



Corporate Communications Directorate

ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWATI

18 JULY 2026

Indigo flights to operate from LGBIA's T2 terminal

STAFF REPORTER

GUWAHATI, July 17: Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport (LGBIA) has announced that IndiGo will transition all its flight operations to the T2 (New Terminal) with effect from July 20, 2026.

"With this transition, all IndiGo arrivals and departures at Guwahati Airport will be operated from Terminal 2, offering passengers a modern, seamless and enhanced travel experience. The new inte-

grated terminal has been designed to provide world-class passenger amenities, improved operational efficiency and greater comfort while catering to the growing air travel demand in the region," an LGBIA spokesperson said.

Passengers travelling on IndiGo flights from July 20 onwards are advised to report directly to Terminal 2 for check-in, security screening and boarding. The airport has put in place comprehensive passenger facilitation meas-

ures, including clear way-finding signage, passenger information displays and on-ground assistance to ensure a smooth transition.

"The migration of IndiGo operations marks another milestone in the phased operationalisation of the new terminal and reinforces Guwahati airport's commitment to enhancing connectivity and delivering a superior passenger experience as the gateway to Northeast India," the spokesperson added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

टर्मिनल-1 पर लगेगा पब्लिक एड्रेस सिस्टम

नई दिल्ली। आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट के टर्मिनल-1 पर यात्रियों की सुविधा बढ़ाने के लिए अत्याधुनिक पब्लिक एड्रेस (पीए) सिस्टम लगाया जाएगा। आपूर्ति, स्थापना, परीक्षण और संचालन संबंधी निविदा प्रक्रिया शुरू की गई है। नई प्रणाली से उड़ान, बोर्डिंग, सुरक्षा और आपातकालीन घोषणाएं टर्मिनल के सभी हिस्सों में स्पष्ट और समान रूप से सुनाई देंगी। हजारों यात्रियों की आवाजाही को देखते हुए यह सिस्टम समय पर जानकारी देगा। संवाद

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

एयरपोर्ट पर कैब लेने की नई आनलाइन व्यवस्था बनी मुसीबत

मुकेश ठाकुर • जागरण

नई दिल्ली: आइजीआइ एयरपोर्ट के घरेलू टर्मिनल-1 पर कैब लेने के लिए शुरू की गई आनलाइन व्यवस्था यात्रियों और कैब चालकों पर भारी पड़ रही है। ट्रैफिक और वाहनों की भीड़ को कम करने के उद्देश्य से शुरू की गई इस व्यवस्था के तहत ओला, उबर और रैपिडो जैसी एप आधारित टैक्सियां अब टर्मिनल के ठीक बाहर नहीं आती हैं। कैब लेने के लिए यात्रियों को आनलाइन कैब बुक करने के बाद अपना सामान लेकर करीब 400 मीटर दूर पार्किंग स्थल तक पैदल ही जाना पड़ता है।

पहले यात्री टर्मिनल से बाहर निकलते ही कुछ कदम की दूरी पर कैब में सवार हो जाते थे, लेकिन अब सामान, छोटे बच्चों और बुजुर्गों के साथ पार्किंग तक पहुंचना मुश्किल हो गया है। व्यस्त समय में कैब के लिए 10 से 30 मिनट तक इंतजार करना आम बात हो गई है। कई यात्रियों ने इंटरनेट मीडिया पर

- यात्रियों को अपना सामान लेकर करीब 400 मीटर दूर पार्किंग तक चलना पड़ता है पैदल
- टर्मिनल-1 पार्किंग में न तो पर्याप्त शेड है और न ही बैठने की है समुचित व्यवस्था

45 मिनट तक इंतजार करने की शिकायत भी की है। टर्मिनल-1 पार्किंग में न पर्याप्त शेड है और न ही बैठने की समुचित व्यवस्था। यात्रियों का कहना है कि व्यवस्था बदलने से पहले आवश्यक बुनियादी सुविधाएं विकसित की जानी चाहिए। नई व्यवस्था को लेकर एक यात्री ने पोस्ट में लिखा कि टर्मिनल-1 पर पार्किंग शुल्क बचाने के लिए चालक निर्धारित पिकअप प्वाइंट तक नहीं आते हैं। अन्य यात्रियों ने भी कैब के बार-बार रुक होने की शिकायत की है। कुछ यात्रियों ने बताया कि पार्किंग या एयरपोर्ट एक्सेस शुल्क के नाम पर वसूली जा रही है।

Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 JULY 2026

Prohibitory orders at Kolkata airport

PTI

KOLKATA

A proposed show of strength by former West Bengal minister Siddiquallah Chowdhury over the planned relocation of a mosque situated on the Kolkata airport premises fizzled out on Friday after police imposed prohibitory orders in the area, forcing the Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind leader to withdraw his call for a mass gathering.

Chowdhury, who had called for a gathering of "one crore people" to protest restrictions on prayers and the proposed relocation of the Gouripur Jama Masjid, backed off from the programme after the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate invoked Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) in Bankra area, prohibiting the assembly of four or more persons.

Police also mounted a heavy security deployment in the locality, with two companies of central forces and around 250 state police personnel keeping vigil to prevent any untoward incident.



Corporate Communications Directorate

STATESMEN

KOLKATA

18 JULY 2026

Siddiqullah calls off Dum Dum airport mosque prayer programme

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

Kolkata, 17 July

Minority leader Siddiqullah Chowdhury on Friday withdrew his proposed programme to offer prayers at the historic Gauripur Jame Mosque, popularly known as the Bankra Mosque, inside the Dum Dum airport premises after visiting the area and holding discussions with senior police officers.

The development came amid unprecedented security arrangements around Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, where the Bidhannagar Police Commissionerate imposed prohibitory restrictions under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) around Gate No. 7 and adjoining areas to prevent any

**THE DEVELOPMENT CAME
AMID UNPRECEDENTED
SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS
AROUND KOLKATA AIRPORT,
WHERE THE BIDHANNAGAR
POLICE COMMISSIONERATE
IMPOSED PROHIBITORY
RESTRICTIONS UNDER
SECTION 163 OF THE BNSS**

breach of peace.

A large contingent of state police, Rapid Action Force (RAF) personnel and Central security forces was deployed across the airport zone. Water cannons were also kept on standby as authorities sought to ensure that airport operations remained unaffected and that no unlawful assembly took place. Chowdhury had earlier announced a programme to offer Friday prayers at the mosque after access to the

shrine was reportedly restricted following the airport authorities' decision to relocate the structure.

However, after speaking to police officials at the airport, he left the area without proceeding with the programme. He later informed reporters that Friday's programme would not be held but did not elaborate on the reasons behind his decision.

Reacting to the development, Dum Dum North MLA Sourav Sikdar said the police would examine whether there had been any other motive behind the proposed programme. "Police will investigate whether Siddiqullah had any other purpose and wanted to create unrest. The man does not have a good record and has often instigated people with sensitive statements. Police aptly handled the situation," Sikdar said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWATI

18 JULY 2026

Night flight operations demanded

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, July 17: The Dibrugarh Press Club has submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention for the immediate commencement of regular scheduled night flight operations from Dibrugarh Airport and the early upgradation of the airport into an international airport.

The memorandum, signed by Press Club president Manash Jyoti Dutta, vice-president Anil Kumar Poddar and general secretary Ripunjoy Das, stated that the Club has been consistently pursuing these long-pending public demands through representations submitted on December 14, 2023, December 22, 2024, and May 31, 2025.

Highlighting Dibrugarh's growing strategic and economic significance, the

memorandum pointed out that the city has emerged as Assam's second capital with the establishment of Secretariat and Legislative Assembly infrastructure. It further notes that Dibrugarh has developed into the commercial, industrial, educational and healthcare hub of Upper Assam, serving not only the region but also neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and adjoining border districts. Consequently, Dibrugarh Airport has become one of the busiest airports in eastern India, catering to millions of passengers every year.

The Press Club observed that although the airport has been equipped with modern night landing facilities since 2010 and successfully handled its first evening landing in December 2014, regular scheduled night flight operations have yet to be-

gin. It attributed the delay primarily to an inadequate deployment of airport operational staff and Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel, resulting in airport operations being confined to a single shift despite the availability of the necessary technical infrastructure.

