

Dibrugarh Airport upgraded



STAFF CORRESPONDENT

DIBRUGARH, March 19: Dibrugarh Airport on Thursday marked a significant leap in aviation infrastructure with the commissioning of its newly extended runway and a full suite of advanced navigational systems, a move expected to strengthen connectivity across upper Assam and neighbouring Arunachal Pradesh.

The milestone was formally inaugurated with the successful landing of an IndiGo flight (6E 893) arriving from Kolkata at 8:38 am, becoming the first aircraft to touch down on the upgraded 2,291-metre runway. The extension, from the earlier 1,830 metres, enables the airport to handle a wider range of aircraft with improved operational safety margins.

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Dibrugarh...

(Contd from page 1)

Airport officials confirmed that the upgrade includes Category-I approach lighting systems extending up to 900 metres, runway edge lighting, threshold and end lighting, and precision approach path indicators (PAPI), all designed to assist pilots during low-visibility operations.

Additionally, modern navigation infrastructures such as DVOR (Doppler VHF Omnidirectional Range) and high-power distance measuring equipment (HP-DME) have been installed along with runway guard lights and an advanced AWOS (automatic weather observation system).

According to airport authorities, these enhancements are expected to significantly reduce weather-related disruptions, particularly during Assam's heavy monsoon and fog-prone winter seasons. "This development strengthens operational reliability and enhances safety standards, ensuring more consistent flight schedules," said airport director Bangajit Saha.

The Airports Authority of India marked the occasion by felicitating the pilot and first officer of the inaugural flight, recognising their role in the historic landing. Officials believe that the upgrade will not only enhance passenger convenience but also attract increased airline operations, further integrating the Northeast with major metropolitan centres across the country.

Strategically located in Mohanbari, the airport serves as a crucial aviation gateway to the easternmost parts of India, including remote districts of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

Ladakh council team meets Shah; seeks airport, new districts

NEW DELHI, March 19: A high-level delegation from the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil, led by Chairman and Chief Executive Councillor Mohd Jaffer Akhoun and Member of Parliament Mohammad Haneefa Jan, called on Union Home Minister Amit Shah here today.

The delegation, which also included Executive Councillor Zakir Hussain, submitted a memorandum seeking the operationalisation of civil flights from Kargil.

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) leaders requested an extension of the existing runway and establishment of a full-fledged civil airport to ensure connectivity, especially during the winter months when surface routes remain closed.

The delegation also pressed for district status for Sankoo and Shakar-Chiktan subdivisions. They noted that these "subdivisions are among the most populous and oldest in Kargil district, fulfil all necessary criteria".

The delegation specifically requested their inclusion in the forthcoming official notification along with other newly announced districts in



Union Home Minister Amit Shah during a meeting with Chairman and CEC of LAHDC, Kargil, Mohd Jaffer Akhoun along with MP Mohammad Haneefa Jan, in New Delhi on Thursday. – PTI

Ladakh, according to a statement from the council.

The leaders also sought restoration of Administrative Approval and Expenditure Sanction powers up to Rs 5 crore for the Deputy Commissioner and CEO of LAHDC, Kargil, to ensure the timely execution of developmental works at the district level.

In the health and education sectors, the delegation sought sanction of a 200-bed hospital for Kargil, citing the inadequate infrastructure and increasing patient load at the existing 100-bed facility.

Further, Chief Executive Councillor (CEC) Akhoun urged for early execution and operationalisation of the already sanctioned engineer-

ing college in Kargil and called for the establishment of an agricultural university to strengthen higher education and support the agrarian economy of the region, the council said in its statement.

The memorandum also sought a women's degree college at Sankoo to facilitate access to higher education for girls and eliminate the hardships they face in pursuing education outside the district.

CEC Akhoun also raised the issue of five already approved hydro-electric projects and requested the Home Minister to issue necessary instructions to the concerned ministries for their early execution and completion. – PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

PM Modi to inaugurate Noida International Airport on March 28

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the much-awaited Noida International Airport at Jewar in Greater Noida on March 28, sources told *businessline*.



Notably, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had earlier indicated the date during an event in Lucknow on March 18, stating that the Prime Minister had been invited to formally open the greenfield airport project.

Notably, the airport inauguration is part of the celebration marking the completion of nine years of Adityanath's government in Uttar Pradesh.

Under these celebrations, the state has identified nine themes, including infrastructure, under which the inauguration is taking place.

The inauguration comes after the airport cleared key regulatory milestones, moving closer to the start of commercial operations after multiple missed deadlines.

SECURITY CLEARANCES
Earlier this month, the NIA secured both security and aerodrome clearances, marking a significant step in its operational readiness.

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has granted final security clearance for domestic passenger operations as well as domestic and international cargo services.

Following this, the airport received its aerodrome licence from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), certifying that it meets regulatory requirements related to safety systems, operational procedures,

infrastructure, navigation aids and emergency response. In technical terms, the certification confirms compliance with the DGCA's Civil Aviation Re-

quirements for airside infrastructure and flight operations.

The next regulatory step involves approval of the Aerodrome Security Programme by the BCAS, after which full-scale commercial operations can commence.

A major operational milestone had already been achieved in December 2024, when IndiGo conducted a validation flight using an Airbus A320 to test approach procedures, navigation aids and air traffic control systems at the airport.

Airport authorities say all core infrastructure is now in place. Concessions have been awarded across key segments, including ground handling, in-flight catering, fuel supply, cargo services, retail, food and beverage, and hospitality.

Communication and navigation systems have also been commissioned by the Airports Authority of India.

The airport is now working closely with airline partners to finalise routes, slot approvals and network plans. IndiGo will be the launch carrier, while Akasa Air plans to operate both domestic and international services. Air India Express is also expected to begin operations from the airport.

Discussions are ongoing with other domestic airlines, as well as carriers from West Asia and Southeast Asia.

BUS SERVICES

Mobility options will include intercity and long-haul bus services, airport taxis and app-based cab aggregators, supported by intelligent traffic management systems.

नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा

मल्टी-मॉडल ट्रांसपोर्ट से बनेगा उत्तर भारत का सबसे सुगम एयर हब

■ देवेन्द्र सिंह

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 20 मार्च (देशबन्धु)। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट (जेवर) अब सिर्फ एक हवाई अड्डा नहीं, बल्कि एक समेकित परिवहन केंद्र बनने की ओर तेजी से अग्रसर है। राज्य सरकार और केंद्र की संयुक्त पहलों से सड़क, रेल, रैपिड रेल और इलेक्ट्रिक बसों का मजबूत नेटवर्क तैयार हो रहा है, जो यात्रियों को दिल्ली-एनसीआर, हरियाणा,

■ प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी 28 मार्च को करेंगे देश के सबसे बड़े नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट का उद्घाटन

राजस्थान और उत्तराखंड से निर्वाह, सुरक्षित एवं पर्यावरण-अनुकूल पहुंच प्रदान करेगा। देश का यह पहला एयरपोर्ट है, जो सीधे एक्सप्रेस वे से जुड़ा हुआ है, इसका उद्घाटन 28 मार्च को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी करने जा रहे हैं।

सड़क मार्ग- एक्सप्रेस वे से सीधी और तेज पहुंच

जेवर एयरपोर्ट यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे से समर्पित इंटरचेंज के जरिए पहले से जुड़ा हुआ है। दिल्ली-मुंबई एक्सप्रेस वे (बल्लभगढ़ लिंक) का काम पूरा हो चुका है, जिससे दक्षिण हरियाणा, फरीदाबाद, गुरुग्राम और पश्चिमी भारत की ओर से यात्रा आसान हो गई है।

ईस्टर्न पेरिफेरल एक्सप्रेस वे से कनेक्टिविटी का इंटरचेंज निर्माणाधीन है, जिसके पूरा होने पर गाजियाबाद, मेरठ, पलवल और सोनीपत से सीधा रास्ता



मिलेगा। उत्तर एवं पूर्व एक्सेस रोड (औद्योगिक और कार्गो यातायात के लिए) लगभग तैयार हैं। यमुना प्राधिकरण के सेक्टर-28 में 60 मीटर चौड़ी सेवा सड़क यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे से जुड़ चुकी है, जिससे स्थानीय ट्रैफिक का बोझ कम होगा।

हाल ही में केंद्र सरकार ने दिल्ली-मुंबई एक्सप्रेस वे से 31.42 किमी ग्रीनफील्ड कॉरिडोर (लागत 3,630 करोड़) को मंजूरी दी है, जो हाई-स्पीड कनेक्टिविटी को और मजबूत करेगा।

रेल और रैपिड रेल : हाई-स्पीड और आरामदायक विकल्प

रेल कनेक्टिविटी में बड़ा उछाल आ रहा है। दिल्ली-जेवर, आरआरटीएस

(रोजनल रैपिड ट्रांजिट सिस्टम) का डीपीआर राज्य सरकार द्वारा स्वीकृत कर भारत सरकार आवासन और शहरी कार्य मंत्रालय को भेजा गया है। गाजियाबाद-जेवर आरआरटीएस कॉरिडोर (72 किमी, 22 स्टेशन) को प्राथमिकता दी गई है, जो सिद्धार्थ विहार से शुरू होकर ग्रेटर नोएडा वेस्ट होते हुए एयरपोर्ट तक जाएगा। यह एलिवेटेड आरआरटीएस-कम-मेट्रो लाइन होगी, जिसमें एयरपोर्ट के अंदर 1.1 किमी अंडरग्राउंड सेक्शन शामिल है। रेल मंत्रालय चोला-रंधी लाइन से एयरपोर्ट को जोड़ने का डीपीआर तैयार कर रहा है। दिल्ली-वाराणसी हाई-स्पीड रेल में जेवर पर स्टेशन का प्रावधान है।

बस और इलेक्ट्रिक परिवहन : पर्यावरण-अनुकूल अंतिम मील समाधान उत्तर प्रदेश राज्य सड़क परिवहन निगम (यूपीएसआरटीएस) के साथ समझौता हो चुका है। दिल्ली, राजस्थान, हरियाणा और उत्तराखंड की बस सेवाएं शुरू होंगी। नोएडा, ग्रेटर नोएडा और यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे प्राधिकरण (यीछ) संयुक्त रूप से 500 इलेक्ट्रिक बसों का बेड़ा चला रहे हैं (हालांकि कुछ रिपोर्ट्स में शुरुआत में 4 रूटों पर 20 बसों से शुरुआत का जिक्र है), जो विभिन्न शहरों और मेट्रो स्टेशनों से एयरपोर्ट तक ग्रीन ट्रांसपोर्ट देंगे।

कैब, राइड-हेलिंग और कार रेंटल : विश्वस्तरीय सुविधा

यात्रियों के लिए अंतिम मील की चिंता खत्म करने हेतु : एनआईए ब्रांडेड कैब, महिंद्रा लॉजिस्टिक्स द्वारा संचालित, झाइवर ट्रेनिंग, वाहन ट्रैकिंग और डिजिटल पैमेंट के साथ एग्रिमेंट कर चुका है।

ऐप-बेस्ड सेवाएं: उबर, रैपिडो और मेकमार्गट्रिप पहले से तैयार, ओला का लाइसेंस आतम चरण में।

