

International status for Madurai airport will boost tourism, exports, says Union Minister

Formally according the status to Madurai airport, Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu says the move will also help create more jobs and greatly aid hospitality, MSME, and agricultural sectors in the district; he also inaugurates new air traffic control tower set up at cost of ₹94 crore

The Hindu Bureau
MADURAI/THOOTHUKUDI

Union Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu on Saturday formally declared the Madurai airport an international airport and said India had catapulted itself into becoming one of the strongest financial countries because of the development of new airports by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the last 12 years.

Speaking at the event, he said the three-decade-old rightful demand of the people of Madurai was fulfilled on March 10, when the Union Cabinet Committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, gave the permission to accord Madurai airport the status of an international airport.

Besides travel, airports were true economy-boosting growth centres, Mr.



Union Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Union Minister of State L. Murugan, MPs B. Manickam Tagore and Su. Venkatesan, and MLA V.V. Rajan Chellappa at the Madurai airport on Saturday. G. MOORTHY

Rammohan said. “The Madurai airport will help tourists and pilgrims from various countries visit the city and its iconic Meenakshi Sundareswarar temple. Besides, the famous Madurai *malli* (jasmine) can be exported to different parts of the world. This will create more jobs. Similarly, hospi-

tality, MSME, and agricultural sectors will get a big boost,” he added.

Mr. Rammohan asserted that every rupee spent on the development of an airport would result in manifold economic development.

The Madurai airport, which handled 6.7 lakh passengers 12 years ago,

now handled 14 lakh passengers.

This growth was possible because the aviation sector had become more inclusive. While only the elite and upper classes were able to travel in flights in 2015, even the common man can opt for air travel today, he added. The number of airports in the coun-

try has increased from 74 in 2014 to 166 now.

Mr. Rammohan said the Centre had taken up the construction of a new terminal building at the Chennai airport at a cost of ₹2,500 crore, and a new terminal building had been opened at the Thoothukudi airport recently. He also inaugurated a new air traffic control tower constructed at a cost of ₹94 crore on the occasion in the presence of Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting L. Murugan.

MPs B. Manickam Tagore (Virudhunagar) and Su. Venkatesan (Madurai), Thirupparankundram MLA V.V. Rajan Chellappa, and Chairman of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) Vipin Kumar were among those present.

Thoothukudi airport

At another event in Thoothukudi, Mr. Rammohan formally renamed the

Tuticorin airport as Thoothukudi airport. Speaking at the event held on the airport premises, he said: “We are moving away from the colonial mindset and re-establishing Tamil pride and heritage, and giving the language the respect it deserves by renaming this airport.”

He said considering the long-standing demand of the people of Thoothukudi, the runway at the new terminal had been extended to 3 km, enabling the landing of larger aircraft. Mr. Rammohan said passenger traffic at Thoothukudi airport had grown significantly – from around 80,000 passengers annually in 2014 to about 2 lakh currently.

He added that Thoothukudi was expected to emerge an important investment hub in the future due to its port, power sector, industrial growth, and tourism potential.

Down the lane

It had been a long road for Madurai to become an international airport after it started out as an airstrip in 1942. The Union government granted the status on March 10, fulfilling the demand made for decades



BETTER INFRASTRUCTURE

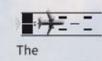
The airport is located on **1,045 acres**

The integrated terminal building is spread over **17,560 square metres**

It can accommodate **1,230 passengers** at peak hours



The airport handled **13,513 aircraft** and **1.39 million** passengers in 2024-25



The **2,285 metre** runway is suitable for operating A-321-type aircraft

It has critical navigational aid: Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Range system

It has also been equipped with **CAT-I** Instrument Landing System



Besides **12** parking bays, the airport has international cargo, customs, immigration, Airport Health Organisation, and plant quarantine facilities



New high: The international airport status will facilitate the operation of flights from Madurai to international destinations, especially West Asian countries, Singapore, and Malaysia, which have a large diaspora from southern Tamil Nadu. G. MOORTHY

Gateway to the world, from Madurai

In the light of the Union government granting international airport status to the Madurai airport, **S. Sundar** traces the long history of such a demand and highlights what the new status will mean for the ever-growing tourism, connectivity, and industrial needs of districts in southern Tamil Nadu

After it was declared a customs airport in 2010, the Madurai airport has finally become an international terminal. The Union Cabinet Committee, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the proposal on March 10. The decision will facilitate the operation of flights to international destinations, especially to West Asian countries, Singapore, and Malaysia, which host a significant diaspora from southern Tamil Nadu.

British-era airstrip

One of the oldest airports of Tamil Nadu, Madurai has for long been the gateway to the southern districts till the Thoothukudi airport was inaugurated in 1992. The airstrip in Madurai that became operational in 1942 was used to fly newspapers from Chennai to Madurai. It became a civil airport in 1952 and started commercial operations in 1957.

With a small terminal building, the Madurai airport was handling only domestic services to destinations, including New Delhi, Mumbai, and Chennai. The inauguration of the spacious integrated terminal in September 2010 renewed the demand for international flights. However, the airport was then accorded the status of customs-notified airport.

That status equipped the airport with modern facilities, such as the 17,560-square metre integrated terminal comprising 36 check-in counters and aero-bridges.

The first international flight landed in Madurai in September 2012. Colombo became the first international destination to be connected with Madurai with SpiceJet launching its services. Soon, Mihin Lanka offered a service between Madurai and Colombo. The next year, Madurai got a direct flight to Dubai.

Only two international flights were in operation for long. Then came Air India Express with the first direct flight to Singapore in September 2017. To start with, the service operated four days a week and became a daily service by March 2018, thanks to the demand. Abu Dhabi became the fourth international destination linked to Madurai in 2025.

Late-night flights

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) made the Madurai Airport operational 24x7 from October 1, 2024. However, there were not many takers for the late-night and early morning flights.

However, passenger patronage had been on the rise and the airport handled 1.39 million passengers, including 0.23 million international passengers, in 2024-25. This forced the AAI to take up a slew of reconfiguration projects at the terminal to increase its passenger-handling capacity.

The immigration counters were shifted to the first floor and the additional space on the ground floor was used to increase the number of check-in counters from 16 to 28, Madurai Airport Director P. Muthu Kumar said.

Now, 16 immigration counters are available for international passengers. Flights to three international destinations – Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Colombo – are in operation after Air India Express withdrew its popular Singapore service. Addi-



We are planning a 10,000-square metre additional terminal building, which will be used exclusively for international passengers

P. MUTHU KUMAR
Airport Director

tional X-ray machines are being installed for baggage scanning.

Meanwhile, the AAI has expedited its earlier proposal to have an additional terminal building. "We are planning a 10,000-square metre additional terminal building, which will be used exclusively for international passengers," the Airport Director said. Acquisition of over 500 acres of land for runway extension is at an advanced stage.

"The demand for international status for the Madurai airport was raised even when I was a Member of Parliament [Rajya Sabha in 1992-98]," said V.V. Rajan Chellappa, AIADMK MLA of the Tirupparankundram constituency, where the airport is located.

The major reason Madurai could not attract flight services to other international destinations, including Kuala Lumpur, was the lack of bilateral air service agreement (BASA) with other countries.

Senior industrialist S. Rethinavelu, who has been spearheading the demand on behalf of trade and industry representatives, said it had not been fulfilled all these years on flimsy grounds. "Some political leaders had the thought that the development of the Madurai airport would be detrimental to the growth of the Tiruchi international airport," he added.

When a policy to protect Indian airlines came up for discussion, the demand was made for including the Madurai airport in the BASA for certain destinations. "Then, the Central government was under the impression that if foreign airlines were to land in Madurai, they would grab all business opportunities of the Indian airlines," he added.

'Election stunt'

Virudhunagar MP B. Manickam Tagore, who is also the chairperson of the Madurai Airport Advisory Committee, has described the Centre's decision as an "election stunt". "Only the name board of the airport has changed. But other formalities to get air connectivity to desired international destinations have not been processed," he said.

Madurai MP Su. Venkatesan thanked Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu for addressing, at last, the long-standing demand of the southern districts.

"We have been making this demand for long. Owing to the Centre's stubborn stand denying the BASA for the Madurai airport, airlines such as Air Arabia and Fly Dubai, which showed keen interest in operating international services to Madurai, could not do so," he said.

He pointed out that the Centre had granted three international airports to Uttar Pradesh in just 10 months. "Madurai sees better patronage from international passengers than the three airports in Uttar Pradesh," he said.

The trade bodies had also urged the government to include Madurai as a point of call (PoC) in the list of 18 tourist destinations across India for designated ASEAN carriers under the ASEAN Open Sky Policy. "But the Minister had then rejected the demand, claiming it was a one-time policy decision," Mr. Tagore said. Meanwhile, the

Tamil Nadu bets big on three airports to drive its growth

Sunitha Sekar

As Tamil Nadu looks to become a one trillion-dollar economy by 2030-31, a key marker and force multiplier to propel the State forward would be world-class airports and diversified growth in aviation. To align with its goal of distributed development, the State has set its sights on developing three key airports – Parandur (near Chennai), Hosur, and Rameswaram. These promising projects could put Tamil Nadu back among the top three spots in the country's aviation map, experts say.

Till the end of the 1990s, Madras was the air-connectivity hub of South India. It started losing its sheen by the beginning of the millennium. While the other metro airports were poised for privatisation for efficient operation, expansion of connectivity, and addition of passengers, Chennai's second airport planned at Sriperumbudur was put on the back burner. In the last four years, the State government has finally caught up.

While the Parandur airport would be to Chennai what Kempegowda International Airport is to Bengaluru, the Hosur project would not only further bolster the industrial growth in the region but would also attract traffic from Bengaluru. The Rameswaram airport is expected to improve tourism prospects and push regional development.

Parandur

The State government is pinning its hopes on this ambitious project which could drastically change the flying experience from Chennai. Announced in 2022, it has so far received site clearance and in-principle approval. The government is gearing up to complete land acquisition. The ₹27,400-crore project, to be implemented in four phases, will augment capacity and allow the airport to handle 100 million passengers annually.

While 5,746 acres has been earmarked for this project, 1,700 acres has been acquired so far. A tender for choosing the concessionaire will be floated, sources say. Some of the top airport

private players have reportedly evinced interest in the project. The government also needs to step up efforts to link Parandur to the core areas of the city with a mass rapid transit system.

Hosur

The Hosur airport could be a game changer for the State betting big on its manufacturing capabilities. Owing to its proximity to Bengaluru, a section of Bengaluru residents and businesses could significantly benefit from the airport at Hosur, a manufacturing and electronic hub. But the wait for Hosur will be longer and the process of securing approval is unlikely to be easy.

Under the Bangalore International Airport Limited's concession agreement with the Ministry of Civil Aviation, no new airport for commercial flight operations can commence within a 150-km radius till 2033, and it stands as the biggest stumbling block. But, recently, the Centre has said it will revisit the current policy that prevents the operation of two airports within a 150-km radius.

Though the State government was rather quick to finalise the site for the Hosur airport in Shoalagiri taluk (between Berigai and Bagalur) and sought approval from the Ministry of Defence, the request for airspace was declined twice. Sources said the State government intends to pursue this application.

Rameswaram

The Rameswaram airport project is in the nascent stage. Though envisioned as a small airport with a capacity to handle Code C aircraft, when the airport gets ready in the next 5-7 years, it could strengthen the tourism potential in the region dotted with iconic and ancient temples. After finishing the pre-feasibility study of two sites – near Uchipulli and Keelakarai, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has suggested the latter. The State government will choose a site in the next few months and nearly 600 acres will have to be acquired for the airport.

Khajuraho airport was made a PoC under this scheme, though it was a domestic airport without any international services, Mr. Venkatesan added.

However, Mr. Ram Mohan Naidu, who unveiled the Madurai International Airport name boards in the city on Saturday, said the Centre would help in bringing international connectivity to Madurai, as it had made the airport operational 24x7 and granted it the international airport status.

Mr. Rethinavelu said that bringing the Madurai airport under the ASEAN Open Sky Policy would

open the floodgates for the airport to operate flights to 10 countries – Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, Myanmar, Cambodia, and Laos. It will boost tourism and pilgrimage activity at Kodaikanal, Courtallam, Rameswaram, Kanniyakumari, and Karaikudi.

"Madurai, a hub of hospitals providing quality treatment at an affordable cost, will become an attractive destination for medical tourism," he added. Besides, it would facilitate further development of the Madurai-Thoothukudi Industrial Corridor.

