



Corporate Communications Directorate

GREATER KASHMIR

SRINAGAR

19 DECEMBER 2025

Flight operations inching back to normal at Jammu, Srinagar airports

2 cancellations at Srinagar Airport, none in Jammu on Thursday

Saqib Malik
Srinagar, Dec 18

After 2 weeks of non-stop disruptions, flight operations are inching back to normal at Jammu, Srinagar airports. While two flights were cancelled at the Srinagar airport due to operational reasons, a huge respite from dozens of flight cancellations for the last few days, Jammu airport witnessed smooth operations on Thursday.

As per Srinagar Airport data, of the total 32 scheduled flights, 17 flights were slotted for IndiGo, of which one flight was cancelled. Another flight to get cancelled was that of SpiceJet. The Airport data reveals that there was no delay in flights on Thursday.

Speaking with *Greater Kashmir*, Director, Jammu Airport Devender Yadav said the flight operations at J&K's winter capital were normal, albeit some delays. "For the last 3 to 4 days, we have seen no cancellations. Even today barring few delays, flight operations were quite smooth," said Yadav.

An IndiGo spokesperson said the low-cost carrier operated over 2,200 flights on Thursday. "Operations are fully normalized since 9 December. Having completely

IndiGo operated over 2,200 flights on Thursday across India

The low-cost carrier is flying to all of its 138 operational destinations

Airline is catering to overall 3.5 lakh customers daily

stabilised operations across the network starting December 9 with 1,800 plus flights, IndiGo has been gradually and carefully adding capacity and will be operating over 2,200 flights today, in line with the revised schedule."

"We have been flying to all our 138 operational destinations and maintaining normal on-time performance, as per IndiGo standards. We continue to maintain full integrity of the revised schedule and remain committed to delivering consistently reliable service to over 3.5 lakh customers daily," said the IndiGo spokesperson.

Between December 3 and 18, as many as 110 flights of IndiGo have got cancelled at Srinagar and Jammu, owing to pilots not turning up due to roster issues. In the rest of the country as well, thousands of flights

were cancelled, leaving passengers stranded.

The cancellation and delay of flights due to fog is being seen despite a recent assurance from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) that an enhanced landing system had been put in place at the Srinagar Airport to avoid flight cancellations due to fog.

Notably, at the 14th General Meeting & Tourism Promotion Event of Tourist Trade Interest Guild in Srinagar last month, Javed Anjum, Director, Srinagar International Airport, told reporters that the runway at the airport has been upgraded to the Instrument Landing System Category-2 (ILS-2), which essentially means that even in low visibility, a flight can make landing. Anjum had said the upgradation of the runway was completed in 2024, the results of which were seen even during last winter, "when flights could land in visibility as low as 400 metres."

On last Saturday, a dry run and preparedness exercise was conducted by the AAI, Srinagar International Airport, to assess and ensure operational readiness in view of the forthcoming winter and snow season, with special emphasis on fog and low-visibility contingencies.



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GREATER KASHMIR

SRINAGAR

21 DECEMBER 2025

12 flights cancelled, 10 delayed at Srinagar Airport

2 IndiGo flights cancelled at Jammu Airport

Saqib Malik
Srinagar, Dec 20

The low visibility, coupled with operational issues faced by low-cost carrier IndiGo, led to the cancellation of 12 flights and 10 delays at the Srinagar International Airport on Saturday.

As per the Airports Authority of India (AAI) data, of the total scheduled flights, 10 were to be operated by IndiGo and the rest by Air India.

These flights were scheduled from Jammu, Delhi,

Chandigarh, Amritsar, and Kolkata. The delayed flights included two flights each of Air India Express and Akasa and three each of SpiceJet and IndiGo, airport data revealed.

Last week, a dry run and preparedness exercise was conducted by the AAI, Srinagar International Airport, on Saturday to assess and ensure operational readiness in view of the forthcoming winter and snow season, with special emphasis on fog and low-visibility contingencies.

A Jammu Airport spokesperson said that two IndiGo flights were cancelled on Saturday. Giving flight details, the spokesperson said that

» See 12 flights...onPg-08

12 flights cancelled...

there were 10 flight arrivals and as many departures in the winter capital.

