



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWAHATI

12 MARCH 2025

# Centre still waiting for DPR from AAI for Doloo greenfield airport

### A CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 11: In spite of giving site clearance to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for setting up of a greenfield airport at Doloo in Cachar district of Assam more than a year back, the Ministry of Civil Aviation is still waiting for a Detailed Project Report (DPR) from the AAI to give 'in-principle' approval to start the construction works of the greenfield airport.

Informing this in the Rajya

Sabha, Civil Aviation minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu said that on the basis of the recommendations of the steering committee on greenfield airports, the Government of India has granted site clearance to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) for setting up of a greenfield airport at Doloo, Cachar, on February 22, 2024.

"The AAI is required to prepare a DPR including the details like social and environmental impact assessment,

timelines for completion of the project, etc. Thereafter, prior to the commencement of construction works, the AAI has to submit an application along with the DPR to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) for grant of 'in-principle' approval," said Naidu.

The minister said that during the last three years, four greenfield airports, namely, Itanagar (Hollongi), Mopa (Goa), Shivamogga and Rajkot (Hirasar) have been built and operationalized.

The Government of India has accorded in-principle approval for setting up of 21 greenfield airports across the country, namely, Mopa in Goa, Navi Mumbai, Shirdi and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, Kalaburagi, Vijayapura, Hassan and Shivamogga in Karnataka, Dabra (Gwalior) in Madhya Pradesh, Kushinagar and Noida (Jewar) in Uttar Pradesh, Dholera and Rajkot (Hirasar) in Gujarat, Karaikal in Puducherry, Dagarthi, Bhogapuram and

Oravakal (Kurnool) in Andhra Pradesh, Durgapur in West Bengal, Pakyong in Sikkim, Kannur in Kerala and Itanagar (Hollongi) in Arunachal Pradesh, as per GFA Policy, 2008.

"Out of these, 12 greenfield airports, viz., Durgapur, Shirdi, Kannur, Pakyong, Kalaburagi, Orvakal (Kurnool), Sindhudurg, Kushinagar, Itanagar (Hollongi), Mopa, Shivamogga and Rajkot (Hirasar) have been operationalized," Naidu said.



**For better services:**

Some passengers say that privatisation of the Chennai airport may help to offer better facilities and services. But officials of Airports Authority of India claim that they have taken steps over the years to offer the best of services to passengers. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

# Passengers miffed at shelving of plan to privatise Chennai airport

Many passengers took to X (formerly Twitter) and said they had been grappling with a host of issues at the airport, from cab pick-up to maintenance of toilets. They felt that the privatisation of the airport might help to offer the passengers better facilities and services

**CITY MATTERS**

Sunitha Sekar

**W**hile visiting the city in the last week of February, Minister for Civil Aviation Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu said that the Chennai airport would not be privatised. "This [existing] airport is close to our heart. We want to better the services by ourselves," he said.

This led to a barrage of comments on X (formerly Twitter) from flyers miffed at the announcement and they listed the issues they faced and urged the Centre to privatise the airport. Some of the passengers said they had been facing a host of issues at the airport, from cab pick-up to maintenance of toilets, and its privatisation might help to offer better facilities and services.

**Parking not accessible**

Ramkumar, an air passenger, says that in recent times, one of the most exasperating things about the Chennai airport is how passengers are forced to walk to the multi-level car parking (MLCP) for cab pick-up. "This building is not easily accessible. Though there are shuttle services, many first-time flyers are unaware that these services are meant for dropping them at the MLCP. It is not easy to identify, too, and the number of lifts is inadequate. This kind of planning doesn't help passengers in any way," he says.

R. Sivakumar, another frequent flyer, says he is disappointed with the announcement. Compared with the privately managed airports such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad, the Chennai airport doesn't live up to the expectations in many respects, he says. "The maintenance of the toilets has to improve at the Chennai airport. Secondly, the shopping and dining terminals at the Hyderabad and Bengaluru airports are top notch. They offer a huge variety, while Chennai has limited options. Also, when I look at the ambience and look of the Bengaluru airport terminal, it is absolutely striking and attracts a passenger."

While the Chennai airport has im-

**Passengers say that while the Chennai airport has improved in some areas over the last decade, it is far behind the Bengaluru or Hyderabad airports in terms of comfort, convenience, and services**

proved in some areas over the last decade, it is far behind the Bengaluru or Hyderabad airports in terms of comfort, convenience, and services, says K. Karthik, another flyer. "Before a decade, I wouldn't even want to step into the toilet at the Chennai airport. While it is marginally better now, passengers still hesitate. I was disappointed with the wash-rooms at the international terminal when I flew out of the city last week because there was a bad odour," he says.

**Long wait for baggage collection**

He says he struggles to find a trolley that moves smoothly. The wait for baggage collection, too, is long sometimes. "I arrived around 8.10 p.m. from Dubai. The immigration was quick, and my wife and I headed to the baggage conveyor belt. By the time we received the baggage, it was 9.45 p.m. Pushing the trolley and collecting my baggage were an extremely frustrating exercise. I think that if the Chennai airport becomes privately managed, these issues are likely to be better handled," he says.

Muralikrishnan, another passenger, says that for lack of good planning and functionality, even little things irk a passenger. "For instance, I flew down from Ahmedabad a few months ago. On reaching the terminal for collecting baggage, we arrived at the specified belt. But it was changed and there was no clarity. We had to walk to another belt. Similarly, the manner in which the cab pick-up has been planned is not at all convenient to passengers," he adds.

Some of the airlines prefer a privately managed airport for various reasons. "If we want to create a hub in Bengaluru, we will get concessions in parking, landing, and office space, which we may not get so easily in a government-run airport. Also, when we plan for connectivity from a city, we not only think about the load factor but also about the services and facilities. Of course, the final call will be taken by the Ministry of Civil Aviation," according to an airline official.

Officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) say they have taken steps over the years to offer the best of services to pas-



"With respect to toilets, we clean them...round the clock. Also, as soon as passengers complained about the difficulty in the cab pick-up point, we added several buggies to drop them off in the parking area..."

AN OFFICIAL,  
Airports Authority of India

sengers and address complaints at the earliest.

"With respect to toilets, we clean them, both in the departure and the arrival, round the clock. Also, as soon as passengers complained about the difficulty in the cab pick-up point, we added several buggies to drop them off in the parking area. After completing construction of a plaza, we are going to add a second cab pick-up point, which will be convenient to passengers," an official says.

AAI officials say congestion on account of security checks occurs only when there is a bunching of flights. They say that they are trying to address the problem. "Sometimes, passengers encounter delays in receiving the baggage because Customs have to scan and then send it to the carousel. We are discussing the issue with them [Customs officials] to resolve it at the earliest," the official says.

**Affordable food outlet**

Asked about shopping and dining at the Chennai airport, officials say they have optimally utilised the limited space and there are quite a lot of options for passengers at the domestic and international terminals. "We have also recently opened Udan Yatri Café. This kind of an affordable food outlet may not be available at a private airport," the official adds.

