

## Bids for privatisation of 11 airports by April

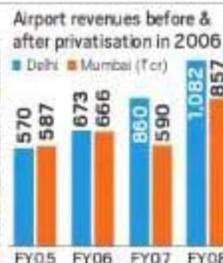
● AAI aims to raise ₹6,000 cr; Adani, GMR, Vinci among potential bidders

YARUQHULLAH KHAN & PRASANTA SAHU  
New Delhi, February 10

**THE AIRPORTS AUTHORITY** of India (AAI) is set to kick off the third round of airport monetisation after a gap of nearly five years, seeking bids for 11 airports, including Varanasi and Amritsar, by April, multiple government officials aware of the discussions told FE.

In the new round, the government has created five bundles, each combining metro and non-metro airports. These are Amritsar-Kangra, Varanasi-Kushinagar-Gaya, Raipur-Aurangabad, Bhubaneswar-Hubli, and Trichy-Tirupati.

### GROWTH PUSH



Source: Parliamentary data, Ministry of Civil Aviation, AAI reports

AS ENVISAGED UNDER the national monetisation pipeline, these airports will be leased out on long-term concession through the public-private partnership (PPP) model for operation, management and development.

"We expect the public-private partnership appraisal committee (PPPAC) to clear the proposal for PPPs in airport operations and management over the next two months, after which RFPs (requests for proposal) will be invited," a senior official said. The official added that the government is aiming to raise around ₹6,000 crore in 2026-27 from leasing these 11 airports. The proceeds will likely be deployed by AAI for further expansion and creation of new airport assets in the

country.

Officials in the Ministry of Civil Aviation said five airport operators — domestic and international — have so far expressed interest in the bidding.

"Apart from the Adani Group and GMR Airports, other interested parties include Vinci Airports and investment firm NIIF," another government official said, adding that several other global private equity funds and airport developers have also shown preliminary interest in the programme.

These airports will be awarded to bidders offering the highest revenue share per passenger to AAI, a mechanism the government believes will enhance transparency in revenue sharing.

The third round of airport monetisation marks the first use of a bundling approach, under which high-traffic, profitable airports are paired with smaller, loss-making ones. The model is aimed at enabling cross-subsidisation, ensuring sustained investment in non-metro airports that may otherwise struggle to attract private capital on a standalone basis.

The PPPAC will evaluate key structural issues, including the choice between revenue-sharing and per-passenger fee models, the framework for user development fees, and whether caps should be imposed on the number of airports that a single entity can operate. These decisions will have a direct bearing on passenger tariffs, particularly at smaller airports.

Airport monetisation began in India in 2003 under the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government, with the approval of PPPs for Delhi and Mumbai airports, where AAI retained a 26% stake and private partners held 74%. In 2006, the GMR consortium won the Delhi airport bid, while the GVK consortium secured Mumbai airport through a competitive revenue-sharing model. The Adani Group took over the operations of Mumbai airport from GVK in February 2021.

In the second round, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru airports were leased out in October-November 2020 and Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram airports in October 2021.

## Bids for privatisation of 11 airports



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

10 FEBRUARY 2026

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## Keelakarai site for Rameswaram airport

**HD Bureau**

**CHENNAI**

The Airports Authority of India has identified a location closer to Keelakarai as the most viable option for building a greenfield airport to serve Rameswaram in Ramanathapuram district, according to officials familiar with the assessment.

A pre-feasibility report outlining the findings has been submitted to the Tamil Nadu government, marking a key step in a project that aims to strengthen air connectivity to the island pilgr-

image town. The proposed site, spanning areas near Manikaneri and Mayakulam villages, has been assessed as technically feasible for airport construction after preliminary studies on terrain, airspace, safety parameters and access.

Officials said the evaluation weighed multiple locations before concluding that the Keelakarai-side option offered clearer operational advantages, including approach paths over less densely populated zones and scope for phased expansion.



Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu

## 'Priority given to defence projects over Hosur airport proposal'

**The Hindu Bureau**

CHENNAI

Union Minister for Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu said on Monday that the Hosur airport project proposal mooted by Tamil Nadu has not been recommended "in order to prioritise defence projects of national importance" executed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) Airport.

He was responding to a question raised by DMK MP S. Kalyanasundaram in the Rajya Sabha on whether the Centre has examined the Hosur airport proposal sent by the State government and the reasons for the delay in granting in-principle approval, airspace clearance and other such permissions. His party colleague Kanimozhi N.V.N Somu too posed a similar query.

Mr. Naidu said: "In order to prioritise defence projects of national importance, being carried out by HAL Airport and to enable operational preparedness of defence forces, the proposal has not been recommended."

In November last year, the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) sent the site-clearance for the Hosur airport. "The proposal was circulated to the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for comments/observations," Mr. Naidu added.

Before that, in June, TIDCO had requested the MoD for airspace relaxation to construct the Hosur airport. When it was rejected, the Tamil Nadu government yet again wrote to the Centre, but it was turned down again in January. Sources said the State government had been drafting a justification for this project and will resubmit the request soon.

## INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC EMERGED AS THE FASTER-GROWING SEGMENT IN 2025

# Passenger traffic at airport up 9.3%

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in the city recorded a strong rise in passenger traffic in 2025, with total footfall of 13.9 million. This included both domestic and international passengers. According to data from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), total passenger traffic rose to 13.98 million in 2025, up from 12.79 million in 2024. In absolute terms, the airport handled nearly 1.2 million additional passengers over the previous calendar year. Airport officials and travel industry players, attributed the rise to steady economic activity, rising business and leisure travel, and major concerts and sporting events held in the city.

“Capacity enhancement



and network expansion over the past year played a key role in the rise in passenger footfall at the city airport. Air India Express began its operations from Ahmedabad during the year. Most airlines added frequencies as well as new sectors, while other do-

estic and international carriers too increased their presence. This improved seat availability and connectivity, particularly to key metros and regional destinations, and drove footfall,” an airport source said.

“Improved surface con-

nectivity played a role too, with the Gujarat State Road Transport Corporation (GSRTC) operating direct bus services from cities such as Rajkot and Vadodara to the airport, making access easier for passengers from across central and Saurashtra Gujarat,” the source further added. Domestic travel continued to account for the bulk of passenger movement, while international traffic emerged as the faster-growing segment with passenger numbers in the latter rising by 13.5% year on year, outpacing overall growth.

Virendra Shah, who runs a travel company in Ahmedabad, said, “We witnessed a strong tourism-led rebound. Leisure travel grew, and so did NRI arrivals during the year.”



