



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Supreme Court allows AERA's appeal on fees for airport services

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday said the appeal by the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) against a ruling by the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal (TDSAT) was maintainable. The TDSAT said AERA cannot regulate tariffs for non-aeronautical services such as cargo and ground handling at major airports. The court's decision is a setback for airport operators, but good news for passengers. **KRISHNA YADAV**

SC upholds AERA powers in setback to GMR, Adani

BHAVINI MISHRA

New Delhi, 18 October

The Supreme Court (SC) on Friday upheld the powers of the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to fix tariffs for certain non-aeronautical services such as ground handling and cargo handling, in a setback to the GMR and Adani groups.

The apex court overturned the Telecom Disputes Settlement and Appellate Tribunal order and listed the matter be heard on merit.

GMR-led Delhi International Airport Limited and Adani Enterprises-led Mumbai International Airport Limited argued that AERA's determination of tariffs for aeronautical services is an adjudicatory function, raising concerns on whether it has the power to fix tariffs for non-aeronautical services.

The court, however, rejected this argument, saying in itself is not sufficient to conclude that the AERA's determination of tariffs for aeronautical services is an adjudicatory function.

"In the previous section, we have in detail explained that principles of natural justice are not just a requirement for 'judicial' actions. They are required to be complied with even in the exercise of administrative

actions. Thus, the requirement of the principles of natural justice does not render the determination an adjudication," the Bench comprising Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud and Justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said.

The court said AERA has a statutory duty to regulate tariff upon a consideration of multiple factors to ensure that airports are run in an economically viable manner without compromising on the interests of the public.

The court said that AERA had a statutory duty to regulate tariffs to ensure airports are run economically without compromising public interest

"This statutory role is evident, inter alia, from the factors that AERA must consider while determining tariff and the power to amend tariff from time to time in public interest as discussed above," the court said.

It also said that when AERA determines the tariff for aeronautical services in terms of Section 13(1)(a) of the AERA Act, it is acting as a regulator and an interested party.

"It (AERA) is interested not in a personal capacity. Its interest lies in ensuring that the concerns of public interest which animate the statute and the performance of its functions by AERA are duly preserved. Thus, AERA is a necessary party in the appeal against its tariff order before TDSAT and it must be impleaded as a respondent," the Bench said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

18 OCTOBER 2024

B'luru Airport, Sarla Aviation in tie-up for electric air taxis

BENGALURU, DHNS: Tapping into the long-discussed potential of air mobility to offset congestion on Bengaluru's roads, the Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru (BLR Airport) and Sarla Aviation have entered into a partnership to develop eVOTL (electric vertical take-off and landing) aircraft as air taxis.

The seven-seater eVOTL aircraft models are aimed at "revolutionising" the reach and accessibility of air travel, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), the operator of the airport, said.

Sarla Aviation has pitched the aircraft as a "quieter, cleaner and more efficient" alternative to conventional ground and air travel. It claimed that the aircraft can cover the distance between Electronics City and the airport in about 19 minutes. The aviation company has proposed a fare of Rs 1,700 for the ride.

25 घरेलू उड़ानों के साथ अगले वर्ष 17 अप्रैल से शुरू होगा नोएडा एयरपोर्ट

जागरण संवाददाता • ग्रेटर नोएडा

नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट आगामी वर्ष 17 अप्रैल को दो कार्गो, 25 घरेलू और तीन अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमान सेवा के साथ शुरू हो जाएगा। देश के 25 शहर गौतमबुद्ध नगर से सीधे जुड़ जाएंगे। महानिदेशालय नागर विमानन ने नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से 25 घरेलू सेवाओं को शुरू करने पर सहमति दे दी है। तीन अंतरराष्ट्रीय फ्लाइट भी शुरू होंगी। इंटरनेशनल एयर ट्रांसपोर्ट एसोसिएशन (आइएटीए) ने अनुमति दे दी है, लेकिन केंद्र सरकार का निर्णय शेष है।

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से व्यवसायिक आपरेशन के लिए 17 अप्रैल की तारीख तय हुई है। एयरपोर्ट के संचालन से जुड़ी जांच एवं केंद्रीय विभागों की अनापत्ति की प्रक्रिया पूरी की जा रही है। 15 नवंबर से 15 दिसंबर के बीच बिना यात्रियों के फ्लाइट ट्रायल शुरू होगा। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लि. के मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी डा. अरुणवीर सिंह

घरेलू विमान सेवा के लिए डीजीसीए से मिली अनुमति

अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवा के लिए केंद्र से स्वीकृति मिलना शेष



जेवर एयरपोर्ट।

फाइल

का कहना है कि यात्रियों की संख्या बढ़ने पर घरेलू विमान सेवाओं की संख्या में भी वृद्धि होगी। टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग के निर्माण को तेजी से पूरा किया जा रहा है। दिसंबर तक सभी कार्य पूरे हो जाएंगे। दिसंबर में ही विकासकर्ता कंपनी यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट प्रा. लि. की ओर से डीजीसीए के यहां एयरोड्रोम लाइसेंस के लिए आवेदन किया जाएगा। तीस नवंबर को क्रू मेंबर के साथ ट्रायल फ्लाइट प्रस्तावित है।

More Flights May Connect India and UK as Travel Scene Hots Up

British Airways to increase India flights to 63 a week, while AI will also fly more flights to UK

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: A fresh war is brewing on the India to UK air travel market with British Airways and Air India preparing to mount new flights to capitalise on the travel boom.

London is one of the most lucrative destinations for carriers connecting to India as the British capital is home to a large Indian diaspora besides being a leading tourist and business destination for Indians.

British Airways operates 56 daily flights from Heathrow to Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad. It will add a new daily Delhi-Heathrow flight from April next year which will augment the carrier's total flights to India to 63 per week.

"India is our second biggest market. It is strategically very important. We have a lot of links from a trade and a diaspora perspective," Sean Doyle, CEO of British Airways said, on the sidelines of an event commemorating the airline's 100th year of flying to India.

Tata Group-owned Air India, the only Indian airline flying between the countries, will expand its presence significantly by increasing flights from Bengaluru, Goa and Ahmedabad to London. It will also add frequency between Amritsar and Birmingham to four weekly flights from the current three.

Takeoff Mode

BRITISH AIRWAYS

56 daily flights from Heathrow Airport to India

AIR INDIA

Plans to increase frequency between Amritsar & Birmingham to **4** weekly flights from **3**



Has **31** weekly flights to London Heathrow

As demand grows, and as the economy develops, it is important that air services agreement keeps pace with that

SEAN DOYLE, CEO, British Airways



BHAVIN G

While Air India has 31 weekly flights to Heathrow, it also flies to Gatwick Airport from Ahmedabad, Amritsar, Goa and Kochi due to unavailability of slots at Heathrow airport.

London Heathrow is the largest airport between India and Europe with a share of more than 30% seats deployed on the route.

To alleviate the current scenario of slot scarcity, Air India is leasing a dozen slots per week at Heathrow from Scandinavian Airlines.

India and the UK revised their air services agreement this May. This revision will allow carriers from both nations to enhance flights from 56 to 70 per week from London Heathrow to Delhi and Mumbai airports.

The need for expanding the agree-

ment arose after airlines in the UK like British Airways and Virgin Atlantic exhausted their quota of aircraft seat capacity per week, hindering plans to launch any new flights.

Doyle at British Airways said considering the current robust demand on the India-UK route, there should be an 'open sky' without any cap on the number of flights that can be operated between the two countries.

"I think as demand grows, and as the economy develops, it is very important that the air services agreement keeps pace with that," Doyle said.

India has become the third largest for Virgin Atlantic after North America and Caribbean, CEO Shai

India third largest market for airline after America & Caribbean: Virgin Atlantic

Weiss had earlier told ET.

The London-based carrier added a second daily flight from Mumbai in October after launching a flight from London Heathrow to Bengaluru in March.

Calum Laming, chief customer experience officer of British Airways, said a substantial number of passengers from India travel onwards to the US and Canada.

"Depending on time and period of the year, it's very much possible to have even half of the flight with connecting passengers," he said.

Laming said British Airways builds its schedule in such a pattern where passengers from India can connect to US flights without an extended waiting period at the airport.



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 OCTOBER 2024

Sarla Aviation partners with B'loru Airport

PTI

NEW DELHI

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport is set to be a key hub for cutting-edge urban air mobility solutions with Sarla Aviation joining hands with the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to launch electric flying taxis.

Last month, the two entities signed a statement of collaboration to explore sustainable air mobility, specifically electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.



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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

पहले दिन 25 घरेलू और तीन अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें शुरू होंगी



ग्रेटर नोएडा, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर पहले दिन से ही 25 घरेलू और तीन अंतरराष्ट्रीय फ्लाइट उड़ान भरेंगी। यहां से न सिर्फ यात्री गंतव्य तक जा सकेंगे, बल्कि सामानों का आयात और निर्यात भी शुरू हो सकेगा।

मालवाहक के लिए दो कार्गो फ्लाइट भी शुरू करने का फैसला

लिया गया है। प्राधिकरण के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि 17 अप्रैल को एयरपोर्ट से व्यावसायिक विमानों की उड़ान शुरू हो जाएंगी। पहले चरण में 1334 हेक्टेयर में विकसित हो रहे एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण कार्य 95 फीसदी तक पूरा हो चुका है। अब जरूरी लाइसेंस समेत अन्य औपचारिकताएं पूरी की जा रहें।

एयरपोर्ट से पहले दिन से शुरू होने वाली फ्लाइट की तस्वीर शुक्रवार को साफ हो गई। कुल 30 फ्लाइट उड़ान भरेंगी। फ्लाइट की अनुसूची पर अंतरराष्ट्रीय वायु परिवहन संघ (आईटा) ने मुहर लगा दी है।



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HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

18 OCTOBER 2024

Sarla Aviation, B'luru airport tie up to launch electric flying taxis

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport is set to be a key hub for cutting-edge urban air mobility solutions with Sarla Aviation joining hands with the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to launch electric flying taxis. Last month, the two entities signed a statement of collaboration to explore sustainable air mobility, specifically electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft.