The AAI has changed over 11,000 trolley wheels in recent months and procured 6,000 wheels. "Work is under way to replace the damaged ones. This aside, we are going to order another 29,000 wheels shortly," the official says.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

## सऊदी अरब की रियाद एयर नोएडा एयरपोर्ट के साथ कर सकती है समझौता

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 12 मार्च (देशबन्धु)। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से सऊदी अरब रियाद एयर समझौता कर सकती है। विकासकर्ता कंपनी यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड इस दिशा में प्रयास शुरू कर दिया है। इन दिनों रियाद एयर के सीईओ टोनी डगलस भारत के दौरे पर हैं, जहां वे इस प्रमुख बाजार में संभावित साझेदारियों का पता लगाने के लिए कई महत्वपूर्ण बैठकों में भाग लेंगे। रियाद एयर, जो इस वर्ष के अंत तक अपनी सेवाएं शुरू करने के लिए तैयार है, भारत और सऊदी अरब के बीच कनेक्टिविटी और विकास के नए अवसरों को बढ़ाने की दिशा में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगा। 2030 तक, भारत सऊदी अरब का शीर्ष पर्यटन स्रोत बाजार बनने की उम्मीद है।

सऊदी पर्यटन प्राधिकरण का लक्ष्य है कि दशक के अंत तक हर साल 75 लाख भारतीय पर्यटकों का स्वागत किया जाए। आंकड़ों के अनुसार, 2023 में भारतीय यात्रियों की संख्या 50



- रियाद एयर प्रतिनिधिमंडल भारत के प्रमुख बाजार का दौरा करेगा, साझेदारी की तलाश करेगी संभावना
- सीईओ टोनी डगलस भारत की दो सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइनों, एयर इंडिया और इंडिगो, और डीजीसीए के साथ बैठक कर समझौते पर करेगी चर्चा

फौसदी बढ़कर 15 लाख से अधिक हो गई। बुधवार से 14 मार्च तक चलने वाले इस दौरे के दौरान, रियाद एयर प्रतिनिधिमंडल नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) और सऊदी अरब के दूतावास के अधिकारियों से मुलाकात करेगा ताकि भारत में संचालन शुरू करने के लिए आवश्यक अनुमतियों और समर्थन को

अंतिम रूप दिया जा सके। इसके अलावा, डगलस इंडिगो और एयर इंडिया के वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों से भी मिलेंगे, जिससे संभावित साझेदारी की संभावनाओं पर चर्चा होगी। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट इसका पूरा फायदा उठाने में लगी हुई है। नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पहले ही इंडिगा और आकासा के साथ समझौता कर चुकी है।



## Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

KANPUR

12 MARCH 2025

### लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर छह घंटे ही बंद रहेंगी उड़ानें

राज्य ब्यूरो, जागरण, लखनऊ : चौधरी चरण सिंह अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट पर 21 मार्च से विमानों की आवाजाही दिन में आठ घंटे की बजाय छह घंटे ही बंद रहेगी। एयरपोर्ट पर रनवे की री-कारपेटिंग के कारण अभी सुबह 10 से शाम छह बजे तक आठ घंटे विमान सेवाएं पूरी तरह बंद होने से यात्री परेशान हो रहे हैं।

वहीं, उड़ानों की रीशेड्यूलिंग के बाद विमानों का किराया भी बढ़ गया है। यात्रियों को हो रही परेशानी को लेकर मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने नाराजगी जतायी है। मुख्यमंत्री

द्वारा इस बारे में नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) के उच्च अधिकारियों से नाराजगी जताने के बाद 21 मार्च से लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर नौ फ्लाईंग दो घंटे कम करने की तैयारी है। 21 मार्च से सुबह 10 की जगह 11 बजे तक विमान आपरेशन हो सकेगा। शाम छह की जगह पांच बजे तक ही विमान संचालन पर रोक लगाने की तैयारी है। इस तरह 21 मार्च से सुबह 11 से शाम पांच बजे तक छह घंटे ही लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर विमानों की आवाजाही पर रोक रहेगी।

## Concern over poor upkeep of Surat int'l airport



### FPJ NEWS SERVICE

SURAT

A glaring case of negligence has surfaced at Surat International Airport, exposing the failure of authorities in maintaining even the basic aesthetic appeal expected at an international airport.

Since the inauguration of the expanded New Integrated Terminal Building (NITB) by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 17, 2023, various deficiencies have continued to emerge—even after nearly one and a half years. The airport, which caters to approximately 16 lakh passengers, lacks the visual and environmental standards that should define an international travel hub.

A major issue is the poor upkeep of decorative plant pots placed across the terminal building. While these were meant to enhance the airport's ambiance, their pathetic maintenance has resulted in dying or wither-

ing plants, completely defeating the purpose of beautification efforts. The lack of proper care and supervision over landscaping elements reflects poorly on the airport's administration.

Additionally, instead of using premium indoor plant varieties, as seen at Mumbai, Bengaluru, or Ahmedabad airports, cheap and unsuitable plants have been placed, further diminishing the overall aesthetic value. This is particularly concerning given Surat's reputation as one of India's cleanest cities, where the airport serves as the gateway for both domestic and international travelers.

"Authorities must take immediate action by awarding the landscaping and maintenance contract to a professional agency well-versed in plant selection and upkeep. Ensuring a world-class experience for passengers at Surat International Airport is not just a necessity but a responsibility" said a frequent traveller in Surat.

## What's the most-seized check-in bag item at KIA? Power bank

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**Bengaluru:** With mobile phones becoming an extension of one's self, the need to keep them working by overcoming their battery limitations, is most people's headache. More so, air travellers prefer to be equipped with the power bank on the go. However, the flyers seem to be unaware of the fact that power banks in check-in bags is resented by airport security personnel who confiscate them.

According to the security data from Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), 1,412 kg of power banks were seized from

flyers' check-in bags between Jan last year and Feb this year. The other two major goods confiscated were 556kg of lighters and 576kg e-cigarettes.

Power banks are allowed in cabin baggages. The primary reason for power banks to be prohibited in check-in bags is their components—lithium ion batteries, which are dangerous and when overheated can cause fire and explosions.

According to Dangerous Goods Regulations, one can carry portable electronic devices (PED) containing lithium metal or lithium ion cells or batteries in cabin baggage and each person can carry only 15 PEDs. In case of lithium

ion batteries, portable devices can't be of more than 100Wh-hour capacity. However, there are special power banks which are over 160 Wh and they can be carried on special permission from the airline.

"Damaged and modified power banks will not pass security check because of their flammable nature. Ideal power banks that are damaged or have a swelling might burst in mid air, risking the lives of passengers," said an official.

The other restricted items intercepted by security personnel included flammable liquids, gases, and dried coconut (copra), all of which pose safety risks.



**CHOOSE YOUR GADGET WISELY**

- Opt for power bank that is under 100 Wh or 20,000 max and compact in size
- Carry it only in hand baggage and not in check-in luggage

**NO ENTRY**  
(Jan 2024 and Feb 2025)

Power banks: **1,412kg**

Lighters: **556kg**

E-cigarettes: **576kg**

**MOST CONFISCATED GOODS**

FROM CHECK-IN BAGGAGE	FROM HAND BAGGAGE
➤ Power banks	➤ Lighters
➤ Lighters	➤ Scissors
➤ Batteries	➤ Knives
➤ Laptops	➤ Liquids

"Once seized, restricted items are systematically categorised based on their clas-

sification and stored in a secure location for up to 15 days. This holding period allows

passengers, in certain cases, to claim items that may be permitted in checked baggage. However, unclaimed or hazardous items are handed over to a BBMP-authorised vendor for environmentally responsible disposal, ensuring compliance with safety regulations," said a BIAL spokesperson.

Despite the high volume of confiscations, officials note that screening trends remained consistent over the past year. There was no significant increase in new or unusual items, indicating that passengers continue to carry commonly restricted goods rather than emerging threats. However, one notable

regional pattern emerged regarding e-cigarettes. While many countries permit passengers to carry e-cigarettes in their carry-on luggage, India strictly prohibits them, leading to frequent confiscations—particularly from international passengers transiting to domestic flights.

"In India, e-cigarettes and vapes are strictly prohibited in the country and these are the ones that are being seized in large numbers here. There are constant arguments between passengers and security personnel about vapes and e-cigarettes being allowed in other countries, but we have prohibitory orders," said an airport official.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

12 MARCH 2025

## SITES BEING ASSESSED TO RELOCATE ATC TOWER

### Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport passenger traffic



(All figures rounded off.  
Source: AERA consultation paper)

**Proposed cost:** MIAL has proposed total capital expenditure of ₹17,439.4cr for CSMIA on various projects till March 2029

> It will be recovered through a mix of aeronautical and non-aero charges

> AERA has tried to ensure lower burden on passengers by considering a higher non-aero revenue that will be used to cross-subsidise the aero charges

> AERA has proposed a non-aeronautical revenue of ₹12,171cr for the fourth control period as against MIAL's submission of ₹5,750.5cr

### Tunnel to transport flyers and baggage

**T1 and T2 apron:** Alignment is underneath runway 14-32  
**T1 apron and the proposed new southern apron:** Alignment is underneath runway 09-27

**Terminal 2** (international and domestic)



**Proposed length of the tunnel: 3.042km**

## WHY ARE CLOGGED TOILETS FLUSHING AI'S REPUTATION DOWN THE DRAIN?

# Aging aircraft, old ducts and flyers' behaviour lead to stink

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New Delhi: Clogged toilets are not new to Air India flights, but the legacy of the old govt-run airline has been flushed across to the new Tata Group-owned company, right in the middle of its modernisation and expansion spree.