The flights that operated included six of IndiGo, two flights each of Air India Express and SpiceJet.

A total of 1523 passengers arrived while 1433 passengers departed at the Jammu airport on Saturday.



Corporate Communications Directorate

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

21 DECEMBER 2025

कोहरे के चलते दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर 129 उड़ानें रद्द

नई दिल्ली। शनिवार को भी पूरे उत्तर भारत में घना कोहरा छाया रहा जिसके चलते दृश्यता बेहद कम रही। सुबह दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर उड़ान

■ एएआई ने हवाई यात्रियों के लिए जारी की एडवाइजरी

सेवाएं बुरी तरह से प्रभावित हुईं। एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर आज 129 उड़ानें रद्द हुईं, जिनमें कई अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें भी शामिल हैं। ऐसे में एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया ने यात्रियों के लिए एडवाइजरी जारी की है। एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ने कहा है कि कोहरे और

कम दृश्यता के चलते हवाई सेवाओं के संचालन में देरी हो सकती है। ऐसे में यात्रियों को संबंधित एयरलाइंस के संपर्क में रहने और रियल टाइम फ्लाइट अपडेट चेक करने की सलाह दी गई है। राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में कोहरे के चलते सड़क परिवहन भी प्रभावित हुआ है। हवा की गुणवत्ता कई इलाकों में बेहद खराब श्रेणी में दर्ज की गई है। दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर कई उड़ानों में देरी भी हुई है। हालात को देखते हुए दिल्ली का इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डा सीएटी-3 कैटेगरी में संचालित हो रहा है, जिसके तहत विमानों की लैंडिंग और टेक-ऑफ के दौरान विशेष सावधानी बरती जा रही है।

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With India's most congested airport on one side and its newest greenfield airport on the other, Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), which runs both airports, is preparing a phased reset of capacity across the Mumbai region. It involves skimming a few peak-hour flights from Mumbai airport in the coming months, possibly merging the Navi Mumbai airport project's third and fourth phases to build a terminal capacity of 50 million passengers per annum (mppa) by 2030, and thereafter demolishing and rebuilding Mumbai airport's Terminal 1 in Vile Parle to increase capacity.

Navi Mumbai airport opens to passengers on Dec 25, but that doesn't mean flights will move out of the existing airport. Mumbai airport will continue to handle most of its domestic and international flights. "But some will be moved to Navi Mumbai, maybe like those operating at peak times. One or two flights to clip the peak a little bit," said AAHL director Jeet Adani.

Currently, Mumbai airport's single runway works beyond capacity. The main runway is designed to safely handle a maximum of 44 take-offs and landings in 60 minutes. But often during peak hours, air traffic control crosses that safety boundary. For instance, on Dec 12, a total of 52 flights landed on the main runway between 4.30 pm and 5.29 pm, according to Airports Authority of India (AAI) data. Then ten times that day, the runway handled 45 to 60 flights an hour, going beyond its maximum capacity, largely because of heavy charter aircraft movement.

"We don't have to necessarily touch those peaks. Maybe we can spread out the flight schedule a bit more... We don't want to exceed 41-42 flights per hour at Mumbai," said Adani. "Those additional flights we have to compensate somehow. Either they move to a different time (non-peak hours), or the airline starts new routes from Navi Mumbai. You'll likely see all of this getting into effect in the next summer schedule." Summer schedule begins in the last week of March and runs till Oct end, followed by winter schedule, currently on.

The next major step happens at Navi Mumbai airport with the acceleration of the project's long-term plan. "We are thinking of clubbing Navi Mumbai phases III (30 mppa) and IV (20 mppa) together to make it 50 mppa capacity by 2030," he said. "The design work for this phase is under way and construction is planned to start in the coming months."

The timeline of the Navi Mumbai expansion will determine the redevelopment sequence at Mumbai airport. Terminal 1 at Vile Parle will be demolished only after NMA's next terminal is completed so that the Mumbai region does not lose terminal capacity during the transition.

