

New plaza at city airport ready, but wait for second cab pick-up point extends

AAI sources say legal opinion has to be sought due to an issue with an earlier contract before opening the new pick-up point; it is expected to be in use by early March after multiple delays

PORT CALL

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

Chennai airport's plaza, which will house the second cab pick-up point has been built and ready, but much to their dismay, air passengers will have to wait till early March to access it.

In 2023, the work to beautify the space opposite the T1 domestic terminal at Chennai airport and to develop it as a plaza commenced with October 2024 as the deadline. But the project was marred by numerous delays due to various reasons and has finally been finished.

In July 2024, when the designated location for boarding cabs changed from the erstwhile flagpole point near the T1 domestic terminal to the multi-level car parking space, air passengers were irked and exasperated.

Many often point out on social media platforms about the cumbersome process of taking a buggy vehicle, then queuing up to board an elevator at the multi-level car parking lot, and finally hopping on to their cabs.

To provide some respite to this problem, the Airports Authority of India



Long wait: A look at the newly built plaza at the city airport. Officials initially had plans to open it by October 2024, but the project was marred by numerous delays. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

(AAI) decided to establish a second cab pick-up point at the plaza (where the flagpole point existed back then). All these months, the construction was delayed. But now, though the construction of the plaza is over, air passengers have to wait longer for an easily accessible cab pick-up point.

Sources at AAI said though they want to launch the second cab pick-up point at the earliest, there has been a hitch.

Revenue loss

"After commencing this additional pick-up point, there should not be any revenue loss to the contractor. Hence, a committee ex-

amined this proposal and recommended that there will not be any such issue. The contractor was also brought on board, and the traffic patterns and vehicle flow were decided in a way to avoid any revenue loss to the firm," a source said.

Sometime back, the contract of the firm, which was earlier handling the multi-level car parking facility was terminated. "There is an arbitration in progress with regard to this issue. Hence, before commencing the second pick-up point, to avoid any implications, legal opinion is being sought. Since public money is being used and it is also a crucial passenger service, and to ensure there is no further in-

convenience to them, it is being done. We are trying to complete it soon and the pick-up point will be opened by early March," he added.

Karthik Kannan, a frequent flyer noted that even a few days back, he encountered a lot of difficulties and delays before boarding his car. "After landing at the airport, I got a buggy quickly, but I waited for almost 15 minutes to board the elevator. There were long queues outside four lifts. Instead of waiting further, I decided to walk to the exit, and the driver brought the car out. By the time, I exited the airport, it took me another 15 minutes. It was an exhausting experience," he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

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AAI secures 'excellent' rating under MoU 2024-25:



Airports Authority of India (AAI), a Mini Ratna Category-I CPSE, has achieved an 'Excellent' rating with a score of 93.21 under its MoU 2024-25 with the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The rating reflects AAI's strong performance in operational efficiency, capital expenditure of Rs. 5,075 crore, MSME procurement, and CSR initiatives. The achievement underscores AAI's commitment to developing state-of-the-art airport infrastructure and enhancing passenger services nationwide.

Why Mumbai's new airport is signal-starved

BY JATIN GROVER

Step into the new Navi Mumbai airport or ride the Aqua Line and it's all world-class until your phone drops to zero bars. This is no glitch but a commercial standoff between infrastructure owners and telecom operators. *Mint* explains what's going on and what the rules say.



1 Why does the airport have no network?

When Adani group-owned Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) began commercial operations on 25 December, travellers found no mobile signals from Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea. The reason was simple: the airport had no connectivity agreement with telecom operators. A similar standoff has been playing out on the Mumbai Metro Aqua line, where passengers have faced network blackouts for three months as infrastructure developers and telecom companies remain unable to agree on commercial terms to enable mobile connectivity.

2 Why are connectivity agreements stuck?

Telcos say they have been quoted "exorbitantly" charges and argue that as licensed spectrum holders they are legally entitled to offer services under right of way rules of the Telecom Act. They have objected to airport and metro authorities appointing third-party providers as gatekeepers. For the Mumbai Metro Aqua line, MMRC, a central-state joint venture, appointed Saudi firm ACES as a neutral host for in-building solutions. At Navi Mumbai, the operator itself deployed the system. Such third-party providers have a timeline for investment recovery, leaving telcos dependent on them for access at higher costs.