This initiative, developed in Karnataka, aims to revolutionise air travel by introducing seven-seater electric flying taxis, which promise faster, cleaner, and more efficient transportation.

While operations may still be two to three years away, Sarla Aviation's electric taxis promise a cleaner, quieter, and more cost-effective alternative to traditional helicopter services previously offered in Bengaluru.

The Bengaluru-based company, co-founded by Adrian



Operations may take 2-3 years to start. MINT

Schmidt, Rakesh Gaonkar and Shivam Chauhan, is at the forefront of this transformation.

Sarla Aviation plans to focus on four of India's most congested cities—Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Pune -- bringing affordable electric aerial taxis to the public. The company's proposed route from Bengaluru Airport to Electronics City would take just 19 minutes, compared to the 152 minutes required by road, with a fare of ₹1,700. "We aim to redefine urban air transport with operational efficiency, reduced carbon emissions, and scalable infrastructure," said Schmidt, Sarla Aviation co-founder and CEO.



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MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

— ADD'L RUNWAY TESTING WILL COMMENCE ON NOV 15 & WILL LAST A MONTH —

Noida International Airport cleared for plane landings after successful ILS test

DIPIKA KIROLA

GREATER NOIDA: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has granted permission for planes to land on the runway of Noida International Airport following the successful completion of a four-day Instrument Landing System (ILS) test. Starting from November 15, the runway will undergo further testing for one month, during which commercial planes will land alongside test aircraft, to strengthen the airport's operational readiness.

Arun Vir Singh, the CEO of the YEIDA, expressed his satisfaction, stating, "Now that DGCA has issued a calibration certificate, it means all systems required for take-off and descent of a flight are in place. So, we can start trials of the entire runway now." Singh emphasised the project's



progress, saying, "We are happy and focused that the project gets ready for trials even before the fixed timelines." The concessionaire will now test all the systems, including signals, ILS, Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI) lights along the runway, and other requirements before commencing operations.

The airport concessionaire is expected to apply for an aerodrome licence in December, with the licence likely to be issued by mid-March. Essential information about the airport, such as codes and booking details, will be uploaded on the International Air Transport Association (IATA) website by 6 February. Singh added,

The ILS, a radio navigation system, provides pilots with accurate information during approach and landing, particularly in low visibility conditions

"Ticket bookings will open 90 days in advance for international flights and up to 60 days for domestic services. So, you can expect booking slots to open around Jan or Feb."

According to an official with the Noida International Airport Limited (NAIL), the airport is equipped with CAT-1 and CAT-3 equipment, which provide information about the plane's height and visibility

during foggy conditions.

The DGCA has also inspected this equipment. From 10 to 14 October, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) conducted multiple daily flights using their Beech King Air 360 ER aircraft to test the Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Precision Approach Path Indicator (PAPI).

During the flight tests, all navigation and radar-related equipment were found to be functioning properly.

The ILS, a radio navigation system, provides pilots with accurate information during approach and landing, particularly in low visibility conditions. The safety system allows pilots to land safely even in situations with very low visibility due to fog or rain. The certificate has been issued following the successful testing of the ILS system.



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THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

18 OCTOBER 2024

Sarla Aviation, Bengaluru airport launch electric flying taxis

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport is set to be a key hub for cutting-edge urban air mobility solutions with Sarla Aviation joining hands with the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) to launch electric flying taxis. Last month, the two entities signed a statement of collaboration to explore sustainable air mobility, specifically electric vertical take-off and landing (eVTOL) aircraft. This initiative, developed in Karnataka, aims to revolutionise air travel by introducing seven-seater electric flying taxis, which promise faster, cleaner, and more efficient transportation. While operations may still be two to three years away, Sarla



Aviation's electric taxis promise a cleaner, quieter, and more cost-effective alternative to traditional helicopter services previously offered in Bengaluru. The Bengaluru-based company, co-founded by Adrian Schmidt, Rakesh Gaonkar and Shivam Chauhan, is at the forefront of this transformation. Sarla Aviation plans to focus on four of India's most congested cities-Bengaluru, Mumbai, Delhi, and Pune -- bringing affordable electric aerial taxis to the public. The

company's proposed route from Bengaluru Airport to Electronics City would take just 19 minutes, compared to the 152 minutes required by road, with a fare of Rs 1,700. "We aim to redefine urban air transport with operational efficiency, reduced carbon emissions, and scalable infrastructure. Our electric flying taxis will set new benchmarks in reliability and performance, aligning with global standards for sustainable aviation," said Schmidt, Sarla Aviation co-founder and CEO.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

जेवर एयरपोर्ट से जुड़ेगा न्यू नोएडा और ग्रेटर नोएडा फेस-2

नोएडा, (पंजाब केसरी): लखनऊ में हुई हाईलेवल बैठक में बड़ा फैसला लिया गया है। योगी आदित्यनाथ की कैबिनेट बैठक में फैसला लिया गया है कि न्यू नोएडा, ग्रेटर नोएडा फेस-2 और नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट को जोड़ा जाएगा। इन तीनों इलाकों को जोड़ने के लिए 16 किलोमीटर लंबा एक्सप्रेसवे बनाया जाएगा। एक्सप्रेसवे के किनारे 1500 हेक्टेयर जमीन पर लॉजिस्टिक हब भी बनाया जाएगा।

इस पूरे प्रोजेक्ट को लेकर उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार की कैबिनेट में मंजूरी मिल गई है। यमुना विकास प्राधिकरण की तरफ से इसको लेकर प्रस्ताव भेजा गया था, जिस पर लखनऊ में बैठे अधिकारियों द्वारा यह फैसला लिया गया है। अब न्यू नोएडा के साथ ग्रेटर नोएडा फेस-2 और नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट को जोड़ा जाएगा। तीनों स्थानों को जोड़ने के लिए उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार ने 16 किलोमीटर लंबे एक्सप्रेसवे को बनाने की मंजूरी दे दी है। इसी के साथ फैसला लिया गया है कि अब नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के आसपास कृषि जमीन नहीं होगी बल्कि इंडस्ट्री विकसित की जाएगी। इसकी मंजूरी भी योगी सरकार ने दे दी है। यमुना सिटी के सेक्टर-8A, सेक्टर-8B, सेक्टर-8C, सेक्टर-8D और सेक्टर-8E में इंडस्ट्री लगाई जाएगी। इसके अलावा सेक्टर-7, सेक्टर-8, सेक्टर-31डी, सेक्टर-23G, सेक्टर-23I और 23E में हर प्रकार की व्यावसायिक सुविधा उपलब्ध करवाई जाएगी।

One bomb hoax can cost an airline over ₹3 cr

From Dumping Fuel And Grounding Aircraft To Putting Up Passengers And Crew In Hotels, Airlines Are Taking A Big Hit This Festive Season

Saurabh.Sinha
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An Air India Boeing 777 took off from Mumbai this Monday (Oct 14) with almost 130 tonnes of jet fuel in its tanks for a 16-hour nonstop journey to New York's JFK airport. Soon after take-off, the airline received a call saying there was a bomb in the plane. JFK-bound AI 119 was immediately diverted and within two hours of take-off, it was preparing to land in Delhi. But there was a problem.

"The maximum landing weight of a B777 is 250 tonnes. A full flight like this weighs about 340-350 tonnes with passengers, baggage and cargo on take-off. Landing within two hours means dumping about 100 tonnes of fuel. At almost Rs 1 lakh per tonne, the fuel wastage cost alone works out to Rs 1 crore," said a senior pilot.

Add to it other expenses like the unexpected landing and parking charges at IGI Airport, putting up over 200 passengers and crew in Delhi hotels, compensating them later for missed connections, grounding of aircraft before it can be back in



service after thorough checks and arranging a fresh pair of operating crew, and the aircraft not reaching JFK to fly passengers from there to India on a scheduled return flight — the total cost of this one hoax threat works out to way over Rs 3 crore, say senior officials.

Costs Adding Up

The spate of hoax threats since last Sunday — close to 40 by late Thursday — is having a massive financial impact on airlines. Rough estimates by airline officials peg the extra expense at about Rs 60-80 crore.

Take the case of Air India B777 (VT-ALM) that took off from Delhi this Tuesday (Oct 15) for Chicago. Twelve hours later, the aircraft with over 200 passengers on board landed in the remote Canadian town of Iqaluit after a bomb threat. The aircraft landed there on Oct 15 at 5.21 am EDT. The next commercial flight it flew was three

and a half days later. First it reached Chicago from Iqaluit as a ferry flight — with no passengers as the stranded passengers had been flown earlier to Chicago on a Canadian Air Force A330 for which AI will pay — and then took off as a commercial flight to Delhi at 5.15 pm on Oct 18.

The average monthly rental of a B777 is between \$400,000 and \$600,000 — this works out to an average daily rental of about \$17,000. Not flying means \$17,000 down the drain every single day. Now, had it not been for the hoax threat, the aircraft would have reached Chicago and then after a few hours, left for Delhi as a regular flight. But not reaching Chicago meant over 200 passengers and crew stranded in Iqaluit for whom accommodation, meals and other basic necessities had to be arranged in a remote town. Then flying them to Chicago on a Canadian Air Force plane.

And, meanwhile, having to deal with Delhi-bound passengers in Chicago's O'Hare Airport whose aircraft didn't show up because it was stranded in Iqaluit. The overall cost of this one threat would run into over Rs 15-20 crore, including the cost of a B777 grounded for that long, said multiple people.

'Financial Terrorism'

No big airline that has been a victim of these threats in the last few days commented on this issue. "This is the peak festive rush season and we don't want to create a scare among travellers. Suffice it to say that this is a sort of financial terrorism against airlines and should be dealt with severely," said a senior airline official.