For years, cleanup crew of Air India's long-haul flights has found in holding tanks of blocked lavatories everything from socks to hand towels, plastic bags, underwear and even small pillows given on board. Just as the Chicago-Delhi flight was forced to return to O'Hare International Airport last Wednesday when eight of its 10 lavatories were clogged, over the years, several of the airline's Europe and US flights have been forced to divert or return after flying for hours with hundreds of bursting bowels and bladders for similar reasons.

The dumping has gone on regardless of clear signage asking flyers not to throw anything in the commode as that could "clog the toilet and cause inconvenience to you and your fellow passengers".

As Air India's legacy Boeing 777s, used for North America non-stops, age, the problem is worsening as the old ducts find it increasingly difficult to suck in whatever indiscreet passengers flush away.

"These aircraft are very old. The lavatory ducts or suction pipes have got scaling due to which their available width has reduced. External particles like shawls, sheets or towels easily and immediately clog them up," said an engineer who has spent decades maintaining aircraft. Aircraft toilets use a vacuum system to remove waste into a storage tank. According to Air India's former executive director Jitender Bhargava, the airline got 21 of its 23 B777s between 2007 and 2010. The other two were inducted much later and are now used as dedicated long-haul VVIP planes operated



The dumping has gone on regardless of clear signage asking flyers not to throw anything in the commode

by the Indian Air Force. The B787 Dreamliners, used on the Europe, Far East and Australia routes, came in a few years later, starting 2010, and are also getting old now. The problem of clogged toilets has shown up on both these long-haul planes in the airline's fleet.

An engineer explained, "A B777 has two waste tanks. If a duct leading from a lavatory gets clogged, it will affect only that particular lavatory. But if the duct close to the waste tank inlet gets clogged, it will affect all lavatories connected to it."

On AI 126 being forced to return to Chicago on March 5, Air India said in a statement on Monday. "Our teams found polythene bags, rags and clothes that had been flushed down and stuck in the plumbing. This led the lavatories to become unserviceable. While not found on AI 126 of March 5, 2025, our teams have previously also found objects such as blankets, underwear, and diapers, among other waste, having been flushed down the toilets on other flights. We take this opportunity to urge passengers to use lavatories only for the purposes that they are meant for." Is this problem faced by airlines of other countries as well? TOI spoke to officials of multiple leading foreign airlines,

who said they have only experienced this problem sporadically. This suggests passengers behave differently in an Indian carrier than when they are aboard a foreign airline.

"This is a very, very rare occurrence that can happen anywhere. Sometimes, a couple of lavatories may become unserviceable. If detected before taking off from a place that is not our engineering base, we resort to denied boarding and proportionately reduce the number of passengers on that aircraft," said an official with a foreign airline.

Apart from educating passengers, aircraft maintenance engineers have a word of advice for Air India. "Small bottles are kept in lavatories by AI and almost all other global airlines operating medium to ultra-long hauls. However given the peculiar situation of AI, it will be better to have bigger fixed dispensers that can be refilled by crew as a lot of small bottles end up getting flushed. Ditto for dental hygiene kits but those have to be given," said an engineer. Crew members say passengers ignore the waste bins, which are right there, below or beside the wash basin, and flush everything down the toilet. Toilets in the economy section are more prone to clogging simply because the passenger load is higher.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

12 MARCH 2025

# ATC may be shifted, S-shaped tunnel to link T1 & T2 by 2029

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**New Delhi:** Come 2029 and Mumbai airport could bear a very different look. Apart from a redeveloped Terminal 1, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) is considering relocating the iconic 275-foot-tall air traffic control (ATC) to free up airside space. By 2029, MIAL has also proposed to construct an over-3km-long S-shaped airside tunnel between the aprons of the terminals.

"Various locations are being assessed to relocate the ATC technical block from the current location. Same will be

done post the finalization of the new location." The Adani Group-managed MIAL said this in the consultation paper for determining the airport's aeronautical tariff for the "fourth control period" from April 1, 2024, to March 31, 2029.

Airport capacity is decided by two factors, runway capacity, the number of flights that can operate in an hour, and the terminal building capacity, the number of passengers that can be handled by its security and immigration counters. Currently, Mumbai airport's runway and terminals together can handle 5.5 crore passengers annually (CPA), with the larger terminal 2 (T2) having a capacity of 4 CPA and T1 at 1.5 CPA. MIAL will demolish terminal-1 (T1)

this year to make way for a new 2 CPA T1 by 2029. It also plans to increase T2 capacity to about 4.5 CPA taking the total capacity of Mumbai airport's two terminal buildings to 6.5 CPA, an increase of 1 crore passengers per annum.

The problem with Mumbai airport is it operates out a single runway. The main runway can handle 42-44 flights an hour. The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has asked for a study on aircraft movements to see how the runway capacity can be increased. Independent consultant NATS study shows a reduction in arrival-departure-arrival spacing could increase runway capacity from 48 to 52-55 movements per hour.

"A dedicated crew facility

and bus boarding gates in northwest pier extension. Addition of check-in desk at each island. Reconfiguration (of) customs handbag screening facility," these were the measures suggested by Jacobs, a consultant engaged to undertake capacity assessment study at T2.

On the S-shaped tunnel, the paper says, "During nighttime, some of the flights operating at T2 are required to be parked at the T1 apron due to shortage of stands at T2. When the flights are parked at T1 apron, passengers and baggage are required to be transported between T1 apron and T2 apron via the perimeter road around runway 14-32, which takes a considerable time. The situation becomes especially adverse during monsoon..."



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

## Looking for partnerships with Air India and IndiGo, says Riyadh Air chief

**Our Bureau**  
New Delhi

Saudi Arabia-based upcoming airline Riyadh Air is looking for partnerships with domestic carriers such as Air India or IndiGo, said Riyadh Air Chief Executive Tony Douglas.

The airline is set to fly to more than 100 destinations by 2030 and increase Saudi Arabia's non-oil GDP growth by \$20 billion and directly and indirectly create more than 2,00,000 new jobs globally and locally.

According to Douglas, the airline's representatives will meet the IndiGo and Air India leadership to discuss possible codeshare agreements.

Currently, Riyadh Air has tied up with global airlines such as Delta, Turkish, Singapore, China Eastern, Saudia, Air China, EgyptAir and Virgin Atlantic. "Only

northeastern Europe and India regions are left for us to find a partner. This is a big gap, and we intend to make a win-win partnership with either Air India or IndiGo," Douglas said.

"I know both Campbell (Campbell Wilson, CEO and MD Air India) and Pieter (Pieter Elbers, CEO, IndiGo). They are industry veterans, and I believe they will see the potential in a partnership with Riyadh Air. We hold both the Indian carriers in the highest regard."

Notably, Riyadh Air will launch operations later this year, with India slated to be one of the first destinations where the airline intends to operate flights.

### ROOM FOR GROWTH

Even though the airline has firm plans for India operations, Douglas, however, did not disclose the launch date



Tony Douglas,  
Chief Executive, Riyadh Air

or the first destination that Riyadh Air plans to service.

The airline is poised to significantly enhance connectivity and growth opportunities between the two nations, with India expected to become Saudi Arabia's top tourism source market by 2030.

In terms of bilateral flying rights, Douglas said, "We are not using anywhere near the limit on the existing bilateral. So there is plenty of

headroom in what was previously agreed in 2019."

The bilateral, in aviation parlance, refers to equitable traffic rights (passenger ferrying quotas per airline) that are allocated under an air service agreement between two countries.

"India has long been a crucial part of Riyadh Air's network planning, ahead of our operations launch. India is a beautiful nation that will play a big part in the success story of our airline, as travel and business opportunities multiply with the expanded offerings we are set to provide."

"Beyond connecting people, fostering economic growth and enhancing and diversifying the Saudi Arabian and Indian tourism sectors, Riyadh Air's network will help develop even stronger bonds between the two great countries."