3 What are the fees being sought from telcos?

Telcos say Navi Mumbai airport has sought ₹92 lakh a month per operator, or ₹44.16 crore a year for four, which they argue far exceeds the cost of deploying an independent in-building solution network. Even a proposal by the NMIA to cut charges to ₹40 lakh a month was rejected by them. At Delhi airport, operators pay only ₹10-12 lakh a month.

4 What is the stance of Navi Mumbai Airport?

It said airports are highly sensitive zones where frequent servicing of telecom networks are needed, best handled by the airport operator with BCAS and other security clearances. Involving third parties would slow response times and inconvenience passengers. It said it has discussed the issue with telcos and offered IBS services at industry-standard charges. NMIA now provides free Wi-Fi at the airport. There is also access to state-owned BSNL's network, which has partnered with NMIA at no cost, private telcos say.

5 What do Telecom Act, right of way rules say?

Regulations don't name airports or metros but set norms to ensure mobile connectivity in public infrastructure. Under telecom laws and right of way rules, telcos can access public assets on reasonable and fair terms at administrative cost-based fees. This covers government airports and metros, but for public-private or private facilities, a public notification is needed as specified under the definition of a public entity under the Telecom Act. The telecom department is holding meetings to resolve the issue.



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NAVBHARAT TIMES

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नोएडा एयरपोर्ट को मिल सकती है कंडीशनल एनओसी, हुआ ऑडिट

Maneesh Aggarwal
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■ नई दिल्ली: ब्यूरो ऑफ सिविल एविएशन सिक्योरिटी (BCAS) और सीआईएसएफ द्वारा दिसंबर में नोएडा (जेवर) एयरपोर्ट के किए गए सिक्योरिटी ऑडिट में मिली 25 से

**सिक्योरिटी
वाँच टावर न
बनाए जाने
समेत मिली
कई कमियां**

अधिक कमियों के बाद अब जनवरी में फिर से यहां का सिक्योरिटी ऑडिट किया गया है। सूत्रों ने बताया कि इसमें पाया

गया है कि कंट्रोल की बाउंड्रीवॉल की जगह काफी दूरी तक लोहे की फेंसिंग खड़ी करने और सीआईएसएफ जवानों के लिए उपयुक्त वाँच टावर न बनाए जाने समेत जो भी कमियां मिली थीं,



उन्हें दूर करने के लिए अब तेजी से काम किया जा रहा है।

सूत्रों का कहना है कि इसे देखते हुए ऐसे संकेत मिल रहे हैं कि बीसीएसएफ द्वारा नोएडा एयरपोर्ट को फिलहाल कंडीशनल एनओसी दी जा सकती है। जिसमें अधूरे सुरक्षा कार्य को टाइम लिमिट के साथ पूरा करना होगा। इसमें नोएडा एयरपोर्ट मैनेजमेंट से बीसीएसएफ अंडरटेकिंग लेगा। तभी बीसीएसएफ की

तरफ से नोएडा एयरपोर्ट को शर्तों के साथ एनओसी दी जा सकती है। सूत्रों ने यह भी बताया कि इस एनओसी देने का मतलब यह नहीं होगा कि सुरक्षा मानक पूरे किए बिना यहां से एयर ऑपरेशंस शुरू करा दिए जाएं। एनओसी का मतलब अभी केवल इस एयरपोर्ट के उद्घाटन तक सीमित रहेगा। इसके बाद जब एयरपोर्ट पूरी तरह से तमाम सुरक्षा मानकों पर खरा उतर जाएगा।



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THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

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AP Cabinet approves Dagadarthi greenfield airport at Nellore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ Amaravati

In a significant boost to Andhra Pradesh's aviation and industrial infrastructure, the State Cabinet has approved the Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport project in Nellore district. With this approval, Dagadarthi will become Andhra Pradesh's 8th airport, reinforcing the State's vision of creating a future-ready, multi-modal logistics and industrial network, officials said.

Strategically located, the Dagadarthi airport enjoys excellent connectivity to National Highway corridors, two major ports — Krishnapatnam Port and Ramayapatnam Port — and multiple industrial clusters, including KRIS City and IFFCO SEZs. This unique locational advantage posi-

tions the airport as a critical enabler for manufacturing, exports, agri-logistics, and services-led growth in southern Andhra Pradesh.

