



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

6 AUGUST 2025

# Keshod airport in Junagadh to undergo major expansion

[Niyati.Parikh@timesofindia.com](mailto:Niyati.Parikh@timesofindia.com)

**Ahmedabad:** Keshod airport is set for a significant infrastructure upgrade, with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) undertaking a runway extension and terminal expansion project to enable operations of large aircraft such as the Airbus A320. The expansion is expected to be completed by Jan 2027.

Union minister of state for civil aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, shared the update in the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday in response to questions raised by MP **Parimal Nathwani**. According to the minister, the runway will be extended to 2,500 metres at an estimated cost of Rs 190.56 crore. The project has a timeline of 18 months from commencement.

The overall development of the

airport, including a new terminal building, is pegged at Rs 364 crore. The terminal, designed to handle 800 passengers (400 arriving and 400 departing) during peak hours, will span 6,500 sq m.

A tender has been issued, and construction is expected to take 15 months after the contract is awarded. Completion timelines for both the runway and terminal depend on factors such as land acquisition, regulatory clearances, and financial closure.

Nathwani said that the upgrade would significantly improve access to the Gir National Park — the only natural habitat for Asiatic lions in the world — and the Somnath temple, one of the 12 jyotirlingas. The move is expected to ease travel for both international tourists and domestic pilgrims.





# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## भुवनेश्वर एयरपोर्ट पर देश की पहली फ्लाइब्रेरी

भुवनेश्वर | भुवनेश्वर  
एयरपोर्ट पर देश की  
'फ्लाइब्रेरी' चल रही है। यह  
देश की पहली ऐसी 'टेक-ए-  
बुक' लाइब्रेरी है, जहां यात्री  
बिना किसी पंजीकरण के फ्री  
में किताबें ले सकते हैं, पढ़  
सकते हैं। इस पहल में कुछ  
महीनों में ही अलमारियों में  
अंग्रेजी, हिंदी और ओड़िया  
भाषाओं की 600 से ज्यादा  
किताबें हो गई हैं। यहां  
कोई स्टाफ नहीं, कोई नियम  
नहीं है। आप चाहें तो पसंदीदा  
किताब दान कर सकते हैं,  
पढ़ने के लिए ले जा सकते  
हैं, चाहें तो घर जाकर भी  
कूरियर कर सकते हैं।

DE.SHBANDHU

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से यात्रियों की आवाजाही को सुगम बनाएगा रैपिडो

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 6 अगस्त (देशबन्धु)। जेवर में निर्माणाधीन नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयर पोर्ट से इस साल अंतरराष्ट्रीय, घरेलू और कार्गो का विमानों का उड़ान शुरू होने की संभावना है। उससे पहले यात्रियों की हर सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है।

इसी कड़ी में बुधवार को नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट (एनआईए) ने भारत की अग्रणी राइड-शेयरिंग कंपनी रैपिडो के साथ एक रणनीतिक साझेदारी की है। इस साझेदारी का उद्देश्य यात्रियों को एयरपोर्ट से सुगम, कुशल और विविध अंतिम मील परिवहन सेवाएं प्रदान करना है। यह पहल एनआईए के विश्वसनीय, तकनीक आधारित परिवहन सेवाएं प्रदान करने की प्रतिबद्धता का हिस्सा है, जो हवाई यात्रा को सुविधाजनक सड़क परिवहन से जोड़ता है।

इस साझेदारी के तहत, रैपिडो एयरपोर्ट पर विशेष पिक-अप जोन संचालित करेगा, जहां यात्रियों को सहायता और स्पष्ट दिशा-निर्देश उपलब्ध होंगे। इससे यात्री आसानी से एयरपोर्ट के आगमन द्वार से रैपिडो पिक-अप पॉइंट तक पहुंच सकते हैं। यात्रियों की सुविधा और प्रतीक्षा समय को कम करने के लिए रैपिडो ड्राइवर-पार्टनर्स के लिए विशेष पार्किंग स्थल भी होंगे।



### रैपिडो की सेवाओं के लाभ

- » रैपिडो मोबाइल ऐप के जरिए रीयल-टाइम राइड ट्रैकिंग और अनुमानित आगमन समय
- » नकदी रहित भुगतान विकल्प, जो सुविधा और पारदर्शिता सुनिश्चित करना
- » ड्राइवर और वाहन की जानकारी के साथ-साथ ऐप में आपातकालीन/एसओएस बटन
- » विभिन्न यात्रा आवश्यकताओं के लिए कई राइड श्रेणियां।
- » 24 घंटे की उपलब्धता, जो सभी उड़ान समय-सारणियों के लिए उपयुक्त है।

यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड के सीईओ क्रिस्टोफ श्रेलमैन ने कहा कि यात्रियों को स्वागत करने की तैयारी के साथ, टर्मिनल से बाहर सुगम और तनावमुक्त यात्रा अनुभव सुनिश्चित करना हमारे लिए महत्वपूर्ण है। रैपिडो के साथ हमारी साझेदारी इस दिशा में एक और कदम है, जो सभी के लिए सुलभ, तकनीक आधारित परिवहन विकल्प प्रदान करता है।

■ नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट ने रैपिडो के साथ मिलकर कनेक्टिविटी सेवा की साझेदारी

■ रैपिडो एयरपोर्ट पर विशेष पिक-अप जोन करेगा संचालित

राजीव भायरी, एवीपी, रैपिडो ने कहा कि हम नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के साथ साझेदारी कर खुश हैं। हमारी एयरपोर्ट कैच सेवाएं यात्रियों को टर्मिनल से ही सुगम और तकनीक आधारित परिवहन अनुभव प्रदान करेंगी। समर्पित पिक-अप जोन, रीयल-टाइम ट्रैकिंग, नकदी रहित भुगतान और 24/7 उपलब्धता के साथ, हम यात्रियों को विश्वसनीय अंतिम मील कनेक्टिविटी सुनिश्चित करते हैं।

यह साझेदारी एनआईए के एक बहु-माध्यम परिवहन केंद्र बनने के दृष्टिकोण के अनुरूप है। एयरपोर्ट निजी वाहनों, सार्वजनिक परिवहन और अन्य नियोजित सेवाओं सहित विभिन्न कनेक्टिविटी विकल्पों पर काम कर रहा है।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## नोएडा एयरपोर्ट परिसर से मिलेगी रैपिडो की टैक्सी सेवा

जासं, ग्रेटर नोएडा : नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर उतरने वाले यात्रियों को गंतव्य तक पहुंचने के लिए रैपिडो टैक्सी सेवा देगा। यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट प्रा. लि. (यापल) ने टैक्सी सेवा के लिए रैपिडो के साथ अनुबंध किया है। यात्रियों को यह टैक्सी सेवा एयरपोर्ट परिसर में ही 24 घंटे उपलब्ध होगी।

नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण अंतिम चरण में है। सितंबर तक कार्य पूरा होने के बाद नवंबर में एयरपोर्ट से यात्री सेवा संचालित होने की संभावना है। यात्रियों को कनेक्टिविटी देने के लिए यापल ने सरकारी एवं निजी कंपनियों के साथ अनुबंध किए हैं। इसके तहत रैपिडो के साथ टैक्सी सेवा के लिए

अनुबंध किया गया है। इसके तहत एयरपोर्ट परिसर में पिकअप जोन से यात्रियों को गंतव्य तक पहुंचने के लिए कनेक्टिविटी सुविधा मिलेगी। आन ग्राउंड सहायता के साथ वे फाइंडिंग गाइड्स की सुविधा भी होगी। यात्री एयरपोर्ट पर आने के बाद रैपिडो राइड्स के साथ अपनी आगे की यात्रा शुरू कर सकेंगे। रैपिडो एप पर यात्रियों को रियल टाइम राइड ट्रैकिंग और यात्रा में लगने वाले अनुमानित समय की जानकारी मिलेगी। डिजिटल भुगतान के अलावा यात्रियों की सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने के लिए एप में आपातकालीन बटन, यात्रा के लिए विभिन्न विकल्प के अलावा 24 घंटे आवागमन की सुविधा होगी।

## Adani Plans ₹20kcr City-Side Push to Diversify Airports Biz

**NEW WINGS** Co aims to raise non-aeronautical revenue share to 70% from 50% currently

Forum Gandhi & George Smith Alexander

Mumbai: Adani Airports will invest ₹20,000 crore (\$2.4 billion) into multi-phase city-side developments, nearly 70% of which is allocated to the Mumbai and Navi Mumbai airports, said top executives. This strategy is anchored by an ambitious target: to increase the share of non-aeronautical businesses to 70% of its revenue by 2030, a significant leap from the industry's current average of 50%.

This shift is aimed at building a more resilient business model, with the city-side ventures serving as the primary drivers of growth, Adani Airports chief executive Arun Bansal told ET in an interview. "Right now, our revenue is about 50% aero and 50% non-aero. But by 2030, I expect aero revenue to drop below 30%, with non-aero including city-side developments making up around 70% of our total revenue," he said. Adani Enterprises' airport arm is

### Flying High

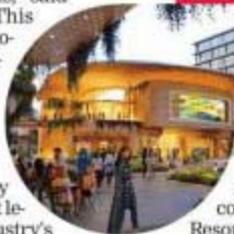
Mumbai and Navi Mumbai to get 70% of funds

Navi Mumbai airport Phase 1 ready by Oct 2025

Co takes inspiration from Schiphol, Sydney, Zurich airports

Expansion also planned at 5 other airports

Talks on with top hospitality chains



its third-largest revenue contributor, after Integrated Resources Management and New Energy Ecosystem. The airports business recorded income of ₹2,715 crore in the first quarter of fiscal 2026, a year-on-year increase of 25%. As per the company, this growth was "in line with higher volume and non-aero income". In June, Adani Airports Hol-

dings raised \$750 million through external commercial borrowings to refinance debt and expand non-aeronautical businesses like retail, food & beverage and duty-free across its six airports.

The project's centrepiece is the 240-acre land parcel at Navi Mumbai International Airport, which is scheduled to operationalise its phase 1 by October this year.

Amit Grover, CEO, City Side Development at Adani Airports, said it will be a "walkable business district". Its first phase (Zone 2) will feature a commercial ecosystem with five hotels with 1,000 keys in total, a shopping mall, and three office to-

wers. While standalone residential units are restricted, a limited number of service apartments will be included as an extension of the hotel properties. The first phase which is projected to be completed by 2031 will cover around 50 acres.