फरीदाबाद से जेवर एयरपोर्ट 15 मिनट में, 3631 करोड़ के प्रोजेक्ट को मंजूरी

सड़क का लगभग 11 किलोमीटर हिस्सा एलिवेटेड कॉरिडोर के रूप में होगा

भास्कर न्यूज़ | फरीदाबाद

450 करोड़ रुपए हरियाणा सरकार वहन करेगी

केंद्र सरकार ने फरीदाबाद से जेवर एयरपोर्ट के लिए हाईस्पीड कनेक्टिविटी कॉरिडोर प्रोजेक्ट को मंजूरी दे दी है। इसकी लागत 3631 करोड़ रुपए है। इस प्रोजेक्ट के पूरा होने के बाद फरीदाबाद से जेवर एयरपोर्ट सिर्फ 15 मिनट में पहुंचा जा सकेगा। इसके बनने से न केवल यात्रियों को सुविधा होगी, बल्कि क्षेत्र में आर्थिक विकास को भी बढ़ावा मिलेगा।

सांसद और केन्द्रीय राज्यमंत्री कृष्णपाल गुर्जर ने बताया कि केंद्रीय मंत्रिमंडल की आर्थिक मामलों की समिति ने दिल्ली-मुंबई एक्सप्रेसवे से जेवर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे तक नई सड़क परियोजना को मंजूरी दे दी है। करीब 31.42 किलोमीटर लंबा यह मार्ग दिल्ली-फरीदाबाद-बल्लभगढ़-सोहना रूट से होते हुए सीधे जेवर अंतर्राष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट को जोड़ेगा। इसके

एलिवेटेड हिस्से के निर्माण पर करीब 689.24 करोड़ की अतिरिक्त लागत आएगी। जिसमें से 450 करोड़ रुपए हरियाणा सरकार वहन करेगी। यह



कॉरिडोर फरीदाबाद मास्टर प्लान-2031 के तहत विकसित होने वाले क्षेत्रों से होकर गुजरेगा, जिससे भविष्य के शहरी विकास को भी गति मिलेगी। फरीदाबाद के उद्योगपतियों व सामाजिक संगठनों ने कहा कि बेहतर सड़क कनेक्टिविटी से शहर में उद्योग, निवेश और विकास की रफ्तार और तेज होगी। केंद्रीय राज्यमंत्री गुर्जर ने इस परियोजना के लिए प्रधानमंत्री, केंद्र और हरियाणा सरकार का आभार जताया।

बनने से दक्षिण दिल्ली, फरीदाबाद और गुरुग्राम के लोगों को एयरपोर्ट तक तेज और आसान कनेक्टिविटी मिलेगी। **11 किलोमीटर हिस्सा एलिवेटेड कॉरिडोर:** केंद्रीय राज्यमंत्री गुर्जर ने बताया कि इस सड़क का लगभग 11 किलोमीटर हिस्सा एलिवेटेड कॉरिडोर के रूप में बनाया जाएगा। यह हिस्सा डीएनडी-बल्लभगढ़ बाइपास से जेवर एयरपोर्ट के बीच

कनेक्टिविटी को मजबूत करेगा और सीधे दिल्ली-मुंबई एक्सप्रेसवे से जुड़ जाएगा। परियोजना पूरी होने के बाद फरीदाबाद से जेवर एयरपोर्ट की दूरी लगभग 15 मिनट में तय की जा सकेगी। यह मार्ग ईस्टर्न पेरिफेरल एक्सप्रेसवे, यमुना एक्सप्रेसवे और डेडिकेटेड फ्रेट कॉरिडोर से भी जुड़ेगा, जिससे क्षेत्र में मल्टी-मॉडल ट्रांसपोर्ट को बढ़ावा मिलेगा।



Corporate Communications Directorate

RS DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट से खाड़ी देशों की अधिकतर उड़ानें रद्द

नई दिल्ली : पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते भू-राजनीतिक तनाव और सुरक्षा जोखिमों का असर अब दिल्ली के आइजीआई हवाई अड्डे पर भी साफ दिखाई देने लगा है। लगातार हो रहे हमले के चलते रविवार को संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (यूएई) की जनरल सिविल एविएशन अथॉरिटी (जीसीएए) ने विदेशी एयरलाइंस के लिए सख्त सुरक्षा प्रोटोकाल और निर्देश जारी किए। इसके बाद विभिन्न एयरलाइंस ने खाड़ी देशों के लिए अपनी अधिकतर उड़ानों को रद्द कर दिया है।

(जासं)



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

15 MARCH 2026

DJ held for bomb remark at KIA

NT Correspondent
BENGALURU

A disc jockey has been held for allegedly making a remark referring to a bomb during an argument with airline staff at Kempegowda International Airport here after he was denied entry for arriving late at the boarding gate, police said on Saturday.

The accused, Rajatesh Bera (40), a native of North 24 Parganas district in West Bengal, was scheduled to travel from Bengaluru to Raipur on

an Indigo flight on March 11, they said.

According to police, Bera, who works as a disc jockey in Bengaluru, went to Gate No 16 at Terminal 1 but was denied entry by gate staff as he had arrived after the boarding time.

Following this, an argument broke out during which he allegedly remarked that the flight would stop if there was a bomb inside the aircraft, a senior police officer said.

The mention of the word



"bomb" triggered security concerns, and he was detained and handed over to the police.

A bomb threat assessment committee was subsequently formed as per protocol to assess the seriousness of the re-

mark, he said. "Based on the complaint filed by the airline staff, a case was registered against him under sections 125 (act endangering life or personal safety of others) and 353 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita," he added.

During questioning, Bera told police that he was trying to board the flight urgently as his father was unwell. He was later released on bail, and further investigation is underway, police said.



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

15 MARCH 2026

offgrid

Madurai airport granted global gateway status

HD Bureau

CHENNAI

Madurai airport has been officially notified as an international airport, a move expected to transform connectivity and economic prospects across southern Tamil Nadu after years of advocacy by regional leaders, businesses and tourism stakeholders.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation issued the notification on Saturday, formalising a decision approved by the Union Cabinet on March 10 to elevate the airport's status.

The announcement fulfils a long-standing demand raised by the state government, local trade bodies and representatives of districts across the southern belt who argued that international recognition was essential for the region's growth.

Madurai airport, located in one of Tamil Nadu's oldest urban centres and a prominent pilgrimage destination, serves as a key aviation gateway to districts including Madurai, Dindigul, Theni, Sivaganga, Ramanathapuram, Virudhunagar and parts of Tirunelveli.

Authorities believe international status will enable more overseas flights, strengthen tourism flows and facilitate greater trade links with markets in West Asia, Southeast Asia and beyond.

The Union Cabinet's approval earlier in the week cleared the way for the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Airports Authority of India to implement the formal notification and begin operational arrangements associated with international airports, including immigration and customs infrastructure. The move also



allows authorities to pursue expanded bilateral aviation agreements and additional

flight slots for international carriers.

Officials in the aviation

sector describe the step as significant for a city known globally for its cultural and religious heritage, particularly the Meenakshi Amman Temple, which attracts pilgrims from across the world. Improved international connectivity is expected to make travel easier for devotees and tourists visiting the temple city and surrounding destinations.

Madurai airport has historically played an important role in regional connectivity. Established during the Second World War as an

airfield used by the Royal Air Force, the facility evolved into a civilian airport in the early years after independence.

Passenger services resumed in the 1950s and the airport gradually expanded to handle larger aircraft and growing domestic traffic.

Over the past two decades, the airport underwent several upgrades including the construction of a new passenger terminal and modernised infrastructure to accommodate increased passenger numbers. A customs facility introduced in

2011 allowed limited international operations, enabling select overseas flights such as services to Colombo. Yet aviation stakeholders argued that the absence of formal international airport designation limited the ability to attract sustained international routes.

Passenger traffic has also steadily increased. Data from aviation authorities show the airport handled more than 1.3 million passengers in the financial year ending March 2025, placing it among the busier airports in the state after Chennai, Coimbatore and Tiruchirappalli.



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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पर ईवी चार्जिंग स्टेशन तैयार

ग्रेटर नोएडा। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर इलेक्ट्रिक वाहनों के लिए चार्जिंग प्वाइंट बनकर तैयार हो चुके हैं। प्रथम चरण में लैंडसाइड पर 19 और एयरसाइड पर 47 चार्जिंग प्वाइंट बनाए गए हैं। दोनों ही जगहों पर एक समय में 98 वाहन चार्ज हो सकेंगे। एयरपोर्ट का प्रथम चरण में 1334 हेक्टेयर में निर्माण कार्य पूरा हो चुका है। यहां यात्री सुविधा से जुड़ी सभी जरूरत स्थापित हो चुकी है। इसी माह में एयरपोर्ट के शुभारंभ की तैयारी है।

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

Airfares to US, Europe up after capacity cut on West Asia crisis

SHARP SPIKE. Limited flights push ticket costs as Gulf-based carriers suspend ops

T E Raja Simhan
Chennai

Airfares from major Indian cities to Europe and the US have surged sharply following the West Asia crisis as Gulf-based carriers have suspended operations, forcing passengers to rely on European, South-East Asian and other international airlines.

Economy fares have more than doubled and, in some sectors, even tripled. Tickets that earlier cost around ₹75,000-₹86,000 for connecting flights to the US are now priced between ₹1.5 lakh and ₹2.45 lakh, depending on the airline and the route. "The fare that used to be a round-trip is now one way," travel agents said.

TICKET SPIKE

P Venkateshwaran had booked a ticket to London a month ago with Kuwait Airlines for nearly ₹30,000. However, after the flight was cancelled, he had to pay ₹1.25 lakh to fly on Ethiopian Airlines via Addis Ababa. "There is very limited choice available, and most flights are operating at full capacity," he said.



COSTLY DETOUR. Some passengers are cancelling earlier bookings over safety concerns and rebooking on alternative routes at higher fares SHY KUMAR PUSHPANNAH

Travel agents said economy class fares from Bengaluru and Chennai had risen two to three times their earlier levels across several international carriers as flight capacity had shrunk.

According to Devaki Thiyagarajan, Managing Director of the Chennai-based Avocet Tours & Travel Pvt Ltd, fares on the Bengaluru-San Francisco route via Singapore operated by Singapore Airlines have risen from ₹78,537 to ₹1,51,469.

On the Bengaluru-Hong Kong-Los Angeles route operated by Cathay Pacific, fares have surged from ₹80,961 to ₹2.45 lakh. Similarly, on the Bengaluru-Frankfurt-New York route

operated by Lufthansa, fares have climbed from ₹80,932 to ₹2.32 lakh.

A similar trend is also seen for departures from Chennai.

The Chennai-Singapore-San Francisco route on Singapore Airlines has seen fares rise from ₹80,717 to ₹1.58 lakh. On the Chennai-Hong Kong-Los Angeles route operated by Cathay Pacific, fares have increased from ₹86,746 to ₹2.44 lakh, she said.

Fares on the Chennai-Frankfurt-New York route operated by Lufthansa have climbed from ₹75,356 to ₹2.28 lakh. The Chennai-London direct flight operated by British Airways has also seen a sharp increase,

with economy fares jumping from ₹43,420 to ₹2.28 lakh, she added.

ROUTE DISRUPTIONS

Connectivity through Asian hubs remains limited. Airlines such as Cathay Pacific, Singapore Airlines and Malaysia Airlines offer fewer international connections from their hubs, mainly to destinations such as Australia and Los Angeles.

Thai Airways connects to the US but does not operate services to the UK or Europe on those routes, she said.

Anjani Kumar Dhanuka, Director of Kolkata-based Aircom Travels Pvt Ltd, said it had become difficult to secure seats to Europe or the US.

"Passengers are ready to pay ₹5 lakh or ₹6 lakh for a one-way ticket, but getting a seat on a flight that can safely reach the destination is almost impossible," he said.

Apart from airline cancellations, some passengers who had booked earlier are choosing to cancel due to safety concerns and rebook through alternative routes at significantly higher costs, he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

Dubai caps flights, Indian carriers cancel services

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Dubai airport on Saturday asked overseas airlines to limit their service to one daily for at least a week in line with airspace restrictions.

Both Air India and IndiGo curtailed their Dubai flights on Sunday. Air India Express also cancelled its flights to Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah on Sunday "following instructions from the UAE airport authorities".

Indian airlines have been operating ad hoc flights to UAE, enabling locals and stranded travellers to return home.

On Saturday, the Dubai airport informed carriers on the daily cap on flight movements.

"The situation continues



GROUNDING. Air India Express cancelled flights to Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah on Sunday 16/03/26.

to remain dynamic. We have restarted operations with reduced airspace capacity; this now has a daily cap on movements that can be facilitated," the airport wrote.

"Based on the daily cap, we are now having to enforce the limit of no more than one rotation per day for carriers. This needs to be implemented for at least the next seven

days and could be extended further," it added.

The airport said given the evolving nature of the situation, it is unlikely to have full visibility on the phasing of capacity over the coming days and week.