The project has already received in-principle clearance from the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), Government of India, and the Request for Proposal (RFP) has been issued to invite private participation for development, operation, and maintenance under a long-term concession framework.

Planned over multiple phases, the airport will be developed on 1,332.80 acres, with Phase-1 designed to handle 1.4 million passengers per annum, and scalable up to 15 million passengers annually in the long term. The master plan also provides for a future cargo facility, aligning with the region's growing industrial output and port-led trade potential.



The Dagadarthi Greenfield Airport is envisaged as more than an aviation asset — it is a catalyst for regional transformation.

By integrating air connectivity with ports, highways, and industrial zones, the project is expected to reduce logistics costs for exporters and manufacturers, attract new investments in industry, warehousing, and services, generate employment across construction, aviation, logistics, and allied sectors, and strengthen Andhra Pradesh's position as a preferred destination for business and investment.

With the Cabinet's approval, Andhra Pradesh continues to demonstrate its commitment to speed, scale, and certainty in infrastructure development - laying the foundation for sustained economic growth and enhanced global connectivity.



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SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

11 JANUARY 2026

अमौसी एयरपोर्ट पर यात्री से मिले दो कारतूस

स्वतंत्र भारत ब्यूरो लखनऊ। चौधरी चरण सिंह एयरपोर्ट पर दुबई जा रहे एक यात्री के हैंडबैग से .32 बोर के दो जिंदा कारतूस बरामद किए गए। सुरक्षा जांच के दौरान सीआईएसएफ ने यात्री को हिरासत में लिया था। लखनऊ के ठाकुरगंज निवासी मो. गुफरान को रात 1:35 बजे एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की उड़ान (आईएक्स 193) से दुबई जाना था। वह बोर्डिंग के लिए टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग में प्रवेश कर रहे थे। रात करीब 12 बजे सुरक्षा जांच के दौरान एमएचए एरिया में सीआईएसएफ को उनके हैंडबैग की स्क्रीनिंग करते समय दो जिंदा कारतूस दिखाई दिए। इसके बाद सीआईएसएफ जवानों ने मो. गुफरान को हिरासत में लेकर पूछताछ शुरू की। भौतिक जांच में बैग के अंदर .32 बोर के पिस्टल के दो जिंदा कारतूस मिले। पूछताछ के दौरान यात्री मो. गुफरान ने अपने शस्त्र का वैध लाइसेंस प्रस्तुत किया। लाइसेंस की वैधता की पुष्टि होने के बाद उन्हें यात्रा जारी रखने की अनुमति दे दी गई। हालांकि, बरामद किए गए कारतूसों को सीआईएसएफ ने सरोजनी नगर पुलिस के सुपुर्द कर दिया है। पुलिस ने मामला दर्ज कर आगे की आवश्यक कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी है।



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AMAR UJALA

DELHI

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ओडिशा विमान हादसे के दो घायल मुंबई एयरलिफ्ट

भुवनेश्वर। ओडिशा के राउरकेला के पास शनिवार को इंडिया वन एयर के नौ सीटर विमान की आपात क्रेस लैंडिंग में घायल हुए दो यात्रियों को इलाज के लिए मुंबई एयरलिफ्ट किया गया है। परिवहन विभाग की प्रधान सचिव उषा पाटी ने बताया कि एक दंपती अपनी निजी इच्छा और खर्च पर आगे के इलाज के लिए मुंबई रवाना हुआ है। हादसे में घायल एक अन्य यात्री फिलहाल वेंटिलेटर सपोर्ट पर है, जिसकी



स्थिति पर विशेषज्ञ डॉक्टरों की टीम नजर रख रही है।

हादसे के समय सेसना ग्रैंड सी208बी विमान में दो पायलटों सहित कुल छह लोग सवार थे। विमान ने भुवनेश्वर से उड़ान भरी थी और दोपहर 1:20 बजे कंसोर के पास खुले मैदान में फोर्स लैंडिंग की। नागरिक उड़्डयन निदेशालय के अनुसार, सभी छह घायलों की स्थिति फिलहाल स्थिर है। इस बीच, विमान दुर्घटना जांच ब्यूरो की तीन सदस्यीय टीम ने घटनास्थल का हवाई सर्वेक्षण कर मामले की जांच शुरू कर दी है। एजेंसी



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

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Digitised future of air travel

IATA's 2025 Global Passenger Survey highlights two key trends that are redefining passenger travel experience — increasing reliance on mobile devices; and rapid adoption of biometrics.