कार रेंटल: स्व-चालित या चालक वाली कारों के लिए कई कंपनियों को लाइसेंस जारी हो रहे हैं।

ये सभी व्यवस्थाएं जेवर एयरपोर्ट को देश के उन चुनिंदा हवाई अड्डों में शामिल करेंगी, जहां सड़क, रेल, रैपिड रेल और बस का पूर्ण एकीकरण हो रहा है। इससे न सिर्फ यात्रियों को सुविधा मिलेगी, बल्कि क्षेत्र में निवेश, पर्यटन और लॉजिस्टिक्स को भी नई गति मिलेगी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

एयरपोर्ट उद्घाटन में प्रधानमंत्री के आगमन को लेकर भाजपा ने की बैठक

ग्रेटर नोएडा। भारतीय जनता पार्टी जिला कार्यालय तिलपता गोलचक्कर पर बैठक का आयोजन किया गया, जिसमें प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के प्रस्तावित 28 मार्च को जेवर में नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट का उद्घाटन समारोह कार्यक्रम को लेकर चर्चा की गई। बैठक की अध्यक्षता जिला अध्यक्ष अभिषेक शर्मा ने की, संचालन जिला महामंत्री धर्मेन्द्र कोरी ने किया। जिला अध्यक्ष अभिषेक शर्मा ने बैठक को संबोधित करते हुए कहा कि विश्व के सबसे लोकप्रिय नेता देश के प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी एशिया के सबसे बड़े जेवर एयरपोर्ट का उद्घाटन करेंगे, जिससे प्रदेश एवं क्षेत्र में विकास के नए आयाम स्थापित होंगे। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी के स्वागत के लिए भारतीय जनता पार्टी गौतमबुद्धनगर के कार्यकर्ता और यहाँ की जनता तैयार है। साथ में प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री आदित्यनाथ योगी रहेंगे। दो लाख से अधिक क्षेत्रीय जनता और कार्यकर्ता उद्घाटन समारोह की ऐतिहासिक रैली में शामिल होंगे, उसके लिए प्रत्येक मंडल पर गांव-गांव जाकर भाजपा कार्यकर्ता क्षेत्र के लोगों से सम्पर्क संवाद स्थापित कर प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की प्रस्तावित रैली जेवर एयरपोर्ट उद्घाटन के लिए शक्ति केंद्र प्रभारी बृथ कमेट्री के पदाधिकारियों के साथ बैठक कर क्षेत्र की जनता को आमंत्रित करेंगे। इस अवसर पर मुख्य रूप से वरिष्ठ नेता नरेन्द्र भाटी, मनोज चौधरी, जिला महामंत्री वीरेन्द्र भाटी, धर्मेन्द्र भाटी, धर्मेन्द्र कोरी, जिला उपाध्यक्ष दीपक भारद्वाज, पवन रावल, अरुण प्रधान, सरदीप नागर, पवन नागर, सतपाल तालान, जिला मीडिया प्रभारी कर्मवीर आर्य, पंकज रावल, जिला मंत्री चन्द्रमणी भारद्वाज, योगेश चौहान, कोषाध्यक्ष अश्वनी गोयल, गायत्री तिवारी, गीता सागर, रजनी तोमर, राज नागर, विमल पुंडीर, जितेन्द्र भाटी, सचिन गौतम, अर्पित तिवारी, लोकेश त्यागी, दिनेश भाटी आदि कार्यकर्ता मौजूद रहे।



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

20 MARCH 2026

LUCKNOW

Jewar airport opening on March 28

The Yogi Adityanath government has proposed March 28 for the inauguration of the Noida International Airport at Jewar, with an invitation extended to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to preside over the ceremony.

"Fifth international airport at Jewar is ready and will be the largest in the country. We have invited the Prime Minister to inaugurate it on March 28," UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said.

- Biswajeet Banerjee

Adani's Mumbai airport takes Jet Airways dues row to NCLAT

Krishna Yadav

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MUMBAI: Billionaire Gautam Adani-owned Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) has approached the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) against the liquidator of the bankrupt Jet Airways over being denied its full parking, storage and hangar dues, and the downgrading of its status as an unsecured creditor.

A bench led by NCLAT chairperson Justice Ashok Bhushan on Thursday issued notice to Jet Airways' liquidator, Satish Kumar Gupta, and listed the matter for further hearing on 24 April. The tribunal also recorded the liquidator's assurance that no disbursement to creditors will be made until the NCLAT decides the matter.

MIAL had submitted claims of over ₹860 crore towards parking, storage, hangar and related charges after Jet Airways' aircraft remained parked at the Mumbai airport for several years following the airline's collapse in 2019.

The Mumbai bench of the NCLT, in its February 13 order, admitted only about ₹510.75



The NCLAT recorded the liquidator's assurance that no disbursement to creditors will be made until it decides. MINT

crore of MIAL's claim, rejecting the remainder. In a similar outcome, GMR-operated Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) saw only about ₹244 crore of its ₹352 crore claim admitted. The tribunal also upheld the liquidator's decision to treat airports as unsecured creditors, a classification that places them lower in the repayment hierarchy during bankruptcy or liquidation with limited say in the resolution process, typically resulting in weaker recoveries.

The NCLT said airport rules allow detention of aircraft for non-payment of dues, but do not create a legal charge over assets. Once liquidation begins, all claims must be settled strictly under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) waterfall, or the order of priority in which creditors are repaid. Under Section 53 of the IBC that deals with the liquidation waterfall, insolvency costs are paid first, followed by secured creditors and workers' dues. Operational creditors, including airports, rank much lower.

Mint had earlier reported that if the NCLT ruling is upheld, it could weaken airports' bargaining power in airline insolvencies, as they lose priority in recoveries and influence over proceedings.

The dispute over airport dues is also linked to the sale of three grounded Jet Airways' Boeing 777-300ER aircraft that had been parked at the Mumbai airport since 2018. In 2022, Malta-based Ace Aviation agreed to buy the aircraft for about ₹400 crore, but the sale was delayed due to litigation with the airport over unpaid dues.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CHENNAI

20 MARCH 2026

Footfalls, revenue hit at airport

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With more than 500 international flights cancelled in the last 20 days, there's been a drop in footfalls and revenue at Chennai International Airport.

From an average of 100 daily international flight movements, the number dropped to 60 in the first week of March. Passenger footfall came down to 13,000 from 20,000. Cargo flights operated by Qatar and Etihad were also cancelled for the first few days of escalation in the region.

From Chennai, airlines such as Emirates, Etihad, Gulf Air, Kuwait Airways, Salam Air and Air Arabia, apart from national carriers such as IndiGo and Air India, operate flights to the Gulf region, but their entire schedule went for a toss following airspace closure due to uncertainty prevailing in the region.

"Now, the operations are slowly rebounding, as Emirates has started operating flights to Dubai. Gulf Air too is resuming its flights via Dammam. Cargo flights too have started operating," said official.

The West Asia crisis unfolded just when IndiGo's operations had stabilised after a massive rescheduling chaos. "It is difficult to quantify the revenue at this juncture since it involves various sources, right from landing and parking charges of flights apart from non-aeronautical sources, but there is certainly a dip in revenue," said an official.

For 2024-25, Chennai airport generated a revenue of ₹1,462.25 crore, which is still less than pre-Covid times. This year, the revenue will be further down. "We cannot term it a revenue loss, but revenue compromise because these are unexpected situations," said an official, on condition of anonymity.

Though airport officials maintained that domestic terminals are busy as usual and the international flights to other regions, except West Asia, are operated without any disturbances, sources say the revenue loss is at least 10%.

THE CRISIS UNFOLDED JUST WHEN INDIGO'S OPS HAD STABILISED AFTER THE RESCHEDULING CHAOS



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

DGCA asks airlines to avoid 11 airspaces amid Iran war

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in an advisory, has asked all Indian airlines to avoid airspaces of 11 countries, particularly nine that are of high risk, as much as possible in the wake of conflict in West Asia. These high-risk countries are Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). The Indian airlines can, however, operate flights over the

other two nations in the list, Oman and Saudi Arabia, subject to certain conditions.

The DGCA made it clear that the operational recommendations do not constitute a formal restriction or prohibition on airlines operating in specified zones, adding that its advisory is in alignment with international safety standards and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency's (EASA) Conflict Zone Information Bulletin (CZIB).

■ More on Page 4



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

■ Ensure contingency plans amid Mideast war DGCA warns airlines on West Asia ops, flags risky airspaces

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

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The DGCA made it clear that the operational recommendations do not constitute a formal restriction or prohibition on airlines operating on specified zones adding that its advisory is in alignment with international safety standards and the EU aviation safety agency's conflict zone information bulletin.

The Indian airlines are advised not to operate below FL 320 or 32,000 feet within the airspace of Saudi Arabia and Oman located south of the seg-

Worried over escalation of war: Modi to Bahrain's King

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

On the heels of the latest round of his discussions with several world leaders including those of Gulf Arab nations over the past two days, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday evening spoke to Bahrain's King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa in a gesture of solidarity and "condemned attacks on the energy and civilian infrastructure in the region" during the

ments defined by following compulsory reporting points (which must be reported to Air Traffic Control). About the nine airspaces, the DGCA asked airlines to "refrain from operating within the affected airspace...at all flight levels and altitudes". Any continued operations would be at the discretion of the operator based on their safety risk assessment, it added.

ongoing conflict that has completed three weeks. New Delhi is worried over escalation of the conflict and its implications on energy security for India.

The PM posted on X, "Had a fruitful discussion with the King of Bahrain, His Majesty King Hamad Bin Isa Al Khalifa. We discussed situation in the West Asian region. Condemned attacks on the energy and civilian infrastructure."

"Operations to airports in the affected region, where other international carriers are currently operating, must involve robust contingency planning to cover all eventualities, as part of the safety risk assessments," DGCA advisory said. Advisory is effective immediately and would remain valid until March 28, unless reviewed or superseded by further developments.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

Fewer flights likely during summer schedule, say sources

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Airlines' summer flight schedule is expected to be lower by around 10-15 per cent on a year-on-year basis, as well as compared to the ongoing winter schedule, as revised pilot rest norms, along with capacity constraints, continue to weigh on the sector.

Sources told *businessline* that a number of factors, including a shortage of aircraft and pilots, as also rising operational costs and recent

regulatory interventions on airfares have impacted the flight schedule.

As a result, the upcoming schedule, applicable from March 29, 2026, is expected to have 10-15 per cent less flights than the summer schedule of 2025, which had 25,610 weekly departures, and the winter schedule of 2025, which had 26,495 weekly departures.

The expected schedule assumes significance ahead of the peak summer travel season due to higher passenger demand.

Aircraft availability con-



tinues to be a key concern for carriers.

As of now, a section of airlines' fleet remains grounded due to supply chain disruptions, maintenance issues, and delays in deliveries, limiting the ability of carriers to

fully utilise their scheduled capacity.

Besides, the implementation of revised flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms has begun to impact crew utilisation, further constraining operational flexibility.