850 INDIANS RETURN

Meanwhile, the Indian Embassy in Doha said that 850

Indians travelled to Delhi and Mumbai on Qatar Airways flights on Saturday. The airline is also operating flights to Delhi, Mumbai and Kochi on Monday.

The embassy also issued an advisory for Indians who wish to travel via Saudi Arabia and is also operating three helplines to assist passengers. "The option of travelling out of Qatar to Saudi Arabia is also available. Indian carriers have also increased their flights from Saudi Arabia to India," the embassy said.

On Sunday, India's ambassador to Kuwait Paramita Tripathi held a virtual interaction with representatives of Indian air carriers to review the current operations in the region and support Indian nationals from Kuwait requiring emergency travel via Saudi Arabia.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

DGCA gives flight duty relaxations to Air India



Mumbai: Aviation safety watchdog DGCA has provided temporary relaxations in flight duty norms for Air India's long-haul flights as the airline is taking longer routes due to airspace curbs amid the West Asia conflict, sources said on Sunday. Due to Iranian and Iraqi airspace restrictions, Air India is taking the Egypt route for European and North American flights, which means longer flying hours. Against this backdrop, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has given certain relaxations in pilot flight duty time limitations (FDTL) norms till April 30, the sources said. ^{PH}

Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

Airbus sees demand surge for copters in India

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Airbus sees growing momentum for its helicopter business in India, a senior company executive told *businessline*.

Helicopter inductions in India grew at a fast pace with over 30 deliveries in calendar year 2025. The number of helicopters registered under the non-scheduled category in the country increased from 213 to 225.

While sceptics view the fast induction as a one-off, Airbus Helicopters said there is a clear growth trend marked by business opportunities and favourable government policies. "It is a fact that we are still in the early

days of helicopter penetration in India. But make no mistake: The momentum is picking up now," said Sunny Guglani, Head of Airbus Helicopters, India and South Asia.

IMMENSE POTENTIAL

"India's helicopter density is currently among the lowest in the world. This also means that the sector holds immense potential in addressing transportation gaps, public service delivery, enhancing national security, improving disaster response and boosting tourism in the world's fastest growing major economy," he added.

Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron virtually inaugurated



GROWTH MOMENTUM. The first 'Made in India' helicopter is expected to be delivered in 2027.

the final assembly line of Airbus H-125 helicopters in Karnataka. The unit will have capacity to deliver 10 helicopters annually and will serve the domestic and South Asia markets. The first 'Made in India' helicopter is expected in 2027.

Asked if the final assembly line in Karnataka is viable

without an order from the defence forces, Guglani said Airbus market projection indicates a demand for more than 1,000 civil helicopters in India over the next two decades, with half of them the single-engine type.

"The H125, which is already the most popular helicopter in this region, is

uniquely primed to dominate this emerging market. Additionally, the Indian armed forces alone project a requirement for hundreds of helicopters, while the civil sector is poised for growth from its current low base. For the armed forces specifically, the H125M can be a game changer," he said.

VYING FOR CONTRACT

Original equipment manufacturers including Airbus, Bell Textron and Leonardo are vying for a potential contract from the armed forces to replace the ageing Cheetak and Chetak helicopters.

While Airbus has teamed up with the Tata group, Leonardo has partnered with the Adani Group to build helicopters in India.

पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते संघर्ष का असर

युद्ध से सेवा क्षेत्र हो रहा अवरुद्ध

विमानन, आतिथ्य-सत्कार, ट्रेवल, विचक-कॉमर्स और लॉजिस्टिक क्षेत्र ने कसी कमर

दीपक पटेल, उदिशा श्रीवास्तव, पीरजादा अबरार, अक्षरा श्रीवास्तव, शिवानी शिंदे और गुलवीन औलख नई दिल्ली/मुंबई/बेंगलूरु, 15 मार्च

पश्चिम एशिया में युद्ध को दो हफ्ते हो चुके हैं और इस बढ़ते संघर्ष का असर भारत के सभी सेवा क्षेत्रों में महसूस किया जा रहा है। विमानन क्षेत्र को जबरदस्त झटका लगा है और आतिथ्य-सत्कार, ट्रेवल तथा ई-कॉमर्स जैसे क्षेत्र एलपीजी की कमी और खाने-पीने की चीजों की बढ़ती लागत से जूझ रहे हैं। इसका असर उनके कामकाज पर पड़ रहा है। महंगे विमान ईंधन (एटीएफ) की वजह से विमानन कंपनियों की लंबी उड़ानों की लागत बढ़ रही है। इससे यात्रियों को भी अधिक लागत झेलनी पड़ रही है। जमीन की बात करें, तो एलपीजी की कमी के कारण क्लाउड-किचन, रेस्तरां और होटलों में आतिथ्य-सत्कार सेवाओं में कमी आई है। लॉजिस्टिक क्षेत्र को कर्मचारियों की कमी का सामना करना पड़ा है, क्योंकि रोजाना का खाना पकाने में इस्तेमाल एलपीजी की आपूर्ति में रुकावट से उन प्रवासी मजदूरों का जीवन अस्त-व्यस्त हो गया, जो फुलफिलमेंट केंद्रों (सामान पहुंचाने वाले केंद्रों) में काम करते हैं। इनमें वे लोग भी शामिल हैं जो विचक-कॉमर्स चैनलों की आपूर्ति करते हैं।

विमानन

28 फरवरी को जब से यह संघर्ष शुरू हुआ है, तब से सभी भारतीय विमानन कंपनियों को अपनी अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों का बड़ा हिस्सा रद्द करना पड़ा है। इससे उनके मुनाफे में भारी कमी आने वाली है। इसकी वजह यह है कि आम तौर पर घरेलू उड़ानों के मुकाबले अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें विमानन



अजय मोहंती

कंपनियों के लिए ज्यादा फायदेमंद होती हैं और राजस्व तथा मुनाफे में ज्यादा हिस्सेदारी करती हैं। 'ऑपरेशन सिंदूर' के बाद पाकिस्तान का हवाई क्षेत्र बंद हो जाने के कारण न केवल पश्चिम एशिया, बल्कि यूरोप जाने वाली उड़ानें भी पहले से ही पश्चिम एशिया के रास्ते से होकर गुजर रही थीं। उड़ानों के रद्द होने और उनकी समयसारणी में बदलाव की इस लहर के साथ-साथ एटीएफ की कीमतों में हुई भारी बढ़ोतरी ने देश की प्रमुख विमानन कंपनियों के परिचालन खर्चों में खासा इजाफा कर दिया है। 4 मार्च को एटीएफ की कीमतें बढ़कर प्रति बैरल 225.5 डॉलर तक पहुंच गईं, जो कि इसकी औसत कीमत से लगभग 167 प्रतिशत ज्यादा हैं।

ट्रेवल

ट्रेवल कंपनियों और टूर सेवा उपलब्ध कराने वालों का कहना है कि ट्रेवल की कुल लागत बढ़ने वाली है। कुछ का अनुमान है कि आने वाले समय में लागत 20 से 30 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ सकती है। एक ट्रेवल एग्रीगेटर के वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने नाम न छापने की शर्त पर कहा, 'अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों की लागत बढ़

जाएगी, जो आम तौर पर यात्रा की कुल लागत का बड़ा हिस्सा होती है। इसके परिणामस्वरूप आने वाले हफ्तों और महीनों में ग्राहकों का खर्च भी बढ़ जाएगा।' प्राइड होटल्स ग्रुप के मुख्य कार्य अधिकारी सत्येन जैन ने कहा, 'अगर युद्ध जारी रहता है, तो भारत में होने वाले कार्यक्रमों में शामिल होने के लिए आने वाले अंतरराष्ट्रीय प्रतिनिधियों की यात्रा आगे खिचकाई की जा सकती है। आगामी गर्मियों की छुट्टियों में अंतरराष्ट्रीय यात्रा करना, खास तौर पर दुनिया के पश्चिमी हिस्सों में, अधिक महंगा हो सकता है। ऐसे में घरेलू पर्यटन स्थलों की मांग बढ़ने का अवसर मिल सकता है।'

होटल और रेस्तरां

आतिथ्य-सत्कार क्षेत्र की बात करें, तो पिछले दो हफ्ते होटलों और रेस्तरां की रसोई में एलपीजी की आपूर्ति सुनिश्चित करने पर केंद्रित रहे हैं। इसके लिए इंडक्शन कुकटॉप जैसे दूसरे विकल्पों को अपनाने तथा तंदूर जैसे पुराने तरीकों पर लौटने के कदम उठाए गए हैं। यहां तक कि बैंक्वेट और शादियों जैसे बड़े स्तर पर खाना बनाने के लिए बाहर खुली रसोई में

लकड़ी का इस्तेमाल भी किया जा रहा है। बेंगलूरु, मुंबई और कोलकाता जैसे शहरों में कई रेस्तरां और भोजनालयों ने गैर-व्यस्तता वाले समय में अपनी दुकानें बंद कर दीं, जबकि दूसरों ने एलपीजी की कमी, घबराहट में की जाने वाली खरीदारी और कीमतों में तेजी की शिकायत की।

क्विक-कॉमर्स

स्विगी इंस्टामार्ट, ब्लिंकइट और जेप्टो जैसे क्विक कॉमर्स प्लेटफॉर्म पर इलेक्ट्रिक कुकिंग उपकरणों की श्रेणी में इंडक्शन कुकटॉप, इलेक्ट्रिक केतली और एयर फ्रायर जैसे कई सामान फिलहाल या तो स्टॉक में नहीं हैं या बहुत कम मात्रा में उपलब्ध हैं, क्योंकि एलपीजी की आपूर्ति में कटौती के बीच इनकी मांग अचानक बढ़ गई है।

लॉजिस्टिक

कंपनियों में लॉजिस्टिक पर कर्मचारियों की कमी का असर पड़ रहा है, क्योंकि वेयरहाउस के कामकाज में मदद करने वाले कई मजदूरों की रोजमर्रा की जिंदगी एलपीजी की कमी के कारण अस्त-व्यस्त हो गई है क्योंकि रोजाना का खाना पकाने के लिए एलपीजी का इस्तेमाल किया जाता है।

आईटी सेवाएं

देश के 300 अरब डॉलर के आईटी सेवा उद्योग के मामले में पश्चिम एशिया का संकट भले ही सीधे तौर पर कोई बड़ा झटका न दे, लेकिन इसके दूसरे असर पहले से महसूस किए जाने लगे हैं। इस इलाके में लगी पाबंदियों के मद्देनजर कई कंपनियों ने अपने अधिकारियों से कहा है कि वे अपनी यात्राएं सीमित रखें।



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

DGCA allows longer pilot duty hours for Air India

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 15 March

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has temporarily allowed longer flight duty time limitations (FDTL) for certain Air India international flights, which have been taking longer routes due to the closure of Iranian and Iraqi airspace since February 28.

Israel and the US conducted military strikes on Iran, igniting a fresh conflict in the Gulf region two weeks ago. Large chunks of the West Asian airspace have since remained closed for commercial flights. In an internal operations circular issued on March 13, Air India informed its flight crew that the DGCA had granted a temporary exemption from standard FDTL rules, to manage disruptions caused by the airspace closures.

The airline said "the unavailability of Iranian and Iraqi airspace has resulted in mandatory rerouting of certain long-haul flights", which are now being operated



through alternate corridors. This, it said, has led to longer sector times and required "a temporary FDTL extension for minimising schedule disruptions and passenger inconvenience".

FDTL are safety rules prescribed by the DGCA that determine how long pilots can fly and remain on duty before mandatory rest. Air India said that under the temporary exemption granted by the

What's new

- Airlines are rerouting long-haul flights due to the West Asia crisis
- Flight time limit for two-pilot crew has been increased by 1 hr 30 mins
- Maximum flight duty period has been increased by 1 hr 45 mins
- Temporary exemption from 30-minute roster planning buffer requirement has been granted on specific flights

DGCA, the maximum permissible "flight time" for two-pilot operations has been increased by 1 hour 30 minutes to 11 hours 30 minutes. Flight time refers to the period from when an aircraft begins moving for take-off until it comes to a stop after landing.

The maximum "flight duty period" — the total time a pilot remains on duty, including pre-flight preparation, the

flight itself and post-flight procedures — has been extended by 1 hour 45 minutes to 14 hours 45 minutes, Air India said.

The airline also said that a "temporary exemption from the 30-minute roster planning buffer requirement" has been granted on specific flights. This buffer is an additional margin airlines normally keep while scheduling crew, so that delays do not push pilots beyond their duty limits.

Certain mitigation measures will accompany the exemption, including "continuous monitoring and review with the regulator", briefings to crew about the changes, and an "additional rest period of 4 hours" for pilots operating flights under the exemption, over and above the minimum rest required under DGCA rules, Air India said.