This model draws inspiration from leading global airport cities such as Schiphol in Amsterdam, Sydney Airport and Zurich's "The Circle", which have successfully created dynamic mixed-use hubs combining hospitality, retail and office spaces. "When looking at market benchmarks for airport cities, Schiphol, Sydney, and Zurich consistently rank among the best, while Changi Airport is also actively working to diversify its revenue streams," Grover said. The focus on mixed-use developments aims to attract both travellers and city residents to ensure consistent business activity, Grover said.

The company is in discussions with the "top five hospitality chains" to manage the new properties, though specific brand names have not been announced, Bansal said.

Development at the existing Mumbai airport is constrained by the Airports Authority of India Act. He said this makes the Navi Mumbai site's concession agreement a more favourable starting point.



By 2030, about half of the 70% non-aero revenue target will come from city-side developments around airports

## Waje urges Centre to name airport after Yashwantrao Chavan

**FPJ News Network**

**NASHIK**

Nashik MP Rajabhau Parag Waje on Monday urged Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu to name Nashik's Ozar airport after former Maharashtra chief minister Yashwantrao Chavan. Waje also raised several key demands for expanding air connectivity and improving infrastructure at the airport ahead of the Simhastha Kumbh Mela scheduled in 2027.

During the meeting in New Delhi, Waje highlighted Chavan's contribution to the region, especially in the industrial, defence and aviation sectors, citing the establishment of Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) in Nashik. He said it would be fitting to name the airport in his honour. Minister Naidu assured Waje that all proposals would be considered in detail. Both leaders agreed to initiate the proposed projects in coordination with the Centre, the state government, HAL, and other relevant bodies.

Among the key demands raised were the resumption of the Nashik-Delhi flight daily, instead of the current thrice-a-week schedule, to ease travel for business, medical, educational and religious purposes. Waje also demanded an expansion of the terminal building to handle 1,000 passengers at a



### Speed up infra projects: Waje urges Gadkari

Nashik MP Rajabhau Waje on Thursday, July 31, urged Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari to expedite key infrastructure projects in the city in view of the 2027 Simhastha Kumbh Mela.

Waje stressed the timely completion of the Nashik Road-Dwarka flyover, the proposed Ring Road and upgrades to the Nashik-Pune and Nashik-Mumbai highways. He said these projects were vital to managing the expected influx of devotees and ensuring smooth traffic movement during the festival.

He underlined the urgency of the 6.5-km flyover between Nashik Road and Dwarka, citing growing congestion. However, officials estimate the project will take at least two to four years, raising doubts about completion before the Mela. Delays in approvals and the risk of traffic disruption during construction remain major concerns.

Waje called for immediate clearances, fund allocation and commencement of technical work. Gadkari assured that the necessary procedures would be fast-tracked.

time, the construction of a new runway, and increased parking space.

Given the upcoming Kumbh Mela, a proposal was

also made to build dedicated helipads at Trimbakeshwar, Nashik city and Ozar for emergency and administrative use during the event.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## आतंकी हमले की आशंका के बाद हवाई अड्डों की सुरक्षा बढ़ाई गई

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो  
नई दिल्ली, 6 अगस्त।

देश भर के हवाई अड्डों के सुरक्षा इंतजामों को और पुख्ता किया गया है। नागर विमानन सुरक्षा ब्यूरो (बीसीएएस) की ओर से 15 अगस्त, त्योहारों के दौरान (सितंबर से दो अक्टूबर) के बीच आतंकवादी हमले की आशंका के मद्देनजर दिल्ली समेत देश के तमाम हवाई अड्डों और हवाई पट्टियों पर सुरक्षा के लिहाज से निगरानी बढ़ाने के निर्देश दिए हैं।

सुरक्षा में यह बढ़ोतरी खुफिया जानकारी मिलने के बाद

की गई है। इस संबंध में ब्यूरो की तरफ से तीन परामर्श जारी किए गए हैं। देश में असामाजिक तत्वों द्वारा किसी नापाक मंसूबे को अंजाम देने की खुफिया जानकारी मिलने के बाद मंत्रालय ने परामर्श जारी किया था। तीन परामर्श में दिल्ली समेत 15 अगस्त और त्योहारों के दौरान किसी भी आतंकी हमले की आशंका के बाद यह परामर्श जारी किए गए हैं। इसके बाद देश भर के हवाई अड्डों, हवाई पट्टियों और हेलीपैड के अलावा प्रशिक्षण संस्थानों में भी सुरक्षा के लिहाज से निगरानी बढ़ाने के निर्देश दिए गए हैं। बीसीएएस को देश की केंद्रीय सुरक्षा एजेंसी से मिली जानकारी के बाद सभी हवाई अड्डों पर सख्ती बढ़ा दी गई है।

# THE MAN CLEANING UP OUR AIRPORT CHECK-IN MESS

Suresh Khadakhavi, CEO of the Digi Yatra Foundation, now wants to take his system global

Link to DigiYatra  
mint.digi-vent.com  
BENGALURU

**O**n a foggy January morning in 2017, 17 passengers voluntarily stepped into an experimental lane at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport to test a new way of boarding flights: no identity (ID) card, no ticket, no boarding pass. A simple scanner cross-verified the passengers' fingerprints with India's unique identity system, Aadhaar, and matched them against the flight manifest.

The pilot project, done in partnership with Jet Airways, which was still operational back then, went smoothly. But it was much harder to pull off, than it seemed.

"Back then, everything was manual," recalls Suresh Khadakhavi, now chief executive officer (CEO) of the Digi Yatra Foundation. "We realized that identity and travel document validations were done by different systems, and we could unify them digitally."

Working with a few manufacturers, his team prototyped a system that validated Aadhaar biometrics alongside the travel ticket. Khadakhavi remembers walking with the passengers from the entry gate all the way to the boarding gate, capturing their reactions on video.

One lady asked him: "Why just one airport?"

"That's when it hit us—this had national potential," he says.

It would be another five years before India formally brought the idea to life with DigiYatra, a system that promises seamless check-in to boarding experience for flyers. Today, it has more than 15 million users and has enabled over 60 million verified journeys. On average, 125,000 passengers use it every day, accounting for 30-35% of domestic flyers. The service is currently live at 24 airports. Another 17 are in the pipeline.

## THE ARCHITECT

The project began as a whiteboard exercise in Bengaluru sometime in 2015. Khadakhavi was then a deputy general manager at the Bengaluru International Airport Ltd's information technology department. He joined an internal workshop about the airport's preparedness to design Terminal 2.

"All participants were asked to imagine the ideal passenger experience," he recalls.

Khadakhavi envisioned a traveller gliding through check-in, security, and boarding without ever showing a document—face as the only credential. Everything else happens digitally, in the background. He titled his proposal: "My face is my boarding pass."

Dozens of submissions were pinned on a wall and put to a vote. "Mine got just seven votes," he laughs. "But I wasn't discouraged."

He started reaching out to biometric vendors to build an end-to-end system. It wasn't easy. Biometrics in airports were still new. The system had to go beyond identity and validate travel documents, coordinate with airlines and security, and

meet compliance at every step.

Even in 2017, "we were just volunteers", recalls Khadakhavi. Hence, to make the project work across the country, and introduce facial recognition, he would need the cooperation of other stakeholders, including the ministry of civil aviation, the Central Industrial Security Force, the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), and intelligence agencies.

Encouraged by the initial passenger feedback, the team reached out to the civil aviation ministry. Then minister of state, Jayant Sinha, was enthusiastic. "He understood immediately that this could make airport experiences less painful," recalls Khadakhavi.

A series of five demos convinced the ministry to back the idea formally. By August 2018, the DigiYatra policy was officially released. While

airports had already been experimenting with pilot trials, this was the first attempt at a formal framework. The ministry formed a digital cell to guide the process, headed by then secretary R.N. Choubey. Chief executives of public-private partnership airports—Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad, Cochin, and Mumbai—joined the steering committee. Technical experts from these airports, including Khadakhavi himself, formed the working committee.

To validate the policy design, they looped in Aadhaar architects Nandan Nilekani and Pramod Varma.

Nilekani suggested a not-for-profit



The DigiYatra project began as a whiteboard exercise in 2015. Suresh Khadakhavi titled his proposal: "My face is my boarding pass."

structure for the organization. That way, the focus remains on the mission, not monetization.

By February 2019, the Digi Yatra Foundation was officially registered as a Section 8 not-for-profit. The Airports Authority of India, and the international airports from Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Cochin, are its shareholders.

For now, the foundation's funding comes from a simple model: each subscribing airport pays a fee based on passenger volumes. Costs are distributed proportionally.

## COVID PAUSE

Just when things were running smoothly, the covid-19 pandemic hit and everything froze. "Travel collapsed. Airports—our shareholders—were focused on surviving. But ironically,

the pandemic made our case stronger. DigiYatra is contactless by default. No touching devices, no exchanging documents," says Khadakhavi.

During this period, he joined the International Air Transport Association (IATA) One ID advisory group, where global discussions were underway to build seamless, secure passenger experiences. "That's when self-sovereign identity (SSI) came into the picture," he says.

Unlike centralized systems, where data is stored on servers, SSI allows identity credentials to be stored directly on users' phones, making it ideal for decentralized applications such as DigiYatra.

"When we asked UIDAI if we could ping Aadhaar every time a passenger boarded, they said no—it would overload their systems and raise privacy risks," recalls Khadakhavi. "So we proposed a one-time Aadhaar validation to create a reusable credential stored on the passenger's phone. They agreed."

To build this, the foundation ran a startup challenge in partnership with NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission. Over 400 startups expressed interest. Two were selected to begin the implementation. One of them stepped back, citing limited blockchain expertise. The other, DataFovio, built the platform that would become DigiYatra's core.

A soft launch took place on 15 August 2022. By 11 December, DigiYatra formally went live at three airports: Delhi, Bengaluru, and Varanasi. In the months following the launch, adoption surged.

"We soon realized we needed a proper organization, not just volunteers," Khadakhavi explains.

The board began searching for a full-time leader. "I threw my hat in the ring," he says. On 1 April, 2023, he was officially appointed CEO.