IndiGo, too, has got threats for several flights, both domestic and international. Very of-

TOI Explains

ten when a flight gets a threat message and is not diverted. The destination airport asks it to hold or hover. This has happened with AI in London, AI Express in Singapore, and perhaps others too. "A B777 burns 7-8 tonnes of fuel every hour and an A320 2.5 tonnes. At Rs 1 lakh per tonne and two hours of hovering, the cost of fuel burn alone is over several crores for all affected airlines," said a pilot.

"Due to the extra time spent in air, very often the same crew can't operate the next flight this aircraft will operate after being cleared by security agencies

post checks. They will need to be rested and given hotel accommodation in that city. It has not been uncommon to have aircraft out of action for 20-25 hours during these crazy hoax message times. While this a force majeure event beyond our control, many passengers who miss connections will take us to court and eventually we will have to settle by paying damages," said a senior official of a big airline.

Making matters worse is the fact there are two types of threats. A specific one where a particular flight number is named or a generic one like the one Air India got on Thursday, saying five AI flights have bombs in them.

"Risk assessment is done. The source of the threat is seen, whether it came via X (former Twitter), WhatsApp, call or mail. Based on an evaluation matrix, the code is decided — whether red (very serious), amber (serious) or green (most likely hoax). But in no circumstances is any threat dismissed as it is better to be safe, even if it means losses and angry passengers, than sorry," said an official.

In cases assessed to be serious, flight have to land at the nearest suitable airport. "To avoid oversight landings, we can dump fuel when the aircraft is holding at over 5,000 feet. Fuel jettisoned from that altitude will vapourise. In Delhi, we dump a little south of the capital near Sakras and in Mumbai over the sea," said a pilot.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Hoax threats to airlines: Police suspect use of VPN or dark web

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Investigators probing the bomb threats on different airlines suspect that a virtual private network (VPN) or dark web browser was used to set up the accounts on X. Police are trying to retrieve their internet protocol (IP) addresses by contacting social media platforms.

Initial probe points to the role of a teenager in the creation of one of the accounts that posted the threats, sources said.

Police have also approached the social media platforms to suspend the handles that posted threatening messages and asked them to remove the posts. FIRs have been registered regarding the bomb threats. Probes are underway into seven similar cases reported at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Oct.

Multiple teams, including Delhi Police's cyber cell and

Initial probe points to the role of a teenager in the creation of one of the accounts that posted the threats, sources said

Intelligence Fusion & Strategic Operations Unit, are investigating the threats. On Thursday, police requested social media platforms to provide details of accounts posting the messages.

The airport police addressed eight bomb threat incidents this month, ultimately confirming all as hoaxes after rigorous verification and inspection. On Wednesday alone, three Delhi-based flights received bomb threats, causing panic among authorities and passengers.

A bomb threat was received concerning a Bengaluru-bound Akasa Air flight carrying 184 passengers, which for-

ced it to return to Delhi. Following standard safety protocols, the flight was promptly redirected back to the Delhi airport, where it landed safely. A CISF official said the threat was made through X, and a bomb threat assessment committee was convened.

In another incident reported on Wednesday, a bomb threat involving a flight operating from Mumbai to Delhi was received, and the flight was redirected to Ahmedabad due to a security-related alert. A bomb threat was also received for SpiceJet Leh-Delhi and Darbhanga-Mumbai flights. On Oct 16, SpiceJet's X handle also received a direct message indicating a bomb threat concerning two flights.

Police said they were taking measures to hold perpetrators accountable, safeguard passenger well-being, and maintain seamless airport operations.

TDSAT HAD HELD AERA LACKS CERTAIN REGULATORY POWERS 'AERA Plea Against Order on Tariffs Maintainable'

Indu Bhan

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Friday held as maintainable an appeal of the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) against a telecom disputes settlement appellate tribunal decision related to its powers to regulate tariff on certain non-aeronautical services. A bench comprising chief justice DY Chandrachud and justices JB Pardiwala and Manoj Misra held that the "AERA can file an appeal under Section 31 of the AERA Act in view of our conclusion that it is a necessary party in appeals against the tariff orders issued by it".

The court said that when it comes to appeals against the tariff orders issued by the AERA, it is not just acting as an "expert body" but as a regulator interested in the outcome of the proceedings.

"AERA has a statutory duty to regulate tariff upon a consideration of multiple factors to ensure that airports are run in an economically viable manner without compromising on the interests of the public. This statutory role is evident, inter alia, from the factors that AE-

RA must consider while determining tariff and the power to amend tariff from time to time in public interest," the apex court said.

When the AERA determines the tariff for aeronautical services, it is acting as a regulator and an interested party, according to the judgment. "Its interest lies in ensuring that concerns of public interest which animate the statute and performance of its functions by AERA are duly preserved. The AERA is a "necessary party in the appeal against its tariff order before TDSAT and it must be impleaded as a respondent," it said. The court also directed its registry to list the matters before a regular bench for deciding the appeals on merits.

Court said that when it comes to appeals against tariff orders issued by AERA, it is acting also as a regulator interested in outcome of proceedings

The TDSAT had in January last year held that the AERA lacks the authority to impose tariffs on services such as ground and cargo handling.

PLANNING YOUR NEXT TRIP? 

Beat the airport rush like a pro

Yvonne Jacob

The festive season is a time for celebration, travel, and big family reunions, but it's also the peak time for airport congestion and unexpected delays. As October is packed with celebrations, longer queues at security checks, packed flights and long layovers, besides delays caused by unpredictable weather may disrupt your travel plans. However, with a bit of pre-planning, you could navigate through the airport chaos smoothly.

Have a Plan B

Be prepared for things to not go as per plan during the festive rush. Try to keep a few hours between connecting flights to avoid the hassle. Another useful tip is to do your homework and research hotels close to the airport or connect with people you know from the same city so you can have a comfortable spot to rest.



Preferably buy tickets directly from the airline

One of the many tips and tricks shared by author Christopher Schaberg in his book *The End of Airports* was to not try and save money by choosing third-party vendor ticket deals. "When delays and cancellations happen, if you have such a ticket, the airline will have less interest in aiding you. Buying tickets directly from the airline will help you get back in the air quicker," writes Christopher.

• The number of passengers affected due to flight cancellations and delays rose by **34%** from January to March 2024

• Over **9.5 lakh** passengers were affected due to cancellations and delays in the first three months of the year

(As per the Directorate General of Civil Aviation)

Expect unexpected baggage delays

Ritik Bansal, a videographer who frequently travels for work, suggests labelling your luggage with all possible details. "The best practice is to keep all your essentials in your carry-on luggage and label all your bags with your name, contact details, address, and alternate phone numbers and addresses of people from the connecting or arrival destination," he adds. Chaarul Shrivastava, a Mumbai-based travel enthusiast suggests carrying an extra set of clothes, comfortable shoes, toiletries, medicines, and non-perishable snacks in your carry-on luggage. "Download books, podcasts, or movies on your device to keep yourself entertained," she adds.





Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

18 OCTOBER 2024

Airport opens after six-hour maintenance

Mumbai: The annual post-monsoon runway maintenance work was successfully completed on Thursday, said the Mumbai airport operator. The airport was shut for flights between 11am and 5pm to carry out the maintenance work on both its runways, 09/27 and 14/32. Flight operations began after the six hour closure. "The annual post-monsoon maintenance routine is crucial for inspecting and addressing any surface degradation caused by the monsoon rains. During the maintenance, key activities included installing runway edge lights at the intersection of runway 14/32, clearing debris from underground ducts beneath runway 09-27, and validating the strength of the Runway End Safety Area," said Mumbai International Airport Ltd. 18/10



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWAHATI

18 OCTOBER 2024

At least 7 social media handles suspended for issuing hoax bomb threat to airliners

NEW DELHI, Oct 17: Over half-a-dozen social media handles that issued hoax bomb threats to multiple Indian airliners this week have been suspended or blocked by cyber security agencies till now, official sources said on Thursday.

The sources said that the handles were “analysed” by a joint team of cyber, aviation security and intelligence agencies following which orders were issued to suspend these accounts as they continued to issue “mindless” threats.

About seven-eight social media handles, majority of them on X, have been suspended or blocked since Monday, when these hoax bomb and terrorist attack threats started being sent to

virtually all the Indian airliners for both their domestic and international route operations, the sources said.

The agencies have also found some common lines and words used in these fake threats like “bombs”, “blood will spread everywhere”, “explosive devices”, “this is not a joke” and “you will all die” and “*bomb rakhwa dia hai*” (Hindi for bomb has been placed), among others.

The sources said the agencies, apart from getting police FIRs registered in each such hoax bomb messages case, have enhanced ‘cyber patrolling’ on the social media and the dark web to check for possible linkages or trends where threats are being posted online leading to grounding or di-

version of the aircraft.

The online surface is being scratched to find the primary email registration and geographical locations of these threat-issuing handles, some of which are possibly being prompted from overseas locations, the sources said.

These details are being shared with jurisdictional police departments, they said.

Beginning Monday, more than two dozen Indian carriers have been affected by these social media posted threat messages, all of which have come out hoax or false, officials said.

In two cases, fighter jets of Singapore and Canada had to be scrambled to help the Indian planes that were carrying hundreds of passengers.

These fake threats have inconvenienced hundreds of passengers and airline crew apart from security agencies. They have taken a heavy toll on airline logistics and operational costs, the officials said.

On Wednesday, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said law enforcement agencies are actively pursuing all cases of bomb threats against airlines and the government is closely monitoring the situation.

A minor boy of 17 years of age from Chhattisgarh has been detained by the Mumbai Police in connection with the hoax bomb threats posted on social media platform X targeting three flights originating from Mumbai on October 14. – PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Vistara in-flight experience is not going away post merger, says Air India chief

Press Trust of India
New Delhi

Air India chief Campbell Wilson on Friday said "Vistara in-flight experience is not going away" and the routes serviced by Vistara will have the flight code 'AI2' post merger.

The merger of the two full service carriers is scheduled to be completed on November 12, following which Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India. Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Post the merger, the vintage 'Maharaja' will be retained through the frequent flyer programme of the integrated entity.

"The existing members of Club Vistara will be seamlessly transferred to Air In-

dia's Flying Returns program. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar 'Maharaja Club'," Air India said in a statement.