"T1 demolition will happen after T2 Navi Mumbai is built," he said. Currently, Mumbai T1 has a capacity to handle 15 mppa. After it is rebuilt, its capacity will go up to 20 mppa. Navi Mumbai T1, which opens next week, can handle 20 mppa, but it is expected to get saturated before mid-2026. The terminal capacity can be increased by a few million, but the race to get another terminal up and going would have already begun.

Mumbai region's dual-airport system is expected to unlock new domestic and international routes for the region, which has been constrained for a decade by Mumbai airport's single-runway operations.

Navi Mumbai airport to take pressure off overstretched Mum single-runway

Pics: S L Shanth Kumar

WHAT LIMITS AIRPORT CAPACITY EXPANSION

Airport capacity depends on runway capacity and terminal capacity. To add more flights, both must increase together

RUNWAY CAPACITY

Determines how many take-offs and landings per hour are possible

DEPENDS ON:

- > Number of runways
- > Runway layout (parallel vs intersecting)
- > Airspace limitations
- > Aircraft separation norms

TERMINAL CAPACITY

Measures how many passengers can be processed efficiently

INCLUDES:

- > Check-in
- > Security
- > Immigration
- > Boarding
- > Baggage handling



Mumbai Region's Dual-Airport Challenge

Airport	Main bottleneck
Mumbai (CSMIA)	Runway capacity
Navi Mumbai (NMIA)	Terminal capacity

MUMBAI AIRPORT

- > Has cross runways, not parallel ones
- > Only one runway can be used at a time
- > Runway 09-27 handles both arrivals & departures

44

aircraft movements per hour is maximum declared capacity, but often exceeds this limit during peak hours

RESULTS IN:

- > High stress for air traffic controllers
- > Increased pilot workload
- > Chronic congestion

WHY IT CAN'T EXPAND:

- > Hemmed in by surrounding slums
- > No space for a parallel runway

RESULT: Growth severely constrained

NAVI MUMBAI AIRPORT

- > Operations begin Dec 25
- > Starts with one terminal
- > NMIA to go 24x7 by Feb-March, including international flights, with expected strong demand in Mumbai Metropolitan Region

20MN

passengers per year is declared capacity, compared to Mumbai airport's handling of around 55 million passengers per year

EXPECTED CONGESTION:

- > Terminal likely to hit capacity by mid-2026
- > Runway can handle more flights, but the terminal cannot, limiting growth

USER DEVELOPMENT FEE (UDF)

UDF is a fee built into air tickets, collected by airlines for airports. It funds airport maintenance and infrastructure upgrades. Is regulated. Likely to be imposed at NMIA

- > Was introduced in India in 2008-09 after airport privatisation, meant to recover capital and operating costs
- > First levied at Hyderabad and Bengaluru

HOW STEEP? DELHI (Per passenger)

	DOMESTIC	ARRIVING
DEPARTING	₹129	₹56
INTERNATIONAL		
Economy	₹650	₹275
Business	₹810	₹345





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THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

21 DECEMBER 2025

No proposal received for 2nd airport: Centre

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: The Centre has not received any proposal under the Greenfield Airports (GFA) policy, either from Karnataka govt or any developer, for a second airport in Bengaluru following the recent pre-feasibility studies of three potential sites, according to the civil aviation ministry.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) had conducted the studies a couple of months ago and sent the report to the state govt.

Under a concession agreement between the Union



Photo for representation

HANDLING CITY'S NEEDS

govt and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), no new or existing airport — except Mysuru and Hassan domestic airports — can be developed, improved or upgraded within 150km of Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) for 25 years from its opening, the mini-

stry said in response to questions raised by Bangalore Central MP PC Mohan. The development of any new airport within 150km of KIA or reopening of the existing HAL airport prior to the 25th anniversary of KIA “would require the consent of BIAL,” the reply said.

The state has proposed a second Bengaluru airport in view of the city's rapid growth and aims to commission a new one after 2033, when KIA completes 25 years. Three sites have been shortlisted for the project — two on Kanakapura Road and one on Tumakuru Road.



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THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Facts are being misrepresented in IGI incident: Pilot Sejwal's lawyer

New Delhi, Dec. 21: The lawyer of Captain Virender Sejwal, who was involved in an altercation with a passenger at the Delhi airport, on Sunday said the incident was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport and claimed the facts were being misrepresented.