## DON'T RYK

Soon, DigiYatra ran into controversies. Concerns were raised over the aggressive and opaque manner in which the system was being pushed at airports, especially since India's Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, is yet to be enforced. The draft rules were notified this January.

That the Digi Yatra Foundation is not

governed by the country's Right to Information (RTI) Act has only increased the unease.

The Internet Freedom Foundation (IFF), a digital rights advocacy organization, acknowledges that DigiYatra is "an opt-in and completely voluntary service at Indian airports". Nonetheless, it cautions that digital processing using facial recognition technology and personal credentials to authenticate users instead of traditional boarding passes is being done "with inadequate privacy safeguards, in a non-transparent data ecosystem, and sometimes without your consent, making it a challenge for you to navigate airports without enrolling in the service".

IFF has written multiple letters to Indian authorities, including the civil aviation ministry, NITI Aayog, Digi Yatra Foundation, and the Airports Authority of India, underscoring that the foundation has a 26% shareholding from the union government, but is not covered under the RTI Act and does not disclose its cyber security audits.

Last July, the India unit of the Software Freedom Law Centre, a legal services organization, too, highlighted reports of passengers "either being forced into or unknowingly enrolled in DigiYatra".

Vijay Mishra, an associate partner at law firm Anand and Anand, notes that while DigiYatra has stated repeatedly that it is voluntary in nature, consent of the end-user to use the system becomes critical, and travellers must know it's a choice.

"Being a private entity, the DPDP law, once in force, would apply. Further, as it is an AI (artificial intelligence) facial recognition technology, risk mitigation beyond

aspects of data protection are equally relevant—such as mitigating the risk of bias," says Mishra.

Khadakhavi acknowledges that clearing concerns around privacy and introducing more languages (other than English) will help unlock even wider adoption.

"It's a fair concern. Unless we communicate clearly and creatively, the doubt will linger," he admits. "We don't know your age, gender, airline, or how often you fly," Khadakhavi stresses. "And that's by design."

This privacy-first approach powers DigiYatra's "Don't Know Your Customer" campaign—a witty reversal of traditional KYC. The Foundation has also begun conducting regular audits across its Amazon Web Services (AWS)-based cloud, app, and airport verifiers.

"All data shared with airports is purged within 24 hours of departure. But we're going further—we'll soon start notifying users when their data is purged."

## WHAT USERS THINK

Kashyap Kompella, an AI analyst and founder of tech consultancy RPA2AL, is a frequent flyer. It typically takes him an hour to reach Bengaluru airport but last week, it took him much longer because of traffic. "I would have missed my flight had it not been for the shorter DigiYatra queue," he says with a sense of relief.

Kompella initially did not use DigiYatra because he wanted to minimize his digital footprint. "I deleted the app after reports

## WHAT

### SHORT STORY

## AND

DigiYatra, the system that allows passengers to breeze through airport checkpoints, has more than 15 million users today. The service is currently live at 24 airports.

## BUT

### SHORT STORY

There are plans to support 22 Indian languages. The Digi Yatra Foundation now aims to make the system a digital public infrastructure asset, like the UPI.

## BUT

Concerns are being raised over the aggressive manner in which DigiYatra is being pushed on passengers at airports. Critics have pointed to inadequate privacy safeguards.

## AND

### SHORT STORY

because the non-DigiYatra security lanes take longer," he says. Kompella does worry about privacy, but like everyone else, he's trading privacy for a bit of convenience, he adds.

DigiYatra has also become an integral part of the flying routine of Mohish Juneja, founder and CEO of Mumbai-based digital agency Avignyata Inc. Juneja is a frequent business traveller, mostly to Delhi and Bengaluru. "It saves time and adds predictability to the airport experience," he says.

As a family traveller, though, Juneja believes DigiYatra has a gap. "Since our kids are under 10, we've consciously given them basic feature phones, which means they can't access the app. This forces us to use the regular lines while travelling as a family, which slows things down," he adds.

## NOT JUST IN ENGLISH

"We're a lean team—fewer than 20 people, including outsourced app and backend developers. But we're nimble," says Khadakhavi. He adds that airports have played a crucial role in adoption. Many deployed "DigiBuddies"—contract staff who walk around terminal areas, helping passengers enroll. "They explain how this process saves time. And it works," he points out.

The next frontier, like the CEO mentioned earlier, is expanding the languages DigiYatra supports. Today, six Indian languages are already tested, with plans to roll out 22. Language translations are being done in partnership with AI4Bharat's Bhaskini system. "Eventually, we want to support global languages, too," he says.

## EASY BORDER CONTROL?

As the system matures, DigiYatra is increasingly fielding inquiries from foreign governments. "They've ex-

pressed it in India and want us to build similar systems," says Khadakhavi.

The foundation now aims to make Digi Yatra a digital public infrastructure asset, like the Unified Payments Interface (UPI). "It will take six to nine months, but we're on track."

How does Digi Yatra compare with global systems such as Singapore's automated gates or Clear, a biometric identity platform, in the US?

"They're centralized. The data goes into sovereign databases," says Khadakhavi. "We're different. Your credentials stay on your phone."

But could DigiYatra eventually enable international travel?

Absolutely, he says. With India now joining International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)-compliant e-passports, passengers can scan and create a digital credential with near-field communication, a short-range wireless technology that allows data exchange between devices.

"You could share this (the digital credential) with both your departure and destination airports. So, if you fly from Bengaluru to Paris, your credentials could help you breeze through border control at both ends," says Khadakhavi.

The CEO's next vision? One day, this system could extend beyond aviation—into hotel check-ins, IT parks, even online exams.

He hopes that what started with "My face is my boarding pass," will eventually become, "My face is my identity—everywhere."



Scan the QR code to read more Long Stories.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## Noida Airport-Rapido tie-up for travel ease

**NOIDA:** Noida International Airport has partnered with ride-hailing platform Rapido to offer seamless last-mile connectivity for passengers. The tie-up includes dedicated pick-up zones, on-ground assistance, and designated parking for drivers. Officials said the tech-enabled service will ensure 24/7 availability, real-time tracking, and cashless payments, making airport travel more convenient, efficient, and affordable. MPOST



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Lack of infra, Hindon Airport urges MoD to allocate more parking bays

ASHISH SRIVASTAVA @New Delhi

PERSISTENT shortage of parking bays has thrown flight operations at Hindon Airport into disarray, prompting the authorities to seek urgent intervention from the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

Officials said that the Ministry of Civil Aviation has requested the MoD for additional air slots and parking space to ease growing pressure on Hindon Airport's civil terminal. Commercial airlines using the airport have been advised to coordinate flight timings better.

The authorities may also take a call to reduce flight operations at select routes temporarily. Of-

ficials said that Ghaziabad MP Atul Garg, who also chairs the Airport Coordination Committee, has written to the Ministry of Civil Aviation suggesting a reduction in the number of scheduled flights to allow remaining services to operate smoothly.

The airport currently connects 25 cities and handles 50 flights in a day, with a slot of three flights each hour.

Umesh Yadav, Director of Operations at Hindon, confirmed the development and expressed the urgency for further allocation of resources.

"We are in talks with the Centre to allocate more bays and

slots. It will help in the rationalisation and management of flights as we are continuously expanding to more cities. There have already been meetings between concerned authorities to resolve the constraints," he told this newspaper.

Last week, flight operations at Hindon were temporarily disrupted on several routes after both designated parking bays were occupied, one by an aircraft grounded due to technical issues, and the other by a flight unable to depart due to adverse weather. The situation led to the diversion and suspension of several incoming flights.





# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## DGCA takes action for pilot skill test rule breach

S LALITHA @NewDelhi

THE Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has suspended a senior official of Akasa Air for six months for violating rules during a pilot skill test. The airline had voluntarily reported the incident involving a Designated Examiner (DE) to the regulator following internal review sessions, said a source.

The DGCA order, dated July 29, said, "Suspension of DE approval of Captain Kunal Khajuria is hereby ordered for a period of 6 months, effective from the date of this order."

The airline's Director of Training, Captain Sewak Singh Khosa, had informed the regulator about the breach of the rule by the Captain.

A source said that the trainee and the DE had a major difference of opinion regarding an issue. "As per the standard procedure, it was reported to the Director, who in turn



The primary objective of any Designated Examiner at Akasa is to ensure that all trainings and assessments are professional, and meet prescribed regulatory standards without any fear of passing unsatisfactory candidates — Akasa Air

brought it to the notice of the DGCA," he said.

Akasa Air said, "Keeping safety in mind is of utmost priority at Akasa. Each Designated Examiner and every other employee of the company upholds this standard in its highest form, at

all times. The primary objective of any Designated Examiner at Akasa is to ensure that all trainings and assessments are professional, and meet prescribed regulatory standards without any fear of passing unsatisfactory candidates."

## Airports put on high alert over terror attacks

S LALITHA @NewDelhi

THE Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), a regulatory agency attached to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, has issued a set of three advisories calling for enhanced security at airports, flights and even flying training schools. This is in light of potential attacks from terrorists or anti-social elements.

In the third advisory, the BCAS has called for enhanced vigilance between September 22 and October 2 to all stakeholders in the aviation industry.

There was no official comment from the aviation ministry on it.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## एअर इंडिया की सभी उड़ानें होंगी बहाल

नई दिल्ली। एअर इंडिया ने एक अक्टूबर 2025 से सभी अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाएं पूरी तरह से बहाल करने की घोषणा की है। ये फैसला जून में अहमदाबाद प्लेन हादसे के बाद अस्थायी रूप से रोकی गई सेवाओं की समीक्षा के बाद लिया गया है। एअर इंडिया के सीईओ कैम्बेल विल्सन ने बुधवार को कहा कि हमने एक अगस्त से अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाओं को बहाल शुरू कर दी है। >> पेज 9



# Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## एक अक्टूबर से एअर इंडिया की सभी अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाएं होंगी बहाल : सीईओ विल्सन ने कहा, एयरलाइन व्यवस्थाएं मजबूत करने में जुटी

नई दिल्ली। एअर इंडिया ने घोषणा की है कि एक अक्टूबर 2025 से सभी अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाएं पूरी तरह से बहाल कर दी जाएंगी। ये फैसला जून में अहमदाबाद प्लेन हादसे के बाद रोक दी गई सेवाओं की समीक्षा के बाद लिया गया है।

एअर इंडिया के सीईओ कैम्पबेल विल्सन ने बुधवार को कहा कि हमने एक अगस्त 2025 से अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवाओं की बहाली शुरू कर दी है और हमारा लक्ष्य एक अक्टूबर 2025 से इन सेवाओं को पूरी तरह से बहाल करना है। उन्होंने यात्रियों को भरोसा दिलाया है कि एयरलाइन आंतरिक व्यवस्था को मजबूत करने में जुटी है।



कंपनी भविष्य में यात्रियों को बिना रुकावट बेहतर अनुभव देने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है। उन्होंने ये भी स्पष्ट किया कि उड़ानों की बहाली एक चरणबद्ध प्रक्रिया के तहत की जा रही है। बता दें कि 12 जून 2025 को अहमदाबाद में हुए एक दुर्घटना विमान हादसे के बाद एअर इंडिया ने अपनी सभी अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें अस्थायी रूप से रोक दी थीं। एजेंसी

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Honeywell eyes significant investment opportunities in India's civil aviation sector

**Rohit Vaid**  
New Delhi

The massive growth of the civil aviation sector in the country has led technology major Honeywell Aerospace to explore "significant investments" in the country.