The results, based on over 10,000 responses from more than 200 countries, show that passengers who have used biometrics report high levels of satisfaction, with 85 per cent saying they are happy with the experience; booking and payment habits are shifting towards mobile channels, and digital wallet use

has increased significantly.

Women are more likely to consider airline reputation and past experiences when making decisions, while men tend to adopt airline apps more quickly than women. Younger travellers are the hardest group to satisfy, with fewer reporting high satisfaction with their journeys, the results show.

Nearly 78 per cent of passengers want to use a smartphone that combines a digital wallet, digital passport and loyalty cards to book, pay and navigate airport processes.

Upgradation on the radar



The first B-52 radar modernisation programme rapid prototype for the United States Air Force has been delivered to the 412th Test Wing, Edwards Air Force Base, for testing. The radar upgrades improve the aircraft's navigation accuracy, targeting and

tracking while providing new, high-resolution mapping.

● **WAITING IN THE WINGS**

Startup airlines look skyward again

TAXIING. After a long wait, will the high-growth Indian aviation market finally see new airlines taking off this year?

Aneesh Phadnis

Will India soon have three new airlines? While the country's airline startup story so far has been about big promises and missed deadlines, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu's recent meeting with the promoters of Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and Fly-Express has rekindled hopes of new airlines taking to the skies.

"It has been an endeavour of the Ministry to encourage more airlines in Indian aviation, which is amongst the fastest growing aviation markets in the world, owing to the policies of the government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Government schemes like UDAN have enabled smaller carriers Star Air, India One Air and Fly91 to play an important role in

the regional connectivity within the country, and there is more scope for further growth," Naidu said in his social media post on December 23.

Alongside Shankh Air, Al Hind Air and FlyExpress, Air Kerala and TruJet, too, are waiting in the wings. All of them have received the Ministry's 'no objection clearance' — some over a year ago — but have been hamstrung by their inability to procure aircraft and delays in raising funds.

However, there could be some good news around the corner.

CAUTIOUS RESTART

"We hope to sign a letter of intent to lease one Airbus A320 aircraft this month," said Umesh Vankayalapati, Managing Director of TruJet.

TruJet flew during 2015-22 before running out of funds; this time around, Vankayalapati wants to play safe. "We plan to begin operations with at least three aircraft as that will help us in maintaining schedule reliability in case of adverse weather or snags... Business can be viable only if there is a certain scale. This year, we hope to get five aircraft and have 20 aircraft in three years," he said. TruJet will be based in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.

In contrast, Uttar Pradesh-based Shankh Air's Chairman, Sharvan Kumar Vishwakarma, seems to be a man in a hurry.

He told a wire agency on December 30 that the airline is likely to start opera-



AIR POCKET. Al Hind Air is facing delays in securing regulatory approvals

tions in the first half of January, with an initial fleet of three Airbus aircraft. The airline will connect Lucknow with Delhi, Mumbai and other metros. Two days later, the airline said it plans to commence operations around March. In another interview, Vishwakarma said Shankh Air will offer flat fares through the year. He said the airline is well-funded and has even received loans from foreign banks.

For now, however, Shankh Air's plan to start operations by the first quarter of 2026 appear unlikely. It does not have the crucial 'air operator certificate' (AOC) needed to start commercial operations. There is no information on its aircraft deliveries or pilot hiring, among other things.

Another startup, Al Hind Air is also on a sticky wicket, with reports of staff being sent on leave without pay from November 15 due to delays in securing regulatory approvals.

RIGOROUS PROCESS

As per norms, companies seeking the Civil Aviation Ministry's NOC for an airline must have minimum paid-up capital of ₹1-50 crore. The requirement is ₹1 crore for a cargo airline, ₹5 crore for scheduled commuter (regional), and ₹50 crore for scheduled airlines.

Besides submitting a business plan to the Civil Aviation Ministry, airlines must secure security clearance from the government.

The more rigorous task, however, involves securing an AOC from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Companies have to prepare manuals on engineering, operations and safety, specifying the exact aircraft each airline intends to operate. An important aspect of this exercise is the inspection of facilities and a tabletop exercise to simulate various operational scenarios, ranging from service recovery following snags to aircraft hijack. The final step is a proving flight to assess the operational readiness of the new airline.