The memorandum also drew attention to the ongoing modernisation of Dibrugarh Airport, including the completion of one of the largest Air Traffic Control (ATC) and Communications, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS) complexes in the North East. It further noted that work on a new integrated passenger terminal building and the installation of an advanced radar system is progressing, which would significantly enhance the airport's operational capacity.

According to the Press

Club, the absence of regular evening and night flight services continues to cause considerable inconvenience to business travellers, patients requiring specialised medical treatment, students, tourists, defence personnel and working professionals. Many passengers, it stated, are compelled to incur additional expenditure on accommodation and surface transport because of limited flight connectivity during evening hours.

Expressing optimism, the Press Club stated that these measures would substantially boost trade, tourism, healthcare, higher education, industrial growth and investment across Assam and the north eastern region, while further strengthening the Government of India's vision of developing the North East as the country's gateway to South-East Asia.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

उड़ान रद्द, रिफंड में देरी पर 40 हजार का लगा जुर्माना दिल्ली जिला उपभोक्ता आयोग ने एयर इंडिया को दिया आदेश, 45 दिन में मुआवजा देने के निर्देश

अमर उजाला ब्यूरो

नई दिल्ली। दिल्ली जिला उपभोक्ता विवाद निवारण आयोग (दक्षिण-पश्चिम) ने उड़ान रद्द होने और समय पर टिकट राशि वापस नहीं करने के मामले में एयर इंडिया के खिलाफ फैसला सुनाया है।

आयोग ने एयर इंडिया और ट्रेवल एजेंसी बाल्मर लॉरी एंड कंपनी को टिकट का किराया छह प्रतिशत वार्षिक व्याज सहित लौटाने तथा

टिकट राशि व्याज सहित लौटाने के लिए भी कहा, 10 नवंबर को उड़ान अचानक रद्द की थी

एयर इंडिया को अलग से 40 हजार रुपये मुआवजा देने का आदेश दिया है।

मामला सेवानिवृत्त लेफ्टिनेंट कर्नल नंद किशोर राणा से जुड़ा है। उन्होंने नवंबर 2024 में दिल्ली-कोच्चि आने-जाने का टिकट सरकारी अधिकृत ट्रेवल पोर्टल बाल्मर लॉरी

एंड कंपनी के माध्यम से बुक कराया था। 10 नवंबर को उनकी उड़ान अचानक रद्द कर दी गई। इसकी सूचना उन्हें देर रात एसएमएस से मिली, जबकि उनका वेब चेक-इन हो चुका था और बोर्डिंग पास भी जारी किया जा चुका था।

यात्रा जरूरी होने के कारण राणा को 20,632 रुपये खर्च कर दूसरी एयरलाइन का टिकट खरीदना पड़ा। टिकट राशि वापस मांगने पर एयर इंडिया और ट्रेवल एजेंसी एक-दूसरे

पर जिम्मेदारी डालते रहे, जिससे रिफंड में देरी हुई। सुनवाई के दौरान आयोग ने कहा कि एयर इंडिया उड़ान रद्द करने का कोई ठोस कारण या साक्ष्य प्रस्तुत नहीं कर सकी। आयोग ने इसे सेवा में कमी और अनुचित व्यापारिक व्यवहार माना। आदेश में दोनों पक्षों को 17,403 रुपये का टिकट किराया छह प्रतिशत वार्षिक व्याज सहित लौटाने और एयर इंडिया को 40 हजार रुपये मुआवजा 45 दिनों के भीतर अदा करने के निर्देश दिए हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

पाकिस्तान ने भारत के लिए हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंध 23 अगस्त तक बढ़ाया