On Friday when Sejwal, an Air India Express pilot off-duty at the time, had an altercation with the passenger, Ankit Dewan. The latter had mentioned the incident and posted photos on social media on the same day evening.

Air India Express has suspended the pilot pend-

ing investigation.

In a statement on Sunday, Sejwal's lawyer Sonali Karwasra Joon said distorted social media portrayal is based on a one-sided, incomplete misrepresentation of facts.

"Ankit Dewan has selectively presented facts to create a false narrative, wrongly implying a professional conflict and attempting to sensationalise a settled issue.

"Whereas castiest remarks were made against Capt. Sejwal, and absolutely unfathomable threats were made to female members of his

family, including a child," the statement claimed.

According to the statement, the incident between the two passengers was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport.

"Both parties 'voluntarily signed a statement' confirming that they did not wish to pursue any legal action," it said.

The lawyer also said Sejwal has full faith in authorities that he will not be denied justice and the incident will be looked at impartially considering all facts and without the overbearing social media narrative. — PTI



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DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

मौसम • विमान सेवाएं प्रभावित, पहाड़ों की बर्फबारी से बढ़ी गलन; अगले चार दिन भारी दिल्ली: कोहरा, ठंड और प्रदूषण का 'ट्रिपल अटैक' आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट से 97 उड़ानें रद्द, 200 देर से उड़ीं

भास्कर न्यूज़ | नई दिल्ली

दिल्लीवासियों के लिए रविवार 'ट्रिपल अटैक' लेकर आया। पहाड़ों पर हो रही बर्फबारी और बारिश के कारण राजधानी में कड़ाके की ठंड, घने कोहरे और गंभीर प्रदूषण का घातक मेल देखने को मिला। आलम यह रहा कि लोग दिनभर रजाई और गर्म कपड़ों में दुबके रहे। वहीं, कोहरे के चलते नई दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट से रविवार को 97 उड़ानें रद्द हो गईं। जबकि 200 देर से रवाना हुईं। वेबसाइट फ्लाइटराडार24 के मुताबिक ज्यादातर उड़ानों में 23 मिनट तक की देरी हुई।

प्रदूषण 'गंभीर' ... औसत एक्वआई 399 रहा



सिग्नेचर ब्रिज

घने कोहरे के कारण आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट पर विजिबिलिटी बेहद कम रही। वहीं, प्रदूषण की स्थिति 'गंभीर' श्रेणी में बनी हुई है। रविवार को औसत एक्वआई 399 दर्ज किया गया, जबकि कई इलाकों में यह 450 के पार पहुंच गया। विशेषज्ञों के अनुसार, 22 दिसंबर तक स्मॉग और प्रदूषण से राहत मिलने के आसार नहीं हैं।

आज 6 डिग्री तक जा सकता है तापमान: रविवार को अधिकतम तापमान गिरकर 16.9 डिग्री सेल्सियस पर आ गया। हालांकि न्यूनतम तापमान 9.4 डिग्री रहा, लेकिन बर्फाली हवाओं ने गलन बढ़ा दी। विभाग ने अगले 4 दिनों तक बादल छाए रहने व तापमान में और गिरावट का अलर्ट जारी किया है। सोमवार को रात का पारा 6 डिग्री तक लुढ़कने का अनुमान है।

मनाली की ऊंची चोटियों में हिमपात, 4 डिग्री गिरा पारा

मनाली हिमाचल प्रदेश में रविवार को लाहौल और मनाली की चोटियों में हिमपात होने से तापमान में 4 डिग्री तक गिरावट आई है। रविवार सुबह से शिंकुला, जांस्कर घाटी और रोहतांग दर्रे में बर्फबारी हुई। रविवार को हिमपात की उम्मीद लिए शिंकुला व रोहतांग पहुंचे पर्यटकों ने लाइव स्नो फॉल का आनंद उठाया। काफी संख्या में पर्यटक रोहतांग और 16580 फुट ऊंचे शिंकुला दर्रा पर पहुंचे। वीकेंड के चलते मनाली के होटलों में आक्यूपेंसी 60 से 70 प्रतिशत तक पहुंच गई।

Adani Group to invest ₹1 lakh crore in airports

Mumbai, Dec. 19: Adani Group plans to invest ₹1 lakh crore in its airports business over the next five years, betting on India's aviation sector, which is expected to expand at 15-16 per cent annually.