While in an ideal scenario, an AOC process can be completed in six months, typically it takes 9-12 months.

"We have completed one step of the DGCA AOC process and prepared the required operations manuals. We will be moving to our new office this month and plan to start operations in the summer schedule. Initially, we plan to invest ₹500 crore in the airline," Vankayalapati said.

NEED FOR CAPITAL

While domestic passenger growth slowed last year (around 4 per cent in the first 11 months), the opportunities are immense. India is the third largest air transport market in the world, behind the US and China. Nearly 174 million passengers travelled from and within India in 2024, according to the International Air Transport Association data. Policies like UDAN have brought air connectivity to tier-2 and -3 towns, and fuelled the growth am-

bitions of start-ups.

Aviation sector experts say startup airlines need to demonstrate confidence to aircraft lessors and original equipment manufacturers. That, in turn, calls for a sound business plan and a strong management team. "Airlines don't make money until they reach a certain scale and, thus, need to provision for losses. From a lessor perspective, the most important questions are, 'How will the startup pay the lease rent' and 'What will the cash flows be like'," said aviation consultant Vishok Mansingh.

"Start-ups in high-growth markets like India are logical, but it is going to be tough, given the market structure. For a national-level airline, start-ups would require close to \$1 billion funding for the first five years to survive and remain relevant," said Kapil Kaul, CEO of consultancy CAPA India.

While Go First's bankruptcy and SpiceJet's challenges have made lessors cautious, larger players continue to supply planes to India, Mansingh said. "Each company has its own risk appetite, based on its exposure to an airline or the country," he remarked.

Will the newcomers win lessors' confidence? We will have to look skywards for the answer.

We value your feedback. Do send your comments to bl.logistics@thehindu.co.in



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

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Amazon boosts delivery in N-E region with addition of freighter services

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

QuikJet Airlines, which operates a charter service for Amazon, has started three weekly flights on the Delhi-Guwahati-Hanoi route, boosting the e-commerce platform's deliveries in the North-East region.

"We started the Guwahati service this month. Our inbound flights to Guwahati are full, and we carry 20-plus tonnes one way," said QuikJet CEO Captain Preetham Philip.

QuikJet began operations in January 2023 and operates services with two Boeing 737 freighters exclusively for Amazon. While one of them now operates to Vietnam via Guwahati, the other flies on the Delhi-Mumbai-Bengaluru route.

"Guwahati has strong inbound flows. Outbound cargo is limited, but there is



TAKING WING. QuikJet Airlines has started three weekly flights on the Delhi-Guwahati-Hanoi route, boosting the e-commerce platform's deliveries in the North-East region

scope for export of perishable commodities. We will discuss opportunities with the State government and the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority," he said.

BLUE DART SERVICES

QuikJet is the second cargo airline to operate flights to Guwahati after Blue Dart,

which began services in January 2024. Blue Dart flies its Boeing 737 freighter six times a week to Guwahati, carrying mail, parcels and e-commerce items.

NEW TERMINAL

While a new passenger terminal was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi last month, the Adani Group also plans to develop an integrated cargo terminal. The overall airport development represents an investment of ₹5,000 crore, including ₹1,000 crore earmarked for maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities.

Planned integrated domestic and international cargo infrastructure will further strengthen trade, logistics and employment generation across the region, said the Group last month.



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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

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AAIB team begins investigation into IndiaOne Air crash



A TEAM OF the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on

Sunday began probing the emergency crash landing of a small aircraft near Rourkela in Odisha, a senior official said. At least six people, including two pilots, were injured when a nine-seater IndiaOne Air plane made a forced landing in an open area near Kansor on Saturday afternoon.



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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

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CARRIER RACES AGAINST TIME TO HIRE STAFF AS PER DGCA NORMS

IndiGo woos rival pilots with bonus up to ₹50 lakhs, Esops

YARUQHULLAH KHAN
New Delhi, January 11

BUDGET CARRIER INDIGO is offering Captains and First Officers, willing to join the organisation by February 10, massive joining bonuses up to ₹50 lakhs, along with contracts which guarantee flying hours, favourable home bases and Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) in an attempt to meet the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms.