NEW CODE

In a message sent to Vistara customers on Friday, Wilson said they can continue to enjoy the same world-class fleet under the new code 'AI2XXX'.

"With the merger on the horizon and the changes that come with it, we wanted to assure you that your Vistara in-flight experience is not going away. You can continue to enjoy the same world-class fleet, exceptional service, and familiar faces under the new code AI2XXX," the CEO and MD of Air India said. In the statement, Air India said the routes and schedule operated by Vistara

aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the airline's in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft. There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post-merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in recent times.

Air India, in the statement, reiterated that the experience offered by Vistara will continue for customers post merger and that Vistara will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'. "For instance, UK 955 will become AI 2955 helping customers identify them while booking... after November 12," it said.

एयर इंडिया-विस्तारा के विलय के बाद

कुछ समय तक बरकरार रहेगा विस्तारा का उड़ान अनुभव

दीपक पटेल
नई दिल्ली, 18 अक्टूबर

विस्तारा का 11 नवंबर से एयर इंडिया के साथ विलय हो जाएगा। विलय के बाद विस्तारा का इन-फ्लाइट यानी उड़ान संबंधित अनुभव (रूट, शिड्यूल, विमान, केबिन क्रू, मेन्यू, कटलरी और सेवा समेत) कुछ समय तक पहले जैसा ही बना रहेगा। अधिकारियों ने बिजनेस स्टैंडर्ड को बताया कि विस्तारा के वफादार यात्रियों को आश्वस्त करने के लिए फौरी तौर पर इस नजरिए को बरकरार रखा जाएगा जो विलय के बाद अपने अनुभव की गुणवत्ता के बारे में चिंतित हो सकते हैं। चूंकि एयर इंडिया को रेट्रोफिटिंग विमान मिलते रहेंगे। इसलिए एयर इंडिया के परिचालन में विस्तारा की सेवाओं का पूर्ण एकीकरण अगले वर्ष चरणबद्ध तरीके से किया जाएगा।

टाटा समूह द्वारा संचालित एयर इंडिया ने शुक्रवार को घोषणा की कि 12 नवंबर से विस्तारा के विमान एयर इंडिया के बैनर तले परिचालन करेंगे और उन्हें '2' से शुरू होने वाले चार अंक के फ्लाइट कोड से पहचाना जाएगा। उदाहरण के लिए, यूके 955 उड़ान का नाम बदलकर एआई 2955 हो जाएगा, जिससे ग्राहकों के लिए इस तारीख के बाद एयर इंडिया डॉट कॉम पर बुकिंग करते समय इसे पहचानना आसान हो

विलय की तैयारी

■ 12 नवंबर से विस्तारा के विमान एयर इंडिया के बैनर तले परिचालन करेंगे

■ विस्तारा के विमानों को 2 से शुरू होने वाले चार अंक के फ्लाइट कोड से पहचाना जाएगा

■ यात्रियों ने अगर विस्तारा का टिकट खरीद लिया है तो उन्हें चिंतित होने की जरूरत नहीं

जाएगा। एयरलाइन के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि विस्तारा की इन-फ्लाइट मैगजीन दिसंबर में बंद हो जाएगी और एयर इंडिया की मैगजीन को एयर इंडिया समूह के सभी विमानों में शुरू किया जाएगा। अधिकारी ने कहा, '12 नवंबर से, एयर इंडिया और विस्तारा दोनों के पायलट एक समेकित ड्यूटी रोस्टर के तहत परिचालन करेंगे। चूंकि केबिन क्रू ग्राहकों के सीधे संपर्क में रहते हैं। इसलिए विस्तारा ब्रांड के समाप्त होने के बाद भी कुछ समय तक उनकी टीम अलग-अलग बनी रहेगी।'

अधिकारी ने यह भी बताया, 'एयर इंडिया के पुराने नैरो-बॉडी एयरक्राफ्ट रीट्रोफिटिंग की प्रक्रिया से गुजर रहे हैं। यह



प्रक्रिया 2025 के मध्य तक पूरी हो जाने का अनुमान है। इसके पूरा हो जाने पर सभी विमानों में यात्रियों को एक खास अनुभव मिलेगा।'

इस बीच, विस्तारा की कैटरिंग टीम पहले ही एयर इंडिया तक बढ़ा दी गई है। चेक-इन काउंटर और बोर्डिंग गेट पर स्क्रीन में सिर्फ एयर इंडिया का नाम और सिंबल दिखेगा। हालांकि एयरलाइन के एक दूसरे अधिकारी ने कहा, 'चूंकि सभी यात्रियों को इस विलय की जानकारी नहीं है। इसलिए हम ग्राहकों को इससे अवगत कराने के लिए चेक-इन काउंटरों और बोर्डिंग गेट पर शुरू में प्लेकार्ड या संकेतों का इस्तेमाल कर सकते हैं। यात्रियों ने यदि

विस्तारा का टिकट खरीद लिया है तो उन्हें चिंतित होने की जरूरत नहीं है।' फिलहाल लक्ष्य विस्तारा की अधिकांश ब्रांडिंग को बाहरी तौर पर समाप्त करना है। लेकिन विमान के अंदर विस्तारा के बैंगनी रंग के सीट कवर और ब्रांडिंग को फिलहाल रखा जाएगा। दूसरे अधिकारी ने कहा, 'एयर इंडिया समूह की तत्काल प्राथमिकता अपने मौजूदा विमानों की रेट्रोफिटिंग है। विस्तारा की पोशाक, सीट कवर और रंगों में कोई भी बदलाव संभवतः उसके बाद ही होगा।' एयर इंडिया इस समय हर सप्ताह करीब 3,150 उड़ानें संचालित करती है और उसके बेड़े में करीब 130 विमान शामिल हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

अकासा एयर के दो अधिकारियों को नोटिस

नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने अकासा एयर के दो वरिष्ठ अधिकारियों (प्रशिक्षण प्रमुख एवं परिचालन प्रमुख) को कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी किए हैं। ये नोटिस गैर-कुशल सिमुलेटरों पर पायलटों का प्रशिक्षण संचालित कराए जाने की वजह से जारी किए गए हैं। ये नोटिस गैर-कुशल और गैर-मंजूर सिमुलेटरों पर पायलटों की 'आरएनपी अप्रॉच ट्रेनिंग' संचालित करने के लिए एयरलाइन के दो अधिकारियों को 15 अक्टूबर को भेजे गए थे। उन्हें अपने जवाब सौंपने के लिए 14 दिन का समय दिया गया है। बीएस

Vistara in-flight experience will last for 'some time' after merger

Air India has taken the step to reassure Vistara passengers concerned over quality

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 18 October

A significant portion of Vistara's in-flight experience — including routes, schedules, aircraft, cabin crew, menu, cutlery, and service — will remain unchanged for "some time" after the brand flies into sunset on November 11.

Executives told *Business Standard* that this approach will be maintained temporarily to reassure Vistara's loyal passengers, who may be concerned over the quality of their experience after the merger.

As Air India continues to receive retrofitted aircraft, a full integration of Vistara's services into Air India's operations will be phased out in the next year. Tata Group-run Air India on Friday announced that starting November 12, Vistara aircraft will be operated under Air India's banner, identifiable by a special four-digit flight code beginning with "2".

For example, flight UK 955 will become AI 2955, making it easier for customers to recognise when booking on airindia.com after this date.

An airline executive said Vistara's in-flight magazine will be discontinued in December, with Air India's magazine being introduced across all Air India Group planes.

"From November 12, pilots of both Air India and Vistara will operate under a unified duty roster. However, since cabin crew interact directly with customers, their rosters will remain separate for some time after Vistara's brand



■ Full integration of Vistara's services into Air India's operations will be phased out next year

■ Vistara to operate under Air India's banner starting November 12

What merger with Air India means

■ In-flight magazine to be discontinued in Dec

■ Catering team already extended to Air India

■ Existing members of Club Vistara to be transferred to Air India's Flying Returns programme

is phased out."

The executive also noted that "Air India's older narrow-body aircraft are undergoing retrofitting, a process expected to be completed by mid-2025. Once finished, this will enable a consistent experience across all planes. As more retrofitted aircraft join the fleet, full integration will be gradually implemented."

Meanwhile, Vistara's catering team has already been extended to Air India.

At check-in counters and boarding gates, only Air India's name and symbol will be displayed on screens.

However, a second airline executive explained: "Since not all passengers are aware of the merger, we may use placards or signs for both Vistara and Air India at check-in counters and boarding

gates initially to inform customers about the change. The passengers should in no way feel anxious if they hold a previously-bought Vistara ticket."

The goal is to phase out most of Vistara's branding externally, but inside the aircraft, Vistara's aubergine-coloured seat covers and branding will remain for now.

"Air India Group's immediate priority is retrofitting its existing fleet. Any changes to Vistara's livery, seat covers and colors will likely happen after that," the second executive added.

He explained that the change in livery and internal seat branding takes time whenever two airlines merge. For example, Kingfisher took months to change the livery of Air Sahara planes after acquiring the latter in 2007.

Air India on Friday said the existing members of Club Vistara — the airline's frequent flyer programme — will be seamlessly transferred to Air India's Flying Returns programme. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar — "Maharaja Club".

In November 2022, the Tata Group began merging Vistara into Air India, 10 months after it took control of the latter from the government through the disinvestment process.

Vistara operates about 2,400 flights weekly and has a fleet of 70 planes. Air India operates about 3,150 flights weekly and has a fleet of about 130 planes.

Vistara has been a loss-making airline since its birth. In 2022-23, the airline recorded a net loss of ₹1,393 crore.

Since its inception in 2015, Vistara, which is a 51:49 joint venture between the Tata group and Singapore Airlines, has seen an infusion of ₹9,900 crore.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

18 OCTOBER 2024

WINTER SCHEDULE

25,007 flights to operate from 124 airports every week in the winter schedule.

5.37% increase from winter schedule in 2023.

