

Asia's biggest aviation event Wings India from Jan. 28-31

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JAN. 17

India's premier biennial civil aviation show, Wings India, will take place at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad from January 28, with domestic and international stakeholders across the aviation sector for four days of exhibitions, discussions and aerial displays. According to the official release, the event will be organised under the theme, "Indian Aviation: Paving the Future — From Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation and Safety to Sustainability."

The four-day show will be inaugurated by Union civil aviation minister K. Ramnohan Naidu and is expected to see participation from leading players across the aviation value chain, including airlines, aircraft manufacturers, service providers and policymakers from India and abroad. Wings India will focus on India's expanding aviation sector, its growing global footprint and its plans to emerge as a hub for manufacturing, services, innovation and sustainable

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● **THE PROGRAMME** includes an international exhibition, static aircraft displays, flying and aerobatic shows, along with a series of closed-door and public discussions involving industry



aviation solutions.

The programme includes an international exhibition, static aircraft displays, flying and aerobatic shows, along with a series of closed-door and public discussions involving industry leaders and government officials. Aerial per-

formances by the Surya Kiran aerobatic team of the Indian Air Force are part of the schedule.

An international conference during the event will feature 13 thematic sessions covering areas such as airports, aircraft leasing, helicopters, airlines, women in aviation and maintenance, repair and overhaul.

The conference will also include the Global CEOs Forum and a ministerial plenary, alongside business-to-business and business-to-government meetings.

An aviation job fair is also on the agenda. Ministerial-level foreign delegations and senior government officials from more than 20 countries are expected to attend, along with official delegations from Indian states.

Active participation from state will showcase aviation-led growth, investment opportunities and development across the country.

Wings India 2026 is organised by the ministry of civil aviation in association with the Airports Authority of India and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry.



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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

18 JANUARY 2026

Airport put on alert after bomb threat email

BENGALURU, DHNS: Officials of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) have lodged a police complaint after receiving a bomb threat email warning of blasts using a human suicide bomber and RDX IEDs at airport terminals.

According to the FIR, on Wednesday at around 9.08

am, the NOC Unit of AAI received an email on its official ID, vobl.noc@aai.aero, from gaina_ramesh@outlook.com. The mail claimed, "Implement 1979 Nainar Das Police Union in Tamil Nadu: Human suicide blast using three RDX IEDs in your airport terminals," and asked authorities to evacuate

passengers by 1.35 pm before the explosion.

Taking the threat seriously, security agencies immediately initiated verification and safety measures. The Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) was constituted, and a thorough inspection was carried out across the premises.

A senior police officer said the threat was aimed at creating panic and fear among the authorities. BIAL police have registered a case, and efforts are on to trace the suspect. However, no inconvenience was caused to airport services or travellers as it was a hoax threat, the police said.



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 JANUARY 2026

Vadodara soars, Surat slips in AAI airport satisfaction rankings

FPJ News Service

SURAT

Surat, one of Gujarat's fastest growing commercial hubs, is falling behind its regional peers when it comes to airport passenger satisfaction. In the latest customer satisfaction and performance survey released by the Airports Authority of India (AAI), Surat Airport secured the eighth position among the country's top 34 airports, while Vadodara Airport surged ahead to claim the second spot nationwide.

The rankings, announced for 2025, underline a widening gap in service quality and passenger experience between Gujarat's key airports. Alongside Vadodara, Jamnagar Airport ranked an



impressive fourth, while Rajkot International Airport at Hirasar placed 18th, marking a significant improvement compared to its earlier performance.

AAI conducts this survey twice a year based on direct passenger feedback, evaluating airports on 33 different parameters, including cleanliness, security, check-in efficiency, availability of facilities, and staff behaviour. In the latest assessment, Khajuraho and Bhopal airports jointly topped the national rankings.

Despite Surat's strong eighth-place finish, aviation experts note that the airport continues to lag behind Vadodara in critical passenger-centric facilities and service efficiency. "Surat has traffic potential and strong business demand, but passenger satisfaction depends heavily on seamless services and infrastructure upgrades," said a senior aviation consultant based in Ahmedabad.

Rajkot's Hirasar Airport, meanwhile, emerged as a notable case of recovery. After slipping to 31st place in the January-June 2025 survey due to poor facilities, it climbed sharply to 18th place in the July-December 2025 rankings.

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DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

एयर ट्रैवल गाइड जानिए एयरपोर्ट पर और सफर में वरिष्ठ नागरिकों को क्या रियायतें हैं, कैसे उठाएं लाभ हवाई यात्रा में आप खास; बोर्डिंग आसान, छूट भी

शैलेंद्र सिंह परिहार
टूर & ट्रेवल एडवाइजर, एसो. ऑफ़ डोमेस्टिक टूर ऑपरेटर्स ऑफ़ इंडिया



देश की प्रमुख बड़ी एयरलाइंस में सीनियर सिटीजन यात्रियों के लिए किराए में रियायत से लेकर सीट चयन में प्राथमिकता मिलती है। वहीं एयरपोर्ट पर भी खास सुविधाएं दी जाती हैं। हालांकि जानकारी के अभाव में कई वरिष्ठजन इन सुविधाओं का पूरा लाभ नहीं ले पाते। आप रियायतें कैसे ले सकते हैं, इस गाइड में जानते हैं।

एयरलाइंस में क्या फायदा?

बेस फेयर में 5% से 25% तक छूट

घरेलू उड़ानों के बेस फेयर में बुजुर्गों को 25% तक छूट मिलती है। वहीं इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट में रियायत में घट-बढ़ हो सकती है।

एयर इंडिया: 25% तक छूट

- इकोनॉमी क्लास के बेस फेयर पर 25% तक छूट।
- टिकट यात्रा से कम से कम 3 दिन पहले बुक कर लें।

इंडिगो: 10% तक रियायत

- बेस फेयर पर 6% से 10% तक की छूट देती है।
- वेबसाइट पर 6E Senior Citizen से टिकट बुक करें।

अकासा एयर: 5% तक छूट

- बेस फेयर पर 5 फीसदी तक की छूट मिल रही है।
- यह छूट सिर्फ 'Saver' फेयर पर ही लागू है।

स्पाइस जेट: 14% तक छूट

- बेस फेयर पर 14% तक की छूट प्रदान की जा रही है।
- यह रियायत केवल सीधी घरेलू उड़ानों पर लागू है।

• **छूट कैसे मिलेगी?** एयरलाइंस की वेबसाइट या एप पर Concessional Fare या Special Fare सेक्शन में सीनियर सिटीजन का विकल्प चुनें। बुकिंग एडवांस करें।



एयरपोर्ट: फ्री व्हीलचेयर की सुविधा

- **मुफ्त व्हीलचेयर:** चेक-इन काउंटर से विमान की सीट तक मुफ्त व्हीलचेयर, और एक सहायक की सुविधा मिलती है।
- **ऑटोमेटेड बग्गी:** टर्मिनल में बोर्डिंग गेट तक के लिए ऑटोमेटेड बग्गी व हैंड बैगेज के लिए छोटी ट्रॉली मुफ्त में मांग सकते हैं।
- **कैसे लें:** टिकट बुकिंग में स्पेशल सर्विस रिक्वेस्ट में व्हीलचेयर चुनें या फ्लाइट से 48 घंटे पहले एयरलाइंस को सूचना दें।

सफर के दौरान क्या करें?