Speaking to *businessline*, Guruprasad Mysore, Business Leader - Airlines, India Region, Honeywell India, said the civil aviation sector had been steadily growing, and "it is today the third-largest aviation market in the world".

"This growth momentum also opens new opportunities in local manufacturing, fleet and airport expansions, public-private partnerships, investments and R&D in next-generation aviation technologies," he said.

He pointed out that more than 3,000 engineers across Honeywell's Centers of Excellence develop cutting-edge aviation technologies that are integral to the global aviation value chain.

According to Mysore,



**BETTING BIG.** There is a positive outlook on the domestic MRO sector, which is projected to become a \$4 billion market by 2030, says Guruprasad Mysore of Honeywell India

there is a positive outlook on the domestic maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) sector, which is projected to become a \$4 billion market by 2030.

"The industry has already deployed efforts to add over 1,000 aircraft by 2027 to meet the rising demand," he said.

"At a macro level, the growth trajectory seems positive, with companies already exploring investments to set up MRO hubs in India."

Such strategic moves, Mysore said, will lead to op-

timised operational costs, reduced turnaround times, create more employment opportunities and "eventually contribute to building self-sustenance in the long run".

Besides, he cited that at the global level, Honeywell Aerospace expects organic sales growth in the mid-single-digit to high single-digit range for 2025.

"India is emerging as an important market for Honeywell, and we plan to explore significant investments in the country," he said.

"We view India as a key area for long-term expansion as we aim to make considerable investments in MRO capabilities here and intend to increase sourcing from India by nearly four times in the next few years," he said.

### MRO FACILITY

Industry estimates project an investment of around \$150-200 million for setting up a greenfield MRO facility.

As per the industry, this type of infrastructure helps reduce turnaround times, cut costs and extends the lifespan of avionics.

Notably, the Centre has urged the industry to enhance onshore MRO capabilities and reduce reliance on overseas repairs.

Earlier this year at an industry event, Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu called for efforts to increase MRO activities in the country. He highlighted that in FY24, the share of Indian MRO entities was only 14 per cent, and the same had to be increased to 50 per cent by 2030.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Taking measures to ensure safety, reinforce ops: Air India CEO

**DEEPAK PATEL**  
New Delhi, 6 August

Air India Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) Campbell Wilson on Wednesday sought to reassure members of the Maharaja Club — the airline's frequent flyer programme — that their concerns around flight safety were understandable, given the "heightened scrutiny" following the AI71 crash and regulatory findings.

In an email to Maharaja Club members, he said that the airline is taking steps to ensure safety and reinforce operations, inspections, and training. "Following the tragic accident of AI71 in June, it is understandable that there is heightened scrutiny, coverage, and concern about air travel," Wilson said. Wilson noted that all the processes are backed by a comprehensive safety management system aligned with global aviation standards and fully compliant with the guideline of DGCA and the International Civil Aviation Organisation ICAO.

He said that Air India had conducted detailed inspections of its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 fleet under DGCA oversight, and we confirm that no issues were found.

In a report released on July 30, DGCA had identified 19 "level 1" safety lapses across the airline over the past year, requiring immediate corrective action. The regulator had also issued four show-cause notices to Air India for serious and repeated violations invol-



**CONCERNS AROUND FLIGHT SAFETY ARE UNDERSTANDABLE GIVEN THE HEIGHTENED SCRUTINY**

Campbell Wilson  
CEO & MD, Air India

ving crew deployment, training gaps, and rest rules for pilots. The enforcement actions followed the June 12 Air India crash, in which 241 people were killed.

"Air India, like all major airlines, undergoes annual audits by our regulator, the DGCA, and a bi-annual IATA Operational Safety Audit conducted by an external team of experts. These audits are part of the aviation industry's process of continuous improvement and, as the DGCA stated in a recent communique, Air India's recent results are "entirely normal" for an airline of our scale and scope," he noted. Wilson said that phased international operations are expected to be fully restored by October 1, ensuring "every verification is thoroughly completed."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE DAILY GUARDIAN

DELHI

6 AUGUST 2025

## SPICEJET CLEARS DGCA AUDIT WITH CLEAN SLATE

Outcome reaffirms our robust safety culture, strict adherence to regulatory requirements, says SpiceJet

**ABHINANDAN MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI

SpiceJet has emerged as one of the few Indian carriers to receive a clean slate in the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) latest annual safety audit, recording zero Level 1 findings—the most serious category of safety lapses.

In a press release issued on Tuesday, the airline said the outcome reaffirmed its "robust safety culture, strict adherence to regulatory requirements, and alignment with global best practices." SpiceJet also noted that it had successfully renewed its IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) certification earlier this year, valid through March 2027. The IOSA certification is glob-



A SpiceJet flight (Representative image). ANI

ally recognised and reflects a high benchmark for operational safety.

The DGCA's audit covered eight major scheduled carriers over the past year and flagged a total of 263 safety and compliance lapses, including 19 Level 1 violations and 244 Level 2 lapses.

While the aviation regulator clarified that these findings are part of routine annual surveillance aligned

with ICAO norms and do not necessarily indicate ongoing risk, the audit has nonetheless drawn attention to lapses at some of India's largest airlines.

In contrast to SpiceJet's clean record, Air India recorded 51 findings—seven of them Level 1—ranging from inadequate pilot training and use of unapproved simulators to violations of crew duty time regulations.

Vistara, now merged with Air India, accounted for ten Level 1 breaches—the highest among all airlines.

Air India Express was flagged for 25 audit observations, including two critical lapses, while IndiGo, India's largest carrier by market share, had 23 findings, all categorised as Level 2.

Alliance Air, a smaller state-run operator, logged 57 observations but no Level 1 violations.

The release of the audit results comes at a time of heightened sensitivity around aviation safety in India, following the fatal crash of Air India Flight 171 near Ahmedabad on 12 June, which claimed over 260 lives. The incident has prompted deeper scrutiny into operational procedures and regulatory oversight.

## 'Ready to operate flights from Ballari, Kolar if state agrees'

NEW DELHI, DHNS

Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol on Tuesday said that his ministry was ready to operate small passenger aircrafts from Ballari and Kolar air strips under UDAN scheme, if the state agreed to it.

"Under UDAN 5.2, bids have been received for small aircraft operations (less than 20-seaters) for Ballari and Kolar airstrips".

The ministry has requested the state government to give consent and confirm the availability of land for the development of these airports," he told the Rajya Sabha, in reply to a question by Lahar Singh Siroya (BJP)

"The state has to ensure that land is provided free of cost and free from encumbrances, and is suitable for operating small aircraft (2B) initially, with potential for future expansion to category 3C. The actual timelines for airport projects



depend on various factors like land acquisition, mandatory clearances and removal of obstacles".

"In Karnataka, 7 airports - Bidar, Mysuru, Vijayanagar, Hubballi, Kalaburagi, Belagavi and Shivamogga are operationalized under regional connectivity scheme (RCS-UDAN). The airstrips - namely Ballari, Kolar, Kushalnagar (Kodagu district), Raichur and Hassan - are unserved airports available in UDAN scheme document for bidding," the minister said.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said Karnataka received Rs 46,932.72 crore from the Centre as its share in central taxes and duties in 2024-25.

Replying to BJP's Eranna Kadadi, he told the House

that in 2022-23 fiscal, the state received Rs 34,596.18 crore, while in 2023-24, a total of Rs 41,193 crore was released.

Under other specific grants, the Centre released Rs 6,826 crore to the state, he said.

As many as 125 out of the total 6,291 Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACSS) in Karnataka were under liquidation, Cooperation Minister Amit Shah told the Lok Sabha.

Replying to Congress' G Kumar Naik (Raichur), the minister said, out of 125 PACSS, 28 cooperatives were in Chikkaballapur, followed by 13 in Hassan and 12 in Belagavi.

According to Shah, 64 PACSS are non-functional/dormant. In the last five years, 428 new PACSS were registered in the state, with the highest 187 in Belagavi, he said in a written reply.

The minister said National Cooperative Development Corporation disbursed Rs 25.56 crore to PACSS in Karnataka, in the five years till 2024-25.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## एअर इंडिया की अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें एक अक्टूबर से पूरी तरह हो सकती हैं बहाल

नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर: एअर इंडिया की अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें पूरी तरह बहाल हो सकती हैं। एअर इंडिया के सीईओ कैपबेल विल्सन ने बुधवार को बताया कि एयरलाइन ने एक अगस्त से अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों की

चरणबद्ध बहाली शुरू कर दी है और एक अक्टूबर तक सभी सेवाओं को पूरी तरह बहाल किए जाने की उम्मीद है। उन्होंने उम्मीद जताई कि चरणबद्ध बहाली के दौरान यात्री अनुभव बेहतर होगा।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

6 AUGUST 2025

---

## जयपुर से अब भी कई बड़े शहरों के लिए नहीं उड़ान

नवज्योति, जयपुर। जयपुर एयरपोर्ट से विमान सेवाओं के विस्तार की मांग लगातार उठ रही है। वर्तमान में यहां से देश के 21 शहरों के लिए ही हवाई सेवाएं संचालित हो रही हैं, लेकिन कई धार्मिक और पर्यटन दृष्टि से महत्वपूर्ण शहरों के लिए अब तक उड़ानें शुरू नहीं हुई हैं। श्रीनगर जैसे पर्यटन स्थल के लिए कोई सीधी फ्लाइट नहीं है। पटना और नागपुर जैसे बड़े शहरों के लिए भी यात्रियों की मांग के बावजूद उड़ानें नहीं हैं। अमृतसर और भोपाल जैसे ऐतिहासिक और राजनीतिक दृष्टि से महत्वपूर्ण शहरों के लिए भी सीधी सेवाएं नहीं मिल रही हैं। ऐसे में यात्रियों को दूसरे शहरों से होकर यात्रा करनी पड़ती है, जिससे समय और धन दोनों का व्यय बढ़ता है।

## Air India to Resume Normal Overseas Schedule from Oct 1

Phased restoration began on Aug 1 amid inspections of fleet

Our Bureau

**Mumbai:** Air India will fully resume international operations by October 1, following a phased restart from August 1, Campbell Wilson, chief executive, said on Wednesday. This follows a voluntary "safety pause" initiated in June after the AI171 accident.