FOR SUMMER SCHEDULE

24,275 flights operated from 125 airports.

THE WINTER SCHEDULE IS FROM OCTOBER 27, 2024 TILL MARCH 29, 2025.

SUSPENDED: Operations from Pakyong and Tezpur airport were suspended.



FLIGHT-WISE

INDIGO: 13,691 departures per week, up 4.91 per cent from 13,050 departures per week in the on-going summer schedule.

LESS DEPARTURES

Vistara: 5.64 per cent less departures per week at 2,193 from 2,324 departures per week in summer.

SPICEJET: 1,297 per week from 1,657 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year, a drop of 21.73 per cent.

AIR INDIA AND ITS SUBSIDIARY

Air India: 2,586 departures per week, 13.52 per cent more compared to 2,278 departures per week in the summer schedule of this year.

Air India Express: 2,832 departures per week during the winter schedule, up 16.21 per cent from 2,437 departures per week in the summer schedule of 2024.

AKASA AIR: 989 departures per week for the winter schedule of 2024.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

18 OCTOBER 2024

More flights receive hoax bomb threat, govt plans action

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, PTI: The pattern of domestic airlines receiving bomb threats continued for a fourth day, with multiple flights being targeted on Thursday, as authorities suspended or blocked about 10 social media handles for posting threats, according to official sources.

Among the flights that received threats on Thursday, four were Air India Express, two Vistara and one Indigo. Air India said "a number of" their flights also received hoax bomb threats.

Beginning Monday, as many as 31 flights of various Indian airlines received bomb threats, including international flights, and some of them were diverted by these social media posted threat messages.

10 social media handles suspended

Meanwhile, official sources said about 10 social media handles that issued hoax bomb threats to multiple airliners this week have been suspended or blocked by cyber security agencies till now.

The sources quoted above said that cyber security agencies, apart from getting police

British fighter jet intercepts Air India plane after bomb threat

The Royal Air Force on Thursday scrambled a Typhoon fighter jet to intercept a London-bound Air India aircraft that received a hoax bomb threat.

An airline official said that a bomb threat was received for the Air India plane from Mumbai to London.

Following an uneventful interception, the aircraft was released to continue to its original destination under the direction of civilian air traffic control, a Royal Air Force spokesperson said.

A loud sonic boom was heard in the East Anglia region of England as the jets were scrambled, authorised to transit at supersonic speed for operational reasons.

FIRs, have enhanced 'cyber patrolling' on social media and the dark web to check for possible linkages.

The online surface is being scratched to find the primary email registration and geographical locations of these threat-issuing handles, some of which are possibly being prompted from overseas locations, the sources said.

Legal action

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the ministry is looking at amending regulations to ensure strict action. Asked whether there is a conspiracy behind the bomb

threats, he said, "Whatever we know now are that of individuals and minors...and pranksters."

The ministry plans to put in place strict norms to prevent such incidents, including placing the perpetrators on the no-fly list. Officials said that the ministry is also examining provisions followed in foreign countries. Further, if necessary, officials said legislative amendments would also be explored.

Since there are no specific provisions under the aviation regulations to deal with it, actions are being taken by the police under criminal laws.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Vistara gets new code post merger

AIR INDIA PLANES, which were part of the Vistara fleet, will sport a differentiated code post the merger of the two Tata-run full-service airlines, the former flag carrier said on Friday.

Vistara aircraft will be operated by Air India and will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'. For instance, a Vistara UK 955 will become AI 2955 after November 12.

The routes and schedule operated by Vistara aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the Vistara in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft. It will also be serviced by the same crew.

Air India group is keen to retain the experience offered by Vistara post the merger.

- FE BUREAU



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

18 OCTOBER 2024

MORE AIRLINES SPOOKED

Staff Reporter

MUMBAI

There was no let-up in bomb threats to airlines on Thursday with at least nine more flights receiving threats on social media. These include five flights of Air India, two of Vistara, and one of IndiGo. This takes the number of such incidents to 30 this week. Two of these were international flights

carrying long-haul passengers.

To begin with, a Mumbai-bound Vistara flight carrying 147 people on board made an emergency landing upon its arrival from Frankfurt in Germany following a bomb threat. Later, an Air India flight from Mumbai to London declared an emergency on board an hour before landing. The AI129 flight was scheduled to land at Heathrow Airport in London at 12:05

pm (UK time). The Royal Air Force scrambled a Typhoon fighter jet to intercept the aircraft and escorted it to the airport. In keeping with the pattern of threats in the last four days, a Mumbai-bound Vistara flight with 147 persons on board was also immediately taken for security checks on its arrival from Frankfurt.

► **Contd on | nation**

More airlines spooked

It was likewise for an IndiGo flight operating from Istanbul to Mumbai; it too was taken to isolation bay following a threat.

A minor was apprehended recently for sending bomb threats to four flights using a fake social media account that he made in his friend's name to implicate him in the matter.

SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES SUSPENDED: Over half-a-dozen social media handles that issued hoax bomb threats to multiple Indian airliners this week have been suspended or blocked by cyber security agencies till now, official sources said. A police officer stated in Mumbai, "The perpetrator issued bomb threats via Twitter from the same account handle. The post mentioned bombs in five airlines, two of which had landed in Mumbai"



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

COPS ASK SOCIAL MEDIA TO SHARE INFO ON BOMB SCARE OFFENDERS

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police on Friday said they have written to multiple social media platforms seeking details of the accounts and users who allegedly posted messages on bomb threats at airports or on flights. On Wednesday, HT reported that at least 20 domestic and international flights received similar threats in the past one week across India.

Senior police officers said a team of Indira Gandhi International Airport police and another of special cell's cyber unit are probing the case now. Police said they have already written to X (formerly Twitter) and Meta officials. "We have asked them to remove the posts and suspend the accounts. We also want details of the users, so that we can take legal action," said an officer.

On Wednesday, an FIR was lodged by the Delhi Police after a hoax bomb threat was received on a Delhi-Bengaluru Akasa Air flight with over 176 passengers. It returned to the IGI airport after the threat was received. Police said most of the threats received in the last week were found through social media. **HTC**

'Vistara experience will continue post-merger'

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Air India on Friday said Vistara routes and schedule as well as the in-flight experience will continue and the flights operated with Vistara planes will have the code 'AI2' post-merger.

The merger of the two full service carriers is scheduled to be completed on November 12, following which Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1% stake in Air India.

Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Post the merger, the vintage 'Maharaja' will be retained through the frequent flyer programme of the integrated entity.

"The existing members of Club Vistara will be seamlessly transferred to Air India's Flying Returns program. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new av-



The Air India-Vistara merger, announced in November 2022, will also see Singapore Airlines acquiring a 25.1% stake in the merged entity.

REUTERS

tar 'Maharaja Club'," Air India said in the statement.

Reiterating that the experience offered by Vistara will continue for customers post-

merger, Air India said Vistara will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'.

"For instance, UK 955 will

become AI 2955 helping customers identify them while booking... after November 12," the statement said.

Further, it said the routes

and schedule operated by Vistara aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the airline's in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post-merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in the recent times.

Air India, on October 2, also said that Vistara experience will remain post-merger.

On Wednesday, the chairman of Vistara Bhaskar Bhat said the integrated entity will share the best practices of the two airlines and the livery of Vistara will stay for sometime.

The Air India-Vistara merger, announced in November 2022, will also see Singapore Airlines acquiring a 25.1% stake in the merged entity.

Bomb hoax cases: offenders could be put on a no-fly list

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

Inter-ministerial consultations are under way to make amendments to the Aircraft Act, 1934 and subordinate legislation to ensure a five-year imprisonment and placing offenders on a no-fly list for hoax bomb threats to flights, highly placed sources in the Ministry of Civil Aviation said on Thursday.

Over 30 bomb threats were posted for various Indian airlines in the past four days. The threats were issued to six Air India Express flights, five Air India flights, two Vistara flights and two IndiGo flights on Thursday.

“Opinions are being sought from all quarters for changes to rules and regulations to ensure strict action in such cases,” Civil Aviation Minister Rammo-han Naidu told pressper-



Operations hampered: Various Indian airlines received over 30 bomb threats in four days. FILE PHOTO

sons on the sidelines of an event here. He said the government wanted to ensure deterrence for miscreants posting false threats.

5-year term proposed

An official of the Ministry said the Union Home Ministry had taken up a proposal from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security for a five-year imprisonment for those who are charged in hoax bomb threat cases. It is consulting the Law Ministry for amendments to the Aircraft Act,

1934 and the Aircraft Rules, 1937.

A second proposal that has been mooted is placing offenders on a no-fly list in order to bar them from air travel.

The officials said that though the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982 provides for life imprisonment for threatening safety at airports or disrupting any service at airports, it was too stringent a punishment for hoax calls and would not stand legal scrutiny.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

AIRCRAFT BOMB THREATS

Elaborate protocols kick in once threat is received

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 18

ASPARTE of hoax bomb threats has hit Indian airlines this week, with at least 34 threats being received so far. While all the threats turned out to be fake, they managed to disrupt airline operations, inconvenience passengers, and put the aviation security infrastructure under immense stress.

Safety and security are considered paramount in aviation and precisely for this reason, even seemingly non-credible threats posted from anonymous and unverified social media accounts can have a disproportionate impact on flight operations. Just a few clicks on the keyboard are enough to send the airlines and agencies into a tizzy. When an aircraft receives a bomb threat, a detailed security protocol is followed, which could even include diverting the aircraft to a suitable nearby airport. The process involves close coordination between multiple stakeholders—from security agencies to airlines and airport operators—and stretches on for hours.

Sounding the alert

When a threat is received by the airline or an airport regarding a domestic flight that is already in the air, a meeting of the airport-specific Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC) is convened. Each airport has its own BTAC, whose members include representatives of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), the airline concerned, and the airport operator.

The committee is usually convened at the airport from which the aircraft departed and often connects with the BTAC of the destination airport to decide the course of action, according to industry insiders. The BTAC essentially focuses on evaluating whether a threat could be credible or not based on different criteria like specificity of details in the threat, and its timing and source.