"On the airport side, ₹1-lakh crore in the next five years," Jeet Adani, director of Adani Airports, said ahead of the start of commercial operations at Navi Mumbai International Airport on Dec.25.

The airport is being developed by Navi Mumbai International Airport Ltd (NMIAL) in which the Adani Group holds a 74 per cent stake.

Built at an initial cost of ₹19,650 crore, the first phase will have a capacity to handle 20 million passengers annually, with plans to scale up to 90 million passengers over time.

Adani group had acquired the Mumbai airport from GVK Group. Beside the two airports at Mumbai, the group operates Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Guwahati, Jaipur, Thiruvananthapuram,

LESSER TRAVAILS

INDIA'S aviation sector expected to expand at 15-16 per cent annually.

NAVI Mumbai International Airport will open on Dec. 25. Adani Group holds 74 per cent stake.

BUILT AT an initial cost of ₹19,650 crore, the first phase will have a capacity to handle 20 million passengers annually.

BESIDE THE two airports at Mumbai, the group operates Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Guwahati, Jaipur, Thiruvananthapuram, and Mangaluru airports.



and Mangaluru.

"We would be 100 per cent aggressive in the next round of bidding for all 11 (airports)," he said.

"The Indian aviation industry can continuously grow at 15-16 per cent, year-on-year for the next 10-15 years," he said, pointing to low per-capita air travel compared to China.

"Mumbai Airport was supply constrained from

2016 onwards and wasn't able to service the additional demand that was coming through," he said.

Meanwhile, the group has been in discussions with officials in Uttar Pradesh to build eight 200 MW small modular reactors (SMRs), said sources. The plan, part of efforts to broaden his renewable portfolio, would give the conglomerate about 1,600 MW of nuclear capacity.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

21 DECEMBER 2025

Passengers weigh in on KIA's new pickup model

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

It has been a week since the new pickup rules kicked in at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), and passengers remain divided about their effectiveness.

The new norms, which only allow private vehicles to access the arrival pick-up lanes and limit yellow-board vehicles to designated taxi stands and pickup zones, were enforced at Terminal 2 on December 11 and at Terminal 1 on December 13. While operations in T2 continue to flow in a seemingly smooth manner, the change in operations at T1 has raised some eyebrows due to the designated parking zones being about 700 metres away from the arrival gates.

In an attempt to smooth the transition into the new operations and accommodate the festive rush, Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), which operates KIA, has implemented multiple transport options to aid senior citizens, children, and the differently abled. The free transport arrangements between T1 and P3 and P4, which are the dedicated parking zones for the terminal, include four buggies, one shuttle bus, one high-capacity passenger van, and three cars. These are in addition to wheelchair support, a BIAL representative shared.

Apart from these, the shuttle

buses which operate between T1 and T2 also make a pit stop at P3 and P4. However, the lack of awareness among passengers about these transport options is leaving an air of frustration across the terminal.

For Kushi, travelling from Mumbai, the accessible pickup feature used to be one of the main highlights of the terminal. "It used to be so convenient to just step out and find a taxi driver waiting for you already," she said.

Better training of the on-ground staff would help benefit the initiative, according to passengers.

"Some of the ground staff themselves do not seem to fully comprehend how the changes work. I spent about 20 minutes waiting for a buggy, as instructed by the staff. But in the end, my mother and I just started walking. We eventually found an empty buggy along the way," said Narayan, from Electronics City. Irrespective of the 15-20 minute walk to the parking zone, many hail the new way of operations for its improved safety and decongested lanes.