"The voluntary 'Safety Pause' I had communicated in my last email on 19 June, 2025 continues, entailing a temporary reduction in our schedule to accommodate additional pre-flight checks and mitigate the impact of regional airspace closures," Wilson said in an email to the airline's frequent flyers.

He added that the carrier has begun a "phased restoration" of international operations from August 1, with full resumption targeted for October 1. "This measured approach ensures we complete every verification thoroughly and resume service with complete confidence."

Air India's international operations faced significant disruptions this year due to a mix of safety concerns, geopolitical tensions, and operational challenges.

Following the crash of flight AI171 in Ahmedabad on June 12, the airline initiated a voluntary "safety pause," leading to a 15% reduction in its international

### Back in the Sky

**'SAFETY PAUSE' INITIATED:**  
June 19, 2025

**15% cut in international flights to allow fleet inspections**

**WHAT TRIGGERED IT?**

**Crash of Flight AI171 in Ahmedabad on June 12, 2025**

**GOAL:** Complete inspections, ensure compliance, and restore passenger confidence

**This measured approach ensures we complete every verification thoroughly and resume service with complete confidence**

**CAMPBELL WILSON, CEO, Air India**



flight schedule to enhance safety measures and conduct thorough inspections of its fleet. The pause was further extended as the airline worked closely with regulators to ensure compliance with safety standards.

Additionally, geopolitical factors contributed to the operational challenges. Airspace closures like the Pakistan airspace and restrictions in regions such as the Middle East and Europe, coupled with airspace curfews, complicated flight planning and led to longer flight durations.

Air India operates flights to around 42 international destinations across 31 countries, including major hubs in North America, Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Australia.

The airline conducted detailed inspections of its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 fleet under DGCA supervision. Additional checks on the fuel control switches of Boeing 737 and 787-8 aircraft were also completed with no findings.

"No issues were found during these inspections," said Wilson. "We continue to work closely with regulators, maintaining full transparency and ensuring that every action we take aligns with the highest standards of safety and care."

Emphasising that Air India uses rigorous safety protocols, Wilson said, "Our regular safety protocols are rigorous and multi-layered, with every aircraft undergoing thorough checks before take-off by trained engineers and pilots."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Air India CEO reassures flyers on safety

PRES TRUST OF INDIA  
New Delhi, August 6

**AIR INDIA HAS VIGOROUS** and multilayered safety protocols with every aircraft undergoing thorough checks before take-off, its chief Campbell Wilson said on Wednesday as he emphasised that the airline is strengthening internal processes to minimise operational challenges.

On June 12, a London Gatwick-bound Air India's Boeing 737-8 aircraft crashed into a building soon after take-off, killing 260 people. Since then, the Tata Group-owned carrier has carried out various checks on its Boeing 737 and 787 planes. In recent weeks, some of Air India's flights have either been cancelled or delayed due to technical issues.

Against this backdrop, Wilson acknowledged that there have been some operational challenges over the last few weeks that may have impacted the travel experience.

### Singapore Air to bolster AI's fleet upkeep

**AIR INDIA PLANS** to lean on shareholder Singapore Airlines to move some aircraft maintenance services in-house instead of outsourcing them to a state-owned company, according to people familiar with the matter.

The airline is preparing to take on pre-flight and daily air-

craft inspections, minor repair work and other troubleshooting activities from state-owned AI Engineering Services (AIESL), said the people. The phased move away from AIESL follows the deadly crash in June, a sectorwide safety audit and a temporary safety-related pause in service.

The carrier "continues to work closely with AIESL. However, with our fleet expansion — 570 aircraft including a significant number of widebody jets — India's current MRO infrastructure is not equipped to support this scale", an Air India spokesperson said in an email. —BLOOMBERG

"Rest assured, we take this seriously and we are committed to strengthening our internal processes to minimise the inconvenience that such circumstances cause to you," the Air India CEO & MD said in a

Air India  
CEO  
Campbell  
Wilson



message to the customers.

Listing out various steps taken since the fatal crash of AI171 flight, Wilson said detailed inspections of its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 aircraft were done and no issues were

found during the inspections. Refer-

ring to the DGCA's audit findings, Wilson said the audits are part of the aviation industry's process of continuous improvement and, "as the DGCA stated in a recent communicate, Air India's recent results are 'entirely normal' for an airline of our scale and scope".

The carrier expects to fully resume international operations from October 1 and the phased restoration commenced from August 1.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## Westermeier to head India, South Asia ops for Airbus



AIRBUS HAS APPOINTED Jürgen Westermeier as the president and MD for India

and South Asia. The appointment of Jürgen, currently the executive vice-president and chief procurement officer at Airbus, will be effective from September 1, the aircraft maker said in a release.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## **Noida Airport joins hands with Rapido**

NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT on Wednesday said it has partnered with ride-hailing platform Rapido for providing passengers with seamless last-mile mobility solutions. —PTI

# A 1988 jet crash, 133 deaths and an unending struggle

**Maulik Pathak**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**AHMEDABAD:** On October 19, 1988, Pankesh Patel and his family were eagerly waiting to receive his younger brother Rakesh and his wife Bhavna, a US citizen. The couple had gone to Mumbai to attend the famous garba festivities at Mithibai College.

"After the wedding, they were coming home for the first time. The college was famous for garba competition and my brother and bhabhi were skilled at garba, hoping to win a prize," said Patel, now a retired bank employee.

That was not to be. The Indian Airlines Boeing 737 Flight IC-113 that was carrying the Patel family among 129 passengers crashed on its final approach to Ahmedabad at approximately 6.53am on October 19, 1988.

The aircraft carried 129 passengers, including five children, and six crew members when it took off from Mumbai at 6.05am. After reporting overhead in Ahmedabad at 6.47am, the aircraft crashed near Chiloda-Kotarpur, about 2,540 metres short of Runway No 23. It hit trees and an electric wire during the landing approach, killing 133 of the 135 people on board.

Patel rushed to the post-mortem room at Ahmedabad Civil Hospital in Asarwa that morning. "Bodies were lying all around, many burnt beyond recognition. I recognised my brother from his wedding ring and my sister-in-law from her mangalsutra. The world came crashing down on us," he said.

## A string of errors

A government-appointed Court of Inquiry, constituted under Rule 75 of the Aircraft Rules, 1937, and chaired by former Supreme Court judge, justice AK Mathur, submitted its report on October 10, 1989.

The inquiry found that the aircraft was travelling at 158 knots instead of the stipulated 128 knots and descended below the minimum descent altitude without establishing visual contact with the runway or

approach lights. The pilots failed to follow the prescribed missed approach procedure and continued landing despite visibility conditions lower than the prescribed minimum.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI), which managed the airport, failed to communicate deteriorating visibility conditions to the pilots, as visibility had reduced to 700 metres. The Ahmedabad airport lacked a functioning Instrument Landing System at the time, and its approach lights were inoperative. Inadequate firefighting services exacerbated the tragedy, as 6,000 litres of fuel ignited after impact.

According to the Justice Mathur Commission report, the pilot's errors in judgement amid poor visibility caused the accident. The report suggested the pilots violated the prescribed minimum descend altitude and did not follow the standard call-out procedure while descending to the Ahmedabad airport.

Then civil aviation and tourism minister Shivraj Patil, visited the crash site the same day and ordered a full investigation under the 1937 Aircraft Rules and announced a ₹2 lakh compensation to the next of kin of each deceased passenger. A parliamentary consultative committee discussed the crash with members criticising Indian Airlines and the civil aviation ministry. Lok Sabha member P Kolan-daivelu demanded that Patil resign.

The crash also prompted a flurry of significant safety improvements. Ahmedabad's Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport installed an Instrument Landing System (ILS) by 1992, upgraded its approach and runway lighting and enhanced its firefighting capabilities by 1995.

The 1937 Aircraft Rules were amended in 1991 to mandate real-time Runway Visual Range (RVR) reporting by the Air Traffic Control during low visibility conditions and stricter pilot training for low visibility landings. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) introduced guidelines in 1990, requiring airports to maintain enhanced fire

and rescue services proportional to aircraft fuel loads.

## The struggle begins

Initially, Indian Airlines – which was the government's national domestic carrier at the time – offered families ₹2 lakh. "In those times, they used to write the compensation amount on the back of plane tickets, which said ₹2 lakh for Indian passengers and ₹5.5 lakh for international passengers," said Patel.

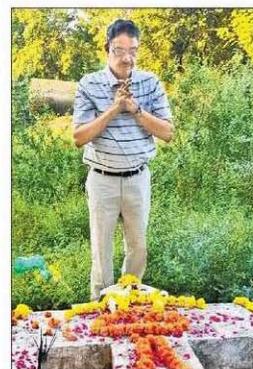
Jatinder Kumar Sethi, deputy advocate general, who appeared on behalf of Indian Airlines, told the Supreme Court during July 24 hearing that no evidence was led either before the Ahmedabad city civil court or the Gujarat high court with regard to the recklessness on the part of the pilots. Sethi also submitted that there was no finding in the inquiry report that the accident was caused by recklessness, adding that the report did not find an error in judgment on part of the pilots. He questioned the admissibility and the evidentiary value of the report.

The Carriage by Air Act, 1972, incorporating the Warsaw Convention (1929) and Hague Protocol (1955), governed the crash. It capped liability at ₹2 lakh for domestic passengers and ₹5.5 lakh for international passengers.