If the committee deems the threat to be a "specific threat", the next move that the pilots should make is conveyed via the Air Traffic Control (ATC). In case of a "non-specific threat", no immediate action is taken. Officials in the government and airlines, however, said that threats made to specific flights are mostly deemed



A Chicago-bound Air India flight that had to be diverted to a small Canadian town. File

as specific threats, out of abundance of caution.

"Based on what the committee decides, the ATC informs us of the threat and the recommended course of action. It could include returning to the airport where we departed from, heading to the destination airport, or diverting to a suitable nearby airport capable of handling the situation," said a senior airline pilot, who spoke on the condition of anonymity.

If the plane is yet to depart, the aircraft is usually moved to an isolated bay for a thorough security check. When the threat is received for an international flight of an Indian airline that has already exited Indian airspace and is a fair distance away, the matter gets more complicated as the overseas ATCs, agencies, and committees also get involved in deciding in the course of action, which could include diversion to different airport, or priority emergency landing at the destination airport.

Security checks upon landing

Once the aircraft lands, it is taken to an isolated bay at the airport and all the passengers and crew members are made to disembark the aircraft at the earliest possible.

Passengers' baggage, cargo, and catering material are also offloaded. This is followed by re-screening of the passengers, and all other offloaded items. The empty aircraft is then thoroughly searched by airline, engineering and security staff. The inspections and screenings involve sniffer dogs and scanning machines, among other equipment.

If nothing suspicious is found, the aircraft is released for operations. In the eventuality that a suspicious object is found, security personnel and bomb disposal squads present at the location get

involved. Other emergency response teams, including firefighters and medical staff, are also on standby during the exercise.

Hassled passengers, airlines

The entire process of screening all the passengers and their baggage during such an exercise usually is extremely time consuming keeping the passengers held up at the airport till they get an all clear from the agencies. The airlines are hit hard as the affected plane is taken out of operations till it is properly inspected, causing long delays and possibly even cancellations of their subsequent flights.

When aircraft are forced to divert to another airport, airlines end up bearing additional costs, which include arranging accommodation or alternate flights or transport for passengers. Often, the crew's flight duty time limitations (FDTL) also exceed the prescribed limits, which means they cannot operate a flight without a mandatory rest period. In such instances airlines have to arrange another set of crew to operate the flight.

The matter gets further complicated when the diversion takes place overseas, particularly to a remote airport—as it happened this week with a Chicago-bound Air India flight that had to be diverted to a small Canadian town. Similarly, a Vistara Mumbai-Frankfurt flight was diverted to a small airport in Turkey.

In the case of the Air India flight, the passengers and crew had to be transported to Chicago on board a Canadian air force plane. In the instance involving the Vistara aircraft, the airline had to dispatch another plane with a new set of crew to operate the remainder of the flight. In both cases, the crew of the diverted flights could not have operated the flights due to FDTL.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Spl code to help identify Vistara flights post merger

New Delhi: Even as Vistara will fly into the sunset come November 12 upon its merger with Air India, the flight's experience for passengers will be maintained with no significant change to the product and crew, at least in the initial months following the merger. All existing Vistara flights will continue to

be operated using the airline's existing fleet of aircraft and by the existing crew, although the flight numbers will change to those of Air India, the latter said Friday.

To enable Vistara's loyal flyers and passengers generally to identify Vistara flights while booking, Air India has decided to

use four-digit flight numbers for Vistara flights beginning with "2", against Air India's three-digit flight numbers.

"For instance, UK 955 (UK is the current airline identifier code for Vistara flights) will become AI 2955, helping customers identify them while booking," Air India said. **ENS**



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

'Vistara in-flight experience is not going away' post merger: AI

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Air India chief Campbell Wilson on Friday said "Vistara in-flight experience is not going away" and the routes serviced by Vistara will have the flight code 'AI2' post merger.

The merger of the two full service carriers is scheduled to be completed on November 12, following which Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1 per cent stake in Air India.

Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Group and Singapore Airlines.

Post the merger, the vintage 'Maharaja' will be retained through the frequent flyer programme of the integrated entity.

"The existing members of Club Vistara will be seamlessly transferred to Air India's Flying Returns program. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar 'Maharaja Club'," Air India said in a statement on Friday.

In a message sent to Vistara customers on Friday, Wilson said they can continue to enjoy the same world-class fleet, exceptional service, and familiar faces under the new code 'AI2XXX'.

"With the merger on the horizon and the changes that

come with it, we wanted to assure you that your Vistara in-flight experience is not going away. You can continue to enjoy the same world-class fleet, exceptional service, and familiar faces under the new code AI2XXX," the CEO and MD of Air India said.

In the statement, Air India said the routes and schedule operated by Vistara aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the airline's in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post-merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in recent times.

Air India, in the statement, reiterated that the experience offered by Vistara will continue for customers post merger and that Vistara will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit '2'.

"For instance, UK 955 will become AI 2955 helping customers identify them while booking... after November 12," it said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

18 OCTOBER 2024

GOVT EXPLORING STRICTER NORMS

Bomb threats: Civil Aviation ministry may put perpetrators on no-fly list

OUR CORRESPONDENT



NEW DELHI: Faced with a spate of hoax bomb threats to airlines, the Civil Aviation ministry plans to put in place strict norms to prevent such incidents, including placing the perpetrators on the no-fly list.

In four days, more than 20 flights of various Indian airlines received bomb threats, including international flights, and some of them were diverted. Most of the threats have turned out to be hoaxes.

Against this backdrop, the ministry is looking at amending existing rules, including those related to the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), in order to ensure stringent pun-

ishments are in place for the culprits, official sources said.

Placing individuals making hoax bomb threats in the airlines' no-fly list is one of the proposals being looked at. Sources also said legal opinions are being gathered with respect to making the changes in the rules. The provisions being followed in foreign

countries to deal with hoax bomb threats are also being examined by the ministry.

Further, if necessary, legislative amendments will be explored for having a strong deterrent to prevent people from making hoax bomb threats to airlines.

Currently, there are strict norms against unruly passen-

In four days, more than 20 flights of various Indian airlines received bomb threats, including international flights

ger behaviour onboard flights but there are no specific provisions under the aviation regulations to deal with instances where a bomb threat has come from outside sources such as social media. At present, the actions against hoax bomb threat incidents are taken by the police under criminal laws.

Continued on P6

Bomb threats

Officials said that discussions are going on with home and law ministries while inputs are being gathered from airlines.

On Wednesday, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said law enforcement agencies are actively pursuing all cases of bomb threats against airlines and the government is closely monitoring the situation.

He also condemned any attempt to compromise the safety, security and operational integrity of the aviation sector.

WITH AGENCY INPUTS



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

Airfares lower up to 38% this festive season due to capacity expansion

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

UNLIKE past peak festive seasons when airfares go through the roof, so far this year it is on the lower side as rapid capacity expansion by airlines and lower jet fuel prices appears to be keeping the mismatch in demand and supply in check.

As per data shared by travel portal ixigo, one-way average fare in the Diwali-led festive heavy week (Oct 28-Nov 3) across major routes has seen a correction of up to 38% when compared to last year's festive heavy week (Nov 10-16, 2023). The one-way average fare from Mumbai to Delhi this season (Oct 28-Nov 3, 2024) has come down to ₹5,762 from ₹8,788 last season (Nov 10-16, 2023), down 34%. Airfare from New Delhi to Bengaluru has seen a correction of 12%, from Chennai to Kolkata it is down by 36% and from Bengaluru

FESTIVE SEASON AIRFARE				
ORIGIN CITY	DESTINATION	ONE WAY AVG. FARE NOV 10-16 2023 (₹) APD 30 DAYS	ONE WAY AVG. FARE OCT 28-NOV 3 2024 (₹) APD 30 DAYS	% DECREASE
Bengaluru	New Delhi	9,792	7,553	22%
Mumbai	New Delhi	8,788	5,762	34%
New Delhi	Kolkata	7,697	5,236	32%
Bengaluru	Kolkata	10,195	6,319	38%
Hyderabad	New Delhi	8,408	5,704	32%

Source: ixigo, APD: Advance purchase date

ru to Kolkata it is down by the highest at 38%. ixigo said the prices are for one-way average fare on a 30-day APD (advanced purchase date) basis.

"Last year, airfares around Diwali had surged due to limited capacity, mainly driven by suspension of GoFirst. However, this year we've seen some re-

lief as additional capacity has been added since then, leading to a 20-25% YoY dip in average airfares across key routes for the last week of October," said Aloke Bajpai, Group CEO, ixigo. Top two airlines, IndiGo and Air India and even the newest carrier Akasa have been adding capacity at a decent pace.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

AIR INDIA

Special code for Vistara flights

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @New Delhi

AIR India has decided to keep the legacy of Vistara alive even as the joint venture (with Singapore International Airline) carrier will be operating its last flight on November 11.

It has been decided that Vistara aircraft operated by Air India will be identified by a special four-digit Air India code beginning with the digit "2". For instance, UK 955 will become AI 2955, helping customers to identify after November 12. The routes and schedule operated by Vistara aircraft will continue to be the same, alongside the Vistara in-flight experience that includes the product and service such as menu and cutlery on the Vistara aircraft. It will also be serviced by the same crew. The existing members of Club Vistara will be transferred to Air India's Flying Returns program. With this merger, Flying Returns will also evolve into an all-new avatar 'Maharaja Club'.

Air India in August had said that the merger between Vistara and Air India is likely to be finalized on November 12. All Vistara flights from September 3 are being booked through the Air India website or app.

Following Vistara's last flight on November 11, Air India will take over all of Vistara's aircraft and operate under its brand. This would mark an end to the 10-year run of Vistara during which it established itself as a premium full-service carrier. The merger was set in motion when Tata Group acquired Air India from the Indian government in January 2022 and was first announced in November 2022. Once the deal is complete, Singapore Airlines will have a 25.1% stake in Air India.



