

Corporate Communications Directorate

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Chennai's airport game must take off post-haste

India's airports have seen a dramatic makeover in almost all metro cities and several tier-II towns, largely due to the entry of the private sector into airport infrastructure and management. Those who flew in the 1970s and 1980s may recall how decrepit airport infrastructure made the risk of a beam or an entire roof collapsing seem higher than an aircraft-related incident. Even major airports had a tired look and feel, a signature of the Airport Authority of India (AAI)'s management.

Now, almost all metropolitan airports — Mumbai and the National Capital Region have two each — have vastly improved facilities. Chennai, however, remains a glaring exception. In 2005-06, when the privatisation of metropolitan airports was in full swing, Tamil Nadu's DMK government of the time rejected privatisation and forced the city to yield to another below-the-mark AAI facility. I recall attending the inauguration of two AAI facilities — Dabolim (Goa) and Chennai — and documenting their pronounced inadequacies.

Recently, en route to Colombo from MOPA (Goa), via Chennai, I realised that unless you have a private car receiving you at the domestic arrival, passengers of all ages landing at Chennai airport are forced to haul their luggage and then ride a buggy to a cramped area where they can hail an app-taxi ride or public transport. This is undoubtedly an inconvenience to the lay flyer since the majority of the arrivals use public transport to travel from the airport to their destinations — it is worse when they have to navigate the busy roads outside the airport's perimeter to board a bus.

One way to fix this is to allow taxis to meet flyers at the exit and make those with private cars and drivers tug their luggage and ride buggies. One is sure that this would make the AAI officialdom find a way out of the present mess quicker than one can imagine.

Flyers complain that the airport feels permanently under-construction, owing to its constant need for renovation and upgrades. It lacks sufficient seating, faces prolonged baggage carousel delays, and experiences severe peak-hour gridlocks both within the airport and at the exit. Things are not much better on the airside, with high usage of shuttle buses and trams on the tarmac due to low aerobridge availability. And parking remains just as much a challenge on the airside as on the terminal side.

Not surprisingly, Chennai has been slipping in airport rankings (as recently reported in the

media); indeed, once considered a laggard of the metropolitan airport pack, Kolkata airport frequently threatens to unseat its southern cousin in the rankings, thanks to the latter's stagnant traffic growth and cancelled flights.

Tamil Nadu has paid a heavy price for the failure to expand — ministry sources say that over the last several years, Chennai has lost valuable American-West-Coast-bound daily traffic to Bengaluru, Karnataka, where flyers are ferried directly to the international terminal in brand new cars, at nominal cost. Whether this is due to better pricing or wider availability of routes and options is not clear, but the fact remains that traffic that would have earlier flown from Chennai is now choosing Bengaluru.

Many airlines have withdrawn flights from Chennai due to the airport's capacity and infrastructure bottlenecks. It now risks losing the race to Bengaluru and Hyderabad for no other factor than its inability to compete. The damage done by successive administrations in Tamil Nadu and their refusal to cede control is now well-documented.

Expert projection that the airport, as it exists today, will hit saturation by 2028-2032 should be a reason for worry. The site picked by the previous administration for a new airport, at Parandur (70 km from the heart of Chennai), was rejected by the new dispensation in power in Tamil Nadu, after the project was opposed by local farmers and activists (the site hosts many key wetlands).

It is now incumbent upon the new administration to choose from two pathways out of the mess: Identify a brand new site within a reasonable distance from the city, get all clearances, and bid it out to a private player — ideally before 2032 (a Herculean task) — or reverse the rejection of the Parandur site, find ways to mollify the farmers, facilitate solutions to environmental concerns and get the project running at the earliest. A properly conceived and executed public transport linkage must accompany construction, given the distance from the city.

Meanwhile, the new chief minister could send a team (including AAI officials) to visit Colombo airport. Though it doesn't set any groundbreaking standards, the government-run and managed facility should inspire many ideas on how to improve Tamil Nadu's airport game.



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AMAR UJALA

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इस्त्राइल में भी भारतीय कंपनियां बनाएं हवाई अड्डे : रूवेन अजार

नई दिल्ली। भारत में इस्त्राइल के राजदूत रूवेन अजार ने भारत के हवाई अड्डों की सराहना करते हुए उम्मीद जताई है कि भारतीय कंपनियां जल्द ही इस्त्राइल में भी हवाई अड्डों का निर्माण करेंगी। इस्त्राइली राजदूत ने यह बात प्रिक्स वर्साय के गुवाहाटी के मशहूर गोपीनाथ बोरदोलोई अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे और नवी मुंबई अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे को दुनिया के सबसे खूबसूरत हवाई अड्डों की 2026 की सूची में शामिल करने के बाद कही।

इस्त्राइल स्थित भारतीय दूतावास सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट पर प्रतिक्रिया देते हुए अजार ने लिखा, उम्मीद है कि जल्द ही भारतीय कंपनियां इस्त्राइल में

**भारतीय हवाई अड्डों की
वैश्विक उपलब्धि की इस्त्राइली
दूत ने की सराहना**

भी एक हवाई अड्डा बनाएंगी। दूतावास ने कहा कि भारत अब केवल हवाई अड्डे नहीं, बल्कि वैश्विक पहचान बना रहा है। दूतावास ने इस सम्मान को भारत के तेजी से बदलते बुनियादी ढांचे का सबूत बताया। उसके मुताबिक, ये हवाई अड्डे आधुनिक डिजाइन, टिकाऊ निर्माण, स्थानीय सांस्कृतिक विरासत का शानदार मेल होने के साथ ही लाखों यात्रियों को विश्वस्तरीय सफर का शानदार अनुभव देते हैं। एजेंसी



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

CCI junks complaint against DIAL over security contracts

RUCHIKA CHITRAVANSHI

Paraj, 16 July

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Thursday closed a complaint against Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) after finding no evidence of abuse of dominance in awarding security service contracts at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA).

The CCI closed the case at the preliminary stage, dismissing allegations that DIAL awarded security contracts to RAXA Security Services, a subsidiary of the GMR group, without following a transparent competitive bidding process.

"The Commission deems it appropriate to not interfere with the commercial decisions made by the entities in the normal course of business unless the same raises any anti-competitive concern," the anti-trust watchdog said in its order.

The complaint was filed by Swam Kartik Sharma, director of Galaxy Security and Allied Services Pvt Ltd. Sharma alleged that DIAL denied market access to other security service providers, created a monopolistic environment, and violated the operation, management and development agreement (OMDA) governing the airport concession.

After seeking a detailed response from DIAL, the CCI concluded that the tender was awarded in compliance with the provisions of OMDA and on an arm's-length basis.

"In a catena of cases, the Commission has already opined that the procurer must have freedom to exercise its choice freely in the procurement of goods and services following the law of the land," the CCI order said.

While examining the com-

plaint, the CCI noted that RAXA was awarded the tender for providing security services at IGIA after adhering to a competitive bidding process.

On the allegations of selectively awarding tender to an entity like RAXA, in which GMR holds 100 per cent share, DIAL told CCI during the proceedings that multiple parties participated in the bidding process and none of the bidders were related parties except RAXA.

It stated that there is no restriction under the OMDA for awarding contracts to "related parties" or "group companies", provided its prescriptions are followed.

DIAL said that the allegation of stifling competition and excluding competitors is thoroughly misplaced. This is because all tenders undertaken by DIAL in 2007, 2014, 2020, 2022, and 2025 followed a competitive bidding process in full compliance with the OMDA and applicable laws, with contracts awarded on an arm's-length basis.

An arm's-length basis in a contract means that all terms, prices, and conditions are negotiated as if the parties are completely independent and unrelated. It ensures the agreement reflects fair market value without favouritism, coercion, or hidden conflicts of interest, protecting both sides from legal or tax complications.

"Based on the material placed on record by DIAL, the Commission is of the view that the allegations raised regarding contravention of Section 4(2)(a)(i) of the (Competition) Act are not established," the regulator said.

The CCI also rejected allegations of bid rigging under Section 3, observing that the informant had placed no material on record indicating any collusive conduct.





