



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

6 FEBRUARY 2025

HYD AIRPORT IS INDIA'S FASTEST GROWING, CERTIFIES AAI

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB.5

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad, has been recognised as India's fastest-growing metropolitan airport, achieving a 15 per cent growth in passenger traffic in 2024, according to the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

RGIA has introduced new routes, improved passenger amenities and implemented technology-driven solutions to enhance the travel experience.

"This milestone is a testament to our expanding global and domestic connectivity, making travel more seamless and accessible. With new routes, enhanced passenger amenities and tech-driven solutions, we're committed to making every journey smoother and more memorable," said the authority.





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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Hosur airport: AAI to submit detailed report on feasibility of sites soon

E T B SIVAPRIYAN
CHENNAI, DHNS

Airports Authority of India (AAI) is likely to complete by the end of February its detailed study of two locations shortlisted by the Tamil Nadu government to house an exclusive airport for Hosur.

After the AAI report on the feasibility of housing the facility on the surveyed sites, Tamil Nadu will take a final call on the location for the greenfield airport.

Sources in the know told *DH* that the AAI, at the request of the Tamil Nadu government, is undertaking field visits to the two sites, including villages close to the private airport owned by Taneja Aerospace and Aviation Limited (TAAL) in Belagondapalli on Thali road.

“Tamil Nadu government proposed five sites identified by it for a study to the AAI which submitted a report on all locations. Since three locations weren’t suitable for building an airport, the government chose two sites,” the source added.

The current study will cover various aspects, including the air space, the extent of the land owned by the government, and whether any defence establishments are located in proximity, among others.

“The AAI will submit a detailed report listing the positives and negatives of each site. The decision on the site is likely to be taken in about a month’s time,” another source said.

Separately, the Tamil Nadu government has asked for details of the government land available in the two sites and the extent of private land that

may be acquired for the project.

The government is going ahead with shortlisting the sites to house the airport as it believes building a new facility will take at least six to seven years and by then, the concessionaire agreement might expire. The sources also said the TN government is in touch with BIAL for the past three years and might be willing to work with it.

The development comes seven months after Chief Minister M K Stalin on June 27 announced in the Assembly that Hosur will get an airport of its own spread over an area of 2,000 acres to handle about 3 crore passengers a year. The new airport, once commissioned, will have a single runway.

The Tamil Nadu government’s move also comes close

on the heels of Karnataka mulling a second airport for Bengaluru near Tumakuru.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu had on Monday told Rajya Sabha that the Tamil Nadu government has been actively pursuing to build an airport in Hosur but termed the concessionaire agreement that the Centre signed with BIAL that no airport should come up within a radius of 150 km till 2033 as tricky. He also proposed that the BIAL, Tamil Nadu government, and the Centre sit across the table to come out with a solution.

Hosur is home to 500 big industries and 3,000 MSMEs and now hosts Tata Electronics Private Limited, a key supplier of Cupertino-based Apple Inc and electric vehicle majors like Ola, Ather, Simple Energy, and TVS motor company.



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Sahu asks state government to submit proposal under UDAN

Staff Reporter

RAIPUR

The Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) Scheme under Budget 2025 aims to boost regional air connectivity by improving infrastructure, adding new routes, and operational airports.

The central government plans to introduce 100 new RCS routes and 12 new RCS airports during the financial year 2025-26. The Ministry of Civil Aviation will focus on upgrading infrastructure based on proposals from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and state governments, including airport developments, helipads, and water drone upgrades.

Tokhan Sahu, Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs, urged Chhattisgarh's state government to submit a formal proposal to the central government to leverage these new budget allocations. He emphasized that collaboration between state and central governments would address current chal-



lenges and enhance connectivity, benefiting the citizens of Chhattisgarh and neighbouring regions.

Sahu has long advocated for the expansion of airports in Chhattisgarh. He previously supported upgrading Bilaspur Airport's runway from the 3C to the 4C category and installing night landing facilities. These improvements would enhance regional air connectivity, supporting larger aircraft and increasing operational capacity for passengers and cargo.

Additionally, Sahu expressed strong support for developing Raipur Airport into

an international hub. This expansion would connect Raipur to international destinations, boosting the region's economic and tourism potential. Sahu remarked, "Transforming Raipur Airport into an international hub will offer a more accessible and efficient gateway, reducing the need for travelers from the state and neighboring areas to go to major airports like Mumbai and Delhi."

Under the UDAN Scheme, three airports in Chhattisgarh—Jagdalpur, Bilaspur, and Ambikapur—have been developed for RCS flights. These airports have operationalized 16 RCS routes, benefiting over 231,000 passengers and improving access to air travel.

Despite the success of the UDAN Scheme, challenges remain. Sahu reassured that steps would be taken to address these, including enhancing airport infrastructure and extending runways to accommodate larger aircraft, reaffirming his commitment to improving the aviation sector in Chhattisgarh.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Disciplinary action separate from criminal trial: Apex court

SC upholds dismissal of AAI official

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has upheld the dismissal of a Bengal-based Airports Authority of India (AAI) official after holding that even after his acquittal by Calcutta High Court in the corruption case registered by CBI, his sacking was justified on disciplinary grounds.

"In the case at hand, the subject matter concerns a domestic enquiry, where the strict rules of evidence prohibiting admissibility of confessional statements recorded by the police officials do not apply. Likewise, non-examination of the decoy cannot be treated to be fatal in the domestic enquiry where other

evidence indicts the delinquent officer," the apex court said in a judgment.

"Even a confession of the delinquent employee recorded by the trap-laying officer during the criminal investigation can be relied upon by the disciplinary authority."

A bench of Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Justice Sandeep Mehta observed: "All that is required on the part of the disciplinary authority is that it should examine the evidence in the disciplinary proceedings and arrive at a reasoned conclusion that the material placed on record during enquiry establishes the guilt of the delinquent employee on the principle of preponderance of probabilities..."



The Supreme Court

The bench passed the judgment while allowing an appeal filed by the AAI, challenging a judgment passed in March 2012 by a division bench of Calcutta High Court, which had set aside the dismissal of Pradip Kumar Banerjee and an order passed by a single judge who had upheld the dismissal

on June 29, 2011.

Banerjee was arrested by CBI in a bribery-related case while working as an assistant engineer (civil). He was convicted for the offence by a CBI court, against which he had appealed at the high court.

While the criminal appeal was pending before the high court, the disciplinary authority, vide order dated July 13, 2000, dismissed Banerjee from service based on the CBI court's order.

Banerjee was subsequently acquitted by the high court of the charges of corruption. He then appealed to the AAI and its appellate authority to reinstate him, which was rejected.

He then challenged the re-

fusal to reinstate him before a single judge of the high court which dismissed his plea. But the division bench directed his reinstatement.

Aggrieved, the AAI filed the present appeal in the Supreme Court.

The apex court said on going through the material on record, it was of the view that the disciplinary authority was fully justified in imposing the penalty of dismissal from service.

"...we find that the impugned judgment dated March 1, 2012, passed by the division bench of the high court is unsustainable in the eyes of law. The same deserves to be and is hereby set aside," Justice Mehta said.



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THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWAHATI

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Only two international airlines operating from LGBI Airport

R DUTTA CHOUDHURY

GUWAHATI, Feb 5: Though Borjhar airport was declared an international airport and renamed Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBI) more than two decades back, the airport is yet to turn into a major international airport. Only two international airline operators are operating from the airport.

The Borjhar airport started operations in 1958 and it formally became an international airport and was renamed LGBI Airport in 2000. The first international flight from the airport was operated by Air India to Bangkok in 2002 but later it was cancelled. The reason given was that there were not enough passengers. But it



File photo

is a fact that there were frequent cancellations and people preferred to travel to Kolkata to fly out to Bangkok.

Another Guwahati-Dhaka flight was introduced but later cancelled because of the reasons best known to the authorities concerned. Now Thai Air Asia Airlines is operating a Guwahati-Bangkok flight four

times a week. Thai Air sources said that the flight is getting good response from passengers and people also fly out to different destinations in SE Asia and Australia after reaching Bangkok. When asked why people still travel to Kolkata to fly out to Bangkok, sources said, "It is people's choice and we cannot comment on that.

Maybe some people are not aware of the direct flight."

Druk Air is also operating connecting flights from Paro to Singapore and Kuala Lumpur via Guwahati.

But these are the only two international flight operators operating flights from the LGBI Airport. Commenting on the issue, aviation industry sources told *The Assam Tribune* that initiatives from the State and Central Governments are also required to increase international flight operations from Guwahati. Last year, a proposal was mooted for a visit of a team from Assam, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh to Singapore and other major international destinations to promote tourism in the region. But that finally

did not materialize.

The LGBI Airport was leased out to the Adani Group in 2019 and it was expected that the number of international flights would increase. But it did not materialize. Aviation sources said that the space rent of the airfield needs to be reduced to attract more international tour operators. Sources said that the space rent in LGBI Airport should not be at par with the rich airports of the country. Moreover, during winter, visibility sometimes becomes a problem at the LGBI Airport. At present, the visibility required to land planes in the airport is around 1,300 meters and it needs to be reduced to around 500 meters.

Only two ...

(Contd from page 1)

The cargo flight operation has also not gone up to the expected level and it is hoped that things will improve after the new terminal building is completed and the old terminal is converted to cater to cargo operations. But the Government should have a clear-cut policy and decide what to be exported and to which country, sources added.

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Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Govt will finalise location for second airport after investors' meet: DKS

BENGALURU, DHNS

The state government will finalise the location for Bengaluru's second international airport only after the Global Investors Meet (GIM), scheduled for February 11.

Deputy Chief Minister D K Shivakumar said the commerce and industries department had held a preliminary meeting to shortlist the locations and that Chief Minister Siddaramaiah would take the final decision after consulting the Cabinet ministers.

Once the government shortlists the location, the Ministry of Civil Aviation undertakes a separate study to assess the technical feasibility of building the new airport.

Last year, the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board (KIADB) identified

seven potential locations, including Harohalli, Dobbspet, Doddaballapur, Nelamangala and Magadi for the new airport. Subsequent meetings primarily focused on locations situated along Nelamangala-Mangaluru National Highway (NH 75) and Kanakapura Road, stretching toward Mysuru Road.

On Wednesday, Home Minister Parameshwara confirmed that 2-3 locations had been shortlisted.

"I have put forth my request but the civil aviation ministry has prescribed some guidelines for the selection of location. Before Devanahalli was finalised, Bidadi was proposed for building the Kempegowda International Airport. The place was ruled out for technical reasons. This time, we have to wait and watch."

A SENIOR OFFICER

“The chief minister is yet to hold a meeting on this subject. Some are making false claims to boost real estate value.

Shivakumar, who also holds Bengaluru Development portfolio, has been reportedly in favour of building the airport in the city's southern direction while Home Minister G Parameshwara wants the project to be closer to his home district. "The chief minister is yet to hold a meeting on this subject. Some are making false claims to boost real estate value," a senior officer said.

Both the western and southern directions of Bengaluru have their pros and cons. While the Nelamangala region

is close to the existing Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), some government officials believe an airport in this part of the city would help steer growth toward Tumakuru, comparing how Bengaluru's existing airport has benefited Andhra Pradesh.

There is also considerable support for bringing the airport to Bengaluru's southern direction, as residents in this area currently travel the longest to reach the existing airport.