THE INDIGO CRISIS

In December 2025, IndiGo faced significant flight disruptions linked to operational and crew-related constraints, which led to widespread cancellations across the country, leaving thousands of passengers

stranded and drawing regulatory scrutiny.

IndiGo reported the cancellation of 2,507 flights and delays to 1,852 flights between December 3 and 5, 2025. The disruptions affected more than three lakh passengers across the country.

Airlines are now recalibrating schedules to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements while maintaining operational reliability.

Rising volatility in crude oil prices is adding to cost pressures for carriers, at a

time when their margins remain under strain.

At present, the West Asia conflict has contributed to higher aviation turbine fuel prices.

JET FUEL COSTS

Jet fuel costs across the four major metro cities, Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, rose by 5.81 per cent, or approximately ₹5,215.50 per kilolitre, in the latest revision.

In Delhi specifically, the price increased by ₹5,244.75 on March 1, representing a rise of about 5.74 per cent,

compared to the February 1 levels.

The prices include Central Excise Duty and State Value Added Tax, and are revised by the oil marketing companies on the first day of every month.

Additionally, the Centre imposed temporary airfare caps in early December after taking cognisance of unusually high fares amid flight disruptions.

At that time, the Ministry of Civil Aviation invoked its regulatory powers to ensure fair and reasonable fares across affected routes.

A-I flight returns to Delhi after deploying wrong plane for Canada

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 20 March

An Air India flight to Vancouver took a U-turn mid-air over China and came back to Delhi on Thursday after the airline deployed a B777 aircraft variant that did not have regulatory clearance to operate on the route, according to aviation industry sources.

This is not the first time Air India has flown a plane without the requisite documents and permissions. In November 2025, the airline operated eight commercial flights using an Airbus A320neo plane that did not have a valid Airworthiness Review Certificate (ARC). For this

THE B777 AIRCRAFT DID NOT HAVE REGULATORY CLEARANCE TO OPERATE ON THE ROUTE

lapse, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) last month fined the airline ₹1 crore. Sources stated that on Thursday, the flight with call sign AI185 took off from Delhi at 12.18 pm for Vancouver using a Boeing 777-300LR plane (registration number VT-AEI), even though Air India has approval from Canadian authorities only for its Boeing 777-300ER fleet on that route.

The Boeing 777-300ER and Boeing 777-200LR are two long-haul variants of Boeing's 777 family with distinct capabilities in range and capacity. Air India's 777-200LR variant is restricted on high-altitude routes over the Himalayas and Hindu Kush mountain ranges as it does not have adequate emergency oxygen systems. Delhi-Vancouver is one such high-altitude route. Turn to Page 7

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airline do so fleet-wide, or even for specific aircraft variants. In this case, Canada's approval for Air India operations is limited to the 777-300ER variant and does not extend to the 777-200LR.

Asked about the incident, an Air India spokesperson said, "Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver on March 19, returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with established standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely, and all passengers and crew had disembarked."

"We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our guests by this unfortunate situation. Our ground teams in Delhi had provided all necessary assistance, including offering hotel accommodations, while every effort was made to fly the passengers to their destination at the earliest. The flight departed this (Friday) morning for Vancouver with the passengers," the spokesperson added.

The development comes against the backdrop of earlier compliance lapses at the airline. The aforementioned incident in November had occurred after the Ajmer aircraft registration number VT-TQH underwent an engine change, but was cleared for operations without approval of the ARC. The airline operated eight commercial flights using this plane before realising that its ARC had expired. It then reported the matter to the DGCA.

In February 2026, the regulator issued an order on the November incident. It imposed a reprimand to the airline, citing systemic failures, and ordered the removal of senior engineering officials while suspending the pilots involved for failing to verify aircraft documents during pre-flight checks.

These actions followed heightened scrutiny after the June 2025 crash of Air India's AI171 flight, operated by a Boeing 787 Dreamliner, shortly after take-off from Ahmedabad, in which six people were killed. Preliminary findings by the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) indicated that both engines of the aircraft lost power after fuel control switches moved to the crash position. The final report into the crash is expected to be released in the next few months.

A-I flight returns to Delhi after deploying wrong plane for Canada



The VT-AEI aircraft had flown for over four hours on Thursday and reached Chinese airspace near Kunming when the error was detected. Aviation protocols vary across countries, with some regulators granting approvals aircraft-wide, while



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

A-I, IndiGo, SpiceJet oppose govt's 60% free seat selection decision

IndiGo, Air India (A-I) and SpiceJet have raised strong objections to the government's decision asking airlines not to levy any charges for the selection of at least 60 per cent seats on flights, saying the move would force them to raise airfares to recover lost revenue. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, has also urged the civil aviation ministry to take steps to withdraw the decision. On Wednesday, the ministry announced that directions had been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers. In a letter written to Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha on Thursday, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector. "The financial impact of the directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares. As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," it said. FIA noted that seat selection fees form a legitimate component of airline revenue, particularly in the high-cost environment where costs rise year-on-year under the regulator AERA-governed regime that accords full cost recovery plus an assured margin to airports.

#11

वैकूबर जा रहा एयर इंडिया का विमान वापस आया

दीपक पटेल
नई दिल्ली, 20 मार्च

एयर इंडिया की वैकूबर को जा रही एक उड़ान को गुरुवार को हवा में ही यू टर्न लेकर लेकर वापस दिल्ली आना पड़ा। विमानन उद्योग के सूत्रों के अनुसार ऐसा इसलिए हुआ क्योंकि विमानन कंपनी ने एक ऐसे बोइंग 777 विमान को उड़ान पर भेज दिया था जिसे उस मार्ग पर उड़ान भरने की नियामकीय मंजूरी नहीं थी।

यह पहला मौका नहीं है जब एयर इंडिया ने बिना समुचित दस्तावेजों और मंजूरीयों के विमान उड़ाया है। नवंबर 2025 में विमानन कंपनी ने एयरबस ए320 नियोजित विमानों का

इस्तेमाल करते हुए 8 वाणिज्यिक उड़ानें संचालित की थी जबकि उनके पास वैध एयरवर्दीनेस रिच्यू सर्टिफिकेट यानी एआरसी नहीं था। इस कमी के लिए डीजीसीए ने गत माह कंपनी पर एक करोड़ का जुर्माना लगाया था।

सूत्रों ने कहा कि गुरुवार को उड़ानसंख्या एआई185 ने दिल्ली से दिन में 12.18 बजे वैकूबर के लिए उड़ान भरी। यह उड़ान बोइंग 777-200 एलआर विमान से भरी गई। जबकि एयर इंडिया को इस मार्ग के लिए कनाडा से केवल बोइंग 777-300ईआर विमानों की उड़ान मंजूरी हासिल थी।

बोइंग 777-300ईआर और बोइंग 777-200एलआर, बोइंग



777 श्रेणी के दो लंबी दूरी वाले संस्करण हैं जिनकी क्षमता और रेंज अलग-अलग है। एयर इंडिया का 777-200 एलआर संस्करण हिमालय और हिंदुकुश पहाड़ियों के ऊपर के ऊंचे मार्गों पर उड़ान नहीं भरता क्योंकि इसमें पर्याप्त ऑक्सीजन प्रणाली नहीं होती। दिल्ली-वैकूबर ऐसा ही एक ऊंचाई वाला मार्ग है। 777-300ईआर की

सामान्य रेंज लगभग 13,650 किलोमीटर होती है और यह लगभग 350-396 यात्रियों को बैठा सकता है। दूसरी ओर, 777-200एलआर को अधिक रेंज (लगभग 15,840 किलोमीटर) के लिए डिजाइन किया गया है, लेकिन इसमें केवल 301 से 317 यात्री ही बैठ सकते हैं।

यह विमान गुरुवार को करीब चार घंटे की उड़ान के बाद चीन के हवाई क्षेत्र में था जब इस गलती का पता चला। विमान चालकों को तुरंत इसे वापस लाने को कहा गया और करीब 9 घंटे हवा में रहने के बाद यह विमान दिल्ली लौट आया। विमान यात्रियों से भरा हुआ था।

अलग-अलग देशों के उड़ान संबंधी प्रोटोकॉल अलग-अलग

होते हैं। कुछ नियामक एयरलाइन-स्तर पर अनुमोदन देते हैं, जबकि अन्य बेड़े-स्तर पर या किसी विशेष विमान संस्करण के लिए। इस मामले में, कनाडा की एयर इंडिया संचालन के लिए मंजूरी केवल 777-300ईआर संस्करण तक सीमित है और 777-200एलआर पर लागू नहीं होती। घटना के बारे में पूछे जाने पर एयर इंडिया के प्रवक्ता ने कहा, 'एयर इंडिया की उड़ान एआई185, जो 19 मार्च को दिल्ली से वैकूबर जा रही थी, परिचालन संबंधी समस्या के कारण दिल्ली लौट आई और यह स्थापित मानक संचालन प्रक्रियाओं के अनुरूप था। विमान सुरक्षित रूप से उतरा और सभी यात्री एवं चालक दल उतर गए।'



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

लापरवाही • कनाडा रूट पर भेजा बिना मंजूरी वाला विमान एअर इंडिया ने वैकूवर गलत विमान भेजा; 7 घंटे बाद लौटा

भास्कर न्यूज | नई दिल्ली

एअर इंडिया की दिल्ली-वैकूवर फ्लाइट एआई-185 गुरुवार को उड़ान भरने के करीब 7 घंटे बाद वापस दिल्ली लौटना पड़ा। विमान चीन के हवाई क्षेत्र तक पहुंच चुका था, तभी उसे यू-टर्न लेना पड़ा। सूत्रों के अनुसार, इस रूट के लिए बोइंग 777-200 एलआर विमान (बीटी-ईआई) तैनात किया गया था, जबकि इस उड़ान के लिए इसकी मंजूरी नहीं थी। कनाडा के लिए उड़ानों की आवश्यक मंजूरीयों की सूची अपडेट न होने के कारण यह चूक हुई और गलत विमान भेज दिया गया। इस रूट पर सामान्यतः बोइंग 777-300 ईआर विमान ही संचालित होता है।

सफाई दी... ऑपरेशनल कारणों से आई दिक्कत

एअर इंडिया ने बयान में कहा कि फ्लाइट ऑपरेशनल समस्या और तय मानक प्रक्रियाओं (एसओपी) के तहत वापस लाई गई। विमान सुरक्षित दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर उतरा और सभी यात्री व क्रू को उतार लिया गया। हालांकि विमान में सवार यात्रियों की संख्या स्पष्ट नहीं की गई है। एयरलाइन ने अस्मविधा के लिए खेद जताते हुए कहा कि यात्रियों के लिए होटल की व्यवस्था की गई और उन्हें हर जरूरी सहायता दी गई। एअर इंडिया के अनुसार, सभी यात्रियों को शुक्रवार सुबह दूसरी उड़ान से वैकूवर खाना कर दिया गया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