## रियाद एयर

# रोजगार के आवेदनों में भारतीय आगे

दीपक पटेल

नई दिल्ली, 12 मार्च

नई एयरलाइन रियाद एयर के मुख्य कार्याधिकारी टोनी डगलस ने बुधवार को घोषणा की कि एयरलाइन को पिछले दो वर्षों में नौकरी के 14 लाख आवेदन मिले हैं। इन आवेदकों में भारतीय सबसे आगे हैं। उन्होंने कहा, 'रियाद में हवाई सेवाओं की भारी कमी है। द्विपक्षीय हवाई सेवा समझौतों के मामले में कोई बाधा नहीं है। 2023 में भारत से सऊदी अरब जाने वाले पर्यटकों की संख्या में 50 प्रतिशत का इजाफा हुआ। हम इस सीधी हवाई सेवा के लिए अपनी उड़ानें शुरू करेंगे।'

रियाद स्थित एयरलाइन के 2025 के आखिर में परिचालन शुरू करने की संभावना है। उसने बोइंग को 72 बी787 वाइडबॉडी विमानों और एयरबस को 60 ए320 नियो नैरोबॉडी विमानों का ऑर्डर दिया है।

डगलस ने एयरलाइन में नौकरी के लिए आने वाले आवेदकों की संख्या पर आश्चर्य जताया है।

रियाद एयर के कर्मचारियों की संख्या इस समय लगभग 500 है जिनमें 36 केबिन क्रू सदस्य और 36 पायलट शामिल हैं।

# होली वाले सप्ताहांत पर होटल कमरों और हवाई टिकटों की बड़ी बुकिंग

अक्षरा श्रीवास्तव और अनीका चटर्जी

होली की छुट्टी इस साल शुक्रवार को होने के कारण यात्रा एवं पर्यटन क्षेत्र में चहल-पहल बढ़ गई है। लोग सप्ताहांत पर लंबी छुट्टियों का भरपूर लाभ उठाने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं।

यात्रा प्लेटफॉर्म इग्जिगो के अनुसार, होली वाले सप्ताहांत पर हवाई टिकटों की बुकिंग में पिछले साल के मुकाबले करीब 45 फीसदी की वृद्धि दर्ज गई है। इससे मुख्य तौर पर लोगों द्वारा अपने गृहनगर के लिए यात्रा, अवकाश पर घूमने-फिरने और आध्यात्मिक पर्यटन से बढ़ावा मिल रहा है।

अयोध्या, वाराणसी और अमृतसर जैसी प्रमुख जगहों में हवाई टिकटों की बुकिंग में 50 फीसदी तक की वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है। गोरखपुर जैसे छोटे एवं मझौले शहरों में हवाई टिकटों की बुकिंग में सबसे अधिक 154 फीसदी की वृद्धि दर्ज की गई है।

त्योहारों पर बड़ी तादाद में लोगों के अपने गृहनगर लौटने का चलन जारी है, मगर कई लोग अब छोटी जगहों पर भी छुट्टियां बिताना पसंद कर रहे हैं।

यात्रा ऑनलाइन के वरिष्ठ उपाध्यक्ष (हवाई एवं होटल कारोबार) भरत मलिक ने बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड से कहा, 'होली मनाने के लिए वृंदावन, मथुरा, वाराणसी एवं अन्य सांस्कृतिक केंद्रों के लिए यात्रा की लोकप्रियता बरकरार है। मगर कई यात्रियों ने इस अवसर पर गोवा, जयपुर, पुदुच्चेरी, ऊटी, श्रीनगर, महाबलेश्वर, कॉर्बेट और वायनाड में छुट्टियां बिताने की योजना बनाई है।'



अगरतला में होली खेलती युवती

इस प्लेटफॉर्म पर होटलों की बुकिंग में 20-25 फीसदी की वृद्धि दर्ज की जा रही है जबकि होटल कमरे के औसत किराये में 18-22 फीसदी की वृद्धि दिख रही है। मलिक ने कहा, 'इस रुझान से पता चलता है कि घरेलू यात्रा का आकर्षण बरकरार है।'

होटल श्रृंखला रेडिसन में भी होली सप्ताहांत के लिए मांग में भारी वृद्धि देखी जा रही है। मांग को खास तौर पर उन लोगों से रफ्तार मिल रही है जो शहरों की भागदौड़ से राहत के लिए छुट्टियां बिताना चाहते हैं। रेडिसन होटल ग्रुप के प्रबंध निदेशक एवं मुख्य परिचालन अधिकारी (दक्षिण एशिया) निखिल शर्मा ने कहा, 'उदयपुर, गोवा, नैनीताल, वृंदावन, पुदुच्चेरी, जवाई और जिम कॉर्बेट जैसी जगहों पर हमारे रिजॉर्ट एवं होटलों में मांग बढ़ गई है। वहां ऑक्जूपेंसी और औसत दैनिक किराये (एडीआर) में दमदार वृद्धि दर्ज की जा रही है।'

बेंगलूरु के आसपास के पर्यटन स्थलों पर भी

बुकिंग में बढ़ोतरी देखी जा रही है। कॉफी हैवन कहे जाने वाले चिकमगलूरु के सिल्वर स्काई रिजॉर्ट में ऑक्जूपेंसी रेट 25-30 फीसदी दर्ज की जा रही है जबकि होटल कमरे के किराये में कोई बदलाव नहीं किया गया है।

तमिलनाडु के येरकौड में एक बुटीक रिजॉर्ट शंबाला ने होली पर एक खास मेन्यू की योजना बनाई है। इस रिजॉर्ट के महाप्रबंधक रवि सुंदर ने कहा, 'अभी तक हमें करीब 60 फीसदी बुकिंग दिख रही है। हो सकता है कि तारीख के करीब आने पर पूरा बुक हो जाए।'

यात्रा प्लेटफॉर्म अगोडा के अनुसार, लंबे सप्ताहांत पर घरेलू यात्रा के लिए सबसे ज्यादा सर्च किए जाने वाले गंतव्यों में गोवा शीर्ष पायदान पर रहा है।

गोवा के कैरावेला बीच रिजॉर्ट्स के महाप्रबंधक सौरव पंचानन ने कहा, 'होली के लंबे सप्ताहांत पर ऑक्जूपेंसी रेट में काफी वृद्धि होने की उम्मीद है। औसत अनुमानित ऑक्जूपेंसी करीब 90 फीसदी है। हमें लगता है कि इस त्योहारी छुट्टियों पर यात्रा का आनंद उठाने वाले लोगों और परिवारों की ओर से मांग में तेजी रहेगी।'

गोवा के पणजी में हिल्टन समूह के डबल ट्री होटल की शुरुआती बुकिंग में जबरदस्त तेजी दिख रही है। रमी ग्रुप ऑफ होटल्स में भी ऑक्जूपेंसी रेट काफी बढ़ चुका है। रमी ग्रुप ऑफ होटल्स के वरिष्ठ उपाध्यक्ष सौरभ गहोई ने कहा, 'हमें लगता है कि होली पर खास पेशकश के कारण दमदार बुकिंग का रुझान इस महीने जारी रहेगा, खास तौर पर उदयपुर, सूरत और भुज जैसी जगहों के लिए।'

# Indians among our biggest job applicants, says Riyadh Air CEO

## Discussions on with IndiGo, Air India for mutually beneficial partnerships

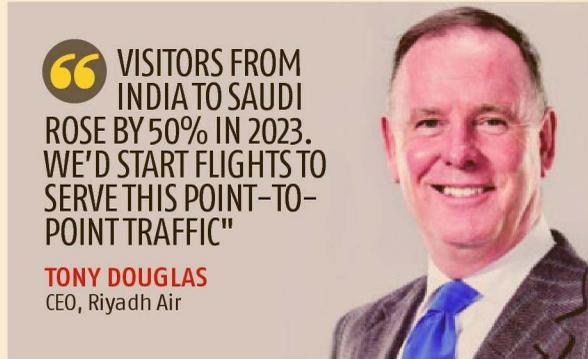
**DEEPAK PATEL**

New Delhi, 12 March

New airline Riyadh Air has received 1.4 million job applications in the past two years, with Indians comprising one of the largest nationality groups among applicants, its Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Tony Douglas said on Wednesday.