"IndiGo has reached out to many pilots in rival airlines and has offered to compensate them to break their current bonds if they can join before the February 10th deadline. Compensation in the range of ₹20-50 lakhs is being offered to many senior pilots in India," a senior executive from a domestic carrier told FE.

He added that beyond the upfront joining bonus, IndiGo is guaranteeing up to 50 flying

SPOILT FOR CHOICE

■ IndiGo has offered to compensate pilots to break their current bonds if they can join before the February 10



■ Compensation in the range of **₹20-50 lakhs** is being offered to many senior pilots

■ Also on offer is up to **50 flying hours** guaranteed per month for the first six months

hours per month for the first six months of employment, providing new joiners with stable income visibility and flight experience in the critical initial period.

Other executives from IndiGo told FE that the airline is also offering Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs) to lure

pilots and align their interests with the airline's future performance.

They also said that some pilots are being offered short-term bond contracts with monetary rewards of up to ₹1.25 crore upon successful completion, a substantial incentive designed to

retain talent beyond the initial joining period.

IndiGo has also sweetened its recruitment strategy by incentivising its incumbent employees to recommend pilot candidates.

"Existing staff members will receive monetary compensation ranging from ₹50,000-75,000 for each pilot successfully onboarded before February 10, effectively turning the airline's workforce into recruiters and leveraging internal networks to expedite hiring," an IndiGo executive said. Emails sent to IndiGo remained unanswered till the time of going to press.

IndiGo has committed to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that it will induct nearly 100 pilots in January alone to stabilise operations. The airline currently employs 5,085 pilots but requires significantly more crew members to comply with the new safety-enhancing rules without disrupting flight schedules.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

12 JANUARY 2026

विमान क्रैश लैंडिंग में घायलों को एयरलिफ्ट किया

भुवनेश्वर। ओडिशा के राउरकेला के पास विमान की आपातकालीन क्रैश लैंडिंग में घायल हुए दो यात्रियों को बेहतर इलाज के लिए मुंबई एयरलिफ्ट किया गया है, जबकि एक अन्य यात्री वेंटिलेटर सपोर्ट पर है। एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने रविवार को यह जानकारी दी। शनिवार दोपहर इंडिया वन कंपनी के नौ सीटों वाले विमान की राउरकेला के पास आपातकालीन क्रैश लैंडिंग हुई थी।



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12 JANUARY 2026

विमान से टकराया पक्षी, आपात लैंडिंग

बाबतपुर (वाराणसी), संवाद। गोरखपुर से बंगलुरु जा रहे इंडिगो एयरलाइंस के विमान से रविवार शाम हवा में पक्षी टकरा गया, जिससे विमान का अगला हिस्सा (नोज) क्षतिग्रस्त हो गया। पायलट ने तत्परता दिखाते हुए बाबतपुर एयरपोर्ट पर इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई। घटना में सभी यात्री सुरक्षित रहे।

विमान संख्या 6ई-437 अपने निर्धारित समय शाम 6:15 बजे गोरखपुर से बंगलुरु के लिए रवाना हुआ था। विमान में कू मेंबरों सहित कुल 216 लोग सवार थे। उड़ान के दौरान पक्षी से टकराने के बाद चालक दल ने तुरंत नजदीकी वाराणसी एयर ट्रेफिक कंट्रोल (एटीसी) से संपर्क किया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

12 JANUARY 2026

2 injured in Odisha aircraft crash-landing airlifted to Mumbai

Press Trust of India
BHUBANESWAR

Two passengers injured in the emergency crash-landing of a small aircraft near Rourkela in Odisha were airlifted to Mumbai for treatment, while another injured person is on ventilator support, a senior official said on Sunday.

At least six people, including two pilots, were injured when a nine-seater aircraft of India One made an emergency crash-landing near Rourkela in Odisha on Saturday afternoon.

Speaking to presspersons at the accident spot, the Odisha's government's

Commerce and Transport Department Principal Secretary Usha Padhee said that two injured passengers (a couple), on their personal wish, were airlifted to a hospital in Mumbai this morning.

"The two passengers were under treatment in a private hospital in Rourkela. They wanted to go to the Mumbai hospital for further treatment. After getting clearance from the Rourkela hospital, they left for Mumbai," she said.

Meanwhile, a three-member team of the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) on Sunday started its probe into the crash-landing incident.