स्वास्थ्य-सुरक्षा की 6 बातें ध्यान रखें

- **सही सीट का चुनाव करें:** बुकिंग के वक्त आइल सीट (गलियारे वाली सीट) चुनें। वॉशरूम जाने व पैर फैलाने में सुविधाजनक होती है।
- **नॉन-स्टॉप फ्लाइट लें:** कनेक्टिंग फ्लाइट से बचें, नॉन-स्टॉप फ्लाइट चुनें, फ्लाइट से दो-तीन घंटे पहले ही एयरपोर्ट पहुंच जाएं।
- **दवाइयों का प्रबंधन:** बीपी, शुगर, हार्ट की दवा व डॉक्टर का पर्चा हैंड बैग में रखें। चेक इन बैगेज में न रखें, जरूरत पड़ने पर उपलब्ध नहीं होगा।
- **एयरलाइंस को बताएं:** मेडिकल दिक्कत है या कोई सर्जरी हुई है तो एयरलाइंस को पहले बता दें। मेडिकल फिटनेस फॉर्म भरा सकते हैं।
- **वेन थ्रोबोसिस से बचाव:** लंबी उड़ानों में पैरों में खून के थक्के जमने का डर रहता है। इससे बचने के लिए सीट पर बैठे-बैठे ही पंजों को घुमाएं।
- **दे दस्तावेज साथ में रखें:** रियायती टिकट पर वेब चेक-इन नहीं होता। एयरपोर्ट पर उम्र के लिए आधार, पैन और वोटर आईडी दिखाना होती है।

तकनीकी अपग्रेडेशन के लिए फरवरी के मध्य से बंद होगा एयरपोर्ट का एक रनवे

गौतम कुमार मिश्रा • जागरण

नई दिल्ली: इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय (आइजीआइ) एयरपोर्ट का एक प्रमुख रनवे (11आर/29एल) फरवरी से करीब चार माह के लिए बंद होने वाला है। इस दौरान इस पर तकनीकी अपग्रेडेशन व बुनियादी ढांचे को मजबूत करने का काम होगा। चार माह तक एक प्रमुख रनवे बंद होने से खासकर कोहरे के मौसम में यात्रियों को उड़ानों में देरी और असुविधा का सामना करना पड़ सकता है।

यह आशंका पिछले वर्षों के अनुभवों के आधार पर जताई जा रही है। हालिया वर्षों में भी जब रनवे को मरम्मत से जुड़े कार्य के लिए बंद किया गया, तो उड़ानों में विलंब हुआ। रनवे 28/10 को जब तीन माह के लिए बंद किया गया था, तो उड़ानों में औसतन 15-20 मिनट की देरी हुई थी।

एयरपोर्ट सूत्रों का कहना है कि रनवे से जुड़े तकनीकी अपग्रेडेशन कार्यों में इंस्ट्रूमेंट लैंडिंग सिस्टम (आइएलएस) को नया लगाना, रनवे की रिसर्फेसिंग, जलनिकासी प्रणाली में सुधार और नए रैपिड एक्जिट टैक्सी-वे का निर्माण शामिल है। ये काम कोहरे और खराब मौसम में बेहतर आपरेशंस के लिए जरूरी हैं।



रनवे से गुजरता विमान • सौजन्य: इंटरनेट मीडिया

अपग्रेडेशन में नया इंस्ट्रूमेंट लैंडिंग सिस्टम लगाना, रनवे की रिसर्फेसिंग, नए रैपिड एक्जिट टैक्सी-वे का निर्माण है शामिल

आशंका है कि सबसे ज्यादा प्रभाव सर्दी के मौसम में पड़ेगा, जब कोहरे के कारण पहले से ही उड़ानें प्रभावित होती हैं। एयरपोर्ट पर प्रतिदिन औसतन 1500 उड़ानें संचालित होती हैं। एक रनवे बंद होने से अन्य तीन रनवे पर दबाव बढ़ेगा। विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि इससे लैंडिंग और टेकआफ में 10-30 मिनट की अतिरिक्त देरी हो सकती है, खासकर व्यस्त समय में। संभव है कि आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट से संचालित होने वाली उड़ानों से जड़ी तमाम एयरलाइंस इसके लिए

अभी से ही तैयारी में जुटी हों। वे वैकल्पिक रूट्स और अतिरिक्त स्टाफ की व्यवस्था करेंगी, ताकि असर कम से कम हो।

वर्ष 2008 में बनकर तैयार हुआ था रनवे 11आर/29एल: 11आर/29एल, आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट का एक प्रमुख रनवे है, जिसकी कमीशनिंग अगस्त 2008 में हुई थी। इसे तीसरा रनवे कहा जाता है, जो 4430 मीटर लंबा है। एयरपोर्ट के पुराने रनवे (जैसे 10/28) 1970-80 के बीच बने थे, लेकिन 11आर/29एल को आजीआइ एयरपोर्ट पर बढ़ते ट्रैफिक के कारण बनाया गया था। विशेषज्ञों का कहना है कि रनवे आमतौर पर हर दस वर्ष में बड़े मरम्मत से गुजरते हैं। हालांकि छोटे-मोटे रखरखाव के कार्य नियमित तौर पर चलते रहते हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट पर घने कोहरे से उड़ानें बाधित



नई दिल्ली, प्रमुख संवाददाता। राजधानी में रविवार सुबह घने कोहरे के कारण इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से उड़ने वाले कुछ विमानों का परिचालन बाधित रहा।

हालांकि, कितनी उड़ानें रद्द हुईं इसकी सूचना यहां का प्रबंधन देख रहे दिल्ली इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ने जारी नहीं किया। कोहरे के मद्देनजर एयर इंडिया और इंडिगो सहित विभिन्न एयरलाइंस ने उड़ानों में संभावित देरी और रुकावटों को लेकर यात्रियों के लिए

यात्रियों को ऐप पर स्थिति देखकर आने की सलाह

विमानन कंपनियों ने यात्रियों से अनुरोध किया गया है कि वे एयरलाइन की वेबसाइट या मोबाइल ऐप के जरिए अपनी

उड़ान की अद्यतन स्थिति पर नजर रखें और हवाई अड्डा जाने से पहले नवीनतम जानकारी हासिल कर लें।

यात्रा परामर्श जारी किया था। जिसमें कहा गया था कि कुछ विमानों के रद्द होने व कई विमानों के परिचालन में देरी हो सकती है। एयरलाइन ने कहा कि उसने रुकावटों को कम करने के लिए पहले से ही कदम उठाए हैं। एयरपोर्ट पर यात्रियों की मदद की जा रही है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

गुरुग्राम में हेलीपैड का इंतजार बढ़ा

गुरुग्राम। सेक्टर-36 में प्रस्तावित हेलीपैड के निर्माण में अभी और समय लगेगा। एचएसआईआईडीसी की ओर से हेलीपैड निर्माण के लिए 18 एकड़ जमीन हरियाणा एयरपोर्ट्स डेवलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन (एचएडीसी) को हस्तांतरण किया जाना है। इसके बाद हेलीपैड निर्माण की प्रक्रिया शुरू होगी। इसका निर्माण नागरिक उड्डयन विभाग की ओर से कराया जाएगा। केंद्र सरकार से हेलीपैड डीपीआर की अभी तक मंजूरी नहीं मिली है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

18 JANUARY 2026

Defence Ministry rejects proposal for airport in Hosur

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

In a significant setback, the Ministry of Defence has yet again rejected the request of the Tamil Nadu government to set up an airport in Hosur.

One of the foremost clearances that the Hosur airport needs must come from the Ministry of Defence, since the airspace in the region is controlled by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).

“The Ministry communicated in a letter last week that HAL needed the airspace and denied the request. Now, the State government will begin evaluating its options on the further course of action and what needs to be done,” a source said.

In June last year, the Tamil Nadu government had asked the Ministry for airspace relaxation required to establish the airport but the request was turned down. Subsequently, in November, the Chief Secretary of the Tamil Nadu Government submitted an elaborate response, with the coordinates, citing how it was feasible to build an airport in Hosur without any operational hindrance to HAL.

Meanwhile, after the government sent the site clearance to the Ministry of Civil Aviation for the air-

The proposal for the airport at Shoogalagiri taluk envisaged serving 30 million passengers

port, the latter has asked for an impact study. “The impact study has been asked to show if the proposed airport in Hosur will affect [passenger traffic] at the existing Bengaluru or Salem airports in any way. It has to be done by the Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO) and submitted to the Ministry of Civil Aviation,” the source said.

The international airport proposed in Hosur, with a passenger capacity of 30 million, at Shoogalagiri taluk (between Berigai and Bagalur) is expected to come up over an area of nearly 2,300 acres. Once the Hosur airport receives site clearance, the TIDCO will seek in-principle approval from the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

It is to be noted that there exists another major challenge for the Hosur airport owing to an existing agreement between the Bangalore International Airport Limited and the Ministry, which prohibits the development of a new airport within 150 km of aerial distance from the Bengaluru airport.