Rule 25 of the Act stated: "The limits of liability specified in Rule 22 shall not apply if it is proved that the damage resulted from an act or omission of the carrier, his servants or agents, done with intent to cause damage or recklessly and with knowledge that damage would probably result; provided that, in the case of such act or omission of a servant or agent, it is also proved that he was acting within the scope of his employment."

The Act was amended in 2009 to align with the Montreal Convention (1999), raising liability to around ₹1 crore in 2009 for international flights and up to ₹20 lakh for domestic flights without proving fault.

As of 2025, the amended Act sets international liability at around ₹1.4 crore and domestic at ₹20 lakh, with higher amounts possible for negligence. All passengers on board were "considered domestic" because the airport was not equipped with fire



**(Top) The co-pilot's mother grieves her son after the crash in 1988; Pankesh Patel pays tribute at Smriti Van, built in memory of the victims, in Ahmedabad.** HT ARCHIVE, HT PHOTO

craft was flying within the country and not connecting to an international flight.

Patel said he immediately began reaching out to other victims' families, urging them not to accept the compensation amount, as he thought it was inadequate. "The ₹2 lakh offer was inadequate for the loss of my brother and his wife." He attended several prayer meetings of the deceased and reached out to their families.

"Many of them turned me down, saying I was talking about compensation when their family members had died. I told them that I was one of them too, but this was a fight we couldn't avoid. If we didn't stand up for ourselves then, we would regret it later," Patel said.

Ushaben Patel, in her petition to the Supreme Court, said: "The ₹2 lakh offer couldn't replace my

husband's role as our family's provider". Vidyagauri Jani told the trial court that "The ₹2 lakh offer did not account for my husband Ramshankar's earning capacity, which supported our sons' future". Patel and 59 others formed the Accident Claim Victims Association in 1989, registering it as a non-trading consultancy. Key figures included Ritaben Shah, the association's president, and Ushaben Patel. The association coordinated litigation efforts with support from Consumer Education and Research Centre (CERC), a Gujarat-based consumer rights NGO.

In 1990, at least 34 families representing dependents of deceased passengers and crew filed civil suits in Ahmedabad's city civil court, seeking higher compensation.

Survivor Ashok Agarwal filed a separate claim for his injuries, bringing the total to 35 claimants, according to court records. Among the claimants were Ushaben Patel and her two sons, pursuing claims for her husband Sharadchandra Patel's death, and Vidyagauri Jani, widow of Ramshankar Jani, along with her sons Shishir and Niranjan, who filed through their power-of-attorney holder, Himanshu Jani.

Ushaben Patel argued that her husband's death was due to the airline's recklessness. "I demand compensation reflecting his earning capacity". They sued Indian Airlines and AAI for composite negligence.

## From courtroom...

The city civil court delivered its judgment in 2003, holding Indian Airlines and AAI jointly liable. The court attributed fault in the ratio of 70% to Indian Airlines

and 30% to AAI, awarding ₹6 crore to the 34 merged suits with 6% annual interest from 1990.

The court said, "The pilots' recklessness in descending without runway visibility, despite knowing the visibility was below the prescribed minimum and failing to follow the missed approach procedure, constitutes wilful misconduct under Rule 25 of the Carriage by Air Act, 1972... AAI's failure to provide real-time RVR updates and maintain operational approach lights contributed to the accident," the order said. Ushaben Patel's family received ₹14.7 lakh and Agarwal ₹61 lakh. The ₹6 crore was not uniform and varied by dependency and injury. Ushaben's award reflected her husband's high earning capacity for three dependents. Agarwal's higher award accounted for lifelong disability and medical costs.

Indian Airlines appealed, arguing its liability was limited to ₹2 lakh per passenger under the Carriage by Air Act, 1972, unless claimants proved recklessness. AAI challenged the finding of negligence and its share of liability. The claimants filed cross-appeals seeking higher interest rates, citing international standards under the Warsaw and Montreal Conventions.

On October 14, 2009, a division bench of the Gujarat high court comprising justices Mohit Shah and Harsha Devani largely upheld the civil court's ruling, maintaining the ₹6 crore award but making significant adjustments.

The court increased the interest to 9% per annum, adjusted liability to 90% for Indian Airlines and 10% for AAI, and reduced certain compensation components, such as pain and suffering, to ₹50,000.

Agarwal's compensation was reduced to ₹45.30 lakh with 9% interest on ₹35.30 lakh and 7.5% on ₹10 lakh. The court ordered payment by December 31, 2009, and required defendants to cover litigation costs.

The claimants argued the award underestimated dependency losses. Indian Airlines claimed no recklessness, capping liability at ₹2 lakh and AAI disputed its 30% liability, arguing pilots' actions were primary.

"The pilots' reckless conduct under Rule 25 of the Carriage by Air Act, 1972... AAI's failure to provide real-time RVR updates and maintain operational approach lights contributed to the accident," the order said. Ushaben Patel's family received ₹14.7 lakh and Agarwal ₹61 lakh. The ₹6 crore was not uniform and varied by dependency and injury. Ushaben's award reflected her husband's high earning capacity for three dependents. Agarwal's higher award accounted for lifelong disability and medical costs.

## ...to courtroom

Both sides approached the Supreme Court in 2010. The families, represented by Ushaben Patel and her sons, argued that the HC underestimated the deceased's prospective income, failed to account for statutory bonuses, and awarded inadequate litigation costs despite 21 years of legal battles across three forums. "We seek much higher compensation adhering to international rules," said Patel. He said while many families of the plane crash victims accepted the compensation amount, the association members have not.

Ritaben Shah's chartered accountant husband, 56-year-old Shirish Shah, was returning from work in Mumbai when he died in the crash. Ritaben said the number of members in the association has dwindled from 60 to 27.

Shirish Shah's sons Ashish Shah and Nirmay Shah have accepted their share of the high court's ₹6 crore compensation award but not without protest. This means that the amount is held in a fixed deposit from which they can only draw interest, and they reserve the right to pursue higher compensation in the court. "Our father was the sole breadwinner, yet the compensation was the same for someone with a B Com degree and a qualified professional like him," Ashish said.

"Many could not pursue due to geographical restrictions and we couldn't keep track of everyone. At least 27 of us are still fighting. Now everything is in the Supreme Court," said Ritaben, president of the association.

On July 24, a bench of justices Sudhanshu Dhulia and Aravind Kumar took up the case of Air India Ltd vs. Airports Authority of India & Ors., involving multiple appeals from the 2009 Gujarat high court ruling. The proceedings showed Indian Airlines filed 40 civil appeals challenging the HC judgment. AAI also challenged the judgment through 32 petitions.

The airline's counsel argued that no evidence was presented before either the city civil court or HC on pilot recklessness, and alleged that the Court of Inquiry report found no error of judgment by the pilots. The counsel also questioned the admissibility and evidentiary value of the Court of Inquiry report, arguing that it found no negligence on the part of Indian Airlines. They noted that while the trial court held liability in a 70:30 ratio between the airline and airport authority, the HC had modified this to 90:10.

"The airline was directed to deposit the compensation in court which has been withdrawn by the claimants," the counsel for Indian Airlines submitted before the court, adding that 12 counter claims have been filed by some of the claimants in the Supreme Court for enhancement of compensation.

Senior counsel Samir Parikh, appearing for the families, argued that both the trial court and HC had concurrently held that Indian Airlines and AAI were negligent and reckless. He emphasised that the recklessness of the pilots was considered in detail, with findings that they acted recklessly with knowledge that damage would probably result, thereby removing the liability limits and allowing for enhanced compensation.

The court has adjourned the case to August 21. By the time the case comes up again, nearly four decades would have passed since the crash – the fifth deadliest air accident in India. Indian Airlines has ceased to exist, and even its successor Air India is a private company now.

The Ahmedabad airport modernised with a new terminal in 2010 and radar upgrades, and privatisation in 2020, when AAI leased it to Adani Enterprises for 50 years. Indian Airlines merged with Air India in 2007 and was privatised in 2022 under Tata Group. DGCA introduced crew resource management training in 2005 and stricter safety audits.

"It's been nearly four decades and we still haven't received the compensation we deserve," said Ashish Shah.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## **Air India launches app for mental well-being of staff**

**NEW DELHI:** Air India, on Wednesday, introduced a new initiative to support the emotional and mental well-being of employees through the launch of a mobile app. The application, named Amaha, is part of the airline's efforts to provide a relaxed environment to its pilots and cabin crew, particularly after the Ahmedabad plane crash and is aimed at helping employees manage their mental health, they said.

# Air India taps Singapore Air to bolster fleet upkeep after crash

## Bloomberg

feedback@livemint.com

Air India plans to lean on shareholder Singapore Airlines, or SIA, to move some aircraft maintenance services in-house instead of outsourcing them to a state-owned company, according to people familiar with the matter.

The Indian airline is preparing to take on pre-flight and daily aircraft inspections, minor repair work and other troubleshooting activities from state-owned AI Engineering Services Ltd, or AIESL, said the people, who weren't authorised to discuss the matter publicly.

The phased move away from AIESL follows a deadly crash in June—the cause of which remains unknown, a sector-wide safety audit and a temporary safety-related pause in service.

Air India was in the midst of a transformation under its new owners—the Tata Group bought the unprofitable former state-run carrier in 2022—when flight AI171 crashed in the western city of Ahmedabad, killing all but one of the 242 people on board.



**It will help Air India to move some aircraft maintenance services in-house.** REUTERS

Gaining control of maintenance services was a part of Air India's restructuring plan even before the plane crash, but it had been put off in favour of getting more aircraft flying regularly and improving the experience on-board, the people said.

Concerns had been raised internally in the past as well about the service provided by AIESL, citing problems such as clogged toilets on flights, they said.

The Indian carrier "continues to work closely with AIESL. However, with our fleet expansion—570 aircraft including a

significant number of widebody jets—India's current MRO infrastructure is not equipped to support this scale," an Air India spokesperson said in an email. MRO refers to maintenance repair and overhaul services.

"To meet the demands of our future operations and ensure world-class reliability and safety, we must invest in building robust MRO capabilities and capacity within the country," the spokesperson added.

SIA, which owns 25.1% share of Air India, will help in the transition of those maintenance tasks to the airline's staff, the people said.

