



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

10 JULY 2025

In a relief to DN Nagar residents, govt says it will shift AAI towers

Sweety Bhagwat

MUMBAI

In a significant development for residents of DN Nagar and the Gulmohar area in Andheri (West), the state government on Tuesday informed the Assembly that transmission towers of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) located at DN Nagar would be relocated within the next six to eight months.

If the relocation does not materialise within the stipulated time, the government said it would positively consider amending the Development Control and Promotion Regulations (DCPR) to allow floating Floor Space Index (FSI) for affected

Redevelopment plans of the bldgs are stuck due to height restrictions

buildings for their redevelopment. The assurance came in response to a calling attention motion moved by BJP MLA Ameet Satam, who highlighted the plight of residents facing redevelopment hurdles due to height restrictions imposed by AAI's transmission installations.

"Old buildings in the area, constructed in the 1970s and 1980s, are in a dilapidated condition and urgently need redevelopment. However, the presence of AAI's transmit-

ting stations has led to strict height restrictions, making redevelopment financially unviable. Most residents are middle-class Marathi families who have been suffering due to this delay. Now, the government says that two options have been given to the AAI for shifting the transmission stations and are awaiting for their response," said Satam.

Satam pointed out that while the issue was raised in the last Assembly session and the government had then assured relocation of the towers before the monsoon session, no action had been taken so far. Will the government ensure the towers are shifted within the next six to eight months, he questioned.

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THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWAHATI

10 JULY 2025

Record growth in cargo tonnage at LGBI Airport

STAFF REPORTER

Guwahati, July 9: The GAIL (Guwahati International Airport Limited) terminal of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA), recorded its highest ever single-day cargo tonnage of 42.43 MT on 28 June, surpassing the previous record of 40.43 MT set last year – a growth of 4.95 per cent.

This achievement was part of a broader upward trend that culminated in the GIAL cargo terminal, LGBIA, crossing the 844 MT mark in monthly cargo processed for the first time since commencement of operations date (COD). This is a growth of 11.93 per cent.

The previous monthly

highest was 754 MT in January this year.

The record growth in cargo tonnage underscores the growing role of LGBIA as a logistics hub in the North-east region of India.

It is the outcome of focused operational enhancements, improved cargo handling efficiency, and the airport's strategic importance in connecting North-east India with key domestic markets, a GIAL spokesman said.

The GIAL cargo terminal has consistently demonstrated strong growth in cargo volumes over the first quarter of FY2025-26, with year-on-year comparisons reflecting a robust upward trajectory.

Agartala and Imphal re-

main the prime contributors in the Northeast region, while major destinations across the country include Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, and Bengaluru.

The airport has seen strong import activity from Bengaluru and Jaipur, with flowers being the primary import commodity, contributing to the region's growing floral trade.

"These achievements are not only milestones for LGBIA's GIAL cargo terminal, but also significant indicators of economic vibrancy in the Northeast. The growing cargo movement reflects the trust of our partners and the region's increasing integration with national supply chains," the spokesperson said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

GHIAL acquires 70% stake in ESR GMR Logistics Park

Our Bureau

Hyderabad

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airports, has acquired a 70 per cent stake in ESR GMR Logistics Park Private Ltd (EGLPPL). GMR Hyderabad Aerotropolis Ltd (GHAL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of GHIAL, already owns the remaining 30 per cent in EGLPPL. EGLPPL was initially formed as a joint venture between GHAL and ESR Hyderabad 1 Pte Ltd in 2020 for the development of warehousing and logistics parks in Hyderabad.

It has developed approximately 1.7 million sq ft of industrial and logistics infrastructure.

STRATEGIC BUY

With this strategic acquisition, GHIAL now owns 100

per cent of EGLPPL, making it a wholly-owned subsidiary of the company.

This move is a significant step forward in GHAL's long-term vision to accelerate its airport land development strategy in Hyderabad. By consolidating its position in the industrial and warehousing sector, GHAL aims to expand its footprint and unlock new growth avenues, strengthen its core airport ecosystem and reinforce Hyderabad's emerging status as a major logistics and warehousing hub in the region.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

10 JULY 2025

जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रीभार में 13% गिरावट

रैंकिंग में फिसला

नवज्योति, जयपुर। जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर मई, 2025 में यात्रियों की संख्या में गिरावट दर्ज की गई है। एयरपोर्ट यात्रीभार के लिहाज से देश के बिजनेस एयरपोर्ट्स की सूची में पिछड़ कर अब 16वें स्थान पर आ गया है। मई-2024 में जहाँ 4.56 लाख यात्रियों ने जयपुर एयरपोर्ट से सफर किया था, वहीं मई 2025 में वह संख्या घटकर 3.97 लाख रह गई। यानी करीब 59 हजार यात्रियों की कमी के साथ 13 फीसदी की गिरावट दर्ज की गई है। इसके चलते जयपुर एयरपोर्ट छोटे शहरों के एयरपोर्ट्स से भी पीछे रह गया है।

जयपुर से दुबई जाने वाली फ्लाइट 7 घंटे लेट

जयपुर एयरपोर्ट से दुबई जाने वाली स्पाइसजेट की इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट मंगलवार को सात घंटे देरी से रवाना हुई। यह फ्लाइट जयपुर से सुबह 9.30 बजे उड़ान भरती है, लेकिन तकनीकी कारणों से शाम 4.40 बजे तक दुबई के लिए रवाना हुई। समय पर सूचना नहीं मिलाने के कारण बड़ी संख्या में यात्रियों को घंटों इंतजार करना पड़ा है।

भुवनेश्वर एयरपोर्ट से मई, 2025 में 4.72 लाख यात्रियों ने सफर किया, जबकि त्रिवेन्द्रम से 4.44 लाख और हाल ही में शुरू हुए गोवा के मोपा एयरपोर्ट से 4.41 लाख यात्रियों ने यात्रा की।

फ्लाइट में तकनीकी खराबी, यात्री हुए परेशान: जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर कोलकाता जाने वाली फ्लाइट

में तकनीकी खराबी सामने आई। ईंडिगो की फ्लाइट जयपुर से सुबह 10.55 बजे रवाना होनी थी, जिसमें यात्रियों की पूरी वॉइडिंग भी हो चुकी थी। एनवक्त पर विमान में खराबी पाई गई। इसके बाद यात्रियों को दोबारा एयरपोर्ट बिल्डिंग में लाया गया। एयरलाइन ने दिल्ली से दूसरा विमान मंगवाया है।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DBLHI

11 JULY 2025

■ GHIAL Buys 70% Stake in ESR GMR Logistics Park



HYDERABAD GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL), a subsidiary of GMR Airport, has

acquired a 70% stake in ESR GMR Logistics Park (EGLPPL). GMR Hyderabad Aerotropolis (GHAL), a wholly owned subsidiary of GHIAL, already holds the remaining 30%, the company said on Thursday.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

AIIMS plans logistics hub near Safdarjung Airport

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

STRUGGLING with space for storage and logistics, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), here is exploring a land parcel near Safdarjung airport to establish a centralised logistics hub that will be connected to the airport.

According to an order issued by the Director Dr M Srinivas, the institute is facing an acute shortage of space for stores & logistics. "It is noted that at AIIMS New Delhi, there is an acute shortage of space for stores & logistics. As an interim measure, a few vacant houses had been allotted for such use cases. However, as these houses are being allotted and renovated for new occupants, there is a felt need for additional space in close proximity to AIIMS for establishing a logistics hub," the order copy read.

"The undersigned has been informed that there is a probability of a land parcel being available near Safdarjung Airport on which AIIMS can establish a logistics hub. Accordingly, in the interest of streamlining the supply chain management systems of Stores and to establish a centralised logistics hub, it is desired that an effort be made to explore the possibility of acquiring an appropriate land parcel near Safdarjung Airport," it added. "There are vacant plots near Safdarjung airport where a centralised logistics hub can be established. The area is also in proximity to the hospital. It is ideal in all aspects," an AIIMS official said.

Initial report to be made public in 2 days: AAIB to House panel

NEW DELHI, July 9: The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) told a parliamentary committee today that it will make public its preliminary report on the Ahmedabad plane crash in a couple of days, sources said.

AAIB Director General GVG Yugandhar told the panel that it will upload the report within 30 days of one of the worst aviation disasters in recent decades and the first crash involving a Boeing Dreamliner.

Concerns over aviation safety dominated the proceedings of the parliamentary committee headed by JD(U) MP Sanjay Kumar Jha, as over 97 representatives covering almost the entire gamut of the sector, including official agencies, airlines and other stakeholders, shared their views with parliamentarians in the day-long meeting.