Airport wheelchair abuse shows our love for gaming the system

THE UNDERAGE OPTIMIST



CHETAN BHAGAT

Did you know that many Indians have a unique medical condition? When it comes to catching flights at airports, particularly international ones, they are suddenly unable to walk. A CISF survey in 2024 suggested that approximately 12% of travellers from Indian airports taking international flights book wheelchairs.

Sure, there are people with genuine mobility issues and need wheelchair support. However, it is hard to believe that one in eight Indians can't walk.

Air India reportedly gets more than 100,000 wheelchair requests every month. On some long-haul routes like India to New York or Chicago, some 30% of travellers book wheelchair assistance. If that figure is accurate, that's 80-100 wheelchair requests per flight!

Airlines and airport authorities have requested people multiple times not to abuse this free service meant for people with genuine disabilities. But Indian travellers not only misuse it at home but also at international airports. The damage to India's reputation is clear from social media posts.

Far from feeling ashamed, many Indians see this as a clever hack to navigate lengthy, complicated and crowded airports. An able-bodied human pushes your wheelchair, bypasses queues, helps you clear security and immigration and then drops you off at the lounge and boarding gate, even as you watch reels and videos on your phone. Wow, you really did figure out a way to game the system, didn't you?

In fact, it is this constant need to 'game the system' that is at the heart of such behaviour.

Airports are stressful everywhere, but in India they can be even more so, often due to poor design, archaic procedures and old equipment. We don't have enough sub-terminals for drop-offs, so you walk kilometres to your gate. Our X-ray machines are so ancient that you have to remove every coin, wire, key, charger, battery, and possibly your soul from your bag. You unpack, repack, and unpack again as if it's a sport. Then come the rubber stamps, the multiple boarding pass checks and the same question asked five times by five different people.

At some point, you think: Why walk when I can roll? Wheelchair assistance offers a clear, immediate benefit: priority movement through security, immigration, and boarding. For a traveller anxious about missing a flight

or simply unwilling to endure discomfort, the wheelchair becomes a shortcut in an inefficient system.

Behavioural psychology calls this incentive-driven rationalisation. When the cost of cheating is low, the benefit high and enforcement weak, even otherwise 'moral' individuals may justify rule-bending. Some simply convince themselves that they are "temporarily unwell," "deserving," or merely "using what's available".

A deeper explanation lies in what psychologists describe as a scarcity mindset. Indian society, shaped by centuries of resource constraint, competition, and population pressure, often fosters the belief that opportunities are limited and must be seized aggressively. When systems feel unfair or overburdened, people are more likely to adopt zero-sum thinking: if I don't take advantage, someone else will. In such a mindset, abusing a wheelchair is not viewed as stealing from a disabled person, but as "beating the system".

In fact, we try to game or beat the system in other areas as well. Queue jumping, traffic violations such as ignoring signals or lanes, misuse of quota certificates, littering and vandalising public property such as trains is all part of behaviour we commonly see in India. In each case, the pattern is similar: weak enforcement, low shame, high personal gain.

This isn't uniquely Indian behaviour. Any overcrowded society with low trust and weak institutions demonstrates such behaviour. India's massive scale just amplifies it and makes it visible, now even on the global stage.

The real victims of the wheelchair scam are those with disabilities. They will either not get wheelchairs or be seen with suspicion by airline staff who lose empathy after witnessing repeated misuse of the facility.

As we modernise our infrastructure, there is a corresponding need to improve civic education as well. Breaking rules shouldn't be cool. Following them well should be. As that cultural shift will take a while, we should, meanwhile, have heavy penalties for misuse of wheelchairs. Airports also need to simplify their procedures and modernise their equipment, some of which are dated and far behind other international airports. Queues have to move fast. There can be more golf cart shuttles for gates located far away.

And for those who frequently book wheelchairs even though they don't need them, please stop. Leave this facility for people who genuinely need it. Be grateful to God that your legs still work. Use them. Walk. Notch up your daily step count. It's good for you anyway. ■



PAYING A PRICE: The real victims are those with disabilities who are viewed with suspicion by airline staff



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

WB-bound IndiGo flight lands at Lucknow airport after threat

Lucknow, Jan. 18: An IndiGo flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in West Bengal carrying 222 passengers made an emergency landing at the Lucknow airport on Sunday due to a security scare after a handwritten note on a tissue paper that read "Plane mein bomb" (bomb on the plane) was found in the aircraft, police said.

No suspicious item was detected during a security sweep of the plane, carried out by the bomb disposal squad and other agencies after all passengers, including eight infants, and seven crew members were safely evacuated and the aircraft was taken to the isolation bay this morning, they said.

▶ **NO SUSPICIOUS** item was detected during a security sweep of the plane, carried out by the bomb disposal squad and other agencies

All passengers of IndiGo flight 6E 6650 re-boarded the aircraft and it left for its scheduled destination at 4.40 pm after the completion of mandatory security checks and prescribed protocols, officials said.

According to the officials, Air Traffic Control (ATC) received information at around 8.46 AM about a bomb threat on IndiGo flight 6E-6650. Acting on the alert and following prescribed security protocols, the aircraft was diverted and made a

safe emergency landing at Lucknow airport at 9.17 am.

The airline said that the plane was diverted to Lucknow after a "security threat" was detected on board.

An IndiGo spokesperson said that a "security threat was noticed onboard IndiGo flight 6E 6650 operating from Delhi to Bagdogra on 18 January due to which the aircraft was diverted to Lucknow".

"Following the established protocol, we informed the relevant authorities immediately and are fully cooperating with them in carrying out the necessary security checks," the spokesperson said. —PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo action: Too little, too late

Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) decision to impose financial penalties of over Rs 22 crore on InterGlobe Aviation, the operator of IndiGo, for the massive disruption in December, is a classic case of regulatory action that is too little and too late. The airline's operational collapse — over 2,500 flight cancellations and nearly 1,850 delays — stranded and distressed lakhs of passengers, disrupted business schedules, cancelled marriages and projected an image of systemic dysfunction in the aviation sector.

According to the inquiry committee, the primary causes for the disruption were over-optimisation of operations and inadequate preparedness, along with deficiencies in system software support for the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) provisions, and shortcomings in IndiGo's operational control. In a capital-intensive, price-elastic sector such as aviation, where several airlines have gone bankrupt, is operational optimisation inherently a flaw — or a commercial necessity? Did the civil aviation ministry inquire with airlines about their preparedness before implementing revised FDTL norms? More importantly, why did the regulator fail to detect systemic weaknesses in operational control?

When a single privately run airline, whose management's primary goal is to make a profit for its shareholders, controls about 65 per cent of domestic air traffic, its failure ceases to be a private corporate lapse and becomes a national vulnerability. But officials allowed such concentration to persist without implementing robust stress-testing of systems.

Regulators are not meant to be reactive agencies that take action after damage has been done. The regulators must think like chess players, anticipating the second- and third-order consequences of every policy change and every step taken by the dominant player. But the aviation regulator was sleeping on the job.

Closing the December crisis with a financial penalty alone, therefore, would be a regulatory failure. The logical conclusion to this crisis is long-term reform of oversight, of market concentration norms and regulatory practices.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

इंडिगो में बम की धमकी लखनऊ में आपात लैंडिंग

लखनऊ। दिल्ली से बागडोगरा (पश्चिम बंगाल) जा रहे इंडिगो के विमान में बम की सूचना पर रविवार सुबह उसे लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर उतारा गया। यात्रियों की स्क्रीनिंग और सात घंटे की सघन जांच के बाद विमान को शाम 4:30 बजे बागडोगरा के लिए रवाना किया गया। विमान में 237

**7 घंटे की सघन जांच
में कुछ नहीं मिला तो
रवाना किया विमान**

लोग सवार थे। इनमें आठ नवजात शामिल हैं। इंडिगो के विमान 6ई-6650 ने रविवार सुबह 7:30 बजे दिल्ली

एयरपोर्ट से बागडोगरा के लिए उड़ान भरी। कुछ देर बाद एक यात्री ने वॉशरूम में टिश्यू पेपर पर विमान में बम की सूचना लिखी होने की सूचना कू सदस्यों को दी। इस पर पायलट ने लखनऊ एयर ट्राफिक कंट्रोलर (एटीसी) से लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर लैंडिंग की अनुमति मांगी। आनन-फानन बम निरोधक दस्ता, फायर ब्रिगेड, मेडिकल, पुलिस, सीआईएसएफ व अन्य सुरक्षा एजेंसियों से जुड़े लोग एयरपोर्ट पहुंचे। करीब सवा नौ बजे विमान लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट पर लैंड हुआ। विमान को आइसोलेशन वे में ले जाकर यात्रियों को उतारकर स्क्रीनिंग हुई। बम निरोधक दस्ते व अन्य टीमों ने विमान में सघन जांच की, लेकिन कुछ नहीं मिला। शाम 4:30 बजे बागडोगरा रवाना किया। ब्यूरो

DGCA penalises Indigo ₹22.2 crore

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JAN. 17

The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a hefty penalty of ₹ 22.20 crore on IndiGo for the flight cancellations fiasco that tormented passengers last December. This includes a penalty for non-compliance of new flight duty timing rules for the pilots and cabin crew for which IndiGo had sought time till February 10, 2026. In addition, IndiGo has been ordered to pledge a bank guarantee of ₹ 50 crore in favour of DGCA, to ensure compliance with the directives and long-term systemic correction while warnings have been issued to IndiGo top management including CEO Pieter Elbers cautioning them against any future repeat of such a situation.