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DESHBANDHU

DELHI

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नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से जोधपुर की उड़ानें भी हुईं कम, अब एक दिन छोड़कर मिलेगी फ्लाइट

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 16 जुलाई (देशबन्धु)। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से उड़ानों के नेटवर्क में लगातार बदलाव देखने को मिल रहा है। नवी मुंबई और चंडीगढ़ के लिए सेवाएं अस्थायी रूप से बंद होने के बाद अब जोधपुर रूट पर भी उड़ानों की संख्या घटा दी गई है। पहले इस सेक्टर पर रोजाना विमान सेवा उपलब्ध थी, लेकिन अब यात्रियों को एक दिन छोड़कर ही फ्लाइट मिल सकेगी। 15 जून से वाणिज्यिक संचालन शुरू करने वाले नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट ने एक जुलाई से 17 शहरों के लिए उड़ानें शुरू की थीं। हालांकि, यात्रियों की मांग और परिचालन आवश्यकताओं के आधार पर एयरलाइंस अपने नेटवर्क में लगातार बदलाव कर रही हैं। हाल ही में अकासा एयर ने नवी मुंबई और बेंगलुरु के लिए अपनी सेवाएं



अस्थायी रूप से स्थगित कर दी थीं, जबकि इंडिगो ने चंडीगढ़ रूट पर उड़ानों का संचालन रोक दिया। अब इंडिगो ने जोधपुर सेक्टर पर भी उड़ानों की आवृत्ति कम कर दी है। एयरपोर्ट की वेबसाइट के अनुसार गुरुवार को जोधपुर के लिए कोई उड़ान निर्धारित नहीं थी। शुक्रवार को दोपहर 2:55 बजे फ्लाइट संचालित होगी, जबकि शनिवार के बजाय अगली सेवा रविवार को उपलब्ध रहेगी। इससे स्पष्ट है कि अब इस रूट पर दैनिक उड़ानों की

- नवी मुंबई और चंडीगढ़ के बाद जोधपुर रूट पर भी कटौती
- गुरुवार को सिर्फ 14 शहरों के लिए संचालित हुई उड़ानें

जगह वैकल्पिक दिनों में ही विमान सेवा मिलेगी। गुरुवार को नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से कुल 14 शहरों के लिए उड़ानों का संचालन हुआ।

मुंबई के लिए अकासा एयर की दो उड़ानें संचालित की गईं, जबकि अन्य सभी गंतव्यों के लिए इंडिगो ने अपनी नियमित सेवाएं जारी रखीं। एयरपोर्ट प्रबंधन का कहना है कि यात्रियों की मांग और एयरलाइंस की परिचालन रणनीति के अनुसार समय-समय पर उड़ानों के शेड्यूल में बदलाव किया जाता रहेगा।



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DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

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Proposed site of the Warangal (Mamnoon) Airport.

Centre set to meet June 2028 target for Warangal airport

NARLAGIRI YADAGIRI | DC
WARANGAL, JULY 14

The Centre will invite tenders within the next three weeks for the construction of the main terminal building at the Warangal (Mamnoon) airport, Union civil aviation minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu announced on Tuesday, marking a major milestone in the long-pending project.

The announcement followed a meeting with Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in Delhi to review the project's progress.

Addressing a joint press conference, the two leaders said the Centre and the state government were working in close coordination to ensure the airport is inaugurated on June 2, 2028.

Ram Mohan Naidu said the terminal building would be designed in the Kakatiya architectural style, reflecting the region's cultural and

historical heritage. He said the Centre was expediting all necessary procedures to keep the project on schedule.

The Union minister alleged that the project had been delayed during the previous BRS government due to inadequate cooperation in land acquisition and statutory clearances.

He said the present state government had handed over nearly 700 acres required for the airport and was extending full cooperation for its execution.

Highlighting the Centre's focus on strengthening aviation infrastructure,

Naidu said that since the NDA government assumed office, more than 90 airports had been constructed or upgraded across the country.

He said the expansion of aviation infrastructure was an important part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

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AFTER BELOW-PAR PERFORMANCE IN PHASE ONE...

Udan 2.0 Takes Flight, Switches on Challenge Mode for Airports



Selection to be based on strict, multiple criteria for boosting regional connectivity

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: Strict criteria will govern airport selection in the second phase of a scheme aimed at boosting regional connectivity. This will be done through the 'challenge mode', with the proposed airports getting scored on multiple criteria such as proximity to tourist spots, industrial corridors or major airports; infrastructure readiness such as runways and terminal buildings; land availability; and state government commitment to financial contribution and offering sops such as reduced taxation on jet fu-

el, showed a document of the revised scheme reviewed by ET.

The top 50 shortlisted airports will be incorporated in the next phase of the Regional Connectivity Scheme.

The latest shift in the government's stance follows realisation of a below-par performance of the first phase, with commercial flights discontinued on nearly half the routes.

First launched in 2017, the ambitious Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (Udan) scheme was aimed at fuelling a nationwide expansion of air travel in one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets. Under the scheme, the government caps airfares and in lieu, offers incentives, including subsidies, to attract airlines to less-traversed routes.

The second phase, announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi earlier this month, boosted the outlay sixfold to ₹28,840 crore.

Adequate Aircraft Rule

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"There have been learnings from the first phase, where airlines were unable to commence operations as airports weren't ready," said a government official. "There are also cases where destinations never became viable and dropped off the network as soon as the subsidy period was over. Hence, the new scheme sets strict standards for airport selection so that only those with chances of sustained air connectivity are included."

Several regional airports, developed with government funding, eventually turned into burdensome projects after airlines ceased operations. Kushinagar Airport in Uttar Pradesh for instance, developed at a cost of Rs 448 crore, has had no commercial flights since 2023.

In the scheme's second phase, the government has also mandated that routes will be awarded only to airlines having adequate aircraft, unlike previously, when a carrier without an air operator permit was allowed to bid.

"Many smaller airlines bid for routes beyond their operational

capability, sometimes without even receiving an operating permit," said the official cited above. "This led to routes that were never started. Hence, we have restricted the eligibility criteria."

During the last bidding round in 2024, an entity called Jettwings Airways, which had submitted a plan to induct 42 aircraft over five years and was awarded a dozen routes, eventually never commenced operations.

The government will also push airports in major cities to allocate landing and take-off slots to smaller carriers, in the second phase, after regional airlines flagged that operations became unviable when they couldn't access privately-owned metro airports. "Major gateway airports like Delhi and Mumbai should support regional carriers for the scheme to have full impact," said Manoj Chacko, MD and CEO of Fly9L, which operates a six-aircraft fleet connecting Udan airports such as Sindhudurg and Jalgaon. "To develop a viable network, it is important for an airline of my size to have connectivity with a major airport."

Adequate Aircraft Rule ►► 6

CCI Dismisses Cases against Jio and DIAL

Our Bureau

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Thursday dismissed a complaint against Reliance Jio Infocomm and over 4,500 entities across sectors, finding no prima facie evidence of cartelisation or abuse of dominant position.

The complaint covered companies in logistics, telecom, government e-marketplace procurement, energy, steel, cement, FMCG, healthcare, real estate and other sectors.



In a separate order, the CCI also closed a case alleging irregularities in the tender process adopted by Delhi International Airport (DIAL) for security services at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, saying the allegations remained unsubstantiated.

NO EVIDENCE AGAINST JIO, OTHERS

In its order, the CCI said the complainant had failed to provide any cogent material, documentary evidence, empirical data or contemporaneous records to substantiate the allegations. Invoking the regulator's jurisdiction without such evidence would amount to a "roving and fishing inquiry", it said.