Air India's Boeing 787-8 aircraft operating flight AI 171 en route to London Gatwick had crashed into a medical hostel complex soon after take-off from Ahmedabad on June 12, killing at least 260 people, including 241 persons aboard. The sources also said that no preliminary report has been submitted by AAIB to the Civil Aviation Ministry.

Under the ICAO norms, AAIB can submit a preliminary report within 30 days of the accident to it.

Jha described the meeting as "very extensive and thorough", noting that every stakeholder participated in the discussion and answered queries of the

Ahmedabad plane crash



panel's members.

Officials told the panel that this is the first time the black box of a crashed plane is being investigated in India, noting that they have shored up their technological know-how in recent times and are consulting foreign experts, including those from Boeing, as required.

The US government has helped with the platform needed to decipher the data, and the Aviation Secretary had led the coordination efforts. They said the black box and voice recorder of the ill-fated aircraft were intact, and the data was being investigated.

to 2,500 in four years from the current nearly 800 and more airports coming up, the overall maintenance and safety requirements have not kept pace. This needs to be addressed," an MP said.

He referred to a string of chopper crashes in Uttarakhand, especially in the route serving pilgrims to Kedarnath, and noted that quite a few of them were due to human errors, including a case where the pilot was untrained and another when a helicopter hit a vehicle parked near the landing. This issue also drew the panel's concern.

Some MPs faulted Air India and official agencies for not being communicative enough with the public following the Ahmedabad crash to restore their confidence.

Asked about the impact of the crash, which was followed by several operational incidents on the aviation sector, officials said the domestic traffic fell by over eight per cent, but international traffic fell by less than a per cent, the sources said. Some members also pointed out the "haphazard" growth around several airports, including densely populated areas, due to rapid urbanisation, the sources said.

The Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture, which oversees the functioning of the civil aviation sector, held its last meeting on the issue of safety on Tuesday and is likely to table its report in Parliament in the session beginning July 21. - PTI

Official sources said that the MPs were of the view that the regulator and the safety infrastructure have not kept pace with the growth of the country's aviation sector, noting that Air Traffic Control oversees nearly 30 flights on a radar compared to the norm of eight to 10 in many places.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has over half of its sanctioned strength vacant, they added.

"A common concern is that amid the rapid growth of the Indian aviation sector, with its plane strength likely to rise

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWAHATI

10 JULY 2025

Chinese pangolin rescued in Senapati dist

CORRESPONDENT

IMPHAL, July 9: A Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) was rescued from Senapati district on Monday and released back to its natural habitat. Forest officials stationed in Senapati district and the Sadim Pukhri Village Pukhri Authority jointly conducted the rescue operation.



Forest officials received a distress call from Joseph Kaba, chairman of Sadim Malingli under the jurisdiction of Sadim Pukhri village, who had spotted the displaced pangolin.

Meanwhile, the Forest Department has urged the public to cooperate in conservation efforts and preserve natural resources for future generations. The Sadim Pukhri village community has undertaken a slew of conservation initiatives in the forest area around the Sadim Lizai Lake for more than a decade.

Air India to extend flight cuts until August end

Aneesh Phadnis

Mumbai

Air India extended the cut in international services at least until August 31 amid ongoing airspace closures.

The closures have resulted in an increase in flight duration and reduction in payload on its non-stop US flights. On June 18, Air India announced a temporary reduction in services until July 15 due to enhanced safety checks, and to cater to additional flight durations.

The airline said the objective is to restore last-minute stability and minimise last-minute cancellations. Now, the cut in service is being extended.

SERVICES AFFECTED

Services from London Gatwick to Amritsar and Goa will remain suspended, and frequencies on various routes to Europe, North America, Asia and Africa will be cut.

The schedule changes were reported by *Aeroroutes*, a website focused on airline schedules and networks.

Frequencies on some of the Europe and US flights are expected to be cut until winter, and details of the same are being finalised. Air India did not respond to an e-mail query.

Last Friday, Managing Director Campbell Wilson wrote to staff that Air India continues to observe a "safety pause".

The pause was an important and necessary move to accommodate voluntary checks on aircraft, navigate volatile international airspace and stabilise flight schedules, Campbell said.

Sources, however, pointed out that the airline is yet to achieve operational stability.

On the demand side, there is softness, especially on routes from the US, Canada and West Asia. "We need more aircraft to operate the same number of flights," a source said.

बिनय सिन्हा



राष्ट्रीयकरण के तीन उदाहरणों के सबक

बीते कुछ सालों में स्टेट बैंक, एलआईसी और एयर इंडिया के साथ हमारी सरकारों के बरताव में कुछ सबक छिपे हुए हैं, जिनसे सीख ली जा सकती है। बता रहे हैं ए के भट्टाचार्य

करीब सात दशक पहले प्रधानमंत्री जवाहरलाल नेहरू के नेतृत्व में भारत सरकार ने तीन प्रमुख संस्थानों का राष्ट्रीयकरण किया था। उनमें से एक भारतीय स्टेट बैंक इस महीने अपने पुनर्जन्म यानी राष्ट्रीयकरण की 70वीं वर्षगांठ मना रहा है और दूसरे भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम (एलआईसी) के राष्ट्रीयकरण के 70 वर्ष 2026 में पूरे हो जाएंगे। तीसरे संस्थान के राष्ट्रीयकरण की 70वीं वर्षगांठ दो साल पहले ही हो जाती मगर हो नहीं सकी क्योंकि उससे एक साल पहले ही उसका निजीकरण कर दिया गया। वह संस्थान है एयर इंडिया।

इन तीनों उपक्रमों का सात दशकों का सफर एक दूसरे से अलग रहा और हमें बताता है कि आर्थिक संस्थानों के स्वामित्व के बारे में देश की सरकारों का रुख कैसा रहा है और उनके स्वामित्व का भविष्य कैसे तय होता है। इसके प्रमुख कारकों पर नजर डालते हैं।

तीनों संस्थानों में एक जैसी बात यह है कि तीनों सेवा क्षेत्र से ताल्लुक रखते थे। एक

विमानन सेवा दे रहा था, दूसरा बैंकिंग और तीसरा जीवन बीमा की सेवा। लोगों की जिंदगी पर इनका जैसा असर होता है, वैसा कई बड़ी औद्योगिक और विनिर्माण कंपनियों का भी नहीं होता। इनके स्वामित्व पर सरकार का रुख शायद इसी समझ के कारण था। नेहरू के राष्ट्रीयकरण में सेवा क्षेत्र में काम करने वाली कंपनियों पर ज्यादा जोर दिया गया था, जबकि उनकी पुत्री इंदिरा गांधी ने बैंकों और सामान्य बीमा कंपनियों के साथ कपड़े और क्रोयले जैसे औद्योगिक एवं खनन क्षेत्र की कंपनियों का भी राष्ट्रीयकरण किया।

अतीत में झांके तो इंपीरियल बैंक ऑफ इंडिया का राष्ट्रीयकरण करने और उसका नाम बदलकर भारतीय स्टेट बैंक करने की रणनीति कारगर रही। पिछले सात दशक में स्टेट बैंक मजबूत होता गया है और देश का सबसे बड़ा वाणिज्यिक बैंक भी बना रहा है। राष्ट्रीय दृष्टिकोण से देखें तो स्टेट बैंक ने कई मुश्किलों से निपटने और प्रशासन के लक्ष्य हासिल करने में सरकारों की मदद की है। उसने 1962 में चीन के साथ युद्ध के

समय विशेष योजना के जरिये कर्ज की जरूरत पूरी की, मई 1991 में भारत को 24 करोड़ डॉलर दिलाने के लिए 20 टन जूट सोना एक स्विस् बैंक में पहुंचाया, उसी साल देश को घोर भुगतान संकट से बचाने के लिए इंडिया डेवलपमेंट बॉन्ड योजना से 1.6 अरब डॉलर जुटाए और सरकार का विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार बढ़ाने के लिए 1998 में रीसर्जेंट इंडिया बॉन्ड योजना लाकर प्रवासी भारतीयों से 4.2 अरब डॉलर भी जुटाए।

उसने जन धन खातों की मदद से देश की वित्तीय समावेशन योजना को भी बढ़ावा दिया। 2018 में जब सरकार ने राजनीतिक दलों को गुप्त चंदा देने की विवादास्पद चुनावी बॉन्ड योजना शुरू की तो उसे चलाने का जिम्मा भी स्टेट बैंक को ही सौंपा गया। 2024 में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने योजना को असंवैधानिक करार दे दिया।