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

25,007 फ्लाइटों टेक ऑफ होगी विंटर सीज़न में हर हफ्ते

AI Image



■ विशेष संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

सर्दियों के इस सीजन में हवाई यात्रियों की बढ़ती संख्या को देखते हुए भारतीय एयरलाइंस भी अपनी अधिक से अधिक फ्लाइट ऑपरेट कर रही है। इसमें इस बार विंटर सीजन में देश के 124 एयरपोर्ट से विभिन्न भारतीय एयरलाइंस की हर सप्ताह 25,007 फ्लाइट टेक ऑफ करेंगी। यह पिछले साल सर्दियों के सीजन से हर सप्ताह 1275 उड़ान अधिक है। एविएशन रेगुलेटर डीजीसीए ने यह जानकारी देते हुए बताया कि बढ़ते हुए एयर ट्रैफिक को देखते हुए

**भारतीय
एयरलाइंस
ने अपना
शेड्यूल तय
कराया**

भारतीय एयरलाइंस ने शीतकालीन सत्र के लिए अपना यह शेड्यूल तय कराया है। शीतकालीन सत्र 27 अक्टूबर 2024 से 29 मार्च 2025 तक रहेगा। डीजीसीए ने बताया कि 2023 की तुलना में 2024 के विंटर सीजन में उड़ानों में यह बढ़ोतरी 5.37 फीसदी है। रेगुलेटर ने यह भी बताया कि ग्रीष्मकालीन सत्र में देश के 125 हवाई अड्डों से प्रति सप्ताह उड़ानों की यह संख्या 24,275 थी। इसमें विंटर सेशन में तीन फीसदी से अधिक की बढ़ोतरी हुई है। इन 124 एयरपोर्ट में पुडुचेरी एयरपोर्ट से एयरलाइंस ने अपनी उड़ान भरने के लिए प्रस्तावित किया है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

19 OCTOBER 2024

The backbone of Star Air's growth: RCS-UDAN scheme

BY CAPTAIN SIMRAN
SINGH TIWANA

The Government of India's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) has been pivotal to Star Air's journey and growth. Since our inception, we've been dedicated to Connecting Real India, and UDAN has enabled us to do exactly that—connecting the underserved and unserved regions of the country, ensuring affordable air travel for everyone.

When we launched our first two route in January 2019, between Hubli to Bengaluru and Hubli To Tirupati, it was a significant milestone for us. It symbolized the beginning of our mission to enhance regional connectivity, starting with this crucial route. Today, I am proud to say that since that first flight, we've flown over 1.3 million passengers by fulfilling dreams of many who had tasted flight for the first time!



Today powered by the UDAN scheme we operate to 22 airports Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Maharashtra. Through this initiative, Star Air was awarded 44 routes under UDAN 2 and 3-8 routes under UDAN-2 and 36 routes under UDAN-3. Further, we have been awarded 44 more routes under UDAN 5, giving us the opportunity to bring air connectivity to even more regions.

The UDAN scheme has been instrumental in providing the necessary support for us to operate routes that otherwise may not have been viable. Through the infrastructural development that came along UDAN, allowed us to expand steadily into tier 2 and tier 3 cities, bringing us closer to our goal of Connecting Real India. We have seen the joy in the eyes of many as they took to sky for the first time. We are see many business come up to support this new air connectivity. Clearly proving

the economic multiplier Air Connectivity is.

Our fleet has grown alongside our aspirations. What started with one Embraer E145 aircraft in 2019 has now expanded to five E145s and four Embraer E175s. This growth has enabled us to launch new routes, access more destinations, and serve an even larger number of passengers.

Thanks to the RCS-UDAN initiative, Star Air is well on its way to realizing its vision of providing swift, affordable, and comfortable air travel to every corner of India. The backbone of our success has been this visionary scheme UDAN, which continues to empower regional carriers like us to play an essential role in India's **aviation** landscape.

We look forward to many more milestones as we continue to build on these solid foundation.

(Author of the article is Chief Executive Officer, Star Air)



15 bomb hoax threats received in a day

RAJESH KUMAR ■ NEW DELHI

The pattern of domestic airlines receiving bomb threats to their flights continued for the fourth consecutive day as Air India got a threat for five flights - Mumbai-London (AI 129), Delhi - New York JFK (AI 119), a Chennai-Singapore and two domestic - IndiGo and Vistara threats for two flights each, were targeted in the similar manner on Thursday. Air India Express is also learnt to have got similar messages for six flights but a confirmation is awaited from the airline. Four of these flights were still on the ground, while three were airborne at the time when the threats were received. The number of flights that have received such threats is now close to around three dozen since Monday, forcing flight diversions and delays, piling up massive operational costs.

On Thursday a Mumbai-bound Vistara flight from Frankfurt with 147 persons on board was immediately taken to security checks on its arrival from Frankfurt following the Boeing 787 aircraft receiving a bomb threat. The flight, UK 28, was over Pakistan when it transmitted the code 7700, having 134 passengers and 13 crew onboard indicating a general emergency at around 6 am (IST) on Thursday, landed in Mumbai at approximately 7.45 am.

At the same time, an IndiGo flight operating from Istanbul in Turkiye for Mumbai also received a bomb threat and was taken to an isolation bay here for the security agencies to carry out a comprehensive security check. The Vistara flight UK 028 operating from Frankfurt to Mumbai on October 16, 2024 was subject to a security threat received on social media," the airline said.

Continued on page 8

15 BOMB HOAX THREATS RECEIVED IN A DAY

Given this persisting situation for the last few days, over half-a-dozen social media handles that issued hoax bomb threats to multiple Indian airliners this week, have been suspended or blocked by cyber security agencies till now. According to

sources, the handles were 'analysed' by a joint team of cyber, aviation security and intelligence agencies following which orders were issued to suspend these accounts as they continued to issue 'mindless' threats.

About seven-eight social media handles, majority of them on microblogging site X, have been suspended or blocked since Monday, when these hoax bomb and terrorist attack threats started being sent to virtually all the Indian airliners for both their domestic and international route operations, the sources said. The agencies have also found some common lines and words used in these fake threats like 'bombs', 'blood will spread everywhere', 'explosive devices', 'this is not a joke' and 'you will all die' and 'bomb rakhwa dia hai' (Hindi for bomb has been placed) among others.

Sources said that the agencies, apart from getting police FIRs registered in each such hoax bomb messages case, have enhanced 'cyber patrolling' on the social media and the dark web to check for possible linkages or trends where threats are being posted online leading to grounding or diversion of the aircraft. The online surface is being scratched to find the primary email registration and geographical locations of these threat-issuing handles, some of which are possibly being prompted from overseas locations, the sources said. These details are being shared with jurisdictional police departments, they said.

Notably, two common IPs from London and Germany have been traced. "The users have tweeted after using a virtual private network or virtual private network (VPN) — an encrypted connection over the Internet between a device and a remote server that's aimed at masking one's online identity," sources said.

At least 30 flights have been affected by these social media posted threat messages, all of which have come out hoax or false since Monday. In two cases, fighter jets of Singapore and Canada had to be scrambled to help the Indian planes that were carrying hundreds of passengers.

On Thursday, Vistara, in a statement, said that its Frankfurt-Mumbai flight

received a security alert but landed safely here. The Vistara flight UK 028 operating from Frankfurt to Mumbai on October 16, 2024 was subject to a security threat received on social media, the airline said.

These fake threats have led to inconveniencing hundreds of passengers and airline crew apart from security agencies. They have taken a heavy toll on airline logistics and operational costs. A minor boy of 17 years of age from Chhattisgarh has been detained by the Mumbai Police in connection with the hoax bomb threats posted on social media platform X targeting three flights originating from Mumbai on October 14.

Meanwhile Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu on Thursday said the ministry is looking at amending civil aviation regulations to ensure strict action is taken against incidents of bomb threats to airlines. "We are taking things seriously... We will take action," Naidu said about the bomb threats. At present, the actions against hoax bomb threat incidents are taken by the police under criminal laws.

फिर मिली विमान को बम से उड़ाने की धमकी



मुंबई। पिछले कुछ दिनों से लगातार विमानों को बम से उड़ाने की धमकियां मिल रही हैं। गुरुवार को जर्मनी के फ्रैंकफर्ट से मुंबई आ रही

■ विस्तारा की फ्लाइट की मुंबई में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग

विस्तारा की फ्लाइट (बोइंग 787 विमान) को बम से उड़ाने की धमकी दी गई। धमकी मिलने के बाद फ्लाइट की मुंबई के छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई गई। इसके बाद फ्लाइट

को तुरंत अलग क्षेत्र में ले जाकर गहन जांच की गई। जांच में कुछ नहीं मिला। जानकारी के मुताबिक, फ्लाइट की सुबह 7.45 बजे सुरक्षित लैंडिंग हुई। सूत्रों के अनुसार, विमान में 134 यात्री और चालक दल के 13 सदस्य सवार थे। विस्तारा ने एक बयान में कहा कि फ्रैंकफर्ट-मुंबई की फ्लाइट को सुरक्षा अलर्ट मिला लेकिन वह सुरक्षित रूप से यहां उतर गई। इससे पहले बुधवार को दिल्ली से बंगलुरु जाने वाली अकासा एयर की फ्लाइट क्यूपी 1335 को धमकी मिली थी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

18 OCTOBER 2024

Winter flights

■ **NEW DELHI:** Indian airlines will operate 25,007 flights every week to and from 124 airports in the winter schedule starting October 27.

Hoax calls hit 13 more flights; isolated incidents, says mantri

Nearly 40 Such Calls Received In Last 4 Days

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi/Mumbai: Hoax threat messages continue to wreak havoc on flights of Indian carriers, with at least 13 aircraft affected on Thursday.

While Air India got a threat for five flights — Mumbai-London (AI 129), Delhi-New York JFK (AI 119), Chennai-Singapore, and two domestic flights — on Thursday, IndiGo and Vistara received threats for two flights each. AI Express is also learnt to have got similar messages for four flights. The number of flights that have received such threats is now close to 40 since the start of this week.