'60% सीटें मुफ्त' घरेलू एयरलाइंस को इस आदेश पर एतराज

बिजनेस संवाददाता | नई दिल्ली

नागरिक विमानन मंत्रालय ने एयरलाइंस को हर फ्लाइट में कम से कम 60% सीटें यात्रियों को मुफ्त में चुनने की सुविधा देने का निर्देश दिया है। इस फैसले पर इंडिगो, एयर इंडिया और स्पाइसजेट जैसी प्रमुख एयरलाइंस ने आपत्ति जताई है। एयरलाइंस का कहना है कि इससे उन्हें होने वाले राजस्व के नुकसान की भरपाई के लिए हवाई किराए में बढ़ोतरी करनी पड़ेगी। फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एयरलाइंस ने नागरिक विमानन सचिव समीर कुमार सिन्हा को पत्र लिखकर इस निर्देश को वापस लेने की मांग की है। वर्तमान में एयरलाइंस फ्रंट रो और एक्स्ट्रा लेग रूम जैसी सुविधाओं के आधार पर सीट चुनने के लिए 200 से 2,100 रुपए तक अलग से वसूलती हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

दिल्ली-वैंकूवर फ्लाइट बीच रास्ते से लौटी, दिल्ली में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग

जासं, नई दिल्ली: देश की प्रमुख एयरलाइन एअर इंडिया की दिल्ली से वैंकूवर (कनाडा) जाने वाली एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ान को बृहस्पतिवार शाम बीच रास्ते से वापस दिल्ली लौटना पड़ा। लगभग सात घंटे से अधिक समय तक हवा में रहने के बाद, विमान को परिचालन संबंधी समस्या के कारण वापस दिल्ली में सुरक्षित लैंड कराया गया। विमान में करीब 300 यात्री सवार थे।

फ्लाइट ट्रेकिंग वेबसाइट फ्लाइट रडार 24 डाट काम से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार, एअर इंडिया की उड़ान संख्या एआई 185 ने बृहस्पतिवार 19 मार्च को दिल्ली से उड़ान भरी थी। विमान बोइंग 777-200 एलआर जब चीनी हवाई क्षेत्र के ऊपर उड़ रहा था, तभी इसे वापस दिल्ली मोड़ने का

- एअर इंडिया के विमान में 300 यात्री सवार थे, सभी सुरक्षित
- परिचालन संबंधी समस्याओं के कारण हुई इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग

निर्णय लिया गया। एअर इंडिया ने शुक्रवार को जारी एक बयान में कहा है कि 19 मार्च को दिल्ली से वैंकूवर के लिए संचालित उड़ान को स्थापित मानक संचालन प्रक्रियाओं के तहत एक परिचालन संबंधी समस्या के कारण दिल्ली में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई गई। एयरलाइन ने किसी विशिष्ट तकनीकी खराबी का जिक्र नहीं किया है। एयरलाइन ने पुष्टि की है कि सभी यात्रियों को लेकर वैंकूवर के लिए यह उड़ान शुक्रवार सुबह दोबारा रवाना की गई।

विमानन में स्टार्टअप की 'उड़ान' का सही समय

आइआइटी के टेककृति और अभिव्यक्ति में बोले एएआइबी के महानिदेशक जीवीजी युगांधर

जागरण संवाददाता, कानपुर : भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र (एविएशन सेक्टर) की चुनौतियां ही भविष्य के अवसरों का द्वार खोल रही हैं। भारत वर्तमान में वैश्विक एमआरओ (मेंटेनेंस, रिपेयर, ओवरहाल) बाजार का महज एक प्रतिशत हिस्सा संभाल रहा है, जबकि यह बाजार लगभग 300 बिलियन अमेरिकी डालर का है। देश की युवा इंजीनियरिंग शक्ति के लिए इस क्षेत्र में स्टार्टअप शुरू करने के लिए अपार संभावनाएं हैं। केंद्र सरकार ने भी स्टार्टअप को बढ़ावा देने के लिए सुविधाओं के द्वार खोल रखे हैं। ये बातें गुरुवार को आइआइटी के वार्षिक तकनीकी फेस्ट 'टेककृति' और एसआइआइसी के 'अभिव्यक्ति' के शुभारंभ पर मुख्य अतिथि व एयरक्राफ्ट एक्सपोर्ट्स इन्वेस्टिगेशन ब्यूरो (एएआइबी) के महानिदेशक जीवीजी युगांधर ने कहीं।

उन्होंने कहा कि जीएसटी को 18 प्रतिशत से घटाकर पांच प्रतिशत करना और कस्टम ड्यूटी में कमी लाकर केंद्र सरकार ने स्टार्टअप के लिए अनुकूल अवसर बनाए हैं। एक विमान की कुल लागत का लगभग 70 प्रतिशत हिस्सा एवियोनिक्स (इलेक्ट्रॉनिक सिस्टम) का होता है, जबकि संरचना केवल 30 प्रतिशत होती है। भारत के पास एवियोनिक्स

• कहा-किसी भी विमान का 70 प्रतिशत तक का हिस्सा होता है इलेक्ट्रॉनिक सिस्टम

• युवा इंजीनियरिंग शक्ति इस क्षेत्र में शुरू कर सकती है अपनी कंपनी, हैं अपार संभावनाएं



टेककृति व अभिव्यक्ति महोत्सव के उद्घाटन समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि जीवीजी युगांधर को स्मृति चिह्न देते हुए आइआइटी निदेशक प्रो. मणीन्द्र अग्रवाल (दाएं) • आइआइटी

इंटीग्रेशन और साफ्टवेयर आधारित विमानन प्रणालियों में नेतृत्व करने का सुनहरा मौका है। वोइंग और एयरबस जैसी दिग्गज कंपनियां अपनी उत्पादन क्षमता बढ़ाने के लिए आउटसोर्सिंग का सहारा ले रही हैं। भारत ने बड़ी संख्या में विमानों के आर्डर दिए हैं, जिनकी डिलीवरी अगले 6-10 वर्षों में होनी है। यही कारण है कि वैश्विक कंपनियां अब भारत में अपनी उत्पादन इकाइयां लगा रही हैं और 30-40 प्रतिशत कंपोनेंट्स की सोर्सिंग स्थानीय स्तर पर कर रही हैं। विमानों में पारंपरिक धातुओं की जगह अब

कंपोजिट मैटेरियल का उपयोग बढ़ रहा है। इससे विमान हल्के तैयार हो रहे हैं जो ईंधन भी कम खर्च करते हैं। आइआइटी के निदेशक प्रो. मणीन्द्र अग्रवाल ने कहा कि रक्षा क्षेत्र में क्रिटिकल तकनीक विकास की जरूरत तेजी से बढ़ी है। एसआइआइसी के ईंचार्ज प्रो. दीपू फिलिप ने बताया कि समारोह में 1000 विद्यार्थी शामिल हो रहे हैं, जबकि 800 स्कुलों के छात्र-छात्राओं को भी आमंत्रित किया गया है। स्वीटी गुसाईं ने कथक नृत्य में भगवान शिव की स्तुति कर भारतीय संस्कृति का

अहमदाबाद में हुए विमान हादसे की जांच जारी

कार्यक्रम के बाद मीडिया से बातचीत में जीवीजी युगांधर ने बताया कि पिछले साल अहमदाबाद में हुए विमान हादसे की जांच अभी जारी है। जल्द ही सच सामने आएगा। विदेशी मीडिया में चल रही अटकलों पर उन्होंने कहा कि जांच पूरी होने से पहले किसी भी निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचना गलत है। हादसे के बाद विमानन कंपनियों के लिए सुरक्षा मानकों को और अधिक सख्त करने पर काम चल रहा है।

परिचय कराया। प्रो. प्रतीक सेन, प्रो. शिवम त्रिपाठी मौजूद रहे। देर शाम तकनीकी आयोजन होकरमेनिया में होकरक्राफ्ट के डिजाइन व प्रदर्शन पर छात्रों ने कौशल दिखाया। अटलासियन करियर कैफे में विद्यार्थियों को मार्गदर्शन संग उद्योग जगत को जानने का मौका मिला। **ड्रोन और सुरक्षा पर चिंता** : युद्ध में ड्रोन के बढ़ते इस्तेमाल पर उन्होंने कहा कि आज के दौर में खतरों की पहचान करना एक बड़ी चुनौती है क्योंकि तकनीक और युद्ध के तरीके पल-पल बदल रहे हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

Del-Vancouver Air India Flight Back After 7 Hrs

New Delhi: An Air India Boeing 777-200LR, enroute from Delhi to Vancouver, was forced to return to the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Thursday evening—more than seven hours into its journey—after it emerged that the aircraft hadn't been cleared to operate the route.

People familiar with the matter said the incident stemmed from an administrative oversight—an apparent failure to update the operational requirements list for flights serving Canadian destinations—which led to an incorrect aircraft being assigned to the service.

Flight tracking data from Flightradar24 showed the aircraft had already entered Chinese airspace before the decision was made to reverse course. Air India, in a statement on Friday, stopped short of elaborating on the precise nature of the operational issue but confirmed that the aircraft touched down safely at the Delhi airport.—**Our Bureau**

Free Seat Mandate Will Force Sharp Hike in Fares: Airlines

Directive likely to hurt budget passengers the most, they say

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: India's leading airlines warned the government that a directive requiring carriers to offer at least 60% of seats across flights free of charge to fliers will force them to raise ticket prices, undermining the very passenger welfare the policy intends to protect.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, wrote to the civil aviation ministry a day after the ministry directed the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to implement the free-seat selection rule.

"The financial impact of this directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares," the FIA said in a letter on Thursday, a copy of which was reviewed by ET.

The industry body argued that seat selection fees are a legitimate revenue stream that helps carriers manage wafer-thin operating margins in an environment of rising fuel costs, airport charges,

Peer View

Country	Seat Selection Fees	Family Seating Together
 US	Free to charge for all seats	Proposed law: children under 14 must sit with parents
 EU		Non-binding advisory only
 UK	Free to charge	Non-binding guidance only

Source: Civil Aviation Authorities



and maintenance expenses.

Airlines cautioned that shifting the burden from individual passengers who choose preferred seats to the entire travelling public amounts to a blanket cross-subsidy — one that will hit budget travellers the most. Price-sensitive passengers, who currently pay

only for services they need, would end up absorbing costs they never opted for, per the letter.

At the heart of the industry push-back is a pointed challenge to the government's authority to intervene in commercial pricing decisions. The FIA cited a 2017 Delhi High Court ruling which held that the DGCA doesn't have any power to fix or cap charges for unbundled services such as preferential seating, so long as the service is offered transparently on an opt-in basis. The court had drawn an explicit boundary around regulatory reach into ancillary pricing.

The airlines also pointed to the government's own stated position — in parliamentary replies as recently as this February — that airfares are determined by market forces and that unbundling services is intended to keep base fares affordable by letting passengers pay only for what they choose.

The industry body urged the ministry to withdraw the directive and allow existing rules to continue, cautioning that the measure could set a precedent for deeper government intervention in airline commercial operations.



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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

AIRLINES OPPOSE GOVT'S 60% FREE SEAT DECISION



INDIGO, AIR INDIA and SpiceJet have raised strong objections to

the government's decision asking airlines not to levy any charges for the selection of at least 60% seats on flights, saying the move will force them to hike airfares to recover lost revenues. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, has also urged the Civil Aviation Ministry to take steps to withdraw the decision. On Wednesday, the ministry announced that directions have been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60% of seats for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers. In a letter written to Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha on Thursday, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector. "Airlines operate on thin margins and rely on ancillary revenues to offset rising operational costs," the FIA said.