स्टेट बैंक के संचालन ढांचे पर भी सवाल उठे। इसमें बहुलांश हिस्सेदारी वाली सरकार को क्या मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी सहित बैंक के शीर्ष प्रबंधन की नियुक्ति में

अहम भूमिका निभानी चाहिए? या नियामक भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक को उसके साथ भी दूसरे बैंकों की तरह बरताव करने देना चाहिए? सरकार और नियामक के बीच इस पर विवाद चलता रहा है।

स्टेट बैंक की 57 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी सरकार और बाकी जनता के पास है, इसलिए इसके निजीकरण या और विनिवेश के बारे में कभी सोचा ही नहीं गया। देश का शीर्ष बैंक होने के नाते इसे अहम संपत्ति माना जाता है और सभी सरकारों ने इसे सरकारी उपक्रम रहने दिया है। इसमें शायद ही किसी को शक हो कि स्टेट बैंक के स्वामित्व का ढांचा ऐसे ही रहेगा।

देश की सबसे बड़ी जीवन बीमा कंपनी एलआईसी के राष्ट्रीयकरण को जनवरी 2026 में 70 साल पूरे हो जाएंगे। नेहरू सरकार ने 1956 में एक अध्यादेश लाकर 245 भारतीय और विदेशी बीमा कंपनियों का राष्ट्रीयकरण किया और सभी को मिलाकर एक कंपनी एलआईसी बना दी। सरकार ने यह कहकर फैसले को सही ठहराया कि इस क्षेत्र में भ्रष्टाचार बहुत था और लोगों को जीवन बीमा देना मुश्किल हो रहा था।

तत्कालीन वित्त मंत्री सीडी देशमुख ने आकाशवाणी पर घोषणा के जरिये लोगों को बीमा उद्योग के राष्ट्रीयकरण और एलआईसी के गठन की जानकारी दी। 1999 में निजी कंपनियों को जीवन बीमा क्षेत्र में प्रवेश दिया गया मगर उससे पहले करीब 40 साल तक एलआईसी का ही इस पर एकाधिकार रहा। निजी कंपनियों के आने के बाद भी एलआईसी अक्वल नंबर की बीमा कंपनी बनी हुई है।

सरकार ने 2022 में आरंभिक सार्वजनिक निर्गम लाकर एलआईसी की 3.5 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी बेचने का फैसला किया। उसके पास 20 फीसदी तक हिस्सेदारी विदेशी निवेशकों को बेचने का अधिकार है मगर अब तक इसमें से 0.5 फीसदी भी नहीं बेची गई है। सरकार के पास अगले कुछ साल में अपनी हिस्सेदारी 96.5 फीसदी से घटाकर 50 फीसदी पर लाने की गुंजाइश है मगर विनिवेश पर ठंडी प्रतिक्रिया और सरकारी संसाधनों की हालत देखते हुए ऐसा होना मुश्किल ही लग रहा है।

एलआईसी मुनाफे में है और देश में

जीवन बीमा पॉलिसियों के पहले साल आने वाले प्रीमियम में उसकी 57 फीसदी से ज्यादा हिस्सेदारी है। सभी निजी बीमा कंपनियों का पहले साल का प्रीमियम मिला लें तो भी एलआईसी से कम होगा। परंतु स्टेट बैंक की ही तरह सरकार ने एलआईसी का इस्तेमाल भी अपने लिए किया है जैसे चाहे गिरते बाजार को संभालना या कंपनियों को जबरिया अधिग्रहण के खतरे से बचाने के लिए उनमें हिस्सेदारी खरीदना। आने वाले सालों में सरकार चरणबद्ध तरीके से एलआईसी में हिस्सेदारी कम कर सकती है। परंतु वह बहुलांश हिस्सेदारी अपने पास रखेगी। टाटा समूह द्वारा 1932 में शुरू की गई एयर इंडिया की कहानी अलग है। जब नेहरू सरकार ने नागर विमानन उद्योग और एयर इंडिया दोनों का राष्ट्रीयकरण करने का निर्णय लिया तो कंपनी ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिचालन का विस्तार किया। लेकिन उसकी माली हालत कमजोर रही और 1994 में इस क्षेत्र का निजीकरण होने के बाद और भी खस्ता हो गई। 2007 में सरकार ने देश के भीतर उड़ान सेवाएं देने वाली इंडियन एयरलाइंस का विलय एयर इंडिया में कर दिया। कंपनी का घाटा फिर भी बढ़ता रहा और कई नाकाम कोशिशों के बाद 2022 में सरकार ने एयर इंडिया का निजीकरण कर दिया। इसे टाटा समूह ने ही वापस खरीद लिया मगर उसके बाद से कंपनी का सफर हिचकोले खाता रहा है। सरकार राहत की सांस ले सकती है कि उसे अब इस सरकारी कंपनी का घाटा पाटने के लिए जनता का पैसा नहीं लगाना पड़ रहा है। इन तीन संस्थानों के निजीकरण की कहानी में एक संदेश स्पष्ट है। सरकार को अगर कोई संस्थान अपने पास रखना है तो उसे पक्का करना होगा कि संस्थान मुनाफे में रहे, उसका घाटा सरकारी खजाने से न पाटना पड़े और आर्थिक विकास की सरकारी योजना में अहम भागीदारी करता रहे। जो उपक्रम ऐसा नहीं कर सकते उन्हें सरकारी कंपनी बनाए रखने की कोई तुक नहीं है। सरकार ने 2021 में सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की जो नीति बनाई थी, उसका सार यही है। इन तीनों संस्थानों के राष्ट्रीयकरण से मिली सीख बताती है कि इस नीति पर चलना बहुत जरूरी है।

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

10 JULY 2025

दुबई फ्लाइट ने 3 घंटे आने में, 7 घंटे जाने में देरी से उड़ान भरी

जयपुर | जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर मंगलवार को एक इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट का शेड्यूल गड़बड़ा गया। जयपुर से दुबई जाने वाली स्पाइसजेट एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट संख्या एसजी-57 सुबह 9:30 बजे दुबई के लिए रवाना होती है, जो दोपहर 12:55 बजे पहुंचती है। लेकिन इसे 7:10 घंटे लेट यानी शाम 4:40 बजे के लिए री-शेड्यूल



किया गया। इसी तरह दुबई से जयपुर आने वाली स्पाइसजेट एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट एसजी-58 भी निर्धारित शेड्यूल से 3 घंटे से अधिक लेट रही। तकनीकी खराबी की वजह से फ्लाइट सुबह 6:43 बजे दुबई से रवाना हो पाई और 11:40 बजे जयपुर पहुंची। वहीं जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर उड़ान भरने से पहले इंडिगो एयरलाइंस की एक फ्लाइट में खराबी आ गई। इंडिगो की फ्लाइट 6ई-6568 जयपुर से सुबह 10:55 बजे कोलकाता जाती है। मंगलवार को भी यात्रियों की फ्लाइट में बॉटिंग करा दी। इसके बाद जैसे ही रनवे पर रवाना होनी थी, उससे ठीक पहले फ्लाइट की फाइनल चेकिंग में पायलट को विमान में तकनीकी खराबी का पता चला। एयरलाइन ने यात्रियों के लिए दिल्ली से दूसरे विमान की व्यवस्था की। जिसके बाद दोपहर करीब 3 बजे दूसरे विमान से यात्रियों को रवाना किया गया।

TheDailyGuardian

epaper.thedailyguardian.com
10 Jul 2025 - Page 11

Emirates goes crypto: This is bigger than just bitcoin on plane ticket

Emirates' move to accept cryptocurrency payments is not just a marketing gimmick—it's a symbol of the UAE's wider post-oil transformation. As one of the first major airlines to embrace Bitcoin and stablecoins for ticket purchases, Emirates is showcasing how traditional sectors like aviation are being integrated into the country's digital economy blueprint.

This aligns with the UAE's Vision 2031, which aims to position the country as a leader in innovation and financial technology. By promoting crypto adoption in tourism, real estate, and now aviation, the UAE is slowly pivoting away from oil dependency. This also sends a powerful message: future Gulf prosperity won't be built on fossil fuels alone, but on code, capital, and connectivity.

A new fintech frontier in the gulf

Dubai and Abu Dhabi have spent the last few years constructing a pro-crypto, innovation-friendly ecosystem. From Dubai's Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (VARA) to the Abu Dhabi Global Market's licensing of global exchanges, the UAE offers one of the most mature and clear regulatory environments for digital assets. Major players like



Dubai department of Finance (DoF) & Crypto.com partner to enable cryptocurrency payments for government services in Dubai. This initiative positions Dubai as one of the first governments globally to accept Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies for public service fees. Credit: X

How the UAE is leveraging crypto to become a tech-savvy, independent global power

Binance, Crypto.com, and Ripple have either moved or expanded operations there, citing regulatory clarity as a key reason.