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## चंडीगढ़ अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से शुरू हो लंदन, सिंगापुर व वैंकूवर की उड़ान : संघू

राज्यसभा में पंजाब, हरियाणा और हिमाचल प्रदेश की एक महत्वपूर्ण और साझा मांग रखी गई। यह मांग चंडीगढ़ अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से लंदन, सिंगापुर और वैंकूवर के लिए नई विमान सेवाएं शुरू किए जाने से संबंधित है। राज्यसभा सांसद सतनाम सिंह संघू ने सरकार के समक्ष यह मांग रखी। उन्होंने सदन को बताया कि चंडीगढ़ अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से वर्तमान में केवल दुबई और अबू धाबी के लिए दो अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें संचालित हो रही हैं।



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## एयर कार्गो कनेक्टिविटी पर ब्रेक

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 10 फरवरी (देशबन्धु)। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट की लॉजिस्टिक तैयारियों को बड़ा झटका लगा है। यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे से एयर कार्गो टर्मिनल को जोड़ने वाली 8.25 किलोमीटर लंबी सड़क का निर्माण तय समय पर पूरा होना मुश्किल नजर आ रहा है। कई स्थानों पर भूमि उपलब्ध न होने और जमीन से जुड़े विवादों के कारण परियोजना की रफ्तार धम गई है।

भारतीय राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग प्राधिकरण (एनएचएआई) द्वारा बनाई जा रही यह सड़क एयरपोर्ट को कार्गो संचालन व्यवस्था के लिए बेहद अहम मानी जा रही है। यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे के उत्तर-पूर्वी हिस्से से एयर कार्गो टर्मिनल तक जाने वाली इस 30 मीटर चौड़ी सड़क पर करीब 178 करोड़ रुपये खर्च होने का अनुमान है। सड़क का कैरिज-वे 18 मीटर चौड़ा होगा, जिससे भारी मालवाहक वाहनों की आवाजाही आसान हो सकेगी। परियोजना के तहत सड़क के



■ यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे से कार्गो टर्मिनल तक बनने वाली 8.25 किमी सड़क समय पर पूरी होना मुश्किल

एक हिस्से में काली लेयर बिछाने का काम पूरा कर लिया गया है और वाहन चलाकर गुणवत्ता की जांच भी की जा रही है। इसके बावजूद कई स्थानों पर सड़क का निर्माण अधूरा पड़ा है। इन हिस्सों में जमीन से जुड़े विवाद न्यायालय में विचाराधीन हैं, जिससे कार्य आगे नहीं बढ़ पा रहा है। यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण (यीडा)

का कहना है कि किसानों के साथ लगातार बातचीत की जा रही है और विवाद सुलझाने के प्रयास जारी हैं। हालांकि मौजूदा हालात को देखते हुए यह स्पष्ट हो गया है कि एयरपोर्ट से उड़ान शुरू होने तक इस महत्वपूर्ण सड़क का पूरा हो पाना लगभग असंभव है।

लॉजिस्टिक्स और कार्गो संचालन के लिहाज से यह देरी एयरपोर्ट की शुरुआती तैयारियों पर असर डाल सकती है, क्योंकि इसी मार्ग से कार्गो टर्मिनल तक मालवाहक वाहनों की निर्बाध पहुंच प्रस्तावित है।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

10 FEBRUARY 2026

## एयरपोर्ट बाउंड्री से 5 किमी परिधि में वर्जित रहेगी लेजर लाइट

नवज्योति, जयपुर। जयपुर अन्तरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे की बाउंड्री से पांच किलोमीटर की परिधि सीमा में लेजर लाइट या किसी अन्य प्रकाश ऑब्जेक्ट्स के उपयोग पर पूरी तरह से प्रतिबंध लगाया गया है।

अतिरिक्त पुलिस आयुक्त कानून एवं व्यवस्था राजीव पंचार ने आदेश जारी कर बताया कि आयुक्तालय क्षेत्र में एयरपोर्ट के आस-पास विवाह स्थलों, होटलों, और अन्य कार्यक्रम स्थलों पर आयोजन के दौरान लेजर लाइटों का इस्तेमाल किया जाता है। इससे विमानों के आवागमन में बाधा उत्पन्न होती है। इससे विमान दुर्घटना और जनहानि की आशंका रहती है। आदेशों की पालना नहीं करने वालों पर नियमानुसार कार्रवाई की जाएगी।

## एयरपोर्ट पर दो करोड़ का हाइड्रोपोनिक गांजा जब्त

बैकॉक से आए यात्री के बैग से बरामद, तस्कर हिंसात में

स्वतंत्र भारत ब्यूरो लखनऊ। चौधरी चरण सिंह अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट लखनऊ पर एक यात्री के बैग से 2.05 करोड़ रुपए का हाइड्रोपोनिक गांजा पकड़ा गया है। वह यात्री बैकॉक से आया है। पुलिस ने हिंसात में लिया है। उससे पूछताछ की जा रही है। आरोपी यात्री को एनडीपीएस एक्ट, 1985 के प्रावधानों के तहत गिरफ्तार किया गया। आवश्यक कानूनी कार्रवाई के बाद उसे न्यायिक हिंसात में भेज दिया गया है। गांजा/मारिजुआना के साथ पैकेजिंग सामग्री को जब्त कर लिया गया है। 8 कुकी टिन बॉक्स में 5.88 किलो गांजा था एयर इंटेलिजेंस अधिकारियों को बैकॉक से आने वाली फ्लाइट को लेकर विशेष खुफिया जानकारी मिली थी। इसी आधार पर फ्लाइट से लखनऊ पहुंचे एक



भारतीय यात्री को जांच के लिए रोका गया। तलाशी के दौरान उसके ट्रॉली बैग में रखे 8 कुकी टिन बॉक्स संदिग्ध पाए गए। जांच में सामने आया कि हर

कुकी टिन बॉक्स के भीतर पॉलीथीन पाउच में हरे रंग का ऑर्गेनिक पदार्थ भरा हुआ था। मौके पर फील्ड डायग्नोस्टिक टेस्ट किट से जांच करने पर यह

पदार्थ गांजा/मारिजुआना (हाइड्रोपोनिक वीड) पाया गया। बरामद नशीले पदार्थ का कुल वजन लगभग 5.88 किलोग्राम निकला। एयर इंटेलिजेंस के अनुसार जब्त हाइड्रोपोनिक गांजे की अंतरराष्ट्रीय बाजार में कीमत करीब 2.05 करोड़ रुपए है। यह मादक पदार्थ अत्यधिक उच्च गुणवत्ता का बताया जा रहा है, जिसे विशेष रूप से विदेशी बाजारों में तैयार किया जाता है। एयरपोर्ट प्रशासन और जांच एजेंसियां इस बात की पड़ताल कर रही हैं कि आरोपी किस नेटवर्क के माध्यम से इस नशीले पदार्थ की तस्करी कर रहा था। इसके पीछे कौन-कौन लोग शामिल हैं। अधिकारियों का कहना है कि आगे की जांच जारी है और जल्द ही इस अंतरराष्ट्रीय तस्करी गिरोह से जुड़े और नाम सामने आ सकते हैं।



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THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

10 FEBRUARY 2026

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## **Flyer lands at KIA with ₹2cr diamonds & foreign currency**

**Bengaluru:** Customs officials arrested a passenger at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) Sunday for attempting to illegally smuggle foreign currency and diamonds out of the country.