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DELHI

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देश को एक दशक में मिलेंगे सौ नए हवाई अड्डे

सुविधा

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता। संशोधित उड़ान योजना के तहत देश में अगले 10 वर्षों में 100 नए हवाई अड्डों को विकसित किया जाएगा। इसके साथ ही, हिमालयी, पूर्वोत्तर राज्यों और आकांक्षी जिलों में 200 आधुनिक हेलीपैड विकसित किए जाएंगे।

गुरुवार को विज्ञान भवन में संशोधित उड़ान योजना पर आयोजित द्विभाषक कार्यशाला को संबोधित करते हुए केंद्रीय नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री राम मोहन नायडू ने अगले 10 वर्षों को रोडमैप रखते हुए यह जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि अगले 10 वर्षों में नए

संशोधित उड़ान योजना की प्रमुख बातें

- बड़े विमानों (80 से अधिक सीट) में अब 50 फीसदी सीटों पर रियायती किराया लागू रहेगा, लेकिन सीटों की अधिकतम सीमा खत्म कर दी गई है।
- पहली बार योजना के तहत एचएल के दो ध्रुव हेलीकॉप्टर और दो डोर्नियर विमान शामिल
- स्परलाइंस को मिलने वाली वायविलिटी गैप फंडिंग की अवधि तीन साल से बढ़ाकर पांच साल कर दी गई है।
- मेट्रो और बड़े हवाई अड्डों पर उड़ान उड़ानों के लिए उपयुक्त स्लॉट उपलब्ध कराने का प्रयास किया जाएगा।

हवाई अड्डे विकसित किए जाने पर 12159 करोड़ रुपये और आधुनिक हेलीपैड के विकास पर 3661 करोड़ रुपये खर्च होंगे। कहा कि आज भारत दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा घरेलू विमानन बाजार बन चुका है। वर्ष 2001 में देश में केवल 65 हवाई अड्डे

थे और 2014 तक इनकी संख्या बढ़कर 74 हुई। जबकि बीते 12 वर्षों में 90 नए हवाई अड्डे जोड़े गए हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त 55 बंद या कम उपयोग वाले हवाई पट्टों को फिर से चालू कर हवाई अड्डों में बदला गया है। इसी का नतीजा है कि देश में हवाई यात्रा करने वाले

यात्रियों की संख्या तेजी से बढ़ रही है।

नागरिक उड्डयन राज्य मंत्री मुरलीधर मोहोले ने कहा कि सरकार का लक्ष्य हवाई यात्रा को सरती, आसान और देश के दूरदराज, टिपर-2 और टिपर-3 शहरों तक पहुंचाना है। इस मौके पर मंत्रालय के सचिव समीर कुमार सिन्हा और भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण (एएआई) के अध्यक्ष विपिन कुमार भी मौजूद रहे।

रोजाना पांच लाख घरेलू यात्री कर रहे सफर: मंत्री ने कहा कि वैश्विक भू-राजनीतिक तनाव के बावजूद भारत में रोजाना करोड़ों पांच लाख घरेलू यात्री हवाई यात्रा कर रहे हैं। अब देश के तमाम हिस्सों से लोगों को कनेक्टिविटी मिल रही है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

जेवर एयरपोर्ट का पहला महीना फीका

नई दिल्ली, लोकसत्थ। करीब 10 हजार करोड़ रुपये की लागत से विकसित नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट (जेवर) ने संचालन का पहला महीना पूरा कर लिया है। शुरुआती आंकड़े बताते हैं कि एयरपोर्ट पर उड़ानों और शहरों की संख्या में धीरे-धीरे बढ़ोतरी हो रही है, लेकिन यात्रियों की संख्या अभी भी उम्मीदों से काफी कम है। 1.2 करोड़ वार्षिक यात्रियों की क्षमता वाले इस एयरपोर्ट से पहले महीने में केवल 61,287 यात्रियों ने सफर किया, जो इसकी कुल क्षमता का करीब पांच प्रतिशत ही है। एयरपोर्ट का संचालन 15 जून से शुरू हुआ था। पहले सप्ताह में यहाँ केवल 86 फ्लाइट मूवमेंट दर्ज किए गए। दूसरे सप्ताह में यह संख्या 88 रही, जबकि तीसरे सप्ताह में बढ़कर 201 और चौथे सप्ताह में 224 फ्लाइट मूवमेंट तक पहुंच गई। यानी एक महीने में उड़ानों की संख्या लगभग तीन गुना हो गई। यात्रियों की संख्या भी शुरुआती दिनों के मुकाबले बढ़ी है।

MINT

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Private airports push back on fee proposal

Aera plans to link passenger fee rise to completion of infrastructure

Abhishek Law

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NEW DELHI

India's biggest private-sector airport operators are pushing back against a regulatory proposal that would delay when they can start charging passengers for new terminals and runways, warning that the change could squeeze cash flows and complicate financing for billions of rupees in planned expansion.

GMR Airports, Adani Airport Holdings and Fairfax-backed Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) are among the operators objecting to the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India's (Aera) plan to link passenger fee increases to the actual completion of infrastructure projects, rather than allowing cost recovery once tariffs are approved, according to minutes of a 6 July stakeholder meeting reviewed by *Mint*.

The dispute, which first emerged during Bengaluru airport's tariff review, has escalated as Hyderabad airport undergoes its own tariff determination for the five years through fiscal year 2031 (FY31), in which Hyderabad and Bengaluru alone plan more than ₹32,000 crore of combined capital spending.

Airport executives argue that the incremental Aggregate Revenue Requirement framework, while well-intentioned, could trigger sharp fee increases later in the tariff cycle, weaken investor confidence and complicate debt financing—concerns echoed by lenders including ICICI Bank, even as passenger advocacy groups back the regulator's user-pay principle. "...while it (GMR Airports) respects the underlying rationale of the proposed user-pay, its implementation in the existing regulatory regime presents certain practical challenges," Narayana Rao Kada, group deputy managing director, GMR, said during the consultation meeting held on 6 July.



Airport executives argue the proposed framework could trigger sharp fee increases later in the tariff cycle and weaken investor confidence. **BLOOMBERG**

The issue is particularly significant for GMR-run Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL), which has proposed a ₹13,548-crore expansion programme. Nearly 80% of the investment is

time, the same may initially be implemented only partially, such as through a 50% implementation..." he said.

The proposal could lead to "tariff shock in the latter years" with significantly higher user development fees. A higher financing burden and "reduced tariff predictability" could affect internal accruals, he said.

Adani Airport, which manages eight airports in the country, based its reasoning on implementation, noting that airlines sell tickets several months in advance.

"(So) any tariff revision consequent upon capitalisation of major assets should be initiated sufficiently in advance..." Ashu Madan, head-regulatory at Adani Airport, said at the meeting dated 6 July, as per the minutes reviewed by *Mint*.

For an extended version of this story, go to livemint.com.

FEE FIGHT

GMR Airports, Adani Airport Holdings and BIAL are among the operators objecting to Aera proposal

THE dispute, which first emerged during Bengaluru airport's tariff review, has escalated

HYDERABAD airport is undergoing its own tariff determination for the five years through FY31

scheduled for the latter half of the five-year tariff cycle, between FY27 and FY31.

The airport's finance chief, Anand Kumar P., urged Aera to retain the existing tariff philosophy or introduce the framework only partially. "...since the concept is being introduced for the first



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

16 JULY 2026

Airport's Bankra mosque worshippers opt for alt venues

KOLKATA: Residents of Bankra, a neighbourhood off Jessore Road near Kolkata airport, have started offering namaz at nearby mosques after access to the historic Gauripur Jame Masjid inside the airport premises was stopped last Friday.

Worshippers are now using the Jamia Islamia Madania madrasa and the Bisharpara mosque, both located close to the airport. Locals said the airport mosque had served generations of families and continued to remain their primary place of worship even after the area was relocated during airport expansion in the 1950s.

Residents said daily attendance at the mosque ranged from around a dozen devotees for the dawn prayer to 20-30 during afternoon and evening prayers. Friday congregations typically drew more than 100 worshippers, while Eid prayers attracted over 200 people. During the early days of Ramzan, around 300-350 people gathered for iftar before evening prayers.

According to residents, access restrictions gradually increased after the CISF took over airport security around 2000. Entry, which initially required only a register at the gate, later involved Aadhaar verification before being limited to Bankra residents.