Unlike Western frameworks that remain fragmented and enforcement-driven, the UAE's approach is proactive and sandbox-based. It actively encourages experimentation while laying out strict compliance for consumer protection. This combination of agility and control has helped the Gulf nation

emerge as a serious fintech and blockchain hub.

Financial independence and gulf soft power

By embracing crypto at a national level, the UAE is also carving out financial sovereignty from Western-dominated systems like SWIFT and dollar-based trade. Initiatives like the Digital Dirham and regionally backed stablecoins signal the country's intent to build independent monetary rails—an essential step in a multipolar financial world.

In doing so, the UAE is not just gaining economic tools—it's projecting soft power. Hosting major crypto conferences, creating friendly policies

for web companies, and integrating blockchain into everyday sectors are cementing its status as a quiet leader in digital diplomacy. Emirates accepting Bitcoin is just the tip of the iceberg—it's a sign that Gulf power is now being exerted through networks, not just oil wells or skyscrapers.

Emirates' crypto announcement is part of a much broader vision: a digital-first, politically neutral, and globally influential UAE. What looks like a tech upgrade in aviation is, in fact, a bold declaration of where the future of finance—and power—may lie.

● TDG NETWORK





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DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

10 JULY 2025

इंडिगो विमान से चिड़िया टकराई पटना में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग



एजेंसी/पटना। बिहार में राजधानी पटना के हवाई अड्डे पर बुधवार सुबह 8.45 पर इंडिगो एयरलाइन्स का विमान उड़ान भरते ही एक चिड़िया से टकरा गया और उसकी इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग करनी पड़ी। विमान में सवार सभी यात्री सुरक्षित हैं। सूत्रों ने बताया कि इंडिगो एयरलाइन्स की एक फ्लाइट के उड़ान भरने के बाद पावलेट को विमान के थरथराने का एहसास हुआ। जिसके बाद पावलेट ने विमान की इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई। पटना हवाई अड्डे के निदेशक के एम मेहरा ने यहां बताया कि जरूरी प्रक्रियाओं का पालन कर विमान को सुरक्षित लैंडिंग कराई गई है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

Black boxes undamaged in Air India crash, say investigators

**ABHUIH GANAPAVARAM &
NIGAM PRUSTY**
New Delhi, July 10

INVESTIGATORS OF THE deadly Air India airliner crash that killed 260 last month told a meeting of lawmakers that the plane's black boxes were not damaged, two people familiar with the discussions said.

The revelation about the devices critical to reconstructing the events leading up to an air crash, comes after media said they were damaged when the London-bound Boeing Dreamliner crashed on June 12, to erupt in a massive fireball.

The Aircraft Accident Inves-



tigation Bureau has also been able to extract "good data" from the black boxes, its officials told lawmakers on Wednesday during a parliamentary panel meeting on aviation, added one of the sources.

Both sources declined to be identified as the discussions are private.

The AAIB and India's aviation ministry did not respond to Reuters queries.

The plane's cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR), as the black boxes are formally known, were recovered in the days after the crash, one from a rooftop at the site on June 13, and the other from debris on June 16.

The preliminary report from investigation into the crash is likely to be made public by Friday, Reuters has previously reported. —REUTERS

Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

10 JULY 2025

IndiGo Ventures raises ₹450 cr; invests in startup Jeh Aerospace

PTI
MUMBAI

IndiGo Ventures, the corporate venture capital arm of domestic carrier IndiGo, on Monday announced the first close of its maiden fund at Rs 450 crore.

Besides, the company also announced the first investment in Hyderabad-based aerospace startup Jeh Aerospace, without disclosing the amount. Jeh will deploy the investment to scale its advanced digital manufacturing infrastructure, enhance its AI-driven production optimization and deep supply



chain integration platforms, and attract engineering and production talent, it said.

Launched in August last year with approval from SEBI to raise Rs 600 crore, IndiGo Ventures is focused on investing in early-stage startups driving innovation in aviation and allied sectors.

The fund targets companies at the pre-Series A to Series B stages, with an emphasis on long-term strategic alignment.

This first close and investment (in Jeh Aerospace) marks a significant step in IndiGo's broader innovation agenda, combining operational expertise with capital to empower entrepreneurs solving critical challenges in aerospace and related domains, it said.

Founded by industry veterans Vishal Sanghavi and Venkatesh Mudragalla, Jeh Aerospace combines deep sectoral expertise with sharp operational execution.



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MUMBAI

10 JULY 2025

PATNA

Indigo flight to Delhi hit by bird strike

A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight carrying around 175 passengers returned to Jayaprakash Narayan International Airport in Patna after takeoff on Wednesday morning as one of its engines developed a technical snag due to a bird hit, airport officials said. All the 175 passengers and crew were safe, they said.

Panel grills Air India, DGCA on safety, manpower

Jagriti Chandra
Sobhana K. Nair
Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Tata Group-owned Air India and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) came under heavy fire from Opposition leaders at the parliamentary panel meeting on aviation safety on Wednesday, with Air India told to provide written replies on safety issues following the crash of its Boeing 787 aircraft in Ahmedabad on June 12.

The DGCA also faced tough questions, including on the shortage of personnel, with 45% of its sanctioned posts lying vacant and questions raised on its autonomy, sources said. Staff shortages at the DGCA needed to be addressed as the civil aviation sector is growing rapidly with the induction of more aircraft and new airports in the country, members of the panel said.

The meeting of the Par-



Question hour: The parliamentary panel has asked for written replies from Air India on safety issues. FILE PHOTO

liamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture, chaired by Janata Dal(U) MP Sanjay Jha, went on for nearly eight hours. Top officials from the DGCA, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Airports Authority of India, as well as representatives from several airlines, airports, and helicopter operators, were present.

The tone and tenor of Wednesday's meeting

seemed to have been set by another parliamentary panel, the Public Accounts Committee, which met on Tuesday.

The DGCA provided a 122-page presentation to the standing committee, sources said. The AAIB, which is investigating the Ahmedabad crash, detailed the investigative process before the panel, and promised to submit a preliminary report "as early as possible" within the 30-day framework laid down

by the International Civil Aviation Organization, the UN aviation safety watchdog. The 30-day period concludes on Friday.

The MPs on the panel also expressed concern on overworked air traffic control personnel, stressing they were required to monitor nearly 30 flights simultaneously, whereas only eight to nine flights were guided at a time globally.

Tuesday's meeting of the Public Accounts Committee had also led to several tough questions. The panel demanded the DGCA carry out a safety audit within three months in light of the June 12 crash, though the regulator spoke of constraints resulting from a resource crunch. The DGCA was also asked what it was doing about multiple incidents of technical glitches since the June 12 crash.

When would the people of India receive assurance on the safety of flights in the country, PAC Chairman

and Congress MP K.C. Venugopal had asked, sources said.

Questions were also raised on the AAIB's probe into the Air India crash, and whether India had the ability to decode data from the black box or if there was a need to send it abroad. The panel demanded a written answer on the issue.

The panel also asked questions on the composition of the probe committee looking into the crash, and whether it included a Boeing 787-trained pilot and engineer to ensure the requisite expertise. Given the AAIB's advisory role after a crash, who fixes accountability after air accidents, the panel asked.

The PAC also asked Air India why it continued to face consumer complaints on issues such as broken seats and poor air conditioning three years after privatisation, and how long it would take to fix these problems.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

IndiGo arm closes ₹450-crore fund, invests in Jeh Aerospace

IndiGo Ventures, the corporate venture capital arm of air carrier IndiGo, announced the first closure of its maiden fund at ₹450 crore. The firm has also approved its first investment in Jeh Aerospace, a Hyderabad-based aerospace start-up focused on high-precision aerospace and defence manufacturing. It, however, did not disclose how much it was investing.

In Air India's flight path: One airline, many legacies

To say India's response to the air crash that the country witnessed in horror and disbelief on June 12, has been far from adequate no matter which angle one looks at it is a gross understatement. But this matter will have to wait.

Over the past month several aviation industry and Air India officials have reached out to this writer to express their concern and air their fears. The most alarming (and hopefully, alarmist) one is that there could be more accidents. Alarmist as this fear may be, Air India and the aviation regulator would do well to take it seriously since the people involved are privy to the system and its fault lines.

There has been a mixed response to news that Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekharan has decided to get more involved with the management of Air India.