To plug problems at its own end and correct systems within, the DGCA has started an internal inquiry to identify and implement improvements within its own systems.

Lakhs of passengers faced massive inconvenience due to abrupt flight cancellations and delays by IndiGo between December 3 to 5, 2025. A total of 2,507 flights were cancelled and 1,852 were delayed leaving about three lakh passengers stranded at various airports as IndiGo management crumbled under the pressure of new roster rules for pilots and crew.

The DGCA had in December constituted a four-member committee to carry out a comprehensive review and assessment of the circum-

FLIGHT CHAOS

- Flight cancellations stranded nearly three lakh passengers.
- Over-optimisation and poor planning caused operational chaos.
- IndiGo management failed implementing new FDTL rules.
- CEO, COO, and senior staff warned formally.

₹50 crore
bank guarantee mandated for compliance.

- DGCA appreciated IndiGo for swift operational recovery.



stances leading to the operational disruptions of IndiGo. During the probe, the committee took statements of the stakeholders and thoroughly studied the network planning, rostering and software being deployed by IndiGo. The inquiry committee found that the primary causes for the disruption were over-optimisation of operations, inadequate regulatory preparedness along with deficiencies in system software support and shortcomings in management structure and operational control on the part of IndiGo. The committee observed that the airline's management failed to adequately identify planning deficiencies, maintain sufficient operational buffers.

IndiGo hit with Rs 22-cr fine for Dec flight chaos

CEO 'cautioned';
airline to furnish
Rs 50 cr bank bond

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Saturday imposed a penalty of Rs 22.20 crore on IndiGo and directed it to furnish a Rs 50 crore bank guarantee to ensure long-term systemic correction over the unprecedented flight chaos in December last year.

The move came after a probe found that over-optimisation of operations and inadequate regulatory preparedness by the airline led to the massive disruption that led to an outcry and calls for holding the airline accountable for the lapses.

The DGCA also "cautioned" IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers for "inadequate overall oversight" of flight operations and crisis management. It also warned the Senior Vice-President (Operations Control Centre) and asked the airline to relieve him and not assign any accountable position for failing to plan and timely implement the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation.

Warnings were also issued to other senior airline management officials for operational, supervisory, manpower planning, and roster management lapses.

IndiGo has also been asked to take appropriate action against any other personnel identified through its internal inquiry and submit a compliance report.

In a statement, IndiGo said it is committed to taking full



Heaps of passengers' luggage piled up at the IGIA during IndiGo flight disruptions in New Delhi. PTI FILE PHOTO

WHAT DID DGCA PROBE ON INDIGO FIND?

- Over-optimisation of operations
- Inadequate regulatory preparedness
- Deficiencies in system software support
- Shortcomings in management structure and operational control
- Overriding focus on maximising utilisation of crew, aircraft, and network resources
- Crew rosters designed to maximise duty periods

SOURCE: DGCA



Penalties:
Rs 22.20 cr
One-time systemic penalties:
Rs 1.80 crore
Continued non-compliance penalty:
Rs 20.40 crore

cognisance of the orders and will, in a thoughtful and timely manner, take appropriate measures.

The probe was ordered following the cancellation of 2,507 flights and delays of 1,852 flights between December 3 and 5, as the airline could not assign adequate crew to operate services due to the new norms that allowed enhanced rest time for pilots.

At the same time, the DGCA also acknowledged the "swift" turnaround to restore its operations. The airline management "failed" to adequately identify planning deficiencies, maintain sufficient operational

buffers, and effectively implement the revised FDTL norms that led to disruption in services, the probe found.

It said the "overriding focus" on maximising utilisation of crew, aircraft, and network resources significantly reduced roster buffer margins.

"Crew rosters were designed to maximise duty periods, with increased reliance on dead-heading, tail swaps, extended duty patterns, and minimal recovery margins. This approach compromised roster integrity and adversely impacted operational resilience," it said.

► IndiGo, Page 3B

Indigo hit with Rs 22-cr fine...

Indigo, From Page 3

Penalties of Rs 30 lakh each were imposed on six counts.

In addition for continued non-compliance with provisions of FTDL for 68 days between December 5 and February 10, a daily penalty of Rs 30 lakh/day has been imposed. The total penalties amount to Rs 22.2 lakh.

The DGCA has asked the airline to pledge a bank guarantee of Rs 50 crore.

The bank guarantee-linked reform framework - IndiGo Systemic Reform Assurance Scheme - is "strictly tied" to the DGCA-verified imple-

mentation of reforms across four pillars:

1) leadership and governance (Rs 10 crore upon certification in three months) manpower planning, rostering and fatigue-risk management; 2) (Rs 15 crore linked to initial and sustained compliance over six months), digital systems and operational resilience; 3) (Rs 15 cr upon acceptance of upgrades and safeguards within nine months) and board-level oversight with sustained compliance; 4) (Rs 10 crore after six months of continued adherence over a 9-15 month period).



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

Bomb Threat in IndiGo Flight Forces Emergency landing at Lucknow Airport



Lucknow: An IndiGo flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in West Bengal carrying 222 passengers made an emergency landing at the Lucknow airport on

Sunday after a handwritten note on a tissue paper bearing the words "Plane mein bomb" (bomb on the plane) was found in the aircraft, police said.

The airline said that the plane was "diverted" to Lucknow after a "security threat" was detected on board. All passengers, including seven crew members, were safely evacuated, officials said. Further investigation and necessary legal action are underway. – PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

Pilot crunch slows airline expansion plans

YARUQHULLAH KHAN
New Delhi, January 18

AS DOMESTIC AIRLINES prepare for one of the largest aircraft induction cycles globally, the country's aviation sector is grappling with a widening gap between demand for pilots and the capacity of the training ecosystem to supply them — particularly at command level.

According to aviation consultancy CAPA, carriers will need around 10,900 additional pilots by 2030, or

IN ROUGH WEATHER

■ CAPA estimates demand for 10,900 additional pilots by 2030, or roughly 1,600 every year

■ Command upgrades require 2,500-6,000 flying hours over many years



roughly 1,600 every year, to operate the expanding fleet.

Yet the problem is not a lack of licences alone.

While flying schools continue to produce hundreds of

first officers annually, airlines say the real shortage is of experienced captains, creating a structural mismatch that investment alone may not immediately resolve.

"We have 36 academies producing pilots, but they are largely left on their own. On one hand, airlines say there is a shortage.

On the other hand, pilots are moving around with CVs, willing to take even clerical jobs. The mismatch is glaring," Lokesh Sharma, senior aviation and defence analyst, told FE.

He pointed out that while flying schools may graduate around 200 pilots a year, barely half find cockpit placements.

Continued on Page 11

Airline expansion may run into pilot...

NEVILLE BHARUCHA, WHO runs Carver Aviation, said roughly 70% of his academy's graduates are placed with airlines, while the rest either move into other aviation roles or seek opportunities overseas.

Airlines argue that the bottleneck lies at the captain level. "There is no shortage of co-pilots. The shortage is only of captains," an Air India executive said, adding that more than 1,200 new co-pilots enter the system annually.

