



Corporate Communications Directorate

BANGALORE MIRROR

BANGALORE

9 JANUARY 2026

Airport parking policy slammed for being 'unfair'

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy has come down heavily on airport authorities over the new taxi parking policy at Kempegowda International Airport, questioning the disparity between app-based aggregator cabs and local taxi operators. During his visit to the airport, the

minister held discussions with taxi drivers and heard their grievances over the revised parking system. Expressing dissatisfaction, he asked officials why Ola and Uber taxis were allowed parking close to the terminal, while local and other private taxis were pushed nearly a kilometre away. **-BMB**



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

Navi Mumbai airport seeks telecom charges in line with Mumbai airport

AJINKYA KAWALE & GULVEEN AULAKH
Mumbai/New Delhi, 9 January

After a standoff with telecom operators, Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIAL) has proposed charging telecom service providers (TSPs) for in-building solution (IBS) infrastructure at rates similar to those at Mumbai International Airport (MIAL).

In a statement on Friday, the airport said it was putting in place a 'layered strategy' from 'aligning telecom infrastructure pricing with established benchmarks' to 'deploying on-ground assistance and mobility workarounds' for its passengers.

This comes at a time when telecom companies have sought the Centre's intervention over the airport operator's refusal to grant the 'right of way' (RoW) to deploy cellular services-related infrastructure to passengers at the recently-launched airport. Operators had alleged that they were being forced to mandatorily use a network deployed by the airport. It was described as exorbitant, aggregating to ₹44.16 crore a year, in order to provide cellular services to customers. "The airport operator has proposed that TSPs be charged for IBS infrastructure at rates aligned with those



PHOTO: REUTERS

NMIAL said it was putting in place a layered strategy of aligning telecom infrastructure pricing with established benchmarks for its passengers

applicable at MIAL. The move is aimed at strengthening in-building telecom coverage while ensuring consistency with established practices at major Indian airports," a NMIAL spokesperson said in a statement. NMIAL is proposing a monthly per-operator cost of ₹36 lakh, on account of its greenfield structure, since costs go up by 20 per cent.

Else, the average pay-out in line with MIAL for NMIAL per month would have been ₹29 lakh. The same is at ₹69 lakh at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport Mumbai (CSMIA).

The total 4G area coverage at MIAL is at 9 million square feet (sq ft), whereas the same for NMIAL is 3.8 million sq feet. This rate is expected to be approximately 20 per cent higher for 5G technology as compared to 4G cellular services. Industry executives belonging to telecom companies told *Business Standard* that the proposed charges at the CSMIA airport levels were not acceptable.

"The charges for CSMIA were high at the time of the agreement. So, NMIAL's charges cannot be at the levels that are being proposed," one of the people said.

The Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), which represents all carriers, has written to the department of telecommunications (DoT) stating that NMIAL was statutorily obligated to grant RoW permissions in a "non-discriminatory and time-bound manner for the installation of telecommunication infrastructure, including IBS." The industry body has stated that NMIAL having exclusive RoW was foreclosing competition, in contravention of the Telecommunications Act, 2023. Meanwhile, the airport added that it had extended Wifi access to passengers at the airport along with visitors, airport personnel, and cab drivers, among others.

Airport faces backlash for reducing BMTC bus bays at Terminal 1

Vayu Vajra drivers struggle; decline in passengers

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has come under criticism for reducing on-ground space for Vayu Vajra bus services at Terminal 1 (T1) of the Kempegowda International Airport.

Earlier, Vayu Vajra buses operated from 14 dedicated bays at T1, with an average waiting time of about 30 minutes. This has now been reduced to six bays, with buses allowed to halt for barely 10 minutes.

Since the airport opened in 2008, Vayu Vajra buses have been among the most preferred modes of airport transport owing to their accessibility and affordability. They also remain the only public transport option serving the airport.

According to the BMTC, until May 2025, T1 had two lanes for Vayu Vajra buses, with six to eight bays in each lane. This has now been cut to a single lane with six bays, after the former bus bays were reportedly taken over by cab aggregator Quick Ride.

With just a narrow lane to operate all 156 Vayu Vajra schedules across 22 routes, congestion has increased, leaving drivers struggling to maintain operations.

"The entire system is now rushed. Earlier, buses could wait for 20-25 minutes and leave the airport full. Now, they have less than 10 minutes, so they don't run at full capac-



From two lanes with six to eight bays each, T1 now has just one lane with six BMTC bus bays. The former bus bays were reportedly taken over by cab aggregator Quick Ride.

DH PHOTO/ASRA MAVAD

The reduction at T1 was made after a dedicated BMTC bus stand was established at T2. All buses that stop at T1 also stop at T2. However, BMTC data shows that about 80% of Vayu Vajra users are T1 passengers, with T2 accounting for only 1,000-2,000 daily riders.

ity. If a passenger is even two minutes late, they must wait 30 minutes to an hour for the next bus. We are losing passengers because of this," a BMTC staff member at the airport said.

BMTC data shows that daily ridership, which averaged around 12,000, has dropped by about 1,000 since the reduction in bus bays.

During a *DH* visit to the airport on Thursday, several passengers were seen enquiring about schedules, but few waited for buses to arrive.

Strain on drivers

The move has also put additional strain on drivers.

"Since we can't park at T1, we have to go all the way to P7, which is about 2-3 km away. With this constant movement, we don't even get time

to eat lunch," said Hemaraju, a BMTC driver.

Other drivers cited difficulties navigating the tight space, with multiple routes now sharing single bays, leading to confusion for both drivers and passengers.

BMTC officials said efforts to restore the second lane have not yielded results. "We have held discussions with BIAL and submitted a letter outlining our concerns, but there has been no positive response," a senior BMTC official told *DH*.

A BIAL spokesperson said the reduction at T1 was made after a dedicated BMTC bus stand was established at Terminal 2 (T2). "All buses that stop at T1 also stop at T2," she said.

However, BMTC data shows that about 80% of Vayu Vajra users are T1 passengers, with T2 accounting for only 1,000-2,000 daily riders.

