



## Corporate Communications Directorate

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BANGLORE MIRROR

BANGLORE

21 FEBRUARY 2026

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### Ganja from Bangkok busted at airport

**B**engaluru Customs officials at Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru intercepted two passengers arriving from Bangkok on February 19 and seized 1.9 kilograms of hydroponic ganja concealed in their cabin baggage. The contraband, estimated to be worth around ₹66.5 lakh in the illegal market, was reportedly hidden inside food packets to avoid detection during routine screening.

Acting on suspicion, officers carried out a detailed examination of the luggage and discovered the narcotic substance carefully packed within food items. Authorities later confirmed on X that the seized material was hydroponic ganja, a high-potency form of cannabis grown using advanced cultivation techniques. The accused have been arrested under NDPS Act and a probe is on.

—BMB

# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## 50 नए एयरपोर्ट से मिलेगा वैश्विक विस्तार: दीपक पीएफटीआई चेयरमैन ने घोषणाओं का स्वागत किया

भास्कर न्यूज | गुरुग्राम

केंद्र सरकार द्वारा अगले पांच वर्षों में देशभर में 50 नए एयरपोर्ट विकसित करने की घोषणा को इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर विस्तार, व्यापार सुगमता और औद्योगिक विकास की दिशा में ऐतिहासिक पहल बताते हुए प्रोग्रेसिव फेडरेशन ऑफ ट्रेड एंड इंडस्ट्री (पीएफटीआई) के चेयरमैन दीपक मैनी ने इसका स्वागत किया है। उन्होंने कहा कि यह पहल केवल परिवहन सुविधा का विस्तार नहीं, बल्कि नए भारत के आत्मविश्वास, विकास और वैश्विक नेतृत्व की ओर बढ़ता हुआ सशक्त कदम है। इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर, बिजनेस और इंडस्ट्री के इस समन्वित विकास मॉडल से भारत निश्चित रूप से विकसित राष्ट्र बनने की दिशा में तेजी से आगे बढ़ेगा। फेडरेशन के चेयरमैन ने

कहा कि वर्तमान में देश में 165 सक्रिय एयरपोर्ट संचालित हैं और औसतन हर 33 दिन में एक नया एयरपोर्ट या टर्मिनल राष्ट्र को समर्पित किया जा रहा है। यह केवल विमानन क्षेत्र का विस्तार नहीं, बल्कि मल्टी सेक्टरल ग्रोथ का मजबूत आधार है, जो लॉजिस्टिक्स, मैन्युफैक्चरिंग, एक्सपोर्ट, पर्यटन, रियल एस्टेट और एमएसएमई सेक्टर को नई गति देगा।

उन्होंने कहा कि 50 नए एयरपोर्ट देश के टियर 2 और टियर 3 शहरों को राष्ट्रीय और वैश्विक बाजारों से जोड़ेंगे। इससे सप्लाई चेन मजबूत होगी, ट्रांसपोर्टेशन कॉस्ट घटेगी और निवेश के अवसर बढ़ेंगे। बेहतर कनेक्टिविटी से उद्योगों के लिए कच्चे माल और तैयार उत्पादों की आवाजाही तेज होगी, जिससे ईज ऑफ डूइंग बिजनेस को ठोस मजबूती मिलेगी।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## सोनपुर एयरपोर्ट मध्य भारत का हब बनेगा: रूडी

पटना | सोनपुर में 4200 एकड़ में एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण होगा। इसका निर्णय कैबिनेट की बैठक में हुआ है। इस संबंध में सांसद राजीव प्रताप रूडी ने कहा कि यह मेरे राजनीतिक जीवन का सबसे बड़ा लक्ष्य था। यह छपरा और पटना ही नहीं, बिहार के लिए बड़ी उपलब्धि होगी। यह मध्य भारत का हब बनेगा और आर्थिक बदलाव का कारण साबित होगा। यह हवाईअड्डा 30 मिलियन आबादी वाला होगा। प्रेसवार्ता में सांसद ने बताया कि ग्रीनफील्ड हवाईअड्डा कई सड़क मार्गों से जुड़ा है। इनमें कई सड़कों का निर्माण अभी शुरू है या होने वाला है। उन्होंने कहा कि एयरपोर्ट की स्वीकृति 2020 में

ही दे दी गई थी। लेकिन टोस नीति बनाने के कारण एयरपोर्ट निर्माण की प्रक्रिया में कुछ देर हुई। राज्य सरकार ने किसानों के हितों के लिए रियल स्टेट द्वारा जमीन की दी जा रही कीमत से पांच गुना अधिक मूल्य तय किया है। इससे किसानों को भी फायदा होगा। एयरपोर्ट निर्माण के बाद यहां एविएशन ट्रेनिंग की संभावना बढ़ेगी। इससे उत्तर-पूर्व भारत, भूटान, नेपाल, पश्चिम बंगाल में आवाजाही आसान होगी। इस एयरपोर्ट से यूरोप, अमेरिका और ऑस्ट्रेलिया तक सीधी कनेक्टिविटी मिलेगी। प्रेसवार्ता में मंत्री संजय टाइगर, विधायक कृष्ण सिंह मंडू, छोटी कुमारी और दानिश इकबाल थे।

## Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

### एयरपोर्ट उद्घाटन की तिथि की घोषणा की लोगों को थी उम्मीद

■ विशाल धर दुवे

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 21 फरवरी (देशबन्धु)। योगी आदित्यनाथ ने शनिवार को जेवर स्थित नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट क्षेत्र के पास आयोजित इंडिया चिप सेमीकंडक्टर यूनिट परियोजना के शिलान्यास कार्यक्रम में हिस्सा लिया। कार्यक्रम में उन्होंने प्रदेश को सेमीकंडक्टर और आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस (एआई) के क्षेत्र में अग्रणी बनाने की प्रतिबद्धता दोहराई। मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि आने वाला समय डेटा, एआई और चिप निर्माण का है और उत्तर प्रदेश इस दिशा में तेजी से आगे बढ़ रहा है। उन्होंने अपने संबोधन में बताया कि चिप निर्माण से न केवल इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स उद्योग को बढ़ावा मिलेगा, बल्कि युवाओं के लिए बड़े पैमाने पर रोजगार के अवसर भी सृजित होंगे।

एआई तकनीक के उपयोग से स्वास्थ्य, शिक्षा, कृषि और प्रशासनिक कार्यों में पारदर्शिता और दक्षता बढ़ेगी। मुख्यमंत्री ने कहा कि प्रदेश सरकार उद्योगों के लिए बेहतर बुनियादी ढांचा और अनुकूल निवेश वातावरण तैयार कर रही है, जिससे वैश्विक कंपनियां उत्तर