"As a significant minority shareholder in Air India, Singapore Airlines has been working closely" to support Air India's transformation plan, a SIA spokesperson said in an email. "This includes providing our expertise and support to Air India, where necessary."

Air India's relationship with SIA in terms of assistance with aircraft maintenance comes full circle as it had been the one helping the Singapore-based airline during the 1970s.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

6 AUGUST 2025

{ **MY INDIA** } BOEING 787 DREAMLINER

## **AI Delhi-Milan flight cancelled after snag**



**Air India on Tuesday cancelled its flight from Delhi to Milan due to a technical snag detected in the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft prior to departure.** "Flight AI137 scheduled to operate from Delhi to Milan on 5 August has been cancelled due to a maintenance task identified prior to departure which required additional time for rectification...", the airline said in a statement. "Hotel accommodation is being provided, and full refunds on cancellation, or complimentary rescheduling is also being offered to passengers based on their preference," it added. **PTI**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

6 AUGUST 2025

## Spirit Air unveils flight plan under UDAN

**PATNA:** Spirit Air on Tuesday announced its flight operational plan in Bihar under the Ministry of Civil Aviation's flagship regional connectivity scheme (RCS) --- UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik).

"Spirit Air will begin operations in phases from the upcoming airports in Bihar that include: Birpur, Saharsa,

Munger, Madhubani, Muzaffarpur, Raxaul, Valmiki Nagar and Bihta," said the company in a press statement issued here on Tuesday.

A high-level meeting between the promoter of Spirit Air, Subodh Verma and Additional Chief Secretary (Cabinet Secretariat), Bihar government, S Siddharth was held here on

Tuesday. The flight operational plan of Spirit Air under UDAN in Bihar was discussed at length.

"The upcoming airports in Bihar will be connected to: (1) Varanasi -- providing onward connections to Delhi, Mumbai, Ahmedabad (2) Bangalore -- Hyderabad, Chennai through Spirit Air's partner airlines (3)

Bihta -- to facilitate direct access to the state capital, Patna and Bihta to Jamshedpur, Bokaro," said the statement.

In Phase II, Spirit Air will introduce international connectivity, including: Muzaffarpur to Kathmandu and Janakpur (Nepal), Birpur to Rajbiraj and Biratnagar (Nepal) and Valmiki Nagar to Kathmandu and Bhairahawa (Nepal). PTI



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Actions aligned with highest standards of safety, care: A-I CEO

**SUKALP SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 6

AMID HEIGHTENED concerns about flight safety in the wake of the AI 171 crash, killing 260, Air India CEO Campbell Wilson Wednesday assured flyers that the Tata group airline is focused on ensuring safe flight operations, and listed various measures being taken by the carrier to "reinforce" its operations following the June 12 incident.

In a communication to the members of Air India's loyalty programme Maharaja Club, Wilson said Air India is ensuring that all its actions are aligned with the "highest standards of safety and care". "I acknowledge that there have been some operational challenges over the last few weeks that may have impacted your travel experience. Rest assured, we take this seriously and we are committed to strengthening our internal processes to minimise the inconvenience that such circumstances cause to you. Alongside our broader efforts to modernise operations continue in full swing, including our retrofit programme which will significantly elevate your in-flight experience. So, whenever you choose to fly with Air India, know that your trust is valued and your journey safeguarded by our entire Air India family, through rigorous processes, ad-

vanced technology, and a deeply embedded culture of safety and care," Wilson said.

He said that the carrier's regular safety protocols are "rigorous and multi-layered", with every aircraft undergoing "thorough" pre-departure checks by trained engineers and pilots. "Maintenance is conducted at certified facilities before and between flights. Our pilots, cabin crew, and engineers train regularly at the Air India Training Academy, ensuring full alignment with the latest safety procedures and global best practices and our Integrated Operations Control Centre tracks every flight in real time, monitoring weather, crew, and aircraft performance," Wilson said.

Wilson's comments come close on the heels of a few highly publicised aircraft snags over the past few weeks, drawing public attention in the wake of the Ahmedabad crash. Over the past few weeks, AI has been subject to a few regulatory actions by DGCA.

Wilson told AI's frequent flyers that the "safety pause", which the airline had adopted after the crash, continues to be in place. This involves additional voluntary technical checks on aircraft and adopting a cautious approach in flight operations, and along with a few other factors, led to a temporary reduction in the carrier's wide-body international schedule.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

MINT

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## Air India taps SIA to bolster MRO ops

[Bloomberg  
lawbacklog@bloomberglaw.com](https://www.bloomberglaw.com/news/2025/08/07/air-india-sia-mro-ops)

**A**ir India plans to lean on shareholder Singapore Airlines, or SIA, to move some aircraft maintenance services in-house instead of outsourcing them to state-owned AI Engineering Services Ltd (AIESL), according to people familiar with the matter.

The airline is preparing to take on pre-flight and daily aircraft inspections, minor repair work and other troubleshooting activities from AIESL, said the people, who weren't authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

The phased move away from AIESL follows a deadly crash in June—the cause of which remains unknown, a sectorwide safety audit and a temporary safety-related pause in service.

The Indian carrier continues to work closely with AIESL. However, with our fleet expansion—570 aircraft including a significant number of widebody jets—India's current MRO infrastructure is not equipped to support this scale," an Air India spokesperson said in an email. MRO refers to Maintenance Repair and Overhaul services.

Air India was in the midst of a transformation under its new owners—the Tata Group bought the unprofitable former state-run carrier in 2022—when flight AI 171 crashed in the western city of Ahmedabad, killing all but one of the 242 people on board.

Gaining control of maintenance services was a part of Air India's restructuring plan even before the plane crash, the people said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

MINT

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---



Jürgen Westermeier's appointment will be effective from 1 September.

AP

## Airbus appoints Jürgen as India prez

**A**irbus has appointed Jürgen Westermeier as the president and managing director for India and South Asia. The appointment of 53-year-old Jürgen, currently the executive vice president and chief procurement officer at Airbus, will be effective from 1 September, the aircraft maker said in a release on Wednesday.

He will succeed Rémi Maillard, who will become executive vice president, engineering for commercial aircraft and head of technology at Airbus. India is a key market for Airbus.

"In his new role, Jürgen will spearhead Airbus' business in India and South Asia, across Commercial Aircraft, Defence and Space, and Helicopters. He will be responsible for commercial aircraft sales and for expanding the company's footprint in the region, which includes services, engineering, digital, innovation and training," the release said. **PTI**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

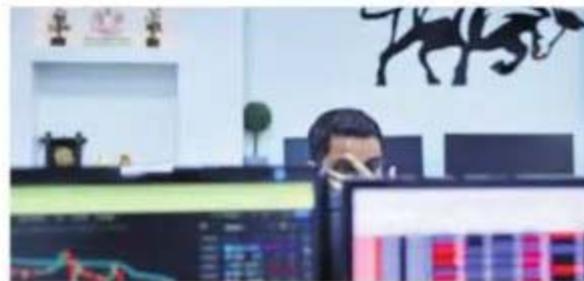
## Mkt tumbles as US tariff offsets RBI rate pause

ARSHAD KHAN @NewDelhi

DOMESTIC equity market closed slightly lower on Wednesday as investors grew cautious following US President Donald Trump's threat on Tuesday to substantially raise tariffs on Indian goods within 24 hours.

This was in response to India's continued imports of Russian oil. Trump acted on his word and on Wednesday signed an executive order imposing an additional 25% tariff on India, raising the total tariff on Indian goods imported by the U.S. to 50%.

Experts believe this tariff increase will negatively impact India's outbound trade to the U.S., which is valued at nearly \$100 billion. The move is also expected to affect the earnings of many companies that derive a significant portion of their revenue from exports to the U.S. Sunny Agrawal, head of fundamental research at SBI Securities, told TNIE the market may open flat or slightly lower on Thursday with a negative bias.



By allowing 21 days, Trump is keeping the negotiation window open, which is likely to provide some relief to investors. I also feel most negative cues are already factored in

Sunny Agrawal, head of fundamental research at SBI Securities

This is because tariffs will apply only after 21 days, creating uncertainty about whether and when the tariffs will actually come into effect.

"By allowing 21 days, Trump is keeping the negotiation window open, which is likely to provide some relief to investors. I also feel most negative cues are already factored in," said Agrawal. He added that sectors like gems & jewellery

and textiles, which have maximum exposure to the US market, have seen sharp corrections in recent sessions.

Regarding pharma companies, Agrawal said, "It is difficult to predict impact because imposing taxes on medicines is not easy for any country."

Concerns over escalating US-India trade tensions overshadowed the RBI's decision to keep repo rate unchanged at 5.5%, a

move that was widely anticipated by markets.

The BSE Sensex fell 166.26 points or 0.21% to settle at 80,543.99 on Wednesday, and the Nifty closed 75.35 points or 0.31% lower at 24,574.20. The Nifty Midcap and Smallcap indices declined over 1% each. Market breadth remained weak, with the Nifty 500 advance-decline ratio at 1:4, reflecting significant profit booking in the broader market.

Barring PSU Banks, which outperformed with gains of 0.6%, all other sectoral indices closed in negative territory. IT, Media, Realty, Pharma, and FMCG stocks declined in the range of 1-2%, reflecting sectoral rotation and risk-off sentiment. "Overall, we expect the market to continue its consolidation as investor sentiment remains cautious amid India-US trade tensions and the ongoing Q1 earnings announcements," said Siddhartha Khemka, head of research, wealth management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## US: 4 die in crash of medical transport plane on Navajo Nation

ASSOCIATED PRESS

■ Chinle (US)

A small medical transport plane crashed and caught fire Tuesday on the Navajo Nation in northern Arizona, killing four people, the tribe said in a statement.

A Beechcraft King Air 300 from the CSI Aviation company left Albuquerque, New Mexico, with two pilots and two health care providers, according to the Federal Aviation Administration and CSI Aviation. It crashed in the early afternoon near the airport in Chinle, about 300 miles (483 kilometres) north-east of Phoenix.

"They were trying to land there and unfortunately something went wrong," district Police Commander Emmett Yazzie said.

The crew was planning pick up a patient who needed critical care from the federal Indian Health Service hospital in Chinle, said Sharen



Navajo Nation Police Department shows a medical transport plane after it crashed near the airport in Chinle, Ariz. AP

Sandoval, director of the Navajo Department of Emergency Management. She said the plan was to return to Albuquerque. The patient's location and condition were not known Tuesday evening.