He mentioned that almost 93 per cent of the air traffic between India and Saudi Arabia is point-to-point, and there is a huge scope of increasing flight frequencies between the two nations.

“Riyadh is massively underserved. There is no constraint in terms of bilateral air service agreements. The number of visitors from India to Saudi Arabia increased by 50 per cent in 2023. We would start flights to serve this point-to-point traffic,” he stated.



The Riyadh-based airline is expecting to start flight operations sometime later in 2025. It has ordered 72 B787 wide-body planes from Boeing and 60 A320neo narrowbody planes from Airbus.

Douglas expressed his surprise at the number of job applications that the airline has received.

“We have a website, and in the careers page, it invites

pilots, cabin crew members, ground staff. It allows you to upload details. It is a structured protocol and takes over five minutes to fill in the details. Our website has been active for over two years now. We have had 1.4 million applicants till now from 146 different nationalities. It is absolutely phenomenal,” he mentioned.

“The number of Indian

applicants is massive. They are definitely one of the biggest groups of applicants,” he stated.

Douglas said that if one had asked him two years ago about how many applications he was expecting to receive, he would have guessed not more than 15,000-20,000.

“This is the power of our brand. We deliberately went out to create something that stood out in the crowd,” he stated.

Regarding partnerships, Douglas emphasised that the airline sees India as a crucial market. Riyadh Air is actively engaging with potential code-share partners to fill gaps in its network, particularly in north-western Europe and India. Discussions are underway with both IndiGo and Air India, with the airline exploring options that could be mutually beneficial, he said.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

# IndiGo set to invest \$45 mn in IFSC arm

InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline, IndiGo, will invest up to \$45 million in its subsidiary InterGlobe Aviation Financial Services IFSC.

The investment was approved by InterGlobe Aviation's board during its meeting on Wednesday.

In one or more tranches, the investment of "up to \$45 million", will be made in the IFSC subsidiary, according to a regulatory filing.

"This investment will be utilised by IndiGo IFSC towards financing of aviation assets, repayment of its outstanding loan and for other general corporate purposes," the filing said. **PTI**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

## स्वदेशी पर बड़ा दांव : सरकार बड़े अवसर को भुनाने की तैयारी में नए हवाई यात्रियों में 70% छोटे शहरों से, इनके लिए 2 साल में चाहिए 250 विमान

**भास्कर एक्सपर्ट**

**विपुल सक्सेना, एविएशन इंडस्ट्री विशेषज्ञ**

**नई दिल्ली** | रीजनल एयर कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाने के लिए केंद्र सरकार प्राइवेट प्लेयर्स के साथ जिस तेजी से काम कर रही है, उससे अगले 3 से 5 साल में पूरी भारतीय एविएशन इंडस्ट्री बदल जाएगी। 2030 तक भारत विश्व का सबसे बड़ा एविएशन हब होगा। अभी यह इंडस्ट्री सालाना 18 से 20% की गति से बढ़ रही है। इसकी बड़ी वजह है- टियर 2 और 3 श्रेणी के शहरों में निवेश तेजी से बढ़ना। सरकार 2027 तक करीब 400 हवाई पट्टियां तैयार करना चाहती है। इनमें ज्यादातर छोटे जिलों में हैं। नए हवाई यात्रियों में 70% तक यहीं से हैं। इस नए पैसंजर लोड को संभालने के लिए 2027 तक हमें 250 छोटे विमान चाहिए।

**पायलट्स को काम, नए रोजगार भी बनेंगे**

घरेलू विमान निर्माण इंडस्ट्री के कई फायदे हैं। इन विमानों का मॉटेनेंस, सर्विसिंग देश में ही हो जाएगी। इसके लिए अदाणी ग्रुप समेत कई बड़े प्राइवेट प्लेयर्स यूनिट लगाने को तैयार हो चुके हैं। दूसरा, देश में अभी बड़ी संख्या में पायलट बेरोजगार हैं, इनका उपयोग हो सकेगा। ट्रेनिंग फैसिलिटीज, कमर्शियल मॉटेनेंस, ग्राउंड हैंडलिंग के लिए नई भर्तियां होंगी, जिससे नए रोजगार भी बनेंगे।

बड़ी विमान कंपनियां करीब एक हजार विमानों का ऑर्डर पहले ही दे चुकी हैं, लेकिन सभी ऑर्डर अमेरिकी या युरोपियन कंपनियों को मिले हैं, जो एयक्राफ्ट इंजन मैन्युफैक्चरिंग क्षमता की कमी से जूझ रही हैं। ऐसे में इनकी सप्लाई में देरी हो सकती है। - **शोष पेज 10 पर**

**नए हवाई यात्रियों में 70% छोटे शहरों से...**

सरकार रीजनल कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाने के लिए घरेलू विमान निर्माण इंडस्ट्री खड़ी कर इसी अवसर को भुनाने की तैयारी कर रही है, ताकि विदेशी विमान निर्माण कंपनियों पर निर्भरता कम हो जाए। इसलिए उसने एसपीवी यानी स्पेशल पैसंजर व्हीकल कंपनी बनाने का ऐलान किया है। विदेशी कंपनियां छोटे विमान कम से कम 50 करोड़ रु. में देती हैं, वो भी पुराने। भारतीय कंपनियां इन विमानों के भरोसे इतनी बड़ी रिस्क नहीं लेना चाहतीं, इसलिए वो बार-बार सरकार पर घरेलू विमान निर्माण इंडस्ट्री खड़ी करने पर जोर दे रही हैं।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

12 MARCH 2025

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## चंडीगढ़ फ्लाइट रद्द, यात्री परेशान होते रहे

जयपुर | जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर मंगलवार को जयपुर से चंडीगढ़ जाने वाले हवाई यात्रियों को फ्लाइट रद्द होने की वजह से परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा। एयरपोर्ट से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार मामला इंडिगो की फ्लाइट 6ई-7742 का है। फ्लाइट जयपुर से सुबह 5:05 बजे चंडीगढ़ जाती है, लेकिन एयरलाइंस ने फ्लाइट को संचालन कारणों का हवाला देकर रद्द कर दिया। सूत्रों से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार फ्लाइट कम यात्रीभार की वजह से रद्द की गई थी। हालांकि यात्रियों को दोपहर और शाम की फ्लाइट्स में एडजस्ट किया गया।

## Holi drives air fares up 2x on select routes

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR  
Mumbai, March 12

**BOOKINGS FOR DESTINATIONS** across the northern cities of the country and to a bunch of tourist hotspots have seen a spike during the Holi long weekend.

According to data supplied by online travel platform ixigo, there has been an average 45-50% year on year (y-o-y) increase in flight bookings close to the festival, driven by a mix of homebound travel, leisure get-aways and spiritual tourism.

Additionally, cultural hotspots have also witnessed a surge in demand. Flight bookings to Ayodhya have skyrocketed by 50% y-o-y, while Varanasi and Amritsar have seen a 20-30% increase.

The surge in booking for Tier-2 and 3 cities is largely due to those coming back home for the Holi weekend. Gorakhpur, the third busiest airport of Uttar Pradesh, is seeing the highest increase at 154% y-o-y among these cities.

According to SkyScanner, for the Holi weekend, a flight to Varanasi from Delhi is priced at ₹11,900, which is more than twice the usual rate. A Delhi-Goa flight is priced at ₹15,900 which is also more than twice the usual fare.

The March uptick is primarily driven by the festival of colours, which falls on Friday, allowing many to utilise the long weekend. Traditionally, it has been a lean month for aviation since students across the country are busy with their annual exams.

While demand for air travel starts to pick up again in April and May, airlines are resorting to discounts between mid-March and mid-September to fill seats as the monsoon season brings with itself the leanest demand period of the year.

IndiGo, the country's largest carrier, is offering seats starting at ₹1,199 on domestic sectors and ₹4,199 on international routes. In addition, it is providing discounts

### HOLIDAY RUSH



■ According to data supplied by ixigo, there has been an average **45-50%** y-o-y increase in flight bookings

■ Gorakhpur, the third busiest airport of Uttar Pradesh, is seeing the highest increase at **154%** y-o-y among ties-2 and 3 cities

■ For the Holi weekend, a flight to Varanasi from Delhi is priced at **₹11,900**, which is more than twice the usual rate

■ Low-cost carriers Air India Express and Akasa Air have a 'Holi Flash Sale' running

on excess baggage, and on seat selection and pre-booked meals.