जेवर  
एयरपोर्ट के  
शुभारम्भ से जेवर क्षेत्र  
में विकास की गति  
होगी तेज

प्रदेश की ओर आकर्षित हो रही हैं।

जेवर विधायक धीरेन्द्र सिंह मुख्यमंत्री को तेजी से बढ़ रहा है जेवर का मोमेंट भेंट किया तो कार्यक्रम में शामिल जनता ने खूब तालियां बजायी और जिन्दाबाद के नारे भी लगाए।

हालांकि, कार्यक्रम में मौजूद लोगों को उम्मीद थी कि मुख्यमंत्री नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के उद्घाटन की संभावित तारीख की घोषणा भी करेंगे, लेकिन अपने संबोधन में उन्होंने एयरपोर्ट के उद्घाटन को लेकर कोई स्पष्ट उल्लेख

नहीं किया। इसको लेकर कार्यक्रम में शामिल उद्योग प्रतिनिधियों और स्थानीय लोगों के बीच चर्चा का विषय बना रहा। गौरतलब है कि जेवर क्षेत्र में विकसित हो रहा नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट प्रदेश की महत्वाकांक्षी परियोजनाओं में से एक है, जिससे क्षेत्रीय विकास को नई गति मिलने की उम्मीद जताई जा रही है।



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**AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA**

# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK NAVAJYOTI

JAIPUR

20 FEBRUARY 2026

## जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर 4 उड़ानें रद्द, यात्री परेशान

जयपुर। जयपुर एयरपोर्ट से इन दिनों विमान संचालन तय समय पर नहीं हो पा रहा है। गुरुवार सुबह एक के बाद एक चार उड़ानें रद्द होने से यात्रियों को भारी परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा। संचालन कारणों का हवाला देते हुए इंडिगो एयरलाइन ने चंडीगढ़ और देहरादून के लिए जाने वाली फ्लाइट्स रद्द कीं। जानकारी के अनुसार सुबह 5.50 बजे इंडिगो की चंडीगढ़ फ्लाइट रद्द हुई। इसके बाद सुबह 8.25 बजे देहरादून जाने वाली, सुबह 9.45 बजे चंडीगढ़ और दोपहर 1.45 बजे निर्धारित चंडीगढ़ फ्लाइट का संचालन रद्द रहा। एयरलाइन सूत्रों के अनुसार विमानों की अनुपलब्धता को उड़ानें रद्द होने का मुख्य कारण माना जा रहा है।

# KUMBH COUNTDOWN | New terminal, 24 counters, ring road planned before 2027 Kumbh Mela Nashik airport gets ₹572 crore boost

FPJ News Network

NASHIK

Preparations for the Simhashta Kumbh Mela 2027 have gathered pace with the state government initiating a major expansion of Ozar (Nashik) Airport, including a new integrated terminal and tripling of passenger handling capacity. The project, estimated at Rs572 crore, is expected to be completed with testing and trial operations by March 2027.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis recently laid the foundation stone for the terminal project. The entire cost will be borne by the state government. Officials said the estimated cost of Rs572 crore may rise to Rs640 crore. The upgraded airport is expected to operate at full capacity ahead of the Kumbh Mela.

The new integrated terminal will cover around 18,250 square metres and focus on passenger comfort and operational efficiency. The current handling capacity of 300 pas-

Representative image



sengers per hour will increase to 1,000 passengers per hour after expansion. A total of 24 check-in counters will be installed to expedite the process. An aerobridge will allow passengers to board aircraft directly from the terminal without walking on the tarmac. Modern security screening systems and faster baggage handling carousels will be introduced. The apron area

will expand to 1,15,000 square metres, and aircraft parking bays will increase from six to 12. A proposal to construct a parallel runway is also under discussion with technical assistance from Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.

In addition to the airport upgrade, a 66.15km-long outer ring road is being constructed to ease traffic congestion in the city. The Maharashtra State

Infrastructure Development Corporation is implementing the project at a cost of Rs7,922 crore. Around 386 hectares of land will be acquired from 25 villages. An amount of Rs3,659.47 crore will be spent on land acquisition, while the civil construction cost will be borne by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

Kumbh Mela Authority Commissioner Shekhar Singh

said, "Discussions are ongoing with the farmers. Appropriate compensation will be given as per government rules. This road will be important in facilitating traffic management in the city during the Kumbh Mela."

Lakhs of devotees from across the country and abroad are expected to attend the Simhashta Kumbh Mela. Officials said existing airport

infrastructure may prove inadequate to handle the surge in passenger traffic. The state government aims to develop Nashik into an international-class religious tourism centre through the airport expansion and ring road project. Once completed, the projects are expected to provide significant convenience to residents and visiting devotees during the Kumbh Mela and thereafter.

### Airport expansion and new facilities

- New integrated terminal:** A new terminal with an area of about 18,250 sq m is to be built.
- Passenger capacity:** Currently, passenger handling capacity will increase to 1,000 per hour from current 300.
- Check-in counters:** 24 check-in counters will be installed, which will speed up the check-in process.
- Aerobridge:** Passengers will be able to board the aircraft directly from the terminal.
- Security and baggage:** Modern security screening systems and fast baggage handling carousel will be installed.
- Apron expansion:** The apron area will be increased to 1,15,000 sq m. The aircraft parking bays will increase from 6 to 12.
- Parallel runway:** A proposal to build a parallel runway is under discussion with the technical assistance of HAL.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

INDIAN EXPRESS

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

# Cab bookings to restaurant recommendations: Trial run of AI robot begins at Pune airport

Shubham Kurale  
Pune, February 21

FLYERS ARRIVING at Pune Airport this week may find themselves getting directions from a humanoid robot. Spaceo M1, an AI-powered robot developed by Pune-based Muks Robotics, has begun an 8- to 10-day trial run at the airport, marking the first deployment of its kind at Pune airport.

The robot is currently stationed on the arrival side of the terminal, helping travellers with basic queries, from tourist attractions in Pune to cab bookings and restaurant recommendations.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Dr Mukesh Bangar, founder and CEO, Muks Robotics, said the robot is designed to be socially interactive and can perform over 35 tasks independently.

"It can provide real-time flight information, announce



Passengers interact with Spaceo M1 at the Pune airport. EXPRESS

gate changes, guide passengers to check-in counters, boarding gates, washrooms, and other airport facilities. If a passenger scans their ticket's QR code, the robot can instantly display the boarding gate number, provided it has been integrated with live flight schedule data, which is part of the plan," Bangar explained.

What sets Spaceo M1 apart from standard kiosks or screens is its ability to move. "Being

wheel-based, it can navigate flat surfaces autonomously and, if a passenger needs more than just directions, it can physically walk alongside them to the destination," Bangar said.

"The robot also carries luggage, up to 60 kg, and has sensors to detect suspicious activity, making it potentially useful not just for passenger assistance but also for basic security monitoring," he added.

For international travellers or

non-natives, the language barrier is another problem Spaceo M1 addresses. "It supports over 85 languages, including Hindi, English, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu, among others, and can communicate easily across all of them," Bangar stated.