Locals also recalled that a corridor connecting the mosque was removed during construction of an aircraft taxiway, after which shuttle buses were introduced for devotees.

Residents said they have cooperated with changing security measures and hope the issue can be resolved through discussions while maintaining airport security.

MPOST

AERA Calls For 'Pay-After-Use' Model ■ UDF At RGIA Highest In India

User fee relief for Hyd flyers as AERA proposes new tariff norm

Sunny.Baski@timesofindia.com

Hyderabad: Reeling under rising airfares, passengers flying out of Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) can at least stop fretting over a further jump in the User Development Fee (UDF), which is already the highest in the country at ₹700 for domestic flyers and ₹1,500 for international travellers.

The relief comes as the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has proposed a new tariff framework that prevents the cost of major expansion projects from being passed on to passengers before the facilities become operational.

The proposal assumes significance as RGIA is set to invest over ₹9,000 crore in two key expansion projects, a northern passenger terminal with an annual capacity of 20 million passengers and a northern precinct airside development, including a new runway, taxiways and aprons. Both projects are expected to be commissioned only in 2029-30.

Under the existing tariff mechanism, airports can factor in projected capital expenditure while determining tariffs for a five-year control

HYD NOW CONNECTED TO 100 DESTINATIONS

- RGIA's connectivity expanded to **100** destinations
- Network now comprises **74** domestic & **26** international destinations

- Passenger traffic at RGIA witnessed sharp growth over past five years

- Airport handled **30.4 mn** passengers during FY 2025-26
- 83,500** passengers & **569** aircraft movements every day

User Development Fee

₹700
for domestic flyers

₹1,500
for International travellers

PASSENGER TRAFFIC AT RGIA (IN MILLIONS)



period, allowing user charges to increase years before passengers can actually use the new facilities.

To address this, AERA has proposed adopting the 'User Pay Principle', under which passengers, airlines and other airport users will pay for major infrastructure only after it is completed, commissioned and made available for use. According to Airports

Economic Regulatory Authority, charging users for infrastructure that is yet to become operational raises concerns over fairness and cost allocation. The regulator noted that the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) also advocates that airport charges should bear a reasonable relationship to the facilities and services actually provided.

Concerns over delays

The authority has actually observed that, in several instances, major capital expenditure projects projected for commissioning within a control period were subsequently delayed, rescheduled, phased differently or, in some cases, not executed at all.

"Such deviations between projected and actual capitalisation can lead to a mismatch

between tariff recovery and asset availability," AERA states. "As a result, airport users may bear charges based on investments that have not yet materialised, while the airport operator may receive revenue recovery in advance of the corresponding asset being put into use," it further said.

Why did AERA propose ARR?

To address this, AERA has proposed a new regulatory mechanism called the Incremental Annual Revenue Requirement (ARR) approach for large airport expansion projects. Under this system, the cost of major future infrastructure projects will not be included while fixing airport tariffs at the beginning of a five-year control period.

Instead, the regulator will separately assess each high-value project based on its estimated cost, financing plan and construction schedule. Airport charges will be revised only after a particular project is completed, commissioned and opened for use, allowing the airport operator to recover the investment only when passengers begin benefiting from the new infrastructure.

Tri-weekly Abu Dhabi flight puts Navi Mum on int'l aviation map

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Abu Dhabi: At 2.55am (IST) Wednesday, Air India Express flight IX 207 to Abu Dhabi lifted off from Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), becoming the first international commercial flight to depart from the city's second airport and formally launching its overseas operations.

The historic departure was marked by a ceremonial send-off. Three "Follow Me" vehicles escorted the eight-month-old Boeing 737 aircraft in an arrowhead formation as it taxied to the runway of the seven-month-old airport. Back at the international terminal, ground staff lined up in a guard of honour, watching the aircraft accelerate into the night sky.

Shortly after take-off, Captain Shapoor Irani informed passengers that the aircraft would pass over Elephanta Caves and south Mumbai before heading across the Arabian Sea. About one hour and 40 minutes into the flight, it entered Muscat airspace before descending into Abu Dhabi's Zayed International Airport roughly 30 minutes later. The flight, with only a handful of empty seats, landed at around 4.15am local time.

For now, the thrice-weekly Air India Express service will remain NMIA's only international route.

Airport officials said no additional overseas flights are expected before Sept. "One international carrier has booked slots beginning in Sept. Other airlines, including IndiGo, have expressed interest, but no additional slots have been confirmed yet," an airport official said.

The launch comes at a time of heightened uncertainty in Middle East aviation after the ceasefire between Iran and the US-backed coalition fell through just days ago, reviving concerns over regional stability and airline operations. "Once the regional situation stabilises, we hope airlines will begin operating more services from this airport," a senior terminal official said. "Airlines operate on very thin margins, and stability will encourage carriers to expand."

The airport is banking on a catchment area extending beyond the Mumbai Metropolitan Region. "We expect to draw international passengers all the way from Pune. Since the Missing Link has become operational, travel time between Pune and Navi Mumbai has reduced significantly making this airport an attractive alternative for overseas travellers," an airport official

Photo: KK Choudhary



Navi Mumbai International Airport welcomes its first international commercial flight from Abu Dhabi. For now, Air India Express service will remain NMIA's only international route



said.

Inside the terminal, NMIA has commissioned 66 conventional check-in counters and 22 self-service kiosks serving both domestic and international passengers. Some facilities, however, are still awaiting regulatory approvals. "The smoking lounge is pending security approval,"

an airport official said.

The passenger processing sequence also differs from Mumbai's international airport. At Navi Mumbai airport, immigration formalities are completed before security screening. Officials said passengers wishing to leave the airport after clearing immigration — because of an

emergency, a delayed flight or any other reason — would have to first cancel their immigration clearance, a process that could take several hours.

The terminal's duty-free outlet also recorded its first customers. An oilfield worker became its inaugural shopper after purchasing chocolates before boarding the flight.

Govt hikes export levy on diesel, aviation fuel

Move follows surge in crude prices amid escalating US-Iran conflict

FC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 16

India has raised taxes on exports of diesel and jet fuel or aviation turbine fuel (ATF) effective Thursday as global oil prices surged amid further escalation of the US-Iran conflict.

The windfall tax on diesel exports has been increased to ₹15.5 per litre, while the levy on ATF exports has been raised to ₹14.5 per litre. However, the export duty on petrol has been cut to ₹2.5 per litre from ₹4 per litre, according to the finance ministry.

As per the ministry's notification, the rate of special additional excise duty (SAED) on diesel exports has been increased to ₹15.5 per litre from ₹8.5 per litre.

Similarly, the SAED on ATF exports has been raised to ₹14.5 per litre from ₹7.5 per litre applicable till July 15.

"The export duty on petrol has been cut to ₹2.5 per litre, from ₹4 per



DOMESTIC NEEDS

TAX on diesel exports has been increased to ₹15.5.

- Levy on ATF exports has been raised to ₹14.5 per litre.

- Export duty on petrol has been cut to ₹2.5 per litre from ₹4 per litre.

- SAED on diesel exports has been increased to ₹15.5 a litre from ₹8.5 a litre.

- SAED on ATF exports has been raised to ₹14.5 per litre from ₹7.5 per litre till July 15.

- Ministry says no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

- Windfall tax levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia.

litre," the ministry said.

The government had imposed an export duty on diesel and aviation turbine fuel on March 27 amid escalating tensions in West Asia and has revised the rates every fortnight since then.

Beginning May 16, an export duty was also

imposed on petrol. The ministry said there was no change in the existing duty rates on petrol and diesel cleared for domestic consumption.

The windfall tax was imposed to increase domestic availability of fuel amid the conflict in West Asia. It was also aimed at prevent-

ing exporters from taking undue advantage of the price differential created by the rise in global crude oil prices.