Becoming a captain typically requires between 2,500 and 6,000 flying hours, translating into six to ten years of experience. This long progression period has created a structural gap just as fleet sizes are ballooning. The problem has been exacerbated by the steady migration of experienced commanders to West Asian and Southeast Asian carriers offering higher pay, better rosters and tax advantages. The issue has been significant enough for the government to raise it at the International Civil Aviation Organisation, seeking a global framework to curb aggressive pilot poaching.

The Tata Group airline is also setting up what it says will be South Asia's largest flight training academy in Amravati, backed by an investment of about ₹200 crore, with a planned capacity of 180 pilots a year and a fleet of 34 trainer aircraft.

Adani Defence Systems has also entered the space by acquiring a majority stake in Flight Simulation Technique



In response, airlines and aviation groups have begun investing heavily in training infrastructure. Air India, along with Airbus, inaugurated a pilot training centre in Gurugram in September 2025, which aims to train around 5,000 pilots over the next decade.

The Tata Group airline is also setting up what it says will be South Asia's largest flight training academy in Amravati, backed by an investment of about ₹200 crore, with a planned capacity of 180 pilots a year and a fleet of 34 trainer aircraft.

Adani Defence Systems has also entered the space by acquiring a majority stake in Flight Simulation Technique

Centre at an enterprise value of ₹820 crore. The company operates 11 full-flight simulators and flying schools in Haryana. IndiGo, for its part, continues to expand its cadet pilot programme, partnering with overseas and domestic schools to train pilots through a structured 21-month course. The airline says it has inducted over 1,000 pilots through such tie-ups over the past 13 years.

Despite these efforts, industry executives say capacity constraints run deeper. The civil aviation regulator, DGCA, itself faces manpower shortages, with nearly half its technical positions vacant. This has slowed licence renewals and command upgrade checks, delaying pilots' progression and adding to the bottleneck.

Training quality remains another concern. In the regulator's first-ever ranking of flying training organisations, none received an A or A+ grade. Thirteen were placed in the B category, while 22 fell into the lowest C category. Even the government-run Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Akademi was graded at the bottom tier.

"It is extremely difficult for smaller players to build high-quality training institutions because of the lack of a strong maintenance and repair ecosystem," Mohammed Hanif, former DGCA official, said. Aircraft often have to be sent abroad for maintenance, driving up costs and disrupting training schedules, he said.

As a result, a large share of aspiring pilots continue to train overseas. Several pilots estimate that nearly 60% of new Indian pilots now obtain their licences abroad, citing better aircraft, instructors and less congested airspace. "Training overseas is more structured and efficient. Here, airspace congestion itself becomes a constraint," said a first officer who trained in Australia and West Asia.

Costs remain a major barrier. A commercial pilot licence in India typically costs around ₹50 lakh, with type ratings adding another ₹15-20 lakh. Cadet programmes can cost up to ₹1 crore, forcing families to rely on large education loans or asset sales. "No one has this kind of money lying around," a junior pilot said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 JANUARY 2026

DGCA slaps IndiGo with ₹22 cr fine

Dhairya Gajara
MUMBAI

In a move to enforce accountability in the aviation sector, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has slapped a Rs 22.2 crore fine on IndiGo following a massive operational meltdown in December.

The regulator has also ordered the removal of a senior official from any accountable position and issued formal warnings to several top executives, including CEO Pieter Elbers.

The penalty ranks among the largest financial sanctions ever imposed on an Indian carrier. The Rs 22.2 crore fine penalises IndiGo for failing to implement Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) norms, with the regulator treating the relaxation granted until February 10 as non-compliance.

Beyond the fine, the DGCA has ordered the immediate removal of Jason Herter from his position as Senior Vice President, Operations Control Centre (OCC), citing "gross negligence" in managing the OCC.

DGCA slaps...

Warnings have also been issued to deputy head of flight operations, AVP-Crew Resource planning and director of flight operations for operational supervisory, manpower planning, and roster management lapses.

The airline has also been ordered to pledge a bank guarantee of Rs50 crore in favour of DGCA to ensure compliance with the directives and long term systemic correction.

Holding the OCC's failure to anticipate and manage crew rosters under the new FDTL norms as the primary cause of the collapse, the regulator has permanently barred him from holding any "accountable position" or roles involving safety and operational oversight.

While taking a hard line with the OCC head, the regulator stopped short of seeking further resignations at the C-suite level. CEO Pieter Elbers and other senior officials, including the accountable manager, have received caution letters warning that any recurrence of such "systemic planning failures" will invite harsher personal enforcement, including possible licence suspensions.

The 60-page investigation report notes that IndiGo's pilot strength fell from 5,463 in March 2025 to about 5,085 by December, just as stricter pilot rest rules came into force. While other airlines managed the transition, IndiGo—operating nearly 2,300 daily flights—underestimated the required crew buffer by nearly 15 per cent, triggering a "domino effect" that grounded nearly half its fleet on the worst days.

The chairman and board members of IndiGo's parent, InterGlobe Aviation, said in a statement that appropriate measures would be taken in a thoughtful and timely manner. "An in-depth review of the robustness and resilience of

IndiGo's internal processes has been underway since the disruption, to ensure the airline emerges stronger from these events," the statement said.

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

फ्लाइट की
लखनऊ में
करानी पड़ी
इमरजेंसी
लैंडिंग

एजेसी नई दिल्ली

इंडिगो एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट की लखनऊ के चौधरी चरण सिंह अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट पर रविवार सुबह इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग करानी पड़ी। फ्लाइट 6ई-6650 दिल्ली से बागडोगरा (पश्चिम बंगाल) जा रही थी। विमान में 238 यात्री सवार। बताया जा रहा है कि विमान के टॉयलेट में टिश्यू पेपर पर फ्लाइट में बम है हाथ से लिखा मैसेज मिला। अभी तक जांच में कोई बम या संदिग्ध वस्तु नहीं मिली है, लेकिन

इंडिगो फ्लाइट में मौत के मुंह से बचे 238 यात्री फ्लाइट में बम है- टॉयलेट में टिश्यू पेपर पर आतंकी मैसेज?



सुरक्षा एजेंसियां गहन तलाशी ले रही हैं। फ्लाइट दिल्ली से उड़ान भर चुकी थी और बीच रास्ते में थी। विमान को आइसोलेशन बे (अलग क्षेत्र) में खड़ा किया गया। सीआईएसएफ, बम निरोधक दस्ता और अन्य सुरक्षा टीमों ने विमान को घेर लिया। सभी यात्रियों को सुरक्षित

बाहर निकाला गया, उनकी जांच की गई और सामान की तलाशी ली गई। एसीपी रजनीश वर्मा (लखनऊ पुलिस) ने कन्फर्म किया कि धमकी फ्लाइट के टॉयलेट में एक टिश्यू पेपर (टिश्यू नैपकिन) पर हाथ से लिखे नोट के रूप में मिली। एक यात्री ने इसे देखा और क्रू मेंबर को सूचित किया, जिसके बाद पायलट ने एक्शन लिया। फिलहाल सबूत होक्स की ओर इशारा कर रहे हैं - टिश्यू पेपर पर लिखा मैसेज आमतौर पर प्रैंक या गलतफहमी का मामला होता है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

धमकी पर विमान की आपात लैंडिंग

लखनऊ, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। बम की सूचना पर दिल्ली से बागडोगरा जा रहे इंडिगो के एक विमान की रविवार सुबह लखनऊ में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई गई। जांच में कोई संदिग्ध वस्तु या विस्फोटक नहीं मिलने पर करीब साढ़े सात घंटे बाद शाम 4:40 बजे विमान को रवाना किया गया।

पुलिस के अनुसार, नई दिल्ली से दार्जिलिंग के बागडोगरा जा रही इंडिगो एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट संख्या 6ई-6650 में बम की सूचना से रविवार सुबह यात्रियों में अफरा-तफरी मच गई। आनन-फन्नन सुबह 9:17 बजे अमौसी



07 घंटे से ज्यादा समय तक चली जांच-पड़ताल के बाद विमान को लखनऊ से रवाना किया गया

■ इंडिगो की फ्लाइट के बाथरूम में टिशू पेपर पर 'फ्लाइट में बम है' लिखा मिला

स्थित चौधरी चरण सिंह अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर विमान की इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई गई।

विमान में सवार सभी 222 यात्रियों, दो पायलट और पांच क्रू-मैम्बर को सुरक्षित बाहर निकाला गया। इसके बाद सरोजनीनगर पुलिस और बम स्व्वाड ने विमान की सघन चेकिंग की।

हालांकि, विमान में कोई भी संदिग्ध वस्तु या बम नहीं मिला। जांच टीम को बाथरूम में टिशू पेपर पर 'फ्लाइट में बम है' लिखा मिला। पुलिस ने टिशू पेपर को कब्जे में ले लिया। इंडिगो एयरलाइंस के सुरक्षाधिकारी विपिन की ओर से अज्ञात व्यक्ति के खिलाफ सरोजनीनगर थाने में तहरीर दी गई है।

DGCA monitoring IndiGo to ensure smooth ops: Officials

Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), will continue to monitor IndiGo, even after it penalised the airline and issued warning to senior executives on Saturday to ensure it has enough pilots to run operations after February 10, officials close to the matter told HT.