Low cost carriers Air India Express and Akasa Air have a 'Holi Flash Sale' running with fares starting from ₹1,499. Regional carrier Star Air is offering fares starting at ₹999 for economy and ₹3,099 for business class, all-inclusive.

Rajnish Kumar, Group Co-CEO, ixigo, said, "With airlines rolling out attractive discounts, it's a great opportunity for travellers to book their trips at affordable fares. Among domestic leisure getaways, Andaman and Nicobar Islands have emerged as the top pick for travellers this Holi."

From the usual highs of more than 90%, the average passenger load factor at the country's top three airlines on March 11 stayed at 80-82%.





# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

## Riyadh Air explores partnerships in India

NITIN KUMAR  
New Delhi, March 12

**INA STRATEGIC** bid to tap into India's vast aviation market, startup carrier Riyadh Air is set to explore potential partnerships with the country's leading airlines, IndiGo and Air India, CEO Tony Douglas said on Tuesday.

"We are in touch with both the airlines in India for a strategic partnership," Douglas said during his media interaction on the first day of his three-day visit to India. Riyadh Air plans to start commercial flights later this year with at least three aircraft.

In addition to engaging with the two airlines, the Riyadh Air delegation will also meet with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Saudi Arabian Embassy to secure the necessary approvals to launch operations in the region.

The new deal plan follows earlier collaborations in which Riyadh Air aligned with global carriers—including Delta Air Lines, Singapore Airlines, Eastern Airlines, and Air China among others—to broaden its network and enhance connectivity between Saudi Arabia and international destinations through potential code-sharing and

TONY DOUGLAS,  
CEO, RIYADH AIR

...we are dedicated to partnering with entities across a variety of aviation stakeholders in India

We are in touch with both (AI and IndiGo) in India for a strategic partnership



interline agreements.

Moreover, the partnership will explore additional avenues of commercial collaboration—such as offering mutual benefits for frequent flyer members, expanding cargo services, and enhancing customer experience and digital innovation—to lay the groundwork for a more comprehensive, long-term strategic alliance.



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## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

# Core sector has to invest now: SBI chairman

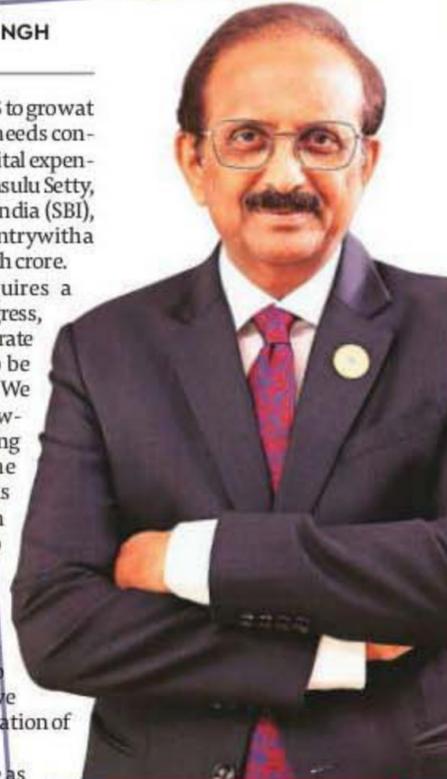
HITESH VYAS, GEORGE MATHEW & SANDEEP SINGH  
Mumbai, March 12

**INDIA DEFINITELY NEEDS** to grow at 8% to progress, and this needs consumption and private capital expenditure, said Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, chairman, State Bank of India (SBI), the largest bank in the country with a deposit base of ₹52.29 lakh crore.

"India definitely requires a growth rate of 8% to progress, but this (current) growth rate (of around 6%) is not to be really worried about... We must realise that the slow-down which we are talking about could be a blip. The long-term story of India is intact," Setty said in an interview. According to him, while private capital expenditure is happening in certain sectors, the core sectors such as steel and cement must start to invest. "They all have reached the capacity utilisation of 75-76%," he said.

Setty, who took charge as SBI chairman in August 2024, is of the view 8% growth needs consumption to pick up pace. "Rural consumption is alright, but we may have to see the trend post rabi harvesting. But broadly some of the indicators are better. In terms of urban consumption, the expectations of consumption have been created. Now, the Budget proposed there will be no tax on annual income up to ₹12 lakh," he said. The Indian economy grew 6.2% during the quarter ended December 2024 and is estimated to grow 6.5% for the full year 2024-25. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has projected a GDP growth rate of 6.7% for the next financial year.

Setty said the economic data indicates private consumption in the current quarter has picked up. The Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) has reached 7.6%, which means that the consumption is coming back. "There are certain sectors which are slightly slower than others, such as the auto segment. The auto sector witnessed very good growth in October-November, but December onwards it has slowed down. But overall, private consumption seems to be moving in a positive direction," he said. Referring to private sector investment, he said companies seem to be worried about external factors.



**WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IN THE WHOLE TARIFF TALK IS THE NARRATIVE. WHILE EVERY EXPORT MATTERS... THE IMPACT... WILL NOT BE AS SIGNIFICANT IN OUR VIEW**

"...how tariffs are going to work out or if a particular country is not able to export, then whether the dumping will happen here. But I think these are all concerns which we feel that can be overcome," Setty said.

Once consumption picks up, private capital expenditure will happen in the sector which is not witnessing (private capex). "Otherwise, if you see our (SBI's) pipeline of corporate lending is about ₹4 lakh crore... half of it is sanctioned but yet to be disbursed and half of it is under discussion. This is a significant pipeline and the sectors also are diversified other than the core sector," he said. On tariff wars, Setty said the broader assessment is that the export basket of India is diversified, both in terms of products and also in terms of geographies. "While every export matters, and even if you are exporting \$10 billion or \$20 billion to the US, the impact will be there, but it will not be as significant in our view. What is the most important in the whole tariff talk is about the narrative," Setty said.





## Corporate Communications Directorate

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

12 MARCH 2025

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### ***Air India's inflight shame***

**I**n an unprecedented and embarrassing incident, Air India's Chicago-Delhi flight on March 6 was forced to return to its origin after remaining airborne for nearly 10 hours. The reason? Eight out of the 12 lavatories on the aircraft were clogged and rendered unserviceable. With both economy and business class toilets affected, continuing the long-haul, non-stop flight would have been impossible. It was not just a matter of inconvenience — passengers simply could not be expected to endure the remaining journey without access to functioning lavatories. Air India initially explored the possibility of landing in Europe, but logistical challenges prevented an unscheduled stop. Ultimately, it made the only reasonable decision — to return to Chicago. This disruption not only affected the airline's schedule but also caused inconvenience to passengers. Unsurprisingly, the incident sparked a wave of criticism on social media, with many questioning how such a basic facility failure could occur on an international flight.

Faced with mounting backlash, Air India clarified the cause of the malfunction — passengers had attempted to flush polythene bags, rags, and even clothing down the toilets, blocking the drainage system. This shocking revelation points to a glaring lack of civic sense among some travellers. Every aircraft lavatory has clear signboards in English and Hindi instructing passengers not to dispose of anything other than human waste and tissue paper in the flush. Furthermore, waste disposal bins are provided specifically for items like sanitary pads and soiled materials. Yet, despite these measures, some passengers chose to act irresponsibly, causing inconvenience to hundreds on board. One would assume that passengers on an international flight, many of whom are frequent travellers, would be aware of proper toilet etiquette. That such an incident occurred on a flight primarily carrying Indian passengers raises troubling questions about awareness and discipline. While only a few individuals may have caused the blockage, their actions resulted in an avoidable national embarrassment. What impression does this leave on foreign passengers? How does this reflect on Indian travellers in the eyes of international airlines operating on the same routes?

