian authorities did not have the expertise to retrieve all the data. The NTSB and AAIB were aware of the contents. The Indian government must also be aware of the contents as it ordered commando protection for the chief investigator of AAIB India. This was a clear pointer that it was a serious issue.

A vague report, the facts

The vague Preliminary report that was released a month after the crash, clearly mentioned two points. First, the fuel control switches of both engines had moved to cut off from three to four seconds after lift-off. Second, one pilot asked the other pilot ‘why did you do that?’ And the other responds ‘I did not do that.’ It has been clearly established that the fuel control switches can only be moved mechanically by lifting the spring loaded switches from run and moving and



Captain A. (Mohan) Ranganathan

is a former airline instructor pilot and aviation safety adviser. He is also a former member of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council (CASAC), India

The transparent and the truthful report promised on the Ahmedabad air crash in June 2025 appears to be a dream

dropping them into the cut off gate. These switches do not move due an electrical failure or software glitch. The DFDR and CVR would have clearly indicated what had happened in those critical 15 seconds – what was being spoken in the cockpit, who was handling the flight controls and all the ambient sounds in the cockpit area. The NTSB has the best expertise to identify the exact data.

If one were to go by details leaked by The Wall Street Journal in July 2025 – and also in November 2025 – it appears that there was friction between the U.S. and Indian authorities that mushroomed into serious differences on the findings. The NTSB will only support technical investigation in an accident. The transparency and the truthful report that India’s Minister of Civil Aviation promised on the day of the crash, appears to be a dream. Political massaging of the report will not find favour with the NTSB. From what this writer hears from former top safety officials in the U.S., the breakdown between U.S. and Indian authorities is the worst he has witnessed and the worst he has seen in an international accident investigation.

The state of aviation

India has had three fatal accidents in the past 15 years. In 2010, Praful Patel, then Minister of Civil Aviation, declared that Mangalore airport conforms to all standards of ICAO. The Court of Inquiry committee, under his Ministry, conveniently drafted a report with a litany of lies. Blatant violations such as a rigid concrete structure holding the Instrument Landing System Localiser, that a rescue and fire fighting truck got stuck outside a gate and never reached the burning aircraft, were covered up. The only positive aspect of the report was the identification of the dangers of flying in hours during the Window of Circadian Low and the lack of rest for crew.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation’s Civil Aviation Requirements have been undergoing modifications over 15 years, with extensions due to pressure from airline owners. An example is the way Indigo, a leading private airline, disrupted air travel for thousands of passengers across India and the Minister and the DGCA to their knees.

In 2020, there was the air crash in Kozhikode. There again, there was scant action by Aviation Minister, Hardeep Singh Puri, and later, Jyotiraditya Scindia on safety measures addressing the dangerous operations at the airport. The deadline set for safe operation has long passed. We are now in 2026 and there are no restrictions in operations. The DGCA, as is the norm, dances to political pressure and is failing in its duty to ensure passenger safety.

Immediately after the AI 171 crash, the site was not sanitised. Television crew and cameramen were seen moving all over the site, trampling on and shifting through crash debris even before investigations began, and wiping out important clues. The airport was opened in three hours, with the zero availability of rescue and fire fighting services. Every flight that operated in this phase did not have rescue and fire fighting services on standby, endangering the lives of every air passenger and even those on the ground.

By delaying the findings and couching the facts with misleading statements, the AAIB is playing into the hands of YouTubers and social media narratives. ACARS and Inmarsat data are being quoted as proof of the flight having operated in dangerous conditions. The data is accessible only between the company that operated the system and an authorised person in the subscribing company. The entire chain of messages will be in an encrypted format. A simple example is how users of WhatsApp are confident about their messages being secure. The refusal of Apple to comply with the Indian Government order to preload a cyber-safety app citing privacy, security, and consent issues that go against its global policies is another example. It is to the credit of the airline, Air India, that it has not commented or responded to many of these strange narratives.

A lesson to learn

The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the AAIB should note how the FAA and NTSB act after a crash. When a UPS cargo MD-11 aircraft crashed on November 4, 2025, the NTSB had press briefings on November 5, 6 and 7, with its findings after the CVR and the DFDR had been downloaded and analysed. By November 9, the FAA issued an Emergency Airworthiness Directive grounding the aircraft type.

The NTSB and the FAA were aware of the CVR and DFDR data within a week of the AI171 crash. If there was an indication of serious system failures on the Boeing 787, as being projected by ‘aviation illiterates’ (as a former NTSB investigator describes them), the FAA would have grounded all Boeing 787s. The very fact that no such action has been done is a clear indication that they know the reason behind the crash.