Officials said the civil aviation ministry has directed IndiGo to submit weekly compliance reports, while the DGCA has been carrying out daily scrutiny of the airline's operations during the three-month relaxation period under the revised Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL) framework, which ends on February 10.

"The airline, on the direction of the civil aviation ministry, has been submitting a compliance report every week and it will continue after the penal action too," a ministry official said. "The regulator is keeping a close eye on the airline's operations to ensure that it is able to function smoothly under the new norms," a second official said.

IndiGo, India's largest airline, cancelled over 5,000 flights in the first week of December, citing pilot shortages allegedly arising from increased rest requirements for cockpit crew under the revised duty norms.

DGCA on Saturday imposed a record ₹22.2 crore penalty on IndiGo and issued warnings to six senior executives including



The civil aviation ministry directed IndiGo to submit weekly compliance reports, while the DGCA has been scrutinising the airline's operations during the revised FDTL framework. ANI

the chief operating officer, after its inquiry found the airline's "overriding focus on maximising utilisation" of crew and aircraft through aggressive cost-cutting drove December's operational meltdown that stranded over 300,000 passengers.

The airline, which operates more than 2,200 flights a day, saw its daily operations curtailed following regulatory intervention into the matter. The civil aviation ministry subsequently directed IndiGo to cut 10% of its winter schedule and asked it to submit a roadmap for full compliance with Phase II of the FDTL norms. Show-cause notices were issued to IndiGo chief executive officer Pieter Elbers and chief operating officer Isidre Porqueras Orea, while multiple officials confirmed that the DGCA has maintained a daily scrutiny of the airline.

Simultaneously, the regulator constituted an eight-member oversight team comprising senior flight operations inspectors

to closely monitor the airline's functioning amid the large-scale disruptions that caused significant passenger inconvenience across airports. According to a December 10 DGCA order, two officials from the team were designated to be stationed daily at IndiGo's corporate office in Gurugram. Officials said the team will continue to remain in place until February 10, monitoring key operational aspects including cockpit and cabin crew availability, rostering practices and standby crew strength.

Separately, DGCA also formed a four-member committee to investigate the reasons behind the mass cancellations. The committee submitted its report to the ministry on December 26, though its findings have not been made public. The airline could face a substantial financial penalty along with possible changes in its senior management, depending on the final decision taken by the government, officials said.

FLIGHT GROUNDED AFTER BOMB THREAT FOUND ON TOILET TISSUE

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: An IndiGo flight en route from Delhi to Bagdogra made an emergency landing at the Lucknow airport on Sunday after a passenger found a bomb threat scribbled on a tissue paper in the plane's toilet, police said.

"A message was found written on a tissue paper in the toilet of the flight, stating that there was a bomb on board," Lucknow's ACP Rajneesh Verma said.

Flight 6E-6650, carrying 237 passengers and crew, landed safely in Lucknow at 9.17am after Air Traffic Control received an alert at around 8.46 am, airport officials said.

All passengers and crew were safely evacuated and the plane was taken to an isolation bay. Bomb disposal squads, CISF personnel, police, fire services, and medical teams were deployed as part of standard operating procedures. After the aircraft was declared bomb-free and sanitised, the flight resumed its journey and departed Lucknow for Bagdogra at 3.39 pm, it added.

"...We informed the relevant authorities immediately and are fully cooperating with them," an IndiGo spokesperson said.

(With agency inputs)



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

18 JANUARY 2026

₹22-CR FINE ON INDIGO FOR MASS FLIGHT RECALLS

NEW DELHI: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a fine of ₹22.2 crore on the airline for massive disruption in December, the regulator said in a statement on Saturday.

The fine comes over a month after the airline regulator constituted a four-member committee to probe widespread disruption between December 3-5. The Indigo had witnessed cancellation of 2,507 flights and 1,852 delays.

HTC



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

Deviation by pilot damaged Chennai runway lights: DGCA

Hemanth C.S.

BENGALURU

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in its final investigation report, has concluded that the pilot-in-command of the Star Air flight to Bengaluru deviated from the lead line on the taxiway (TWY K), aligned the aircraft on the runway 07 edge line and initiated the take-off roll, thereby damaging seven runway edge lights at the Chennai International Airport in February 2025.

On February 25, 2025, a Star Air flight (SDG 8216) operating from Chennai to Bengaluru, with 34 passengers and six crew members, took off from the airport at 4.53 p.m. and landed at the Kempegowda International Airport at 5.33 p.m.

All persons on board the flight were safe.

At 7.41 p.m., a security jeep, while carrying out a

routine runway inspection at the Chennai airport, reported that seven runway edge lights were found broken on the right side of RWY 07.

According to the DGCA, during this time (between 4.53 p.m. and 7.41 p.m.), there were a total of 45 aircraft movements and none of these aircraft reported any abnormalities in the airfield or to their aircraft.

“After detailed examination, it was observed that SDG 8216, while lining up from TWY K, aligned to the extreme right side of RWY 07 and took off,” the DGCA report stated.

It further added that information on this was communicated to the aircraft operator the next day to check for any damage and the operator informed there were no abnormalities observed.

However, by that time, the aircraft had already flown to three sectors.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026



Security forces at the Lucknow airport after an IndiGo flight made an emergency landing due to a bomb threat message. ANI

UTTAR PRADESH

Bomb threat in flight forces emergency landing in Lucknow

Lucknow: An IndiGo flight from Delhi to Bagdogra in West Bengal carrying 222 passengers made an emergency landing at the Lucknow airport on Sunday due to a security scare after a handwritten note on a tissue paper that read “Plane mein bomb” (bomb on the plane) was found in the aircraft, police said. No suspicious item was detected during a security sweep of the plane, carried out by the bomb disposal squad and other agencies after all passengers were evacuated. All passengers of IndiGo flight 6E 6650 re-boarded the aircraft and it left for its scheduled destination at 4.40 pm, officials said. PTI

MINT

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

DGCA action lifts one cloud, but IndiGo's pilot plans are still hazy

Abhishek Law & Dipali Banka
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI

The aviation regulator's weekend decision to impose a penalty on IndiGo and warn its top officials concludes more than a month-long row triggered by the flight meltdown at India's largest airline last month. While the move lifts the immediate regulatory overhang, questions remain over whether IndiGo can realistically induct enough pilots to meet new rules, four consultants and pilots said.

In the first week of December, IndiGo had promised the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that it would induct 158 pilots by 10 February. On 10 December, the reg-



Sector experts have doubts on the hiring prospects. BLOOMBERG

ulator had asked the airline to curtail its winter schedule, or the proposed domestic flights, by at least 10%.

"You cannot add so many pilots in three months. It is practically impossible. Even if

pilots are recruited, training and DGCA approvals take at least 60 days. Even expat pilots require long security clearances," said Amit Singh, a former pilot and chief executive officer (CEO) of Safety Matters Foundation, a Gurugram-based aviation safety education platform.

Sector experts have doubts over the hiring prospects. "We still do not know if IndiGo will be hiring additional pilots to avoid a similar operational meltdown in the future. And if so, there is no clear roadmap for such hiring that has been made public. People are still in the dark," said Mark D. Martin, founder and CEO at Martin

TURN TO PAGE 2

IndiGo's pilot plans still hazy after DGCA penalty, warning

FROM PAGE 1

Consulting.