The move was intended to ensure adequate domestic availability of petroleum products by discouraging exports during the West Asia crisis.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Govt hikes windfall tax on export of diesel, ATF



New Delhi: The government has increased the windfall gains tax on exports of diesel and ATF, while lowering the levy on petrol for the fortnight beginning July 16. The rate of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED) on diesel exports has been increased to ₹15.5 a litre from ₹8.5 a litre. Similarly, SAED on ATF exports has been raised to ₹14.5 per litre from ₹7.5 per litre till July 15. However, the export duty on petrol has been cut to ₹2.5 per litre, from ₹4 per litre. PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

British Airways' ground handling receipts are taxable in India: ITAT

Shishir Sinha
New Delhi

The Delhi Bench of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal declined to give relief to British Airways on tax benefits under the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for services provided to other airlines in India.

Experts opined that other airlines from the UK will face a similar issue, while there would be relief for airlines from Germany and the Netherlands.

POOLING DISPUTE

The Bench highlighted that, as per the contention of British Airways, the ground handling and engineering services rendered by it to other airlines in India are ancillary to the main activity of operating aircraft in India, and such ancillary services fall under a pooling activity. Hence, the revenue generated from rendering of such services deserves the benefit of the India-UK DTAA.

"We find that the issue raised by the assessee in the present appeal is a legacy issue, the assessee was denied treaty benefit on the revenue generated from such pooling activity for the first time in AY 1996-97 and thereafter in subsequent assessment



CAP ON RELIEF. Article 8 interpretation limits tax exemption for UK airlines' ancillary service revenues

years, the revenue has consistently denied benefit of Article 8 of the India-UK DTAA on receipts from rendering of ground handling and engineering services to other airlines in India," the Bench said.

TREATY CONTRAST

Outlining that the assessee has tried to draw parity between its own case and Delhi HC decisions in KLM Royal Dutch Airlines and Lufthansa German Airlines, the bench specified that the High Court had categorically held that the provisions of Article 8 of the DTAA are not *pari materia* to the provisions of Article 8 of the India-Germany/Netherlands DTAA.

Further, it opined that it is a well-accepted proposition

that OECD commentary is not a binding precedent.

Sandeep Sehgal, Partner-Tax at AKM Global, said this correctly underscores that treaty benefits under Article 8 of the India-UK DTAA are strictly confined to profits from the operation of aircraft in international traffic. Unlike the India-Germany and India-Netherlands treaties, which contain an express pooling clause, the UK treaty is narrower. The Tribunal has rightly distinguished the Delhi High Court decisions on KLM and Lufthansa on this precise ground — the High Court had observed that the UK provision is not *pari materia*.

While airlines may view ground-handling and engineering services to other carriers as commercially ancillary to their international operations, the plain language of the India-UK DTAA does not extend the exemption.

"The issue having attained finality in British Airways' own cases since AY 1996-97, the ruling reinforces that treaty interpretation remains text-driven and jurisdiction-specific. UK airlines (and others with similarly worded Article 8) will continue to face Indian tax on such receipts, while German and Dutch carriers enjoy a broader shield," Sehgal said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Centre will explain its stance on dynamic airfare pricing to SC

KEY REQUIREMENT. Aviation Minister says the framework is a global practice and is needed for connectivity

Our Bureau
New Delhi

The Centre will explain to the Supreme Court that the existing rules and regulations governing domestic airfares are based on a dynamic pricing framework, which remains essential for the growth of the aviation sector, said Civil Aviation Minister K. J. Somaiya on Thursday.

Speaking on the sidelines of an industry event here on Thursday, the Minister said that the Centre would present its rationale behind permitting dynamic airfare pricing before the apex court.

The remarks come as the Centre is preparing its re-



UNDER WATCH. The DGCA monitors airfare trends and requires airlines to maintain transparency

sponse before the apex court in a matter relating to regulation of airline ticket prices.

According to the Minister, dynamic pricing is an internationally-accepted practice

and is necessary for expanding aviation connectivity.

"Aviation is an industry that we are moving forward with the help of dynamic fare pricing because it is an inter-

national practice. Everywhere it happens that if we want to move forward with aviation or connectivity, then we should provide the dynamic pricing facility to the airlines, which we are extending in India as well," he said.

ACCEPTABLE LEVELS

However, Naidu said the Ministry of Civil Aviation intervenes whenever it finds that airfares are rising beyond acceptable levels or where instances of predatory pricing are noticed.

Besides, the Minister cited instances such as the Pahalgam situation, the IndiGo operational disruption and the Kumbh Mela, where the government stepped in to regulate fares.

"Whether it is in relation to Pahalgam, or in relation to IndiGo crisis, or in relation to Kumbh, whenever we feel that predatory pricing is happening, then we have put a restriction that this pricing should be regulated," Naidu said.

RETAINING PRICING

Currently, airlines continue to determine fares under the prevailing dynamic pricing framework. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also monitors airfare trends and requires airlines to maintain transparency in fare display.

The minister, however, reiterated that retaining a dynamic pricing framework remains important for the aviation sector.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Foreign airlines bolster premium offerings

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

International airlines are increasing their premium offering on India routes on the back of high demand for business and first-class seats.

Lufthansa began deploying Airbus A380 aircraft on Munich-Mumbai route last week. From October 25, Emirates will operate an A380 aircraft from Delhi to Dubai.

The A380 aircraft of both these airlines have premium dense configurations which means these have more business and first-class seats than Airbus A350 or Boeing 777.

"We're seeing very strong demand across India, particularly for premium travel, and the deployment of the

A380 allows us to respond to that demand with significantly greater premium capacity.

The aircraft offers more business class and premium economy seats, while also re-introducing Lufthansa's first-class on the Mumbai route. This gives customers travelling between India and Europe even more choice, complementing the daily first-class offering already available on Swiss services to Mumbai," said Kevin Markette, Lufthansa Group Senior Director - Regional Sales South Asia.

STRONG DEMAND

Markette said the A380 will be flown to Mumbai in the summer schedule and its deployment reflects strong demand between India and Europe.



Other carriers too are tapping the opportunity with Swiss operating a second daily to Delhi till the end of October and British Airways increasing frequencies on Delhi and Bengaluru routes.

These moves come amid increased competition and changes in traffic flows following tensions in West Asia. Air India is upping its game by deploying its latest in-

flight products to Frankfurt, London and Tokyo.

Several governments had issued travel advisories asking their citizens to avoid travelling to the West Asia region.

These had an impact on transit flows via hubs such as Dubai or Doha, benefiting the European airlines. The situation is slowly improving now.

A source said Emirates is seeing big demand for premium and business class seats on Delhi routes prompting it to deploy the A380 service from October.

The Emirates A380 has up to six extra first-class and up to 26 more business class seats than its Boeing 777s.

PREMIUM TRAVEL

The deployment of large premium aircraft such as

A380 on key India routes reflect airlines' confidence in sustained demand for premium travel from India, said Indiver Rastogi, President and Group Head — Global Business Travel, Thomas Cook (India) and SOTC Travel.

FCM Travel's Managing Director Sunny Sodhi said the firm has seen double-digit year on year growth in business and first-class transactions on India routes led by MNCs.

"Demand via Gulf hubs declined sharply following the government advisories but has gradually recovered as airlines restored capacity to around 90 per cent of the previous levels," he said.

"Yet many corporates continue to take a wait and watch approach to travel via Gulf carriers," Sodhi added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

‘Modified UDAN unlocks next phase of growth’

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

The Centre designed the Modified UDAN scheme after incorporating feedback received over the past decade, moving beyond a mere extension of the existing programme to create a broader framework aimed at accelerating regional aviation growth, said Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu.

Speaking at an UDAN workshop here on Thursday, the Minister said the new scheme seeks to unlock the next phase of regional aviation growth on the back of the strong foundation laid over the past decade through

the expansion of airport infrastructure as well as improved connectivity.

Accordingly, Naidu said the Centre has earmarked nearly ₹29,000 crore over the next 10 years under the Modified UDAN scheme, which was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 4 from Jodhpur.

NEW FRAMEWORK

Under the new framework, the eligibility threshold for an airport to be classified as underserved has been relaxed from fewer than seven weekly flights to 14 or fewer weekly flights.