Look for travel insurance that covers flight cancellations

REASSESS EFFICACY OF TRAVEL COVER IN ADDRESSING GEOPOLITICAL RISKS

SAIKAT NEOGI

INDIVIDUALS MUST SELECT travel insurance policies that specifically cover involuntary flight cancellations, trip interruption, and medical evacuations. The war in West Asia is leaving Indian travellers financially exposed, as most standard travel policies exclude losses arising from acts of war.

Travellers should align their plans with government advisories and opt for refundable fares and hotels with free cancellation policies. In case of flight cancellations, retain all documentation such as boarding passes, itinerary changes, bills to claim from airlines, as insurers often won't cover war-related cancellations.

Meet Kapadia, head, travel insurance at Policybazaar.com, says it is essential for passengers to be aware of their statutory rights. "If an airline cancels a flight, travellers are entitled to seek compensation under the DGCA's passenger rules. Exercising these rights ensures that the financial burden of operational disruptions remains with the carrier, not the traveller."

Inclusions in travel cover

A standard travel insurance covers costs for unexpected illness, injury, or accidents, including doctor consultations, hospitalisation, and surgery. It pays for transportation to a better medical facility if local ones are inadequate. In case of flight delays, such a policy compen-



sates for additional expenses like meals or overnight accommodation if your flight is delayed beyond a specified timeframe. It covers costs for missed connecting flights due to an initial delay beyond your control.

It also shields the travellers against trip cancellation for emergencies occurring before departure. Travel insurance ensures compensation for the permanent loss of checked-in luggage, reimbursement for essentials during baggage delays, and financial assistance for the emergency replacement of a lost passport.

Sarita Joshi, head, health & life insurance, Probus, says the intention is to give individuals financial protection from unexpected hits abroad, but the extent varies

between insurers. "So, check sub-limits and caps rather than the usual blanket assumption that the travel insurance policy will cover everything," she says.

Exclusions

Most standard travel insurance policies do not cover pre-existing medical conditions unless you buy a specific pre-existing disease add-on. A standard travel cover will exclude countries with travel warnings such as war zones, areas with political unrest. Individuals must check the ministry of external affairs for advisories. Claims arising from accidents or illnesses caused by alcohol, illegal drugs, or misuse of prescription drugs are not covered.

FINANCIAL PROTECTION

- A standard travel insurance covers costs for unexpected illness, injury, or accidents
- Most travel policies do not cover pre-existing medical conditions

■ In case of flight cancellations, retain all documentation such as boarding passes

■ In case of flight delays, the policy compensates for additional expenses like meals or overnight accommodation

Elective treatments, cosmetic surgeries, or non-emergency procedures such as dental check-ups, plastic surgery are excluded. However, emergency dental treatment such as for a broken tooth may be covered up to a limit. Losses from carelessness, like leaving luggage unattended or ignoring safety rules, are not covered.

Shilpa Arora, co-founder and COO, Insurance Samadhan, says in most cases, standard travel insurance policies do not automatically cover pre-existing medical conditions. "These conditions are typically listed as exclusions, meaning any medical emergencies, hospitalisations, or trip cancellations related to them will not be reimbursed unless you have a specific waiver or add-on."





Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

20 MARCH 2026

DGCA bats for passenger rights

The government has suddenly woken up to the difficulties faced by airline passengers, and over the last few weeks, it has issued a slew of guidelines, ranging from new refund rules to directing carriers not to charge a fee for preferred seats. While these directives have been widely welcomed by passengers, they have caught the airlines off guard. Implementing these measures will obviously come at a cost to airlines, but regulators now want to rebalance the relationship between the carriers and passengers, even if it risks tightening the financial screws on a sector already flying on razor-thin margins. According to a report, these directives have come at a time when the Supreme Court is hearing a public interest litigation seeking steps to reduce changes in airfares and ancillary charges.

Perhaps the two most significant changes are directing airlines not to charge fees for preferred seats, such as window, aisle, and front-row seats. Under the new rule, at least 60 per cent of seats on any flight will not be charged an extra fee. The second is that passengers can now modify or cancel their tickets without incurring additional fees within 48 hours of making the reservation, though this is subject to certain conditions. These are important guidelines, but will obviously not sit well with airlines who, for years, have steadily unbundled services and monetised every aspect of the travel experience—from seat selection and baggage to meals and change fees—under the banner of “low fares, optional extras”.

The airlines in India resort to these measures because they operate on very thin margins, and there are no incentives for carriers offering low fares to passengers, such as lower landing and parking charges. For an airline operating multiple rotations, combined passenger-based charges (UDF+ASF+PSF) can easily add several hundred rupees per ticket at metro airports, materially affecting total trip cost. Hence, some airlines have started making more money not from selling tickets but from selling snacks on board. This might look like an act of desperation, but this also mirrors the reality. On the cost side, fuel remains volatile, and fleet financing costs are elevated. On the revenue side, intense competition caps base fares, and policy is now constraining a portion of ancillary income. Put bluntly, the government is asking airlines to be more customer-friendly without offering any offset in the form of lower input costs, tax relief or airport charges. That is why airlines see these measures not just as consumer protection but as regulatory risk that complicates already fragile business models. India is infamously known as a graveyard of airlines, and hence, if the government is serious about both consumer rights and sectoral health, this cannot be a one-way diktat.

India is infamously known as a graveyard of airlines, and hence, if the government is serious about both consumer rights and sectoral health, this cannot be a one-way diktat.

तकनीकी और नियामकीय चूक के कारण विमान को 8 घंटे हवा में रहने के बाद दिल्ली लौटना पड़ा

एयरइंडिया की ऐसी गलती की बन आई 'महाराजा' की मूंछों पर

हरिमूमि ब्यूरो नई दिल्ली

जब से और इंडिया वापस निजी क्षेत्र में गया है तब से ऐसे ऐसे कारनामे सामने आ रहे हैं कि वर्षों एयर इंडिया की ब्रांडिंग करने वाले महाराजा की मूंछों पर बन आई है।

दिल्ली से कनाडा के वैकूबर जा रही एयर इंडिया की एक अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ान यात्रियों के लिए जान मुंह को आने वाली साबित हुई। तकनीकी और नियामकीय चूक के कारण विमान को लगभग 8 घंटे हवा में रहने के बाद वापस दिल्ली लौटना पड़ा।



गलत विमान तैनाती बनी वजह: बताया गया है कि इस उड़ान में बोइंग 777-300ER विमान का उपयोग किया गया था, जबकि एयर इंडिया को कनाडा के लिए फिलहाल केवल बोइंग 777-300ER विमानों के संचालन की ही अनुमति प्राप्त है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमानन नियमों के अनुसार, कई देशों में उड़ानों के लिए अनुमति एयरलाइन के साथ-साथ विशेष विमान प्रकार या यहाँ तक कि विमान के पंजीकरण संख्या (टेल नंबर) के आधार पर भी दी जाती है।

ऐसी बचकानी गलती, ऐसा अक्षम्य अपराध !

एयर इंडिया का उड़ान ए.आई.185 शुक्रवार को सुबह 11:34 बजे दिल्ली से वैकूबर के लिए रवाना हुई थी। विमान पूर्व दिशा में अपनी निर्धारित उड़ान पर आगे बढ़ रहा था। लेकिन उड़ान के करीब चार घंटे बाद, जब विमान चीन के कुनमिंग क्षेत्र के हवाई क्षेत्र में पहुँचा, तब एयरलाइन को पता चला कि जिस विमान का उपयोग किया गया है, उसे कनाडा में उड़ान भरने की अनुमति नहीं है। सोचिये, जो विमान कनाडा के लिए फिट नहीं, उसको इजाजत नहीं, उसमें यात्रियों को भरकर जहाज को उड़ने दिया गया।

7 घंटे 54 मिनट उड़ान के बाद वापसी

जैसे ही यह चूटि सामने आई, विमान को तुरंत वापस दिल्ली बुला लिया गया। इस दौरान विमान कुल 7 घंटे 54 मिनट तक हवा में रहा और अंततः उसी स्थान पर लौट आया, जहाँ से उसने उड़ान भरी थी। विमान सुरक्षित रूप से दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर उतरा और सभी यात्रियों व चालक दल के सदस्यों को बिना किसी परेशानी के उतार लिया गया।

एयर इंडिया का बयान

एयर इंडिया ने इस घटना को "परिचालन संबंधी समस्या" बताया है। एयरलाइन ने अपने बयान में कहा, "निर्धारित प्रक्रियाओं के शेष पेज 5 पर

यात्रियों के लिए व्यवस्था: एयरलाइन के अनुसार, दिल्ली में यात्रियों के लिए होटल में ठहरने की व्यवस्था की गई और उन्हें जल्द से जल्द उनके गंतव्य तक पहुंचाने के प्रयास किए गए। बताया गया है कि अगली सुबह यही उड़ान दोबारा रवाना की गई, जिसमें सभी यात्रियों को भेजा गया।

भारी आर्थिक नुकसान की आशंका : विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, इस घटना से एयरलाइन को भारी आर्थिक नुकसान हुआ है। एक बोइंग 777 विमान प्रति घंटे लगभग 8 से 9 टन ईंधन की खपत करता है। ऐसे में लगभग 8 घंटे की अनियोजित उड़ान से ईंधन, संचालन और अन्य खर्चों में बड़ा नुकसान हुआ। यात्रियों को जान जोखिम में रही, सो अलगा।

जांच और सवाल : इस घटना ने एयरलाइन के परिचालन प्रबंधन और नियामकीय अनुपालन पर गंभीर सवाल खड़े कर दिए हैं। यह देखा जा रहा है कि इतनी बड़ी चूक कैसे हुई और उड़ान से पहले आवश्यक स्वीकृतियों की पुष्टि क्यों नहीं की गई! फिलहाल मामले की विस्तृत जांच की जा रही है। वैश्विक स्तर पर एयर इंडिया के इस लापरवाही ने दुनिया भर के विशेषज्ञों की निगाह खींची है, सभी हतप्रभ हैं। उनके बीच चर्चा हो रही है।



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कनाडा भेजा गया गलत विमान बीच रास्ते से लौटा

लापरवाही

नई दिल्ली, एजेंसी। एयर इंडिया की दिल्ली से वैकूबर जा रही उड़ान एआई 185 गुरुवार को करीब सात घंटे बाद वापस दिल्ली लौट आई। दरअसल एयरलाइन ने इस रूट पर गलत विमान भेज दिया था, गलती का अहसास होने पर चीन से यह विमान वापस दिल्ली लौट आया।

सूत्रों के अनुसार, इस उड़ान के लिए बोइंग 777-300 ईआर विमान की अनुमति थी, लेकिन इसकी जगह बोइंग 777-200 एलआर भेज दिया गया। बताया जा रहा है कि कनाडा के लिए