Still, there's no denying the fact that the chairman of Tata Sons might find his task harder than managing some of his other companies. While onlookers have no doubt that he can fix what's broken, it is by no means going to be easy as this entity needs a total cultural makeover. There is a long and hard road ahead to be traversed, no matter who the navigator.

Let me elaborate with some background. In their original avatars, while Air India and Indian Airlines were both owned by the government, they had very distinct cultures and identities even though both suffered the malaise of many State-owned firms.

Of the two, Air India had a far more centralised system of operating with each department under one departmental head, who were all powerful and more often than not ran it as a personal fiefdom.

Indian Airlines had a more decentralised system: a divisional structure with regional heads responsible for their regions and with far more functional autonomy. While petty rivalries at the top often guided the agenda at both, most of the regional heads in Indian Airlines worked in the larger interests of the airline.

This showed in the generally healthier economic performance of Indian Airlines

despite it facing more competition (Jet Airways and others) whereas Air India faced practically none (not too many bilaterals had been granted and the access of foreign airlines to Indian traffic was limited).

But what was disorienting for the two carriers was the constant change in leadership, which primarily comprised senior bureaucrats pulled in from diverse fields and backgrounds. These individuals had different working and leading styles and their own idiosyncrasies.

As one joke that circulated at the time of the merger went: One XX wants a mega airline and the other XX couldn't care less as long as his elevation to additional secretary proceeds without any hiccups (the XXs stand for the common initials of two top managers at the time of the merger and post it).

The larger point was that with two very distinct cultures and systems of functioning, the merged entity that emerged suffered from a deep identity crisis and was in some senses doomed from the word go. That is what Tata Sons inherited at the time of the acquisition.

Then there was the well-run Vistara, Tata's own airline, but an altogether different creature with its own ethos, values, culture and personality.

It is this cocktail of split personalities that Chandrasekharan has the unenviable task of reconciling and fixing. In addition, he also has a top management team that may not be equipped to handle this. The results of this have already shown up in incessant troubles, operational glitches and safety concerns the airline has faced for the last three years, even as it managed to avoid a catastrophic accident.

One cannot therefore help but sympathise with the chairman who now has the task of developing a brand-new corporate culture in a multipolar entity while dealing with the fallout of the crash. It's probably a lot more than what he or the Tata group bargained for and is likely to take Herculean effort, commitment and time.



Anjali
Bhargava

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



One cannot help but sympathise with the chairman who now has the task of developing a brand-new corporate culture in a multipolar entity.

IndiGo flight from Patna hit by bird during take-off; grounded

Ruchir Kumar

ruchirkumar@hindustantimes.com

PATNA: An IndiGo Airlines flight (6E 5009) from Patna to Delhi, carrying 175 passengers and crew, suffered a bird hit immediately after take off from the Jay Prakash Narayan International airport here on Wednesday morning.

"All passengers are safe and the aircraft returned safely after suffering a bird strike shortly after take off," said Krishan Mohan Nehra, director Patna airport.

The aircraft had taken off from Patna at 8.42am when it suffered the bird strike and returned immediately thereafter.

"One dead bird in pieces was found on Runway 07 during inspection. The same was communicated to the pilots of the aircraft through the approach control unit. The pilots requested to come back to Patna airport due to vibration in one engine. A local standby was



The Indigo plane at Patna airport on Wednesday. SANTOSH KUMAR/HT

declared and the aircraft was given priority landing at 09.03am," said Nehra.

"We are making alternate options for the passengers, as the aircraft has been grounded," said an airlines official, requesting anonymity.

Shops selling meat in the open around the Patna airport attract birds. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has regularly flagged the problem of avian activity near the airport to the state government due to

such shops.

"It has come to our notice that fish is being sold in the open temporarily for 2-3 hours in the morning along the road near the Officers' Enclave in Gardanibagh. We have taken up the issue with the civic authorities and asked them to ban such sale and also provide alternate space to the vendors," said Chandrashekhar Singh, Patna's divisional commissioner, who is also chairman of the airport environment management

committee.

"We have been able to curb such sale of fish and meat in the open in Phulwarisharif area," said Singh.

The divisional commissioner said the garbage transfer station at Yarpur was also under construction and likely to be completed by the end of this month. "The civic authorities should be able to shift the existing garbage yard at Gardanibagh to Yarpur before August 15," added Singh.

The AAI had expressed serious concern over the presence of shops selling meat in the open around the vicinity of the airport during the last meeting of the airport environment management committee on June 16. It was then decided to eliminate the source of attraction of birds by shifting the existing garbage yard at Gardanibagh to Yarpur and also covering with shed the yard used for parking municipal vehicles by August 15, said an official who attended the meeting.

AAI had also raised its con-

cern over the accumulation and open segregation of garbage and waterlogging near the southern boundary wall of the airport. The railway authorities, who were also present during the meeting, said drainage from adjacent localities had to be planned to avoid water logging. Singh had tasked the Bihar Urban Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (BUIDCL) to make alternate arrangement for drainage.

The Patna airport is among the 11 most critical airports in India given the multiple obstructions and its short runway.

The Bihar government has requested the Centre to send a multidisciplinary team to assess the obstructions and suggest remedial measures. Bihar chief secretary Amrit Lal Meena had in June written to the secretary, ministry of civil aviation in this regard. The Centre was yet to communicate to the state on its request for the multi-disciplinary team.

Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

10 JULY 2025

DGCA to rank flying institutes based on safety, performance

Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has declared that it will rank the Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) based on safety standards of an FTO, its performance, compliance, assistance to students and operational aspects, with an aim to improve the safety and efficiency of pilot training in India. The ranking system will come into effect from October 1 this year.

Stating the need for ranking FTOs, the DGCA, in its public notice dated July 8, said that ranking provides a comparative framework to assess the performance and quality of FTOs based on uniform and objective criteria, which promotes standardisation in training quality across institutions.

"Ranking will be published bi-annually, preferably on 1st Oct and 1st April of every year. Categorisation of FTO ranking will be based on the following overall score achieved by individual FTO," the DGCA stated.

Stating the ranking system, it stated, FTOs with 85% and above will be rated as A++, 70% to less than 85% A+, less than 70% to 50% A and those scoring

below 50% will be rated as B.

"Category 'B' FTOs will receive a notice from DGCA for self-analysis towards improvement of their performance," the notice stated. The DGCA also provided details on the basis of which the grades will be given. The notice by the regulator stated that 20% of the grade will depend on the 'safety standards' obeyed by an FTO. This will include the number of accidents in preceding 12 Months (weightage -18), number of incidents in preceding 12 Months (weightage -02) and non-reporting of any accident/incident which will attract five points for each case.

The 'operational aspect' of an FTO will have the maximum weightage of 40% and will include parameters such as yearly instructor-to-aircraft ratio, yearly student-to-instructor ratio, fleet-to-aircraft maintenance engineer ratio, fleet size (single and multi-engine aircraft), and availability of ground school and simulators. Also, 20% of an FTO's grade will be based on 'safety standards', factoring in accidents and penalties for non-reporting, while another 20% will be based on the FTO's performance.

The third aspect, 'compliance standards' of an FTO, will carry a 10% weightage.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

10 JULY 2025

IndiGo flight to Delhi makes emergency landing in Patna

A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight carrying around 175 passengers returned to Jayaprakash Narayan International Airport in Patna after take-off on Wednesday as one of its engines developed a technical snag due to a bird hit. All the passengers and crew were safe, airport officials said. “IGO5009 Patna to Delhi reported bird hit after takeoff at 0842 IST. One dead bird in pieces found on runway during inspection. The same was advised to the aircraft. Message received from the approach control unit that aircraft requested to come back to Patna due to vibration in one engine. Local stand-by declared and aircraft landed safely at 0903 IST,” a statement issued by the Patna airport said. PTI

Panel grills Air India, DGCA on safety, manpower

Jagriti Chandra
Sobhana K. Nair
Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Tata Group-owned Air India and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) came under heavy fire from Opposition leaders at the parliamentary panel meeting on aviation safety on Wednesday, with Air India told to provide written replies on safety issues following the crash of its Boeing 787 aircraft in Ahmedabad on June 12.

The DGCA also faced tough questions, including on the shortage of personnel, with 45% of its sanctioned posts lying vacant and questions raised on its autonomy, sources said. Staff shortages at the DGCA needed to be addressed as the civil aviation sector is growing rapidly with the induction of more aircraft and new airports in the country, members of the panel said.