The current testing phase, which began on Friday, is focused on assessing how the robot handles the airport environment, crowds, different spaces, and varying levels of footfall. The areas being tested include the entrance, check-in and check-out zones, boarding gates, and baggage claim.

Speaking about the trials, Pune Airport Director Santosh Dhoke said, "A private entity had approached us for testing the robot with passenger assistance services. We have granted them permission for testing for 8-10 days. They will monitor its performance, passenger response, and technical capabilities."

If the trials go well, there are

plans to integrate the robot into airport operations. Bangar said, "At least three such robots would be needed to cover an airport the size of Pune's."

Moreover, in the first week of March, Spaceo M1 is expected to be put on trial at the Pune Metro's Civil Court station. There are also plans to deploy it at the Navi Mumbai International Airport near Nerul.

Bipedal model

One limitation of the current model is that it is wheel-based, which means it can only operate on flat, unobstructed surfaces. Multi-floor navigation, taking a lift, for instance, is not yet possible.

But Muks Robotics is working on a bipedal locomotion model that would allow the robot to move on two legs, similar to a human, and handle different floors independently. "We are hopeful this version will be ready by the end of 2026," said Bangar.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLANIUM POST

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## Navi Mumbai airport launches DigiYatra at its facility

**MUMBAI:** Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) has announced the launch of DigiYatra at its facility, nearly two months after the commencement of commercial operations.

NMIA digitally joined the Civil Aviation Ministry's nationwide DigiYatra rollout alongside five other airports across the country, the private airport operator said in a statement on Friday.

The inauguration was conducted remotely, with the proceedings streamed live inside the terminal for visiting passengers, it said, adding that to mark the occasion, three passengers ceremonially used the DigiYatra e-gates and performed a ribbon-cutting at the biometric entry points.

DigiYatra leverages facial recognition technology to enable contactless and paperless passenger processing at airport checkpoints, reducing wait times while incorporating robust data privacy and security safeguards, NMIA said. #1

## Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLANIUM POST

KOLKATA

21 FEBRUARY 2026

# App-based cab drivers allege harassment by local operators at Bagdogra Airport

### OUR CORRESPONDENT

**SILIGURI:** Tension surfaced at Bagdogra Airport after online app-based cab drivers alleged harassment and obstruction by local transport operators in the airport area. The aggrieved drivers have approached the administration seeking immediate intervention and have warned of launching a hunger strike if the issue is not resolved promptly.

According to the drivers, passengers today increasingly rely on government-backed platforms such as the Yatri Sathi application, along with various private ride-booking apps, to book cabs conveniently. However, they



**App-based cab drivers approached the administration with their grievances**

### App cab drivers seek intervention by authorities

allege that local drivers operating in and around the airport are preventing app-based cab drivers from picking up passengers.

The cab drivers claim that they are often stopped from entering the airport premises to pick and drop off passengers. In some instances, passengers are also allegedly forced to get down from booked vehicles.

Protesting against the alleged harassment, members of the All Bengal Trinamool

Cab Drivers and Operators Union submitted memorandums to the Siliguri Police Commissionerate and the Siliguri Sub-Divisional Officer's office on Friday, demanding administrative intervention.

Mrinal Barman, secretary of the union, stated that the situation has persisted for nearly 15 days. "Local drivers are assaulting app-based cab drivers. This cannot be tolerated. We are demanding immediate action from the administration," he said.

The union has warned that if swift steps are not taken to ensure the safety and operational rights of online cab drivers, its members will resort to a hunger strike in the coming days.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

# TN govt to firm up road connectivity to proposed Parandur Greenfield Airport

C SHIVAKUMAR @ Chennai

THE Tamil Nadu government has begun preparatory works to firm up road connectivity to the proposed Parandur Greenfield Airport by identifying two priority corridors to link the new aviation hub with Chennai and key industrial belts, according to sources.

The first project involves widening of the existing Pallur-Sogandi Road, a major district road, over a length of 23.8 km. The corridor is proposed to be developed with a 60m right of way, including a 9.2-km rerouted stretch skirting the boundary of the proposed airport.



Officials have suggested a four-lane carriageway with service roads on either side, with some flexibility on the rerouted portion to reduce land requirements. Additionally, a section of State Highway 58 be-

tween the expressway interchange and the Pallur-Sogandi Road is also proposed to be widened to handle the anticipated spike in traffic volume.

The second corridor is a new greenfield link from the Oradadam-Cheyyar Industrial Corridor (OCIC) to the airport, aimed at providing direct access from south Chennai and the GST Road. The 30.7-km route would run from Singaperumal Koil to Parandur via SH 58, the Chennai Peripheral Ring Road, and the Mannivakkam-OCIC stretch. The proposal envisages a four-lane carriageway with grade-separated entry and exit ramps.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

21 FEBRUARY 2026

# AI, AI Express to shift domestic operations to T2 from March 29

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Ahmedabad:** The domestic operations of Air India and Air India Express are likely to shift to Terminal 2 (T2) of the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad from March 29, sources privy to the development said.

The change coincides with the rollout of the summer schedule to be implemented by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. The shift comes after the completion of infrastructure upgrades at T2. In April 2023, Air India had temporarily moved its domestic services to Terminal 1 (T1). The two airlines combined operate 38 domestic flights, including arrivals and departures.

Airport sources indicated that the consolidation was expected to ease passenger movement and improve



operational efficiency, particularly as traffic builds up during the peak summer travel period.

“With upgraded facilities now ready at T2, authorities are looking to optimise terminal usage and reduce congestion across the airport. T2 has recently undergone major upgrades, including additional check-in counters, improved transit flow within the terminal, and expanded food courts, among

other enhancements. A new domestic lounge is also set to become operational soon,” said a source familiar with the development.

While Air India is the first to formally confirm the shift, more airlines are likely to move select domestic operations to T2 in the coming months as part of broader terminal rationalisation plans. Sources said the airport operator is in talks with other airlines.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

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TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

21 FEBRUARY 2026

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### Low-cost airport food outlet Udaan Yatri Café opens at T2

**Mumbai:** Udaan Yatri Café, the low-cost airport food outlet offering refreshments and snacks at prices ranging from Rs 10 to Rs 20, was inaugurated at Mumbai airport Terminal 2 on Friday.

The cage, e-inaugurated by civil aviation minister Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, is located in the check-in area between gates 1 and 2 at departures, said Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL). The menu covers beverages and eatables including tea, coffee, bottled water, snacks and desserts. While a bottle of water and tea are priced at Rs 10, the other items including coffee, samosa and 'sweet of the day' are priced at Rs 20.