The interception occurred during routine checks, when officers noticed suspicious concealment. On examination, the passenger was found carrying foreign currency worth \$18,500 and diamonds weighing approximately 1,135 carats. The total estimated value of the seized contraband stood at Rs 2 crore.

Officials said the attempt constituted a clear violation of Indian regulations governing the export of currency and precious stones. The passenger was taken into custody and arrested under the Customs Act-1962. Probe is under way to determine the source of the diamonds, their intended destination, and whether the accused is linked to a wider smuggling network. **TNN**



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BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

## India-US trade framework will accelerate aviation growth, says Boeing India official

**Rohit Vaid**  
New Delhi

The proposed India-US trade framework could accelerate growth in the aviation sector by easing tariffs on aircraft components and strengthening supply chains, Salil Gupte, President, Boeing India and South Asia, told *businessline*.

He noted that policy support under the agreement may also help position India as a global aerospace hub. On January 7, India and the US reached a framework for an interim trade agreement that sets out areas where India will gain improved access to the American market.

Under the framework, the US will remove tariffs on certain aircraft parts from India that were earlier imposed under national security-related measures covering aluminium, steel and copper imports.

According to Gupte, the framework is likely to usher

in a period of significant change.

"Lower costs, stronger supply chains and deeper international cooperation could position India not only as one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, but also as an increasingly important hub for manufacturing, maintenance and innovation," he said.

### **STRONG TIES**

Calling the agreement a sign of deepening ties between the two countries, Gupte added that "the US-India trade agreement is a strong signal of the two nations' commitment to deeper economic partnership".

In aerospace and defence, he noted that Boeing has long supported a zero-for-zero tariff approach, and "this deal creates momentum to extend that principle, which will boost industrial growth, strengthen national security and deliver win-win opportunities for both countries".



Salil Gupte, President,  
Boeing India and South Asia

Besides, Gupte said that domestic policy measures announced in the Budget are expected to reinforce the sector's growth.

Referring to the exemption of basic customs duty on aircraft components, Gupte said, "By exempting basic customs duty on components, the government has met a long-standing industry demand and directly reduced the cost of aircraft maintenance in India."

Additionally, Gupte cited that the reform will make Indian maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) providers more competitive with global hubs, attract new in-

vestment and strengthen the country's role in the international aviation supply chain.

On the manufacturing side, Gupte said the Budget measures mark "a transformative step towards building a global hub for aerospace production".

Further, by exempting basic customs duty on raw materials and components, "the government has lowered entry barriers and reduced costs for manufacturers and suppliers", strengthening the foundation for domestic production and deepening the aerospace supply chain, according to him.

### **NEW VISTAS**

"As India prepares for a sharp expansion in aviation traffic into the next decade, these incentives help capacity keep pace with demand while opening a unique opportunity to integrate the nation's vast coastline into the mainstream aviation map through localised innovation," said Gupte.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

## AAIB invites applications for posts of Director General, safety investigation officers

**Our Bureau**  
Mumbai

The Civil Aviation Ministry has initiated a search to select a new Director General for the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), with incumbent GVG Yugandhar set to retire in June. Applications have also been invited for 23 posts, including safety investigation officers and director-level positions. Both senior and



junior roles are proposed to be filled through deputation. These recruitments are part of the government's broader push to strengthen aviation safety. Other measures under consideration include setting up the National Aviation Safety Centre at Je-

war and launching safety audit courses at the Rajiv Gandhi National Aviation University.

### DEPUTATION MODEL

However, the decision to hire investigation officers and director-level officials at AAIB on a deputation basis has drawn criticism from the Safety Matters Foundation, led by aviation safety expert Captain Amit Singh.

"Accident investigation is not a temporary project

function; it is a continuously maturing safety capability that must compound over years," Singh said. "When core investigator roles rotate on short tenures, we risk losing institutional memory, weakening independence and repeating lessons at the highest possible cost."

The foundation has urged structural reforms, including the creation of a permanent AAIB cadre, to strengthen aviation safety in the [country](#).

# 14 चार्टर विमान परिचालकों का सुरक्षा ऑडिट शुरू

दीपक पटेल

नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) एक विशेष सुरक्षा निरीक्षण अभ्यास के तहत 14 चार्टर विमान परिचालकों का सुरक्षा ऑडिट कर रहा है, जिसमें फिलहाल फील्ड निरीक्षण चल रहा है और नियामक द्वारा जारी एक आदेश के अनुसार, पहला चरण 25 फरवरी तक पूरा होने की उम्मीद है।

‘स्पेशल सेफ्टी ऑडिट प्लान 2026 - फेज 1’ नाम का यह अभ्यास 2 फरवरी को शुरू किया गया था और निरीक्षण 9 फरवरी को शुरू हुआ। यह व्यापक ऑडिट 28 जनवरी को बारामती हवाईअड्डे पर हुए विमान दुर्घटना के बाद किया जा रहा है, जिसमें महाराष्ट्र के

उपमुख्यमंत्री अजित पवार और चार अन्य लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। चार्टर विमान का संचालन दिल्ली स्थित गैर-अनुसूचित परिचालक कंपनी वीएसआर वेंचर्स प्राइवेट लिमिटेड द्वारा किया गया था।

28 जनवरी को बॉम्बार्डियर लीयरजेट 45 विमान, पंजीकरण संख्या वीटी-एसएसके मुंबई से बारामती के लिए एक गैर-अनुसूचित चार्टर उड़ान का संचालन कर रहा था और विमान को उतारने के दूसरे प्रयास के दौरान यह हवाईअड्डे पर दुर्घटनाग्रस्त हो गया, जिससे विमान में सवार सभी पांच लोगों की मौत हो गई। वीएसआर वेंचर्स (वीएसआर वेंचर्स) स्पेशल सेफ्टी ऑडिट प्लान फेज-1 का हिस्सा नहीं है और डीजीसीए की छह सदस्यीय टीम द्वारा इसका अलग से ऑडिट किया जा रहा है।

## DGCA kicks off audit of charter operators

DEEPAK PATEL  
New Delhi, 10 February

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is auditing 14 charter flight operators as part of a special safety oversight exercise, according to an order issued by the regulator. It says that the field inspections are underway and the first phase is expected to be completed by February 25.

The exercise, titled "Special Safety Audit Plan 2026 — Phase 1", was ordered on February 2 and inspections began on February 9. The wide-ranging audit comes in the aftermath of the plane crash in Baramati on January 28 in which Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others died. The charter flight was operated by Delhi-based non-scheduled operator VSR Ventures.

VSR Ventures is not part of the Special Safety Audit Plan Phase-1 and is being audited separately by a six-member team of the DGCA. The regulator has asked the team to submit VSR's audit report by February 15. On February 2, the DGCA issued an order identifying a set of operators for inspection in the first phase to check compliance with airworthiness and operational requirements.