India’s standing is dropping everyday on the diplomatic front. It is the same as far as India’s credibility in aviation safety investigation is concerned.

The crash of AI 171 has drawn worldwide attention. For India to isolate itself with a self-centred ego, is going to take it down a dangerous path. Isolating foreign experts from the AI 171 crash report is a dangerous trend.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

'Tata group looking for new chiefs for Air India, AI Express'

Mumbai: The Tata Group has begun scouting for a suitable candidate to head Air India, as the tenure of the incumbent, Campbell Wilson, will end next year, sources have said.

Meanwhile, the Group is also looking to appoint a new Managing Director for its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express. Alok Singh, will also be completing his tenure in the current position in 2027. "Both sides (Wilson and Tata Group) don't want a renewal (of the contract after 2027). So, it is but natural to go to the market to look for suitable candidates for the top job at Air India," said a source privy to the information.

There were no comments from the Tata Group on this issue in response to a *PTI* query.

Sources, however, said that it would take at least 3-6 months to finalise a suitable candidate for Air India, adding that if an overlap occurs, it would be good because the takeover would then become easier.

PTI

Tata Group starts hunt for Wilson's Air India successor

HT correspondent
letans@hindustantimes.com
NEW DELHI

Tata Group has begun identifying a successor to Air India chief executive Campbell Wilson, whose contract is set to expire next year, according to multiple people aware of the development.

Wilson joined the airline in March 2022 after Tata Group acquired Air India from the government earlier that year. Separately, people familiar with the matter said Tata Group's low-cost arm, Air India Express, is also expected to see a leadership change, with the tenure of its current CEO Alok Singh set to end around March 2027. The news of the search

was earlier reported by the Economic Times.

An Air India spokesperson did not comment.

These people said preliminary discussions have already started. "The process will take time and could be concluded in the second half of the year," one of them said, adding that any leadership transition is likely to be visible only towards the end of the year.

"CEO Campbell Wilson is expected to handover the charge to the new appointee before he exits the system," this person said.

The development has triggered several internal discussions, including speculation over the Tata Group's dissatisfaction with the pace of the air-



Air India chief executive officer Campbell Wilson's contract expires next year.

line's turnaround. While Air India had set ambitious targets to upgrade its fleet and product, these have not been fully met, largely due to global supply chain disruptions, airline officials said.

"Air India's performance has fallen short of the expectations set by the Tata Group and its chairman N Chandrababu Naidu. The aim was to achieve operational profitability by March this year, but that has proven difficult, and performance continues to be a concern," an official familiar with the matter said.

A former senior airline executive, however, said turning profitable remains challenging amid persistent global headwinds. "The airline industry worldwide has been grappling with severe supply chain issues, which have significantly affected recovery," the person said, adding that Wilson had managed to make visible changes to the airline, despite the issues.

Wilson joined the airline in March 2022 after Tata Group acquired Air India from the government earlier that year



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Tata Group looking for new chiefs for Air India and Air India Express

Campbell Wilson was appointed as Air India's CEO and Managing Director in July 2022

MUMBAI: The Tata Group has begun scouting for a suitable candidate to head Air India, as the tenure of the incumbent, Campbell Wilson, will end next year, sources have said.

Meanwhile, the Group is also looking to appoint a new Managing Director for its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express.

Aloke Singh, will also be completing his tenure in the current position in 2027.

"Both sides (Wilson and Tata Group) don't want a renewal (of the contract after 2027). So, it is but natural to go to the market to look for suitable candidates for the top job at Air India," said a source privy



to the information.

There were no comments from the Tata Group on this issue.

Sources, however, said that it would take at least 3-6 months to finalise a suitable candidate for Air India, adding that if an overlap occurs, it would be good because the takeover would then become

easier.

The final report on the Air India Boeing 787-8 crash at Ahmedabad is expected around June.

Significantly, Wilson was at Tata House on Monday to attend a scheduled meeting, sources said.

Wilson was appointed as Air India's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director (CEO & MD) in July 2022, following former Turkish Airlines Chairman Ilker Ayci's decision not to take up the top job in March 2022 amid a controversy.

Tata Group acquired Air India from the government in January 2022. P11



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

एयर इंडिया के लिए नए CEO की तलाश !