Additionally, it is close to Electronics City and Sarjapur Road, both of which are growing rapidly. However, there are concerns that building an airport in this region could lead to the destruction of hillocks, elephant corridors, wildlife habitats, and reserve forests, either directly or indirectly.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

हिंडन एयरपोर्ट से 22 मार्च से जम्मू और चेन्नई के लिए शुरू होगी उड़ान

जागरण संवाददाता, साहिबाबाद: मार्च में हिंडन एयरपोर्ट सिविल टर्मिनल से गोवा समेत छह शहरों के लिए यात्री उड़ान भर सकेंगे। एक मार्च से गोवा, कोलकाता और बेंगलुरु के लिए हरी झंडी दिखाकर सेवाएं शुरू की जाएंगी। वहीं 22 मार्च से जम्मू और चेन्नई के लिए उड़ान शुरू होंगी। लखनऊ, अयोध्या, प्रयागराज, वाराणसी, मुंबई और पुणे समेत अन्य शहर के लिए विमान सेवा शुरू करने की कवायद चल रही है।

एक मार्च से एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस को बेंगलुरु, गोवा और कोलकाता के लिए उड़ान सेवाएं शुरू करेगा। रोजाना तीनों शहरों के लिए हिंडन एयरपोर्ट सिविल टर्मिनल से फ्लाइट मिलेगी। इसी कंपनी को हिंडन से चेन्नई, जम्मू के अलावा बेंगलुरु की दिन में दूसरी उड़ान शुरू करने के लिए भी अनुमति मिल गई है। 22 मार्च से उड़ान की शुरुआत होगी।

इन सभी शहरों के लिए कंपनी ने टिकटों की आनलाइन बुकिंग शुरू कर दी है। गाजियाबाद के सांसद अतुल गर्ग ने बताया कि मार्च माह में इन नए शहरों के लिए हिंडन से सेवाएं शुरू होंगी। बेंगलुरु,

- एक मार्च से बेंगलुरु, गोवा और कोलकाता के लिए जाने वाले उड़ानों को दिखाई जाएगी हरी झंडी
- हिंडन एयरपोर्ट से अभी आदमपुर, किशनगढ़, नांदेड़, लुधियाना, बठिंडा के लिए हैं उड़ान
- सांसद अतुल गर्ग भी एक मार्च को दिखाएंगे हरी झंडी, नागरिक उड़्डयन मंत्री होंगे शामिल

गोवा और कोलकाता के लिए एक मार्च को हरी झंडी दिखाई जाएगी। 22 मार्च को चेन्नई, जम्मू के लिए उड़ान सेवाएं शुरू होंगी। शुभारंभ के दौरान नागरिक उड़्डयन मंत्री भी इसमें शामिल होंगे।

अभी इन शहरों के लिए उड़ रही फ्लाइट: साहिबाबाद के हिंडन एयरपोर्ट सिविल टर्मिनल से अभी तक आदमपुर, किशनगढ़, नांदेड़, लुधियाना, बठिंडा के लिए छोटी उड़ान हो रही हैं। अन्य शहरों के लिए भी गाजियाबाद की कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाने के लिए लंबे समय से प्रक्रिया जारी है। तीन शहरों के लिए बड़ी उड़ान की अनुमति मिलने से लोगों को काफी राहत मिलेगी।

HC steps in to decide who will manage Airport Zone waste — MCD or DIAL

SOHINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

THE DELHI International Airport Limited (DIAL) is locked in an unusual battle with the Municipal Corporation of Delhi since last December — to establish who is responsible for the waste generated at the Airport Zone, which also includes Aerocity.

With both seeking to stake a claim over the area, the Delhi High Court has held marathon hearings on the issue — six in January and two in February. It is slated to hear the matter next on February 13.

The DIAL is challenging a November 2024 tender issued by the MCD, where the civic body had notified that it is looking to select an agency for setting up of a 50 tonne per day (TPD) Material Recovery Facility (MRF) for management of dry solid waste in Najafgarh zone — on a public private partnership (PPP) basis — along with managing an existing MRF plant of 5 TPD.

Opposing the move, DIAL has said that the tender “unauthorisedly and unlawfully includes the Airport Zone, which is undisputedly within the exclusive domain of DIAL”.

While the court is yet to decide on who holds jurisdiction over the area, on December 24, 2024, it had directed MCD to not process the tender to the extent it concerns the area, which falls within the Airport Zone under the Delhi Master Plan.

The MCD, meanwhile, has highlighted the risk of persistent bird strikes and maintained that existing waste management fa-

cilities being maintained by DIAL are insufficient. According to MCD, it generates solid waste of around 11,000 TPD at present.

The DIAL has highlighted that the Airport Zone — which includes terminals, facilities like in-flight catering/kitchens and Air Traffic Control, government and security agency offices, as well as Aerocity — at the Indira Gandhi International Airport was leased to it by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

It has added that it was granted exclusive rights for Operation, Maintenance, and Development Agreement (OMDA), which includes aeronautical services such as disposal of bulk waste.

The DIAL is relying on a 2021 HC order in its favour to reiterate that it is the “custodian” of the Airport Zone to dispose of bulk waste generated in the area.

In 2022, DIAL had relegated management and disposal of bulk waste at the zone through expert agency JK Contractors, signing an agreement for a period of 10 years.

As per DIAL’s plea, if MCD is ceded control for waste management in the area, it would lead to an “absurdity” where DIAL is legally obliged to manage the waste in the zone and is yet unable to, thanks to MCD awarding the contract of waste management to a third party.

Part of DIAL’s agreement with JK Contractors requires the latter to set up an MRF for waste generated from the Airport Zone, with an objective of “zero waste to landfills”, and according to DIAL, JK Contractors has already invested over Rs 10 crore on the

same so far.

The MCD, on the other hand, has contended that it alone is the local body entrusted with all aspects of solid waste management under the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2016 and bylaws of 2017.

The MCD, on December 24, 2024, through its standing counsel Tushar Sannu Dahiya, told HC that while the airport itself may be left outside the scope of the tender, commercial areas, even if they fall within the Airport Zone, are not liable to be left out.

It added that the commercial areas outside the main airport, “including hotels in Aerocity, are bulk waste generators... and are liable to the same rules applicable to other bulk waste generators”.

The civic body has also told HC that JK Contractors is “not being able to manage the solid waste being produced in this part of Najafgarh zone”, and its “undercapacity” is resulting in “incessant illegal dumping of waste having origin from airport and Aerocity...”, which in turn is “attracting birds, which could turn fatal as the same would lead to bird hit in aircraft flying in and out of the airport”.

It also said that JK Contractors’ MRF can manage only about 2 MT of waste on a daily basis against the total waste generation of around 50 metric TPD, making it “apparent that the remaining waste was being dumped illegally”.

According to documents submitted by the MCD before HC, it had fined DIAL Rs 6.32 lakh in January alone for violation of waste management laws.





Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

6 FEBRUARY 2025

NONE INJURED

Minor fire at Kolkata airport, inquiry begins

KOLKATA: An inquiry committee has been formed at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) airport on Wednesday to probe the cause of a minor fire that broke out allegedly during welding work inside the airport.

The fire broke out during an ongoing construction work, causing momentary panic. It was learnt from an airport official that the fire broke out near the conveyor belt during welding work. The sparks from the welding torch are said to have triggered the fire. However, the flames were quickly put out by the airport workers and staff, preventing any major damage. Fire extinguishers were put into use

for the same. It was confirmed that no injuries took place. Airport sources said that an inquiry committee has been formed to probe the cause of fire even as preliminary probe revealed it was accidental. Such an action also comes as the incident of fire paved the way for concerns since several delegates, including foreigners, are arriving in the city to attend the 8th Bengal Global Business Summit.

The summit is being attended by some of the big names in the world of trade and commerce which includes Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani. Representatives of about 40 countries are visiting the summit, 20 are partner countries. **MPOST**



Corporate Communications Directorate

RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

दिसंबर 2027 में उड़ान भरेगा कोटा

कोटा ग्रीन फील्ड एयरपोर्ट को लेकर टेंडर जारी

केन्द्रीय उड़्डयन मंत्री
राममोहन नायडू ने
स्पीकर बिरला को दी
जानकारी

पत्रिका ब्यूरो
petrika.com

नई दिल्ली. एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया (एएआई) ने राजस्थान के कोटा में ग्रीन फील्ड एयरपोर्ट के निर्माण को लेकर गुरुवार को टेंडर जारी कर दिए हैं। इससे पहले संसद भवन में लोकसभा अध्यक्ष ओम बिरला से केन्द्रीय उड़्डयन मंत्री राममोहन नायडू ने मुलाकात की। तब बिरला ने उनको टेंडर में जारी करने के लिए कहा था। उड़्डयन मंत्री नायडू ने स्पीकर बिरला को बताया कि अगले 3 महीने में टेंडर से संबंधित सभी प्रक्रिया पूरी कर निर्माण कार्य प्रारंभ किया जाएगा। दिसंबर 2027 तक एयरपोर्ट निर्माण



पूरा कर लिया जाएगा और कोटा से विमान सेवा शुरू हो जाएगी। इसका लाभ कोटा-बूंदी क्षेत्र के लोगों के साथ-साथ पूरे हाड़ौती और पश्चिमी राजस्थान के कई जिलों को मिलेगा। इस दौरान बिरला के ओएसडी राजीव दत्ता, एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी के शरद कुमार भी मौजूद रहे।

467.67 करोड़ रुपए से पहले फेज का काम

एएआई की ओर से जारी टेंडर के अनुसार, पहले फेज में करीब 467.67 करोड़ की लागत से एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण कार्य होगा। इसमें टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग, रनवे सहित

अन्य महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किए जाएंगे। टेंडर जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि 11 अप्रैल जबकि, दिसंबर 17 अप्रैल को टेंडर घोषित होंगे। इसके अलावा अन्य एजेंसियों की ओर से सड़क और पानी जैसी बुनियादी सुविधाओं को लेकर काम शुरू कर दिया है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Substantial increase in cargo handled at major airports

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The cargo handled at Major Ports has increased from 581.34 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 819.23 million tonnes in FY 2023-24, a CAGR of 3.5% which is comparable to global standards.

During 2023-24, the cargo handled consisted of 33.80% liquid bulk, 44.04% dry bulk, and 22.16% container cargo.

Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sarbananda Sonowal told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply that infrastructure development and



capacity augmentation of major ports is a continuous process. It involves the construction of new berths and terminals, mechanisation of existing berths and terminals,

capital dredging for deepening of drafts for attracting larger vessels, development of road and rail connectivity, etc. Further, VadHAVAN Port in Maharashtra has been

approved to be developed as the mega container port in the country catering the requirement of handling new generation mega size container vessels.

Based on consultation with major ports, state maritime boards, Ministry of Railway and Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, 107 road and rail connectivity infrastructure gaps for major and non-major ports have been identified and included in the Comprehensive Port Connectivity Plan (CPCP) prepared by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in September 2022. These projects aim to enhance connectivity between ports and domestic production/consumption centres.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Substantial increase in cargo handled at major airports

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 5 FEBRUARY

The cargo handled at Major Ports has increased from 581.34 million tonnes in 2014-15 to 819.23 million tonnes in FY2023-24, a CAGR of 3.5% which is comparable to global standards.

During 2023-24, the cargo handled consisted of 33.80 per cent liquid bulk, 44.04 per cent dry bulk, and 22.16 per cent container cargo.

Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways Sar-



bananda Sonowal told the Rajya Sabha in a written reply that infrastructure development and capacity augmentation of major ports

is a continuous process. It involves the construction of new berths and terminals, mechanisation of existing berths and terminals, capital dredging for deepening of drafts for attracting larger vessels, development of road and rail connectivity, etc. Further, Vadhavan Port in Maharashtra has been approved to be developed as the mega container port in the country catering the requirement of handling new generation mega size container vessels.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

6 FEBRUARY 2025

JSW to buy stake in Andal airport

SAMBIT SAHA

Calcutta: Sajjan Jindal's JSW Group has expressed interest in picking up a significant stake in Andal airport to redevelop the state's only greenfield airport in partnership with the Bengal government and Singapore's Changi Airport.

The \$24-billion conglomerate, which is a major player in core industries such as steel, energy, cement, port and automobile, has kicked off discussions with the existing private investors for the buyout.

If successful, this would be the first foray of the \$24-billion JSW group in the airport sector, further deepening its engagement with Bengal. "It is a very exciting project. We are very keen," Sajjan Jindal, chairman of the JSW group, said at the sidelines the 8th edition of the Bengal Global Business Summit.

The state owns a 26 per cent stake in Bengal Aerotropolis Projects, while Changi Airport Authority has a 33 per cent. Private investors led by city-based industrialist Utsav Parekh and the IL&FS group hold a 36 per cent and an 8 per cent stake, respectively, which the JSW group is looking to buy out.

Jindal pointed out that there is scope to develop the airport and the land around it where an industrial park and township can come up. "We want to build a world class aerotropolis there. It has a very large catchment area and lots of potential," he added.

Conceived during the Left Front government, which acquired close to 1,800 acres in Burdwan for the greenfield airport, the investment in



Sajjan Jindal in Calcutta on Wednesday.

Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

the project stands about ₹800 crore, including debt. Initially a non-starter, the airport now has multiple direct flights connecting various state capitals.

Jindal pointed out that he was keen that Changi, a global leader in airport management, remains in the company, along with the West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation. However, there are certain issues with the land, which needs to be resolved, Jindal cautioned. "We want a clean slate," he emphasised.

Power play

During his public address at BGBS, Jindal announced that JSW Energy will build a 1,600 (800X2) megawatt coal-fired plant at an investment of ₹16,000 crore and develop a 2,000-acre industrial park at Salboni, West Midnapore.

"We plan to build the power plant in four years," Jindal later said, adding that it would procure coal from Coal India through the Bengal government and sell the electricity back to the state. JSW came up as the lowest bidder to offer power to the state discom on a finance, own and operate basis. Jindal said JSW would be ready to double power capacity should the state need it.

While the power plant would require 1,000 acres, the rest will be used for the industrial park. "We would like to bring the Japanese and Koreans there, among others," he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Airport fire

■ **CALCUTTA:** A fire broke out inside the integrated terminal of the Calcutta airport on Wednesday afternoon, officials said. Welding work was going on at the partition of the international and domestic sections on the terminal building's arrival level. There were flexes near the area and some sparks triggered by the welding work led to the fire around 1.55pm. An airport official said the staff put out the fire immediately although two fire tenders were sent. He said the fire was not in the passenger area.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

भारत व दक्षिण एशियाई एयरलाइंस 2,835 विमानों का दे सकतीं ऑर्डर

नई दिल्ली। अमेरिकी विमान निर्माता बोइंग का मानना है कि हवाई यात्रा की लगातार बढ़ती मांग को पूरा करने के लिए भारतीय और दक्षिण एशियाई एयरलाइंस अगले 20 वर्षों में अपने बेड़े में 2,835 नए वाणिज्यिक विमान जोड़ सकती हैं। भारत की मजबूत अर्थव्यवस्था और तेजी से बढ़ते घरेलू बाजार से विमानन क्षेत्र में भी तेज बढ़त हो रही है। बोइंग का अनुमान है कि भारत व दक्षिण एशिया का वाणिज्यिक हवाई जहाज बेड़ा अगले 20 वर्षों में लगभग चार गुना बढ़ जाएगा। बेहतर कनेक्टिविटी और हवाई यात्रा उदारीकरण वाली नीतियों के कारण 2043 तक सालाना 7% की वृद्धि होगी। एजेसी



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

IndiGo inks pact with Norse Atlantic for Boeing 787-9 lease

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

To start long-haul commercial operations, airline major IndiGo on Thursday said that it has entered into an agreement with Norse Atlantic Airways for damp lease (leased aircraft accompanied by crew) of one Boeing 787-9 aircraft.

Accordingly, the aircraft will be arriving in India in the next few weeks and is expected to start operations in March 2025. The airline said that this partnership underscores IndiGo's strategic efforts to expand its geographic reach and provide its customers with more options for international travel.

Industry sources told *businessline* that the airline will deploy the Boeing 787-9 aircraft to open new international routes and support direct connectivity, while the Airbus XLRs, which are also expected to join its fleet this year, will be the main stay of its long-haul operations.

For ultra-long-haul operations, IndiGo has placed a firm order for 30 Airbus 350-900 wide-body aircraft with an option for an additional 70 aircraft, whose deliveries are expected to commence from 2027.

EUROPE DEBUT

It is widely speculated the airline will launch long-haul international operations to Europe in this year's summer season utilising the 787-9 aircraft.

"As part of our broader strategy to significantly expand our international network, we are pleased to confirm this damp lease of one Boeing 787-9 aircraft from Norse Atlantic Airways," IndiGo's Chief Executive Pieter Elbers said in a statement. "Our vision is to transform into a global player by 2030." As per the airline, the initial term of the agreement is six months, extendable to up to 18 months, subject to regulatory approvals.

Furry friends take off; Air India plans policy tweaks

Akasa Air and Air India see jump in bookings after launching pet travel facility

Aneesh Phadnis

Mumbai

Eva, a one-year-old mixed breed cat, received celebrity-like attention when she landed in Kochi airport last November — she was Kerala's first directly-imported pet. Two months later, over 20 dogs and cats have flown into the State from overseas as pet parents take advantage of the new facility at the Kochi airport. It plans to expand its pet facilities to meet "increasing demand" and look at handling bird movement.

Kochi airport's move is in sync with the growing trend among businesses to turn pet friendly. Last September, Uber launched its pet-friendly ride options for its customers. Several five-star hotels and retreats already allow guests to check in with their pets and now airlines and airports are doing their bit.

WINGING THEIR WAY

Take Akasa Air, which launched its pet travel facility in November 2022 and



After launching its pet travel facility in 2022, Akasa Air has flown over 5,300 cats and dogs on domestic routes.

since then has flown over 5,300 cats and dogs on domestic routes. The airline says that after it decided to allow pets weighing up to 10 kg inside the cabin from May, it has seen a growth in demand. In the past eight months alone, Akasa Air has carried 2,100 pets. Dogs accounted for 66 per cent of flown pets. Bengaluru contributed to 31 per cent of all pets flown, Akasa Air said.

Akasa Air and Air India are the only domestic airlines currently offering pet carriage. Air India carried 7,000 pets in 2024 but saw a jump in bookings towards the year-end. Compared to the 429 cats and dogs that were flown in February 2024, the airline carried 861

in December. "We are planning to update our policy and make it more streamlined and customer friendly," Air India added.

The airline assigns passengers with pets the last row of the cabin class. In an all-economy class aircraft, passengers with pets will be seated at least five rows apart with one of them occupying the last row. Pets are not allowed to occupy seats even if these are vacant, Air India said.

In Akasa Air, passengers with pets are assigned a window seat on specific rows. "If a co-passenger is uncomfortable... we reassign the passenger traveling with their pet to a different seat," the airline

said. Akasa Air allows only two pets on a flight (one in cabin and other in cargo hold) and charges a flat ₹7,500-15,000 fee depending on their weight. Air India allows two pets in the cabin on a flight.

LIMITED SPACE

What are the chances that there may be demand for over two pets on a flight? Well, it does happen. Kolkata resident Arundhati Rakshit was forced to alter her travel plans as another pet was checked in before her in economy class. The airline asked her to upgrade to business class or reschedule. Rakshit, who travels with her cat at least four times a year, feels there should be more seats for pets. "Pet transportation is not yet a priority business for airlines," said Vinayak Prabhu, co-founder of Furry Flyers, a pet relocation agency.

"Airlines and airports need to invest in specialised staff and facilities to take care of pets but we see that lacking in India," he added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Akasa Air raises ₹1,100 crore, Premji, Pai check in

—
Our Bureau
Mumbai

Akasa Air is raising around ₹1,100 crore from investment offices of Azim Premji and Dr Ranjan Pai, as well as funds managed by 360 ONE Asset to support its operations and prepare for growth.

The family of late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, original investor in the airline, is also committing fresh funds.

Akasa Air announced the signing of investment agreements on Thursday. The airline did not disclose an investment figure and sources said around ₹1,100 crore is being raised through share sale. The investment will be subject to Competition Commission of India approval. New investors will get two board seats in the airline. The airline said the funds raised will fuel Akasa Air's path to becoming one of the top 30 airlines in the world by the end of this decade. Additionally, the fresh funds will also support its operations.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Boeing sees commercial aircraft fleet growing to 2,835 by 2043

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Global aerospace major Boeing on Thursday predicted that South Asia's commercial aircraft fleet will grow nearly four-fold over the next 20 years to 2,835, propelled by the demand from India-based airlines.

Accordingly, 90 per cent or over 2,500 aircraft are expected to be delivered to India-based airlines in the next 20 years.

India has over 800 commercial aircraft; on the other hand, there are around 1,700 more on order. These orders are expected to be delivered beyond 2030.

As per Boeing's current Commercial Market Outlook (CMO), continued growth will be fuelled by greater demand and a rise in the region's air traffic, which will grow more than 7 per cent annually through 2043, driven by sustained economic growth, improved connectivity, and policies that support air travel liberalisation.

The CMO cited that domestic air traffic is expected



SPREADING WINGS India has over 800 commercial aircraft

to remain the largest and fastest-growing segment in India's travel market, enabled by further low-cost carrier expansion and network diversification.

DOMESTIC DEMAND

"The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's fastest-growing commercial aviation market due to strong economic and trade growth," said Ashwin Naidu, Boeing's Managing Director of Commercial Marketing for India and South Asia.

CMO pointed out that fuel-efficient single-aisle aeroplanes, such as the 737 MAX, will account for nearly nine out of 10 commercial jet

deliveries in the forecast period (2024-2043) to 2,445 aircraft.

Besides, the region's wide-body fleet will quadruple to 370 aircraft as carriers leverage aeroplanes like the 787 Dreamliner and 777X to further develop long-haul networks, particularly from India to North America. Furthermore, the CMO forecasts that India and South Asia's cargo freighter fleet, including new and converted models, will grow five-fold to 20 as the region expands its role in global supply chains, advanced manufacturing, and e-commerce. The demand for pilots, cabin crew, and technicians will quadruple to 1,29,000.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Azim Premji, Ranjan Pai family offices infuse capital into Akasa

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 6 February

Akasa Air, which began operations in August 2022, announced on Thursday that it has signed agreements with investors, including Premji Invest, Ranjan Pai's investment office, and 360 ONE Asset, to infuse fresh capital into the airline.

The Jhunjhunwala family, which already holds about 40 per cent stake in the airline, has also committed to infuse additional capital into the airline, it mentioned. The airline

did not disclose the investment amount or the stake to be sold. However, sources indicated it plans to raise about \$125 million.