For priority regions, including the Northeast and hilly States, the threshold has been increased to 21



Union Civil Aviation Minister
Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu

weekly flights, enabling a larger number of routes to qualify for viability gap funding (VGF) support. The Centre has also extended VGF support for airlines from three years to five years under a tapered funding structure.

In the new framework, air-

lines will receive 100 per cent support during the first two years, followed by 75 per cent in the third year, 50 per cent in the fourth year and 25 per cent in the fifth year to improve the long-term sustainability of regional routes.

NEXT DECADE

Besides, the Minister said the government plans to develop 100 airports over the next decade and is working with states under a challenge-mode approach to accelerate airport infrastructure development.

He added that all States and Union Territories participated in consultations on the revised scheme.

Furthermore, the expanded programme envisages

the development of 100 airports and 200 heliports while promoting indigenous manufacturing through the procurement of two Hindustan-228 Dornier aircraft for Alliance Air and two helicopters for Pawan Hans.

According to Naidu, the initiative will strengthen the domestic maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) ecosystem while supporting the government's Make in India and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives. In addition, the Minister said the Centre will, for the first time, provide operational and maintenance support to airports in tier-2 and tier-3 cities that are unable to attain financial viability because of low passenger traffic.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

सरकार उड़ान योजना के तहत वित्तीय सहायता को 5 साल तक बढ़ाएगी : नायडू

नई दिल्ली, 16 जुलाई (एजेंसियां)। केंद्रीय नागर विमानन मंत्री राम मोहन नायडू ने गुरुवार को कहा कि केंद्र सरकार ने क्षेत्रीय हवाई संपर्क योजना उड़ान के तहत संचालित होने वाली एयरलाइंस को दी जाने वाली वित्तीय सहायता की अवधि 3 साल से बढ़ाकर 5 साल करने का फैसला किया है। यह बदलाव चरणबद्ध तरीके से लागू किया जाएगा, जिससे क्षेत्रीय मार्गों (रीजनल रूट्स) को आर्थिक रूप से अधिक व्यवहार्य बनाया जा सके। उड़ान योजना पर आयोजित एक कार्यशाला के दौरान पत्रकारों से बातचीत में केंद्रीय मंत्री ने कहा कि सरकार ने इस योजना को अगले 10 वर्षों के लिए बढ़ा दिया है। इसके साथ ही एयरपोर्ट्स को वायविलिटी गैप फंडिंग (वीजीएफ) देने के पात्रता मानदंडों में भी बदलाव किया गया है, ताकि अधिक हवाई अड्डों और रूट्स को इसका लाभ मिल



■ चरणबद्ध तरीके से
लागू किया जाएगा
यह बदलाव

सके। राम मोहन नायडू ने बताया कि पहले किसी एयरपोर्ट को 'अनसर्व्वड' या 'अंडरसर्व्वड' तब माना जाता था, जब वहां सप्ताह में 7 से कम उड़ानें संचालित होती थीं। अब इस सीमा को बढ़ाकर 14 उड़ानें प्रति सप्ताह कर दिया गया है। इससे अधिक संख्या में एयरपोर्ट और क्षेत्रीय रूट्स वीजीएफ सहायता के दायरे में आ सकेंगे।

उन्होंने कहा कि सरकार देश में तेजी से हवाई अड्डों का विकास कर रही है। उनके अनुसार, हर महीने एक नया एयरपोर्ट या नया टर्मिनल तैयार किया जा रहा है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Centre raises diesel, ATF export levies by ₹7 per litre; cuts duty on petrol

SAURAVANAND
New Delhi, July 16

THE CENTRE HAS raised export taxes on diesel and aviation turbine fuel (ATF) by ₹7 per litre each from July 16, tightening curbs on overseas sales as escalating US-Iran tensions and disruption risks around the Strait of Hormuz push global energy prices higher.

The Special Additional Excise Duty on diesel exports has been increased by 82% to ₹15.50 a litre from ₹8.50, while the levy on ATF has jumped 93% to ₹14.50 from ₹7.50, according to a finance ministry notification. Petrol exporters received relief with a duty cut of 37.5% to ₹2.50 a litre from ₹4.

The revised rates, effective for the fortnight beginning July

TIGHTENED CURBS

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16, mark the government's latest attempt to retain more transport and aviation fuels in the domestic market while international prices and refining margins remain elevated.

The Centre first imposed export duties on diesel and ATF

on March 27 after the West Asia conflict escalated and has reviewed the levies every fortnight. Petrol exports were brought under the windfall-tax framework from May 16.

The government clarified that duties on petrol and diesel

cleared for domestic consumption remain unchanged, ensuring that the latest revision applies only to export consignments.

The sharp increase makes diesel and ATF exports substantially less attractive for refiners, strengthening the incentive to supply the domestic market. The move is intended to prevent exporters from benefiting disproportionately from the gap between domestic and international prices after the surge in global crude and product rates.

The contrasting reduction in the petrol levy reflects a product-specific approach rather than a uniform restriction on fuel exports. While diesel and ATF face a ₹7-a-litre increase, the petrol duty has been lowered by ₹1.50.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

AFTER E195-E2 AIRCRAFT CERTIFIED FOR INDIA OPS

Embraer in talks for Alliance Air order

AKBAR MERCHANT
Mumbai, July 16

BRAZILIAN AIRCRAFTMAKER Embraer is in talks with the government-owned Alliance Air for a potential aircraft order as the regional carrier evaluates options to strengthen its fleet, sources told. Alliance Air currently operates 18 ATR 72 turboprops, a majority of which are grounded due to various issues.

While details of a potential order with Embraer are not yet available, the airline is evaluating aircraft from the E175 family as well as the larger E195-E2 for its operations, sources said, adding that discussions are at a nascent stage.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) recently certified the Embraer E195-E2 for operations in India, allowing the company to formally pursue airlines in one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets. This also helps regional airlines to start their operations with a slightly larger Embraer aircraft rather than with a turboprop which was one of the only few options earlier.

Embraer estimates a potential market for 500 aircraft in India over the next decade as airlines expand beyond metros and

FLY HIGH

■ Embraer estimates a potential market for **500 aircraft** in India over the next decade



■ DGCA certified the Embraer E195-E2 for operations in India recently

■ Embraer says E195-E2 aircraft's cost per seat is comparable to larger narrow-body aircraft and trip cost is **25% lower**

improve connectivity to smaller cities. "The E-Jet family certification allows us to cater to future demand from both existing airlines and possible new entrants that may look at small narrow-body aircraft to start operations. The E175 is already flying in India, and we are hopeful of securing further E-Jet orders soon," its spokesperson said.

While declining to comment on discussions with specific customers, including Star Air, which has publicly expressed interest in acquiring up to 20 E2 aircraft, Embraer said it is engaging with major and regional airlines as well as potential new entrants.

The manufacturer sees regional jets complementing

existing narrow-body fleets by improving connectivity to second- and third-tier cities, particularly on routes where larger jets can only support low frequencies and turboprops lack the range. Embraer said the E195-E2 also fits into the government's UDAN regional connectivity framework.

The aircraft's cost per seat is comparable to larger narrow-body aircraft, while its trip cost is 25% lower, making thinner routes and higher frequencies more commercially viable. The discussions come as the Brazilian manufacturer bets on underserved regional markets to drive India's next phase of aviation growth.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Made in India aircraft

The country is making encouraging progress on smaller, regional aircraft projects

THE POSSIBILITIES OF assembling a civilian passenger aircraft in the country are a policy priority of the National Democratic Alliance regime. Last month, the first Made in India Airbus C295 military transport aircraft had a successful maiden test flight from the final assembly line in Vadodara, Gujarat. In end-October 2022, at the foundation ceremony of this manufacturing facility, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that India would soon be manufacturing big passenger aircraft proudly bearing the words "Made in India". On the civilian aviation front, this ambition remains aspirational. However, discernible progress on helicopters and smaller passenger aircraft projects can boost prospects of the Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (Udan) scheme that provides connectivity to smaller cities. Besides the C295, Airbus and the Tata Group have inaugurated the final assembly line for H125 helicopters that can bridge the last mile for regional connectivity.