The airline added that the exemption will apply only to certain flights and that the details will be communicated to crews through fleet-specific company NOTAMS — operational

notices used to brief pilots about flight-specific conditions.

When asked about this increase in pilot duty hours, an Air India official told *Business Standard* that the airline will ensure that additional rest — more than what's mandated — is given to pilots who are operating flights with increased flying time.

However, C S Randhawa, president of the Federation of Indian Pilots (FIP), said the union has written to the DGCA raising concerns over the extension.

Randhawa said the regulator's civil aviation requirements currently restrict flight time to 10 hours and the flight duty period to 12 hours for operations involving a single landing. The exemption allows an additional 1 hour 30 minutes of flight time and 1 hour 45 minutes of duty period for two-pilot crews.

He also said the circular does not specify limits on the number of sectors or landings permitted under the exemption.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

4K A-I staffers 'misused' leisure travel policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
New Delhi/Mumbai, 15 March

Air India has detected large-scale discrepancies in the utilisation of its leisure travel policy, involving more than 4,000 employees, and has initiated corrective actions, including imposing penalties on the erring staff, according to sources.

Loss-making Air India was acquired by the Tata group in January 2022, and the airline, which has faced multiple headwinds in recent times, is also in the midst of implementing an ambitious transformation plan. The airline has more than 24,000 employees.

The sources in the know told *PTI* that the large-scale discrepancies in the use of Air India's Employee Leisure Travel (ELT) policy were detected after a detailed internal investigation.

The ELT policy allows a specified number of free air tickets for individual employees and their nominees, including spouse and parents. These are subject to certain conditions. Many employees were found to have misused the policy by showing those not related to them as relatives to avail the benefits. Some were reported to have even availed the free tickets and sold them to people at a higher price, the sources said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

कंपनी को जानें | सीसीआई जांच, ईरान जंग से जूझ रही एयरलाइन इंडिगो का शेयर एक माह में 16% टूटा, पर ब्रोकरेज को 48% उछाल की उम्मीद

भास्कर न्यूज | मुंबई

देश की सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइन इंडिगो (इंटरग्लोब एविएशन) के शेयर में इन दिनों गिरावट देखी जा रही है। इस महीने 13 मार्च तक बीएसई पर शेयर 14% गिरकर 4,158 रुपए पर आ गया। एक महीने में यह 16.6% टूट चुका है। इसके बावजूद कंपनी के लॉन्ग-टर्म आउटलुक को लेकर ब्रोकरेज फर्मों का भरोसा कायम है। जेफरीज ने 6,140 रुपए का टारगेट दिया है, जो मौजूदा स्तर से 48% ज्यादा है। हालांकि, भू-राजनैतिक अनिश्चितता के कारण कुछ विश्लेषक सतर्क रहने की सलाह दे रहे हैं।

चिंता: इयूटी नियमों पर सीसीआई की नजर

पायलटों के इयूटी नियमों में बदलाव से दिसंबर में इंडिगो की करीब 2,500 उड़ानें रद्द हुई थीं। 3 लाख यात्री प्रभावित हुए। टिकटों के दाम तेजी से बढ़े थे। प्रतिस्पर्धा आयोग (सीसीआई) ने कंपनी के खिलाफ 'दबदबे के दुरुपयोग' की जांच के आदेश दिए हैं। 90 दिनों में रिपोर्ट सौंपने के निर्देश हैं। डॉलर के मुकाबले रुपए की कमजोरी का असर बैलेंसशीट पर पड़ रहा है।

चुनौतियां: सीईओ का इस्तीफा, महंगा ईंधन

- 10 मार्च को सीईओ पीटर एल्बर्स ने पद छोड़ा। को-फाउंडर राहुल भाटिया ने अंतरिम कमान संभाली है। फोकस साख सुधारने पर है।
- ईरान तनाव, एटीएफ के बढ़ते दाम के कारण इंडिगो ने अतिरिक्त फ्यूल चार्ज लागू किया।

ब्रोकरेज फर्म	रेटिंग	टारगेट	संगठित तेजी
जेफरीज	खरीदें	6,140	47.7%
एचएसबीसी	खरीदें	5,860	40.9%
यूबीएस	खरीदें	5,480	31.8%
सिटी	खरीदें	5,100	22.7%

ब्रोकरेज का नजरिया

एचएसबीसी का मानना है कि पीटर एल्बर्स के इस्तीफे से इंडिगो की रणनीति नहीं बदलेगी। यूबीएस के अनुसार, एअर इंडिया ने किराया बढ़ा दिया है, इंडिगो के पास भी गुंजाइश है। सिटी ने मिडिल-ईस्ट तनाव पर चिंता जताई, क्योंकि कंपनी का आधा अंतरराष्ट्रीय ट्रैफिक इसी रूट पर।

विजनेस... दिसंबर 2025 तक 440 विमान। डेली उड़ानें 2,200+ है। मार्केट शेयर 63.6%।

पश्चिम एशिया में तनाव का असर, दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट से खाड़ी देशों के लिए उड़ानें रद्द

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली: पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते भू-राजनीतिक तनाव और सुरक्षा जोखिमों का असर दिल्ली के इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय (आइजीआई) हवाई अड्डे पर भी साफ दिखाई देने लगा है। लगातार हो रहे हमले के चलते रविवार को संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (यूएई) की जनरल सिविल एविएशन अथॉरिटी (जीसीएए) ने विदेशी एयरलाइंस के लिए सख्त सुरक्षा प्रोटोकॉल व निर्देश जारी किए। इसके बाद विभिन्न एयरलाइंस ने खाड़ी देशों के लिए अधिकतर उड़ानों को रद्द कर दिया है।

जीसीएए ने अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरलाइंस के लिए विशेष 'सुरक्षित हवाई गलियारे' निर्धारित किए हैं। एयरलाइंस को इन गलियारों के माध्यम से एक निश्चित संख्या में (लगभग 48 उड़ानें प्रति घंटा) उड़ान भरने की अनुमति है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरलाइंस, जैसे- ब्रिटिश एयरवेज, लुफ्थान्सा, एयर इंडिया) को उत्तरी और पूर्वी हवाई रास्तों (ईरान और इराक के करीब) से बचने व ओमान, सऊदी अरब के ऊपर से वैकल्पिक रास्तों का उपयोग करने का निर्देश दिया है।

पश्चिम एशिया में जारी सैन्य संघर्ष और वहां के कुछ शहरों में हवाई क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंध के कारण दिल्ली से दुबई, अबू धाबी और अन्य पश्चिम एशियाई शहरों के लिए उड़ानें रद्द होने से बड़ी संख्या में यात्री एयरपोर्ट में फंस गए हैं।

रविवार सुबह जारी अपडेट के अनुसार एअर इंडिया ने दिल्ली से दुबई के लिए निर्धारित पांच



- एअर इंडिया और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने खाड़ी देशों के लिए कुल 14 उड़ानें रद्द की
- इंडिगो ने खाड़ी देशों की उड़ानों को 28 मार्च तक किया स्थगित

डीजीसीए ने एअर इंडिया को दी राहत

मुंबई, प्रेट : विमानन निवामक नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने एअर इंडिया की लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए उड़ान ड्यूटी मानदंडों में छूट प्रदान की है। यह निर्णय पश्चिम एशिया में चल रही जंग के चलते हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों को वजह से लिया गया है। ईरानी और इराकी हवाई क्षेत्र में प्रतिबंधों के कारण एअर इंडिया यूरोपीय और उत्तरी अमेरिकी उड़ानों के लिए मिश्र के मार्ग का उपयोग कर रही है। इससे उड़ान के घंटे बढ़ गए हैं। इस संदर्भ में डीजीसीए ने 30 अप्रैल तक फ्लाइट ड्यूटी टाइम लिमिटेशन (एफडीटीएल) में कुछ छूट दी है। सूत्रों के अनुसार, दो

पायलटों के साथ संचालित लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए छूट प्रदान की गई है। डीजीसीए ने कुछ क्रू के लिए उड़ान समय (एफटी) को 10 घंटे से बढ़ाकर 11:30 घंटे कर दिया गया है। उड़ान ड्यूटी अवधि (एफडीपी) को भी 1.45 घंटे बढ़ाकर 11.45 घंटे कर दिया है।

हालांकि, सूत्रों का कहना है कि एअर इंडिया अपने जेद्दा उड़ान की योजना बनाकर छूट का उल्लंघन कर रही है, जिसकी एफडीपी 11.55 घंटे है। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने बताया कि वह दिल्ली-दुबई मार्ग पर आने-जाने वाली एक उड़ान संचालित करेगी।

उड़ानों में से चार को रद्द कर दिया है। केवल एक रिटर्न फ्लाइट का संचालन किया जा रहा है। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने दुबई के लिए छह में से पांच उड़ानें रद्द कर दी हैं। वहीं, दिल्ली से अबू धाबी जाने वाली सभी पांच उड़ानों को भी रद्द कर दिया है। एअर इंडिया और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने 14 उड़ानें रद्द की

हैं। इधर, इंडिगो ने दुबई सहित दोहा, कुवैत, बहरीन, दम्माम, फुजैरा, रास अल खैमाह और शारजाह के लिए उड़ानों को 28 मार्च तक अस्थायी रूप से स्थगित कर दिया है। इस समस्या के कारण रविवार को ही इंडिगो के लगभग 30 सेक्टर की उड़ानें प्रभावित हुई हैं, जो दिल्ली से कनेक्टेड थीं।

एअर इंडिया को उड़ान ड्यूटी मानदंडों में राहत

मुंबई, 16 मार्च : नागरिक उड़्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने एअर इंडिया को लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए उड़ान ड्यूटी मानदंडों में अस्थायी छूट प्रदान की है। यह निर्णय पश्चिम एशिया में चल रही जंग के चलते हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों की वजह से लिया गया है।

ईरानी और इराकी हवाई क्षेत्र में प्रतिबंधों के कारण एअर इंडिया यूरोपीय और उत्तरी अमेरिकी उड़ानों के लिए मिस्र के मार्ग का उपयोग कर रही है। इससे उड़ान के घंटे बढ़ गए हैं। इस संदर्भ में डीजीसीए ने 30 अप्रैल तक फ्लाइट ड्यूटी टाइम लिमिटेशन (एफडीटीएल) में कुछ छूट दी है। सूत्रों के अनुसार, दो पायलटों के साथ संचालित लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए यह छूट प्रदान की गई है। डीजीसीए ने कुछ क्रू के लिए उड़ान समय (एफटी) को 10 घंटे से बढ़ाकर 11:30 घंटे कर दिया गया है। उड़ान ड्यूटी अवधि (एफडीपी) को भी 1.45 घंटे बढ़ाकर 11.45 घंटे कर दिया है। हालांकि, सूत्रों का कहना है कि एअर इंडिया अपने जेड

- डीजीसीए ने पश्चिम एशिया में चल रही जंग के चलते हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों की वजह से लिया गया निर्णय
- यूरोपीय व उत्तरी अमेरिकी उड़ानों के लिए वैकल्पिक रास्ते के इस्तेमाल से बट गया है उड़ान का समय



प्रतीकात्मक

उड़ान को योजना बनाकर छूट का उल्लंघन कर रही है, जिसकी एफडीपी 11.55 घंटे है। इसके अलावा, 30 मिनट की रोस्टर योजना बफर आवश्यकता के संबंध में भी छूट दी गई है। 28 फरवरी को अमेरिका, इजरायल और ईरान के बीच बढ़ते संघर्ष ने उड़ान संचालन पर

बड़ा प्रभाव डाला है। कई एयरलाइनों ने अपनी सेवाओं में कमी की है।

एअर इंडिया ने यूएई की तीन उड़ानें रद्द कीं : एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने संयुक्त अरब अमिरात (यूएई) के हवाई अड्डा प्राधिकारियों के निर्देशों के बाद रविवार को अबू धाबी, रास अल खैमाह और शरजाह के लिए अपनी निर्धारित उड़ानें रद्द कर दीं। विमानन कंपनी ने बताया कि वह दिल्ली-दुबई मार्ग पर आने-जाने वाली एक उड़ान संचालित करेगी, जो हवाई अड्डे पर स्लाट (उड़ान का समय) की उपलब्धता और मौजूदा परिस्थितियों पर निर्भर होगी। कंपनी ने बयान में कहा कि उसे यूएई हवाई अड्डा प्राधिकारियों के निर्देशों के बाद रविवार को उक्त शहरों के लिए अपनी गैर निर्धारित उड़ानों की भी संख्या कम करने पड़ी है। एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के बयान में कहा गया कि अमेरिका, इजरायल और ईरान के बीच बढ़ते संघर्ष की वजह से हवाई क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंधों के कारण पश्चिम एशिया के लिए सेवाओं में कटौती की गई है।

SURPRISE INSPECTIONS AT AIRPORTS

European Checks Find Slew of Lapses in Air India Planes

Airline faults come down as DGCA steps up scrutiny after EASA red flag

ET EXCLUSIVE

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: The European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has raised alarm about numerous safety lapses by Air India, discovered during surprise aircraft inspections at European airports, said people aware of the developments.