■ NBT रिपोर्ट, नई दिल्ली

टाटा ग्रुप अपनी एयरलाइंस एयर इंडिया और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के लिए नए सीईओ की तलाश कर रही है। सूत्रों का कहना है कि इसके लिए टाटा ग्रुप अमेरिका और यूके समेत दुनिया की कुछ बड़ी एयरलाइंस से अपनी इन एयरलाइंस के लिए दो नए सीईओ खोज रही है। हालांकि, इस बारे में एयर इंडिया की तरफ से कोई आधिकारिक पुष्टि नहीं की गई है। लेकिन सूत्रों का कहना है कि दोनों एयरलाइंस को इन टॉप पोस्ट पर यह बदलाव होना संभव है।

टाटा ग्रुप द्वारा जनवरी 2022 में एयर इंडिया को टेक ओवर करने के बाद एयर इंडिया के सीईओ और एमडी के रूप में कैप्टेन विल्सन ने जुलाई 2022 में इस पद को संभाला था। उनका कार्यकाल



मार्च 2027 तक है। जबकि एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के सीईओ आलोक सिंह का कार्यकाल भी 2027 तक ही है। सूत्रों का कहना है कि खुद कैप्टेन अपना कार्यकाल पूरा होने के बाद एयर इंडिया के सीईओ पद पर नहीं बने रहना चाहते हैं। टाटा ग्रुप भी इस पोस्ट के लिए नए सीईओ को नियुक्त करने पर विचार कर रही है। ऐसे में काफी अधिक संभावना है कि मौजूदा दोनों सीईओ का कार्यकाल खत्म होने से काफी पहले ही दोनों

एयरलाइंस के लिए नए सीईओ की तलाश पूरी कर ली जाए। ताकि वर्तमान सीईओ के बचे कार्यकाल के दौरान नए सीईओ भी भारतीय एयरलाइंस की कुछ बारीकियों को समझ सकें।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि टाटा ग्रुप चाहता है कि वह नए सीईओ को उन एयरलाइंस से यहां लाए, जिनके बेड़े में कम से कम 500 एयरक्राफ्ट हैं। दुनिया में ऐसी कम ही एयरलाइंस हैं और उनके मौजूदा सीईओ को तोड़कर अपनी एयरलाइंस में शामिल करना बड़ी चुनौती होगी। क्योंकि, टाटा ग्रुप की इन दोनों एयरलाइंस के पास भी 300 से अधिक एयरक्राफ्ट हैं। जिनकी संख्या में आने वाले समय में खासी बढ़ोतरी होनी है। नए सीईओ के रूप में उपयुक्त और अपनी जरूरतों के हिसाब से अंतिम रूप देने में ग्रुप को कम से कम छह महीने का वक्त लग सकता है।

देश आ रहा इंडिगो का सबसे अडवांस विमान, मिलेगा यूनान का स्पेशल खाना

Maneesh Aggarwal
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■ नई दिल्ली: भारत को तमाम एयरलाइंस में सबसे पहले इंडिगो के बेड़े में शामिल हो रहे नई जनरेशन के बेहद एडवांस एयरबस के A321-XLR हवाई जहाज का इंजनार खत्म होने को है। बताया गया है कि यह प्लेन जर्मनी के हैम्बर्ग शहर से सात जनवरी को दोपहर बाद दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट लैंड कर जाएगा। दो-तीन दिनों में इसके फ्लाई करने की डीजीसीए से एनओसी मिलने के बाद कुछ दिनों तक इसे भारत में ही दिल्ली-मुंबई जैसे डोमेस्टिक रूट पर फ्लाई कराया जाएगा। इसके बाद 23 जनवरी से दिल्ली और मुंबई से इसकी अलग-अलग दिन यूनान की राजधानी एथेंस के बीच फ्लाई करना शुरू कर देगा।

दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर इसका स्वागत



AI Image

करने खुद इंडिगो के सीईओ पीटर एल्वर्स समेत एयरलाइंस मैनेजमेंट के तमाम वरिष्ठ अधिकारी मौजूद होंगे। इसे इंटरनेशनल रूट पर फ्लाई कराया जाएगा। इसमें सफर करने वाले यात्रियों को यूनान की फेमस रेल्सिना, मास्टिचा और उजो वाइन-विस्की से लेकर ग्रीक सलाद, मुसाका, सुवलारी, ग्युरोस और काफतेदस जैसी फूड में एथेंस की फेमस डिश भी खाने को मिलेगी। सूत्रों ने बताया कि भारत के इस पहले प्लेन को लेकर बेहद उत्साहित इंडिगो यात्रियों

को ऑन बोर्ड मनोरंजन का अलग फील भी देगी। इसमें यात्रियों को कई अन्य तरह की सुविधाएं भी मिलेगी। 195 यात्री क्षमता के साथ इसमें बिजनेस (इंडिगोस्ट्रेच) और इकोनॉमी दो क्लास होंगी। जिसमें 12 सीट स्ट्रेच और 183 इकोनॉमी क्लास होंगी। इकोनॉमी क्लास पैसेंजर को इंटरनेशनल रूट पर खाने के साथ लिकर प्री में सर्व नहीं की जाएगी। इसके लिए यात्री को पैमेंट करना होगा। जबकि स्ट्रेच क्लास में लिकर टिकट की कीमतों में शामिल होकर प्री रहेगी।