The meeting of the Par-



Question hour: The parliamentary panel has asked for written replies from Air India on safety issues. FILE PHOTO

liamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism, and Culture, chaired by Janata Dal(U) MP Sanjay Jha, went on for nearly eight hours. Top officials from the DGCA, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Airports Authority of India, as well as representatives from several airlines, airports, and helicopter operators, were present.

The tone and tenor of Wednesday's meeting

seemed to have been set by another parliamentary panel, the Public Accounts Committee, which met on Tuesday.

The DGCA provided a 122-page presentation to the standing committee, sources said. The AAIB, which is investigating the Ahmedabad crash, detailed the investigative process before the panel, and promised to submit a preliminary report "as early as possible" within the 30-day framework laid down

by the International Civil Aviation Organization, the UN aviation safety watchdog. The 30-day period concludes on Friday.

The MPs on the panel also expressed concern on overworked air traffic control personnel, stressing they were required to monitor nearly 30 flights simultaneously, whereas only eight to nine flights were guided at a time globally.

Tuesday's meeting of the Public Accounts Committee had also led to several tough questions. The panel demanded the DGCA carry out a safety audit within three months in light of the June 12 crash, though the regulator spoke of constraints resulting from a resource crunch. The DGCA was also asked what it was doing about multiple incidents of technical glitches since the June 12 crash.

When would the people of India receive assurance on the safety of flights in the country, PAC Chairman

and Congress MP K.C. Venugopal had asked, sources said.

Questions were also raised on the AAIB's probe into the Air India crash, and whether India had the ability to decode data from the black box or if there was a need to send it abroad. The panel demanded a written answer on the issue.

The panel also asked questions on the composition of the probe committee looking into the crash, and whether it included a Boeing 787-trained pilot and engineer to ensure the requisite expertise. Given the AAIB's advisory role after a crash, who fixes accountability after air accidents, the panel asked.

The PAC also asked Air India why it continued to face consumer complaints on issues such as broken seats and poor air conditioning three years after privatisation, and how long it would take to fix these problems.



Air India has faced intense scrutiny since the crash. [AP/WIDEWORLD](#)

Investigators told MPs black boxes undamaged in AI crash

Reuters
feedback@livemint.com
NEW DELHI

Indian investigators of the Air India airliner crash that killed 290 last month told a meeting of lawmakers that the plane's black boxes were not damaged, two people familiar with the discussions said.

The revelation about the devices critical to reconstructing the events leading up to an air crash, comes after Indian media said they were damaged when the London-bound Boeing Dreamliner crashed on 12 June.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) has also been able to extract "good data" from the black boxes, its officials told MPs on Wednesday during a parliamentary panel meeting on aviation, added one of the people.

Both people declined to be identified as the discussions are private. The AAIB and India's aviation ministry did not respond to Reuters queries.

The plane's cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR), as the black boxes are formally known, were recovered in the days after the crash, one from a rooftop at the site on 13 June, and the other from debris on 16 June.

The preliminary report from investigation into the crash is likely to be made public by Friday, Reuters has previously reported.

Air India has faced intense scrutiny since the crash. Its chief executive, Campbell Wilson, appeared before the committee and the airline gave updates on its efforts after the crash, one of the people said.

The EU Aviation Safety Agency has said it plans to investigate the company's budget airline, Air India Express, after Reuters reported it did not follow a directive to change engine parts of an Airbus A320 in a timely manner and falsified records to show compliance.

India's aviation watchdog has also warned Air India for breaching rules for flying three Airbus planes with overdue checks on escape slides.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

10 JULY 2025

FLY IN LUXURY TO ABU DHABI FROM SEPT 26

‘Festive surprise’: Etihad to upgrade Kolkata flights to next-gen A321LR

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA: Etihad Airways has a festive surprise lined up for Kolkatans this Durga Puja. Come September 26 and Etihad Airways is set to upgrade its Kolkata service with the introduction of the next-gen Airbus A321LR. All Etihad flights between Zayed International Airport, Abu Dhabi and Kolkata will be operated by the state-of-the-art A321LR, offering guests an upgraded travel experience across all cabin classes.

Imagine texting your family on WhatsApp, all while stretched out in your fully lie-flat business class seat on your way to Abu Dhabi. Sounds unreal, right? Now picture heading off on your honeymoon with your partner. You’d want some privacy, of course. That’s exactly what the Airbus A321LR offers.

It brings the comfort of a wide-body aircraft into a sleek single-aisle design. The First



Suites are next-level: forward-facing, lie-flat beds in a 1-1 layout so you get space and privacy, perfect for a medium-haul getaway. And if you’re flying economy, you can enjoy top-notch entertainment, and in-flight Wi-Fi to keep you connected and entertained from takeoff to touchdown.

Arik De, Etihad’s Chief

Revenue and Commercial Officer, was in Kolkata on Wednesday for the special announcement. Calling India a “key market,” De said the aircraft offers next-level comfort and efficiency, reinforcing Etihad’s position as the top choice for travel between Abu Dhabi and Kolkata.

Despite Etihad’s strong

base in Kerala, the airline chose Kolkata for the launch of the premium A321LR, which has 160 seats. When asked if Kolkata really has a premium flyer market, something often questioned, De pointed to the numbers.

“Etihad carried 115,000 passengers from Kolkata in 2024, with over 90 per cent load factor and business class occupancy crossing 70 per cent.

Premium doesn’t just mean corporate travellers. It’s also for people who want extra comfort and are ready to spend more and Kolkata has proved there’s strong demand for that. If the product is good, people are willing to pay,” De said.

Etihad is growing fast, expanding by 40% annually and adding 16 new destinations in May 2025 alone. It now operates 180 weekly flights across 11 Indian cities, with locally sourced and catered food on board.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

Etihad says 'thank you' to Kolkata with more inflight comforts, amenities

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, 9 JULY

Etihad Airways, the national carrier of UAE, is betting big on the *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* psyche of the young, upwardly mobile travellers to increase its reach-outs with more comforts, more amenities and luxury. This is not to say that the airlines is losing focus on business passengers, leisure tourists, traditional tourists and the Indian diaspora living in UAE and other parts of the world, said Arik De (photo), Chief Revenue and Commercial Officer, Etihad Airways.

With this in view, the Abu Dhabi-based airlines is set to enhance its Kolkata service with the introduction of the next-generation Airbus A321LR, reinforcing its commitment to the Indian market.

Kolkata happens to be the first city in the world where this will be introduced. It is in the process of introducing game-changing A321LR features luxury First suites and lie-flat Business seats, next-generation Economy with 4K touchscreens with high-speed WiFi underlining Etihad's commitment to the Indian market.

Quite significantly, the airlines is not doing it for incremental passengers or revenue, but as a 'thank you' gesture to a city, from where they are running at a 90 per cent occupancy rate, said De.

"In the last 12 months, we carried nearly 1,15,000 passengers. So we are already running at 90 per cent occupancy. We can hardly look at incremental number, going by current rules and regula-



tions. Hopefully these rules and regulations will be relaxed in next two years or so," he said.

De said that the most perceptible changes or trend, he had noticed in the airlines industry over the years, have been that people are now willing to pay any premium for vacation travel, people are looking for new destinations, people are opting for



changes and diversities, passengers are looking for more customised products. And Etihad is keeping these factors in mind.

Interestingly, starting on September 26, 2025, all Etihad

flights between Zayed International Airport, Abu Dhabi (AUH) and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata (CCU) will be operated by the state-of-the-art A321LR, offering guests

an upgraded travel experience across all cabin classes. The aircraft is equipped with luxury First Suites, fully lie-flat Business seats, and a cutting-edge Economy class featuring ultra-modern 4K touchscreens and high-speed WiFi, ensuring seamless connectivity throughout the journey.

The Airbus A321LR is designed to bring wide-body comfort to a single-aisle aircraft, offering enhanced space, privacy, and premium amenities. The First Suites provide an exclusive experience with forward-facing fully-flat beds in a 1-1 configuration, while Business Class features 14 lie-flat seats, ensuring maximum comfort on medium-haul routes. Economy Class passengers will enjoy next-generation seating, complete with advanced in-flight enter-

tainment and connectivity, making every journey more enjoyable.

"India is a key market for Etihad, and we are delighted to elevate our Kolkata service with our latest A321LR aircraft. With this upgrade, our guests can now enjoy a superior travel experience, whether in our luxurious First Suites, Business Class lie-flat seats, or next-generation Economy cabin. This investment underlines our ongoing commitment to providing world-class service and greater connectivity across the Indian subcontinent."

The new A321LR aircraft brings enhanced efficiency and comfort, making Etihad the premier choice for travellers between Abu Dhabi and Kolkata. The airline continues to strengthen its footprint in India, offering pas-

sengers greater access to Etihad's growing global network.