The ratio of findings per inspection in Air India's planes reached 1.96 in January following which the Cologne-based agency flagged the concern with India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), which subsequently intensified scrutiny of the Tata Group-owned carrier. If the ratio exceeds 2, it can impact Air India's operations in one of its key international markets, as its planes will face enhanced scrutiny by inspectors and in extreme cases, countries may impose a ban.

"DGCA immediately stepped in imposing corrective measures on Air India to avoid potential consequences affecting its operations in European countries," said a senior official at the civil aviation regulator.

Following the heightened inspections, the fault count declined, and as of last week, the ratio was at 1.76, the official said. Airlines possessing a high safety performance record consistently have a ratio of less than 1. Air India didn't respond to queries.



Flight Scan

EASA checks planes of non-EU airlines under a safety assessment programme.

Inspections done on 54 parameters

Findings divided into 3 categories

Third category gaps carry highest weightage

Require immediate rectification

Ratio of findings per inspection is less than 1 for carriers with robust safety record

If it exceeds 2, airline can face higher scrutiny and possible ban by EU countries

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SEQUOIA ALUMNI EYE \$250M FUND ►► FACING PAGE

High Standards

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A senior Air India official blamed the carrier's ageing aircraft fleet for the high number of faults.

Since its takeover by the Tata, Air India started a \$400 million exercise to refurbish its older planes, but this has been delayed significantly as global vendors have been unable to meet deadlines due to supply chain constraints.

"European standards are very high," said the Air India official cited above. "A broken seat or a worn-out emergency marking are also recorded by EASA inspectors as a violation and there is a lag on the snags on the cabin side as many of our planes are older."

Under the Safety Assessment of Foreign Aircraft (SAFA) programme, EASA inspectors conduct surprise inspections when a plane from any non-EU airline lands at a European airport. Inspectors check around 54 parameters to ensure safety equipment such as emergency exits and life jackets are in place, documentation like manuals are in order, and that the crew is licensed and fit to operate the aircraft.

"The airline has carried out more than 100 checks while DGCA is also conducting inspections of Air India's aircraft scheduled for international operations," the DGCA official said. "Only after rectification and satisfactory compliance are the aircraft being allowed for further operations."

Air India's fleet reliability and engineering woes underscore struggles of conglomerate Tata Sons to turn around the airline even after four years of ownership.

DGCA has repeatedly flagged the carrier's engineering and maintenance processes. Air India's top engineering officials have been suspended, and CEO Campbell Wilson has been issued a show cause notice for multiple incidents of lapses including one recently where the airline operated eight scheduled flights using an Airbus aircraft without having the mandatory airworthiness permit.



Corporate Communications Directorate

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India Moves to Ease Airlines' Jet Fuel Shock



India is exploring ways to shield airlines against spike in jet fuel prices. With this, the government is also seeking to prevent sharp rise in fares and impact on air travel, reports **Arindam Majumder**.

Centre in a Huddle to Cushion Jet Fuel Shock for Airlines

Ministries in talks with OMCs to ensure higher cost isn't passed over during April 1 price revision

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: India is exploring ways to safeguard airlines from spiralling jet fuel prices amid the widespread disruptions caused by the worsening conflict in West Asia. Through this, the government is also seeking to prevent any sharp rise in fares and adverse effect on domestic air travel demand.

Over last few days, officials of civil aviation ministry led by secretary Samir Sinha have engaged with their counterparts in the petroleum ministry and oil marketing companies, with aim of ensuring that any rise in jet fuel price is not passed over immediately during the upcoming price revision on April 1.

The jet fuel crack spread, which measures the difference between the price of a barrel of crude oil and the price of jet fuel refined from it, soared to nearly \$100 before cooling. Jet fuel makes up around 26% of an airline's operating expenses on average, according to global airlines association IATA.

India's jet fuel pricing is linked to the 'Mean of Platts Arab Gulf (MOPAG)'—a widely used benchmark for pricing refined petroleum products in the Gulf. Oil marketing companies generally levy an extra cost, which is the expense of refining and carriage cost for them.

Indian airlines have been advocating for the domestic pricing model based on crude oil prices plus fixed refining margin, delinked from international price swings.

"We are trying to devise a mechanism where the carriage cost of the oil marketing companies can be spread over a larger timeline rather than one single shot," said a senior government official.

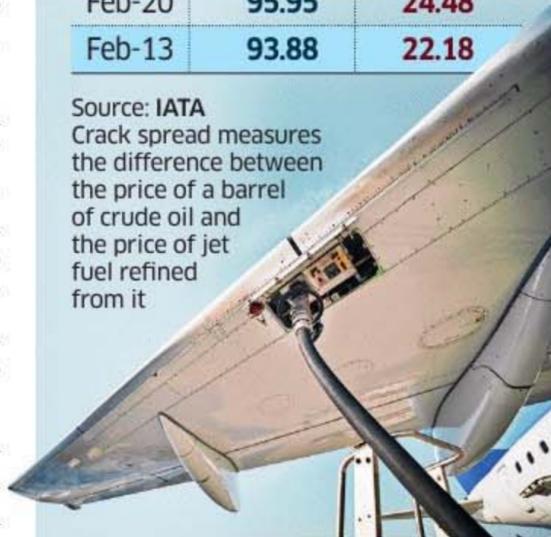
IATA in a recent analysis highlighted that when fuel prices remain elevated but stable, airlines can adjust pricing and operations gradually, and continue to operate profitably, although typically with thinner margins. Fuel price shocks push costs higher faster than revenues can adjust, posing a greater risk to margins and profits.

For Indian airlines, jet fuel cost ri-

Action Plan

Week	Average jet fuel price/ barrel (\$)	Average crack spread/ barrel (\$)
Mar-06	157.41	72.26
Feb-27	99.40	27.83
Feb-20	95.95	24.48
Feb-13	93.88	22.18

Source: IATA
Crack spread measures the difference between the price of a barrel of crude oil and the price of jet fuel refined from it



ses further as excise duty and value-added tax are levied as a percentage of the fuel price rather than as a fixed amount. Excise duty is 11%, while VAT in major aviation hubs such as Delhi is 25%. All Indian carriers IndiGo, Air India, and Akasa Air have imposed fuel surcharges, but executives said maintaining high ticket prices is difficult as it would dent demand. "The pricing is completely correlated to supply and demand," said an airline official. "Airlines can't increase ticket prices very high. They will have to absorb the increased cost."

Costs have soared for airlines as they are being forced to take longer routes for overseas flights. Insurance companies have started raising premiums for hull war risk insurance coverage. There has been an increase of ₹30-₹40 lakh for a narrow-body flight and ₹90 lakh-₹1 crore for a wide-body flight on routes such as Delhi-Dubai-Delhi.

Airlines have begun limited operations to West Asia, to evacuate thousands of Indian nationals stranded in the region. Airline executives lament that such flights are unviable due to the unreliability of operations at hub airports like Dubai, Doha, and Riyadh while the aircraft flies empty on its leg to West Asia.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

AI gets flight duty norms relief on long-haul routes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai, March 15

THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has provided temporary relaxations in flight duty norms for Air India's long-haul flights as the airline is taking longer routes due to the airspace curbs amid the West Asia conflict, sources said on Sunday.

With Iranian and Iraqi airspace restrictions, Air India is taking the Egypt route for European and North American flights, which means longer flying hours.

Against this backdrop, the DGCA has given certain relaxations in pilot Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms till April 30, the sources said.

There were no comments from Air India and DGCA on the FDTL norm relaxations. Providing the relaxations for the long-haul flights operated with two pilots, the sources said, adding that DGCA has extended the Flight Time (FT) by 1.30 hours to 11.30 hours and the Flight Duty Period (FDP) by 1.45

LIMITED REPRIEVE



■ The temporary relaxation is due to the airspace curbs amid the West Asia conflict

■ AI is taking Egypt route for European and North American flights, which means longer flying hours

hours to 11.45 hours.

Sources say that Air India has been violating the relaxation by planning its Jeddah flight, which has an FDP of 11.45 hours.

"While flight duty period (FDP) has been extended by 1.45 hours, Air India is forcing its pilots to operate Jeddah flight, which has an FDP of 11.55 hours, thus exceeding the allowed relaxations by 10 minutes," a source said.

एयर इंडिया के कर्मचारियों ने ईएलटी का दुरुपयोग किया

खुलासा

नई दिल्ली/मुंबई, एजेंसी। एयर इंडिया ने अपने कर्मचारियों के लिए निर्धारित अवकाश यात्रा नीति (ईएलटी) के उपयोग में बड़े पैमाने पर विसंगतियां पाई हैं। सूत्रों के अनुसार, इस मामले में 4,000 से अधिक कर्मचारी शामिल हैं और एयरलाइन ने दोषी कर्मचारियों पर जुर्माना लगाने सहित सुधारात्मक कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी है।

टाटा समूह ने जनवरी, 2022 में घाटे में चल रही एयर इंडिया का अधिग्रहण किया था। इस समय एयरलाइन एक महत्वाकांक्षी परिवर्तन योजना को लागू कर रही है। एयर इंडिया में कुल 24,000 से अधिक कर्मचारी हैं।

मुफ्त टिकटों को ऊंचे दामों में बेचा : सूत्रों ने बताया कि एयर इंडिया की ईएलटी नीति के उपयोग में बड़ी गड़बड़ियों का पता एक विस्तृत आंतरिक जांच के बाद चला। ईएलटी नीति के तहत कर्मचारियों और उनके द्वारा नामित व्यक्तियों (जैसे जीवनसाथी और माता-पिता) को एक निश्चित संख्या में मुफ्त हवाई टिकट दिए जाते हैं। यह सुविधा कुछ शर्तों के अधीन होती है। सूत्रों ने बताया कि कई कर्मचारियों ने उन लोगों को अपना रिश्तेदार बताकर इस नीति का दुरुपयोग किया, जिनसे उनका कोई संबंध नहीं



4000 से अधिक कर्मियों ने किया फर्जीवाड़ा, एयरलाइंस ने शुरू की दोषियों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई

धोखाधड़ी की राशि को वापस करना होगा

एक सूत्र ने बताया कि 4,000 से अधिक कर्मचारियों को ईएलटी नीति का दुरुपयोग करते पाया गया है। उल्लंघन के ये मामले पिछले वित्त वर्ष से जुड़े हुए हैं। हालांकि, इस दुरुपयोग के कारण हुए कुल वित्तीय नुकसान और सटीक समय अवधि का पता नहीं चल सका है। एयर इंडिया ने इस दिशा में सुधारात्मक कदम उठाते हुए संबंधित कर्मचारियों से धोखाधड़ी के जरिये ली गई राशि वापस करने को कहा है।

था। कुछ मामलों में तो कर्मचारियों ने मुफ्त टिकट लेकर उन्हें ऊंचे दामों पर बाहरी लोगों को बेच दिया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

लंबी उड़ानों के लिए अस्थायी छूट मिली

मुंबई, एजेसी। पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते संकट के कारण हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों के बीच विमानन सुरक्षा निगरानी संस्था नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने एयर इंडिया की लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए अस्थायी छूट दी है। सूत्रों ने रविवार को जानकारी दी।

पश्चिम एशिया में हवाई क्षेत्र पर लगे प्रतिबंधों के कारण एयर इंडिया अब यूरोप और अमेरिका जाने के लिए लंबा मार्ग अपनाकर उड़ानें संचालित कर रही है। सूत्रों के अनुसार, डीजीसीए ने पायलटों के उड़ान और कार्य समय सीमा में अस्थायी ढील दी है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने यूएई के लिए कई उड़ानें रद्द कीं

नई दिल्ली। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने संयुक्त अरब अमीरात के हवाई अड्डा प्राधिकारियों के निर्देशों के बाद रविवार को अबू धाबी, रास अल खैमाह और शारजाह के लिए अपनी निर्धारित उड़ानें रद्द कर दीं।

विमानन कंपनी ने बताया कि वह दिल्ली-दुबई मार्ग पर आने-जाने वाली एक उड़ान संचालित करेगी, जो हवाई अड्डे पर स्लॉट (उड़ान का समय) की उपलब्धता और मौजूदा परिस्थितियों पर निर्भर होगी। कंपनी ने बयान में कहा कि उसे यूएई हवाई अड्डा प्राधिकारियों के निर्देशों के बाद रविवार को उक्त शहरों के लिए अपनी गैर निर्धारित उड़ानों की भी संख्या कम करनी पड़ी है। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के बयान में कहा गया कि अमेरिका, इजरायल और ईरान के बीच बढ़ते संघर्ष की वजह से हवाई क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंधों के कारण पश्चिम एशिया के लिए सेवाओं में कटौती की गई है।

दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर पुशबैक ट्रेक्टर में आग लगी : दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर शुक्रवार तड़के एआईएसएटीएस द्वारा संचालित एक विमान पुशबैक ट्रेक्टर में आग लग गई, जिसे बुझा दिया गया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

DGCA relaxes safety rules for Air India amid West Asia crisis

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The aviation regulator has allowed Air India a temporary relaxation from meeting pilot duty norms owing to the West Asia crisis, allowing the carrier to operate some long-haul flights with two pilots despite longer flying times forced by the choked airspaces over the war-torn region.