The first Udaan Yatri Café was inaugurated at Kolkata airport in Dec 2024. Currently, these low-cost cafes are operational at other airports as well which include Chennai, Pune, Bhubaneswar, Ahmedabad, and Vijaywada. The Udaan Yatri Café aims to provide quality food at accessible prices, making airport dining more affordable for passengers, said MIAL. TNN

## Corporate Communications Directorate

TRIBUNE

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

# Govt releases ₹500 cr more for Kangra airport expansion

150 hectares already acquired for the project, affecting 942 families

**KULWINDER SANDHU**

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**DHARAMSALA, FEBRUARY 21**

The state government has released a fresh installment of Rs 500 crore for the expansion of the Gaggal airport in Kangra district. With this, the local administration has received a total of Rs 1,960 crore to speed up land acquisition for the airport's expansion. Deputy Commissioner, Kangra, Hemraj Bairwa said that more than Rs 1,500 crore had already been transferred as compensation directly to the bank accounts of the families whose land had been acquired for the airport project.

He said that 150 hectares had been acquired for the airport's expansion project, affecting 942 families of the area. "With additional Rs 500 crore released recently, the process of the disbursement of compensation has now been expedited," he added.

Bairwa said that the total

### RUNWAY TO BE EXPANDED TO 3,010 METRES

After the airport's expansion, the runway will be extended to 3,010 metres, enabling the operation of larger aircraft with over 180 seats, including Airbus A320 and Boeing 737

compensation requirement was expected to reach around Rs 2,500 crore. However, for the time being, Rs 1,960 crore was sufficient for the acquisition of land. He added that a few cases were pending due to intra-family ownership disputes, partition issues and ongoing court cases.

Another installment of Rs 500 crore would be required only after the resolution of such personal disputes and legal proceedings, he added. "I assure that payments in these cases will be processed immediately upon the completion of legal formalities, which may take some time," he said.

He, however, clarified that the administration would proceed with the acquisition of this 'disputed land' even if compensation remained

pending due to legal issues.

Bairwa said that the district administration had set March 31 as the deadline for the transfer of the acquired land to the Airports Authority of India. "We have completed all legal formalities. Notices under Section 19 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, have been issued," he added.

At present, the airport has a runway of 1,376 metres, which restricts operations to smaller aircraft such as ATR-72 having a seating capacity of 70 to 80 passengers. Due to this limitation, airfares are often high and services are sometimes disrupted during adverse weather conditions.

After the airport's expan-

sion, the runway will be extended to 3,010 metres, enabling the operation of larger aircraft with over 180 seats, including Airbus A320 and Boeing 737.

The upgraded infrastructure was expected to significantly enhance operational efficiency and passenger capacity. It was likely to facilitate direct air connectivity between Kangra and major metropolitan cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai. The airport's expansion was also projected to substantially increase tourist inflow, benefiting the hospitality sector and allied industries in the region.

Bairwa said that modern navigation and landing systems would be installed after the expansion of the airport. The introduction of a night landing facility would enable round-the-clock operations and ensure safer landings even during heavy rain, fog and other challenging weather conditions.



**भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण**  
**AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA**

# Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## रोहित पवार ने की उड़डयन मंत्री को हटाने की मांग, पीएम को खत

नई दिल्ली। एनसीपी-एसपी विधायक रोहित पवार ने शनिवार को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को पत्र लिखकर नागरिक उड़डयन मंत्री के. राममोहन नायडू को पद से हटाने और हाल में हुए विमान हादसे की स्वतंत्र जांच कराने की मांग की।

### अजीत पवार विमान हादसे की स्वतंत्र जांच की उठाई मांग

रोहित पवार ने आरोप लगाया कि पिछले महीने बारामती में हुए विमान हादसे के पीछे साजिश हो सकती है। उन्होंने कहा कि इस

मामले में एयर चार्टर कंपनी वीएसआर की भूमिका और उसके राजनीतिक संबंधों की निष्पक्ष जांच होनी चाहिए। हादसे में महाराष्ट्र के उपमुख्यमंत्री अजीत पवार और चार अन्य लोगों की मौत हो गई थी। पत्र की प्रति गृह मंत्री अमित शाह को भी भेजी गई है। रोहित पवार ने कहा कि वीएसआर और संबंधित पक्षों के संभावित संबंधों की जांच स्वतंत्र प्राधिकरण से कराए। ब्यूरो

## Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

20 FEBRUARY 2026

# इंडिगो की चंडीगढ़ और देहरादून की चार उड़ानें रद्द, क्योंकि एयरक्राफ्ट ही नहीं मिले

भास्कर न्यूज़ | जयपुर

एयरपोर्ट पर गुरुवार सुबह इंडिगो एयरलाइन के फ्लाइट संचालन गड़बड़ाने से यात्रियों को परेशानियों का सामना करना पड़ा। जयपुर से चंडीगढ़ और देहरादून जाने वाली 4 फ्लाइट्स को एयरलाइन ने एनवक्त पर रद्द कर दिया। एयरलाइन ने फ्लाइट कैन्सिलेशन के लिए संचालन कारणों का हवाला दिया, जबकि सूत्रों की मानें तो सभी फ्लाइट्स एयरक्राफ्ट उपलब्ध नहीं होने से रद्द की गईं। बता दें कि दिसंबर माह में इंडिगो एयरलाइन ने अकेले जयपुर से 50 फ्लाइट रद्द की थीं। जनवरी में भी करीब 12 फ्लाइट रद्द रहीं।

दिसंबर में 50 और जनवरी में 12 फ्लाइट रद्द



**यात्रियों का आरोप-देरी से मिली सूचना**  
फ्लाइट रद्द होने से 250 से अधिक यात्री परेशान हुए। सबसे अधिक परेशानी उन यात्रियों को हुई, जो कनेक्टिंग फ्लाइट और पारिवारिक कार्यक्रमों के लिए जा रहे थे। जयपुर से चंडीगढ़ जा रहे आदित्य ने बताया कि दोस्त की शादी में जाना था, लेकिन फ्लाइट कैन्सिल के बारे में पहले से कोई जानकारी नहीं दी गई। कई यात्रियों का आरोप है कि उन्हें फ्लाइट रद्द होने की सूचना देर से मिली।

- **अलसुबह 5:50 बजे** जयपुर से चंडीगढ़ जाने वाली फ्लाइट 6ई-7742 रद्द की गई।
- **सुबह 8:25 बजे** देहरादून की फ्लाइट 6ई-7274 को रद्द किया गया।
- **सुबह 9:45 बजे** चंडीगढ़ की फ्लाइट 6ई-7718 नहीं उड़ी।
- **दोपहर 1:45** चंडीगढ़ की दूसरी फ्लाइट रद्द।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

## Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

अजित पवार के भतीजे रोहित पवार का बड़ा आरोप

# प्लेन क्रेश को बड़ी साजिश बताया

दिल्ली में की प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस बोले, विमान में पेट्रोल के डिब्बे रखे गए थे

नई दिल्ली, 21 फरवरी (एजेंसियां)। राष्ट्रवादी कांग्रेस पार्टी (शरद पवार गुट) के विधायक रोहित पवार ने शनिवार को अजित पवार के प्लेन क्रेश पर फिर सवाल उठाए। उन्होंने दिल्ली में एक प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस में स्क्रीन पर डेटा और फोटो दिखाए। उन्होंने कहा कि ब्लैक बॉक्स को लेकर शक जताया जा रहा था। उनके मुताबिक, दुर्घटना के समय सिर्फ एक धमाका नहीं हुआ था, बल्कि