Transport Minister Ramalinga Reddy, who visited the airport on Wednesday to review new cab pick-up rules and overstay charges, termed the reduction of bus bays "unacceptable" and said he had taken up the issue with BIAL.

The state government holds a 13% stake in the airport.

दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर यात्री न घटे, न बढ़ें

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली: देश का सबसे बड़े और व्यस्त इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय (आइजीआइ) हवाई अड्डे से वर्ष 2025 में उम्मीद के मुताबिक यात्रियों ने सफर नहीं किया। 2024 के मुकाबले 2025 में आजीआइ एयरपोर्ट से सफर करने वाले यात्रियों की संख्या में कोई बढ़ोतरी नहीं हुई। अगर कोविड महामारी और 2008 की वैश्विक आर्थिक मंदी के दौर को छोड़ दें, तो एयरपोर्ट की स्थापना के बाद यह तीसरा मौका है, जब यात्रियों का ग्राफ ऊपर जाने के बजाय, जगह थम सा गया है। नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) के अनुसार, वर्ष 2025 में एयरपोर्ट से करीब 7.8 करोड़ यात्रियों ने सफर किया। यह स्थिति तब है जब आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट सालाना 10.5 करोड़ यात्रियों को संभालने की क्षमता रखता है।



आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट • आर्काइव

रनवे की मरम्मत और पड़ोसी देशों का असर : वर्ष 2025 में आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट के मुख्य रनवे की मरम्मत का काम चलता रहा, जिससे उड़ानों की संख्या सीमित रही। इसके अलावा, पाकिस्तानी एयरस्पेस बंद होने से यूरोप व खाड़ी देशों की कई फ्लाइट्स को रद्द भी करना पड़ा।

एअर इंडिया का हादसा और इंडिगो की परेशानी : जून 2025 में एअर इंडिया के विमान हादसे के बाद एयरलाइन ने अपनी कई उड़ानों में

कटौती की। वर्ष के अंत में इंडिगो के शेड्यूल में आई भारी गड़बड़ी ने रही-सही कसर पूरी कर दी।

हवाई अड्डों की बंदी : मई 2025 में उत्तर और मध्य भारत के करीब 32 छोटे हवाई अड्डों के अस्थायी रूप से बंद होने का असर भी दिल्ली पर दिखा। इन शहरों से दिल्ली आने वाली कनेक्टिंग उड़ानें बंद होने की वजह से आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों की कुल संख्या में कमी आई।

पांच वर्ष में आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों की संख्या

वर्ष	यात्रियों की संख्या
2021	3.7 करोड़
2022	5.9 करोड़
2023	7.2 करोड़
2024	7.8 करोड़
2025	7.8 करोड़



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

Defunct Udan airports cost govt nearly ₹900 cr

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India's plan to connect its interior areas by air has run into heavy weather, with expensive infrastructure and commercial viability playing spoilsport while hundreds of crores are being spent to maintain airports where no planes are landing.

The government spent a total of nearly ₹900 crore on 15 regional airports that are currently non-operational. These airports, built under the government's Udan (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) connectivity scheme, still incur expenses.

The total expenses over eight years from 2017, as per documents submitted by the civil aviation ministry to Parliament, highlight the fraught nature of expansion. While over ₹4,300-crore have been given in subsidy to keep these



The govt has paid over ₹4,300 crore in subsidies to help keep regional routes running.

routes running, the troubles at the hinterland airports show the huge gap between aspirations and ground reality.

"Subsidy-based schemes like Udan generally do not work in aviation," said Mark D. Martin, founder and CEO at Martin Consulting, an aviation consultancy. "Once the three-year subsidy or VGF (viability gap funding) period ends,

many of the flight operations turn unviable, or people may not be willing to pay for high-priced tickets."

Queries emailed to the civil aviation ministry have yet to receive a response.

A case in point is Uttar Pradesh, which has five of the seven airports inaugurated in 2024 that have gone silent. The remaining two are in Madhya Pradesh. From Shimla to Sikkim's Pakyong, these facilities face problems as varied as technical hurdles, pilot shortages, and the exit of small-budget airlines.

The 15 airports that are 'temporarily non-operational' include the six in Uttar Pradesh—Aligarh, Azamgarh, Ambikapur, Moradabad, Shravasti and Kushinagar—two each in Madhya Pradesh and Punjab—Datia, Chitrakoot, Ludhiana and

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Big bill: ₹900 crore spent on non-operational Udan airports

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Pathankot—and one each in Odisha, Himachal, Gujarat, Sikkim and Karnataka—Rourkela, Shimla, Bhavnagar, Pakyong, and Kalaburagi.

These airports fall under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) or Udan. The scheme was launched in 2016. The Union government has invested ₹4,638 crore in airport development under RCS apart from the VGF subsidy.

Under Udan, there are 93 airports in smaller towns and cities, of which 78 are operational. It helps connect hundreds of thousands of people who fly from smaller towns.

Shimla, the airport where the first Udan flight took off in April 2017, is an example of the struggle. Despite suspended operations, the ministry still incurs an expense of ₹16.70 crore on maintenance, as per December 2025 disclosures by minister of state for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol.

The Pakyong airport, built at a cost of ₹605 crore, has seen maintenance spending of ₹78.75 crore. At the other end of the spectrum, Pathankot remains the least expensive non-operational site, costing ₹5.18 crore in upkeep.



Of the 93 Udan airports in smaller towns and cities, 78 are operational.

For the ongoing winter schedule (October-March), the ministry had said there were 126 operational airports in India, with Amravati, Hissar, Purnea and Rupsi being the new ones where operations were proposed. It said operations were suspended at seven of the 15 non-functional airports during this period.

"At present, 15 airports...are temporarily non-operational under the Udan Scheme due to various reasons, including completion of the three-year VGF tenure, poor visibility conditions at VFR (Visual Flight Rules) airports, daytime runway closures, shortage of

aircraft, leasing issues, temporary discontinuation of operations by the airline concerned, novation of contractual obligations to other operators, and low passenger load factors, etc.," the minister told the Rajya Sabha on 1 December.