• TRANSPORT

Fogged out: How Railways and airlines tackle fog-induced disruptions in winter

Sukalp Sharma and Dheeraj Mishra
New Delhi, January 11

EVERY WINTER, Indian travellers face a familiar challenge in the form of fog. Both airlines and the Indian Railways are hit by delays and cancellations owing to the low visibility, particularly in northern India.

What impacts both modes of transportation is radiation fog. It forms under clear winter nights, when the ground cools rapidly, moisture condenses, and gets trapped by stagnant air. Pilots and officials with Indian carriers say that smog and high pollution levels have, over the years, compounded fog-related disruptions.

Technology has helped blunt the impact to an extent, but the rapid growth in traveller volumes means that systems are always playing catch-up.

Specialised take-offs, pilots

When visibility falls drastically due to fog, airports start operating under Low Visibility Procedures (LVPs). These involve

specialised operations such as Low Visibility Take-Off (LVTO) and Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT IIIB landings.

ILS is a ground-based radio navigation system at airports that provides precise horizontal and vertical guidance to aircraft. On the other hand, CAT IIIB is one of the highest levels for precision approaches for aircraft landings, allowing landings even when visibility is as low as 50 metres. However, not all Indian airports have these capabilities, and both the aircraft and their crew also need to be equipped and certified for such operations.

To minimise disruptions, airlines try to ensure that an adequate number of pilots trained for low-visibility operations are available. Real-time meteorological data is also monitored for fog prediction.

Still, natural limitations do arise. LVPs dictate that the distance and time between landings and take-offs increase to ensure safety. This leads to backlogs in departures and arrivals and adds to airport congestion.

The airlines plan fair-weather alternative airports for fog-prone airports, in case flights



Heavy fog at the New Delhi Railway Station in late December 2025. AMIT MEHRA

have to be diverted. Diversions are based on real-time weather and visibility situations at nearby airports, where the carrier's engineering staff is stationed. Severe fog-induced disruptions can also have a cascading impact across the carrier's network. This is

most likely for disruptions at an airport like Delhi, a major hub for India's biggest airlines — IndiGo and Air India. An aircraft and a set of crew work on multiple flights on different sectors throughout the day, and disruptions can particularly impact large networks and

high aircraft and crew utilisation levels.

Another factor is the Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) guidelines, which say that if pilots and crew exceed the maximum permissible duty time for the day — even if they have not been able to operate any flights — they have to be taken off duty.

Kavach for trains

During winters, trains in northern India can be delayed for more than 12 hours, owing to fog. To overcome this problem, Railways has been taking up multiple measures, including the provisioning of fog safety devices (FSD) and deployment of the Automatic Train Protection System.

FSD or Fog pass device is a GPS-based, handheld system provided to locomotive pilots in the affected sections. It alerts the train driver through an audio-visual alarm if it detects anything within the geo-fenced range. It also provides information on warning boards, signals and level crossing gates.

Last month, the Minister for Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw, told the Rajya Sabha that

25,939 FSDs have been provisioned for the season. Almost 23% of the total FSDs go to the Northern Railway alone, as it operates the most trains in the most fog-prone regions.

Apart from this, a modified automatic signalling system has been introduced in Northern Railway and North Central Railway to restrict the number of trains running between stations during fog. The Railways have also introduced luminous strips on signalling equipment to improve visibility.

Another important mechanism is the Automatic Train Protection (ATP) system or Kavach, which is being deployed in select sections. It will ensure that locomotive pilots can maintain their train's speed even during dense fog. They would not even have to look outside the cabin for a signal, as the relevant information is flashed on a dashboard installed inside the locomotive.

Kavach also applies the brakes automatically in case a pilot fails to do so. The advanced version of this system, Kavach 4.0, is planned for large-scale deployment over the rail network.



The aircraft after it crash-landed at Kansor in Odisha on Saturday. (PTI)

Aircraft with 6 on board crash-lands in Odisha

SUBHASHISH MOHANTY

Bhubaneswar: Six people were injured after a single-engine, nine-seater aircraft belonging to a private airline crash-landed at Kansor near Jajda, around 20km from Rourkela, on Saturday afternoon.

The pilot chose an open field near the Rourkela airstrip to land the aircraft on its belly. It is not immediately clear if the aircraft had developed a technical snag.