Civil Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu indicated "encouraging progress" in smaller aircraft projects in a media interview. Brazilian aerospace major Embraer and Adani Defence & Aerospace have exchanged an enhanced Memorandum of Understanding to establish a final assembly line for the E175 regional jet with a target to roll out the first plane by 2028. India is expected to require at least 500 aircraft in the 80-146 seat segments over the next 20 years. Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) has partnerships, including collaborating with the Russian company, United Aircraft Corporation, to manufacture the 87-108 seat regional jet, SJ-100. HAL has also conducted the test flight of the civilian helicopter, Dhruv NG. The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-National Aerospace Laboratories has completed the design of the 19-seater Saras MK II — the test flight of which is scheduled for the last quarter of FY28.

These regional aircraft projects are bound to strengthen Udan if there is a better alignment between the economics of the aviation business and the imperatives of regional connectivity. Unfortunately, there are serious structural issues as only 7-10% of the Udan routes remain viable once viability gap funding is ended. This funding incentivises private airlines to provide affordable air travel to hitherto unconnected airports in smaller cities. To make it work better, the government enhanced outlays and shifted to a broader aviation infrastructure programme of airport development, operations, and maintenance, including indigenous aircraft acquisition. But the modified Udan still does not resolve demand-side and cost challenges. Smaller aircraft typically have higher per-seat costs and limited tolerance for low load factors. Resolving the economics of this issue is essential for the induction of smaller regional aircraft.

But the higher level of policy ambition on bigger passenger aircraft will take more time to bear fruit. Despite record orders for passenger aircraft from domestic airlines, Airbus and Boeing have resisted policy pressures for final assembly lines citing the critical mass of their investments in engineering, supply chain, and maintenance in the country. Persuading them to set up shop in India needs much greater strategic intent. If the C295 and H125 helicopter deals are taken as exemplars, there is a warrant to similarly reconfigure the historic fleet orders by domestic airlines to ensure that a certain proportion are finally assembled here. Otherwise, there is no deal. But if we have to do it indigenously, making a big passenger aircraft will take more than a decade and substantial resources as China incurred with the single-aisle C919.

Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

उड़ान योजना के अगले चरण से 120 नए गंतव्यों को मिलेगी हवाई सेवा 10 वर्षों में 4 करोड़ यात्रियों को मिलेगा लाभ: राममोहन नायडू

» अगले चरण का
उद्देश्य देश में क्षेत्रीय
हवाई संपर्क को और
मजबूत बनाना है

» सरकार ने इसे
प्रभावी बनाने कई
बदलाव किए

हरिभूमी ब्यूरो नई दिल्ली

केंद्रीय नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री किंजरापु राम मोहन नायडू ने कहा है कि उड़ान योजना के अगले चरण का उद्देश्य देश में क्षेत्रीय हवाई संपर्क को और मजबूत बनाना है। इसके तहत अगले 10 वर्षों में 120 नए गंतव्यों को हवाई नेटवर्क से जोड़ने और चार करोड़ यात्रियों को हवाई यात्रा की सुविधा उपलब्ध कराने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है।

उड़ान योजना के अगले चरण पर आयोजित एक कार्यशाला को संबोधित करते हुए मंत्री ने कहा कि सरकार ने योजना को और अधिक प्रभावी बनाने के लिए इसमें कई महत्वपूर्ण बदलाव किए हैं। संशोधित योजना के तहत कार्यबिलिटी गैप फंडिंग के दायरे का विस्तार किया गया है, जिससे अधिक एयरलाइनों और नए मार्गों को लाभ मिल सकेगा। उन्होंने बताया कि पहले एयरलाइनों को इस योजना के तहत तीन वर्षों तक सहायता दी जाती थी, जिसे अब बढ़ाकर पांच वर्ष कर दिया गया है। इसके अलावा चयनित टियर-2 और टियर-3 शहरों के हवाई अड्डों के लिए संचालन एवं रखरखाव (ऑपरेशन एंड मेंटेनेंस) सहायता



का भी प्रावधान किया गया है। राम मोहन नायडू ने कहा कि सरकार ने उड़ान योजना के अगले चरण के लिए 29 हजार करोड़ रुपये का बजटीय प्रावधान किया है। इस राशि से अगले दशक में 100 नए हवाई अड्डों और 200 हेलीपोर्ट विकसित करने का लक्ष्य निर्धारित किया गया है, जिससे देश के दूरदराज और कम विकसित क्षेत्रों को भी हवाई सेवाओं से जोड़ा जा सके।

उन्होंने कहा कि उड़ान योजना का नया चरण आत्मनिर्भर भारत अभियान को भी मजबूती देगा। इससे स्वदेशी विमान निर्माण को बढ़ावा मिलेगा, मेंटेनेंस, रिपेयर एंड ओवरहॉल क्षेत्र का विस्तार होगा, बड़े पैमाने पर रोजगार के अवसर सृजित होंगे और क्षेत्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था को गति मिलेगी। केंद्रीय मंत्री ने विश्वास जताया कि उड़ान योजना का नया चरण भारत के नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र को नई ऊंचाइयों तक ले जाएगा और छोटे शहरों तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों को देश के प्रमुख आर्थिक और व्यावसायिक केंद्रों से जोड़ने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाएगा।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

16 JULY 2026

NMIA goes global with first Abu Dhabi flight



An Air India Express flight from Abu Dhabi arrived at the Navi Mumbai International Airport on Wednesday. BACHCHAN KUMAR/HT

G. Mohiuddin Jeddy

letters@hindustantimes.com

NAVI MUMBAI: Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) on Wednesday began scheduled international operations, with Air India Express launching the airport's first overseas route with direct flights to Abu Dhabi.

The inaugural Air India Express flight, IX208 from Abu Dhabi, landed at 10.20am and was welcomed with a traditional water cannon salute. The airline will operate the service three times a week.

The international launch comes less than seven months after NMIA opened for domestic operations on December 25, 2025. Airport authorities said Abu Dhabi is the first of several international destinations planned as NMIA expands its airline partnerships and route network in the coming months.

"The launch of our first scheduled international flight marks the beginning of a new phase in Navi Mumbai International Airport's journey," said Arun Bansal, chief executive officer of Adani Airport Holdings Ltd.



Corporate Communications Directorate

LOKSATYA

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

डीजल-ATF पर एक्सपोर्ट ड्यूटी बढ़ी

नई दिल्ली, लोकसत्या। केंद्र सरकार ने डीजल और विमान ईंधन यानी ATF के एक्सपोर्ट पर लगने वाली ड्यूटी में बढ़ोतरी की है। वहीं दूसरी तरफ पेट्रोल के एक्सपोर्ट पर लगने वाले टैक्स को कम कर दिया है। डीजल के एक्सपोर्ट पर ड्यूटी 8.50 से बढ़ाकर 15.50 प्रति लीटर कर दी है। यानी इसमें प्रति लीटर 7 रुपए का इजाफा किया गया है। इसी तरह ATF यानी हवाई जहाज के ईंधन पर एक्सपोर्ट ड्यूटी 7.50 से बढ़ाकर 14.50 प्रति लीटर कर दी गई है। हालांकि, पेट्रोल एक्सपोर्टर्स को थोड़ी राहत देते हुए इस पर लगने वाली ड्यूटी को 4 से घटाकर 2.50 प्रति लीटर की है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

MELBOURNE TO DELHI

After years, ultra long-haul Air India plane flies in a pet

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

AIR India is on cloud nine. It recently flew in a male Rottweiler, 4, named Cloud, from Melbourne to New Delhi, making him the first pet to take an ultra long-haul Indian passenger flight in recent times.

Ultra long-haul flights refer to journeys with a travel time of more than 10 hours. While airlines permit pets in domestic flights and short international flights inside the cabin as well as the

cargo hold (plane belly), only Air India has the permit to transport cats and dogs on such long journeys.

An Air India source said, "The pet parent is relocating permanently from Australia to India and was very particular about taking his dog back home. Both flew by AI 309 and Cloud, (weighing 56 kg) had a smooth journey in his pet carriage in the cargo hold for

nearly 12 hours. Water was placed in it for him. To calm him down during the trip, a mild medication was given which was not a sedative."