Even new entrants have hit a wall. Operations at the Moradabad airport were suspended in November 2024 by the then operator, FlyBig. The airline discontinued its flight operation due to poor visibility in North India and the non-availability of requisite equipment at Moradabad airport, Parliament was informed last year. Government has spent ₹30.41 crore on its upkeep.

Subsequently, FlyBig shut down in October 2025, with Moradabad airport now having no flight operations.

Aviation consultant Martin points to the failure of airlines such as FlyBig and TruJet, which were heavily reliant on Udan to have commercially viable operations.

Proximity to major hubs dictate success for the smaller ones, Martin said. "An airport like Hindon became viable as it is located near Delhi and, in a way, acts as a satellite."

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Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

9 JANUARY 2026

IGIA traffic growth flatlines; hit by clash, crash & chaos

No Footfall Growth Only For Third Time In This Millennium

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New Delhi: For the first time this millennium — except the Covid blip and 2008 economic downturn — Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) did not see its passenger footfall grow on a year-on-year basis in 2025.

Last calendar year (CY), IGIA handled about 7.8 crore passengers — almost the same as the number in CY 2024 — with both being 8.3% more than 2023's 7.2 crore.

There are several factors due to which IGIA was unable to maintain its CAGR of 8%, which was being witnessed on a year-on-year basis. These include the airport's main runway being shut for repairs for some months during the year; the closure of 32 airports in north and central India during Operation Sindoor for some days in May; continued closure of Pakistan airspace for Indian carriers due to which some western routes, mainly to and from Delhi, have been impacted; the aftermath of



NOT MUSIC TO EARS: IGIA growth could remain muted in the short term as Noida Airport could open this year and wean away domestic footfall

Air India AI 171 crash after which the airline reduced flights, and finally, the IndiGo schedule collapse in Dec. For both AI and IndiGo, the main hub is IGIA.

Meanwhile, India's second busiest airport — Mumbai's CSMIA — was a little less impacted by factors like the closure of 32 airports during Operation Sindoor and closure of Pakistan

airspace. As a result, CSMIA handled 5.6 crore passengers — its highest ever — in CY 2025. This was 1.3% more than the 2024 numbers and 7.6% over the 2023 figures.

IGIA flatlined due to its location in the heart of north India and being the base of AI and IndiGo. Its growth could remain muted in the short term as Noida Internat-

ional Airport could open this year and wean away domestic footfall.

On a pan-India basis, air traffic was spared this flatline. DGCA data shows Jan-Nov 2025 saw 15.3 crore domestic flyers — up 4.8% from 14.6 crore in the same period in 2024. India saw 5.7 crore international travellers in Jan-Sept 2025 — up 7.5% from 5.3 crore in the corresponding period in 2024.

IGIA can handle over 10.5 crore passengers annually but is yet to touch the 8-crore mark. Airlines hope Delhi Airport Authority Ltd (DIAL) uses this breathing period to sort out key irritants, such as connectivity between terminals. The about-a-decade old air train plan remains on paper. DIAL now plans to implement airside transfers for domestic to international and vice-versa transfers between T3 and T1/2. Domestic passengers will, however, continue to trudge by road between T1 and T3/2 — almost 9km apart — till an automatic people mover like air train is in place.

Wrong runway landing: ATC units may have to record video

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New Delhi: After an Ariana Afghan flight from Kabul landed on a wrong runway at Delhi's IGI Airport last Nov, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has recommended that air traffic control (ATC) units "be equipped with devices to record video and background communications of controllers performing ATC duties in the tower."

In its preliminary report of the incident, the bureau said video recording device installation needs "to be implemented for all international airports on priority."

The recommendation comes as the "cockpit voice recorder (CVR) recording of the involved flight had been overwritten because the aircraft operated its next flight without downloading or replacing the CVR at IGI Airport," the report says. The 34-year-old Airbus A310's digital flight data recorder (DFDR) data was retrieved and its "analysis is in progress."

AAIB said the idea of the recommended recording was to "analyse the controller's actions post incident/ accident" and that this "information shall be solely utilised for investigation purposes by the Di-



rectorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and AAIB."

On Nov 23, the Ariana Afghan Airlines AFG311 flight was cleared to land on IGI's runway 29 left (29L). ATC had instructed AFG311 to continue to approach runway 29L which was read back correctly. At two nautical miles to touchdown, ATC gave landing clearance for runway 29L while Air India flight AI 2243, was departing from runway 29 right (29R). But AFG311 landed on an unassigned runway, 29R, at 12.06 pm despite clearance for runway 29L.

Crew statements of arriving and departing flights were obtained as witness records for analysis. The aircraft operated its next flight

as AFG 312 to Kabul at 3.42 pm the same day.

Delhi has two runway systems: the northern runway system that includes runways 09/27 and 10/28, and the southern with 11L/29R and 29L/11R. Runways 29L/11R and 29R/11L are parallel, separated by only 360 meters.

The runways did not meet the criteria for parallel runways for simultaneous use. Therefore, both runways were operated in "segregated dependent mode", with 29L designated exclusively for arrivals and 29R for departures.