Safety always remains top most priority of Etihad and for that matter, of all airlines. And it will remain so. The recent air crash in India has been a hugely tragic event and all stakeholders are awaiting to know what had gone wrong, because that would help everyone to draw up the future roadmap, said De.

De said that Etihad is laying utmost thrust on adoption of technology, especially AI. "For instance, if it starts raining incessantly in Kolkata, our AI-driven system will automatically come up with customised schemes/products/offers for people in Kolkata, suggesting them that they can look at Abu Dhabi for enjoying bright, sunny days."

Etihad says 'thank you' to Kolkata with more inflight comforts, amenities

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Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

Indian student pilot dies in Canada midair collision

Nijeesh Narayanan &
Sivadas Varma | TNN

Kochi: A 23-year-old student pilot from Ernakulam was one of two people killed in a midair collision between two training aircraft in Canada on Tuesday morning. The deceased Malayali pilot trainee was Sreehari Suresh, a native of Tripunithura, Kochi.

The accident involving Sreehari and May Royce (20), another student of Harv's Air flight training school, occurred when their planes collided midair near Steinbach South Airport. According to reports, both pilots were flying single-engine aircraft as part of their training, and the two pilots, who were flying solo, collided with each other while landing.

Royal Canadian Mounted Police in Manitoba confirmed that "the midair collision occurred at 8.45am (local time) and the two pilots were pronounced deceased on scene." Harv's Air owner Adam Penner told reporters that Sreehari was training to fly commercial airplanes, and the woman, a Canadian citizen, was working towards obtaining a private pilot's licence.

"The incident occurred during a training exercise for take-offs and landings, in which it is not uncommon for students to fly on their own.



Sreehari Suresh, a student pilot who was killed on Tuesday in a midair collision in Canada's Manitoba province

The pilots were trying to land their planes — a Cessna 172 and Cessna 152 — at the same time, before they crashed near a landing strip," he said.

Sreehari's family received the information regarding the accident on Tuesday night. "We first received news of the incident from Sreehari's fellow trainees in Canada on Tuesday night. However, official confirmation came from his trainer only by Wednesday afternoon," said Sreehari's uncle Dipesh. "Since we are unfamiliar with the technical aspects of the training, we still don't know what exactly led to the accident," he added.

The Indian consulate in Canada said in an X post that they would provide assistance to the family of the deceased person. "With profound sorrow, we mourn the tragic passing of Sreehari Suresh, a young Indian student pilot, who lost his life in a mid-air

collision near Steinbach, Manitoba. We extend our deepest condolences to his family. The consulate is in contact with the bereaved family, the pilot training school, and local police to provide all necessary assistance," says the post.

In 2023, Sreehari moved to Canada to pursue advanced training in commercial aviation. He was on the verge of completing the final requirements for obtaining a pilot's licence.

Dipesh told TOI that Sreehari had dreamt of becoming a pilot since childhood. "Right after finishing school, he enrolled at a flying school in Nashik and obtained his licence to fly private aircraft. That initial experience thrilled him and he was determined to pursue commercial pilot training. He was close to completing the mandatory 180 flying hours, the first major milestone towards securing a commercial pilot's licence."

Sreehari was very enthusiastic about searching online for information about onboard professional pilots, said his schoolmate Gokul K. He used to search for adventurous flying experiences of professional pilots and even the operational details of warplanes, he said. His basic nature was to face adventurous moments with extraordinary boldness, he recalled.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

11 JULY 2025

With no radar, no air traffic control and unpredictable clouds, helicopters make thousands of trips each year to Kedarnath, relying only on instinct and faith

FLYING BLIND IN THE HIMALAYAS

Gauresh Bahar@timesofindia.com

The helicopter crash of June 15 that killed all seven people on board on route to Kedarnath was one of 8,700 trips that flew pilgrims to mountain shrines in Uttarakhand in a roughly 45-day window this year. Capt Kanishk (name changed) remembers the day well. He has flown this route hundreds of times, but not enough to not be worried before every trip. Up amid the cloudy peaks, disaster comes before you can see it. When things go wrong, as they so often do, there is no help for it. No air traffic control, no guidance systems.

Heightened Hazard

At 17,500ft above sea level, just minutes from the Kedarnath helipad, the sky turned slate grey at 5:30am on June 15. Visibility dropped from miles to mere metres. Capt Kanishk was flying his first pilgrim batch of the day to the Garhwali Himalaya shrine, each trip in the fickle weather of the Kedar valley undertaken with a prayer on the lips. He landed safely, but a chopper being flown by retired Indian Army Lt Col Rajveer Singh Chauhan was not as fortunate. Caught in bad weather, it crashed in a dense forest. Among those killed was a two-year-old baby.

The tragedy underlined systemic issues with the way helicopter operations are conducted during Char Dham yatra — pilgrimages to the four Himalayan shrines of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunotri and Gangotri — which takes place during a six-month period. The June 15 crash followed another that took place on May 8, when a chopper carrying pilgrims to Gangotri went down in Uttarakhand, killing six persons, including the pilot. These accidents capped a turbulent season for helicopter rides. The reaction they triggered was along expected lines. Flights were suspended and operators grounded while the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) launched a safety audit.

Frenzy of Flying

In the days before Kedarnath Valley got accustomed to the rhythmic whir of rotor blades, the only way to reach the shrine was on foot. The journey was as much a test of endurance as of faith — an uphill trek of nearly 16km through rugged terrain and pine forests. Setting out from Gaurikund, a town known for its hot springs and ancient temple, devotees need to make an over 3,500m (11,320ft) ascent to reach Kedarnath temple. Helicopter services to Kedarnath began

in 2002 with govt-run Pawan Hans Ltd entering primarily to elderly and pilgrims with disabilities. In 2006, the first dedicated shuttle service began between Phata and Kedarnath. The Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) was established in 2013 to regulate the state's civil aviation sector as operations boomed, with many preferring the convenience of a few minutes' flight to the arduous 16km trek.

The nearly 9,000 sorties flown by nine different companies between May 2 — the day this year's yatra season began — and June 23, when operations closed due to monsoon, works out to an average of about 100 flights daily in one of the most treacherous air corridors of the country. "The volume of flights is staggering," said British Satt, general secretary of the Char Dham Teerth Purvhit Maha Panchayat. "Earlier, a single helicopter was allowed just eight trips a day. The heavy traffic means there is immense pressure to maximise the flying window. Choppers take off at the crack of dawn and continue flying as long as there is daylight available. Most choppers don't even touch down properly but keep hovering above the ground even as passengers are pulled out, the next to show in, and they fly off again," said a pilgrim.

The rush of landings and takeoffs may paint a picture of habitual efficiency, but flying in

the upper Himalayas involves serious challenges, most notably the weather. What pilots particularly dread is the 'Rambhar Express' — a cloud surge that appears without warning. "It can form before you realise what's happening," said a veteran pilot. "One moment you're clear, the next, you're blind." Also known as 'Mandakini Express', this phenomenon typically forms near Rambhar, just before the final turn towards Kedarnath.

Meteorologists attribute such white-outs to orographic lifting — when moisture-laden air rises sharply against steep Himalayan slopes, condensing quickly into dense



A helicopter flying close to the mountains near Kedarnath

₹5k-7k FOR HELI TRIPS

Helicopter shuttle services to Kedarnath are available for pilgrims from three key helipads: Phata, Sersai, and Gupkash. The fee, regulated by the state govt, ranges between ₹5,000 and ₹7,000 per person for a two-way trip. There are also chartered helicopter services — at ₹1.2 lakh-1.5 lakh per head — for Char Dham Yatra with packages usually including helicopter transfers, VP dashes, etc.

fog or cumulonimbus clouds. "Visibility can fall to near zero within minutes. In such a tight airspace, there's no room for wide turns or error corrections," said Anand Sharma, former additional director general, India Meteorological Department.

Logistical Void

The Himalayan odds that pilots face are worsened by the lack of aviation infrastructure. Despite handling over 200 sorties a day during peak season, the route lacks radar coverage, air traffic control (ATC) or an aviation-grade weather station. Pilots fly visually depend on radio chatter for updates, and rely on a few road-view cameras. "Flying here needs sharp instincts, exceptional skills, and a deep familiarity with the terrain," said one high-altitude pilot. "You don't just fly by the book, you fly by memory, gut, and the gods."