इस्लामाबाद। पाकिस्तान ने भारतीय विमानों के लिए अपना हवाई क्षेत्र प्रतिबंध 23 अगस्त तक बढ़ा दिया है। पाकिस्तान एयरपोर्ट्स अथॉरिटी ने शनिवार को इस संबंध में नोटिस टू एयरमैन (नोटम) जारी किया। पहले यह प्रतिबंध 24 जुलाई तक लागू था। नोटम के अनुसार, भारतीय पंजीकरण वाले सभी विमान, भारतीय एयरलाइंस के स्वामित्व, संचालन या लीज पर लिए गए विमान और भारतीय सैन्य विमान 23 अगस्त रात 11:59 बजे तक पाकिस्तान के हवाई क्षेत्र का इस्तेमाल नहीं कर सकेंगे। प्रतिबंध पाकिस्तान के दोनों फ्लाइट इंफॉर्मेशन रीजन कराची और लाहौर, पर लागू रहेगा। गौर हो कि अप्रैल 2025 में जम्मू-कश्मीर के पहलगाम में हुए आतंकी हमले के बाद भारत और पाकिस्तान ने एक-दूसरे को एयरलाइंस के लिए अपना-अपना हवाई क्षेत्र बंद कर दिया था। एजेंसी

Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGLORE

8 JULY 2026

SECURITY ALERT

Bomb scare delays flight; lavatory note a hoax

BENGALURU, DHNS

Panic gripped Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) briefly after a note warning of a bomb was found inside an aircraft lavatory, officials said on Friday.

"Don't go Bomb Hai! Please," the note read.

The crew found it inside the front lavatory of IndiGo flight 6E 6423, which was bound for Ahmedabad from Bengaluru, at 7.35 pm on Thursday. The flight was scheduled to depart at 8 pm.

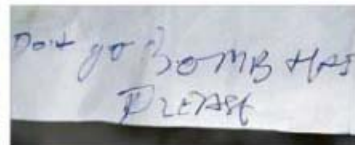
"The threat caused significant disruption and concern for the safety of our passengers, crew and airline. We request your assistance in investigating this incident, identifying the person



The crew found it inside the front lavatory of the IndiGo flight.

responsible and taking appropriate legal action," the police complaint stated.

Following the Standard Operating



The note warning of explosives.

Procedure (SOP), a Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) was convened at Terminal 1.

After a thorough inspection, the threat was declared a hoax and classified as "non-specific", police sources said.

"Based on the complaint, an FIR was registered on Friday. An investigation has been launched," Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) GK Mithun Kumar said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 JULY 2026

CCPA slams SpiceJet with ₹1L fine for dark patterns

Dhairya Gajara

MUMBAI

The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has penalised low-cost carrier SpiceJet Rs 1 lakh for deploying deceptive user interface tactics, commonly known as dark patterns, on its online flight booking platform.

A rigorous inquiry led by CCPA Chief Commissioner Nidhi Khare and Commissioner Anupam Mishra revealed that SpiceJet utilised manipulative design features to influence consumer choices and force consent during ticket purchases.

The ruling called out three prohibited digital practices:



forced action, interface interference, and trick questions.

Passengers were automatically enrolled into the SpiceClub Loyalty Programme via pre-ticked checkboxes without an active choice. The airline also utilised confusing, negatively worded consent language to trick users into accepting promotional messages via SMS, WhatsApp, and email.

The watchdog ruled that obtaining consent through passive default settings viol-

ates Rule 4(9) of the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, alongside provisions of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, and the Dark Patterns Guidelines, 2023.

SpiceJet representative Jasbir Chaudhary denied deliberate deception, claiming the website was customer-friendly and attributing the issues to an unintentional technical error. The airline argued its loyalty programme carries no direct monetary liabilities. The CCPA rejected technical glitches as a valid defence, emphasizing that pre-ticked agreements alter consumer rights without explicit consent.

Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

सीसीपीए का स्पाइसजेट पर एक्शन डार्क पैटर्न अपनाने पर 1 लाख रुपए का जुर्माना, जांच में दोषी



एजेंसी नई दिल्ली

केंद्रीय उपभोक्ता संरक्षण प्राधिकरण (सीसीपीए) ने फ्लाइट बुकिंग प्लेटफॉर्म पर 'डार्क पैटर्न' (भ्रामक डिजाइन प्रथाओं) का इस्तेमाल करने के मामले में स्पाइसजेट लिमिटेड पर 1 लाख रुपए का जुर्माना लगाया है। प्राधिकरण ने कहा कि कंपनी की ये