The airline had been working to get pet clearances both in India and abroad for more than a year, he added. Air India operates long haul flights to the US, Australia and Canada. "We had to get the consent from the stakeholders and regulatory agencies



IndiGo does not permit pets on long-haul flights

"Air India used to ferry pets by ultra long-haul many years ago. It was discontinued much before the Tata Group took over the airline. Since, we had to restart after a long gap, all the clearances had to be obtained afresh," another airline source said. IndiGo at present does not permit pets on long-haul flights while Air India Express, SpiceJet and Akasa Air do not operate ultra long-haul flights

of these international airports. We also had to get the nod from airport operators in India as well as regulatory agencies like the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, the Bureau of Civil Aviation and the Central Industrial Security Force."

Airports too need to have a

pet-friendly infrastructure. "Flyers with pets arrive a few hours ahead of other passengers. The airport needs to be equipped with infrastructure to house the pets and attend to their needs until the start of the journey. Delhi airport has these facilities already," he added.

EXPRESS
CLUSIVE



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

May saw highest domestic monthly traffic of 1.5 crore flyers, says minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

LAUDING the resilience shown by India's aviation sector despite the raging global tensions, Union Civil Aviation Minister **Rammohan Naidu** on Thursday pointed out that India recorded its best ever domestic passenger growth in May 2026. The minister released the UDAN Scheme document at a workshop on its next phase at Vigyan Bhawan in Delhi.

In his keynote address, Naidu said, "Even when the world was going through geopolitical tensions, we have been recording about five lakh domestic passengers every day. In fact, in the month of May, India recorded its highest ever monthly domestic air traffic serving over 1.5 crore passengers!"

Naidu pointed out that in 2001, India had 65 airports. "By 2014, the number increased to 74 airports—which works out to 9 airports added in 13 years.



And in the last 12 years, we have added 90 airports! From 9 to 90!"

He added that 55 unutilised and unserved airstrips have been revived and converted into operational airports!

Citing instances of the success registered by UDAN, the Minister said, "Earlier people from Darbhanga had to travel 150 km just to catch a flight. And today, Darbhanga's Shahi litchi is reaching global markets like Dubai. Then Kishanganj is one more success story. Before the airport came up in 2017, the marble industry was stranded. But now, there is

'From 9 to 90!'

Naidu pointed out that in 2001, India had 65 airports. "By 2014, the number increased to 74 airports—which works out to 9 airports added in 13 years. And in the last 12 years, we have added 90 airports! From 9 to 90!"

direct connectivity for exports as well as 2 crore pilgrims reaching Pushkar Temple & Ajmer Dargah annually. Kesnod, Deogarh, Jharsuguda, Nanded, there are so many UDAN success stories".

Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Murlidhar Mohol, reaffirmed the Government's commitment to making air travel affordable and accessible for citizens across the country, particularly in Tier-II, Tier-III and remote locations.

A digital exhibition on UDAN showcasing the achievements of the scheme across the country was inaugurated.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

एयर इंडिया को देना होगा 40 हजार मुआवजा

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): हवाई टिकट बुक करने के बाद यात्री को सबसे बड़ा भरोसा समय पर उड़ान और जरूरत पड़ने पर समय पर रिफंड का होता है। लेकिन जब बोर्डिंग पास जारी होने के बाद अचानक उड़ान रद्द कर दी जाए और टिकट का पैसा भी समय पर वापस न मिले, तो यह उपभोक्ता के अधिकारों का उल्लंघन माना जाता है। ऐसा ही एक मामला दिल्ली के नांगलोई निवासी सेवानिवृत्त लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल नंद किशोर राणा के साथ हुआ। जहां उन्होंने कोच जाने के लिए एयर इंडिया की फ्लाइट का टिकट बुक किया था, लेकिन अचानक से उनकी उड़ान रद्द हो गई। साथ ही पैसे मांगने पर रिफंड नहीं किए। इसी मामले में दक्षिण-पश्चिम जिला उपभोक्ता विवाद प्रतिरोध आयोग ने एयर इंडिया और ट्रेवल एजेंसी को सेवा में कमी का दोषी मानते हुए 17,403 का टिकट किराया छह प्रतिशत वार्षिक ब्याज सहित लौटाने का आदेश दिया। साथ ही एयर इंडिया पर अलग से 40 हजार का मुआवजा भी लगाया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

17 JULY 2026

Air India ranks among top 5 most on-time global airlines:

Gurugram: Air India has been ranked the 4th most on-time airline in the world in June 2026 by aviation analytics firm Cirium, underscoring the airline's continued focus on operational reliability and schedule integrity. According to Cirium's June 2026 On-Time Performance report, Air India recorded an on-time arrival rate of 86.85 per cent across 15,135 flights tracked during the month. The airline also posted an on-time departure rate of 86.23 per cent and a completion factor of 99.7 per cent meaning virtually all scheduled flights operated as planned. The ranking reflects Air India's sustained investments in operational resilience, improved network planning, and enhanced execution across its domestic and international operations.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

16 JULY 2026

DGCA opposes AI crash cause disclosure

OUR BUREAU

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday opposed in the Supreme Court the public disclosure of fact-finding reports on the Air India flight crash that killed 260 people in Ahmedabad on June 12, 2025.

The aviation regulator has cited the Convention on International Civil Aviation, 1944, also known as the "Chicago Convention", besides the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB) Rules, 2025, to support its objection.

The DGCA has filed the counter-affidavit in response to three petitions seeking an independent probe into the crash of the London-bound Boeing 787 Dreamliner, a regulatory mechanism to prevent such accidents and adequate compensation for the deceased.

According to the DGCA affidavit, the AAIB rules contain critical and mandatory safeguards with regard to confidentiality and integrity of the investigative material. Under Rule 17(1), some categories of records cannot be disclosed for purposes other than investigation of the accident or incident, except where the Centre determines the disclosures outweigh "the adverse domestic and international impact on that investigation or any future investigation", it said.

The confidential information exempt from disclosure includes "statements of persons taken during investigation; all communication between persons having been involved in the operation of the aircraft; medical or private information regarding persons involved in the accident or incident; cockpit voice recording and transcripts from such recordings; recordings and transcripts of recordings from air traffic control units; cockpit airborne image recordings and part of transcripts from such recordings and opinions expressed in the analysis of information, including flight recorder information."

"Rule 17(3) provides that the final report shall not disclose the names of the persons involved in the accident or incident, reflecting the legislature's considered intent that the investigation process is not

used for purposes of attribution or blame. The framework is a complete code. No room for parallel investigation," the affidavit asserted.

It was submitted that the investigating agency comprised representatives from more than one country and probes were conducted at various levels in different countries.

"The system of investigation is fair and transparent. It involves all stakeholders, including representatives of countries whose nationals unfortunately died in the air crash. Investigation being conducted in accordance with the Chicago Convention and AAIB rules," it said.

The affidavit submitted that an investigation of a civil aircraft accident by its very nature was an intensely technical, scientific and specialised discipline, requiring expertise in aeronautical engineering, power plant technology, avionics, flight data recorder analysis, cockpit voice recorder interpretations and human factors psychology.

According to the DGCA, the draft final report will be shared with the operator and manufacturer of the crashed aircraft and the country investigating the accident. The draft report is expected to be finalised by October and will be subjected to further evaluation before a final report is released within 60 days, the regulator said.

It said the crash, which involved 241 fatalities on board and citizens of multiple countries, was more complex and required a detailed investigation. The objective of the investigation is to prevent accidents and not to apportion blame or liability, it added.

The writ petitions seeking compensation mechanisms, regulatory reforms and criminal prosecution fall outside the scope and purpose of the probe under the AAIB rules, the affidavit said.

"...Media speculation and narrative attributing blame-worthiness to the pilots have regrettably caused some witnesses to become restrictive and non-responsive, which is precisely the kind of prejudice to the investigation that the confidentiality protections under Rule 17 of the AAIB Rules are designed to protect," it added.