एयरलाइन ने खेद जताया

एयर इंडिया ने अपने बयान में केवल 'ऑपरेशनल समस्या' का हवाला दिया और कहा कि यह फैसला तय प्रक्रियाओं के तहत लिया गया। कंपनी ने विस्तृत जानकारी साझा नहीं की। बाद में एयरलाइन ने यात्रियों को असुविधा के लिए खेद जताया और उन्हें वैकल्पिक व्यवस्था दी। सभी यात्रियों को शुक्रवार सुबह दूसरी उड़ान से वैकूबर भेज दिया गया।

उड़ानों से जुड़ी जरूरी मंजूरीयों की सूची अपडेट न होने के कारण यह गलती हुई।

सलाह | नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय ने बयान में कहा, अभी खाड़ी देशों में स्थिति काफी संवेदनशील, लगातार बढ़ रहे हवाई क्षेत्र में खतरे

‘विमानन कंपनियां खाड़ी देशों के संवेदनशील क्षेत्रों में घुसने से बचें’

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता । पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते सैन्य तनाव के बीच नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने विमानन कंपनियों के लिए अहम सुरक्षा सलाह जारी की है। डीजीसीए ने सभी भारतीय विमानन कंपनियों व ऑपरेटर को सलाह दी है कि वह खाड़ी और मध्य पूर्व के संवेदनशील एयरस्पेस में ऑपरेशन से बचें, क्योंकि सैन्य कार्रवाई के बाद से खतरा बढ़ गया है।

डीजीसीए ने स्पष्ट किया है कि अमेरिका-इजरायल द्वारा ईरान में तेल टिकानों पर हमले के बाद से अब ईरान ने भी बड़े पैमाने पर खाड़ी देशों पर हमले की घोषणा की है। ऐसी स्थिति में



नागरिक विमानन सेवा के लिए खतरा बढ़ गया है। मौजूदा हालात में कई तरह के खतरे हैं, जैसे जवाबी कार्रवाई, हथियार इंटरसेप्शन, एडवांस्ट एयर डिफेंस सिस्टम की मौजूदगी और ऑपरेशनल एरर। इससे एयरस्पेस में स्पिलओवर रिस्क यानी संघर्ष का असर अन्य देशों तक फैलने का खतरा

भी बना हुआ है। इसलिए ईरान, इराक, इजरायल, जॉर्डन, कुवैत, ओमान, कतर, संयुक्त अरब अमीरात, सऊदी अरब, लेबनान और बहरीन के हवाई क्षेत्र में खतरा है। स्थिति को देखते हुए कंपनियां इन देशों के एयरस्पेस में सभी फ्लाइट लेवल और एल्टीट्यूड पर ऑपरेशन से बचें। हालांकि, कुछ

सऊदी अरब और ओमान में बरतें सावधानी

सऊदी अरब और ओमान के कुछ हिस्सों में ऑपरेशन के दौरान फ्लाइट लेवल 320 (एफएल320) से नीचे उड़ान नहीं भरनी चाहिए। इसके साथ ही, सीरिया और यमन के एयरस्पेस को लेकर पहले जारी सलाह प्रभावी है और उनका पालन करना अनिवार्य है। जारी की गई सलाह तत्काल प्रभाव से लागू हो गई है और 28 मार्च तक वैध रहेगी।

मामलों में ऑपरेटर्स सुरक्षा खतरे के आकलन के आधार पर सीमित ऑपरेशन कर सकते हैं, लेकिन इसके लिए सख्त सुरक्षा प्रोटोकॉल अपनाने होंगे। साथ ही कंपनियों से कहा गया है कि मॉनिटरिंग प्रोसेस अपनाएं, नोटैम और एरोनॉटिकल इंफॉर्मेशन पब्लिकेशंस पर नजर रखें।

भारतीय एयरलाइंस ने केंद्र से किराया सीमा हटाने की मांग की

नई दिल्ली, एजेंसी। इंडिगो, एयर इंडिया और स्पाइसजेट का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाले फेडरेशन ऑफ इंडियन एयरलाइंस (एफआईए) ने सरकार से किराया सीमा हटाने की मांग की है।

समूह ने कहा है कि यदि दिसंबर में लगाई गई किराया सीमा को वापस नहीं लिया गया, तो वे कुछ रूटों से उड़ानें बंद कर सकते हैं और बेड़े तथा नेटवर्क विस्तार में देरी कर सकते हैं। ईरान

संकट से पहले ही, राजनयिक तनाव से पाक हवाई क्षेत्र पर लगे प्रतिबंध से भारतीय एयरलाइंस अंतरराष्ट्रीय परिचालन में भारी नुकसान झेल रही थीं। दिसंबर में, परिचालन संबंधी समस्याओं से इंडिगो द्वारा बड़े पैमाने पर उड़ानें रद्द किए जाने से विमानन क्षेत्र में काफी व्यवधान पैदा हुआ था। इसके बाद अधिकारियों ने दूरी के आधार पर हवाई किराए की अधिकतम सीमा तय कर दी थी।



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‘Wrong’ AI 777 jet makes u-turn 4 hours into flight

NEW DELHI : A Delhi-Vancouver Air India flight was forced to return to the national capital on Thursday evening after flying for over seven hours, when it emerged that the Boeing 777-200LR deployed for the service did not have the regulatory approvals required for operations to Canada, people aware of the matter said.

A lapse in updating operational requirements led to the wrong aircraft variant being assigned to the flight, they said.

“Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver

on March 19, returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with established standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely and all passengers and crew disembarked safely,” an Air India spokesperson said on Friday, adding that the flight departed for Vancouver on Friday morning but did not provide further details.

According to flight tracking website Flightradar24, the aircraft — a Boeing 777-200LR (VT-AEI) — turned back over Chinese airspace a little over four hours after it departed. →PB



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{ MY INDIA } FINANCIAL IMPACT

Airlines oppose free seat allocation order



IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet have raised strong objections to the government's decision asking airlines not to levy any charges for the selection of at least 60% seats on flights, saying the move will force them to hike airfares to recover lost revenues. The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, also urged the civil aviation ministry to take steps to withdraw the decision. In a letter written to civil aviation secretary, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector. "The financial impact of the directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares. As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," it said.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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Air India flies wrong 777 to Canada, plane turns back after 4 hrs

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: A Vancouver-bound Air India flight from Delhi, operated by a Boeing 777 200LR aircraft, was forced to return to Delhi on Thursday evening after flying for over seven hours, as it was found that the aircraft deployed for the service was not approved for operations to Canada, people aware of the matter said.

An alleged lapse in updating operational requirements led to the wrong aircraft being assigned to the flight, they said.

"Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver on March 19 returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with established standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely, and all passengers and crew had disembarked (safely)," an Air India spokesperson said on Friday adding that the flight departed for Vancouver on Friday morning, but did not give details.

The spokesperson said that the airline's ground teams in Delhi had provided all necessary assistance, including offering hotel accommodation, while every effort was made to fly the passengers to their destination at the earliest. According to Flightradar24, the flight, which operated with a Boeing 777-200LR (VT-AEI), turned back while flying over Chinese airspace after being airborne for roughly four hours.

"The flight should have been

AN ALLEGED LAPSE IN UPDATING OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS LED TO THE WRONG AIRCRAFT BEING ASSIGNED TO THE FLIGHT

operated using a Boeing 777-300ER aircraft, which has the necessary approvals for operations to Canada," an official said, adding, "This aircraft wasn't allowed to operate into Canada because the approvals are specific to certain variants like the Boeing 300ER."

Another official said, "You can't just send a different aircraft, for instance one cannot operate a B777 200LR or a B787 without prior clearance, since airport infrastructure, ground handling, and parking gates are configured accordingly."

Operating international flights requires multiple clearances that vary by destination country, including aircraft-specific approvals linked to infrastructure and regulatory requirements, the official said.

Officials also pointed to the financial implications of the incident. "The aircraft was airborne for about seven to eight hours, including the time it spent over Chinese airspace. Fuel burn alone would be significant... Add to that passenger accommodation and the opportunity cost, and the total loss could run into a few crores," the person said.



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'AFTER 4 HOURS IN THE SKY'

Air India plane
returns to Capital
as 'wrong aircraft'
deployed for
Vancouver

Express News Service
New Delhi, March 20

AFTER FLYING for around four hours, a Vancouver-bound Air India flight had to return to Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport after the airline realised it had deployed the wrong aircraft which did not have the permission to enter the Canadian airspace, sources said on Friday.

Aircraft AI 185, operated by a Boeing 777-300 extended range (ER), flies from Delhi to Canada daily. However, on Thursday, a B777-200 long-range (LR) version took off from Delhi at 12:18 pm. The aircraft was not approved for the flight to Canada. It had flown eastward for around four hours before turning back while near the Chinese city of Kunming, according to flight tracking website Flightradar24.

It landed in Delhi safely in the evening and passengers were disembarked, the airline said. The flight for Vancouver departed on Friday morning.

Sources also said that had the aircraft reached Canadian airspace and not been allowed to enter, it would have been a bigger problem.

"Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver on 19 March, returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with established standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely, and all passengers and crew had disembarked," an Air India spokesperson, meanwhile, said.

"We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our guests by this unforeseen situation. Our ground teams in Delhi had provided all necessary assistance, including offering hotel accommodation, while every effort was made to fly the passengers to their destination at the earliest. The flight for Vancouver departed this morning with the passengers," the spokesperson added.

MINT

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Journeys to the start of the story

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM GETTY IMAGES



In Bengaluru's Terminal 2 (where I spend far too many hours) is a corridor leading to the restrooms that's lined with vintage posters from what's now called the "golden age of travel". Air India's now-retired Maharaja does the can-can in Paris, goes sledding sitting on a bed of nails in Europe, and for some inexplicable reason, saves a mermaid in Sydney. Designed between the 1940s and the 1970s, the posters are provocative, rascally, contain every stereotype possible, and would certainly get both the Maharaja and the airline cancelled today. What they did then—and despite their inappropriateness, do even now—is capture the excitement, the sense of discovery and the flights of fantasy that travel makes possible.

We're wearier of travelling now in this era of closed air spaces, visa restrictions, travel advisories and flight delays, but reaching the destination still brings back that child-like sense of excitement. For most of us at *Lounge*, films, books, music and art have often been the first exposure to a place, and then we've gone seeking that feeling in the real world. Our writers this week describe that moment when the world opened up because of something they read, saw or heard, how they searched for the setting and planned the trip, and the feeling of finally tracing a beloved work of art back to the places that inspired them. One writer heads to a beach near Seoul that was the staging spot for her favourite K-drama, another follows Eric Shipton's trail to the Nanda Devi sanctuary, a third races around Mexico City trying to track down a mural first seen on a notebook cover, and someone else follows Feluda's clues to Jaisalmer. These are journeys by superfans to pay tribute to art that moved them.

Apart from these 10 little journeys, each a story in itself, we write about the ways social media has transformed our ideas of sharing and connecting. We also have our recommendations for films and shows to watch, books to read, art to appreciate, and other ways to relax this weekend.