The airline's net loss more than doubled in 2023-24, soaring to ₹1,670 crore from ₹744 crore in the previous year. Meanwhile, its total income saw a sharp rise, reaching ₹3,144 crore in 2023-24 compared to ₹778 crore in 2022-23.

In a statement on Thursday evening, the airline said: "A consortium of India's finest investors, including Premji Invest—the global investment arm of

Azim Premji—Claypond Capital, the investment office of Ranjan Pai, and funds managed by 360 ONE Asset, a leading asset management firm, has signed investment agreements with Akasa Air. Independently, the Jhunjhunwala family has also committed to an additional capital infusion into Akasa Air... The investment transactions now await requisite regulatory approvals."

In January last year, Akasa Air placed an order for 150 B737 Max aircraft with Boeing, adding to the 76 Max planes it had ordered earlier.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

'Supply chain issues slowed A-I growth'

Boeing expects to deliver two planes a month to Indian carriers for next 2 yrs

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 6 February

Supply chain issues in the aviation industry have "considerably" slowed capacity growth, as the sector took on "too much" work than it could handle after the pandemic, said Ryan Weir, vice-president of Commercial Sales and Marketing for India and South Asia at Boeing Commercial Airplanes, on Thursday.

During a press briefing, he said Indian airline CEOs are less interested in discussions about any new aircraft development by Boeing and more focused on the timely delivery of planes already ordered. "The CEOs in India don't want to hear Boeing talking about the next new airplane right now. They want to talk about — when am I getting my deliveries? And again, that goes back to our focus, which is on meeting our commitments," Weir said.

He added that Boeing

IndiGo signs pact with Norse Atlantic for Boeing 787-9 lease

Domestic carrier IndiGo on Thursday said it has entered into a pact with Norse Atlantic Airways for the damp lease of one Boeing 787-9 aircraft, amid its reported plans to fly directly to Europe. The wide-body aircraft will arrive in the country in the coming weeks and is expected to start oper-

ations in March 2025, IndiGo said. It also said that both IndiGo and Norse Atlantic will continue exploring opportunities to contract additional aircraft and increase their collaboration further. This would be the first time the airline will induct a Boeing 787 aircraft in its fleet. **PTI**

expects to deliver two planes per month to Indian carriers for the next two years, with a slight increase in deliveries thereafter.

In November last year, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson stated that the airline had to "recalibrate" its ambitious growth plans due to delays in aircraft deliveries and supply chain disruptions, which hindered its transformation efforts. For instance, the airline recently announced that it will begin retrofitting its existing widebody planes in June 2025, with the process continuing until 2027. Air India had initially hoped to start the retrofitting by now.

The airline also hoped to receive more planes from aircraft manufacturers by now. Over the last two years, Tata Group-promoted airline has ordered a total of 570 commercial aircraft — 220 from Boeing and 350 from European planemaker Airbus.

Weir said: "What Air India is trying to do from a transformation perspective, versus where the industry is at in terms of supply chain constraints, we — the industry — has slowed down Air India considerably." He stated that this issue is not just affecting Air India.

More on business-standard.com



Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

वर्ष 2043 तक भारत व दक्षिण एशिया में हवाई जहाजों का बेड़ा होगा चार गुना : बोइंग

नई दिल्ली, 6 फरवरी (एजेंसियां)। वैश्विक एयरोस्पेस दिग्गज बोइंग ने कहा कि भारत और दक्षिण एशिया में आर्थिक विकास और बढ़ती हवाई यातायात मांग की बदौलत वाणिज्यिक हवाई जहाजों का बेड़ा वर्ष 2043 तक चार गुना तक बढ़ जाएगा।

बोइंग के नवीनतम वाणिज्यिक बाजार परिदृश्य (सीएमओ) के अनुसार, इस क्षेत्र में वर्ष 2043 तक हवाई यातायात सालाना सात प्रतिशत से अधिक की दर से बढ़ेगा। इसका मुख्य कारण निरंतर आर्थिक विस्तार, बेहतर कनेक्टिविटी और सरकार की उदारीकरण नीतियां होंगी, जो हवाई यात्रा को बढ़ावा देंगी।

बोइंग के पूर्वानुमान के अनुसार, भारत में घरेलू हवाई यातायात सबसे बड़ा और सबसे तेजी से बढ़ने वाला खंड बना रहेगा। यह विस्तार विशेष रूप से कम लागत वाली एयरलाइनों के विस्तार और नेटवर्क विविधीकरण के कारण होगा, जो नए मार्गों



■ भारत में घरेलू हवाई यातायात सबसे बड़ा व सबसे तेजी से बढ़ने वाला खंड बना रहेगा

और गंतव्यों को जोड़ने में सहायक होंगे।

बोइंग ने भविष्यवाणी की है कि सिंगल-ऑयल ईथन-कुशल विमान 737 एमएक्स आने वाले वर्षों में 10 में से नौ नए वाणिज्यिक जेट डिलीवरी के लिए जिम्मेदार होंगे। ये विमान छोटे और मध्यम दूरी के मार्गों के लिए एयरलाइनों को अधिक लचीलापन और लागत-कुशलता

प्रदान करेंगे।

वाइडबॉडी विमानों की मांग भी चार गुना बढ़ने की उम्मीद है। एयरलाइंस 787 ड्रीमलाइनर और 777एक्स जैसे बड़े विमानों का उपयोग कर भारत से उत्तरी अमेरिका तक लंबी दूरी के मार्गों को और विकसित करेंगी। पिछले दशक में इस मार्ग की क्षमता दोगुनी हो चुकी है और भविष्य में इसमें और तेजी आएगी।

बेड़े के विस्तार के साथ-साथ विमानन उद्योग में पायलटों, केबिन क्रू और तकनीशियनों की मांग भी चौगुनी होकर एक लाख 29 हजार तक पहुंच जाएगी। यह वृद्धि वैश्विक स्तर पर सबसे तेज मानी जा रही है, जिससे भारत और दक्षिण एशिया विमानन क्षेत्र में प्रमुख प्लेयर बनेंगे। बोइंग के अनुसार, कार्गो विमानों की मांग भी तेजी से बढ़ेगी क्योंकि यह क्षेत्र वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला, उन्नत विनिर्माण और ई-कॉमर्स के विस्तार में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

6 FEBRUARY 2025

PASSENGERS PROTEST AS ALLIANCE AIR CANCELS FLIGHT

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 5

An Alliance Air flight from Hyderabad to Tirupati that was scheduled to take off at 5.30 am was cancelled due to technical issues after several hours of waiting at the RIGA here on Wednesday. The passengers, who were left stranded, staged a protest in the airport. They were upset as they were informed about the cancellation after waiting for almost four hours. They condemned the lack of communication from airline officials as they could not make any alternate arrangements.

An irate passenger recalled a similar traumatic experience that he had undergone on February 2. "On that particular day, my 5.30 am Alliance air flight was cancelled, which upset my darshan program at Tirumala. The Hyderabad to Tirupati flight didn't take off on that day," said one S. Subrahmanyam in a post on 'X'.



Corporate Communications Directorate

RS DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

आसमान पर पहुंचा अयोध्या तक हवाई यात्रा के टिकट का दाम

जागरण संवाददाता, अयोध्या

श्रद्धालुओं और पर्यटकों को हवाई जहाज से अयोध्या पहुंचाना अब महंगा पड़ने लगा है। महाकुंभ से पहले जो किराया चार से छह हजार रुपये तक था, वह अब बढ़कर नौ से 15 हजार रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। इसका कारण अयोध्या आने वाले श्रद्धालुओं की संख्या में निरंतर बढ़ती को माना जा रहा है। श्रद्धालु रामलला का दर्शन कर महाकुंभ जा रहे हैं अथवा वहां से आ रहे हैं। यही कारण है की करीब-करीब सभी एयरलाइंस ने अयोध्या का किराया बढ़ा दिया है।

सामान्य दिनों में दिल्ली से अयोध्या का हवाई टिकट पांच से छह हजार रुपये के बीच होता था, लेकिन अब नौ से 11 हजार रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। फरवरी माह में सीटों की उपलब्धता भी कम है। अयोध्या से मुंबई का किराया 11 से 17 हजार तो बेंगलुरु का 20 हजार रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। इसी प्रकार अयोध्या

अयोध्या से दिल्ली, बेंगलुरु, हैदराबाद का हवाई किराया हुआ महंगा



महर्षि वाल्मीकि अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट। जागरण

से हैदराबाद का किराया 15 से 18 हजार रुपये तक पहुंच गया है। विशेष रूप से फरवरी माह के किराये में खासी बढ़ती हुई है।

इसी प्रकार से अयोध्या से अन्य स्थानों पर जाने के लिए फरवरी माह में हवाई यात्रा खासी महंगी है। यह एक नहीं, बल्कि लगभग सभी एयरलाइंस की स्थिति है। वर्तमान समय में प्रतिदिन 12-13 फ्लाइट अयोध्या आती हैं और सभी भरी हुई चल रही हैं।

हैदराबाद से 183 यात्री लेकर पहुंची महाकुंभ स्पेशल उड़ान

जागरण संवाददाता, कानपुर: महाकुंभ में पुण्य की डुबकी लगाने के लिए जाने वाले श्रद्धालुओं को आसान सफर मुहैया कराने में कानपुर महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रहा है। इसी कड़ी में चकेरी एयरपोर्ट पर हैदराबाद से 183 यात्री लेकर पहली महाकुंभ स्पेशल उड़ान बुधवार दोपहर लैंड की। इस उड़ान की सुविधा फिलहाल 12, 19 और 26 फरवरी को भी मिलेगी। इसके अलावा चकेरी एयरपोर्ट से पहली बार एक ही दिन हैदराबाद के लिए दो विमानों ने उड़ान भरी।

चकेरी एयरपोर्ट से हैदराबाद के लिए सप्ताह में चार दिन उड़ान की सुविधा पहले से ही मिल रही है। दैनिक जागरण ने 28 जनवरी को 'शहर से उड़ानें बढ़ें तो

- पहली बार हैदराबाद के लिए एक ही दिन दो उड़ानें
- अभी 12, 19, 26 फरवरी को और मिलेगी सुविधा



एयरपोर्ट ● फाइल फोटो। जागरण आर्काइव

महाकुंभ जैसे आयोजनों में लोगों को सहूलियत मिलेगी' शीर्षक से खबर प्रकाशित करते हुए मामले को गंभीरता से उठाया था। इसमें बताया था कि महाकुंभ के कारण इस समय उड़ानों में यात्रियों की संख्या बढ़ी है।

इससे उड़ानों का किराया कई गुणा तक बढ़ गया है। प्रयागराज की उड़ानों में सीटें न मिलने पर लोग सुविधानुसार कानपुर या लखनऊ आने वाली फ्लाइट से यात्रा कर रहे हैं। इसके बाद यहां

दोपहर 1.25 बजे विमान उतरा

हैदराबाद से महाकुंभ स्पेशल उड़ान दोपहर 1:25 बजे चकेरी एयरपोर्ट पर पहुंची। इससे करीब 183 यात्री शहर पहुंचे। इनमें से ज्यादातर यात्री टर्मिनल से टैक्सी लेकर महाकुंभ के लिए निकल गए। इसके यह उड़ान दोपहर दो बजे 139 यात्रियों को लेकर हैदराबाद के लिए रवाना हो गई। वहीं, हैदराबाद की सामान्य फ्लाइट दोपहर 12:55 बजे 180 यात्रियों को लेकर आई और दोपहर 1:35 बजे यहां से 164 यात्री लेकर रवाना हो गई। हवाई अड्डा निदेशक संजय कुमार ने बताया कि 26 फरवरी तक हर बुधवार हैदराबाद के लिए विशेष उड़ान की सुविधा मिलेगी।

से सड़क मार्ग के जरिये महाकुंभ जा रहे हैं। इसके बाद सांसद रमेश अवस्थी ने महाकुंभ स्पेशल उड़ानों की सुविधा के लिए नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रों के सामने मामले को उठाया था।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Boeing may Deliver Two Aircraft a Month to Indian Carriers

New Delhi: Boeing Thursday said it expects to start delivering two planes per month to Indian airlines. This includes the single-aisle 737 Max variant to Air India Express and Akasa and the 787 Dreamliner to Air India used on long haul routes.