Segregated dependent mode means there are no parallel landings and takeoffs of the kind passengers see at, say, San Francisco.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

Akasa Air joins IATA after completing safety audit



New Delhi: Akasa Air has joined the global airlines' grouping International Air Transport Association (IATA) as a member. IATA represents over 360 airlines, including Indian carriers Air India, Air India Express, IndiGo and SpiceJet. Akasa Air said it became an IATA member after completing IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA) which is mandatory for the membership. "We are excited to welcome Akasa Air as an IATA member. India's aviation potential is huge, with the industry supporting 7.7 million jobs and \$53.6 billion in economic contribution," Regional Vice President for Asia-Pacific for IATA Sheldon Hee said. ❧



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo loses appeal against DGCA fine over alleged training lapses

IndiGo on Friday said an appellate authority had rejected its appeal against Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) penalties on two senior executives of the airline for alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at certain airports. In September last year, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a fine of ₹20 lakh each on the Director Flight Operations and Director Training of IndiGo. The DGCA Appellate Authority, through an order dated January 7, has dismissed the appeal. The watchdog had imposed the penalty for the airline's alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at Category C aerodromes. PH

Akasa Air joins international airlines' association IATA

Akasa Air has joined global airlines' grouping International Air Transport Association (IATA) as a member. IATA represents over 360 airlines, including Indian carriers Air India, Air India Express, IndiGo and SpiceJet. In a release on Friday, Akasa Air said it became an IATA member after completing IATA Operational Safety Audit which is mandatory for the membership. "We are excited to welcome Akasa Air as an IATA member. India's aviation potential is huge, with the industry supporting 7.7 million jobs and \$53.6 billion in economic contribution," Sheldon Hee, regional vice-president for Asia-Pacific for IATA, said. PH

IndiGo, Air India may remain dominant in Indian skies till 2030



Comfortably placed

Airline	FY25 fleet size	*Projected fleet size in 2030	New firm order for aircraft since 2023
IndiGo	437	600	960
Air India group	304	500	570
Akasa	27	150	150
SpiceJet	53	NA	NA

Note: *Estimates have not been given by the firm. Source: DGCA, Network Thoughts, announcements and industry estimates.

SURAJEET DAS GUPTA
New Delhi, 9 January

With IndiGo Airlines becoming the first Indian carrier to induct the wide-bodied A321 XLR, followed closely by Air India taking delivery of its first Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner four years after it was privatised, India is likely to continue to remain a duopoly in the skies even in calendar year 2030 (CY30), with 85 per cent of the fleet controlled by the top two players. IndiGo inducted the A321 XLR into its fleet on Wednesday.

While slower deliveries by Airbus have aggravated global supply shortage, only three airlines in India — IndiGo, Air India, and Akasa — have given long-term orders, going as far as 2037, to lock up deliveries. Airbus, which has a large backlog of planes, is now ramping up production.

In 2024-25 (FY25), IndiGo with a 437-strong fleet controlled over half the commercial passenger aircraft, followed by the Air India group with a 35.5 per cent share. The combine dominated the skies with 86 per cent share of total fleet. Akasa and SpiceJet together had over 9 per cent of the planes.

The same duopoly is likely to prevail in 2030. Projections by Ameya Joshi, aviation analyst and founder of Network Thoughts, say that by that year, IndiGo will have a fleet of 600 active planes, the Air India group will hit 500, and Akasa Air will have 150. Joshi points out that at the moment it is difficult to gauge the overall industry fleet size as SpiceJet's survival or future is unclear.

Industry estimates show that the overall commercial fleet in India will hit around 1,300-1,350 by 2030. This primarily means that IndiGo's share would go down marginally by 4 percentage points, which will be mostly gained by the Air India group. Yet together they will still control nearly 85 per cent of the market. The only difference is that Akasa could emerge as a possible third player if it continues to take deliveries as planned and also reduces its growing losses. Akasa could have more than 30 per cent share of the country's total fleet by 2030 — a level where it can become a viable airline.

Clearly, those who have put together a long-term plan for aircraft acquisition can survive. Since 2023, IndiGo, Air India, and Akasa have collectively placed orders for a whopping 1,280 planes from Airbus and Boeing. And their pending orders waiting to be delivered now stand at over 1,600 planes (including orders before 2023).

As far as IndiGo is concerned, it made a firm order for 500 Airbus A320neo family planes in June 2023 during the Paris show. In 2025, it again made an order for 30 A-350-900 wide-body aircraft. This order was later modified into 60 planes. Air India has also upped the ante. It made an order for 470 Boeing and Airbus aircraft, and added another 300 to the order in December 2024.

In this scenario, for other players — like the three new airlines that have received no-objection certificates (NOCs), and even SpiceJet — looking out for aircraft on lease without firm orders, it would be a Herculean task.

भारत के आसमान में 2030 तक दो कंपनियों के दबदबे के आसार

सुरजीत दास गुप्ता
नई दिल्ली, 9 जनवरी

इंडिगो एयरलाइंस चाइड-वॉटी ए321 एक्सएलआर को शामिल करने वाली पहली भारतीय विमानन कंपनी बन गई है। इसके तुरंत बाद एयर इंडिया ने निजीकरण के चार साल बाद अपना पहला बॉइंग 787-9 ड्रीमलाइनर लिया है। ऐसे में संभावना है कि कैलेंडर वर्ष 2030 में भी भारत के आसमान में दो कंपनियों का ही दबदबा रहेगा और 85 प्रतिशत बड़े शीप दो कंपनियों के पास ही रहेगा। इंडिगो ने बुधवार को ए321 एक्सएलआर को अपने बेड़े में शामिल किया।

एयरबस की धूमिल दिल्ली ने वैश्विक आपूर्ति की समस्या को और बढ़ा दिया है। भारत में केवल तीन एयरलाइनों - इंडिगो, एयर इंडिया और अकासा ने दिल्लीवरी पक्की करते हुए 2037 तक के ऑर्डर दिए हैं। एयरबस भी अब अपना उत्पादन बढ़ा रही है।

वित्त वर्ष 2025 में इंडिगो के पास 437 विमानों का मजबूत बेड़ा था और अग्रे से अधिक वाणिज्यिक यात्री विमानों पर उसका निबंध था। इसके बाद एयर इंडिया समूह का 35.5 प्रतिशत हिस्सा था। इस तरह दोनों ने कुल बेड़े के 86 प्रतिशत हिस्से के साथ आसमान पर अपना दबदबा बनाए रखा। अकासा और स्पाइसजेट के पास कुल मिलाकर 9 प्रतिशत से अधिक विमान थे।

वर्ष 2030 में भी यही दबदबा रहने की संभावना है। विमानन क्षेत्र के विश्लेषक और नेटवर्क थॉट्स के संस्थापक अमेय जोशी का अनुमान है कि उस वर्ष तक इंडिगो के पास 600 सक्रिय विमानों का बेड़ा होगा। एयर इंडिया समूह के