Write to the editor at shalini.umachandran@livemint.com

📧 @shalinimb

IndiGo, AI, SpiceJet oppose govt's 60% free seat selection decision

Federation of Indian Airlines, which represents the three airlines, has also urged Civil Aviation Ministry to take steps to withdraw decision

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet have raised strong objections to the government's decision asking airlines not to levy any charges for the selection of at least 60 per cent seats on flights, saying the move will force them to hike airfares to recover lost revenues.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which represents the three airlines, has also urged the Civil Aviation Ministry to take steps to withdraw the decision.

On Wednesday, the ministry announced that directions have been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers.

In a letter written to Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha on Thursday, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector.

"The financial impact of the directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares. As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up pay-



On Wednesday, the ministry announced that directions have been issued to the DGCA to direct airlines to allocate a minimum of 60 per cent of seats for selection on any flight free of charge to ensure fair access for passengers

ing higher fares," it said.

FIA noted that seat selection fees form a legitimate component of airline revenue, particularly in the high-cost environment where costs rise year-on-year under the regulator AERA-governed regime that accords full cost recovery plus an assured margin to airports.

"Airlines operate on thin margins and rely on ancillary

revenues to offset rising operational costs, including fuel, maintenance, airport charges, etc. Imposing a uniform restriction on ancillary revenue undermines commercial flexibility and interferes with market-driven pricing mechanisms," the grouping said.

The ministry's announcement on Wednesday came against the backdrop of rising concerns that airlines are levy-

Highlights

- » In a letter to Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha on Thursday, FIA said the direction would have unintended and adverse consequences for the aviation sector
- » Generally, airlines charge Rs 200 to Rs 2,100 for seat selection, depending on various factors, including front rows, extra leg room
- » The grouping mentioned that the ministry did not carry out stakeholder consultations before announcing the decision

ing high charges for various services, including for choosing seats.

Generally, airlines charge Rs 200 to Rs 2,100 for choosing seats, depending on various factors, including front rows and extra leg room.

Meanwhile, FIA also said that while free seat selection might appear beneficial at first glance from passengers' perspective, the overall outcome

would be counter-productive and higher fares would reduce consumer choice and affordability.

According to FIA, the decision will defeat the stated objective of passenger welfare, as it shifts targeted user-based charges into a blanket fare increase borne by the entire passenger base, and disproportionately impacts price-sensitive travellers and erodes affordability.

Among other concerns, the grouping mentioned that the ministry did not carry out stakeholder consultations before announcing the decision.

"If applied, this measure will set a precedent for excessive intervention in ancillary pricing with heavy loss of revenues for the airlines, apart from creating uncertainty for airlines regarding future regulatory constraints," FIA said and urged that the mandate to the DGCA be withdrawn.

Meanwhile, sources said the airlines have also told the ministry about various operational challenges, including rising jet fuel prices, in the wake of the West Asia conflict. The conflict has significantly impacted flight operations to and from the region.

Airline sends wrong plane to Canada, calls back flight from China airspace

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

AN Air India flight from New Delhi to Canada carrying 280 passengers had to return midway from the Chinese airspace on Thursday. The airline had dispatched an aircraft that was not legally permitted by into the Canadian airspace. The turnback was made after the airline realised the mistake, said sources.

Canada permits only Extended Range (ER) Boeing aircraft from India and not Long Range (LR) Aircraft. Air India had dispatched an LR aircraft due to an error in documentation, sources said.

The aircraft, AI 185, a Boeing 777-232 LR, had taken off at 12.18 pm from Indira Gandhi International Airport, according to flightradar24. The plane was approaching Kunming area in China when it had to return.

A source said, "The flight had flown for nearly 3.5 hours when the crew were alerted by the Air India ground staff team that the aircraft would not be permitted inside Canada. The



cockpit crew then decided to turn back and got permission from the Air Traffic Control at IGIA to return."

A Delhi airport source confirmed that AI 185 had returned at 7.19 pm on Thursday, nearly seven hours after it took off.

Another source said the decision to immediately bring the aircraft back was to avoid further complications. "The situation could have been explained and special permission obtained from Canadian authorities. But when departing, issues would crop up again. This could pose an issue too. Hence, returning was a prudent choice," he said.

An LR aircraft has superior features when compared to an ER aircraft, the source added.

In a statement, the airline said, "Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver on 19 March, returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with established standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely, and all passengers and crew disembarked."

The flyers were accommodated in a hotel and all necessary assistance provided, the airline said. "The flight departed this morning (Friday) with all the passengers," it added.





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NAVBHARAT TIMES

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भारत-कुवैत के बीच हवाई सेवा शुरू

■ **NBT रिपोर्ट:** Jazeera एयरवेज ने भारत और कुवैत के बीच फिर से कनेक्टिविटी शुरू करके एक बड़ी कामयाबी हासिल की है। 'प्रोजेक्ट वंदे भारत' के तहत भारत के आठ शहरों (अहमदाबाद, बंगलुरु, चेन्नै, दिल्ली, हैदराबाद, मुंबई, कोच्चि और तिरुवनंतपुरम) से कुवैत के लिए उड़ानें शुरू की गई हैं। यह सफर सऊदी अरब के हफर अल वातिन में स्थित कैसुमा एयरपोर्ट (AQI) के जरिए पूरा होगा।



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

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9 देशों के एयरस्पेस से बर्चे: DGCA

■ **NBT रिपोर्ट, नई दिल्ली:** नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय ने पश्चिम एशिया में बढ़ते तनाव के बीच एयरलाइंस के लिए नई अडवाइजरी जारी की है। इसके तहत एयरलाइंस को बहरीन, ईरान, इराक, इस्त्राइल, जॉर्डन, कुवैत, लेबनान, कतर और यूएई के एयरस्पेस से 28 मार्च तक दूर रहने को कहा गया है। अधिकारियों के मुताबिक, इस क्षेत्र में हालात तेजी से बदल रहे हैं,



DGCA ने नई अडवाइजरी जारी की

जिससे उड़ानों का संचालन और जटिल हो गया है। डीजीसीए ने साफ किया है कि इनके एयरस्पेस में किसी भी ऊंचाई पर उड़ान से बचा जाए। हालांकि, ओमान और सऊदी अरब के ऊपर से उड़ान की अनुमति दी गई है, लेकिन इसके लिए कुछ शर्तें लागू हैं। जैसे इन क्षेत्रों में 32,000 फीट से नीचे उड़ान नहीं भरी जा सकती। बैकअप प्लान भी तैयार रखने को कहा गया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

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एयर इंडिया ने गलत मॉडल का प्लेन भेजा

■ NBT रिपोर्ट

एयर इंडिया को दिल्ली से वैक्यूव जा रही फ्लाइट AI-185 को एक बड़ी चूक के चलते बीच रास्ते से ही वापस लौटना पड़ा। TOI की रिपोर्ट के अनुसार, 19 मार्च को यह उड़ान बोइंग 777-200 LR विमान से रवाना हुई थी, जबकि कनाडा के लिए एयर इंडिया को सिर्फ बोइंग 777-300 ER विमान उड़ाने की अनुमति है। करीब 4 घंटे की उड़ान के बाद, जब विमान चीन के कुनिमिंग के पास एयरस्पेस में पहुंचा, तब इस गलती का पता चला। इसके बाद विमान को तुरंत वापस दिल्ली बुलाया गया। फ्लाइट ने सुबह 11:34 बजे उड़ान भरी थी और करीब 9 घंटे बाद शाम 7:19 बजे दिल्ली लौट आई। एयर इंडिया के प्रवक्ता ने इसे 'ऑपरेशनल इश्यू' बताया और कहा कि विमान सुरक्षित उतरा। यात्रियों को होटल और अन्य सुविधाएं दी गईं, और उन्हें जल्द ही दूसरी फ्लाइट से

9 घंटे बाद दिल्ली लौटी
एयर इंडिया की फ्लाइट



**'जिम्मेदार अफसरों
पर होगी कार्रवाई'**

सूत्रों के अनुसार, एयरलाइन ने गलती को गंभीरता से लिया है और जिम्मेदार अफसरों पर कार्रवाई की बात कही गई। एक बोइंग 777 विमान हर घंटे 8-9 टन ईंधन खपत करता है, ऐसे में गलती आर्थिक रूप से भारी पड़ी।

वैक्यूव भेज दिया गया। जानकारी के अनुसार, अलग-अलग देशों के अपने एविएशन नियम होते हैं और कनाडा ने एयर इंडिया को केवल B777-300 ER विमानों के लिए मंजूरी दी हुई है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

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AI DELHI-VANCOUVER FLIGHT DIVERTS MIDAIR

Air India faced another operational setback when its Delhi-Vancouver flight AI185 returned to Delhi after more than seven hours in the air on March 19. The Boeing 777-200 LR operating the flight lacked the necessary approvals for international operation, officials said, highlighting a procedural oversight in updating the airline's records. The aircraft turned back while crossing Chinese airspace. "All passengers and crew disembarked safely," Air India said in a statement. "We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused. Our ground teams in Delhi provided full assistance, including hotel accommodations, and the flight departed for Vancouver the following morning with all passengers on board." Sources noted the flight should have been operated with a Boeing 777-300 ER, which holds required international approvals. Aviation experts said precautionary returns, though rare, underscore the airline's prioritisation of passenger safety over schedules. This incident follows a previous mid-air return due to an aircraft approval issue, raising concerns about operational oversight as Air India expands its fleet and global routes. The airline has launched an internal review to prevent similar lapses.

Air India pilots flies wrong Aircraft to Canada without clearance, returns mid-Air

ASHOKE RAJ ■ New Delhi

Air India faced yet another operational lapse when a Vancouver-bound flight had to return to Delhi after being airborne for several hours, sources said, because the aircraft deployed did not have the necessary approvals for international operation.

The flight, operated with a Boeing 777-200 LR, was in the air for over seven hours before turning back while crossing Chinese airspace. Officials indicated that the aircraft was not listed for flights to Canada, highlighting a procedural oversight in updating the airline's records and operational clearances. In a statement, Air India reassured passengers: Air India flight AI185, operating from Delhi to Vancouver on 19 March, returned to Delhi due to an operational issue and in line with standard operating procedures. The aircraft landed safely, and all passengers and crew disembarked without incident.

Air India apologizes for Flight Disruption, 'We sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our passengers due to this unforeseen situation. Our ground teams in Delhi provided full assistance, including hotel accommodations where required, and worked dili-



gently to ensure passengers could continue their journey as quickly as possible. The flight departed this morning for Vancouver with all passengers on board.

Sources said the flight should have been operated with a Boeing 777-300 ER, which holds the required international approvals.

The lapse has triggered an internal review, as multiple approvals are required for flights to foreign destinations, and any discrepancy can affect aviation compliance.

Passengers were accommo-

dated after the return, and the flight successfully departed for Vancouver the following morning.

Aviation experts stressed that while incidents like these are rare, precautionary returns underscore the airline's priority on passenger safety over schedules.