कई धमाके हुए थे। विमान में सामान रखने वाली जगह पर अतिरिक्त पेट्रोल के डिब्बे रखे गए

- विमान दुर्घटना के समय कई धमाके हुए थे
- सभी पहलुओं की गहराई से जांच की मांग

थे, जिससे आग भड़की। सभी पहलुओं की गहराई से जांच होनी चाहिए। उन्होंने कहा कि अगर साजिश की बात करें तो यह दो तरह की हो सकती है, राजनीतिक या व्यावसायिक। रोहित ने आरोप

मोदी और शाह को लिखा पत्र

## उड्डयन मंत्री का मांगा इस्तीफा

रोहित पवार ने पीएम मोदी और गृह मंत्री अमित शाह को लेटर लिखा है। इसमें नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री राम मोहन नायडू के मामले में तुरंत कार्रवाई करने का निवेदन किया है। कंपनी वीएसआर और उनकी पार्टी के बीच संबंधों को लेकर गंभीर सवाल उठे हैं। इन संबंधों की जांच किसी स्वतंत्र और निष्पक्ष एजेंसी से कराई जानी चाहिए।

लगाया है कि अजित पवार प्लेन कंट्रोल करने की कोशिश कर क्रेश के मामले को कुछ लोग रहे हैं।

# Ready for a Water Landing

Shantanu Nandan Sharma

**W**hen Pawan Hans Helicopters Ltd launched India's first seaplane—a Cessna 208 Caravan with eight passenger seats—from Mumbai's Juhu Aerodrome in December 2010, the moment was billed as a James Bond thriller. The ministry of civil aviation's press release did not hold back on the drama. Its opening sentence read: "The seaplane, that has captured the imagination of people, mainly through James Bond movies, has finally arrived in India too."

Fifteen years on, that maiden voyage of the seaplane—christened Jal Hans, with scheduled services introduced in the Andaman Islands—reads less like the dawn of an aviation revolution and more like a prelude to a protracted saga of disappointment. Ambitions stalled, projects faltered and setbacks mounted.

Among the more telling episodes of failures was the dismantling and return of a nine-seater Kodiak seaplane to US a few years ago after two entrepreneurial pilots in Kochi failed to keep their venture afloat.

India's seaplane story has struggled to stay airborne, resembling a Bollywood flop rather than a 007 blockbuster.

But the story may not be over. Seaplanes are back on the policy radar, buoyed by fresh government subsidies for operations and incentives aimed at promoting indigenous manufacturing.

## FLOATING FLEET

Avani Singh, founder and CEO of SkyHop Aviation, confirms to ET that her company is preparing for takeoff, and "in the next few weeks", it will launch seaplane services from Kochi to five islands in Lakshadweep—Agatti, Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Kiltan and Kadmat—using a 19-seater Twin Otter.

"Beyond Lakshadweep, we see strong potential in regional routes across Andhra Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Northeast and other strategic locations," she says.

At 29, Singh—a Wharton MBA, licensed private pilot and daughter of SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh—is unequivocal about the opportunity. "We intend to have a fleet of five to ten aircraft in the next few months," she says, adding that India could soon emerge as the world's most exciting seaplane market. "Over the next five years, the market can absorb 500 seaplanes, provided infrastructure development and regulatory momentum continue."

SkyHop maintains that its seaplane venture is an independent initiative, with no operational linkage to SpiceJet. Fresh hopes of reviving seaplane operations in India were kindled when Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in her recent budget speech, announced the rollout of a viability gap funding (VGF) scheme to support the sector. The proposal also promises incentives aimed at encouraging indigenous manufacturing—a dual push intended to make seaplane services both operationally and economically viable.

VGF, a financial instrument commonly used to support infrastructure projects in public-private partnership (PPP), is designed to bridge the gap for ventures that

are socially, economically and strategically important but financially unviable on their own. In sectors such as roads and ports, VGF grants can cover up to 40% of project costs. The precise contours of support for seaplane operations have yet to be detailed.

## ISLAND HOPPER

"India is made for seaplanes," says Manish Sharma, partner and leader—infrastructure, transport and logistics at PwC India. With an 11,000 km coastline, numerous islands and remote routes where building runways is prohibitively expensive, seaplanes could be transformative, he argues. "They can turn four-hour ferry rides into 30-minute flights, boost tourism and enable rapid medical evacuation and disaster response. UDAN demand is proven, and countries like the Maldives show that the model works." UDAN is the government's regional connectivity scheme, Ude



Desh Ka Aam Nagrik.

Sharma cautions that execution will be key. Among the priorities he outlines are a 10-year national mission, focus on a handful of high-potential corridors, calibrated tapering of subsidies, single-window clearances, community buy-in, standardised aircraft platforms and seamless integration with airlines and other modes of transport.

The benchmark is not far away. The Maldives operates more than five dozen seaplanes, ferrying tourists almost to the doorsteps of luxury resorts—a vivid demonstration of what a well-oiled ecosystem can achieve.

A seaplane called DHC-6 Twin Otter currently dominates the global commercial seaplane market, accounting for nearly 90% of the active fleet. Manufactured by De Havilland Canada, headquartered in Alberta, the twin-engine, 19-seater aircraft has become the industry's workhorse. A Twin Otter costs around \$8 million, but pre-owned aircraft are available for less than half that amount.

"The Twin Otter is not a new or experimental platform—it is a mature, proven aircraft with decades of safe operations worldwide," says Yogesh Garg, vice-president, sales—Asia Pacific and Middle East, De Havilland Canada. He adds that the aircraft that SkyHop has leased for its maiden flight—a landplane converted to amphibian aircraft—is best suited for island connectivity. "It's safe, reliable and economically viable," says Garg.

## MAKE IN INDIA?

The larger question now is whether the Canadian

## INDIA'S SEAPLANE JOURNEY

### 2010

- Jal Hans launched by Pawan Hans
- India's first commercial seaplane service begins
- Initial trial in Mumbai

### 2011-2019

- Multiple trials and short-lived operations in Maharashtra, Kerala, Goa, Andamans

### 2020

- Ahmedabad (Sabarmati)-Kevadia route launched
- Operations continue between October 2020 and April 2021

### 2021

- Sagarmala Seaplane Services announced
- 25 water aerodromes identified

### 2024

- 32 routes awarded, but zero operational routes

### 2026

- Kochi-Lakshadweep services expected soon
- Destinations: Agatti, Kavaratti, Kalpeni, Kiltan, Kadmat
- 19-seater DHC-6 Twin Otter to be deployed

Source: Ministry of Civil Aviation, Lok Sabha, news reports

**To enhance last-mile and remote connectivity, and promote tourism, I propose to give incentives to indigenise manufacturing of seaplanes. A Seaplane VGF Scheme will also be introduced to provide support for operations"**

**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN,**  
Finance Minister, in her budget speech on February 1



manufacturer will respond to the finance minister's push for indigenous production by shifting part of its manufacturing base to India.