Protracted delays in Boeing's aircraft deliveries have stunted growth at Akasa and Air India among Indian carriers.

The aircraft maker faced a sharp slowdown in production amid increased scrutiny from regulators, airlines and lawmakers after an incident last January when a door plug blew off an Alaska Airlines plane. It was followed by a strike by the machinist union which lasted three months from September to November.

In 2024, Boeing delivered a to-



tal of 32 737 Max jets to Akasa and Air India Express. However, the latter were planes already built by Boeing for a Chinese airline but were not delivered due to frosty relations between the US and China.

Ryan Weir, vice president, commercial sales and marketing, India and South Asia at Boeing said it will take some time for things to stabilise after which the rate of delivery will

increase. "We do expect it to last for some period of time. It's going to take a while to recover and being as transparent as possible with our customers and helping them plan accordingly is what we're here to do," he said. "We are going to deliver about two aeroplanes a month to India and expect that to continue at that pace and grow slightly as we move forward." —Our Bureau



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Akasa Air Fuels Up on Funds from Claypond Capital, Premji Invest

New investors likely to have bought stake worth ₹1,200 cr; promoters too set to add funds

Our Bureau

Mumbai: Akasa Air Thursday said it has raised fresh investments from the family offices of Wipro founder Azim Premji and Manipal Group chairman Ranjan Pai, and funds managed by asset manager 360 ONE Asset. The Jhunjhunwala family, which already owns nearly 40% of the budget airline, also committed additional capital as part of the latest funding exercise.

While Akasa did not officially comment on the size of the investment, people familiar with the matter said the airline raised ₹1,200 crore, split equally among Premji Invest, Claypond Capital, 360 ONE Asset and the Jhunjhunwala family.

The Jhunjhunwala family will remain Akasa's single largest shareholder after the deal. The likely change in the airline's ownership structure after the addition of new investors could not be ascertained immediately.

ET had earlier reported that Premji Invest and Claypond Capital were in talks to invest \$130-



\$140 million in Akasa for a minority stake. The airline had declined to comment at the time.

Akasa, which currently has a fleet of 27 aircraft, said it is awaiting regulatory approval for the transaction and the funds will support its growth plans, including fleet expansion and international operations.

"These are not just financial transactions; they are an investment in our vision and commitment to building an airline for generations," said Vinay Dube, the airline's founder and CEO.

Ankur Goel, chief financial officer, added, "These strategic investments represent a pivotal

milestone in our journey and ensure long-term financial stability, enabling us to continue building a sustainable, future-focused business."

The fresh capital will be used to support Akasa's expansion plans and for aircraft payments. It will also be utilised to support the carrier's expansion plans, including fleet growth and international operations, according to the company.

A person briefed on the deal said Premji Invest and Claypond Capital are keen to invest in well-run, consumer-facing

Akasa said it is awaiting regulatory approval for the transaction and the funds will support its growth plans

startups that are close to breaking even and have a large serviceable market. Investors are also encouraged by the future prospects of the carrier in what is increasingly becoming a two-horse race dominated by IndiGo and Air India, given the bankruptcy of Go First and the financial woes of SpiceJet, the operating fleet of which

has been reduced to 22 planes from 98 before Covid.

Akasa had placed an initial order for 72 Boeing 737 Max aircraft, later adding another four to the order. In January, the airline followed it up with an order for another 150 aircraft of the same variant.

However, since then, its growth has stunted as Boeing's aircraft production has slowed dramatically in the face of increased scrutiny from regulators, airlines and lawmakers following a January incident when a door plug blew off a plane.

"The funds raised will fuel Akasa Air's path to becoming one of the top 30 airlines in the world by the end of this decade, enabling the airline to further its unique contribution to India's extraordinary growth as an aviation hub," the company said.

In FY24, Akasa reported a total income of ₹3,144.38 crore, a more than fourfold surge from ₹777.84 crore in the previous fiscal year. Despite the strong revenue growth, the airline's net loss widened to ₹1,670.06 crore from ₹744.53 crore in FY23.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Akasa Air to get funding boost

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR
Mumbai, February 6

A CONSORTIUM OF investors comprising Premji Invest, Claypond Capital and 360 One Asset will invest an unspecified sum into Akasa Air. The Jhunjhunwala family, who are the largest shareholders in the low-cost airline, has also committed to an additional capital infusion.

With 27 narrowbody aircraft in its fleet, the airline noted that these fresh funds will be utilised to power Akasa Air's growth plans, including international expansion and enhance customer experience. The airline has ambitions to become one of the top 30 airlines in the world by 2030.

This would be Akasa's first major fund-raising exercise since taking its first flight in August 2022. The agree-

TAKING OFF

■ A consortium of Premji Invest, Claypond Capital and 360 One Asset to invest fund



■ Fresh funds to be utilised to power growth plans, including international expansion

■ This would be Akasa's first major fund-raising exercise since taking flight in 2022

ments signed on Thursday are subject to regulatory approval.

CFO Ankur Goel said, "Akasa Air continues to be well-capitalised, and these investments allow us to secure enduring, sustainable growth, with a financial safeguard to weather any unexpected challenges, thus rein-

forcing our readiness for the future."

Akasa, whose fleet is entirely made up of Boeing 737 Max single-aisle, short-haul planes, was issued a warning letter by DGCA for lapses a few weeks ago. In December, the DGCA suspended two of its senior executives over training lapses.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Indian, South Asian airlines to add over 2,800 jets by 2043: Boeing

● To deliver two aircraft/month to domestic carriers

NITIN KUMAR
New Delhi, February 6

INDIAN AND SOUTH Asian airlines will add 2,835 commercial aircraft to their fleet by 2043, a four-fold increase from the current levels, according to US planemaker Boeing. It said that India will account for over 90% of the total demand, with the remainder coming from countries like Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, the Maldives and Bhutan.

In its commercial market outlook (CMO) released on Thursday, Boeing projected that the growth of India's aviation sector will be fueled by a rising middle class and strong economic expansion. The company expects air travel demand in the region to surge, with air traffic forecast to grow at an annual



rate of over 7.9% through 2043.

"The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's fastest-growing commercial aviation market due to strong economic and trade growth, rising household incomes and investments in infrastructure and development. More than 90% of this demand will come from India," said Ashwin Naidu, Boeing managing director of commercial marketing for India and South Asia. Boeing forecast that the

region's carriers will take delivery of 2,445 single-aisle planes, which will make up around 90% of the deliveries, while widebody fleets will grow significantly, adding 370 aircraft.

It said that it delivered two planes per month to Indian airlines in FY25 to meet demand and will maintain that pace in the coming year, with the potential for further increases.

Indian airlines have about 1,800 aircraft on order with global planemakers and are

scheduled to take delivery of 130 jets this year, according to data from UK-based Cirium, an aviation analytics company.

However, airlines worldwide are struggling to procure jets on time as supply chain issues pressure production at Boeing and Airbus.

Air India and Akasa have ordered planes from Boeing and the deliveries have been delayed by several months due to slowdown in production and strike at the company's manufacturing unit in the US last year. IndiGo with the largest order of new planes is primarily Airbus.

India, already the third-largest domestic aviation market globally, following the US and China, is also the fastest-growing. IndiGo and Air India are expected to remain the leading carriers in the country. This anticipated increase in traffic will be driven by the expansion of low-cost carriers and a broader network of routes and destinations across the region.

The Indian aviation industry also faces challenges such as currency pressures, jet fuel price volatility, lower airfares than the global average and an imbalance in long-haul market share compared to foreign carriers, Boeing outlook said.



GE VERNOVA

GE VERNOVA T&D INDIA LIMITED
(formerly known as GE T&D India Limited)

KEY WINS Q3 FY 2024-25

- Secured order from Sterlite Grid, one of India's leading private power transmission company for 765 kV Power Transformers, Shunt Reactors and Gas Insulated Switchgear (GIS) to be supplied, installed, and commissioned for renewable energy evacuation from REZ in Gujarat.





Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

6 FEBRUARY 2025

Air India set to resume flights between Kochi, London

HD Bureau

KOCHI

Air India is preparing to reinstate its direct flight service between Kochi and London, the sole direct connection from Kerala to Europe, within the next few months. This development follows discussions between Cochin International Airport Limited officials and the airline regarding the earlier suspension of the route.

The Kochi-London direct flight, operated by Air India as flight AI149, was previously suspended due to operational challenges, including technical issues. On 8 September 2024, a scheduled departure was cancelled minutes before takeoff after a technical fault was detected, leading to passenger protests at Cochin International Airport.

The aircraft, a Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner, was slated to depart at 12:25 PM but was grounded due to the malfunction. Passengers were offered alternatives, including rerouting through Mumbai, full refunds, or accommodations until the next available flight.

Flight AI149 has historically operated thrice weekly—on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays—connecting Cochin International Airport to London Gatwick Airport. The service has been pivotal for travelers from Kerala seeking direct access to Europe, eliminating the need for layovers in other Indian cities or international hubs.

The suspension of this route had significant implications for passengers, particularly the Malayali diaspora in the United Kingdom and Europe. The absence of a direct flight increased travel time and inconvenience, necessitating connections through other airports. The resumption of this service is anticipated to restore convenience for travelers and bolster economic and cultural ties between Kerala and Europe.