These include Air Charter Services, A R Airways, Arrow Aircrafts Sales & Charters, Chipsan Aviation and Deccan Charters. The list also includes Global Vectra Helicorp, Indo Pacific Aviation, India FlySafe Aviation, Karnavati Aviation and state-owned helicopter operator Pawan Hans.

In addition, DGCA teams were inspecting Rajas Aerospots and Adventures (Aero Safari), Red-bird Airways, Reliance Commercial Dealers and Zest Aviation.

ILLUSTRATION: BINAY SINHA



### Checking in

- The DGCA has constituted separate audit teams for each operator
- Audit teams to submit final reports within 10 days of completing inspections
- Findings expected to highlight safety gaps or non-compliance issues

According to the February 2 order, the regulator had constituted separate audit teams for each operator, comprising deputy directors, assistant directors, flight operations inspectors and senior flight operations inspectors, to conduct the inspections of the aforementioned 14 charter flight operators.

The DGCA has directed the audit teams to submit their final reports to its headquarters within 10 days of completing inspections.

The findings are expected to highlight any safety gaps or non-compliance issues, following which the regulator may take further action.

The audit is part of the DGCA's broader effort to tighten safety oversight and standardise operational practices across the charter and private aviation segment.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

10 FEBRUARY 2026

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### **FIR against YouTube channel for flying drone in KIA no-fly zone**

**BENGALURU, DHNS:** The Bengaluru International Airport police have registered a case against a YouTube channel for allegedly flying a drone in a restricted no-fly zone near Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), in violation of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) guidelines.

A senior police officer told *DH* that an FIR has been registered against the 'Bangalore Wanderlust' YouTube channel based on a complaint by CISF officials.

The drone footage was uploaded on January 4, 2026. It was being flown in a red zone area where aerial operations are strictly prohibited as per DGCA regulations and posed a potential threat to aviation safety, the officer said.

The vigilance team of DGCA had observed the aerial footage and alerted CISF personnel to register a case against the YouTube channel to initiate legal action. "We are verifying the details of the channel operator and also the involvement of a third party, or whether any other government agency had asked him to shoot the video by giving money. Action will be initiated against those responsible if found guilty," the officer added.

The YouTube channel has 2.61K followers and contains more than 30 such videos related to various places in the city.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

10 FEBRUARY 2026

## Airlines' cumulative loss at Rs 5,289.73 cr last FY

**NEW DELHI, PTI:** The cumulative loss of Indian airlines stood at Rs 5,289.73 crore in the last financial year, with Air India Group alone accounting for Rs 9,808.12 crore of the total loss, according to official data.

Out of the 11 operators, four had reported profit — IndiGo, Blue Dart, Star Air and IndiaOne Air.

The data was provided as part of a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on Monday by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol.

In 2024-25, Air India and Air India Express recorded a loss of Rs 3,975.75 crore and Rs 5,832.37 crore, respectively



while Akasa Air reported a loss of Rs 1,986.25 crore.

State-owned Alliance Air's loss was at Rs 691.12 crore and that of SpiceJet stood at Rs 55.67 crore in the last fiscal.

Other loss-making operators were Fly91 (Rs 67.65 crore) and Quikjet Cargo

(Rs 1.34 crore).

IndiGo raked in a profit of Rs 7,253.30 crore and other profitable entities were Star Air (Rs 68.75 crore), Blue Dart (Rs 0.71 crore) and IndiaOne Air (Rs 0.33 crore).

All these figures are after considering extraordinary items.

In the reply to CPI-M member John Brittas, the Union minister also said that in a deregulated aviation market, airfares are neither fixed nor regulated by the government and are determined by airlines based on demand-supply dynamics and other commercial considerations.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

AROUND TWO WEEKS AFTER NCP LEADER AJIT PAWAR'S DEATH IN A PLANE CRASH IN MAHARASHTRA'S BARAMATI

## Uncle's Flight Crash A Conspiracy, Claims Rohit Pawar

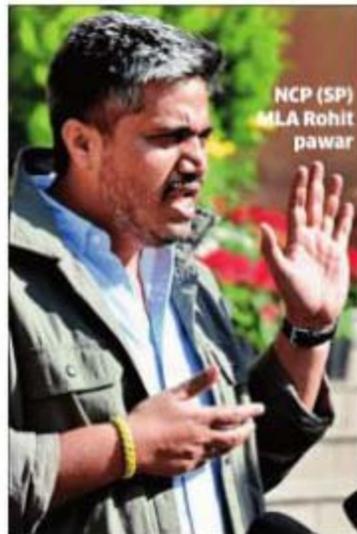
**AJIT PAWAR DEATH** 'Why did pilot insist on landing on runway 11, which was difficult, rather than runway 29?'

**Krishna Kumar**

**Mumbai:** Thirteen days after NCP leader Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash, his nephew Rohit Pawar alleged that the crash was not an accident but a conspiracy, claiming that the accident was "100% created." This is the first time that a member of the Sharad Pawar family has alleged foul play in Ajit Pawar's death.

At a press conference, Rohit raised questions about VSR, the company whose aircraft Ajit was travelling in when it crashed, citing several lapses such as poor maintenance and "short cuts" like illegally carrying fuel on board. He also questioned Arrow, another firm that hired VSR, and alleged possible motives involving the senior pilot.

He added, "I firmly believe this is not



NCP (SP)  
MLA Rohit  
pawar

an accident but a conspiracy: The transponder was shut for the last one minute before the crash. Why and who shut it down? Why did the pilot insist on landing on runway 11, which was more difficult, rather than runway 29? The plane tilted before crashing and

been permitted to fly.

He referred to changes in Ajit's habits prior to the crash insinuating that Ajit apprehended a threat to his life. For instance, he said Ajit stopped drinking water from plastic bottles and switched to glass bottles, fearing that



**ON SHARAD PAWAR'S 'NO FOUL PLAY' STATEMENT**

'He said that within 6 hours. If he had said otherwise based on incomplete info, lakhs of people had gathered for the funeral & anything could have happened'

the senior pilot was silent. Did the pilot doze off, did something else happen, or had the pilot decided that come what may, he would crash the aircraft?"

Rohit also alleged that the aircraft was allowed to depart from Mumbai despite poor visibility, claiming that under DGCA norms it should not have

something could be injected into plastic ones.

Rohit also questioned why a senior pilot, who was originally scheduled to fly, missed the flight. He alleged that the pilot who flew the aircraft had previously been warned for being drunk on duty. "Was he under depression, or did so-

meone take advantage of his mental state to cause this accident?" he asked. The NCP (SP) MLA said he addressed the press because the probe was not progressing.