"De Havilland Canada is always evaluating opportunities for supply chain partners both in Canada and around the world," says Garg. "Manufacturing in jurisdictions that support our products is always something we consider when making investments."

That said, he tempers expectations. "We do not comment on potential government policy," he adds, while replying to a specific query on the budget announcements related to incentives for indigenous manufacturing of seaplanes.

The company estimates that India can comfortably absorb 50-70 seaplanes over the next decade. This assessment, Garg elaborates, is based on awarded and proposed seaplane routes, strong interest from multiple state governments, island connectivity requirements, tourism, et al. "Once passengers experience the time saved, accessibility and convenience, demand tends to accelerate very quickly."

Over the years, seaplanes have made fleet-ing appearances across India—undertaking trials, and in some cases operating briefly in Maharashtra, the Andaman Islands, Kerala and Goa, and most notably in 2020 and 2021 on the Ahmedabad-Kevadia route, linking the Sabarmati riverfront with the Statue of Unity in Gujarat. Each experiment generated headlines, but none endured.

In early 2021, the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways attempted a more structured push, launching what it termed the Sagarmala Seaplane Services under the Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL). The blueprint was ambitious. Proposed destinations spanned the Andaman and Lakshadweep islands, the Guwahati riverfront and Umrangso reservoir in Assam, the Yamuna riverfront, Tehri, Chandigarh and tourist hubs such as Shirdi and Lonavala, among others.

The initiative was later aligned with UDAN, in an effort to integrate seaplanes into the broader aviation ecosystem. On paper, progress appeared tangible. In a written reply in the Lok Sabha in July last year, the government said 32 seaplane routes had been awarded, connecting 25 water aerodromes across the country.

Yet the same reply carried a telling admission: "Currently, there are no operational seaplane routes."

Two years ago, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) revised the regulatory framework governing seaplane operations, easing training requirements and streamlining approval processes in a bid

**In the next few weeks, we will launch seaplane services from Kochi to five islands in Lakshadweep.**

**Beyond Lakshadweep, we see strong potential in regional routes across Andhra Pradesh, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Northeast and other strategic locations. We intend to have a fleet of 5-10 aircraft in the next few months"**

**— AVANI SINGH,**  
Founder and CEO, SkyHop Aviation

**The Twin Otter is not a new or experimental platform—it is a mature, proven aircraft with decades of safe operations worldwide. Manufacturing (seaplanes) in jurisdictions that support our products is always something we consider when making investments"**

**— YOGESH GARG,**  
Vice-President, Sales, Asia Pacific and Middle East, De Havilland Canada



to give the segment fresh momentum. The government has also recalibrated its infrastructure strategy. Instead of investing heavily in full-fledged water aerodromes, it is opting for more economical and quicker-to-deploy floating jetties.

These modular docks, anchored on rivers, lakes and coastal stretches, rise and fall with changing water levels, offering operational flexibility at a fraction of the cost of a water aerodrome. In Lakshadweep, basic portacabins are being installed to handle security checks and baggage handling—a minimalist approach designed to accelerate rollout without waiting for elaborate terminals.

But infrastructure is only one piece of the puzzle. An equally pressing question is the availability of trained pilots—and, inevitably, concerns around safety. "Since

seaplanes are new to India, the country currently has a very limited pool of pilots qualified to operate them," says Singh of SkyHop Aviation.

## WATER TEST

To bridge the gap, she says, the airline's cockpit crew will be a mix of seasoned international pilots and Indian aviators undergoing specialised seaplane training. "Building local pilot capability will be just as important as inducting aircraft as the segment evolves," adds Singh, underscoring that human capital, no less than hardware, will determine how soon India's seaplane push finally takes flight.

Beyond tourism and regional connectivity, the creation of a seaplane ecosystem could carry strategic dividends. Pawan Khatter, partner and national aerospace & defence leader at EY India, argues that the segment has meaningful military spillovers.

"In military applications, seaplanes support expedited maritime reconnaissance, anti-submarine operations and amphibious missions, aligning with India's maritime security imperatives amid geopolitical dynamics," he says.

Khatter adds that the budget's proposed incentives may also nudge manufacturers to consider setting up seaplane assembly or production facilities in India. Localised manufacturing, he suggests, could lower costs by 20-30% while fostering technology partnerships and joint ventures with global aircraft makers—strengthening both the civil and defence aerospace ecosystems in the process.

The immediate headline, however, is unlikely to be global seaplane manufacturers relocating their assembly lines to India. If the government's current push gathers traction, the more tangible near-term story will unfold much closer to the water—on the Kochi-Lakshadweep route.

There, seaplanes could soon ferry domestic and international tourists across the Arabian Sea, descending on crystal-clear turquoise lagoons. Passengers would step off on a floating jetty, retrieve their bags from a portacabin on the beach and head straight to their island resorts—bypassing long ferry rides and cumbersome transfers.

India's seaplane story must prove itself not in factories or policy papers, but in the quiet magic of touching down on water. After years of false starts and grounded ambitions, what it needs are Bond-worthy splashdowns, day in, day out—a dependable, everyday service.

shantanu.sharma@timesofindia.com



CREDIT: DE HAVILLAND CANADA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## New wedding edict: Band, bajaa, baraat & Bombardier

Private jet use rising as wedding budgets touch sky

VAISHALI DAR  
New Delhi, February 21

INDIA'S EVER-expanding wedding economy, estimated at over \$75 billion, luxury has long been the norm. Private wedding charters are now becoming the newest status symbol for ultra-elite families planning destination wed-

dings in India.

The recent Mantena and Vamsi Gadiraju wedding in Udaipur, with an estimated 600 guests from over 40 countries, saw many flown in on specially arranged private charters. The Ambani family in 2024 also chartered a fleet of over 100 private planes for their son Anant Ambani's wedding.

The Indian Air Charter Services Market report from Market Research Future projects the air charter-services market is projected to grow from \$3348 million in 2025 to \$5891 million by 2035,

### WEDDING WINGS

Operators report a 25% year-on-year rise in bookings

Key demand from Udaipur, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Agra, Goa and Lakshadweep

Charters are being used for helicopter entries, flying in guest lists & in-air proposals



exhibiting a CAGR of 5.81% during the forecast period 2025-2035.

Luxury operators feel wed-

dings have emerged as one of the fastest-growing contributors, driven by both HNIs and aspirational consumers willing

to splurge for a once-in-a-lifetime event.

As per Kotak Private Luxury Index released in December,

India's luxury market heads toward an estimated \$85 billion by 2030.

Private jet operator owner Santosh Sharma, founder and chief executive officer of Foresee Aviation and BookMyJet, confirmed that the company has already completed eight wedding charters this year and expects 10-12 more movements, with four already confirmed in the coming months.

"The demand in 2025 was almost 25% higher than the previous year.