Documents submitted by IndiGo to the DGCA show that the total crew availability, including pilots and co-pilots, was at 4,134 in October 2025. This rose to 4,575 in November but fell slightly to 4,551 in the following month. By 10 February, IndiGo plans to increase its pilot strength to 4,709. In total, the airline will add 68 captains and 90 first officers by 10 February. The airline has committed to hiring and upgrading a total of 300 captains and 600 junior first officers by December.

"It takes at least seven to eight months to upgrade a co-pilot or first officer as a pilot," said captain C.S. Randhawa, president of the Federation of Indian Pilots. "And if you are making a direct hire, then it is even longer to get a pilot since release clauses for serving pilots are quite watertight. In this backdrop, hiring a significant number of pilots before by 10 February is a challenge."

Ratings agency Icria has said



Total crew availability was at 4,134 in October 2025. MINT

it would "monitor continuity of senior leadership in the context of the show cause notices" issued by the DGCA to IndiGo's CEO and COO, and brokerages have observed there could be leadership changes at IndiGo.

"The amount of penalty is insignificant as compared to their balance sheet. I think it is a good thing that they just got the warning and since they improved the situation after the first week of December, it looks like many regulatory uncertainties and concerns are behind them now," said Gagan

Dixit, aviation, chemicals, oil and gas analyst, at Elara Capital.

"The fine is paltry and does not send the right message to an airline the size of IndiGo. Issues such as corrective measures to be taken up by IndiGo have not been addressed. The DGCA's findings and recommendations also do not make it clear if there is a pilot shortage at the airline or not," said Martin.

Some executives also questioned the DGCA panel's conclusions. "The report is a sham. It has just parroted what IndiGo has told earlier—that there were software issues. It is silent on pilot hiring and corrective measures. More stringent action in terms of penalties was expected too," said captain Randhawa. "If pilots can be grounded, why could the top brass at IndiGo not be suspended temporarily or even fined?" he asked.

IndiGo did not reply to emailed queries sent by Mint until press time.

abhishek.law@live-mint.com

For an extended version of this story, goto [livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com)



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo flight diverted to Lucknow after bomb threat, FIR to be filed

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ New Delhi

AN IndiGo flight from Delhi on Sunday carrying 230 passengers, including eight infants, and bound for Bagdogra in West Bengal was diverted to Lucknow midway after the Air Traffic Control Centre received a bomb threat alert, police said. The flight landed safely at Lucknow airport, and onboard checks revealed a tissue paper in the lavatory claiming a bomb was on board. Lucknow police will register an FIR over the incident, an officer said.

Flight 6E-6650 took off at 7:46 am from Terminal 1 of Indira Gandhi International Airport.

According to a statement released by the Lucknow police, "An Air Traffic Control Centre received a call at 8:46 am stating that a bomb threat had been received for IndiGo flight 6E-6650, which was on its way from Delhi to Bagdogra. Based on the information received and following security protocols, the aircraft made an emergency landing at Lucknow airport at 9:17 am."

The aircraft was taken to an isolation bay immediately, and all passengers and seven crew members were safely evacuated. "Preliminary investigation revealed that a handwritten note related to the threat was

found on a tissue paper, which read 'Plane mein bomb' (bomb in the plane)," the statement read.

The bomb disposal squad, security agencies, and airport authorities conducted necessary security checks at the scene. "The police and concerned agencies are continuously monitoring the situation. Further investigation and necessary action are underway, and detailed information is being collected," the statement added.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (South Zone) Vasant Kumar said, "We received a complaint from Vineet Kumar of IndiGo Airlines and, after a preliminary probe, will register an FIR." He added that further investigation is underway to trace the source of the threat, and additional details are being collected as part of the probe.

In a statement, IndiGo said, "A security threat was noticed onboard IndiGo flight 6E-6650 operating from Delhi to Bagdogra on 18 January, due to which the aircraft was diverted to Lucknow. Following established protocol, we informed the relevant authorities immediately and are fully cooperating with them in carrying out the necessary security checks."





Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

इंडिगो पर जुर्माने के बाद नियामक संस्था DGCA की अब होगी जांच

Maneesh Aggarwal
@timesofindia.com

■ नई दिल्ली: पिछले साल 3 से 5 दिसंबर के बीच देशभर में इंडिगो की उड़ानों से जुड़ी दिक्कत में नियामक संस्था DGCA की जांच कमिटी ने भले ही इंडिगो पर 22.20 करोड़ रुपये का जुर्माना लगा दिया हो, लेकिन अब DGCA की भी जांच होगी। नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने इस पूरे मामले को गंभीरता से लेते हुए DGCA के इंटरनल सिस्टम की जांच के आदेश भी दिए हैं। इसका मकसद यह पता लगाना है



पर्याप्त पायलट से जुड़ी इंडिगो की राहत 10 फरवरी तक

कि DGCA के कामकाज में कहां-कहां कमियां हैं और उन्हें कैसे सुधारा जा सकता है।

सूत्रों के मुताबिक, DGCA ने इंडिगो को फ्लाइट ड्यूटी टाइम लिमिट (FTL) के नए नियम

लागू करने से 10 फरवरी तक की राहत दी थी। अब 11 फरवरी से इंडिगो को नए FTL नियमों के तहत ही अपने फ्लाइट ऑपरेशंस चलाने होंगे। इसे इंडिगो के लिए एक नई चुनौती माना जा रहा है। इससे पहले DGCA को यह भी सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि इंडिगो पूरी तरह तैयार है, ताकि दोबारा ऐसी स्थिति पैदा न हो। इस पूरे मामले को लेकर DGCA के अंदर भी सवाल उठ रहे हैं। सूत्रों का कहना है कि जब पिछले साल 1 नवंबर से FTL नियमों का दूसरा चरण लागू किया गया था, तब DGCA ने यह पहले से क्यों नहीं जांचा कि एयरलाइनों के पास पर्याप्त पायलट हैं या नहीं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

BOMB SCARE: INDIGO FLIGHT DIVERTED

Passengers aboard an IndiGo flight from Delhi to Bagdogra faced a mid-air scare on Sunday, after a bomb threat note was discovered in the aircraft lavatory, forcing an urgent emergency landing in Lucknow and triggering significant disruption across one of India's busiest domestic corridors. The aircraft, identified as flight 6E-6650, was travelling from Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) to Bagdogra when the threat came to light. The airline said that the plane was "diverted" to Lucknow after a "security threat" was detected on board. According to officials, Air Traffic Control (ATC) received information at around 8.46 am about a bomb threat on IndiGo flight 6E-6650. Acting on the alert and following prescribed security protocols, the aircraft was diverted and made a safe emergency landing at Lucknow airport at 9.17 am. All passengers, including eight infants, and seven crew members were safely evacuated, officials said, adding bomb disposal squads and security agencies launched a thorough check of the plane. Preliminary investigation revealed a handwritten note on a tissue paper inside the rear lavatory of the aircraft, which read, "Bomb on the plane."



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

18 JANUARY 2026

DGCA slaps ₹22.2cr penalty on IndiGo

AMIYA KUMAR
KUSHWAHA

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has slapped a fine of ₹22.2 crore on IndiGo for its poor implementation of revised crew roster norms and other operational failures that led to massive flight disruptions in early December.

The DGCA order came on the basis of the findings of its four-member committee that was set up to carry out a comprehensive review and assessment of the circumstances that led to such disruptions.

The airline has also been directed to furnish a ₹50-crore bank guarantee to ensure compliance with the DGCA directives and long-term systemic correction. The DGCA has asked IndiGo to relieve the senior vice-president (operations control centre) from current responsibilities after the probe panel found him responsible for the failure in systemic planning and timely implementation of the revised flight duty time limitation provisions.

► FROM PAGE 1

Warnings have also been issued to CEO Pieter Elbers and accountable manager (chief operating officer), among others, for the crisis.

"Caution to the CEO for inadequate overall oversight of flight operations and crisis management. Warning to the accountable manager (COO) for failure to assess the impact of winter schedule 2025 and the revised FDTL CAR (civil aviation requirements) leading to widespread disruptions," the DGCA said in a statement.

DGCA slaps ₹22cr penalty on IndiGo

The DGCA underscored the committee's observations that blamed the IndiGo imbroglio on over-optimisation of operations, inadequate regulatory preparedness, deficiencies in system software support and weak management structure and operational control.