इंडिगो एयरलाइंस ने बुधवार को ए321 एक्सएलआर को अपने बेड़े में शामिल किया

पास 500 विमान हंगे और अकासा एयर के पास 150 विमान। जोशी बताते हैं कि इस समय संपूर्ण उद्योग के बेड़े के आकार का अनुमान लगाना मुश्किल है क्योंकि स्पाइसजेट का अस्तित्व या भविष्य अनिश्चित है।

उद्योग के अनुमानों से पता चलता है कि भारत में कुल वाणिज्यिक विमानों की संख्या वर्ष 2030 तक करीब 1,300-1,350 पर पहुंच जाएगी। इसका मतलब है कि इंडिगो की भागीदारी थोड़ी सी 4 प्रतिशत तक घट जाएगी, जिसका ज्यादातर फायदा एयर इंडिया समूह को होगा। फिर भी, दोनों का अभी भी बाजार के लगभग 85 प्रतिशत हिस्से पर निबंध होगा। एकमात्र अंतर यह है कि अगर अकासा अपनी योजना के मुताबिक दिल्लीवरी लेती रही और अपने बढ़ते नुकसान को भी कम करती है, तो वह एक संभावित तीसरी कंपनी के रूप में उभर सकती है। 2030 तक अकासा के पास देश के कुल बेड़े का 10 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा हिस्सा हो सकता है, जो ऐसा स्तर है, जिसके दम पर वह कामवाच एयरलाइन बन सकती है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

अकासा एयर आईएटीए की सदस्य बनी

अकासा एयर विमानन कंपनियों के वार्षिक समूह अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन संघ (आईएटीए) की सदस्य बन गई है। आईएटीए 360 से अधिक विमानन कंपनियों का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। इनमें भारतीय विमानन कंपनियां एयर इंडिया, एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस, इंडिगो और स्पिरिटसजेट भी शामिल हैं। अकासा एयर ने शुक्रवार को जारी प्रेस विज्ञापित में कहा कि आईएटीए 'ऑपरेशनल सेफ्टी ऑडिट' (आईओएसए) को पूरा करने के बाद वह आईएटीए की सदस्य बन गई है। आईओएसए को पूरा करना सदस्यता पाने के लिए अनिवार्य है। आईएटीए के एशिया-प्रशांत क्षेत्र के क्षेत्रीय उपाध्यक्ष रोल्फन ही ने कहा, 'हम अकासा एयर को आईएटीए के सदस्य के रूप में शामिल करने पर उत्साहित हैं। भारत के विमानन क्षेत्र में अगार संभावनाएं हैं, यह उद्योग 77 लाख रोजगार सृजित करता है और अर्थव्यवस्था में 53.6 अरब अमेरिकी डॉलर का योगदान देता है।' अकासा एयर 31 बोइंग 737 मैक्स विमानों के बेड़े के साथ 26 घरेलू और छह अंतरराष्ट्रीय शहरों के लिए सेवाएं देती है। आईएटीए की सदस्यता पाने पर अकासा एयर के सीईओ विनय दुबे ने कहा कि यह कदम विमानन कंपनी की वार्षिक विश्वसनीयता को मजबूत करेगा और इसे विश्व मंच पर पवित्र के लिए तैयार भारतीय विमानन कंपनी के रूप में स्थापित करेगा।

भाषा



Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

अकासा एयर को मिली आयटा की सदस्यता

नई दिल्ली। नवोदित विमान सेवा कंपनी अकासा एयर को अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन संघ (आयटा) की सदस्यता मिल गयी है। दुनिया की 360 से अधिक विमान सेवा कंपनियां आयटा की सदस्य हैं जिनका वैश्विक हवाई यातायात में 80 प्रतिशत से अधिक योगदान है। आयटा की सदस्यता हासिल करने के लिए इसके ऑपरेशनल सेफ्टी ऑडिट में अकासा का अच्छा प्रदर्शन रहा। अकासा के संस्थापक एवं मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी विनय दुबे ने कहा कि वैश्विक विमानन पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को स्वरूप देने में आयटा की केंद्रीय भूमिका है। उसकी सदस्यता मिलना प्रगति की दिशा में आयटा के अनुशासित रुख को रेखांकित करता है। अकासा की स्थापना अगस्त 2022 में हुई थी। फिलहाल उसका नेटवर्क 26 घरेलू और छह अंतरराष्ट्रीय गंतव्यों तक फैला है।

CSMIA records 55.5-mn passenger traffic in CY2025

MRITYUNJAY BOSE
MUMBAI, DHNS

Closing the year on a strong note, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) here recorded overall passenger traffic of around 55.5 million in CY2025, marking a steady year of growth alongside multiple operational milestones.

The annual traffic included over 16.3 million international passengers and 39.2 million domestic passengers, reflecting a year-on-year growth of approximately 1.3% compared to CY2024 with 54.8 million passengers, and an overall increase of 7.6% over CY2023 passenger traffic numbers.

Passenger movement at CSMIA during the year was driven by strong seasonal demand and peak travel periods.

January 2025 emerged as the busiest month, welcoming close to 5 million passengers,



Airliners parked on the apron of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai. PTI FILE PHOTO

followed closely by November 2025, with approximately 4.9 million passengers. November was particularly noteworthy, as CSMIA recorded its top-three highest single-day passenger traffic figures during the month, including its highest-ever single-day throughput of 1,75,925 passengers on November 29, 2025. The October-December quarter (Q4) also marked the highest quarterly traffic, with 14.36 million passengers handled in Q4.

Operational throughput at CSMIA also reached new highs during CY25. The airport handled a total of 3,31,011 Air Traffic Movements (ATMs), including 92,141 international and 2,38,870 domestic ATMs.

A new record was also achieved on November 21, 2025, when CSMIA handled 1,036 ATMs, the highest number of ATMs recorded at the airport in a day. Overall, ATMs at CSMIA have grown by approximately 25% from CY2022.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

PILOT TRAINING LAPSES

Appellate Body Rejects IndiGo's Plea Against DGCA Penalty

New Delhi: IndiGo on Friday said an appellate authority has rejected its appeal against regulator DGCA's penalties on two senior executives of the airline for alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at certain airports.