400 से अधिक एयरक्राफ्ट के साथ देश की सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइंस इंडिगो इस प्लेन में यात्रियों के सफर को अधिक से अधिक सुविधाजनक बनाने के लिए कई तरह की योजना बना रही है। यह प्लेन कम फ्यूल खपत करते हुए अन्य एयरक्राफ्ट से करीब 50 फीसदी शोर कम मचाता है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

TATA BEGINS AIR INDIA CEO SEARCH

Tata Group-owned Air India has initiated a search for a new Chief Executive Officer as incumbent CEO and Managing Director Campbell Wilson's tenure is set to end next year, with both sides reportedly unwilling to renew the contract beyond 2027. Simultaneously, Tata is also looking to appoint a new Managing Director for its low-cost arm, Air India Express, where current head Alope Singh is expected to complete his term in 2027. Sources said the CEO selection process could take three to six months, and any overlap with Wilson's tenure would help ensure a smooth leadership transition. Air India declined to comment on the development. Wilson, who was appointed in July 2022, was seen at Tata House this week for a scheduled meeting. Tata Group acquired Air India from the Government in January 2022 after decades of State ownership. Meanwhile, the final report into the Air India Boeing 787-8 crash in Ahmedabad is expected around June. The leadership revamp is seen as critical as the airline accelerates fleet expansion, merger integration, service upgrades, and brand repositioning to compete aggressively with global and domestic rivals worldwide competitors.

2 flights circle fog-hit Lucknow 28 times in 2 days, fail to land

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: For two winter mornings, dense fog over Lucknow turned the skies into a maze for an Air India Express Boeing 737 MAX 8 operating flight from Delhi.

On Jan 2 and Jan 4, the aircraft circled the city 28 times, spending around 171 minutes hovering above Lucknow, only to return to Delhi without landing.

On Jan 4, IX217 flight reached Lucknow at 6.42 am. But the runway visual range (RVR) was only 125 metres, far below the DGCA-mandated minimum of 150



A view of the Taj Mahal engulfed in dense fog, in Agra on Sunday

metres required for a safe landing.

Hoping the fog would clear, the pilots kept the aircraft in a holding pattern. For 78 minutes till 8.01 am,

the jet looped over the city 11 times. When conditions didn't improve, the aircraft turned back, landing in Delhi at 8.55 am.

SalamAir OV705 from Muscat landed over 90 minutes late at 5.16 am, while two Air India Express flights — IX2048 from Bengaluru and IX1026 from Mumbai — arrived one to three hours behind schedule.

On Jan 2, IX217 faced nearly identical conditions. It reached Lucknow at 6.18 am, and for the next 93 minutes, it circled over the city 17 times, waiting for a break in the fog that never came.

GREECE FLIGHTS

tion of Greek Air Traffic Controllers, told state broadcaster ERT.

The association later said the breakdown affected all frequencies used on the ground, and some frequencies used by Athens Approach, an air traffic control unit responsible for managing aircraft arriving in and departing from Athens's Eleftherios Venizelos airport.

Among its responsibilities is radar monitoring for safe separation of aircraft in the sky as well as issuing instructions on speed, and altitude levels.

The Air Traffic Controllers Association said controllers were using all means at their disposal to ensure the safety of flights, calling the scale of Sunday's incident "unprecedented and unacceptable" for an air traffic control system.

Psarros said the problem seemed to be a collapse of central radio frequency systems at the Athens and Macedonia area control systems, the largest air control facility in the country. It monitors the Athens Flight Information Region, a vast expanse of airspace under the control of Greek authorities.

"We haven't been informed about the cause of this problem... certainly the equipment we have is virtually ancient. We have raised this many times in the past," Psarros said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

6 JANUARY 2026

Tata Group looking for new chiefs for Air India, Express

MUMBAI, JANUARY 5

The Tata Group has begun scouting for a suitable candidate to head Air India, as the tenure of the incumbent, Campbell Wilson, will end next year, sources have said.

Meanwhile, the group is also looking to appoint a new Managing Director for its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express. Alok Singh, will also be completing his tenure in the current position in 2027.

"Both sides (Wilson and Tata Group) don't want a renewal (of the contract after 2027). So, it is but natural to go to the market to look for suitable candidates for the top job at Air India," said a source.

Sources, however, said that it would take at least 3-6 months to finalise a suitable candidate for Air India, adding that if an overlap occurs, it would be good because the takeover would then become easier. — PTI