The exact date for the resumption of the Kochi-London direct flight has not been officially announced. However, both Air India and CIAL have indicated that operations are expected to restart in the coming months, subject to regulatory approvals and operational preparedness. Passengers are advised to monitor official communications from Air India and CIAL for updates on the flight schedule and booking availability.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

अजीम प्रेमजी, रंजन पई ने किया अकासा एयर में निवेश

एजेसी >> नई दिल्ली

उद्योगपति अजीम प्रेमजी की वैश्विक निवेश इकाई और मणिपाल समूह के प्रमुख रंजन पई के पारिवारिक कार्यालय ने देश की सबसे नई विमानन सेवा अकासा एयर में हिस्सेदारी खरीदने के लिए एक अज्ञात राशि का निवेश किया है। एयरलाइन ने कहा कि प्रवर्तक झुनझुनवाला परिवार ने भी अकासा में और अधिक कोष डालने का वादा किया है। बयान में कहा गया है, "भारत की सबसे तेजी से बढ़ती एयरलाइन अकासा एयर में नई पूंजी डालने के लिए प्रमुख निवेशकों के साथ समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए हैं।"

**झुनझुनवाला परिवार
के पास 45.97 फीसदी
हिस्सेदारी**

झुनझुनवाला परिवार के पास 45.97 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी है जबकि दुबे के पास 16.13 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी है। नए शेयरधारकों के आने के बाद अकासा एयर में मौजूदा शेयरधारकों की हिस्सेदारी कम हो जाएगी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

विमान से टकराया पक्षी, आपात लैंडिंग

पटना, मुख्य संवाददाता। गुवाहाटी से पटना को स्पाइसजेट की फ्लाइट (एसजी 3445) गुरुवार दोपहर उड़ान भरने के बाद पक्षी से टकरा गई। इससे विमान का विंड शिल्ड टूट गया। आपात स्थिति में इस विमान को बागडोगरा एयरपोर्ट पर उतारा गया।

विमान से 82 यात्री सवार थे। सभी यात्री सकुशल हैं। उधर, बागडोगरा में आपात लैंडिंग की वजह से विमान पटना नहीं पहुंचा और यहां से गुवाहाटी जाने वाली फ्लाइट रद्द कर दी गई। इसे लेकर पटना एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों ने जमकर हंगामा किया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025



Akasa Air gets funding from Azim Premji, Pai family offices

Tech tycoon Azim Premji's global investment arm and Manipal group chief Ranjan Pai's family office have invested an undisclosed sum of money to pick up a stake in Akasa Air, India's youngest airline. In a statement, the airline said promoter Jhunjhunwala family has also committed more funds to Akasa. The Jhunjhunwala family and Vinay Dube, the founder and CEO of Akasa Air, own a majority stake in the airline. ११

Why civil aviation in India needs further consolidation

A recent Morgan Stanley research report tells us that marriage as an institution might be going through one of its worst phases — but, for the smaller companies in Indian civil aviation, there is no other hope on the horizon.

To understand why, readers need to step back in time. The Indian skies changed forever with the first low-fare airline flight of Air Deccan in 2003, sparking off a revolution that made flying more affordable and accessible. Larger numbers were able to make flying their most preferred and common form of transport.

From 2003 to 2020, India saw a spate of low-fare and full-service airlines get launched and shut down, depending mostly on how well the founders structured and ran their businesses. With the sector as price-sensitive as it was, in most years, the industry registered significant losses. In general, airlines in India were considered an unprofitable business with very low margins. In 2019, Jet Airways, created for a different era and once India's most-loved full-service private airline, closed as it failed to navigate the winds of change.

The Covid pandemic added to the industry's troubles significantly. It led to the further weakening of already vulnerable firms, but Indian civil aviation defied logic. In FY 2020, the country had six scheduled airlines with combined losses of around \$1.7 billion. In FY 2021, the country had seven with even higher combined losses. However, despite losses growing, none of the incumbents were bowing out. In fact, one new airline, Akasa Air, joined the race. Before the pandemic, airlines such as SpiceJet and Go First had more aircraft in the air, bigger market shares, lower losses, and stronger balance sheets. Post the pandemic, both became considerably weaker.

However, it was the sale of the erstwhile national carrier to the Tatas that changed the industry irrevocably. In one shot, four airlines — Air India Express, Air Asia India, Vistara, and Air India — came under a single owner. As a result, besides the two biggies (the other being IndiGo), the total number of airlines shrank to just four by 2024, including SpiceJet and Akasa; Go First, weakened beyond recovery, ceased flying in May 2023.

Industry observers and analysts argue that a lower number of airlines works better; that

the old structure of many small ones with limited market share was untenable, with financial repercussions for the sector. Not only were the airlines proving to be increasingly unreliable, but they also had weak balance sheets and were overextending themselves, causing more grief to passengers.

How to mitigate the ill effects of massive consolidation became a big concern. Collusion between two airlines is likely to be even easier than a clutch of them, something the Competition Commission of India (CCI) has grappled with over the years. Time and again concerns over collusion on fares and charges have appeared in the Indian narrative, though such allegations have largely remained unproven.

The two smaller airlines — SpiceJet and Akasa — have had a shaky ride for a while now. Although Akasa set up a good pace of growth, offering a reliable and decent quality service, its losses have soared, as is to be expected with a startup. It has also paid a hefty price for its turbulent history with its own pilots and lost the support of its primary founder and financial backer, the late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala since it took to the skies.



Anjali Bhargava

If things have not been smooth for Akasa, SpiceJet has been on a roller-coaster for a while now. Since the pandemic and the subsequent troubles faced by Boeing, its aircraft supplier, many were convinced that it was a touch-and-go situation for SpiceJet, which has no big corporate backing like Air India or a strong cash position and balance sheet like IndiGo. As was largely predicted, the airline whittled down in size and stature since its heydays, when its total fleet crossed 100 aircraft, and its market share was almost 10% (2017-18). Its on-time performance took a beating as did its safety record. The airline lost market share, hitting lows of 3%, not far above Akasa, the youngest in the game.

It was only towards end-2023 that some semblance returned to its operations after it infused fresh funds. SpiceJet allotted shares and warrants worth ₹744 crore (just below \$100 million) on a preferential basis in the first tranche, and a second and larger tranche of funds (₹3,000 crore) was raised through a qualified institutional placement in September 2024. This money has been used by the airline to settle employee dues, payments to vendors, tax and other statutory dues. It is also deploying the funds to pull grounded aircraft back into the fleet. Perhaps for the first time in many years, its employees are not complaining or fearing the worst (read closure).

But industry observers and experts are all united on one matter: The smaller airlines will find themselves in dire financial straits repeatedly at different points in time unless they go in for marriages (mergers or sale of stakes) to well-capitalised airlines in regions such as West Asia or other carriers that might have a strategic interest in the Indian market. The best bet for airline owners will be to try and get their businesses to a healthy state and viable size for a stake sale, finding a match that can complement what they have built.

Anjali Bhargava writes about governance, infrastructure and the social sector. The views expressed are personal



Before the pandemic, airlines such as SpiceJet and Go First had more aircraft in the air, bigger market shares, lower losses, and stronger balance sheets. Post the pandemic, both became weaker. REUTERS

Boeing to deliver 24 aircraft to Indian carriers this year

Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: US planemaker Boeing on Thursday said it will deliver 24 aircraft to Indian carriers in 2025, with plans to deliver more starting 2027.

"We will deliver two per month on average this year. This includes both single-aisle aircraft (like the Boeing 737 or Airbus A320) and dual single-aisles (such as the Boeing 787 or Boeing 777)," Ryan Weir, vice president of commercial sales and marketing at Boeing, said. Weir also said that Boeing will continue to deliver aircraft to Indian airlines at a similar pace in 2026. He, however, noted that there could be more deliveries from 2027.

Boeing's aircraft deliveries have decreased over the past few months due to supply chain woes, in part due to a labour strike at its headquarters in Seattle. "We do expect the impact (of supply chain issues) to last for some period of time. It's going to take a while to recover," Weir said.

Boeing also said that India and South Asia's commercial airplane fleet will grow nearly



The planemaker pointed out the new airports in Noida, Navi Mumbai will serve as catalysts for Indian aviation. REUTERS

four-fold over the next 20 years, with the region's carriers needing over 2,800 new aircraft by 2043 to meet growing demand.

"Continued growth will be fuelled by greater demand and a rise in the region's air traffic, which will grow more than 7% annually through 2043, driven by sustained economic growth, improved connectivity, and policies that support air travel liberalisation, according to Boeing's current commercial market outlook," a statement issued by the company said.

Ashwin Naidu, managing director of commercial marketing for India and South Asia at Boeing, said that the region will need 2,835 new aircraft by 2043, continuing the fleet growth observed over the last decade.

"India and South Asia will need 2,835 new airplanes by 2043, of which 2,445 will be single-aisles, 370 will be widebodies, 20 will be freighters, and a few will be regional jets," he said.

"The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's fastest-growing commercial aviation market due to strong economic and trade growth, rising household incomes, and investments in infrastructure and development."

Boeing also mentioned that investments in airports are helping build infrastructure across the country. The planemaker pointed out the new airports in Noida and Navi Mumbai will serve as catalysts for Indian aviation when they become fully operational. "We have seen a 33% growth in capacity with Mopa (second airport in Goa) being operational," it added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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AKASA RAISES FUNDS FROM PREMJI, RANJAN PAI FAMILY OFFICES

Daanish Anand

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NEW DELHI: Akasa Air, India's youngest airline, has raised an undisclosed sum from a number of investors, including the family offices of Bengaluru-based billionaires Azim Premji and Ranjan Pai. Akasa Air, which started flying in 2022, has become the country's third-largest carrier with a market share of 4.6%. Media reports in the past had said the airline was in talks to raise between \$130 and \$140 million.

"These are not just financial transactions; they are an investment in our vision and commitment to building an airline for generations," Akasa Air founder and chief executive officer Vinay Dube said in a statement on Thursday. Dube said the fresh funding should help the carrier become one of the top 30 global airlines by the end of 2030.

The family office of late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, who first invested in the airline three years ago, also agreed to invest more money in this fundraising round, along with financial services firm 360 One Asset.

"We can confirm that we have signed an investment agreement with Akasa Air that is subject to regulatory approval," said a spokesperson for Premji Invest. "No additional information will be provided until all regulatory approvals are obtained."

Akasa's fundraising comes amid growing concerns that the country's aviation market could become a two-horse race. InterGlobe, which runs the country's largest airline IndiGo, and Tata-backed Air India together have a 90% share.

"From a macroeconomic standpoint, India needs a third carrier with 160 million passengers and the third-largest market. It cannot be limited to becoming a duopoly market. So, for Akasa Air, which seasoned professionals run, this money will help [it] scale up. From Akasa's perspective, this capital will help them in terms of working capital and adding more fleet and people," said an aviation consultant, requesting not to be named.

Boeing deliveries to Indian carriers may average 2 a month in 2024, 2025

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 6

BOEING ESTIMATES that its aircraft deliveries to its Indian customers Air India group and fledgling airline Akasa Air would be two planes a month on average over the 2024-2025 period. The US aerospace giant has grappled with various headwinds—including regulatory action amid safety concerns and the recent strike by a section of its workers—that have considerably slowed its aircraft production.

The slow pace of production has impacted airlines' growth plans, including those of the Air India group and Akasa Air, which ordered 446 Boeing aircraft between them over the past couple of years. According to industry estimates, Boeing has so far delivered around 65 of those aircraft.

"We will be delivering about two airplanes a month (on average) to India and we expect that to continue at that pace and then grow slightly as we move forward... We have gone very slow coming out of the strike, working on safety and quality... we've realised it's been very hard being a Boeing customer for the last couple of years, and we are dead set on making sure that we perform," said Ryan Weir, VP of commercial sales and marketing, India and South Asia, Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

"Worse than the delays is the unpredictability of the delivery schedules. The delays are going to be prevalent for a while. What we are trying to fix is that airlines can count on when we give them a date, they receive the aircraft (on that date). That's really

'2,835 jets could be added in 20 years'

New Delhi: Indian and South Asian airlines are likely to add 2,835 new commercial aircraft to their fleet over the next 20 years to meet the ever-increasing demand for air travel, according to US jetmaker Boeing.

In its Commercial Market Outlook (CMO) announced on Thursday, Boeing expects demand for 2,835 new aeroplanes over 20 years propelled

by Indian carriers India's robust economy and rapidly growing domestic market support region's annual traffic growth of more than 7 per cent.

Domestic air traffic is expected to remain the largest and fastest-growing segment in India's travel market, it added. CMO said single aisle are projected at 2,445 and wide-body at 370. **PTI**

the singular focus," Weir said.