In September, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a fine of ₹20 lakh each on the director flight operations and director training of IndiGo.

The DGCA Appellate Authority, through an order dated January 7, has dismissed the appeal.

"The matter has been disposed of by reinstating the penalty of ₹20 lakh each on the director flight operations and director training of the company," IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation said in a filing to BSE.

The watchdog had imposed the penalty for the airline's alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at Category C aerodromes. Generally, pilots require additional training for operating flights to and from Category C airports as they might have operational challenges.

While informing the stock exchange about the penalty in October last year, IndiGo had said that it was in the process of contesting the order before the appellate authority. Shares of IndiGo fell 1.22% on BSE on Friday. — PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

Two UK-bound AI flights diverted due to bad weather



TWO AIR India flights enroute to different UK cities were diverted to nearby airports there due to inclement weather on Thursday, according to the airline. One flight was from Mumbai to London Heathrow and the second was from Amritsar to Birmingham. These flights had taken off from India on Thursday and as per UK time.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

Pilot training lapses: IndiGo loses appeal against DGCA

INDIGO ON FRIDAY said an appellate authority has rejected its appeal against regulator DGC's penalties on two senior executives of the airline for alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at certain airports.

In September last year, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a fine of ₹ 20 lakh each on the Director Flight Operations and

Director Training of IndiGo.

The DGCA Appellate Authority, through an order dated January 7, has dismissed the appeal.

"The matter has been disposed of by reinstating the penalty of ₹ 20 lakh each on the Director Flight Operations and Director Training of the company," IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation said in a filing to BSE.

DGCA had imposed the penalty for the airline's alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at Category C aerodromes. Generally, pilots require additional training for operating flights to and from Category C airports as they might have operational challenges.

Shares of IndiGo fell 1.22% to end at ₹ 4,844.70 apiece on BSE on Friday. **PTI**



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

9 JANUARY 2026

AI takes delivery of first Dreamliner after privatisation

PTI

NEW DELHI

Tata Group-owned Air India has taken delivery of the first Boeing 787-9 aircraft after the airline was privatised nearly four years ago.

This is also the first line fit or custom-made Dreamliner for the airline.

Generally, line fit refers to an aircraft specifically made for a particular airline.

An official on Thursday said Air India completed the title transfer of the Dreamliner at the Boeing's Everett factory in Seattle on January 7.

After inspections by the



Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the aircraft, also the first line fit Dreamliner to be taken by Air India after being acquired by Tatas in January 2022, is expected to arrive in India in the next few days.

The new aircraft has a three class configuration -- economy, premium economy and business class seats.

The last line fit Dreamliner that was acquired by Air India was in October 2017 when the carrier was under the government ownership.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

डीजीसीए ने इंडिगो की अपील की खारिज

नई दिल्ली। इंडिगो ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि एक अपीलीय प्राधिकरण ने विमानन नियामक डीजीसीए द्वारा एयरलाइन के दो बरिष्ठ अधिकारियों पर लगाए गए जुर्माने के खिलाफ उसकी



अपील को खारिज कर दिया है। यह जुर्माना कुछ हवाई अड्डों पर पायलट प्रशिक्षण के लिए योग्य सिमुलेटर का इस्तेमाल करने में कथित विफलता के लिए लगाया गया था।

पिछले साल सितंबर में नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने इंडिगो के निदेशक उड़ान परिचालन और निदेशक प्रशिक्षण पर 20-20 लाख रुपये का जुर्माना लगाया था। डीजीसीए अपीलीय प्राधिकरण ने सात जनवरी के एक आदेश में इस अपील को खारिज कर दिया है। इंडिगो की मूल कंपनी इंटरग्लोब एविएशन ने बीएसई को बताया, "इस मामले का निपटारा कंपनी के निदेशक उड़ान परिचालन और निदेशक प्रशिक्षण पर 20-20 लाख रुपये के जुर्माने को बहाल करते हुए किया गया है।"



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

इंडिगो जुर्माने के आदेश के खिलाफ अपील हारी

नई दिल्ली। डीजीसीए के अपीलीय प्राधिकरण ने इंडिगो की अर्जी खारिज करते हुए जुर्माने का आदेश बरकरार रखा है। पायलट ट्रेनिंग के लिए क्वालिफाइड सिमुलेटर का इस्तेमाल न करने के आरोप में डीजीसीए द्वारा एयरलाइन के दो सीनियर अधिकारियों पर लगाए गए जुर्माने के खिलाफ इंडिगो ने अर्जी दाखिल की थी। पिछले साल सितंबर में, डीजीसीए ने इंडिगो के डायरेक्टर फ्लाइट ऑपरेशंस और डायरेक्टर ट्रेनिंग पर 20 लाख रुपये का जुर्माना लगाया था।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

जुर्माने के खिलाफ इंडिगो की अपील खारिज

नई दिल्ली। इंडिगो ने शुक्रवार को कहा कि एक अपीलीय प्राधिकरण ने विमानन नियामक डीजीसीए द्वारा एयरलाइन के दो वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों पर लगाए गए जुर्माने के खिलाफ उसकी अपील को खारिज कर दिया है। यह जुर्माना कुछ हवाई अड्डों पर पायलट प्रशिक्षण के लिए योग्य सिमुलेटर का इस्तेमाल करने में कथित विफलता के लिए लगाया गया था।

Airfares hit 4-yr low in Dec qtr on weak traffic

Abhishek Law & Dipali Banka

dipali.banka@livemint.com

NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI: India's domestic airfares slid to a four-year low in the October-December quarter, an unusual outcome for a seasonally strong period, as passenger traffic slowed through the year and demand weakened on non-metro routes. Analysts also pointed to IndiGo's wave of cancellations in December as a likely added cause.