The committee flagged

that the failure of the airline management to adequately identify planning deficiencies, maintain sufficient operational buffer and effectively implement the revised FDTL provisions.

"These lapses resulted in widespread flight delays and large-scale cancellations, causing inconvenience to pas-

sengers," the committee said in its report.

The IndiGo fiasco had led to the cancellation of 2,507 flights and delays of 1,852 flights between December 3 and December 5.

Responding to the DGCA's order, IndiGo said: "We would like to take this opportunity to inform all of our stakeholders, particularly our valued customers, that the board and the management of IndiGo are committed to taking full cognisance of the orders and will, in a thoughtful and timely manner, take appropriate measures."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 ►



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo to inform if it can fly 2k flights daily

New Delhi: As IndiGo's exemption from the new safety-enhancing flight duty rules for A320 fleet pilots expires Feb 10, the airline must tell DGCA this week, likely Monday, whether it can still run more than 2,000 flights a day under the new rules that increase pilot requirement, reports Saurabh Sinha.

If it cannot, authorities are expected to step in and cut flights in time to avert a repeat of last December's chaos, for which the DGCA fined the airline Rs 22.2cr; an amount pilots' body has dismissed as "peanuts", saying the regulator counted only three days of disruption when the turmoil lasted far longer.

► 'Chaos longer', P 12

Flight diverted after bomb note in toilet

An IndiGo Delhi-Bagdogra flight with 230 passengers was diverted to Lucknow after finding a handwritten note in the rear lavatory which read: "Bomb on the plane". Authorities declared the threat a hoax. P 11

No pilot, parking bay: Flyers wait for 11 hrs

Over 150 flyers on an Ahmedabad-bound Akasa Air flight were forced to wait at Pune airport for about 11 hours on Saturday due to major delays, no parking bay and for want of a pilot. P 11

IndiGo chaos lasted beyond 3 days DGCA probed: Pilots body

► Continued from P 1

Regular meetings are being held with IndiGo to get a status on their preparedness for once the flight duty time limitation (FDTL) exemption ends on Feb 10. They have informed us about their pilot hiring plans. The airline has been doing dry runs with its scheduling software by matching available pilot strength with number of flights to be operated. On Monday they are expected to share their post Feb 10 preparedness," said people in the know.

It is learnt that from Feb 1 IndiGo will plan its crew rosters as per new FDTL rules and without factoring in the current exemption that will end later that month. IndiGo flights have been reduced till the end of winter schedule (which ends on last Saturday in March) and the airline plans to serve its entire network with these cuts under the new FDTL rules. It is learnt IndiGo may not seek any further exemptions.

The aviation ministry and the DGCA are keeping a very close watch on the situation. "We can't and won't allow a repeat of what happened last Dec," said sources.

The Federation of Indi-

an Pilots (FIP) has termed the DGCA's Rs 22.2cr fine on IndiGo as "peanuts" and questioned some aspects of its report. FIP president Captain CS Randhawa said: "The DGCA probe takes cognisance of IndiGo flight disruptions only on three days — Dec 3, 4 & 5. In reality, the disruptions lasted much longer till about mid Dec and the scale was much higher."

Captain Randhawa questioned the lack of action. "Issuing a warning letter after a massive disruption of this scale is a joke, like the fine amount. Also with IndiGo flights cut, why hasn't the FDTL exemption been revoked? The DGCA is levying a fine of Rs 30 lakh for each day of non-compliance of the new flight duty rules. Does it mean that non-compliance of the law can be traded with a penalty?" Captain Randhawa said.

IndiGo said on Saturday that it is "committed to taking full cognisance of the orders and will, in a thoughtful and timely manner, take appropriate measures... an in-depth review of the robustness and resilience of the internal processes at IndiGo (is) underway to ensure that the airline emerges stronger out of these events in its otherwise pristine record of 19 plus years of operations."



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

Akasa flight held up for 11 hrs in Pune

Pune: Over 150 flyers on an Ahmedabad-bound Akasa Air flight were forced to wait at Pune airport for about 11 hours on Saturday due to major delays, no parking bay, and for want of a replacement pilot, reports **Joy Sengupta**.

The flight (QP-1509), scheduled to take off at 10.10 pm Saturday, finally departed at 9.10 am Sunday. "I was on my way to the airport when I received a message that the flight was delayed and would depart at 11.20 pm. However, after reaching the airport, the airline told us it would fly at 11.55 pm. The gate number changed from 5 to 7 and then to 9. Around 11.40 pm, we were informed that the flight had been deferred again," said a flyer, Sanjiv Patil, told **TOI**.

He said an airline official told passengers that the incoming flight from Delhi was delayed due to the unavailability of parking bays. When it landed in Pune, the pilot's duty hours had ended, and he decided not to operate the flight.

Het Mehta, another passenger, told **TOI**, "The airline didn't tell us anything."

However, an Akasa spokesperson told **TOI**, "Our teams kept passengers informed and provided refreshments and hotel accommodation."



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

Plane diverted after bomb hoax, delayed by 7 hrs

Lucknow: An IndiGo Delhi-Bagdogra flight with 230 passengers and seven crew members was Sunday diverted to Lucknow after a mid-air bomb warning, prompting evacuation and searches of over seven hours before authorities declared the threat a hoax.

Probe revealed a handwritten note in the rear lavatory which read: "Bomb on the plane". Authorities also said the plane's luggage hold had radioactive material in a cancer medicine package (with NOC).

Officials said Lucknow's ATC received the alert from flight 6E-6650 at 8.46am. The aircraft made an emergency landing at 9.17am and was moved to an isolation bay.

A Bomb Threat Assessment Committee was set up. Quick Reaction Teams cordoned off the aircraft. Bomb-disposal squads and security agencies ran checks. After an all-clear late in the afternoon, the plane left for Bagdogra at 4.30pm. The flight had 222 passengers, eight infants, two pilots, and five hostesses.

Sunday evening, Lucknow Police announced a probe. "We received a complaint from Vineet Kumar of IndiGo and, after a preliminary probe, will register an FIR," additional DCP Vasanth Kumar said. TNN



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

19 JANUARY 2026

IndiGo To Change?

Feb 10 is when India's biggest airline will face a new test, as new pilot duty rules kick in. DGCA better watch out

In slapping IndiGo with a ₹22.2cr fine – the steepest ever for an Indian airline – for massive flight disruptions last month, DGCA has sent out the right message. Additionally, IndiGo has to submit a ₹50cr bank guarantee whose release is tied to implementing the new flight duty norms for pilots. Plus, IndiGo's senior VP of operations control centre has to be removed. DGCA's probe into the IndiGo schedule collapse found over-optimisation of operations, inadequate regulatory preparedness and shortcomings in management structure and operational control. As management gurus would put it, the airline failed to identify skill deficiencies and maintain sufficient operational buffer.

But even if this sounds like management jargon, it's what turns a smooth flight into a catastrophe. The airline business is a highly sophisticated operation. Any operational deficiencies can lead to a huge domino effect. That's precisely what happened to IndiGo in



Dec. Its failure to adequately plan for the new flight duty norms wrecked its flight schedule and stranded tens of thousands of passengers across the country.

But will the slap on the wrist by DGCA make a difference? At the heart of the problem is the fact that India's aviation sector today is practically a duopoly, with IndiGo holding around 61% market share. Therefore, the airline is essentially too big to fail as customers have few other

options. True, aviation is a tough business the world over. But it is for GOI and regulators to look at how entry barriers can be lowered and the market made more competitive – we have argued before for a relook at the steep tax on aviation fuel.

But even regulators need to get their act together. IndiGo during the Dec crisis wasn't able to meet even a fraction of the schedule approved by the regulator. But the DGCA report addresses flight disruptions only between Dec 3 and 5, whereas thousands of flights were cancelled or delayed beyond Dec 5 too. Why this slack for IndiGo? Plus, what happens beyond Feb 10 when the exemption from the new flight duty rules for IndiGo Airbus A320 pilots ends? Can IndiGo stick to its schedule beyond Feb 10 or will we see another round of chaos? Also, following the probe report, the onus has been put on IndiGo to course correct. But will it? Many argue more heads should have rolled at IndiGo, including that of the airline's COO. DGCA was found to have had lax oversight over IndiGo. It should not be lenient now.