Following the recent accidents, DGCA has deployed officers to monitor chopper ops. It also capped flight frequency to nine per hour, almost halving the earlier rate. UCADA is working on a command-and-control centre to track real-time movement. Operators have been warned against violating weather and safety protocols with CM Pushkar Singh Dhami having issued a series of directives to overhaul helicopter safety protocols in high-altitude zones.

Officials say protocols are being drawn up that will mandate pre-flight checks, precise site-specific weather assessments, and stricter criteria for pilot deployment. "We are awaiting DGCA's report on the June 15 crash. We will act on all recommended safety measures," Ashish Chauhan, CEO of UCADA, told TOI. An ATC system is being set up at Sabastradhara helipad in Dehradun while more real-time weather cameras are being installed in Kedarnath valley.

HELICOPTER ACCIDENTS IN RECENT PAST

JUNE 15, 2025

Aryan Aviation chopper crashes in Kedarnath valley, killing all seven on board, including pilot

JUNE 7, 2025

A Restor Aviation chopper carrying six pilgrims makes emergency landing on a highway in Rudrapur

MAY 8, 2025

Aero Trans Service Pvt Ltd chopper crashes in Gangnani near Kedarnath, killing 5 pilgrims and pilot

APRIL 23, 2023

Uttarakhand civil aviation authority's finance controller dies after being hit by tail rotor while boarding chopper at Kedarnath

OCT 10, 2022

Aryan Aviation chopper crashes near Kedarnath, killing 6 pilgrims and the pilot

Air India Sucks, Tata Hotels Rock

An Indian company gives us world-class hotel experience but low-quality airline experience. Preliminary report on the Ahmedabad air crash should give some explanation for this oddity

Chetan Bhagat



Preliminary investigation findings for the horrific AI 171 crash that took 260 lives a month ago, are expected to be made public by Friday. The airline is presumably processing this accident as a wakeup call. Policymakers should be doing the same. What do they need to do to give India a truly world-class airline? It is what Indians deserve and it would give the country a big strategic advantage too.

Consider, by contrast, that anyone who has visited a Taj hotel – whether for a cup of tea or a long stay – is likely to share positive memories. Taj gets it right. The hotels are clean and luxurious, staff is courteous, food is delicious. The lobby, rooms, facilities, services, and restaurants are consistently top-notch. Be it a Taj property in Kerala, Mumbai, Lucknow or New York, be it summer or winter, day or night, it's always excellent. They even speak of something called 'Tajness' – a unique, elevated feeling experienced at any Taj location.

And no, this column is not sponsored by Taj or its parent, the Tata Group. But the Taj is genuinely one of the few Indian brands that competes at a global level. Which makes it all the more baffling that the very same Tata Group also owns Air India, one of the most poorly rated airlines in the world.

There are many who refrain from bashing Air India in public, for the sake of its staff's feelings. There's also the patriotism angle, where Air India is seen as a national flag carrier. But things aren't getting better.

So, how to explain Tata Group running world-class Taj Hotels on the one hand and whatever-class Air India on the other? A key point is that Air India is a recent purchase. Not long ago, it was a bloated, unionised, public sector behemoth losing thousands of crores annually. Tatas took it over and merged it with Vistara, a wonderful little airline that had been well on its way to make a mark in the world. People expected Air India would now transform into Vistara. Instead, the opposite happened.

Air India quality standards continue to decline. There is non-stop news about filthy planes, broken air conditioners and planes turning back due to technical issues. Then came the shocking crash of the Ahmedabad-London flight.

What suddenly happens in the sky that even the Tatas who run first-rate hospitality businesses become third-rate?



It is a combination of factors – Air India's history, our aviation policies, and maybe even the Indian consumer. Kingfisher, Jet, Vistara – all are gone. All aspired to deliver a high-quality experience.

The only true winner in Indian aviation is Indigo, an efficient, point A to point B, no-frills airline. The high point of an Indigo flight is eating dehydrated upma and boring tomato and cucumber sandwiches, which make you feel like a grade IV child eating tiffin prepared by a neglectful parent.

India deserves a world-class airline. A great airline delivers more than comfort. It's a national branding tool. Investors, business travellers and tourists get their first taste of a country through its flag carrier. Just look at what Singapore Airlines, Emirates and Qatar

Airways have done for their respective countries.

What does it take to have a world-class airline? Here are the top five elements, all of which need to be on point and consistently delivered each time.

Cleanliness and aesthetics: At present, the Air India planes seem dank and dirty compared to other global airlines or even Indigo. Are most of the carpet and seats dirt-coloured to hide the dirt? The staff's govt school teacher look could also do with a refresh.

Safety: A world-class airline by definition has a good safety record. Air India's Ahmedabad crash will be hard to erase from public memory. However, new safety-first procedures will help.

Connectivity, punctuality and transits: Almost all good global airlines have good transit hub airports supporting them. The airports, regulators and airlines work in tandem to provide a seamless experience for the traveller. In India, even at major airports, you have no idea when there will be congestion, when you will not get an aerobridge and when will you be stuck for hours. If we are serious about achieving a world-class airline, our airports and policymakers need to support our airlines.

Service: World-class airlines benchmark extraordinary service standards. This, actually, is one area where Air India staff still do a decent job.

Profitability: All of the above becomes irrelevant if the airline isn't profitable. Most Indian airlines that have tried to deliver high-end quality have failed. It seems most Indians don't want or can't afford anything nice when it comes to flying. Reconstituted dried poha is okay, but a few hundred rupees more for better flying is not. All those savings shouldn't be kept aside just for big fat weddings.

The only way forward for Air India is to do what most high-end brands do in India – keep most of India out. Taj hotels work because they only serve a high-end clientele.

Of course, Air India has the added role of providing national connectivity. It follows that the only solution is to split Air India into two. There can be one high-end, international airline (like Vistara used to be) and one super-efficient local airline that competes on the blandest sandwiches and lowest cost.

For profitability, it's also important that our regulators relook at policy and taxation. The massive failure rate of India's airlines clearly suggests that they're being overtaxed. And of course, if we want a world-class carrier, we need to take active steps to fix Air India.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

10 JULY 2025

DGCA to rank Indian flying schools from Oct 1

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New Delhi: In a first, flying schools in India will be ranked by Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) from Oct 1, 2025, on several key parameters, including safety records and the time taken to complete the mandatory 200 hours of flying required for a commercial pilot licence (CPL).

The move is aimed at helping aspiring pilots identify high-quality training institutes. Currently, many students—

despite spending several lakhs of rupees—struggle to secure their required flying hours, often having to “beg” for slots at many schools.

TOI first reported DGCA chief Faiz Ahmed Kidwai’s plan to introduce these rankings on March 24, 2025. Kidwai’s initiative seeks to push Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) to improve across the board, especially in terms of safety and timely training completion, with the goal of earning higher rankings and attracting more students.

Though a regulated sector, a majority of FTOs in India are far from student-friendly, driving a large number of aspiring pilots to travel abroad every year to earn their CPLs. “This is part of DGCA’s continued commitment to improve the quality, safety, and efficiency of pilot training in India, while fostering a performance-driven and transparent training ecosystem. (Ranking) holds FTOs accountable for maintaining regulatory compliance and operational standards,” DGCA said in a statement.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

10 JULY 2025

London-Del flight with low fuel lands in Lucknow

Lucknow: A Delhi-bound flight from London, carrying 300 passengers, made an emergency landing in Lucknow where it was diverted due to low fuel on Wednesday afternoon. Before the diversion, the aircraft hovered over Delhi's IGI airport as the pilot made 'Pan Pan' call seeking landing permission. Pan Pan is a signal indicating a less severe situation where assistance is needed but there's no immediate danger. The aircraft took off for Delhi after refueling. TNN

DGCA to start ranking flying schools from Oct 1

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DGCA said the ranking system will “ensure training quality and standardisation; enhance transparency

AI 171 crash report to be made public this week: AAIB

The preliminary report of the June 12 Air India crash in Ahmedabad will be made public likely by this week, the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) told the parliamentary committee on transport and tourism Wednesday. It said as per rules, a crash report is put on public domain with 30 days of incident.

TOI has learnt that in response to questions from MPs, civil aviation ministry submitted that it will come up with a comprehensive system by Nov to deal with pilot fatigue and by Oct, increase headcount in DGCA. TNN

and accountability; provide guidance for student pilots; aid in identifying high-performing FTOs for expansion or international collaboration, and underperforming ones for closer monitoring or corrective action”.

Ranking will be published bi-annually, “preferably on Oct 1 and April 1”. FTOs scoring 85% and above will be ranked A++; 70-84.99% as A+; 50%-69.99% A; and below 50% as B. “‘B’ FTOs will receive a notice for self-analysis towards improvement of their performance.”