The move comes after Air India approached the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on March 12 and sought relief from the Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL), citing operational constraints triggered by airspace restrictions that have forced aircraft to take longer routes. The relaxation was allowed on March 13.

Flights from India to North America, including services to Toronto, have had to take lengthy diversions due to the closure of Iraqi and Iranian airspaces. The situation has been worsened by the continued closure of Pakistani airspace for Indian-registered aircraft since last year.

Under the existing FDTL rules, the maximum flying time per-

mitted for a two-pilot crew is 10 hours, while the maximum Flight Duty Period (FDP) is capped at 13 hours. FDP is a pilot's overall duty time, from reporting for a flight until post-flight duties are completed.

Airline officials said the permission gives Air India space to allow itself to rework its rostering and mitigate disruptions caused by the restrictions.

The Air India group on Saturday said it would operate 72 scheduled and non-scheduled flights to and from West Asia on Sunday. However, it said it had to curtail its ad-hoc flights following "instructions from UAE airport authorities," the airline said on Sunday. "The unavailability of Iranian and Iraqi airspace has resulted in mandatory rerouting of certain long-haul flights through alternate corridors, increasing sector flight times," one of the officials said.

"This will allow adequate rest to crew operating in Europe, UK and North American flights," the official added.

As part of the temporary relaxation, the regulator has permitted an extension of the flight time by 1.5 hours, allowing a

maximum flying time of 11.5 hours for two-pilot operations.

The permissible Flight Duty Period has also been extended by an hour and 45 minutes, allowing a maximum FDP of 14 hours and 45 minutes for the affected flights, another official said.

"The exemption will remain in effect until April 30 and will apply only to specific sectors, the circular said. Flight-specific details will be communicated through individual fleet-specific company NOTAMs, which will also serve as crew briefings," he added. He said that the airline has also assured mitigation measures during the exemption period, including continuous monitoring with the regulator, mandatory crew briefings and an additional rest period of four hours for crew members over and above the minimum rest prescribed under applicable civil aviation requirements.

Officials earlier said Air India had sought the relaxation due to increased block times on several long-haul routes as aircraft were forced to take longer diversionary routings following the closure of key West Asian air corridors.

Closed skies and costly detours: why Indian airlines are among the worst hit by the conflict in West Asia

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

As Gulf routes that have long formed the backbone of Indian airlines' international networks are hit by the ongoing regional conflict, aircraft utilisation at domestic carriers has dropped sharply.

At Air India Express, for example, nearly a quarter of the fleet is effectively idle. "About one in four aircraft of Air India Express's 115-strong fleet is grounded," an industry executive said about the country's second-largest domestic airline. While the aircraft are not formally grounded, airlines are flying them once every three or four days to keep them serviceable, and because parking stands are scarce at several airports.

For many Indian carriers, destinations across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and Kuwait account for the bulk of their international flying, reflecting the pre-



Many IndiGo aircraft are now idling at airports during hours that were once used to operate frequent flights to West Asia. REUTERS

sence of more than 90 lakh Indians living across the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. But flight restrictions and heightened military activity in the region led to about 2,600 flight cancellations by Indian carriers in the first nine days after tensions between Iran and Israel escalated on February 28.

While operations in Oman are normal, major hubs such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi continue to face severe disruptions and intermittent suspensions.

In more normal times,

roughly half of all international passengers flying to or from India travels on a Gulf route, using hubs such as Dubai, Doha, and Abu Dhabi to connect onward to flights to the U.S., Canada, and Europe.

Nearly four crore passengers travelled between India and the Gulf in 2025, making it the country's largest international aviation corridor by far.

Rising costs

Several other factors are also driving up operational costs for airlines. Jet fuel prices in India have risen

by about \$50 per kilolitre since January to \$150 per kilolitre, while aircraft operating on Gulf routes are also facing additional war-risk insurance premiums of about ₹18,000 per seat.

Though airlines have announced a fuel surcharge of up to ₹400 on domestic routes (and higher for international routes), these barely cover 10% to 12% of the ticket fare, executives say.

The unpredictability of flight schedules to West Asia caused by security threats, along with last-minute slot allocations by airports in the region, leaves airlines with little time to sell seats, contributing to the underutilisation of aircraft. Most flights to these destinations are operating with very few passengers.

Redeploying their idle aircraft on Southeast Asian routes is not a viable option for airlines, as that market is already oversupplied and earnings per passenger per kilometre are significantly lower than on

Gulf routes. The same holds true for domestic services, where margins are thinner and airlines must additionally contend with VAT and other levies on aviation turbine fuel that do not apply to international flights. In India, fuel alone accounts for about 40% of airlines' operating costs.

For Air India, the challenges are even greater as its flights to Europe and the U.S. are now forced to take a longer southerly route to avoid Iranian airspace, with some U.S. services also requiring fuel stops. This comes on top of the earlier closure of Pakistani airspace following Operation Sindoor last April.

As a result, flight times have lengthened sharply. A Delhi-London service now takes around 12 hours, compared with about nine hours last year. Flights to New York, which must now stop in Rome for refuelling, can take close to 20 hours instead of roughly 15 hours earlier.



Corporate Communications Directorate

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● AIRLINE NETWORKS WORLDWIDE HAVE BEEN RATTLED BY AIRSPACE CLOSURES AND SKYROCKETING JET FUEL PRICES

Iran war reroutes global flights; even Southeast Asia tourism takes a bad hit

Angelica Ang
March 15

THE IRAN war is reshaping global flight paths, posing a threat to Southeast Asia's key tourism sector. Iranian missile and drone attacks have shut down key Middle Eastern aviation hubs like Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha, cutting off popular travel routes for European and US travellers to get to Southeast Asia's beaches and temples.

Travel experts now fear that countries like Thailand, Cambodia and Indonesia may soon see a dip in tourists.

"There aren't non-stop flights between Europe and

destinations like Bali and Cambodia," Brendan Sobie, a Singapore-based independent aviation analyst, tells *Fortune*. "These countries, which are heavily dependent on tourism, are also more impacted due to the trickle down effect on their economies."

Tourism is a mainstay of Southeast Asia's economy. In 2024, tourism accounted for 9.4% of Cambodia's GDP, and 12% of Thailand's.

Major Gulf carriers including Emirates, Qatar Airways and Etihad have scrapped thousands of flights to and from the Middle East. This has ripple effects on some Southeast Asian carriers; Malaysia Airlines, for

instance, relies on Qatar Airways to move tourists from the USA, Europe, and the Middle East into Southeast Asia.

"Malaysia Airlines doesn't fly into Europe much, except for London and Paris," said Mayur Patel, the Asia head at aviation consultancy OAG. "A lot of their codeshares were through Doha with Qatar Airways, and if airplanes can't fly into Doha, it would certainly put a constraint on traffic flow."

Airline networks worldwide have been rattled by airspace closures and skyrocketing jet fuel prices, which have doubled since the Iran conflict began.

Airlines are suspending some routes to the Middle East



Some airlines have begun hiking ticket fares in response to energy concerns arising from the war that have driven up oil prices. REUTERS

for weeks, if not months. Carriers are also slapping fuel surcharges on flights, and Air New Zealand pulled its guidance on Tuesday due to increased fuel costs.

"In the first week of the war,

we saw a 50% drop in total bookings," said Lucy Jackson Walsh, the co-founder and managing director of Lightfoot Travel, a luxury travel firm with offices in Dubai, London, Singapore and Hong Kong. Bookings for Middle Eastern destinations—about 15% of Lightfoot's business—vanished almost immediately.

"We're shifting our focus towards Asia-to-Asia regional travel and also trips to further-flung destinations like Australia which don't have to route through the Middle East," she said.

Supply chain disruptions from closed airspace and waterways are also delaying air-

craft maintenance, repair and operations (MRO), and exacerbating existing aircraft delivery delays from manufacturers like Airbus and Boeing.

"There's a shortage of aerospace spare parts and components, which may be delivered from Europe or the US," Kent Yar, an independent aerospace consultant, told *Fortune*. "To manufacture airplane parts, you also need raw materials... everything boils down to supply chain issues." He estimates that airplane spare parts have seen a 15% jump in price since the Iran war began.

Still, some Asian carriers like Singapore Airlines and Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific,

which fly several non-stop routes between Asia and Europe, might have an edge over other disrupted carriers. "Existing non-stop flights between Asia and Europe have already re-routed in light of the Russia-Ukraine war, and don't necessarily use Iran or Middle Eastern airspace," Sobie explained.

But this will be a slim silver lining compared to the overall hit to the sector.

"I don't think anybody's happy," Sobie said. "Some airlines will have routes that see an extra surge in load factor and revenue—and that's natural—but it does not offset the negative of how this crisis has impacted the overall industry." NYT



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

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16 MARCH 2026

'FDTL norms relief on long haul for Air India'

New Delhi: With Iranian and Iraqi airspace restrictions, Air India is taking the Egypt route for European and North American flights, which means longer flying hours. Against this backdrop, the DGCA has given certain relaxations in pilot Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms till April 30, sources said. There were no comments from Air India and DGCA on the FDTL norm relaxations. Providing the relaxations for the long-haul flights operated with two pilots, the sources said, adding that DGCA has extended the Flight Time (FT) by 1.30 hours to 11.30 hours and the Flight Duty Period (FDP) by 1.45 hours to 11.45 hours. PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

Adani, MSEDCL ink power supply agreement

New Delhi: Adani Power on Sunday said it has received a letter of award from Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Co Ltd (MSEDCL) for the supply of 1,600 MW of power from one of its upcoming ultra-supercritical thermal power projects. The supply of power under the proposed 25-year Power Supply Agreement (PSA) is scheduled to commence from FY31, the company said. PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

15 MARCH 2026

Akasa Air to levy fuel surcharge on flight tickets from March 15

NEW DELHI: Akasa Air will levy fuel surcharges ranging from Rs 199 to Rs 1,300 on domestic and international flight tickets from March 15 due to the spike in jet fuel prices amid the West Asia conflict.

Air India, Air India Express and IndiGo have started levying similar charges on domestic and international flight tickets.

In a statement on Saturday, Akasa Air said it would levy fuel surcharge for each flight and the quantum would vary based on the duration of the flight.

“Akasa Air will introduce a fuel surcharge ranging from Rs 199 to Rs 1300 on our domestic and international routes, for all bookings that are made with effect from 00:01 hrs on March

15, 2026,” it said. According to the airline, there has been a significant increase in the price of aviation turbine fuel, driven by evolving geopolitical developments in West Asia.

“As fuel represents a significant portion of airline operating costs, this impacts the cost of operations across the aviation industry,” the statement said. ¶¶



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

DGCA permits Air India to extend pilot duty hrs amid West Asia crisis

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

THE Directorate General of Civil Aviation, has permitted Air India to extend the duty period for its pilots operating long-haul flights to Europe and the United States by one hour and 45 minutes due to the ongoing West Asia crisis, Air India sources said. A DGCA source confirmed the development.

With the exemption, the maximum duty hours of a pilot have been extended to 14 hours and 45 minutes from the earlier Flight Duty Period (FDP) limit of 13 hours. The FDP refers to all the formalities a pilot must complete before beginning a flight and after concluding it.

Under the exemption, extension in actual flying time will work out to about 90 minutes, taking the maximum permissible flight time for a pilot to 11 hours and 30 minutes, up from the earlier limit of 10 hours.

"The temporary exemption in Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) has been permitted with immediate effect and will remain in force till April 30," an Air India source said.

"We will not compromise on the rest period for the pilots. It



will be four hours more than the Civil Aviation Requirement norms prescribed during such exemptions. However, this will take place after the extended duty hours are completed by the cockpit crew," another source said.

Air India had approached the regulator seeking relaxation in FDTL norms as its aircraft were forced to take longer routes to Europe and the US via southern Saudi Arabia and Egypt following the closure of Pakistani and Iranian airspace. The airline has also cited the closure of Iraqi airspace in its request to the regulator.