Questioning possible motives, he asked whether his uncle might have been about to take decisions affecting someone financially or possessed sensitive information. "Their own party members have doubts about the accident... I need to know what happened to my uncle," he said. "We want aviation safety agencies from the US, UK or Canada to be part of the probe along with the DGCA. Two such agencies should also handle the investigation," he said. Responding to Sharad Pawar's statement shortly after the crash that there was no foul play, Rohit said, "He made that statement within six hours. If he had said otherwise based on incomplete or incorrect information, lakhs of people had gathered for the funeral and anything could have happened."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

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## Ajit Pawar Plane Crash Fallout: DGCA Orders Safety Audit of Non-scheduled Operators

**New Delhi:** The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a safety audit of non-scheduled flight operators in the country. The safety check exercise follows the crash of a chartered jet belonging to VSR Ventures in Maharashtra last month, which killed the state's deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and four others.

The special audit will be conducted in a phased manner, with large

charter operators to be covered first, DGCA said on Tuesday. In the first phase, the audit will cover 14 operators including charter companies and corporates. The team has been asked to submit inspection reports within 10 days of audit completion. The sector regulator has also announced a separate safety audit of VSR Ventures. — **Our Bureau**





# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

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## DGCA orders special safety audit of VSR Ventures



**AVIATION  
WATCHDOG**  
DGCA has started  
a special safety  
audit of non-scheduled flight  
operators, including VSR  
Ventures, following the plane  
crash that killed Maharashtra  
Deputy Chief Minister  
Ajit Pawar and four  
others in January.

## NEW DUTY NORMS INTEGRATED INTO ROSTERS: AIRLINE

# IndiGo says adequate pilots as DGCA relaxations end

YARUQHULLAH KHAN  
New Delhi, February 10

**INDIGO ON TUESDAY** said it has an adequate pool of pilots and crew to ensure stable operations as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) temporary relaxations from the revised flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms came to an end.

The statement comes after the airline faced severe operational disruptions in early December, when a combination of crew shortages, system and planning gaps and management deficiencies led to widespread cancellations and delays. Following an investigation, the aviation regulator curtailed IndiGo's winter schedule by 10% and granted limited relaxations from the revised FDTL norms until February 10 to help stabilise operations.

"As assured to the regulatory authorities earlier, we are maintaining an optimum pool of employees, including pilots, to ensure stable operations across our network," an airline spokesperson said, adding that the revised duty norms have already been integrated into crew rosters and planning.

Between December 3 and 5 alone, IndiGo cancelled 2,507 flights and delayed another 1,852, impacting over 300,000 passengers across airports in the country. The airline operates around 2,200 flights daily

### TURBULENT TIMES



■ IndiGo saw major operational chaos in early Dec due to crew shortages, planning failures and management deficiencies

■ Over 2,500 flights were cancelled & nearly 1,900 delayed in just 3 days

■ Following this, DGCA cut IndiGo's winter schedule by 10%

■ It also imposed ₹22.2 cr in penalties and asked for a ₹50-cr bank guarantee

■ DGCA also temporarily relaxed flight duty time limits to prevent collapse

and saw its domestic market share decline to 59.6% in December from 63.6% in November, reflecting the scale of the disruption.

The regulator had attributed the crisis to over-optimisation of operations, inadequate regulatory preparedness on the airline's part, deficiencies in system software support and shortcomings in management structure and operational control. In addition to cutting capacity, the DGCA imposed penalties totalling ₹22.2 crore, directed the airline to furnish a ₹50-crore bank guarantee to ensure compliance with long-term corrective measures,

and issued warnings to senior management.

On January 20, the DGCA said sustained regulatory oversight and corrective steps had helped stabilise IndiGo's operations, and that the airline now had sufficient pilots to comply with the revised FDTL norms without disruption. Citing submissions from the carrier, the regulator said IndiGo had 2,400 pilots in command against a requirement of 2,280, and 2,240 first officers against a requirement of 2,050.

Data shared by the regulator also showed that IndiGo added 44 Airbus-certified pilots, including 21 captains and 23

first officers, after coming under scrutiny in December, taking its Airbus fleet strength to 2,378 captains and 2,217 first officers as of early January.

Following the December episode, DGCA also flagged deficiencies in oversight and planning, directed the removal of a senior vice-president from operational responsibilities and sought a compliance report from the airline. Warnings were issued to CEO Pieter Elbers and other senior executives.

IndiGo said it remains fully compliant with applicable duty time norms and expects operations to remain stable as the relaxations lapse.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

10 FEBRUARY 2026

## Airlines' cumulative loss touched ₹5,289.73 cr in 2024-25: Govt



**PTI**

NEW DELHI

The cumulative loss of Indian airlines stood at Rs 5,289.73 crore in the last financial year, with Air India Group alone accounting for Rs 9,808.12 crore of the total loss, according to official data. Out of the 11 operators, 4 had reported profit -- IndiGo, Blue Dart, Star Air and IndiaOne Air.

The data was provided as part of a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on Monday by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol.

In 2024-25, Air India and Air India Express recorded a loss of Rs 3,975.75 crore and Rs 5,832.37 crore, respectively while Akasa Air reported a loss of Rs 1,986.25 crore.

State-owned Alliance Air's loss was at Rs 601.12 crore and that of SpiceJet stood at Rs 55.67 crore in the last fiscal.

Other loss-making operators were Fly91 (Rs 67.65 crore) and Quiljet Cargo (Rs 1.34 crore).



# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

10 FEBRUARY 2026

## Airlines see 32% drop in aircraft inductions in 2025 amid supply chain and engine woes

**Dhairya Gajera**

MUMBAI

The rapid expansion of India's aviation sector hit a significant speed bump in 2025. According to the latest government data, Indian airlines inducted a total of 95 aircraft in the past twelve months, marking a 32% decline from the record 140 aircraft inducted in 2024.

The drop comes despite a massive backlog of over 1,600 aircraft orders, signaling that global supply chain bottlenecks and engine reliability issues are finally catching up to one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets.



The 2025 fleet expansion was characterised by a mix of narrow-body workhorses and a strategic push toward long-haul wide-body jets. However, the volume failed to match the aggressive growth trajectory seen in the previous year. According to the data presented by the Union Civil Aviation Minister for state Murlidhar Mohol in Lok Sabha, Indian airlines inducted 95 narrow-body air-

craft in the last year, which saw no deliveries of wide-body jets.

The deliveries saw an overall 32% decline from the previous year when the Indian airline inducted 129 narrow body and 11 wide body aircraft. In 2023, Indian airlines received delivery of 104 narrow body and 8 wide body aircraft. The current year has also recorded a decent start as airlines inducted seven narrow body and one wide body in January.