प्रथाएं उपभोक्ता संरक्षण अधिनियम, 2019, उपभोक्ता संरक्षण (ई-कॉमर्स) नियम, 2020 के नियम 4(9) और डार्क पैटर्न्स की रोकथाम एवं विनियमन संबंधी दिशानिर्देश, 2023 का उल्लंघन हैं।

सीसीपीए की अध्यक्ष मुख्य आयुक्त स्मृति निधि खरे और आयुक्त अनुपम मिश्रा की अगुवाई में हुई जांच में पाया गया कि स्पाइसजेट अपने फ्लाइट बुकिंग प्लेटफॉर्म पर पहले से टिक किए गए चेकबॉक्स के जरिए उपभोक्ताओं को स्वतः 'स्पाइसक्लब' लॉयल्टी प्रोग्राम में नामांकित कर रही थी।

Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

18 JULY 2026

3 grounded Boeing 737 planes of Jet Airways up for auction



The auction comes months after three Boeing 777 aircraft belonging to Jet Airways were sold to Malta-based Ace Aviation in February this year.

Yogesh Naik

yogesh.naik@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: As part of the airline's ongoing asset monetisation process, three Boeing 737 aircraft of grounded Jet Airways will be auctioned on Saturday following the Supreme Court's liquidation order.

The aircrafts are parked in Mumbai, Delhi and Hyderabad and have reserve prices of ₹90.02 crore, ₹70.64 crore and ₹4.93 crore.

The third aircraft has been priced significantly lower as it does not have its right engine and auxiliary power unit (APU).

The auction comes months after three Boeing 777 aircraft belonging to Jet Airways were sold to Malta-based Ace Aviation in February this year. Those aircraft have since been made fly-worthy and are expected to leave the country once they receive certificates of airworthiness.

The Boeing 777s, bearing registrations VT-JES, VT-JEV and

VT-JEM, were sold for \$16 million, \$12.5 million and \$17.5 million, respectively.

People familiar with the process said a few more Jet Airways aircraft are yet to be sold as their ownership titles remain unresolved due to outstanding loans.

Jet Airways, founded by Naresh Goyal in 1993, ceased operations in April 2019 after a prolonged financial crisis. The Supreme Court ordered its liquidation in November 2024 after the revival efforts failed.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDU

CHENNAI

18 JULY 2026

Bomb hoax delays IndiGo's Bengaluru-Ahmedabad flight

Panic ensued on an IndiGo flight bound for Ahmedabad from Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport on Thursday after the cabin crew found a handwritten bomb threat message on a piece of paper near the lavatory. The threat was declared hoax after an extensive inspection, said an officer investigating the case, adding that the message on the paper read, "Don't go, bomb *hai!* Please". The police have obtained the passenger list and launched an investigation.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

18 JULY 2026

**STRATEGIC
SKIES**

Geoeconomics of Aviation

As aviation reshapes global trade and diplomacy, India must move beyond domestic growth and position itself as the world's next major international hub



KDP RAO

THE WRITER
IS A FORMER
ADDITIONAL CHIEF
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Airports are no longer mere gateways; they have become instruments of soft power, connectivity, and economic influence

Normally, a robust aviation sector acts as a catalyst for exponential growth through multiplier effects in countries with abundant natural resources and assured domestic demand. But, unusually and surprisingly, aviation has become an economic resource in itself for some countries that have neither natural resources nor the quintessential factors of production, boosting their growth phenomenally and making them geopolitical powers. The magic lies in 'geoeconomics'. Today, Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Singapore in Southeast Asia, and Turkey—the bridge between Europe and Asia—have become geopolitical powers largely due to sustained investment in aviation programmes, building world-class airports catering to 100–200 million passengers globally every year, one-third of whom are transit passengers. While Dubai Airport's (DXB) annual direct revenue is roughly \$3.8 billion, its overall economic impact adds approximately \$22–26.7 billion annually to Dubai's GDP. Similarly, Singapore's Changi Airport Group's revenue reached US\$2.4 billion for FY 2026. As masters of global air connectivity, these countries wield a tremendous amount of political and economic influence in the world.