According to analysts at Elara Capital, airfares slipped about 1% in the October-December period from ₹5,485 last year to ₹5,436 in 2025, even as domestic air travel growth slowed sharply to 3% growth in Q3FY26 compared to the same period in FY25, from 9% in Q3FY25 compared to Q3FY24.

According to Gagan Dixit, aviation, chemicals, oil & gas analyst at Elara Capital, this happened because 300 routes (of 400), which carry about a fifth of India's air traffic, saw a 6% decline in fares in the quarter.

"This hints at demand-side concerns in the current high airfare environment," Dixit wrote in a report dated 8 January. "The decline in airfare prices has been seen in non-metro cities more, while prices remained largely flat in the metro cities."

Alongside, data from the aviation regulator — Directorate General of Civil Aviation — showed domestic air traffic declining across successive quarters in 2025, from 43.2 million in January-March, to 42 million in April-June and 38.2 million in the July-September period. Data for October-December is yet to be released by DGCA.

The drop in fares came despite the four major airlines—IndiGo, Tata-backed Air India group, Akasa Air and SpiceJet—operating a combined 550 aircraft during the quarter, 6% higher than the 518 aircraft operated a year ago. Dixit noted that the industry's passenger load factor (PLF) of 87% remained flat year-on-year, indicating slower demand growth.

Analysts attribute the sharper decline in non-metro airfares to passenger cancellations triggered by IndiGo's operational



IndiGo's wave of cancellations in December is being seen as a likely added cause. HT

disruption in December.

According to Shobit Singhal, associate director at Anand Rathi Institutional Equities, the decline in non-metro fares may be linked to passengers shifting to alternative modes of transport amid uncertainty caused by flight disruptions.

Jinesh Joshi, aviation analyst at PL Capital, a Mumbai-based financial services group, said the flight cancellations by IndiGo — which controls around 60-65% of the domestic market — created a supply crunch, which would typically have pushed fares higher, but "this impact was felt mainly on metro and busy routes where travel is often unavoidable due to corporate or other essential reasons".

"On non-metro routes, which are largely driven by leisure travel, passengers tend to cancel or postpone trips more easily during disruptions, leading to weaker demand and softer fares," he said.

Joshi added that IndiGo had revised its Q3 passenger revenue per available seat km (PRASK) guidance to a mid-single-digit percentage decline, indicating fare softness on select routes. PRASK measures how much money an airline earns for every seat flown per km, regardless of whether it is sold.

E-mails sent to IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet and Akasa remained unanswered till press time.

In early December, a combination of pilot shortages and planning gaps in implementing the second and final phase of flight duty time limitations (FDTL) norms led to more than 4,500 flight cancellations by IndiGo—its worst operational stretch since listing in 2015.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

9 JANUARY 2026

AIR INDIA TAKES DELIVERY OF FIRST DREAMLINER POST PRIVATISATION

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Tata Group-owned Air India has taken delivery of the first Boeing 787-9 aircraft after the airline was privatised nearly four years ago. This is also the first line fit or custom-made Dreamliner for the airline.

Generally, line fit refers to an aircraft specifically made for a particular airline.

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The last line fit Dreamliner that was acquired by Air India was in October 2017 when the carrier was under the government ownership.

According to the official, the latest aircraft is the airline's first wide-body and 52nd overall delivery from the 220 Boeing jets ordered in 2023. Air India Express has already taken delivery of 51 narrow-body Boeing 737-8s, including its first line fit plane that was inducted in late December.

After Tatas took over in January 2022, Air India placed orders for 350 Airbus and 220 Boeing planes. Out of the Airbus order, 6 A350s have already been inducted into the Air India fleet. Air India already has 26 B787-8s and 6 B787-9s of erstwhile Vistara which was merged with the airline.

Currently, Air India Group has over 300 planes, including 185 aircraft with Air India and the remaining ones with Air India Express.

The official said a dozen more legacy Dreamliners with refreshed interiors are expected to return to service through 2026.



Corporate Communications Directorate

LOKSATYA

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

अकासा एयर को मिली आयटा की सदस्यता

नई दिल्ली, एजेंसी। नवोदित विमान सेवा कंपनी अकासा एयर को अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन संघ (आयटा) की सदस्यता मिल गयी है। दुनिया की 360 से अधिक विमान सेवा कंपनियां आयटा की सदस्य हैं जिनका वैश्विक हवाई यातायात में 80 प्रतिशत से अधिक योगदान है। आयटा की सदस्यता हासिल करने के लिए इसके ऑपरेशनल सेफ्टी ऑडिट में अकासा का अच्छा प्रदर्शन रहा। अकासा के संस्थापक एवं मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी विनय दुबे ने कहा कि वैश्विक विमानन पारिस्थितिकी तंत्र को स्वरूप देने में आयटा की केंद्रीय भूमिका है। उसकी सदस्यता मिलना प्रगति की दिशा में आयटा के अनुशासित रुख को रेखांकित करता है। अकासा की स्थापना अगस्त 2022 में हुई थी। फिलहाल उसका नेटवर्क 26 घरेलू और छह अंतर्राष्ट्रीय गंतव्यों तक फैला है।

Airfares hit four-year low on weak traffic; IndiGo crisis dulls demand

Abhishek Law & Dipali Banka
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

India's average domestic airfares hit a four-year low in the December quarter, an unusual outcome for a seasonally strong period, as traffic slowed through 2025 and demand weakened on non-metro routes. Analysts also pointed to the IndiGo crisis in December as a possible cause.

According to analysts at Elara Capital, average airfares slipped about 1% in the December quarter from ₹5,485 in 2024 to ₹5,436 in 2025, even as domestic air travel growth slowed sharply to 3% in Q3FY26 compared to the same period in FY25, against 9% between Q3FY25 and Q3FY24. According to Gagan Dixit of Elara Capital, this happened because 300 out of India's 400 routes, which carry about a fifth of its air traffic, saw a 6% dip in fares in the quarter.

The slide

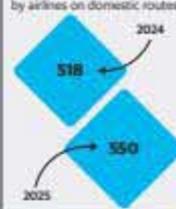
Airfares fall despite 550 aircraft in operation.