Both the global leaders in original equipment manufacturers Boeing and Airbus have been facing production hurdles due to issues in the global supply chain.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

## इंडिगो ने कर्मियों की संख्या बढ़ाई

### फैसला

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता। देश की सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइन इंडिगो ने पायलटों के आराम से जुड़े नियमों में मिलने वाली छूट खत्म होने से पहले अपनी तैयारियों को पुख्ता किया है। नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) द्वारा दी गई छूट मंगलवार को समाप्त हो गई है।

ऐसे में इंडिगो ने पायलटों और रिजर्व स्टाफ की संख्या को बढ़ा दिया है, जिसके चलते छूट की अवधि खत्म होने के बाद किसी भी तरह का व्यवधान

### परिचालन पर रखी जा रही नजर

नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय और डीजीसीए लगातार इंडिगो के संचालन पर नजर रखे हुए हैं। अधिकारियों का कहना है कि फिलहाल पायलटों की उपलब्धता को लेकर कोई गंभीर समस्या नहीं दिख रही है। उधर, मंगलवार को केंद्रीय उड्डयन मंत्री राममोहन नायडू ने अधिकारियों के साथ विमानन परिचालन, हवाई अड्डों पर यात्रियों की सुरक्षा और देश भर में उड़ान सेवा के विस्तार किए जाने संबंधी मुद्दों पर चर्चा की।

होने की संभावना बहुत कम है।

बीते वर्ष डीजीसीए ने फ्लाइट ड्यूटी टाइम लिमिटेशन नियम द्वारा निर्धारित सुरक्षा मानक निर्धारित किए थे, जिसमें पायलटों और केबिन क्रू के लिए अधिकतम उड़ान समय, ड्यूटी अवधि और अनिवार्य विश्राम का प्रावधान

किया गया। इन नियमों का मुख्य उद्देश्य थकान के कारण होने वाली मानवीय गड़बड़ियों को कम करना और विमानन सुरक्षा को बढ़ाना था, नियमों के तहत सबसे बड़ा प्रावधान साप्ताहिक आराम को 36 से बढ़ाकर 48 घंटे कर दिया गया है।

## IndiGo raises crew buffer and pilot-to-aircraft ratio

**Neha LM Tripathi**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** IndiGo has increased its crew buffer from zero in December to 3% in February and raised its pilot-to-aircraft ratio, improvements that have led government officials to expect minimal disruption when exemptions on pilot rest periods expire on February 10, according to officials aware of the matter.

The build-up in pilot strength comes as the airline prepares to resume full compliance with flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms that triggered operational collapse in December, when IndiGo cancelled over 5,000 flights and drew a record ₹22.2 crore penalty from aviation regulators alongside accountability action against its top leadership.

The December crisis forced DGCA to grant temporary exemptions on December 6, allowing the airline to breach night-duty restrictions until February 10.

"We are expecting minimal flight disruptions due to FDTL violations," a senior government official said, asking not to be named. A second senior official, who asked not to be named and spoke without mentioning any specific measures taken by the airline, said: "A review on IndiGo operations was conducted on 6th and they are on track."

The assessment that operations will stabilise post-February 10 is based on rostering plans showing IndiGo has increased its ratio of pilot crews to aircraft — a key measure of operational resilience — while expanding reserve pilot strength and maintaining a hiring pipeline to offset attrition, according to aviation ministry data accessed by Hindustan Times.

"The airline has begun planning operations at seven crew sets per aircraft, with the February roster showing 7.2 sets, up from 7.1 in January, based on



**The build-up in pilot strength comes as IndiGo prepares to resume full compliance with FDTL norms that triggered operational collapse last year.**

1,862 daily flights and a block per trip day of 3.99 hours," a government official said. Crew sets measure how many complete pilot teams the airline has for each aircraft in its fleet.

In December, when it encountered trouble, the airline had fewer than six crew sets per jet, according to documents seen by HT.

"Crew buffers have increased from zero in December 2025 to 3% in February, while standby crew levels have been raised to a minimum of 15%," the official said. Crew buffers represent surplus pilot capacity beyond the minimum required to operate scheduled flights, while standby crews are reserve pilots rostered to cover sick calls or scheduling disruptions.

But experts said the strengthening will need to be seen in the context of the rules and schedules to determine whether they are enough. "To assess whether IndiGo can operate smoothly under the new FDTL, it needs to be checked whether IndiGo has at least seven crew sets per aircraft under the new FDTL," said aviation expert Capt Mohan Ranganathan, referring to the tougher crew rest rules from which the airline was exempted during the December chaos.

"The airline claims 7.2 sets,

meaning 7.2 captains and 7.2 co-pilots for each aircraft; for an operational fleet, for instance, of about 350 aircraft, that is roughly 2,520 captains and the same number of first officers. What matters is the captain-to-co-pilot ratio, not total pilot headcount, and the assessment must be based on aircraft actually flying, as many are grounded for engine issues. If the numbers given to DGCA meet this requirement, there should be no disruptions due to FDTL, but if they do not align with the claimed 7.2 sets, the roster cannot be sustained," he added.

As per government data provided on December 8, 2025, IndiGo had 5,085 pilots in its system, with around 350 active aircraft.

IndiGo hired 100 trainee first officers in January and has planned training for 20 pilots a month and around 75 first officers in alternate months over the next quarter, officials said. However, attrition over the next six months is projected at 81 captains and 12 first officers, with 19 captain retirements expected over the next year.

An email sent to IndiGo did not elicit a response.

A review of the airline's operational data by the ministry shows flight cancellations in January were driven largely by weather and airspace-related disruptions rather than pilot duty norms, officials said.

"Based on the data reviewed by the ministry, recent flight cancellations and disruptions seen in the second half of January were largely due to weather, airspace restrictions and other operational factors," a senior government official said, asking not to be named.

For the period between January 15 and 31, IndiGo operated around 90% of planned services in line with government directives, with a total of 284 flights cancelled.

### 352 DGCA NOTICES TO AIRLINES SINCE JAN 2024, INDIGO HIGHEST WITH 98

**Neha LM Tripathi**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** India's aviation safety regulator issued 352 show-cause notices to domestic airlines between January 2024 and December 2025, minister of state for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol said in a written reply to Trinamool Congress MP Saket Gokhale.

IndiGo, which accounts for the largest market share and has 440 aircraft, received the highest number of these notices, followed by Air India, which has 187 planes, according to information tabled in the Parliament on Monday. The notices covered violations across safety, operations, maintenance, training and passenger-rights categories.

India currently has five major airlines; IndiGo, Air India, Air India Express, Akasa Air and SpiceJet. InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, which operates IndiGo, accounted for 98 notices, nearly 28% of the total. Air India was issued 84 notices, while Air India Express received 65. SpiceJet faced 45 notices and Alliance Air 23. Akasa Air and FlyBig were issued 17 and 12 notices respectively, Mohol's reply stated. Air India Express has 110 aircraft, followed by SpiceJet with 35 and Akasa with 33.

Of the 352 cases, penalties were imposed in 139 instances and warnings were issued in 113.

Mohol said that 33 matters led to suspension of personnel or operations, while 15 resulted in withdrawal of approvals. It also stated that the DGCA found the airline's reply satisfactory only in seven cases, enough to close the matter without action. As per the shared by the minister, 11 replies were still awaited.