The airline has additionally been granted exemption from the mandatory 30-minute buffer period required while preparing the duty roster.

Tow truck catches fire at Delhi airport

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

A tow truck of a leading ground handling service provider caught fire during the pushback of an international cargo plane at the IGI Airport. No one was injured in the incident but the vehicle suffered damage, airport officials said.

"The tow truck of Air India SATS Airport Services Pvt Ltd was assisting in the pushback of an Etihad flight loaded with cargo, which was on its way to Doha, when the incident occurred late on Friday night. For reasons unknown, the truck caught fire. It was doused within ten minutes by the fire service," said an airport official.

Pushback is the process deployed for departing flights whereby a specialised tow tractor guides a plane backwards from the parking bay to the taxiway. This is essential as commercial flights cannot move in the reverse direction.



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVODAYA TIMES

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

एयर इंडिया के कर्मचारियों ने किया यात्रा नीति का दुरुपयोग, 4,000 से अधिक कर्मियों पर कार्रवाई

नई दिल्ली/मुम्बई, 15 मार्च (एजेंसी): एयर इंडिया ने अपने कर्मचारियों के लिए निर्धारित अवकाश यात्रा नीति (ई.एल.टी.) के उपयोग में बड़े पैमाने पर विसंगतियां पाई हैं। सूत्रों के अनुसार, इस मामले में 4,000 से अधिक कर्मचारी शामिल हैं और एयरलाइन ने दोषी कर्मचारियों पर जुर्माना लगाने सहित सुधारात्मक कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी है। टाटा समूह ने जनवरी, 2022 में घाटे में चल रही एयर इंडिया का अधिग्रहण किया था।

इस समय एयरलाइन एक महत्वाकांक्षी परिवर्तन योजना को लागू कर रही है। एयर इंडिया में कुल 24,000 से अधिक कर्मचारी हैं। मामले की जानकारी रखने वाले सूत्रों ने पीटीआई-भाषा को बताया कि एयर इंडिया की ई.एल.टी. नीति के उपयोग में बड़ी गड़बड़ियों का पता एक विस्तृत आंतरिक जांच के बाद चला। ई.एल.टी. नीति के तहत कर्मचारियों और उनके द्वारा नामित व्यक्तियों (जैसे जीवनसाथी और माता-पिता) को एक निश्चित संख्या में मुफ्त हवाई टिकट दिए जाते हैं। यह सुविधा कुछ शर्तों के अधीन होती है। सूत्रों ने बताया कि कई कर्मचारियों ने उन लोगों को अपना रिश्तेदार बताकर इस नीति का दुरुपयोग किया।

जिनसे उनका कोई संबंध नहीं था। कुछ मामलों में तो कर्मचारियों ने मुफ्त टिकट लेकर उन्हें ऊंचे दामों पर बाहरी लोगों को बेच दिया। इस मुद्दे पर प्रतिक्रिया के लिए एयर इंडिया को भेजे गए विस्तृत सवालों का फिलहाल कोई जवाब नहीं मिला है। एक सूत्र ने बताया कि 4,000 से अधिक कर्मचारियों को



लंबी उड़ानों के लिए डी.जी.सी.ए. से अस्थायी छूट

मुम्बई, (एजेंसी): पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते संकट के कारण हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों के बीच सूत्रों ने रविवार को जानकारी दी कि विमानन सुरक्षा निगरानी संस्था नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डी.जी.सी.ए.) ने एयर इंडिया की लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए अस्थायी छूट दे दी है।

ई.एल.टी. नीति का दुरुपयोग करते पाया गया है।

उल्लंघन के ये मामले पिछले वित्त वर्ष से जुड़े हुए हैं। हालांकि, इस दुरुपयोग के कारण हुए कुल वित्तीय नुकसान और सटीक समय अवधि का पता नहीं चल सका है। एयर इंडिया ने इस दिशा में सुधारात्मक कदम उठाते हुए संबंधित कर्मचारियों से धोखाधड़ी के जरिये ली गई राशि वापस करने को कहा है। इसके साथ ही कई दोषी कर्मचारियों पर भारी जुर्माना भी लगाया गया है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVODAYA TIMES

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

एयर इंडिया ने अबु धाबी, रस अल खैमा, शारजाह की उड़ानें रद्द कीं

एयर इंडिया और उसकी सहायक कंपनी एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (यूएई) की रविवार 15 मार्च की अपनी कई विशेष उड़ानें रद्द कर दी हैं।

टाटा समूह की कंपनियों ने रविवार को बताया कि यूएई हवाई अड्डा प्राधिकरण के निर्देश पर उसने उक्त शहरों के लिए अपनी ये गैरनिर्धारित उड़ानें रद्द की हैं। अबु धाबी, रस अल खैमा और शारजाह को जाने वाली विशेष उड़ानों को रद्द किया गया है।

सोशल मीडिया पर जारी एक बयान में खेद व्यक्त करते हुए बताया गया है कि प्रभावित यात्री बिना किसी अतिरिक्त शुल्क के आगे की तारीखों के लिए टिकट बुक करा सकते हैं या पूरा रिफंड पा सकते हैं। एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के बयान में कहा गया कि अमेरिका, इजराइल और ईरान के बीच बढ़ते संघर्ष की वजह से हवाई क्षेत्र पर प्रतिबंधों के कारण पश्चिम एशिया के लिए सेवाओं में कटौती की गई है।

दिल्ली से दुबई की उड़ानें भी रद्द

इनके अलावा, दिल्ली से दुबई की एयर इंडिया की पांच में से चार और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की छह में से पांच उड़ानें रद्द कर दी गयी हैं। इससे पहले एयर इंडिया और एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने रविवार को नियमित और विशेष उड़ानें मिलाकर संयुक्त रूप से कुल 72 उड़ानों के परिचालन की सूचना दी थी। नियमित उड़ानें सऊदी अरब के जेद्दा और ओमान की राजधानी मस्कट के लिए उपलब्ध हैं। प्रमुख विमान सेवा कंपनी इंडिगो ने भी दुबई से परिचालन पर प्रतिबंध बढ़ाये जाने की सूचना दी है।

इस बीच पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते संकट के कारण हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंधों के बीच विमानन सुरक्षा निगरानी संस्था नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने एयर इंडिया की लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए अस्थायी छूट दी है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

DGCA gives flight duty time relaxations to Air India amid conflict

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

■ Mumbai

Aviation safety watchdog DGCA has provided temporary relaxations in flight duty norms for Air India's long-haul flights as the airline is

taking longer routes due to the airspace curbs amid the Middle East conflict, sources said on Sunday. With Iranian and Iraqi airspace restrictions, Air India is taking the Egypt route for European and North American flights,



which means longer flying hours. Against this backdrop, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has given certain relaxations in pilot Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) norms till April 30, the

sources told PTI.

There were no comments from Air India and DGCA on the FDTL norm relaxations. Providing the relaxations for the long-haul flights operated with two pilots, the sources said.

Air India acts after finding misuse of staff travel policy



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

Air India has detected large-scale discrepancies in the utilisation of its leisure travel policy, involving more than 4,000 employees and has initiated corrective actions, including imposing penalties on the erring staff, according to sources.

Loss-making Air India was acquired by the Tata Group in January 2022, and the airline, which has faced multiple headwinds in recent times, is also in the midst of implementing an ambitious transformation plan. The airline has more than 24,000 employees.

The sources in the know told PTI that the large-scale discrepancies in the use of Air India's Employee Leisure Travel (ELT) policy were detected after a detailed

internal investigation.

The ELT policy allows a specified number of free air tickets for individual employees and their nominees, including spouse and parents. These are subject to certain conditions.

Many employees were found to have misused the policy by showing those not related to them as relatives to avail the benefits. Some were reported to have even availed the free tickets and sold them to people at a higher price, the sources said. A detailed set of queries sent to Air India on Thursday seeking comments on the issue and the actions taken remained unanswered. One of the sources said more than 4,000 staff were found to have misused the ELT policy. Violations dating back to the last financial year, claims were also detected.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

फ्री टिकट पॉलिसी के दुरुपयोग में एयर इंडिया के 4 हजार से अधिक कर्मचारी जांच के घेरे में

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): निजी एयरलाइन कंपनी एयर इंडिया इन दिनों अपने कर्मचारियों द्वारा फ्री टिकट सुविधा के कथित दुरुपयोग को लेकर आंतरिक संकट से जूझ रही है। कंपनी की आंतरिक जांच में सामने आया है कि हजारों कर्मचारियों ने 'एम्प्लॉई लेजर ट्रेवल' (ईएलटी) पॉलिसी के तहत मिलने वाली मुफ्त टिकट सुविधा का गलत इस्तेमाल किया। मामले में 4,000 से अधिक कर्मचारी जांच के दायरे में आ गए हैं और अब उनके खिलाफ कार्रवाई शुरू कर दी गई है। एयरलाइन अपने कर्मचारियों को 'एम्प्लॉई लेजर ट्रेवल' नीति के तहत हर साल 14 फ्री रिटर्न टिकट उपलब्ध कराती है। इन टिकटों का उपयोग कर्मचारी स्वयं या



अपने करीबी परिवार जैसे माता-पिता या पति-पत्नी के लिए कर सकते हैं। लेकिन जांच में पता चला कि कई कर्मचारियों ने इस सुविधा का लाभ उठाने के लिए फर्जी तरीके अपनाए। कुछ कर्मचारियों ने ऐसे लोगों को अपना रिश्तेदार बताकर फ्री टिकट दिलवा दिए, जिनका कोई पारिवारिक संबंध नहीं था। कुछ मामलों में कर्मचारियों ने मुफ्त टिकट लेकर उन्हें बाहरी लोगों को ऊंची कीमत पर बेचने तक का काम किया। सूत्रों के मुताबिक एयर इंडिया के करीब

24 हजार कर्मचारियों में से लगभग 4 हजार इस गड़बड़ी में शामिल पाए गए हैं। इनमें बड़ी संख्या उन कर्मचारियों की बताई जा रही है जिन्होंने एयरलाइन के निजीकरण के बाद नौकरी जॉइन की थी। यह गड़बड़ियां पिछले वित्त वर्ष से चल रही थीं। मामला सामने आने के बाद एयरलाइन प्रबंधन ने सख्त कदम उठाए हैं। अब किसी भी कर्मचारी द्वारा नामित रिश्तेदार को फ्री टिकट देने से पहले कंपनी को वैध दस्तावेज और रिश्ते का प्रमाण देना अनिवार्य कर दिया गया है। वहीं जिन कर्मचारियों ने नियमों का उल्लंघन किया है, उनसे टिकटों की पूरी राशि वसूलने की प्रक्रिया शुरू कर दी गई है और भारी जुर्माना भी लगाया जा रहा है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

15 MARCH 2026

एअर इंडिया के बाद इंडिगो की भी टिकटें महंगी

नई दिल्ली। एअर इंडिया के बाद इंडिगो की फ्लाइट्स भी कल से महंगी हो जाएंगी। देश की सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइन कंपनी ने सभी घरेलू और इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट्स पर फ्यूल सरचार्ज लगाने की घोषणा की है। एयरलाइन ने बताया कि ईरान और अमेरिका-इजरायल के बीच जारी जंग की वजह से जेट फ्यूल की कीमतें 85 प्रति. तक बढ़ गई हैं। इस कारण घरेलू और इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट्स की टिकटों पर 425 से 2300 तक सरचार्ज लगाया जाएगा। एक्सट्रा फ्यूल चार्ज के साथ टिकटों की नई कीमतें 14 मार्च रात 12 बजे से लागू हो गई हैं। इंडिगो ने यात्रियों पर पड़ने वाले बोझ को कम रखने के लिए अलग-अलग दूरी के हिसाब से चार्ज तय किया है।

हवाई सफर महंगा : क्या है फ्यूल सरचार्ज

नई दिल्ली। पश्चिम एशिया में जारी का असर अब हवाई यात्रियों की जेब पर पर पड़ा तय है। इंडिया, इंडिगो और आकासा एयर जैसी प्रमुख भारतीय एयरलाइंस ने अपनी बढ़ती लागत से निपटने के लिए घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों पर ईंधन अधिभार यानी फ्यूल सरचार्ज वसूलने का निर्णय लिया है। आइए इस आसान सवाल-जवाब के जरिए समझते हैं कि यह सरचार्ज क्या है, हवाई किराए बढ़ने का खतरा क्यों है और इसका आपकी जेब पर क्या असर पड़ेगा। **क्या होता है ईंधन अधिभार या फ्यूल सरचार्ज?**