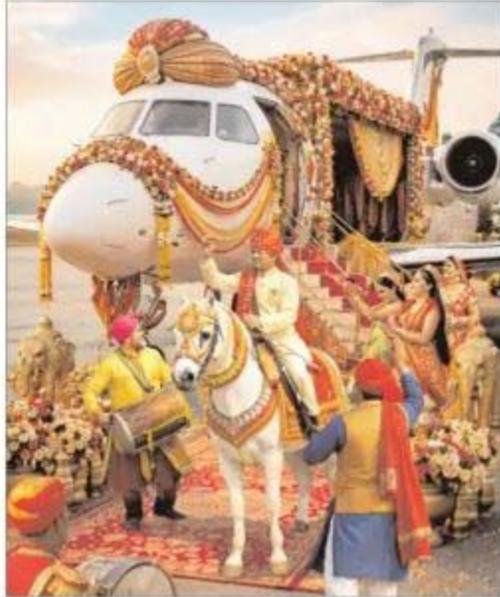
Continued on Page 2

## Band, bajaa, baraat and Bombardier

INDIAN WEDDINGS HAVE now gone from band baaja baraat to Boeing, Bombardier, and Bell helicopters," said Sharma.

The big demand pockets come from Udaipur, Agra, Jaipur, Jaisalmer, Goa and Lakshadweep for services like helicopter entries and in-air proposals, with the spending spectrum expanding, said Sharma. Helicopter entries cost between ₹1.5 lakh and ₹5 lakh, private jets range from ₹2.5 lakh to ₹6 lakh per hour respectively, and engagement or proposal flights, with décor and catering, cost ₹3 lakh to ₹10 lakh for 1-2 hours. "For many affluent families, it's no longer about flying just the bride and groom. Entire guest lists, sometimes 50 to 150 people, are being ferried across cities on multiple charters," said Sharma.

Luxury charter plane operators like Rajan Mehra, CEO, Club One Air, who had deployed 10-15 jets for the Mantena wedding in Udaipur, said that there is a niche demand for 10-15 seaters. "For a wedding, over 98% people prefer larger planes with 40-50 capacity



to fly in one go but there are only a handful of families who opt for 14-15 seaters. This chunk of business, however, is promising. With such high-profile weddings happening at least once every year, we are hopeful of great wedding business in the future,"

Mehra told FE.

The 2025 wedding report by WedMeGood suggests over 60% of weddings are estimated for over ₹1 crore and are destination weddings. "Weddings are becoming more experiential and the experience of a private chartered flight sig-

nals the ultimate status symbol while offering privacy, as well as flexibility of departure times," said Mehak Shahani, co-founder of WedMeGood.

Travel portal EaseMyTrip offers experiential in-flight services, but only on a customised, on-request basis, with "mehendi on air" and other curated experiences. They have seen 10-15% rise this year, while an overall destination wedding market has grown around 20-25%. "This rise is an encouraging move towards private aircraft for group travel.

Families look for travel options that reflect exclusivity and comfort during destination celebrations. Dedicated terminals and personalised onboard services add to the appeal, creating an experience that feels intimate and well managed. These features are turning private charters into a mark of distinction," said Rikant Pittie, CEO & co-founder of EaseMyTrip. Founder and

CEO Kanika Tekriwal of private charter company JetSetGo said wedding-related charters remain a very small portion of the private aviation market. However, last year, JetSetGo flew over 35 flying hours of wedding-related movements, largely due to the wedding in the Ambani family circle. "This year, the demand is steady and the number is nearly half at around 15 hours,

which is not a slowdown, but a return to typical levels. So year-on-year growth does not reflect an industry trend for us, it depends on the scale of individual events in a particular season," said Tekriwal, who receives 200-300 queries a year for weddings.

A Ministry of Civil Aviation 2024 report states 119 non-scheduled operators holding air operator permit (AOP) were endorsed with 427 aircrafts for undertaking non-scheduled air transport services (air charter or private jets).

Helicopter entries cost ₹1.5 lakh to ₹5 lakh, private jets ₹2.5 lakh to ₹6 lakh per hour



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# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## अदाणी-एम्ब्रेयर भारत में तैयार करेंगे यात्री विमान



नई दिल्ली, एजेंसी। अदाणी डिफेंस एंड एयरोस्पेस और ब्राजील की प्रमुख विमान निर्माता कंपनी एम्ब्रेयर ने ई175 क्षेत्रीय जेट विमानों के लिए भारत में फाइनल असेंबली लाइन (एफएएल) स्थापित करने की योजना बनाई है। यानी एम्ब्रेयर के ई175 मॉडल के जेट विमानों को अब भारत में पूरी तरह से तैयार (असेंबल) किया जाएगा।

इस संबंध में दोनों कंपनियों के अधिकारियों ने शनिवार को दिल्ली में ब्राजील के राष्ट्रपति लुइज इनेसियो लुला डासिल्वा और वाणिज्य एवं उद्योग मंत्री पीयूष गोयल की मीडिया में एमओयू पर हस्ताक्षर किया है।

ई175 विमान में अधिकतम 88 यात्री बैठ सकते हैं और इसे दूसरी एवं तीसरी

### फाइनल असेंबली लाइन में तैयार होता है विमान

विमान के कलपुर्ज अलग-अलग जगहों पर बनते हैं। 'फाइनल असेंबली लाइन' वह जगह होती है जहां इन सभी हिस्सों (पंख, इंजन, बॉडी, कॉकपिट) को एक साथ जोड़कर एक पूरा उड़ान भरने लायक विमान तैयार किया जाता है। अदाणी और एम्ब्रेयर यही करेंगे।

श्रेणी के शहरों के बीच क्षेत्रीय हवाई संपर्क बढ़ाने के लिए तैनात किया जा सकता है। बड़े विमानों द्वारा कम सेवा वाले इन बाजारों में ई175 विमान नए मार्ग, बेहतर संपर्क और विश्वसनीय परिचालन को सक्षम बना सकता है।



## Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

# IndiGo replaces key ops exec after flight disruptions in Dec

**Press Trust of India**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** IndiGo has appointed Captain Rohit Rikhye as the new Head of Operations Control Centre (OCC) in place of Jason Herter, the first rejig at the airline's senior management level after the massive operational disruptions in December last year.

In January, aviation regulator DGCA took various actions against the airline, including imposing penalties totalling ₹22 crore and asking dismissal of a senior vice-president, in relation to the operational disruptions.

In an internal communication on Friday, the airline said Rohit Rikhye has been appointed as the Head of OCC with immediate effect.

**IN JAN, DGCA TOOK VARIOUS ACTIONS AGAINST INDIGO, INCLUDING FINES OF ₹22 CRORE AND ASKING DISMISSAL OF A SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT**

He would report to Chief Operating Officer (COO) Isidre Porqueras.

Rikhye, who has been with the airline for over 11 years, was serving as Chief Pilot — Standards, QA & Ops Safety.