# A reckoning for India's aviation sector

India's aviation sector faces urgent challenges as operational failures and safety incidents threaten IndiGo and Air India. With profits declining and rising passenger dissatisfaction, the industry must address systemic vulnerabilities ahead of the entry of new regional players

**FULL CONTEXT**

**Deepanshu Mohan**  
**Anvita Tripathi**

The past year was marked by sustained turbulence in India's civil aviation sector, with multiple failures, whose scale and frequency paint a grim picture for the duopoly (IndiGo and the Air India group), both now bracing for thumping losses, with profits plunging drastically, according to recent numbers. The year witnessed a series of breakdowns from the June 2025 Ahmedabad crash to mass cancellations and prolonged flight delays generating unrest, not only among stranded passengers, but across the aviation market at large.

The December IndiGo disruption emerged as the first failed stress test, the scale of which now threatens to weigh heavily on the country's largest carrier, with it being ranked in the bottom layer of most indexes. What appeared to be an airline-specific failure has now revealed itself as a system-wide constraint coming into view. And as the system attempts to correct itself after this exposure, the emergence of new regional players receiving No Objection Certificates (NOCs) demands regulatory caution: without targeted structural correction, these entrants risk merely redistributing fragility rather than absorbing shocks or easing the sector's mounting operational strain.

India's commercial aviation sector stands as the world's third-largest domestic market, operating over 840 aircraft and carrying more than 350 million passengers annually. Yet this scale has been achieved through an expansion that is increasingly overstretched. As airlines prepare for the upcoming peak travel season amid tighter duty-time enforcement and fleet expansion, the December disruption now reads less as an aberration and more as a warning — making it imperative to evaluate what needs correction.

**India's pilot bottleneck**

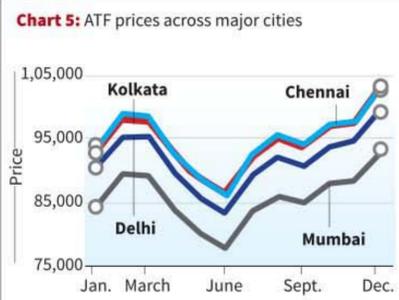
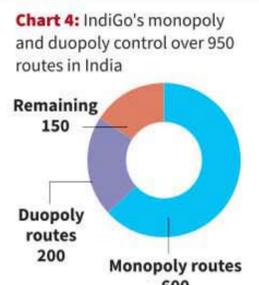
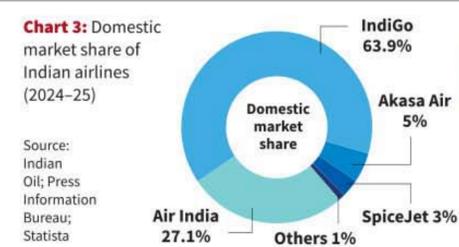
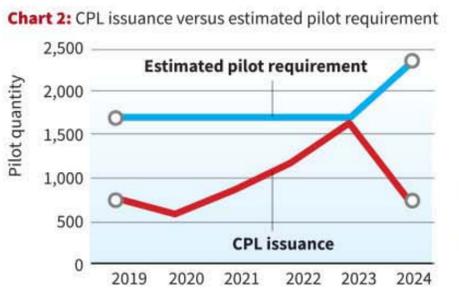
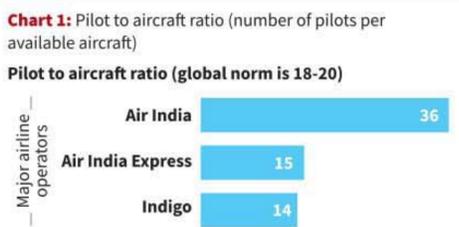
The December disruption brought into sharp view the mechanics of vulnerability within India's aviation system. IndiGo entered Phase-2 of the implementation of the Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms with 5,038 pilots operating a fleet of more than 360 aircraft, translating into a pilot-to-aircraft ratio of roughly 14, well below the global benchmark of 18-20 considered necessary for fatigue-mitigated operations. This mismatch exposed the limits of an operating model calibrated for sustained high utilisation.

The new FDTL framework, which reduced permissible night operations, extended mandatory rest periods, and tightened cumulative flight-hour ceilings, rendered IndiGo's published schedules legally untenable without adjustment. Even with the flight time capped at 60 hours over a seven-day period, substantially higher than the 40-hour weekly standard widely regarded as healthy across sectors, the rules proved incompatible with existing crew strength.

While India's aviation expansion has intensified demands for pilots, training capacity has failed to keep pace. Parliamentary disclosures estimate a requirement of 7,000 pilots between 2024 and 2026, rising to 25,000-30,000 over the next decade. In contrast, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued only over 5,700 Commercial Pilot Licences (CPL) between

## Plummeting hopes

India's commercial aviation sector stands as the world's third-largest domestic market, carrying more than 350 million passengers annually. Yet this scale has been achieved through an expansion that is increasingly overstretched



**Complete chaos:** Passengers distressed over flight cancellations at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad, Hyderabad on December 5, 2025. NAGARA GOPAL

2020 and 2024, a figure further diluted by attrition and type-rating constraints.

Industry norms indicate that 15-16 pilots are required per narrow-body aircraft, yet trainer shortages, simulator constraints, regulatory bottlenecks, and high training costs have rendered pilot supply relatively inelastic. Airlines have increasingly relied on foreign aircrew, with around 236 temporary approval licences issued in 2025. However, these remain a limited and expensive stopgap.

Regulatory capacity has further compounded the strain. Nearly half of the DGCA's sanctioned technical positions remain vacant even as fleet size and passenger volumes expand. Recent disruptions have been managed through schedule exemptions rather than strict enforcement, reflecting a shift towards ad hoc crisis management and underscoring deeper fragilities in India's aviation oversight framework

**India's aviation duopoly**

The degree of concentration in India's domestic aviation market materially alters both the nature of competition and the system's operational resilience. DGCA data for 2024-25 show that IndiGo commands approximately 63% to 65% of domestic passenger traffic, while the Air India group accounts for a further 27% to 28%, together forming a duopoly controlling nearly 90% of the market. At this level of concentration, IndiGo ceases to function merely as a competing airline and instead assumes the role of a systemically significant carrier, whose operational decisions have direct implications for national connectivity, fare stability, and service continuity.

Empirical evidence from cancellation episodes indicate that disruptions of dominant airlines lead to a contraction in aggregate capacity rather than a redistribution of passengers to competing carriers. Data show that IndiGo operates as the sole carrier on about 60.4% of all

routes. Therefore, operational stress at IndiGo does not merely displace traffic across the network; it results in the outright loss of connectivity on a large share of domestic sectors, with few or no viable alternatives for passengers.

**New regional players**

In December 2025, the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued NOCs for the operational launch of three regional airlines — Shankh Air, Al Hind Air, and FlyExpress — all aimed at enhancing regional connectivity and serving previously unattended routes. Al Hind Air will operate regional connections from Kochi, Shankh Air will begin services from the upcoming Noida International Airport linking regions in Uttar Pradesh, and FlyExpress will function as a low-cost passenger and cargo carrier in Telangana.