On being asked if Boeing has received compensation claims from Indian airlines in view of the delays in aircraft deliveries, Weir answered in the affirmative, but did not give details.

"Those conversations are private, but yes (there are claims), just like we have everywhere in the world, and we are working through it methodically and consistently across the industry," he said. On the impact of the production slowdown on delivery timelines, Boeing officials did not provide an estimate of the delay, saying that they are being transparent with their customer airlines.

"We are in constant conversations with our customers about what aircraft they are going to receive when. And that is a conversation that the customers will take forward publicly as opposed to us," said Boeing India President Salil Gupte.

Late in November, Air India's Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson had said that some deliveries of already-manufactured Boeing 737 MAX jets that were earlier scheduled by

December 2024 were likely to stretch up to June 2025.

As for line-fit aircraft — planes to be built specifically for Air India — the airline was not sure about the length of the delay.

As part of its mega aircraft order placed in 2023 with Airbus and Boeing, the Air India group had ordered 220 Boeing planes — 190 narrow-body 737 MAX planes, 20 wide-body 787 planes, and 10 wide-body 777X aircraft. Of the 190 737 MAX planes, 50 were white-tails — aircraft made for other airlines but transferred to the Air India group due to cancellation of the original order — and the other 140 were to be line-fit planes.

So far, 37 of the 50 white-tails have been delivered to the group's low-cost airline Air India Express, with the remaining planes delayed.

As for Akasa Air, which placed orders for a total of 226 Boeing aircraft, 27 planes have been delivered so far. Timely delivery of aircraft is a critical component of airlines' fleet and network expansion strategies, and slower-than-expected aircraft deliveries could slow down their growth plans.





Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

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Akasa raises funds from Premji, Ranjan Pai family offices

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Akasa Air, India's youngest airline, has raised an undisclosed sum from a number of investors, including the family offices of Bengaluru-based billionaires Azim Premji and Ranjan Pai.

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"These are not just financial transactions; they are an investment in our vision and commitment to building an airline for generations," Akasa Air founder and chief executive officer Vinay Dube said in a statement on Thursday.

Dube said the fresh funding should help the carrier become one of the top 30 global airlines by the end of 2030. The family office of late Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, who first invested in the airline three years ago, also agreed to invest more money in this fundraising round, along with financial services firm 360 One Asset.

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"From a macroeconomic standpoint, India needs a third carrier with 160 million passengers and the third-largest market. It cannot be limited to becoming a duopoly market.

So, for Akasa Air, which seasoned professionals run, this money will help [it] scale up. From Akasa's perspective, this capital will help them in terms of working capital and adding more fleet and people," said an aviation consultant, requesting not to be named.

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

MINT

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7 FEBRUARY 2025

KLM eyes India's aviation boom

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The Netherlands' flag carrier KLM will expand its operations in India by starting flights to Hyderabad in September, president and chief executive officer Marjan Rintel said in an interview with *Mint*. The airline will deploy Boeing 777s on the Amsterdam-Hyderabad route, its fourth connection to India.

Rintel also said she was impressed by the growth of India's aviation market, and that the airline would invest more in the country. KLM expects demand to increase and IndiGo to remain a partner despite its plans to start direct flights to Europe, she added.

Edited excerpts:

KLM has been flying to India for many decades. What opportunities do you see for expanding operations? What's your outlook on the Indian market?

KLM has been in India for the past 70 years, and we are investing in India in terms of destinations. The relationship between the Netherlands and India is important, so we always look for opportunities. We will start operating flights to Hyderabad in September. This will be our fourth destination in India.

India is a booming market. With a



growing middle class, more people want to fly, and that's what we see today. A lot of businesses from the Netherlands are flying to Hyderabad, so this market will also be important from a cargo perspective. Demand has doubled in comparison to pre-covid, and we will look at more options based on the demand.

Do you see any challenges in the Indian market? How do you plan to invest more here?

There are more opportunities than

challenges in India, but of course we'll always need to overcome challenges in terms of regulations and entrance approvals. But there are opportunities in terms of the growing market, and our long-term relationship makes it possible for KLM to invest in India.

We are investing not only in terms of destinations and frequencies, but also in our long-term relationship with TCS (Tata Consultancy Services). We are their oldest European customer, with a relationship dating

back 30 years. TCS has supported us in our digital transformation. We really value the long-term relationship and the trust we have built between ourselves, and that's why I feel there are more opportunities than challenges.

Your codeshare partner IndiGo is reportedly planning to fly to the Netherlands and other parts of Europe. Do you believe Indian airlines will give you tough competition?

The Indian market is growing rapidly, which is impressive. I understand that IndiGo is taking the initiative to fly to certain destinations within Europe. But as Air France-KLM, we have a long-lasting relationship. We will invest in India. IndiGo has been our codeshare partner, and we have had the advantage of working together. That is what we see today, and we will keep seeing that.

Are there any requests to the Indian government to make it easier to fly to India?

First of all, we recognise and appreciate our long-term relationship in India. We are investing in India by opening new destinations and frequencies, holding the relationship with TCS, etc. There are always challenges that you need to overcome to

make it easier for tourists from abroad to enter India. India has much to offer, including beautiful places. But if we compare tourism in India with other places, for example Dubai, a lot can be done on that end.

Are your flights to India profitable?

I can't give any specific numbers, but look at it this way: we are expanding operations to India. The market is growing in terms of passengers, and

India's economy is growing, so people will spend more on tickets. Airlines look for profitability by definition, but the key here is the fleet.

A modern fleet helps to save costs, a new fleet is more profitable than an old fleet, and we did invest a lot in inducting the Boeing 787. We will focus on giving our passengers comfort through premium products. Our premium product is the most appreciated class at KLM, and it is always booked.

Are you looking to increase hiring from India?

Yes, we are looking for a lot of people, especially engineers and technical staff. The bilateral agreement between Europe and India needs to make it easier for people to work abroad; they need to look at various regulations and other challenges.

India is a booming market and with a growing middle class, more people want to fly, and that's what we see

Marjan Rintel
president and chief executive officer, KLM

 INTERVIEW



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025



Boeing expects Indian and South Asian airlines to add 2,835 commercial aircraft by 2043. REUTERS

Boeing to deliver 24 planes to India

Boeing is set to continue delivering two aircraft per month this year to Indian airlines, the mix of narrowbody and widebody planes maintaining the company's average of the last two years.

India's second biggest airline Air India and its youngest Akasa Air together have pending deliveries over 400 Boeing aircraft. Air India has pending deliveries of over 200 Boeing aircraft, while Akasa has an equal number of 737MAX yet to be delivered.

Boeing expects Indian and South Asian airlines to add 2,835 commercial aircraft by 2043. The American manufacturer believes rising middle classes and healthy economic growth will spur travel.

As per its global commercial outlook, there will be a strong demand of 44,000 aircraft globally through 2043.

Ashwin Naidu, MD-commercial marketing for India and South Asia, said, "The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's fastest-growing commercial aviation market due to strong economic and trade growth, rising household incomes and investments in infrastructure and development." **DAANISH ANAND**



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

Akasa Air secures fresh funding from Azim Premji and Ranjan Pai

ARSHAD KHAN @ NewDelhi

AKASA AIR on Thursday said that it has signed agreements with marquee investors to infuse fresh capital into the airline. A consortium of investors, including Premji Invest, the global investment arm of IT Czar Azim Premji, Claypond Capital – the investment office of Ranjan Pai and funds managed by 360 ONE Asset, a leading asset management firm – has signed investment agreements with Akasa Air.

Independently the family of late ace investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, a key stakeholder in the airline, has committed to an additional capital infusion. All these agreements are subject to regulatory approval.

While Akasa didn't disclose the financial details of the investments, reports suggest that the airline has raised capital to the tune of \$ 130-140 million. Akasa said the fund will be utilised in its ambitious path of



becoming one of the top 30 airlines in the world by the end of this decade.

As per Akasa, the fresh investment will be utilised to power its ambitious growth plans and enhance customer experience. The funds will also be used to drive international expansion. "These are not just financial transactions, they are an investment in our vision

and commitment to building an airline for generations," said Vinay Dube, Founder and CEO of Akasa Air.

Akasa, launched in August 2022, currently connects with 22 domestic and five international cities. The airline has a fleet of 27 aircraft and 236 more aircraft on order with Boeing. Akasa closed the calendar year 2024 with a market share of 4.6%, making it India's third-largest airline in India. The two big players IndiGo and Air India group control nearly 90% of India's domestic aviation market.

As per the available data, the Jhunjhunwala family held a 45.97% stake in the airline while Vinay Dube has 16.13%. Vinay's brothers Sanjay and Niraj have 7.59% shares each.

Jhunjhunwala family commits additional investment

Independently, the family of late ace investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala, a significant stakeholder in the Akasa airline, has also committed to an undisclosed additional capital infusion. All these agreements are subject to the regulatory approval of authorities concerned.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

India, South Asia to receive 2,835 planes in 20 years: Boeing

ARSHAD KHAN @ NewDelhi

INDIAN and South Asian airlines are expected to add 2,835 new commercial aircraft to their fleets over the next 20 years to meet the rising demand for air travel, US aircraft manufacturer Boeing said on Thursday. The company stated that it will maintain a delivery rate of about two aircraft a month through 2024 and 2025.

Boeing's statement on anticipated growth and dispatches

comes at a time when its India clients, mainly Tata Group's Air India and Akasa Air, are facing a delay in plane delivery. As per reports, Boeing's deliveries fell to the lowest in 2024 since COVID-19 pandemic due to a strike in its US unit. It had said last month that it was making progress on increasing aircraft production.

In its latest Commercial Market Outlook (CMO), Boeing said continued growth will be fuelled by greater demand and a rise in



region's air traffic, which will grow over 7% annually through 2043. The CMO predicts domestic air traffic is likely to remain largest and fastest-growing seg-

ment in India.

"The India and South Asia region continues to be the world's fastest-growing commercial aviation market due to

strong economic and trade growth, rising household incomes and investments in infrastructure and development," said Ashwin Naidu, Boeing managing director of Commercial Marketing for India and South Asia. Boeing also highlighted some of the key headwinds India's aviation sector has to navigate through. These headwinds are jet fuel volatility, currency pressures, and lower fare levels in comparison to global averages.