Can India also leverage its aviation sector to take advantage of geoeconomics? The answer could be in the affirmative, in view of the sector's pre-pandemic growth of more than 10 per cent CAGR. Tremendous growth has been observed in India's aviation sector in recent years. Dozens of modern airports are coming up across the country under UDAN, transporting around 174 million O-D passengers (the third highest globally), though the sector is primarily dominated by domestic travel (78 per cent), which largely sustains the industry (IATA, June 2025). Aviation (airlines, airports, MRO, ground handling, etc.) directly adds to GDP through revenues, taxes, and spending. In India, it contributed cumulatively about USD 53.6 billion and supported 7.7 million jobs overall, as per recent assessments. Delhi is aiming to increase its capacity to 100 million passengers by 2030. But can it replicate the Dubai or Singapore model?

Dubai International (DXB) is an example of turning one's disadvantage into an advantage with the help of vision and strategy. A desert was transformed into an international aviation hub to connect 80 per cent of the world's population within an eight-hour flight radius. Hundreds of secondary cities with no



Global aviation is increasingly becoming an instrument of economic statecraft

direct international connectivity were provided access by the state-run Emirates Airline. The UAE, through the massive expansion project at Al Maktoum International Airport, has built a system of structural dependency for the world worth billions. Singapore is just a city-state of 5.9 million people, with no noteworthy natural resources or a significant domestic market. Surprisingly, Changi Airport catered to 70 million passengers in 2025. It is not just an airport but a huge national, man-made economic asset facilitating the global flow of people, capital, and cargo. Similarly, Turkey leveraged its strategic location by expanding Istanbul Airport into one of the best-connected airports in the world, providing political and commercial access to markets that other countries could not. In 2025, Istanbul Airport served 84 million passengers, of whom 36 million were transit passengers who never stepped out of the terminal. It connects 309 destinations across 110 countries, including many in Africa that most Western airlines have shied away from. It has surpassed even Heathrow, Charles de Gaulle, and Frankfurt, not to mention major airports in the United States. China handled around 1.5 billion passenger trips in 2025 and is reportedly investing heavily in international aviation as part of its Belt and Road Initiative.

Airports are no longer mere gateways; they are instruments of 'soft power' and influence, along with being drivers of income. Infrastructure investment, operational strategy, and the accumulation of connectivity will determine which country moves ahead of the others in the race. Analysts believe that

the future global balance of power will depend not only on military capabilities or political influence but also on who succeeds in building mega aviation networks and world-class terminals, outsmarting the existing aviation hubs.

India, with 65–68 per cent of its population in the working-age group, strong economic fundamentals, and a huge domestic market—not to mention political stability—is definitely poised to emerge as one of the world's major aviation hubs within the next decade. India occupies a central position in South Asia by virtue of its geography and can serve as a bridge between the East and the West. It has proximity to the Middle East, Europe, Africa, and Southeast Asia. Remittances flow from its diaspora, while trade links with Gulf nations ensure natural traffic flows. Projections forecast that India will emerge among the world's top three aviation players in the long term. Reportedly, plans to develop Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru as transit hubs to challenge Gulf carriers are already underway.

Airports in India have doubled from 74 in 2014 to 159 by 2024. Under the UDAN scheme, hundreds of regional routes have become operational, connecting Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities through more than 90 airports and over 600 routes. According to the PIB, ₹4,023.37 crore as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) has been disbursed to promote connectivity to underserved and remote regions. The positive effects are, of course, visible in tourism, healthcare access, and overall trade. Private players like Adani have undertaken major capex projects involving the construction and expansion of multiple airports.

GMR's airports in Delhi and Hyderabad are making huge investments in expansion, developing aerocities and cargo terminals that are clearly visible to passengers during take-off or landing. The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016 targets massive growth in passenger traffic and cargo movement. The market continues to be sustained by low-cost flights, whose demand is assured by the growth of the middle class and rising disposable incomes.