Tribal authorities began receiving reports at 12:44 pm

of black smoke at the airport, Sandoval said. The cause of the crash wasn't known, the tribe said. The National Transportation Safety Board and the FAA are investigating.

CSI Aviation officials "with great sadness" confirmed the deaths in an emailed state-

ment and extended condolences to the families, friends and loved ones of the people killed. Their names haven't been released. The company is cooperating with the investigation, according to the statement.

Navajo Nation President

Buu Nygren said in a social media post that he was heartbroken to learn of the crash.

"These were people who dedicated their lives to saving others, and their loss is felt deeply across the Navajo Nation," he said.

Medical transports by air from the Navajo Nation are common because most hospitals are small and do not offer advanced or trauma care. The Chinle airport is one of a handful of airports that the tribe owns and operates on the vast 27,000 square-mile (70,000 square-kilometer) reservation that stretches into Arizona, New Mexico and Utah — the largest land base of any Native American tribe. In January, a medical transport plane crashed in Philadelphia, killing eight people. The National Transportation Safety Board, which is investigating the crash, has said the voice recorder on that plane was not working.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Air India strengthening internal processes to minimise operational challenges: CEO

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE  
■ New Delhi

Air India has vigorous and multi-layered safety protocols with every aircraft undergoing thorough checks take-off, its chief Campbell Wilson said on Wednesday as he emphasised that the airline is strengthening internal processes to minimise operational challenges.

On June 12, a London Gatwick-bound Air India's Boeing 737-8 aircraft crashed into a building soon after take-off, killing 260 people. Since then, the Tata Group-owned carrier has carried out various checks on its Boeing 737 and 787 planes.

In recent weeks, some of Air India's flights have either been cancelled or delayed due to technical issues.

Against this backdrop, Wilson, on Wednesday, acknowledged that there have been some operational challenges over the last few weeks that may have impacted the travel experience.

"Rest assured, we take this seriously and we are committed to strengthening our internal processes to minimise the inconvenience that such circumstances cause to you," the Air India CEO and MD said in a message to the customers.

Listing out various steps taken since the fatal crash of AI171 flight, Wilson said detailed inspections of its Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 air-



REPRESENTATIVE PHOTO

craft were done and no issues were found during the inspections.

"As with some other international airlines, we also inspected the fuel control switch mechanism of Boeing 737 and 787-8 aircraft, likewise with no findings," he noted. Last month, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), during an audit, came across around 100 violations and observations related to Air India's training, crew's rest and duty

period norms, and airfield qualification.

Referring to the audit findings, Wilson said the audits are part of the aviation industry's process of continuous improvement and, "as the DGCA stated in a recent communique, Air India's recent results are 'entirely normal' for an airline of our scale and scope".

The airline, as part of 'safety pause', has temporarily cut its schedule to accommodate additional pre-flight

checks and mitigate the impact of regional airspace closures.

"We also took the opportunity of additional ground time to accelerate upgrades to improve aircraft reliability and to strengthen how we manage delays and disruptions," Wilson said and stressed the airline's safety protocols are rigorous and multi-layered, with every aircraft undergoing thorough checks before take-off by trained engineers and



Campbell Wilson FILE PHOTO

pilots.

"Maintenance is conducted at certified facilities before and between flights. Our pilots, cabin crew, and engineers train regularly at the Air India Training Academy, ensuring full alignment with the latest safety procedures and global best practices and our Integrated Operations Control Centre tracks every flight in real time, monitoring weather, crew, and aircraft performance," he said.

The carrier expects to fully resume international operations from October 1 and the phased restoration commenced from August 1.

Wilson has sent a message to the members of Air India's loyalty programme, Maharaja Club.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

6 AUGUST 2025

---

## इंडिगो के खिलाफ प्रदर्शन

स्वतंत्र भारत संवाददाता लखनऊ। समाजसेवी विपिन अग्निहोत्री ने इंडिगो एयरलाइंस व उसके मालिक राहुल भाटिया के खिलाफ विरोध प्रदर्शन किया। मुंबई-कोलकाता फ्लाइट में एक विशेष धर्म के यात्री को थप्पड़ मारे जाने की घटना पर कार्रवाई न होने से नाराज़गी जताई। इस विरोध में सोशल मीडिया इन्फ्लुएंसर फैजान अंसारी और योग प्रशिक्षक शिल्पी चुघ भी शामिल हुए। नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय से इंडिगो पर प्रतिबंध लगाने की मांग की।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

## Your trust is valued, journey safeguarded, AI CEO tells flyers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** The Maharaja is rolling out a campaign to restore passenger confidence after the fatal crash of Flight AI 171 in Ahmedabad — the airline's first wide-body accident since 1978 and the first major disaster since the Air India-Indian Airlines merger and privatisation.

In a message to customers on Wednesday, Air India MD and CEO Campbell Wilson said: "Whenever you choose to fly with Air India, know that your trust is valued and your journey safeguarded... through rigorous processes, advanced technology, and a deeply embedded culture of safety and care."

The airline began a phased restoration of international services on Aug 1 and aims for full resumption by Oct 1. "This measured approach ensures we complete every verification thoroughly and resume service with complete confidence," Wilson said.

Wilson, a veteran of Singapore Airlines, which holds a 25% stake in Air India alongside majority owner Tata Group, wrote, "I acknowledge there have

### Akasa Air pilot examiner gets 6-mth suspension

**D**GCA has suspended a designated examiner (DE) of Akasa Air for 6 months for violating rules during pilot skill tests. The airline claimed that it voluntarily reported the violation to the regulator.

"Safety is of utmost priority at Akasa. Each DE and every other employee of the company upholds this standard in its highest form. The primary objective of any DE at Akasa is to ensure that all training and assessments meet prescribed regulatory and safety standards," a spokesperson said. TNN

been some operational challenges... Rest assured, we take this seriously."

Wilson outlined a raft of remedial steps: detailed inspections of Boeing 787-8 and 787-9 fleet; voluntary flight cuts to allow deeper maintenance checks; strengthened internal systems; continued adherence to regular safety protocols and a comprehensive safety management system.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## Westermeier new head of Airbus India & S Asia

**New Delhi:** Airbus has appointed Jürgen Westermeier (53) as MD and president for India and South Asia, effective Sept 1, 2025.

Jürgen, currently EVP & chief procurement officer at Airbus, will succeed Rémi Maillard, who will become EVP engineering for commercial aircraft and head of technology. In his new role, Jürgen will lead Airbus' business in India and South Asia, across commercial aircraft, defence, space and helicopters. He will be responsible for commercial sales and for expanding the company's footprint in the region. TNN



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## **Bird-hit AI Exp flight aborts take-off**

**A** Pune-Bhubaneswar AI Express flight aborted its take-off after a bird hit the right engine while it was gaining pace Wednesday. "Flames started coming out of the engine," a flyer told TOI. The flight, which had 140 people on board, later returned to the bay. On Tuesday, clogged toilets delayed AI's Delhi-Pune flight by five hours. Flyers remained seated in the plane for two hours. 780



# Corporate Communications Directorate

---

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

7 AUGUST 2025

---

## Clogged toilets delay AI flight

[Joy.Sengupta@timesofindia.com](mailto:Joy.Sengupta@timesofindia.com)

**Pune:** Clogged toilets delayed Air India's Delhi-Pune flight by almost five hours on Tuesday afternoon, compelling over 150 passengers to spend almost two hours sitting in the aircraft before deboarding and getting into another plane after going through the formalities, including security check, all over again.

The flight (AI-2982) was

scheduled to take off from Delhi at 1.05pm and land in Pune at 3.20pm. The substitute plane finally flew at 5.40pm and landed in Pune around 8pm.

An Air India spokesperson told **TOI**, "Our ground colleagues in Delhi airport extended support to the passengers to minimise the inconvenience. Arrangements were made to fly the passengers to their destination at the earliest."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

6 AUGUST 2025

## India mulls new pilot training system as air traffic booms

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** India is considering revamping pilot training by gradually moving away from the current system, where a student has to first earn a commercial pilot licence (CPL) and then do type rating separately for a specific aircraft, to a unified “multi-crew pilot licence” (MPL) system.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation will hold a meeting with stakeholders on the issue on Wednesday. If approved, both systems will co-exist, and operators will have the flexibility to choose what best meets their requirements of safety and operational efficiency.

This is the second big change India is contemplating in this field, after proposing to make students who are from Class 12 arts and commerce streams eligible to pursue CPL — a field reserved for science students with physics and maths in 12th since mid-1990s. As the fastest growing aviation market globally, govt is clearly keen to take steps to meet Indian carriers’ requirement for pilots in coming years.

At the moment, cadet pi-

**This is the second big change India is contemplating in this field, after proposing to make students from arts and commerce streams eligible to pursue commercial pilot licence**

lots have to first do CPL that involves, among other things, flying training aircraft for 200 hours. They then need to do simulator-based type rating for specific aircraft like Airbus A320 or Boeing 737.

MPL will require them to fly a small training plane for about 70 hours. Then they will do simulator training for 140 to 160 hours. Subsequently, airlines will induct them as trainees on that type of aircraft. Approved by International Civil Aviation Organisation, MPL has been adopted by over 50 airlines globally, like Lufthansa, Etihad, flyDubai and Singapore Airlines.

“We will evaluate both the systems and take a considered view on what is best in terms of ensuring high training standards and meeting

airline requirements. MPL was considered by us in the past too. There has again been a request to consider the same and that is being done,” said senior govt officials. If approved, MPL will be introduced gradually over 2-3 years and CPL will continue to exist for non-airline students.

An integrated programme, MPL “lays emphasis on developing key competencies that are essential to safely operate modern commercial aircraft. It can be tailored to specific aircraft type and the operational philosophy of airlines which will ensure a steady stream of pilots”, said a senior pilot.

“MPL should have been adopted several years ago to meet India’s growing aviation needs... MPL aligns better with modern airline operational realities than the current CPL system which is outdated for a fast-developing aviation sector. India needs 2,000-plus new pilots annually over the next decade,” said another captain.

Opposing MPL, a senior captain said: “Our regulatory system lacks necessary robustness to adequately oversee and enforce MPL program standards consistently.”