“AI flights to New York and Singapore landed uneventfully. The flight to London was asked to hold for a while, and in that time the airline informed the UK authorities about a non-specific threat. Finally it



Govt is working on new rules to deal with and punish hoax callers

was allowed to land at Heathrow,” said people in the know.

Meanwhile, the Union aviation ministry is working on a deterrent — new rules to deal with and punish hoax callers severely. It is also looking at global best practices. “The law department is being consulted for the legal framework of the proposed new rules. Legal opinion is being sought. We hope to put in place new regulations with harsher penalties, including putting such callers on no-fly lists for a long time,” said sources. The ministry is also consulting with the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Union aviation minister

Ram Mohan Naidu said: “Action is being taken on this. We can’t comment on any kind of conspiracy, but from whatever little bit we know these calls are coming from some minors and pranksters. These are all minor and isolated incidents. There is no kind of conspiracy that we can comment on. From our side, we are going to see what best we can do. We are talking to the airlines, security agencies, within the ministry also. Consultations are going on.”

An Air India official said: “Five AI flights received a security threat on social media Thursday. These have been duly reported to the regulatory

bodies and all laid-down procedures were strictly followed as per guidance of the regulatory bodies. All the five flights have made a safe landing.”

An X user using the handle @psychotichuman had tagged Air India and the DGCA in a tweet. “I planted explosive devices onboard of 5 of your planes (sic)... The explosive devices will soon go off. Down the plane as quick as possible...” the message had said while listing five Air India flights.

Both the Vistara flights that received hoax threats were international — Frankfurt-Mumbai (UK 28) and Paris-Delhi (UK 22). Both landed at their destinations.

The IndiGo flights for which threats were received were Lucknow-Pune (6E 11*) and Istanbul-Mumbai (6E 18). They also landed at their destinations. In all these cases, planes were parked at a remote bay for thorough checking.

An Air India aircraft diverted to Canada after receiving a threat while flying from Delhi to Chicago earlier this week finally left for Chicago on Thursday.

AGAINST LAST YEAR'S FESTIVAL, TICKET COSTS ARE AT LEAST 30% LOWER

Airfares skyrocket ahead of Diwali, up to 374% higher than normal

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Travelling is certainly going to be an expensive affair as Diwali holiday airfares around the festive season have skyrocketed. Compared to non-festival days, non-stop domestic airfares to various destinations from Ahmedabad, when booked now for travel between Oct 31 and Nov 5, are up to 374% higher.

A return ticket to Bagdogra now costs Rs 59,356 (up 374%) against Rs 12,500 of normal fare per person. Similarly, ticket prices to Jaipur (125.5%), Jodhpur (94.3%), Jammu (87.8%), and Kochi (79.7%) have skyrocketed, as these airports connect tourists to various holiday destinations from Ahmedabad with a direct flight.

"The overall demand for air travel ahead of Diwali is significantly high. Visa woes for certain countries have also led to a surge in domestic travel, with bookings going up by about 25% compared to last year's Diwali," said Virendra Shah, chairperson, Travel Agents' Association of India (TAAI) Gujarat.



Destination	FARE (₹)*		% Change
	Normal	Current	
Bagdogra	12,500	59,356	▲ 374
Jaipur	8,500	19,165	▲ 125.5
Jodhpur	7,500	14,570	▲ 94.3
Delhi	8,500	16,284	▲ 91.6
Jammu	13,000	24,415	▲ 87.8
Kochi	12,500	22,459	▲ 79.7
Chennai	12,000	21,591	▲ 79
Dehradun	13,500	23,484	▲ 74
Chandigarh	11,000	18,345	▲ 66.8
Kolkata	15,000	22,564	▲ 50.4
Bengaluru	9,500	14,151	▲ 49
Goa	9,500	13,175	▲ 38.7

This time around, destinations in the Northeast, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu are very popular among people from Ahmedabad and Gujarat, said Shah.

Interestingly, even though airfares are higher compared to non-festive days, they're still cheaper against last year's spike. When booked a fortnight before Diwali 2023, a return ticket for Kochi cost as high as Rs 57,400 per person. Similarly, tho-

se to Bagdogra (Rs 45,389), Jaipur (Rs 24,962), Dehradun (Rs 33,763), Chandigarh (Rs 36,998) and Kolkata (Rs 41,730) were also 30-60% higher than this year's airfares. Increased capacity and the recent fall in oil prices are considered to be among the factors for the fall in air ticket prices, according to industry players. The analysis by an online travel portal showed that average airfare on domestic routes has declined in the range of 20-25% across the country.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

18 OCTOBER 2024

Aviation regulator approves 5% more domestic flights this winter

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India could see five percent more flights this winter with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approving 25,007 weekly domestic flights — up from 23,732 last winter.

Effective from Oct 27 to March 29, 2025, domestic flights will operate to and from 124 airports. Last winter the number of airports was 125. Since then, while Pondicherry is back on the air map, Pakyong (in Sikkim) and Tezpur (in Assam) have found no takers among airlines.

The coming winter schedule has three percent more

flights than the ongoing summer schedule, at 24,275 weekly domestic departures.

Among big airlines, the recently expanded Air India Express (with erstwhile AirAsia India merging into it) will see the biggest jump of domestic flights, at 46 percent. While last winter, Tata's low-cost airlines (then two separate carriers) had 1,940 weekly domestic departures, this time the number has gone up to 2,832.

Domestic market leader IndiGo will have the largest number of domestic flights at 13,691 per week, up 4.4 percent from 13,119 last winter. The combined domestic presence

of Tata Group airlines — AI, AI Express and Vistara — that merge in Nov, will be at 7,611 weekly domestic flights, up 23 percent from 6,209 last winter. Akasa schedule has increased 25.2 percent from 790 last winter to 989 this time. SpiceJet, which just got fund infusion, has seen its schedule drop 39 percent from 2,132 last time to 1,297 this winter. "Winter schedule 2024 of scheduled domestic airlines has been finalised after the slot conference meeting held in Sept 2024. The final slots clearances have been received from respective airport operators," DGCA said in a statement.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

18 OCTOBER 2024

DGCA fines Akasa ₹30L for pilot training deficiencies

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Thursday fined Akasa Air Rs 30 lakhs alleging non-compliance of pilot training rules. The regulator had conducted spot inspection at the airline's Gurgaon headquarter on May 20, this year, and issued show cause notice thereafter. DGCA allows airlines to train its pilots at their establishments approved by the regulator. Airlines can also conduct some exams there and DGCA accepts the results. However, spot inspection revealed some alleged deficiencies and the regulator's findings were communicated to the airlines a fortnight later.

DGCA then, as per procedure, gave Akasa time to respond to the notice. It also met airlines officials to understand why action should not be taken against Akasa. After this, DGCA directed the airline head of training to deposit Rs 30 lakh as fine within a month. An Akasa spokesperson said: "We acknowledge receipt of an order by DGCA dated Oct 17, 2024. We are working closely with the regulator on this matter. For us at Akasa Air, safety is of utmost importance, and we are committed to pursuing the highest global standards of safety."

Bomb hoax msgs affect 15 flights, including 4 of city; close to 40 hit since start of week

New Delhi/Mumbai: Hoax threat messages continue to wreak havoc on flights of Indian carriers, with at least 15 aircraft affected on Thursday.

While Air India got a threat for 5 flights — Mumbai-London (AI 129), Mumbai-New York (AI119), Delhi-New York JFK (AI 119), Vancouver-Delhi (AI186), Chennai-Singapore — on Thursday, IndiGo and Vistara got threats for 2 flights each. One

of those IndiGo flights was bound for Pune and the other for Mumbai. One affected Vistara flight, Frankfurt-Mumbai (UK 28), was bound for Mumbai, and landed safely.

AI Express is also learnt to have got threats for six flights but confirmation was awaited. The number of flights affected by such threats is now close to 40 since the start of this week.

“Most AI flights landed uneventfully. The flight to London was asked to hold and the airline informed the UK authorities about a non-specific threat. Finally it was allowed to land at Heathrow,” said people in the know. **TNN**

► **Work on deterrent, P 10**

Aviation ministry framing deterrents for hoax callers

► **From P 1**

The Union aviation ministry is working on a deterrent — new rules to deal with and punish hoax callers severely. It is also looking at global best practices. “The law department is being consulted for the legal framework of the proposed new rules. Legal opinion is being sought. We hope to put in place new regulations with harsher penalties, including putting such callers on no-fly lists for a long time,” said sources.

The ministry is also consulting with the International Civil Aviation Organisation.

Union aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu said: “Action is being taken on this. We can’t comment on any kind of conspiracy, but from whatever little bit we know these calls are coming from some minors and pranksters. These are all minor and isolated incidents. There is no kind of conspiracy that we can comment on. From our side, we are going to see what best we can do. We are talking to the airlines, security agencies, within the ministry also. Consultations are going on.”

An Air India official said: “Five AI flights received a security threat on social media Thursday. These have been duly reported to the regulatory bodies and all laid-down procedures were strictly followed as per guidance of the regu-



Getty Images/Stockphoto

latory bodies. All the five flights have made a safe landing.”

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An Air India aircraft diverted

“ We can’t comment on any kind of conspiracy, but from whatever little bit we know these calls are coming from some minors and pranksters. There is no kind of conspiracy that we can comment on. From our side, we are going to see what best we can do. We are talking to airlines, security agencies & within ministry also

Ram Mohan Naidu | AVIATION MINISTER

to Canada after receiving a threat while flying from Delhi to Chicago earlier this week finally left for Chicago on Thursday.

Since Sunday there have been dozens of hoax messages, leading to multiple diversions, including at airports abroad, by AI and IndiGo. On Wednesday, seven flights of IndiGo, SpiceJet, and Akasa received similar hoax messages about bombs on board, while on Monday and Tuesday about a dozen flights operated by Indian carriers had received hoax messages that led to flight diversions and delays.

Airlines are urging govt to tackle this menace at the earliest as it is putting huge financial burden on them. The calls are leading to scares abroad too. Singapore scrambled jets on at least two occasions when a flight received threats before landing there.