"It felt like a breath of fresh air walking out of Terminal 1 after the new rules, which no longer allow taxis to crowd the arrival lanes. It was absolute chaos before, with taxi drivers leaving no space for other vehicles. Plus, they always behaved in an uncouth manner," said a middle-aged female passenger.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

20 DECEMBER 2025

जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर फ्लाइट संचालन प्रभावित, यात्री हुए परेशान

नवज्योति, जयपुर। जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर शुक्रवार सुबहसे फ्लाइट संचालन बिगड़ हुआ नजर आया जिससे यात्रियों को परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा। तकनीकी और संचालन कारणों के चलते कई उड़ानें देरी से रवाना हो रही हैं, जबकि एक

फ्लाइट को रद्द किया। एयर अरबिया की जयपुर से शारजाह जाने वाली अंतरराष्ट्रीय फ्लाइट निर्धारित समय सुबह 4.10 बजे रवाना होनी थी, लेकिन देरी के चलते अब यह फ्लाइट सुबह करीब 10.05 बजे जयपुर से उड़ान भरी। वहीं स्पाइसजेट की

जयपुर से सुबह 5.20 बजे पुणे जाने वाली फ्लाइट दोपहर 12 बजे, इंडिगो की जयपुर से सुबह 5.35 बजे बेंगलुरु जाने वाली फ्लाइट सुबह 8.10 बजे रवाना हुई। वहीं इंडिगो की जयपुर से सुबह 6.40 बजे गुवाहाटी जाने वाली फ्लाइट का संचालन रद्द रहा।



Corporate Communications Directorate

GREATER KASHMIR

SRINAGAR

21 DECEMBER 2025

Air travelers seek facilities at Chandigarh Int'l Airport

GK News Service
Srinagar, Dec 20

Passengers travelling through Chandigarh International Airport are facing serious inconvenience due to the lack of basic amenities. Concerns have been raised over the closure of the international lounge, absence of drinking water facilities, and non-operation of duty-free services.

Dr Anshu Kataria, President, Punjab Unaided Colleges Association (PUCA) and Chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura (near Chandigarh), who was leading a PUCA delegation to Dubai, urged airport authorities and

the concerned ministries to take immediate and effective steps to restore all essential and promised facilities for passengers, said a press release.

Supporting the demand, PUCA members including Ashwani Garg and Ashok Garg from Swami Vivekanand Group of Institutions, along with S. Gurpreet Singh from Universal Group of Institutions, emphasized that airport services must be streamlined in accordance with international standards. They stated that Chandigarh International Airport caters to passengers from Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, and Chandigarh.



Corporate Communications Directorate

GREATER KASHMIR

SRINAGAR

21 DECEMBER 2025

Delhi airport sees 129 flight cancellations on Saturday

Press Trust of India
New Delhi, Dec 20

At least 129 flights were cancelled at the Delhi airport on Saturday due to dense fog, according to an official. Flight operations have been disrupted for the past several days at Delhi and other airports due to dense fog, resulting in low visibility conditions.

The official said at least 66 arrivals and 63 departures have been cancelled.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

कार्गो हब के पहले चरण का काम पूरा



ग्रेटर नोएडा, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर एयर कार्गो हब के प्रथम चरण का काम पूरा हो गया है। फेज-1 में यहां से प्रतिवर्ष 2.55 लाख मीट्रिक टन कार्गो का आयात निर्यात हो सकेगा। इससे नोएडा, ग्रेनो और गाजियाबाद समेत एनसीआर के कार्गो के काम को गति मिलेगी।

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पर कुल 87 एकड़ के मल्टी मॉडल कार्गो हब बन रहा है।

कार्गो हब के प्रथम चरण का कार्य पूरा हो गया है। यह हब उत्तर भारत में कार्गो गेटवे के रूप में उभरेगा। इससे दिल्ली आईजीआई का दबाव कम होगा और एनसीआर समेत पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश के उद्यमी आसानी से अपना सामान देश-विदेश में निर्यात कर सकेंगे। - रामनाथन राजमणि, सीईओ एयर इंडिया सेट्स

इसमें 30 एकड़ का इंटीग्रेटेड कार्गो टर्मिनल (आईसीटी) और 57 एकड़ का इंटीग्रेटेड वेयरहाउसिंग एंड लॉजिस्टिक्स जोन (आईडब्ल्यूएलजेड) शामिल है। फेज-1 में आईसीटी का विकास 11 एकड़ क्षेत्र में किया गया है, जो शुरुआत