This incident marks another challenge for Air India, following a previous mid-air return due to an aircraft approval issue, raising concerns about operational oversight amid the airline's growing fleet and expanding global routes.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

जाना था वैकुवर और जा पहुंचा चीन

पंजाब केसरी/नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली से वैकुवर जा रही एअर इंडिया की एक उड़ान सात घंटे से अधिक समय तक हवा में रहने के बाद बृहस्पतिवार शाम को परिचालन संबंधी समस्या के कारण दिल्ली लौट आई। एअर इंडिया ने शुक्रवार को एक बयान में बताया कि विमान दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर सुरक्षित उतर गया। हालांकि कंपनी की ओर से ज्यादा कोई विशिष्ट जानकारी नहीं दी गयी। बोइंग 777-200 एलआर विमान करीब सात घंटे से अधिक समय तक हवा में रहा। उड़ानों पर निगरानी रखने वाली वेबसाइट फ्लाइटडार 24 डॉट कॉम पर उपलब्ध जानकारी के अनुसार,



● एयर इंडिया विमान 7 घंटे तक हवा में उड़ता रहा और आखिरकार दिल्ली ही वापिस लौट आया

विमान चीन के हवाई क्षेत्र में प्रवेश करने के बाद दिल्ली लौट आया। एअर इंडिया ने बयान में बताया कि 19 मार्च को दिल्ली से वैकुवर जाने वाली एअर इंडिया

की उड़ान संख्या एआई 185 परिचालन संबंधी समस्या के कारण और निर्धारित मानक प्रक्रियाओं के अनुरूप दिल्ली लौट आई। विमान सुरक्षित रूप से उतर गया और सभी यात्री एवं चालक दल के सदस्य सुरक्षित बाहर निकल गए। एक सूत्र ने बताया कि विमान के परिचालन में प्रशासनिक समस्या हो सकती है, जिसके कारण दिल्ली लौटने का निर्णय लिया गया। वापसी का कारण और विमान में सवार यात्रियों की संख्या जैसी अन्य जानकारियां अब तक प्राप्त नहीं हो सकी हैं। इस बीच, एअर इंडिया ने यह भी बताया कि विमान शुक्रवार सुबह यात्रियों को लेकर वैकुवर के लिए रवाना हो गया।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

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'1.8-2.2cr air passengers to remain unserved in MMR through FY29'

Gap May Reduce To 94L Travellers By FY30: Study

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New Delhi: Even with the addition of Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) is projected to fall short of meeting air travel demand, leaving 1.8-2.2 crore passengers unserved through FY2029, according to a consultation paper on NMIA's aeronautical tariff.

In the subsequent fiscal (FY2030), the gap may reduce to 94 lakh passengers if Terminal 2 at NMIA becomes operational, the paper said.

NMIA Ltd had appointed ICF Consulting India Pvt Ltd (ICF) to study and project traffic demand. The consultant has divided passenger forecasts across three levels — MMR, Mumbai airport, and NMIA. It estimates NMIA will handle close to its built capaci-

ty of 2 crore passengers annually in the next fiscal and operate at around 30% above capacity for three to four years thereafter.

"Considering the constraints at Mumbai airport, the two airports are expected to complement each other to meet the aviation demands of the region.... MMR's unconstrained traffic projections indicate that even with the combined traffic handled by both airports in the MMR, a significant demand will remain unserved until FY2029-30," the consultation paper said.

The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) noted that between FY2025-26 and FY2029-30, traffic at Mumbai airport is expected to remain constrained due to capacity limitations despite NMIA becoming operational. "Consequently, there exists a significant quantum

of latent and unserved passenger demand at the MMR level, estimated at approximately 1.8 to 2.2 crore passengers per annum. Such demand is expected to be progressively absorbed by NMIA over the first control period," it said.

NMIA Ltd has indicated that the next phase of expansion is likely to be operational around March 2030. "Considering the scale and complexity of the proposed expansion works under Phase III, (AERA) has assumed a minimum construction period of about three years and has hence estimated its likely completion in FY2030-31," the paper added.

To meet demand until then, NMIA is expected to undertake optimal asset utilisation measures to maximise existing Terminal 1 capacity and accommodate traffic growth.

Dropping seat charge will lead to fare hike: Airlines

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New Delhi: Airlines are not going to comply with the new seating mandate easily. Air India Group, IndiGo and SpiceJet took on govt, which earlier this week asked them to make available at least 60% of their seats free of charge, arguing the move would lead to a hike in airfares. They have also "raised concerns regarding regulatory overreach into commercial aspects of airline operations".

"Seat selection fees form a legitimate component of airline revenue, particularly in the high-cost environment in India where costs rise year on year under the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) governed regime that accords full cost recovery plus an assured margin to airports," Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), which has these three airlines as its members, said in a letter to the civil aviation secretary Samir Sinha on Thursday.

Ignoring demands for financial relief to carriers, the aviation minister had recently issued the free seat directive to enable people travelling on the same PNR to be seated together without any extra charge. "Airlines operate on thin margins and rely on ancillary revenues to offset ris-



Federation of Indian Airlines urged the DGCA to let the prevailing rules continue

ing operational costs, including fuel, maintenance, airport charges... The financial impact of (seating) directive on airlines will be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through increases in fares. As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," the letter said.

"If applied, this measure will set a precedent for excessive intervention in ancillary pricing with heavy loss of revenues for the airlines, apart from creating uncertainty for airlines regarding future regulatory constraints. Hence it is proposed that this mandate to the DGCA be withdrawn and the currently prevailing rules continue," it said.

India's air corridor shrinks as conflict in W Asia expands

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New Delhi: The "usable" corridor in West Asia — a key route for flights between India and Europe, UK and North America — is shrinking with the Israel-Iran war theatre expanding.

From Friday, Air India changed its route slightly to fly more to the southern side of Saudi Arabia after entering the country from Oman as Riyadh is also being targeted now. This has added another 20-30 minutes to its long flights.

"While as of now we are operating our schedule to Europe, the UK and North America taking the longer route, if the same gets even longer we may have to cut some of our flights as the operating costs will get even higher," an airline executive said. AI has done route studies to explore options available, if things get even worse in the Gulf.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday issued an urgent "safety advisory" in wake of the "escalation in security risks" in the region. Since the situation is extremely volatile and dynamic, operators have been asked to make an assessment in real time before operating flights in the region.

The difference between DGCA's earlier March 11 and Thursday's directive is that the airspace hazard description now includes "weapons inter-



The challenge for Indian operators has increased as they are unable to use the Pakistan airspace on account of recent hostilities

ceptions". Now, airlines have been asked to operate above 32,000 feet in certain airspaces in Saudi and Oman that are currently being used for overflying.

Third, airlines have to now implement "robust monitoring and risk assessment processes". Finally, they have to advise crew of airborne flights with latest notice to airmen (NOTAM) and airspace restrictions.

The conflict is rapidly expanding into new areas, said airline executives.

As operating costs will rise exponentially, airlines may cut flights as fares will rise further allowing essential travel only. Indian airlines are waiting for the month-end and fear a steep rise in jet fuel prices. The challenge for Indian airlines has spiked as they are unable to use Pakistan's airspace due to the outbreak of recent hostilities.

Airlines oppose 60% free seat selection order

Asia and Persian Gulf, flagging a sharply deteriorating security environment following the recent US-Israel and Iran war. In an advisory issued late Thursday,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Regulator lists 11 high..

the regulator said the situation posed "significant risks" to civil aviation, warning that Tehran's retaliatory actions could spill over into wider regional airspace. The restrictions will remain in force till March 28, unless reviewed earlier. The DGCA identified Iran, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman, Iraq, Jordan, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait as high-risk zones, covering all altitudes and flight levels. It cautioned the airlines against operating in these regions, citing threats ranging from possible attacks on US and Israeli assets to operational hazards arising from military activity.

The advisory specifically bars operations below FL320 in Saudi Arabian and Omani airspace, even in permitted zones, and calls for enhanced surveillance mechanisms for any flights operating near conflict zones. The airlines have also been asked to maintain constant watch on Aeronautical Information Publications and NOTAM updates issued by the regional authorities.

The regulator further underlined the need for contingency

planning for flights operating to airports in the affected region, noting that international carriers continued to maintain limited operations despite the escalating risks. Existing advisories for Syrian and Yemeni airspace remain unchanged and fully applicable. This is the sixth such advisory, indicating a rapidly evolving crisis that is beginning to reshape aviation operations in and around one of the world's busiest transit corridors.

The fallout is already visible on the ground. Indian carriers have started increasing fuel surcharges on both domestic and international routes as aviation turbine fuel prices surge amid supply disruptions linked to the conflict. Industry estimates suggest jet fuel prices have nearly doubled since the hostilities escalated on February 28, significantly inflating operating costs, given that fuel accounts for up to 40 per cent of airline expenditure. The airlines are also being forced to reroute flights to avoid conflict zones, resulting in longer flying times, higher fuel burn and cascading operational costs.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

21 MARCH 2026

Air India deploys wrong plane, flight returns after 7 hrs in air

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

A Vancouver-bound Air India Boeing 777-200 LR aircraft, after being airborne for over seven hours, returned to the national capital on Thursday evening after it was found that the plane was not approved for operating the flight, according to sources.

An apparent lapse in updating the list of requirements for the operation of flights to Canada resulted in the situation, where a wrong aircraft was deployed for the particular service, sources said.

Without providing specific details, Air India, in a statement on Friday, said the aircraft had landed safely at the

Delhi airport.

The flight was operated with Boeing 777-200 LR aircraft VT-AEI and was airborne for over seven hours. The plane turned back to Delhi when it was in the Chinese airspace, according to information available on the flight tracking website Flightradar24.com.

Sources said the flight should have been operated only with a Boeing 777-300 ER aircraft, and there was no approval for flying the Boeing 777-200 LR plane.

There are various approvals required for operating flights to foreign destinations, and those depend on each country.

Meanwhile, Air India also said the flight departed for Vancouver with the passengers on Friday morning.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

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Airlines warn of fare hike over 60% seat selection move, flag 'overreach'

SHEKHAR SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, MARCH 20

India's leading airlines have opposed the Centre's proposal to mandate that 60 per cent of seats be offered free for selection, raising concerns over when and how the move was introduced, why it could disrupt pricing structures, and what impact it may have on passengers and the aviation sector.

The Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), representing Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, has written to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) after the directive was issued earlier this week, questioning the rationale behind the decision and warning that it could lead to higher airfares across the board.

At present, airlines allow passengers to either pay for preferred seats during web check-in or opt for random allocation at no extra cost. Premium seats, such as those with extra legroom, attract higher charges. The proposed move is expected to shrink a key ancillary revenue stream for airlines.

The letter dated March 19 said imposing a uniform restriction on ancillary revenue undermined commercial flexibility and interfered with market-driven pricing mechanisms. The industry body has underlined that airlines operated on thin margins and relied on ancillary revenues to offset rising operational costs, including fuel, maintenance and airport charges. It has cau-

tioned that any hit to this income stream would have a cascading effect on fares.

The letter said the financial impact of this directive on airlines would be significant, compelling airlines to recover the lost revenues through fare hike. "As a result, all passengers, including those who may not wish to preselect seats, will end up paying higher fares," it further said.

The FIA has argued that while the proposal may appear passenger-friendly at first glance, the broader outcome would be counterproductive. The letter also raised concerns over regulatory overreach, questioning the ministry's direction to the DGCA to act on seat-selection pricing.