The injured have been identified as Anita Sahoo, 50, Sabita Agarwal, 35, Sunil Agarwal, 40, Susanta Kumar Biswal, 46, Captain Naveen Kadanga, 46, and co-pilot Tarun Shrivastava, 46.

The district administrative team rescued the injured with the help of locals and shifted them to hospitals in Rourkela.

Odisha transport minister Bhubhu Bhusan Jena said:

"All the passengers are undergoing treatment and are safe... The India One Air type of aircraft (Caravan 208) bearing registration VT-KSS was flying from Bhubaneswar to Rourkela. It departed at 12.27pm and force-landed at a place near Jajda, eight nautical miles short of Rourkela. The pilots saved precious lives."

Jena said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had been informed. "The airline will be reporting the details to the DGCA and Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau for further action," he said.

The DGCA, in a media release, said India One Air operated under the Centre's UDAN scheme that aims to provide air connectivity to tier-2 and 3 cities. It said the pilot gave a Mayday call to Rourkela air traffic control at 1.14pm and made a forced

landing at 1.20pm.

Chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi posted on X: "I am deeply saddened to learn about the plane crash that occurred in Rourkela. The news that all passengers are safe by the grace of Lord Jagannath is reassuring."

Former Indian Air Force officer Group Captain Sanjeeb Mohapatra said: "We don't have any information on why the pilot decided to crash-land on an open airfield. Some technical snag must have developed. We need to wait for the details."

Former Indian Airlines pilot, Captain Manmath Routray, said: "The Cessna Grand C208B aircraft has a good reputation. It has a reliable engine. A mechanical or technical glitch must have happened. The pilot did the right thing by force-landing."

CALCUTTANS BOOKED ON FLIGHTS VIA DELHI, MUMBAI

IndiGo's Airbus to Athens ready for take-off

SANJAY MANDAL

Calcutta: IndiGo has unveiled a new narrow-body plane capable of covering distances exceeding 8,000 kilometres in a single flight, offering direct services to Athens from Mumbai and Delhi.

Calcutta is not yet on the route map, but many Calcuttans have already booked Athens-bound flights, sources said.

Calcutta is not yet on the route map, but many Calcuttans have already booked Athens-bound flights, sources said. IndiGo recently inducted an Airbus A321XLR into its fleet, a long-range variant of the Airbus A321neo. Officials announced that it will operate non-stop services from Mumbai to Athens starting January 23, and Delhi to Athens from January 24, with three weekly flights on both routes.

The Airbus A321XLR, a next-generation narrow-body aircraft with a range of up to 8,700 kilometres and enhanced fuel efficiency, allows IndiGo to serve longer international routes while maintaining high cost-efficiency.



IndiGo's Airbus A321XLR



Inside the aircraft: 12 IndiGoStretch and 183 economy class seats and more



"There are several bookings on the flight from Calcutta," said a travel industry source.

According to sources, a return trip from Calcutta to Athens via Delhi or Mumbai on this aircraft costs around ₹35,000 in economy class, compared with the usual average of ₹60,000.

"Greece is one of the top tourist destinations from Calcutta among Schengen countries. Every year, between 30,000 and 45,000 people from the eastern region visit Greece," said Anil

Punjabi, chairman of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), eastern region.

"Most passengers currently travel via Gulf countries. With IndiGo's new aircraft and competitive fares, interest in Greece is expected to rise," he added.

The Airbus A321XLR features a dual-class configuration with 12 IndiGoStretch and 183 economy class seats, an airline official said.

"Airbus A321neo used on international sectors has 232 economy seats. Another

domestic configuration has 12 IndiGoStretch and 208 economy seats. So the A321XLR provides more leg space for passengers," a source said.

Of a total firm order for 40 A321XLR aircraft, nine are expected to be delivered in 2026. After the first international induction to Athens, subsequent aircraft will serve existing routes such as Istanbul, Turkey, and Denpasar, Bali.

Incoming deliveries will then enable IndiGo to expand to new long-haul

routes in Europe and East Asia.

Pieter Elbers, IndiGo's CEO, said: "The advanced capabilities of this aircraft enable us to reach new regions across the globe."

Jürgen Westermeier, president and managing director of Airbus India and South Asia, said: "By opening mid-to-long-haul routes previously unreachable by single-aisle aircraft, this delivery catalyses IndiGo's international growth and significantly enhances India's global connectivity."