These new entrants offer a ray of hope for de-concentration and improved regional connectivity, particularly under the UDAN scheme, which had operationalised 625 routes and 85 airports by 2025, including 102 new routes in the Northeast, targeting 1.5 crore commuters in the first phase itself. Yet, Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities still rely on only one or two airlines with limited frequency, and any disruption in IndiGo's operations could lead to route cancellations, rendering air transport inaccessible for a sizable portion of the population.

The vulnerability of past regional airlines underscores that challenges in India's aviation sector remain significant. The market has witnessed the failures of several carriers, including Paramount Airways (2010), Kingfisher Airlines (2012), Jet Airways (2019), Trujet (2022), and Go First (2023), while Vistara failed in 2024 and was subsequently acquired by Air India. These failures were driven by intense cost competition, weak demand in smaller markets, poor management, and infrastructural limitations at regional

airports. A persistent structural challenge was the volatility of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices, which are closely tied to the U.S. dollar, exposing airlines to global market fluctuations.

For emerging players to survive and meaningfully contribute to market de-concentration, active policy support beyond initial NOCs will be essential.

This includes the effective implementation of UDAN subsidies, preferential slot allocation at congested airports, coordinated development of Tier-2 and Tier-3 airport infrastructure, and potentially fuel hedging mechanisms or tax relief on ATF to offset price volatility.

**The need for a systemic solution**

The rising frequency of safety incidents indicate that India's aviation system is operating beyond its safe design limits. By late 2025, the DGCA had issued 19 safety violation notices citing breaches of FDTL norms, lapses in quality assurance, unauthorised cockpit access, and aircraft operated with expired emergency equipment.

Globally, airlines maintain 20-25% spare crew capacity to absorb shocks; Indian carriers operate at near-total utilisation, allowing minor disruptions to cascade across networks. In this context, crisis management cannot substitute for structural reform.

With India accounting for 4.2% of global air traffic, and domestic demand set to rise sharply by reaching 715 million by 2030, failure to address these constraints risks converting India's aviation growth into a recurring crisis borne ultimately by passengers.

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**THE GIST**

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# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

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## Enough pilots to ensure stable ops: IndiGo

*New Delhi:* IndiGo, which faced massive flight disruptions in early December, Tuesday said it has an optimum pool of staff to ensure stable operations as regulator DGCA's temporary pilot duty norm relaxations for the country's largest airline come to an end. Against the backdrop of IndiGo cancelling 2,507 flights between December 3 and 5, DGCA approved the airline's request for relaxations in implementing the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation norms till February 10. IndiGo operates around 2,200 flights daily. PTI

— AND OTHER NON-SCHEDULED OPERATORS —

## DGCA orders special safety audit of VSR Ventures



### OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NEW DELHI:** Aviation watchdog DGCA has started a special safety audit of non-scheduled flight operators, including VSR Ventures, following the plane crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and four others in January.

The Learjet 45 plane that crashed near Baramati airport on January 28 belonged to VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd. Pawar and four others were killed in the crash, which is being probed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday said that, consequent to the accident of VSR Ventures' Learjet 45 aircraft VT-SSK on January 28, it has

### HIGHLIGHTS

- » The Learjet 45 plane that crashed near Baramati airport on January 28 belonged to VSR Ventures Pvt Ltd
- » Pawar and four others were killed in the crash, which is being probed by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau
- » The audit commenced on Feb 4, the regulator said in a post on X

ordered a special safety audit of non-scheduled operators in a phased manner.

The audit commenced on February 4, the regulator said

in a post on X.

The special safety audit of VSR Ventures and 14 other non-scheduled operators was ordered on February 2. The special safety audit will continue until February 25 for 14 non-scheduled operators.

DGCA shared the orders on X hours after NCP (SP) MLA Rohit Pawar alleged that there was reason to suspect sabotage in the tragic air crash that killed his uncle Ajit Pawar last month, and demanded a comprehensive probe by multiple expert agencies.

Meanwhile, on January 28, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu had said AAIB would take an in-depth look into the plane crash near Baramati airstrip, and that there were no safety concerns regarding the aircraft's operator.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

10 FEBRUARY 2026

### Cumulative loss of airlines touched ₹5,289.73 crore in FY25, says govt

**NEW DELHI:** The cumulative loss of Indian airlines stood at Rs 5,289.73 crore in the last financial year, with Air India Group alone accounting for Rs 9,808.12 crore of the total loss, according to official data.

Out of the 11 operators, 4 had reported profit — IndiGo, Blue Dart, Star Air and IndiaOne Air. The data was provided as part of a written reply to the Rajya Sabha on Monday by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol.

In 2024-25, Air India and Air India Express recorded a loss of Rs 3,975.75 crore and Rs 5,832.37 crore, respectively while Akasa Air reported a loss of Rs 1,986.25 crore.

State-owned Alliance Air's



loss was at Rs 691.12 crore and that of SpiceJet stood at Rs 55.67 crore in the last fiscal. Other loss-making operators were Fly91 (Rs 67.65 crore) and Quikjet Cargo (Rs 1.34 crore).

IndiGo raked in a profit of Rs 7,253.30 crore and other profitable entities were Star Air (Rs 68.75 crore), Blue Dart (Rs 0.71 crore) and IndiaOne Air (Rs 0.33 crore).

Four out of 11 operators had reported profit — IndiGo, Blue Dart, Star Air and IndiaOne Air

All these figures are after considering extraordinary items. In the reply to CPI-M member John Brittas, the Union minister also said that in a deregulated aviation market, airfares are neither fixed nor regulated by the government and are determined by airlines based on demand-supply dynamics and other commercial considerations. **PTI**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

11 FEBRUARY 2026

## INDIA vs PAKISTAN

### FLYING TO COLOMBO? PAY ₹1.18L FROM DEL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

IN less than 24 hours after Pakistan government cleared its team to play India on February 15, the excitement is visible everywhere. But nothing surpasses the aviation sector. The carriers have hiked ticket rates between most Indian cities to Sri Lanka's capital and some

return tickets are being sold for over ₹1 lakh. The cheapest non-stop direct return flight from Delhi to the Sri Lankan capital for the game is ₹1,18,961 (as on Tuesday evening). Normally, it's below ₹30,000 if you were to book tickets in this sector.

IndiGo, an LCC, usually charges in the region of ₹16,000

for a direct return flight from Chennai. It's at ₹54,475 for the coming weekend (leaving on February 14 and returning on Monday post game). Because Chennai is just an

80-minute flight away from Colombo, it would make sense for people to book return domestic flights to Chennai and fly to Colombo from Chennai. Fans departing from Mumbai

will have to cough up approximately ₹82,000. Even hotel prices are surging. Some star hotels are charging six to 10 times more. One famous star landmark is priced at ₹1.50 lakh a night (normal days it's ₹10k). The match could also see ICC chair, Jay Shah, and Pakistan Cricket Board chief, Mohsin Naqvi, share the stage. **P11 & 12**

**PRICE SURGE**  
Direct flights