Clearly, stronger preventive measures are needed. While flight crews routinely provide safety instructions before take-off, airlines should consider including a mandatory announcement reminding passengers not to dispose of non-biodegradable materials in lavatories. Passengers should be proactive in reporting such incidents to the crew. Stricter monitoring and possible penalties for misuse could also be explored. Ultimately, an airline can only do so much; it is up to the passengers to act responsibly. Incidents like this tarnish India's image and highlight the need for better awareness and discipline while travelling. Let this be a wake-up call for all.

# Uber will pay ₹7,500 if bad roads cause a missed flight

Cab aggregator has tied up with Reliance General Insurance to offer the benefit to passengers

**Shashank Rao**

Htmumbai@hindustantimes.com

**MUMBAI:** One of the many challenges Maximum City poses for its citizens today is navigating its excavated arterial and internal roads. Frayed nerves of commuters often lead to extreme reactions -- spells of road rage or satire. Such is the severity of the situation that Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which is carrying out work on 701 kilometers of roads, recently suspended fresh plans of digging to prevent disruption of people's movement.

To placate on-the-edge passengers, cab aggregator Uber has allowed compensation of up to ₹7,500 when they miss a domestic or international flight due to delays on the road under the 'Missed Flight Connection Cover'. Additionally, the aggregator also promised OPD and medical costs incurred in cases of accident.

Uber rolled out the plan from the end of February, after collaborating with Reliance General Insurance. Sources in Uber have told HT that the step was taken



**Uber promise**

When you pay ₹3 extra per ride under 'Missed Flight Connection Cover', you get:

- Up to ₹10L in case of serious or fatal injuries from accidents.
- Up to ₹10,000 for OPD and medical costs incurred.
- Up to ₹7,500 for missed flights.

The infographic features a background image of an airport tarmac with several aircraft tails visible, including one with the Indian Airlines logo. In the foreground, there is a busy traffic scene with various vehicles like buses and cars.

after cab drivers expressed their reluctance to take rides to the airport where reaching on time is crucial. "At just ₹3 extra per ride, Uber is offering coverage to its passengers," HT learnt from Uber sources. (See box)

Leaders of the Maharashtra Rajya Rashtriya Kamgar Sangh (MRRKS), a conglomeration of drivers working for aggregator cabs, said, at a meeting held last week, drivers expressed their anxiety over spontaneous arguments

and abuse purportedly hurled at them by passengers when they fail to reach the airport on time because of thick traffic caused due bad roads.

"While drivers keep their eye on the clock, every time the map on the Uber app shows 2-3 minutes to destination or pick-up point, it inevitably gets extended to 8-10 minutes, as the map does not factor in the ongoing road works interrupting the drive," said Anand Kute, organising secretary,

MRRKS. "Also, as the wait period at the airport has gone up drivers avoid picking up rides."

### The insurance

According to Uber sources, the 'Missed Flight Connection Cover' can be claimed only if the destination is specified as the "airport" while booking the ride. It is applicable keeping track of the estimated time of arrival (ETA) to the airport -- between 90 minutes and 120 minutes. Should passengers

wish to claim the insurance, they will have to submit documents -- a signed claim form, booking reference number and ride details -- at the time of claim. They will also need to submit a copy of the flight ticket along with the respective airline's confirmation on no travel and refund certificate, the original ticket of the new flight booked and a crossed cheque for an NEFT transfer.

An official from Uber said, "While opting for the insurance, the time of booking and travel should be realistic."

### Hardship and humour

Poor roads have impacted drivers' earnings, and beleaguered aggregator cab drivers went on a flash strike at the Mumbai airport on Tuesday evening. "The drivers are tired of the low fare rates they receive from operators, which charge 25-30 percent as commission. We are already suffering from the poor road conditions which has led to losses in our earnings. So, we decided not to ply between 5 pm till 9 pm at the airport," said R Jadhav, an aggregator cab driver who was part of the protest. Calling attention to bad roads, in an Instagram post aimed at BMC on Tuesday, @mojorojo said: "Tell us the amount you need after which you will say 'we are full'... just take that full and final amount from taxpayers and give us our city back".



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

**TO DISCUSS POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS WITH INDIGO, AIR INDIA**

## India 'super important' market: Riyadh Air CEO

**SUKALP SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 12

SAUDI ARABIA'S ambitious new airline Riyadh Air considers India a "super important" market and will explore potential partnerships with Indian carriers IndiGo and Air India in addition to its plans of operating flights between the two countries as passenger flows between India and Saudi Arabia are growing rapidly, Riyadh Air's chief executive officer Tony Douglas said Wednesday. Saudi Arabia expects India to become its

largest source market for tourism by 2030, and Indian nationals are already the biggest non-Saudi resident group in that country, making India a lucrative market for Riyadh Air.

Douglas is in New Delhi as part of a Riyadh Air delegation for meetings with India's aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to discuss the requisite permissions and support for launch of the airline's India operations. Douglas is also slated to meet top executives of IndiGo and Air India to discuss possible partnerships.

**Tony Douglas is in India as part of a Riyadh Air delegation for meetings with the DGCA, IndiGo and Air India**

The Riyadh-based full-service airline, which is Saudi Arabia's second national carrier alongside Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia) and is slated to start commercial operations later this year, has al-

ready forged partnership with various global airlines including Delta Air Lines, Singapore Airlines, Turkish Airlines, Virgin Atlantic, China Eastern, Air China, and Egypt Air.

Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is the force behind Riyadh Air, which aims to fly to over 100 destinations by 2030.

The airline has 39 wide-body Boeing 787 aircraft on order, with an option to expand the order size to 72 jets, in addition to 60 Airbus A321 narrow-body planes.

According to Douglas, Riyadh

Air currently has two major gaps in its airline partnerships—North-Western Europe and India—and it wants to cover those.

Speaking to reporters in Delhi, while Douglas did not elaborate on the likely talks between Riyadh Air and the Indian airlines, he said that the conversations at this early stage would be mostly exploratory, and expressed keenness to forge partnerships in India as long as they are a "win-win" proposition for Riyadh Air as well as the potential partner airline.

**FULL REPORT ON**

[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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MINT

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

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## IndiGo to invest \$45 mn in IFSC arm

InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, will invest up to \$45 million in its subsidiary InterGlobe Aviation Financial Services IFSC Pvt. Ltd.

The investment was approved by InterGlobe Aviation's board during its meeting on Wednesday.

In one or more tranches, the investment of "up to ₹3,940 million (\$45 million approximately)", will be made in the IFSC subsidiary, according to a regulatory filing made by the company.

"This investment will be utilised by IndiGo IFSC towards financing of aviation assets, repayment of its outstanding loan and for other general corporate purposes," the filing said.

IndiGo IFSC, engaged in aircraft and aircraft engine leasing and providing financial services for such transactions, was incorporated in October 2023.

PTI



# Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

12 MARCH 2025

## 'India will need 30,000 pilots in 15-20 years'

**NEW DELHI:** India will need 30,000 pilots in the next 15-20 years as domestic airlines have more than 1,700 planes on order as they expand their network, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram-mohan Naidu said on Tuesday.

Asserting that the ministry is working with a collective approach for the aviation industry, he also said that officials are verifying various aspects of 38 Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) and these organisations will be rated.

The minister was speaking at a function to mark the signing of a MoU for an order for 200 trainer aircraft. Indian airlines have placed orders for more than 1,700 aircraft and currently, there are over 800



planes, Naidu said.

Presently, there are 6,000-7,000 working pilots and the country will need 30,000 pilots in the next 15 to 20 years, the minister said and also pitched for making India a training hub.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets. According to the minister, efforts are being made to categorise airports, including the possibility of having dedicated airports for cargo and FTOs.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

## Riyadh Air eyes partnership with Air India and IndiGo

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

TONY DOUGLAS, CEO of the soon-to-be-launched Riyadh Air, is exploring partnerships with home-grown airlines — Air India and IndiGo — as the new Saudi Arabian carrier seeks to establish a strong presence in the Indian market, particularly in the India-Saudi sector.