Corporate Communications Directorate

RASHTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

7 FEBRUARY 2025

प्रेमजी, रंजन पई की इकाइयों ने अकासा एयर में निवेश किया

■ निवेश की गई राशि का खुलासा नहीं ■ झुनझुनवाला ने भी किया निवेश का वादा

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

उद्योगपति अजीम प्रेमजी की वैश्विक निवेश इकाई और मणिपाल समूह के प्रमुख रंजन पई के पारिवारिक कार्यालय ने देश की सबसे नई विमानन सेवा अकासा एयर में हिस्सेदारी खरीदने के लिए एक अज्ञात राशि का निवेश किया है। एयरलाइन ने एक बयान में कहा कि प्रवर्तक झुनझुनवाला परिवार ने भी अकासा में और अधिक कोष डालने का वादा किया है।

बयान में कहा गया है, 'भारत की सबसे तेजी से बढ़ती एयरलाइन अकासा एयर में नई पूंजी डालने के लिए प्रमुख निवेशकों के साथ समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए हैं।' विप्रो के संस्थापक प्रेमजी की वैश्विक निवेश इकाई प्रेमजी इन्वेस्ट, रंजन पई के निवेश कार्यालय क्लेपॉन्ड कैपिटल और एक प्रमुख परि संपत्ति

भारतीय व द. एशियाई विमानन कंपनियों जोड़ेंगी 2,835 विमान नई दिल्ली (भाषा)। अमेरिकी विमान विनिर्माता बोइंग ने कहा कि भारतीय और दक्षिण एशियाई विमानन कंपनियों के अगले 20 वर्षों में अपने बेड़े में 2,835 नए वाणिज्यिक विमानों को जोड़ने की उम्मीद है। बोइंग ने बृहस्पतिवार को अपनी वाणिज्यिक बाजार संभावना (सीएमओ) जारी की। भारत की मजबूत अर्थव्यवस्था और तेजी से बढ़ते घरेलू बाजार से क्षेत्र की वार्षिक यातायात वृद्धि सात प्रतिशत से अधिक हो सकती है। बोइंग के मौजूदा सीएमओ के अनुसार भारत और दक्षिण एशिया के वाणिज्यिक हवाई जहाज बेड़े में अगले 20 वर्षों में लगभग चार गुना वृद्धि होगी।

प्रबंधन फर्म 360 वन एसेट द्वारा प्रबंधित कोष सहित भारत के बेहतरीन निवेशकों के एक समूह ने अकासा एयर के साथ निवेश समझौते किए हैं। हालांकि एयरलाइन ने इन निवेश समझौतों का कोई ब्योरा नहीं दिया है।

एयरलाइन ने कहा कि स्वतंत्र रूप से झुनझुनवाला परिवार ने भी अकासा एयर में अतिरिक्त पूंजी निवेश करने की प्रतिबद्धता जताई है। सभी समझौते नियामकीय अनुमोदन के अधीन हैं। झुनझुनवाला परिवार और अकासा एयर के संस्थापक एवं मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी विनय दुबे के पास एयरलाइन में बहुलांश हिस्सेदारी है। झुनझुनवाला परिवार के पास 45.97 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी है जबकि दुबे के पास 16.13 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी है। नए शेयरधारकों के आने के बाद अकासा एयर में मौजूदा शेयरधारकों की हिस्सेदारी कम हो जाएगी।

हवाई यात्रा और बढ़ती सुरक्षा चिंताएं

इस वर्ष के आरंभ में अमेरिका की राजधानी वाशिंगटन डीसी में एक भीषण हवाई दुर्घटना में अमेरिकन एयरलाइंस के एक जेट विमान की एक अमेरिकी सैन्य हेलीकॉप्टर से खुले आकाश में टकरा हो गयी। विमान में सवार सभी 67 यात्रियों और चालकों की दर्दनाक मौत की खबर बेहद दुखद थी। लेकिन इसके साथ मिली यह सूचना और भी चौकाने वाली थी कि इस दुर्घटना का कारण न तो खराब मौसम था, न ही विमान में तकनीकी खराबी थी।

यात्री विमान एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल के निर्देशानुसार हवाई पट्टी की तरफ पूर्वनिर्धारित मार्ग पर उतर रहा था और चंद मिनटों में लैंड करने वाला

-अरुणेंद्र नाथ वर्मा

था। उधर हेलिकॉप्टर पायलट को यातायात नियंत्रण ने उसी ऊंचाई पर उड़ने का निर्देश देकर चेतावनी दे दी कि वह यात्री विमान से स्वतः दूरी बनाये रखे।

इसके बावजूद सैन्य हेलिकॉप्टर से इतने बड़े यात्री विमान को साफ आसमान में देखने में चूक हो गयी। दुर्घटना के कारणों की जांच हो रही है, लेकिन जैसा कि राष्ट्रपति ट्रंप ने कहा है, प्रथम दृष्टि में इस दुर्घटना के लिए एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल की लापरवाही ही जिम्मेदार है। इस दुर्घटना के तुरंत बाद फ्लोराडेल्फिया में एक हवाई एंबुलेंस की टक्कर में दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो जाने के लिए भी एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल की आलोचना की गयी। अगले सप्ताह ह्यूस्टन हवाई अड्डे पर टेक ऑफ करत हुए एक अन्य विशाल यात्री विमान के इंजन में आग लगने पर उड़ान रोक लेने से एक और दुर्घटना होते-होते रह गयी।

इस बार एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल ने तुरंत आपदाकालीन सहायता भेजने में मुस्तैदी दिखाई, लेकिन इस तीसरी दुर्घटना ने रेखांकित कर दिया कि एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल आकाश के अतिरिक्त हवाई अड्डों पर विमानों के जमीनी संचालन के लिए भी

जिम्मेदार है और दुर्घटना के बाद यात्रियों की जान बचाने में हवाई अड्डे की अग्निशमन तथा एंबुलेंस सेवा प्रदान करने वाली एरोड्रोम रेस्क्यू एंड फायर फाइटिंग सर्विसेज के साथ तालमेल बिटाने और संयोजन का महत्वपूर्ण काम करता है।

इस संदर्भ में भारत में देखें, तो अपने यहां भारत में भी हवाई यातायात में आश्चर्यजनक वृद्धि हो रही है। हाल में ही इंडिगो एयरलाइंस द्वारा 1,000 विमानों और एयर इंडिया द्वारा 570 नये विमानों की खरीद के आदेश दिये गये हैं। उधर अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डों के अतिरिक्त द्वितीय श्रेणी के शहरों तक हवाई यातायात फैल रहा

से संबद्ध किसी संस्था या संगठन ने इस अहम मुद्दे की विवेचना नहीं की है।

सच यह है कि भारत में भी विमानों और हवाई अड्डों की लगातार बढ़ती संख्या के मद्देनजर हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण के लिए समुचित मानव संसाधन की चिंतनीय कमी है। एक संसदीय समिति की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, भारत में हवाई यातायात नियंत्रकों की संख्या आवश्यक संख्या से 22 प्रतिशत कम है और एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल संस्थानों की संख्या में 40 प्रतिशत की कमी है। इसका दुष्परिणाम यह है कि व्यस्त हवाई अड्डों पर यातायात नियंत्रकों को

क्षमता (वॉयस क्वालिटी) के परीक्षण आदि से गुजरने के बाद प्रशिक्षण के लिए भेजा जाता है। प्रयाग, हैदराबाद और गोंदिया के तीन संस्थानों में प्रशिक्षण पाने के बाद भी सफल प्रशिक्षु तुरंत व्यस्त हवाई अड्डों पर नियुक्त नहीं किये जा सकते। उन्हें एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोलर का लाइसेंस लेना होता है, जिसका नवीनीकरण हर तीन साल पर कराना पड़ता है। इनमें केवल प्रयाग का सिविल एविएशन ट्रेनिंग सेंटर हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण का पूरा प्रशिक्षण देता है।

हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण तीन चरणों में होता है- एरोड्रोम कंट्रोल, अप्रोच कंट्रोल और एरिया कंट्रोल। प्रयाग के सिविल एविएशन ट्रेनिंग सेंटर के अतिरिक्त अन्य दो संस्थाओं में इन तीनों चरणों का प्रशिक्षण नहीं मिलता। हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण के लिए पूरा देश चार मुख्य हवाई क्षेत्रों में विभक्त है। एक क्षेत्र के हवाई अड्डे से उड़ान भरकर दूसरे क्षेत्र में उतरने वाले विमान को तीनों तरह के नियंत्रण से गुजरना पड़ता है। इसलिए नियंत्रण करने वाले अधिकारियों को भी तीनों तरह के नियंत्रण में सक्षम होना चाहिए।

समुचित योग्यता और कौशल पाने के लिए जो पर्याप्त व्यावहारिक अनुभव चाहिए, वह किसी एक संस्था में नहीं मिलता। इस लंबी प्रशिक्षण अवधि के कारण इन नियंत्रकों की संख्या अचानक बढ़ाना संभव नहीं होता। खरीद का आदेश देने के बाद विमानों की डिलीवरी तक के लंबे अंतराल में एयरलाइंस विमान लीज कर सकती हैं, लेकिन लंबी प्रशिक्षण अवधि के कारण यातायात नियंत्रकों की संख्या अचानक नहीं बढ़ायी जा सकती। इन तथ्यों के मद्देनजर एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी तथा डीजीसीए, दोनों को हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण केंद्रों की संख्या तथा हर केंद्र में प्रशिक्षणार्थियों की संख्या बढ़ाने के लिए आवश्यक कदम यथाशीघ्र उठाना चाहिए। दुर्घटना से देर भली कहावत इस संदर्भ में अर्थहीन है। यहां तो देर ही दुर्घटना का कारण बन सकती है।



है। भारत में हवाई यात्रा अब उच्च वर्ग तक सीमित नहीं रह गयी है। अमेरिका जैसे विकसित देश के सप्ता केंद्र कैपिटल हिल के बहुत समीप हुई भयंकर आकाशीय भिड़ंत के परिप्रेक्ष्य में यह पूछना जरूरी हो गया है कि क्या भारत में बढ़ते हवाई यातायात के साथ हवाई सुरक्षा दृढ़ बनाये जाने की दिशा में भी समुचित कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं। कहां हमारा सारा ध्यान विमानों और विमानपत्तनों की संख्या बढ़ाने तक ही तो सीमित नहीं है।

अमेरिकी एटीसी एसोसिएशन ने वाशिंगटन की भीषण दुर्घटना पर प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए अमेरिका में कुशल और प्रशिक्षित नियंत्रकों की भारी कमी का प्रश्न उठाया है। उसने बताया है कि अमेरिका में 313 उड़ान केंद्रों में से 90 प्रतिशत संस्थान निर्धारित संख्या से काफी कम नियंत्रकों से काम चला रहे हैं। लेकिन भारत में एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल

विना आराम किये लगातार लंबी ड्यूटी करनी पड़ती है। तीन घंटे की ड्यूटी के बाद 45 मिनट के आराम का नियम नियंत्रकों की कमी के कारण एक 'हवाई' नियम बन कर रह गया है। उधर जैसे-जैसे कोहरे और धुंध में विमानों को रनवे पर उतारने में मददगार आधुनिक इलेक्ट्रॉनिक उपकरणों की उपलब्धि हमारे हवाई अड्डों पर बढ़ायी जा रही है, वैसे-वैसे ही काम के घंटों में नियंत्रकों की व्यस्तता लगातार बढ़ती जा रही है। मौसम की खराबी अब एटीसी के काम में ढील नहीं आने देती, उल्टे उसकी जिम्मेदारी और बढ़ा देती है।

भारत में हवाई यातायात नियंत्रण के प्रशिक्षण की सुविधा बहुत सीमित है। एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोलरों का चुनाव एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया द्वारा आयोजित संयुक्त परीक्षा के जरिये होता है। सफल उम्मीदवारों को शारीरिक जांच, बोलने की



Corporate Communications Directorate

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Akasa gets fresh capital of \$125mn

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New Delhi: Akasa has secured fresh capital infusion of over \$125 million to fund its growth story. Premji Invest, the global investment arm of Azim Premji, Claypond Capital, the investment office of Ranjan Pai, and funds managed by asset management firm 360 ONE Asset have signed investment agreements with Akasa Air.

Late billionaire investor Rakesh Jhunjhunwala's — whose funding led to the airline taking off in Aug 2022 — has also committed to additional capital infusion to ensure their stake does not fall post fresh infusion by the new investors, say sources.