However, to compete with Dubai or Singapore, India has to address certain structural challenges in the sector. First, current operations are insufficient even to handle point-to-point domestic traffic efficiently, while transit traffic remains limited, with nearly 85 per cent still routed through Gulf hubs. Second, service quality, immigration and security delays, skill shortages, dependence on overseas MRO services, and high operating costs make the competition stiff. Third, unpredictable profits, fuel price shocks, regulatory issues, and the near monopoly of a few operators such as IndiGo and Air India make airline economics complex and less attractive. Last but not least is the uncertainty arising from policy issues such as ownership rules, taxation, bilateral agreements, and coordination between the Centre and the states.

The ongoing Middle East conflict has dented Dubai's reputation as a secure and invulnerable aviation hub. India, as a peaceful country with zero tolerance for terrorism, commands respect among nations and can emerge as an ideal alternative international aviation transit point. As a fast-growing economy with enormous natural resources, India should embark on a mission to fill this vacuum by creating world-class aviation hubs. Superior infrastructure, coupled with operational efficiency, is the need of the hour to ensure hassle-free connectivity, faster processing, high-end amenities, and large cargo-handling facilities. Open policies are needed to encourage liberal bilateral agreements, tax incentives, and integration with broader ecosystems in tourism, finance, trade, and real estate (including aerotropolises). A route expansion strategy must be pursued aggressively to guarantee enhanced ease of doing business. Needless to say, a far-sighted vision that transforms airports into economic assets capable of fuelling growth and enhancing India's geopolitical influence should be the guiding force. India can do it.

Views expressed are personal

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MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

DGCA bars South Asia's largest flight training body from taking in students

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

AVIATION regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has prohibited South Asia's largest flight training school, the Redbird Flight Training Academy, from taking on board any fresh students for pilot training programmes until August 31, 2027. This follows multiple complaints received against the academy from trainee pilots, says the regulator.

Redbird has bases in Baramati, Kalbauragi, Lilabri, Belagavi and Seoni. This is the second major action against the academy. Its operations were suspended by the DGCA in October 2023 for two months after it was involved in five incidents in six months. On April 4, 2026, it was involved in an air ambulance incident in Jharkhand in which seven people died.



The DGCA order, dated July 16, said action has been initiated against Redbird due to the following five reasons – prolonged delays in completion of training, unilateral revision of training charges to Rs 3,000 per flying hour, citing fuel escalation, inadequate and disproportionate fee refunds, execution of revised agreements by imposing additional charges, and

alleged denial of access to training facilities for students unwilling to accept the revised terms. The DGCA carried out a spot inspection of its premises too on July 8 when it found multiple discrepancies, the order said.

Redbird presently had 435 active and 92 non-active trainee pilots, the regulator said. As per aviation regulations, there need to be only ten students receiving training per aircraft.

Karan Mann, a senior manager at Redbird, confirmed the receipt of the order. "We have more than 500 students presently and have 43 aircraft. We had placed an order for ten more aircraft, and they are expected to arrive shortly. Due to global tensions, they have got delayed. We have plans for the future, including opening new bases across India shortly, including in Uttar Pradesh."



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PIONEER

DELHI

19 JULY 2026

Pakistan extends airspace ban for Indian aircraft

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

■ Islamabad/Karachi

Pakistan on Saturday extended the closure of its airspace to Indian aircraft until August 23, according to the country's airports authority.

Pakistan and India imposed matching airspace restrictions on each other's airlines after the Pahalgam terrorist attack in April 2025.

"Pakistan airspace not available for Indian-registered aircraft and aircraft operated or leased by Indian airlines/operators, including military flights," said a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority.

According to the NOTAM, the restric-



tion will remain in force until 11:59 pm on August 23. The decision was taken ahead of the expiry of the previous ban on July 24. The country's airspace is

divided into two flight information regions (FIRs) - Karachi and Lahore, according to a Pakistan Civil Aviation Authority document from 2022. The NOTAM applies to both the Karachi and Lahore FIRs.

The ban has been extended monthly since last year, causing financial problems for airlines and extended travel time for passengers. India has also maintained a reciprocal airspace ban on all Pakistani-registered aircraft, airlines, and military flights as part of measures taken against Pakistan in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 people last year.

Both countries closed their respective airspace to each other's airlines after the attack. (PTI)