Meanwhile, Herter is moving out of the airline.

According to the communication, Rikhye would lead the OCC, which manages real-time coordination and oversight of

flight operations, including flight planning, tracking, and dispatch, in compliance with regulatory requirements such as air traffic control rules and safety guidelines.

He would also oversee crew scheduling and rostering. I am sure his current and past experience will help him in managing his new role, the communication added.

On January 22, Additional Solicitor General Chetan Sharma appeared on behalf of the civil aviation ministry and DGCA, and submitted that several steps were taken by the authorities in the aftermath of the crisis.

A senior vice-president of the airline was told to be dismissed from service and a penalty of ₹22 crore was also imposed, he had said.



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# Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

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## अजित पवार विमान हादसे पर रोहित पवार की मांग जांच पूरी होने तक नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री को हटाया जाए

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो  
नई दिल्ली, 21 फरवरी।

राकांपा (शरद गुट) के महासचिव एवं विधायक रोहित पवार ने शनिवार को प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी को पत्र लिखकर मांग की कि 28 जनवरी को हुए विमान हादसे की जांच पूरी होने तक नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री के राम मोहन नायडू को केंद्र सरकार से इस्तीफा देने के लिए कहा जाए। उक्त विमान दुर्घटना में महाराष्ट्र के उपमुख्यमंत्री अजित पवार का निधन हो गया था।

कर्जत-जामखेड से विधायक रोहित पवार दिवंगत नेता के भतीजे भी हैं। उन्होंने अपने पत्र में

दावा किया कि दुर्घटनाग्रस्त लियरजेट 45 विमान की मालिक कंपनी वीएसआर और उसके साथ नायडू के संबंधों को लेकर गंभीर सवाल उठ रहे हैं। उन्होंने लिखा कि इसकी जांच एक स्वतंत्र और सक्षम प्राधिकारी द्वारा की जानी चाहिए।

रोहित पवार ने पत्र के जरिए प्रधानमंत्री मोदी से अनुरोध किया कि राम मोहन नायडू को जांच पूरी होने तक अपने पद से इस्तीफा देने के लिए कहा जाए। यह आवश्यक है ताकि इसकी ठीक पड़ताल की जा सके कि वीएसआर के मामले में डीजीसीए किसी भी तरह से प्रभावित तो नहीं हुआ था। उन्होंने विमान दुर्घटना से जुड़े विभिन्न मुद्दों को उजागर करने के लिए कई संवाददाता सम्मेलन किए हैं।



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## Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLANIUM POST

DELHI

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FLAGS VSR-TDP LINKS; WRITES TO PM MODI SEEKING PROBE WITH GLOBAL AGENCIES

# Rohit Pawar seeks Naidu's ouster, independent probe into Ajit Pawar crash

MPOST BUREAU

**NEW DELHI/MUMBAI:** NCP-SP MLA Rohit Pawar on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the ouster of Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu and demanding an independent probe into the plane crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar.

Addressing a press conference, Rohit Pawar alleged that Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash at Baramati last month was caused as part of a conspiracy involving the

### CONSPIRACY CLAIM

- » Addressing a press conference, Rohit Pawar alleged that Ajit Pawar's death in a plane crash at Baramati last month was caused as part of a conspiracy involving the air charter company VSR
- » 'Serious questions have been raised about the company VSR and its links with Rammohan Naidu's party (TDP)'

air charter company VSR.

"Serious questions have been raised about the company VSR and

- » 'These links must be investigated by an independent and competent authority, preferably in collaboration with international agencies'
- » Rohit Pawar, a two-term MLA and nephew of NCP-SP leader Supriya Sule and late NCP leader Ajit Pawar, has been addressing press conferences claiming sabotage in the air crash

its links with Rammohan Naidu's party (TDP). These links must be investigated by an independent and

competent authority, preferably in collaboration with international agencies," Pawar said in the letter, a



copy of which was marked to Home Minister Amit Shah.

Rohit Pawar, a two-term MLA

and nephew of NCP-SP leader Supriya Sule and late NCP leader Ajit Pawar, has been addressing press conferences claiming sabotage in the air crash.

"You have always shown respect for Ajit Dada and his contribution to the country. In this context, I request that Rammohan Naidu be asked to resign from his post," the grandson of NCP-SP chief Sharad Pawar said in his letter.

Pawar said his findings have shown that a set of influential people across industry and politics are involved in VSR.

"This is why we feel this investigation will not happen transparently. I request you to ensure that there is no influence or interference in examining whether the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) was compromised in any manner in relation to VSR," Pawar said.

Ajit Pawar and four others, including two pilots, were killed after the air charter they were travelling in crashed barely 200 metres from the edge of a tabletop runway at Baramati airport in Pune district on January 28. WITH AGENCY INPUTS

# Corporate Communications Directorate

TRIBUNE

DELHI

22 FEBRUARY 2026

## MLA writes to PM, seeks minister's ouster over Ajit Pawar plane crash

**SHEKHAR SINGH**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 21

NCP SP MLA Rohit Pawar on Saturday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking the removal of Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu and an independent probe into the plane crash that killed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on January 28.

In his letter, a copy of which was also sent to Home Minister Amit Shah, Pawar said the fatal crash near Baramati last month was not accidental but part of a conspiracy involving the air charter firm VSR.

The MLA raised questions over alleged links between the company and political figures, saying the matter required a thorough and independent probe, preferably with international collaboration. He said the seriousness of the allegations warranted a probe insulated from any domestic influence.

Pawar, who is the nephew of Ajit Pawar and NCP SP MP Supriya Sule, has in recent days repeatedly claimed sabo-

tage in the crash.

In the letter, he urged the PM to ensure accountability at the highest level, stating that given Ajit Pawar's public life and contributions, the case deserved a transparent and credible investigation. He also pressed for the resignation of Naidu to ensure the inquiry remains free from any perceived conflict of interest.

The MLA claimed that his findings pointed to the involvement of influential individuals across business and political circles in the operations of the charter company. This, he argued, could compromise the fairness of any internal probe.

He also flagged concerns about the role of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), urging that it be examined whether the regulator was compromised in any manner in relation to the company under scrutiny.

Ajit Pawar and four others were killed when the chartered aircraft they were travelling in crashed barely 200 metres short of a tabletop runway at

the Baramati airport in Pune district on January 28.

Meanwhile, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has said a special audit of VSR Ventures, which commenced on February 4, is expected to conclude shortly, even as the technical probe into the accident gathers pace.

The ministry said it had directed the DGCA to carry out a detailed review of the operator's regulatory compliance, operational control systems, maintenance practices, crew training standards, safety management systems and monitoring of cockpit voice recorder (CVR) and flight data recorder (FDR) data.

"The audit findings, once finalised, will be examined under the DGCA's enforcement policy and procedure manual, and action will follow wherever violations are established," the officials had said.

The ministry has also asked the regulator to undertake special audits of other major non-scheduled operators and aerodromes engaged in VIP and VVIP operations.