Average airfares for domestic routes (₹)



Source: Elara Capital

Number of aircraft operated by airlines on domestic routes



Source: Elara Capital

SATISH KUMAR/MINT

"This hints at demand-side concerns in the current high airfare environment," Dixit wrote in a report dated 8 January. "The decline in airfare prices has been seen in non-metro cities more, while prices remained largely flat in the metro cities."

Alongside, data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation showed domestic air

traffic declining across successive quarters in 2025, from 43.2 million in January-March, to 42 million in April-June and 38.2 million in the July-September period. December quarter data is not out yet.

The drop in fares came despite the four major air-

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Airfares at 4-yr low on weak traffic; IndiGo cuts hit demand

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lines—IndiGo, Tata-backed Air Indigo, Akasa Air and SpiceJet—operating a combined 550 aircraft during the quarter, 6% higher than the 518 aircraft operated a year ago. Dixit noted that the industry's passenger load factor (PLF) of 87% remained flat year-on-year, indicating slower demand growth.

Analysts attribute the sharper decline in non-metro airfares to passenger cancellations triggered by IndiGo's operational disruption in December.

According to Shobit Singhal, associate director at Anand Rathi Institutional Equities, the decline in non-metro fares may be linked to passengers shifting to alternative modes of transport amid uncertainty caused by flight disruptions.

Jinesh Joshi, aviation analyst at PL Capital, a Mumbai-based financial services group, said the flight cancellations by IndiGo—which controls around 60-65% of the domestic market—created a supply crunch, which would typically have pushed fares higher, but "this impact was felt mainly on metro and busy routes where travel is often unavoidable due to corporate or other essential reasons".

"On non-metro routes, which are largely driven by leisure travel, passengers tend to cancel or postpone trips more easily during disruptions, leading to weaker demand and softer fares," he said.

Joshi added that IndiGo had revised its Q3 passenger revenue per available seat km (PRASK) guidance to a mid-single-digit percentage decline, indicating fare softness on select routes. PRASK measures how much money an airline earns for every seat flown per km, regardless of whether it is sold.

Queries emailed to IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet and Akasa remained unanswered.

In early December, a combination of pilot shortages and planning gaps in implementing the second and final phase of flight duty time limitations (FDTL) norms led to more than 4,500 flight cancellations by IndiGo—its worst operational stretch since listing in 2015. IndiGo has since outlined plans to add 158 pilots by 10 February, who will operate under the new FDTL norms, and a further 742 pilots by December next year.

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Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo loses appeal against DGCA penalty order for alleged pilot training lapses

NEW DELHI: IndiGo on Friday said an appellate authority has rejected its appeal against regulator DGCA's penalties on two senior executives of the airline for alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at certain airports.

In September last year, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) imposed a fine of Rs 20 lakh each on the Director Flight Operations and Director Training of IndiGo.

The DGCA Appellate Authority, through an order dated January 7, has dismissed the appeal.

"The matter has been disposed of by reinstating the penalty of Rs 20 lakh each on the Director Flight Operations and



Director Training of the company," IndiGo's parent Inter-Globe Aviation said in a filing to BSE.

The civil aviation watchdog had imposed the penalty for the airline's alleged failure to use qualified simulators for pilot training at Category C aerodromes.

Generally, pilots require additional training for operating flights to and from Category C airports as they might have operational challenges. #11



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MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

India needs aviation giants, not 'Fly-by-Night' operators: Patel

MUMBAI: Former Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel on Friday warned against "fly-by-night" operators entering India's aviation sector, arguing that only established, high-capital players can survive the industry's "tough" financial demands.

The 68-year-old Rajya Sabha member emphasised that while India has no restrictions on new airlines, the "tough, capital-intensive" nature of the business requires long-term commitment.

"That is why it is important that big players should come into the aviation business, and not just fly-by-night people. Some new airlines have been

given licenses, but I don't think they are long-term players," he noted.

His comments come as the Civil Aviation Ministry recently approved three new carriers — Shankh Air, Al Hind Air, and FlyExpress — to start their operations in 2026.

Patel, who served as Civil Aviation Minister from 2004-11 under the Congress-led UPA government,

said many newly licensed airlines may lack the endurance required to survive the sector's high cash-flow drain.

"We need strong players like Tatas, who came with Air India. We need similar big names also to come into the

aviation sector," the NCP leader opined.

Asked about IndiGo's widespread flight cancellations last month, Patel said, "IndiGo is financially a very strong airline, a very big airline. There was an issue of pilots and Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) rules. I wish they had handled it better."

"Having said that, on the whole, it is still a very important player in the Indian aviation market and will remain important for many, many years to come," the former Aviation Minister said.

The key sector needs strong players, the veteran politician emphasised. PII



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

10 JANUARY 2026

UK weather forces diversion of two AI flights

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 9

Two Air India flights bound for the United Kingdom were diverted after adverse weather conditions disrupted operations at their destination airports, airline officials said on Friday.

Flight AI131, operating from Mumbai to London Heathrow, was forced to divert to London Gatwick after prolonged holding over Heathrow due to continuing inclement weather. An Air India spokesperson said the aircraft remained airborne for some time as weather conditions failed to improve before the pilot sought clearance to divert.

"As per standard operating procedures, the pilot requested priority landing after assessing the situation," the spokesperson said, adding that the aircraft landed safely at Gatwick. All passengers were provided necessary assistance following the diversion, the airline said.

In a separate incident, Flight AI117, operating from Amritsar to Birmingham, was also unable to land at its scheduled destination because of poor weather conditions. The aircraft was placed in a holding pattern before the crew decided to divert the flight.

"The crew diverted the flight to London and sought priority landing permission in accordance with laid-down procedures," the spokesperson said.

There were no reports of injuries or technical issues in either incident. Air India said both diversions were precautionary and taken purely in the interest of passenger safety.

Weather-related disruptions have affected flight operations across several parts of the UK in recent days, with strong winds and reduced visibility impacting arrivals at major airports, including Heathrow and Birmingham. — TNS