As part of Riyadh Air's trip to India from March 12-14, 2025, a delegation led by Douglas will meet officials at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to secure necessary permissions and support for launching operations in India. Riyadh Air, set to begin operations later this year, anticipates India will become Saudi Ara-

bia's top tourism source market by 2030. Data show the number of Indians traveling to Saudi Arabia surged by 50% in 2023, surpassing 1.5 million visitors, following a series of strategic initiatives by the Saudi Tourism Authority. The authority aims to welcome 7.5 million Indian visitors annually by the end of the decade. "India has long been a crucial part of Riyadh Air's network planning ahead of our operations launch. As the



world's first digital native airline, we are dedicated to partnering with entities across a variety of aviation stakeholders in India to create a sustainable, prosperous, and mutually beneficial relationship that delivers exceptional travel experiences," he added.

**WHY ARE CLOGGED TOILETS FLUSHING AIR INDIA'S REPUTATION DOWN THE DRAIN?**

# Aging aircraft, old ducts, scaling in pipes, and passenger behaviour lead to stink

**Saurabh.Sinha**  
@timesofindia.com

**New Delhi:** Clogged toilets are not new to Air India flights, but the legacy of the old govt-run airline has been flushed across to the new Tata Group-owned company, right in the middle of its modernisation and expansion spree.

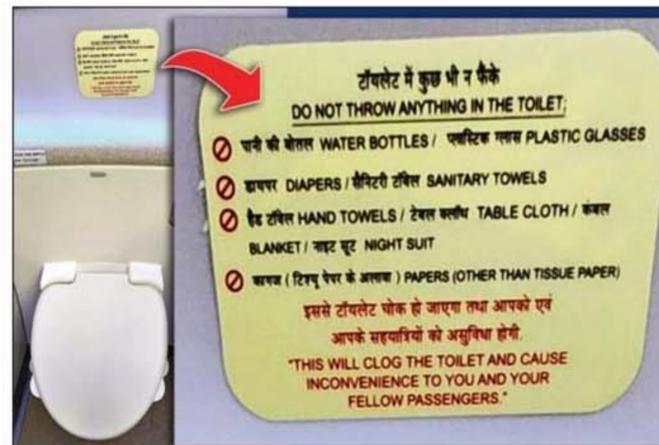
For years, cleanup crew of Air India's long-haul flights has found in holding tanks of blocked lavatories everything from socks to hand towels, plastic bags, underwear and even small pillows given on board.

Just as the Chicago-Delhi flight was forced to return to O'Hare International Airport last Wednesday when eight of its 10 lavatories were clogged, over the years, several of the airline's Europe and US flights have been forced to divert or return after flying for hours with hundreds of bursting bowels and bladders for similar reasons.

The dumping has gone on regardless of clear signage asking flyers not to throw anything in the commode as that could "clog the toilet and cause inconvenience to you and your fellow passengers".

As Air India's legacy Boeing 777s, used for North America nonstops, age, the problem is worsening as the old ducts find it increasingly difficult to suck in whatever indiscreet passengers flush away.

"These aircraft are very old. The lavatory ducts or suction pipes have got scaling due to which their available width has reduced. External particles like shawls, sheets or towels easily and immediately clog them up," said an engineer who has spent decades maintaining aircraft. Aircraft toilets use



The dumping has gone on regardless of clear signage asking flyers not to throw anything in the commode

a vacuum system to remove waste into a storage tank.

According to Air India's former executive director Jitender Bhargava, the airline got 21 of its 23 B777s between 2007 and 2010. The other two were inducted much later and are now used as dedicated long-haul VVIP planes operated by the Indian Air Force. The B787 Dreamliners, used on the Europe, Far East and Australia routes,

**Is this problem faced by airlines of other countries as well? Officials of multiple foreign carriers said they have only experienced this problem sporadically. This suggests flyers behave differently on an Indian carrier than when they are aboard a foreign airline**

came in a few years later, starting 2010, and are also getting old now. The problem of clogged toilets has shown up on both these long-haul planes in the airline's fleet. Due to night curfew in Europe, Air India's affected B777s have in the past returned to either India or North America after flying hours.

An engineer explained, "A B777 has two waste tanks.

If a duct leading from a lavatory gets clogged, it will affect only that particular lavatory. But if the duct close to the waste tank inlet gets clogged, it will affect all lavatories connected to it."

On AI 126 being forced to return to Chicago on March 5, Air India said in a statement on Monday, "Our teams found polythene bags, rags and clothes that had been flushed down and stuck in the plumb-

ing. This led the lavatories to become unserviceable. While not found on AI 126 of March 5, 2025, our teams have previously also found objects such as blankets, innerwear, and diapers, among other waste, having been flushed down the toilets on other flights. We take this opportunity to urge passengers to use lavatories only for the purposes that they are meant for."

Is this problem faced by airlines of other countries as well? TOI spoke to officials of multiple leading foreign airlines, who said they have only experienced this problem sporadically. This suggests passengers behave differently in an Indian carrier than when they are aboard a foreign airline.

"This is a very, very rare occurrence that can happen anywhere. Sometimes, a couple of lavatories may become unserviceable. If detected before taking off from a place that is not our engineering base, we resort to denied boarding and proportionately reduce the number of passengers on that aircraft," said an official with a foreign airline.

Apart from educating passengers, aircraft maintenance engineers have a word of advice for Air India. "Small bottles are kept in lavatories by AI and almost all other global airlines operating medium to ultra-long hauls. However given the peculiar situation of AI, it will be better to have bigger fixed dispensers that can be refilled by crew as a lot of small bottles end up getting flushed. Ditto for dental hygiene kits but those have to be given," said an engineer.

Crew members say passengers ignore the waste bins, which are right there, below or beside the wash basin, and flush everything down the toilet instead. Toilets in the economy section are more prone to clogging simply because the passenger load is higher. "Given the impact on reputation for Air India, the management must take a call on whether pre-flight instructions by crew should also include what not to flush in the lavs," said a crew member.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

13 MARCH 2025

# Riyadh Air: India among top sources for job applications

**Saurabh.Sinha**  
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**New Delhi:** Aviation industry personnel in India have made a beeline for joining Saudi Arabia's soon to be launched second national carrier Riyadh Air, that is owned by the Public Investment Fund (PIF) of Saudi Arabia.

The airline website's career portal has been open for two years on which pilots, cabin crew members, ground, maintenance staff and others can evince interest by submitting their details.

"In the last two years, we have received 14 lakh applications from 146 nationalities of which 52% are women. India is one of the biggest sour-

ce countries for the applications. We are overwhelmed by the interest and faith in our brand, despite the fact that so far we have not announced any salary structures," Riyadh Air CEO **Tony Douglas** said here.



The upcoming full service airline has ordered up to 132 aircraft, Airbus A321neos and Boeing 787 Dreamliners. It is currently in talks with both Boeing and Airbus for placing orders for ultra long range wide bodies with the choice being between the B777 9X and A350-1000. It currently has one aircraft and 500 employees, including 36 cabin crew and pilots each. "After Saudis, the second biggest nationality of employees is Indians. Ditto for the population

of Singapore," he said. A large number of Indian professionals work in Middle East carriers like Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways.

### CARRIER CAREER

The airline, which is going to start operations in a few months, says India is a key market for it. "In 2024 Saudi Arabia saw 15 lakh tourists from India which was a 50% jump over previous year. 93% of flyers at Riyadh are point to point and just 7% are in transit. That shows the scope of growth from India as well as of our connecting potential from our hub, Riyadh, as our fleet grows. Nearby Doha has 80% transfer traffic and the figures for Dubai are also very high," Douglas said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

12 MARCH 2025

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## Pune-Raipur IndiGo flight makes emergency landing

**Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar:** A Pune-Raipur IndiGo flight was forced to make an emergency landing at Aurangabad airport on Tuesday evening due to a technical glitch, reports **Mohammed Akhef**.

All 161 passengers and crew members on board were reported to be safe.

Aurangabad airport director Sharad Yeole told TOI, "Soon after receiving a request seeking permission for the flight's emergency landing, it was allowed following the standard operating procedure (SOP). We

were told there was some technical glitch."

IndiGo flight 6E 6905, an Airbus A320, took off from the Pune airport at 6.10pm and was scheduled to land in Raipur at 7.50pm. However, a technical issue in the aircraft's engine prompted a precautionary diversion to Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar city's airport. The flight landed safely at 7.13pm at the Aurangabad airport.

An airline source said it was a precautionary landing and not related to engine failure. *(With inputs from Joy Sengupta)*