विमानन ईंधन यानी एविएशन टर्बाइन फ्यूल या यानी विमानन ईंधन की कीमतें तेजी से बढ़ती हैं, तो उड़ानों का संचालन करने वाली कंपनियां अपनी बढ़ती लागत की भरपाई के लिए टिकट पर एक अतिरिक्त शुल्क लगाती हैं, इसे ही ईंधन अधिभार या फ्यूल सरचार्ज कहा जाता है। यह शुल्क हवाई यात्री मूल किराए से



अलग होता है और इससे यात्री की जेब पर किराये का कुल भार बढ़ जाता है। चूँकि एयरलाइंस के कुल खर्च में ईंधन की हिस्सेदारी लगभग 25 प्रतिशत होती है, इसलिए ईंधन के महंगा होने पर ऐसे शुल्क लगाना कंपनियों की व्यावसायिक मजबूरी बन जाती है।

मौजूदा हालात में विमानन कंपनियों ने ईंधन अधिभार लगाने का फैसला क्यों लिया? हालिया दिनों में पश्चिम एशिया में जारी संकट के बीच देश की प्रमुख

विमानन कंपनियों ने हवाई यात्रियों से ईंधन अधिभार वसूलने का फैसला किया है। पश्चिम एशिया में ईरान और अमेरिका (इस्त्राइल समर्थित) के बीच घमासान चल रहा है। इस तनाव के कारण कच्चे तेल के निर्यात में बाधा उत्पन्न हुई है और तेल की कीमतों में भारी उछाल आया है। इसके अलावा, सुरक्षा चिंताओं को देखते हुए कई एयरलाइंस पश्चिम एशिया के हवाई क्षेत्र से बचकर लंबी दूरी के वैकल्पिक मार्गों से उड़ान भर रही हैं। लंबे रूट की वजह से ईंधन

की खपत ज्यादा हो रही है, जिससे परिचालन लागत काफी बढ़ गई है। **भारत की प्रमुख एयरलाइंस ने सरचार्ज में कितना इजाफा किया है?**

लागत को संतुलित करने के लिए भारत की मुख्य एयरलाइंस ने अलग-अलग दरें तय की हैं-

एअर इंडिया- 12 मार्च से घरेलू उड़ानों पर 399 रुपये का फ्यूल सरचार्ज लगाया गया है। 18 मार्च से दूसरे चरण में यूरोप, उत्तरी अमेरिका और ऑस्ट्रेलिया की उड़ानों के लिए इस सरचार्ज में 25 से 50 डॉलर तक की वृद्धि की जाएगी।

इंडिगो- 14 मार्च से घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय टिकटों पर 425 रुपये से लेकर 2,300 रुपये तक का सरचार्ज लागू हो गया है। इसमें घरेलू उड़ानों के लिए 425 रुपये और यूरोप जैसी लंबी दूरी की उड़ानों के लिए 2,300 रुपये तक का चार्ज शामिल है।

आकासा एयर- 15 मार्च से बुक होने वाले टिकटों पर उड़ान की

अवधिके आधार पर 199 रुपये से 1,300 रुपये के बीच सरचार्ज लगाया गया है।

क्या पश्चिम एशिया के इस तनाव से वैश्विक तेल आपूर्ति पर भी असर पड़ा है?

जी हां। ईरान की ओर से फारस की खाड़ी में वाणिज्यिक जहाजों पर किए गए हमलों के कारण होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य से आवाजाही लगभग रुक गई है। यह एक बेहद महत्वपूर्ण समुद्री मार्ग है, जहां से दुनिया की लगभग 20% तेल आपूर्ति होती है। हालांकि, ऊर्जा सुरक्षा के मोर्चे पर भारत के लिए राहत की बात यह है कि भारतीय एलपीजी आपूर्ति से जुड़े दो महत्वपूर्ण जहाज- शिवालिक और नंदा देवी इस होर्मुज जलडमरूमध्य को सफलतापूर्वक पार कर चुके हैं। इंटरनेशनल एयर ट्रांसपोर्ट एसोसिएशन के महानिदेशक विली वॉल्श के मुताबिक, मौजूदा वैश्विक हालात में दुनिया भर में हवाई किराए 9% तक महंगे हो सकते हैं।



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SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

15 MARCH 2026

अकासा एयर आज से लगाएगा ईंधन अधिभार टिकट 199 से 1300 रुपये तक होंगे महंगे

नई दिल्ली। अकासा एयर ने घोषणा की है कि 15 मार्च से घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों के टिकटों पर ईंधन अधिभार (फ्यूल सरचार्ज) लगाया जाएगा। एयरलाइन के अनुसार, यह अतिरिक्त शुल्क घरेलू उड़ानों के टिकटों पर 199 रुपये से 1,300 रुपये तक होगा। इस कदम से यात्रियों को अब अपनी यात्रा के लिए अधिक भुगतान करना होगा। **क्यों लगाया गया अधिभार?**

पिछले कुछ समय से वैश्विक बाजार में कच्चे तेल की कीमतों में उतार-चढ़ाव देखा जा रहा है। इसका सीधा असर विमानन कंपनियों के परिचालन लागत पर पड़ रहा है। ईंधन लागत विमानन कंपनियों के कुल खर्च का एक बड़ा हिस्सा होती है। इस अधिभार का उद्देश्य बढ़ती परिचालन लागत के बोझ को कम करना है। यात्रियों को टिकट बुक करते समय इस अतिरिक्त शुल्क का



ध्यान रखना होगा। यह अधिभार टिकट की मूल कीमत के अतिरिक्त होगा। एयरलाइन ने कहा कि वह बाजार की स्थितियों की लगातार निगरानी करती रहेगी।

यात्रियों पर प्रभाव और लागू होने की तिथि-यह नया ईंधन अधिभार 15 मार्च, 2026 से प्रभावी होगा। इसका मतलब है कि इस तिथि के बाद बुक किए गए सभी टिकटों पर

यह शुल्क लगेगा। यात्रियों को अपनी यात्रा योजना बनाते समय इस अतिरिक्त लागत को ध्यान में रखना होगा। यह कदम हवाई यात्रा को थोड़ा महंगा बना देगा। पश्चिम एशिया में जारी तनाव के चलते जेट फ्यूल की कीमतों में हुई तेज बढ़ोतरी के बाद एअर इंडिया, इंडिगो और एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस पहले ही यह फैसला ले चुकी है।



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THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

15 MARCH 2026

Akasa levies surcharges

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: Akasa Air will levy fuel surcharges ranging from ₹199 to ₹1,300 on domestic and international flight tickets from March 15 due to the spike in jet fuel prices amid the West Asia conflict and days after domestic carriers Air India, Air India Express and IndiGo levied similar price hikes.

In a statement on Saturday, Akasa Air said it would levy a fuel surcharge for each flight and the quantum would vary based on the duration of the flight.

"Akasa Air will introduce a fuel surcharge ranging from ₹199 to ₹1300 on our domestic and international routes, for all bookings that are made



SPIKE IN FUEL PRICES

with effect from 00:01 hrs on March 15, 2026," it said.

"There has been a significant increase in the price of aviation turbine fuel, driven by evolving geopolitical developments in West Asia," a company spokesperson said.

"As fuel represents a significant portion of airline operating costs, this impacts the cost of operations across the aviation industry," the state-

ment said.

Akasa Air added that it would continue to closely monitor the operating environment and review the fuel surcharge periodically.

IndiGo on Friday announced that it would levy a fuel charge ranging from ₹25 to ₹2,300 on domestic and international flight tickets from March 14, while Air India and Air India Express announced on March 10 that they would levy a fuel charge of ₹399 to ₹4,600.

Akasa Air on Friday also announced a strategic collaboration with Noida International Airport for setting up an aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility at the upcoming airport in Jewar, Uttar Pradesh.

Govt may review bilaterals as int'l airfares defy gravity

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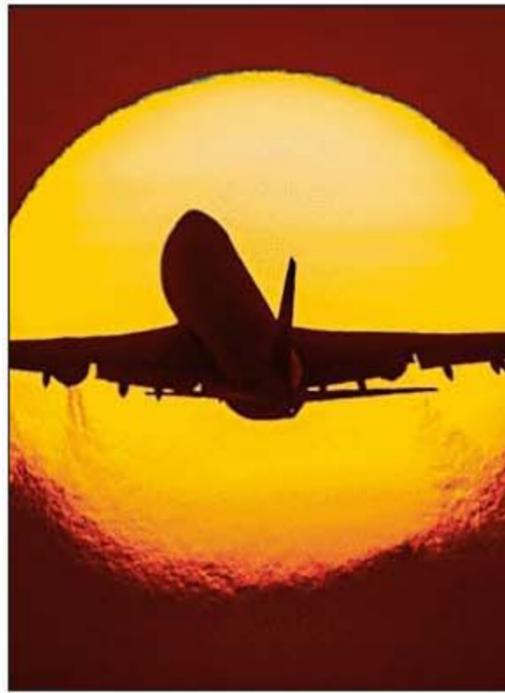
New Delhi: Skyrocketing international airfares may lead govt to review its unstated policy of not enhancing flying rights of foreign airlines, in a bid to come to the rescue of the public.

Indian carriers' operating costs are going through the roof due to the sharp spike in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, and the rupee crashing to new lows on a daily basis — along with a drop in the supply of seats offered by Gulf carriers — means international airfares are likely to remain high in the foreseeable future.

Against this backdrop, industry sources say there may be a revision in bilaterals of some countries that have remained largely frozen for nearly a decade to increase supply to and from India and help douse the fares on fire.

Places that have been seeking an upward revision include Dubai, Qatar and Abu Dhabi.

Since 2014, the Narendra Modi govt has focused on strengthening Indian carriers through a virtual freeze on bilaterals. That has borne fruit in terms of IndiGo becoming a giant; Air India group's ghar wapsi to founder Tata Sons and now being flush with funds and fleet orders; and new carriers like Akasa, Star Air and Fly91



The sharp spike in ATF prices and the rupee crashing to new lows — along with a drop in the supply of seats offered by Gulf carriers — means international airfares are likely to remain high

taking to the skies. Last year, Indian carriers added 80 additional aircraft to their fleet.

“While we continue to bat for rationalising both the base pricing of ATF and the state (VAT) and central (excise) levies on it, there is a thinking now to consider reviewing bilaterals that haven't been revised for a long time despite the increase in demand. (Except on ATF pricing) Indian carriers have got support in the last one decade. Now the time may have come to help lower fares by considering enhancement of foreign airlines' capacity and increasing supply,” said an industry executive.

With India getting a new airport in Navi Mumbai and

the hugely delayed one in Noida likely to open this summer, some airport operators, including Adani Group, have been seeking a revision in bilaterals.

The freeze in bilaterals means that new capacity can't be added to places like Dubai, which was the biggest international destination for Indian globetrotters before the Israel-Iran war. Akasa, for instance, hasn't been able to fly there as the bilaterals have been fully utilised by airlines of both sides.

Indian airlines get cheaper ATF and higher yields for international flights. “Domestic airfares have been capped since the IndiGo crisis last Dec. But our operating cost has skyrocketed. To cap fares, cap costs too. This is what we have told govt,” said an official.

On its part, the aviation ministry is trying to reason with the oil ministry to ensure rational ATF pricing as part of the crack spread — the difference between a barrel of crude oil and refined products like petrol, diesel and ATF produced from the same. Globally, ATF accounts for 20%-25% of airlines' operating cost. In India, that percentage is in the range of 40%-45%. The ministry has asked states like Delhi and Maharashtra to lower VAT for close to two decades now. A revision at 11% excise has been requested too.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

16 MARCH 2026

Airlines curtail UAE ops; DGCA relaxes AI flight duty norms

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 15

Flight operations between India and the United Arab Emirates faced disruptions on Sunday, with several airlines cancelling or scaling back services amid operational restrictions due to rising tensions in West Asia.

In a related development, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted temporary relaxations in pilot duty time limits for long-haul flights operated by Air India as the airline is taking longer routes to avoid restricted airspace in the warzone. The restrictions over Iranian and Iraqi airspace have forced the airline to reroute services bound for Europe and North America via Egypt. Air India and Air India Express confirmed that a number of flights scheduled between India and the UAE were cancelled after directions from

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Airlines curtail...

UAE airport authorities. The restrictions also forced the airlines to temporarily curtail certain ad-hoc operations, additional flights usually scheduled outside the regular timetable to meet higher passenger demand.

In a statement, Air India said both the full-service carrier and its low-cost subsidiary had scaled back such ad-hoc operations for March 15 in line with the instructions issued by UAE airport authorities. IndiGo said it had cancelled several flights to and from Dubai due to continuing airspace restrictions in the region.

As regards relaxations in pilot duty time limits for Air India, Sources said the aviation watchdog relief applied to long-haul operations conducted with two pilots until April 30. Under the temporary arrangement, the permitted flight time has been increased by one hour and thirty minutes, allowing a maximum of 11 hours and 30 minutes.