एयरपोर्ट से कार्गो और घरेलू उड़ान एक साथ शुरू करने की योजना है। इस दिशा में सभी काम को अंतिम रूप दिया गया है। कार्गो हब में प्रत्यक्ष और अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से हजारों रोजगार उपलब्ध होंगे। - शैलेंद्र भाटिया, ओएसडी, नायल

में मुख्य कार्गो ऑपरेशन का केंद्र होगा। वहीं, आईडब्ल्यूएलजेड 10 एकड़ में प्रस्तावित है। आईसीटी का प्रमुख इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर पूरी तरह तैयार है। यहां कार्गो फ्लो, सिस्टम इंटीग्रेशन, उपकरणों की टेस्टिंग सफल रही है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

JANSATTA

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

कोहरे से दिल्ली में हवाई सेवाएं बुरी तरह प्रभावित

हवाई अड्डे पर कम दृश्यता के कारण 110 उड़ानें रद्द

जनसत्ता संवाददाता
नई दिल्ली, 21 दिसंबर।

दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर रविवार को कोहरे के कारण कम दृश्यता के कारण कुल 110 उड़ानें रद्द कर दी गईं और 370 से अधिक उड़ानों में विलंब हुआ। इस संबंध में एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि हवाई अड्डे पर 59 आगमन और 51 प्रस्थान उड़ानें रद्द कर दी गईं। फ्लाइट ट्रेकिंग वेबसाइट 'फ्लाइटरडार24 डाट काम' पर उपलब्ध नवीनतम जानकारी के अनुसार, 370 से अधिक उड़ानों में विलंब हुआ और हवाई अड्डे पर उड़ानों के प्रस्थान में औसतन लगभग 26 मिनट की देरी हुई। घने कोहरे के कारण पिछले कई दिन से दिल्ली और अन्य हवाई अड्डों पर उड़ान संचालन बाधित है।

वहीं, दिल्ली में रविवार को दिनभर आंशिक तौर पर बादल छाए रहे। सुबह के वक्त अधिकांश इलाकों में कोहरा छाया रहा जिसकी वजह से वाहनों को कुछ परेशानी हुई। भारत मौसम विज्ञान विभाग ने सोमवार के लिए भी सुबह के समय मध्यम से घना कोहरा छाए रहने की संभावना जताते हुए पीली चेतावनी जारी की। रविवार को दिल्ली का न्यूनतम तापमान 9.4 डिग्री और अधिकतम 18.1 डिग्री सेल्सियस रिकार्ड किया गया। धूप नहीं निकलने की वजह से राजधानीवासियों को मौसम में ठंडक महसूस हुई।

आइएमडी की ओर से अगले छह दिनों के लिए जारी किए मौसम पूर्वानुमान के मुताबिक, 22 दिसंबर (सोमवार) को भी न्यूनतम तापमान 9 डिग्री रिकार्ड होने की उम्मीद है जबकि अधिकतम तापमान में वृद्धि हो सकती है। अधिकतम तापमान 21 डिग्री सेल्सियस दर्ज होने की संभावना है। 23 दिसंबर को



घने कोहरे के बीच कर्तव्य पथ पर लोग।

मौसम विभाग ने सोमवार के लिए भी सुबह के समय मध्यम से घना कोहरा छाए रहने की संभावना जताते हुए पीली चेतावनी जारी की।

न्यूनतम तापमान में एक-एक डिग्री की वृद्धि दर्ज हो सकती है। वहीं, 24 दिसंबर को न्यूनतम तापमान 9 डिग्री तो अधिकतम 19 डिग्री सेल्सियस रिकार्ड हो सकता है। यानी 22 से 24 दिसंबर के बीच न्यूनतम व अधिकतम तापमान में उतार चढ़ाव की स्थिति देखने को मिलेगी।

मौसम विभाग की माने तो क्रिसमस डे 25 दिसंबर से न्यूनतम पारे में कई डिग्री की गिरावट आने की संभावना है। 25 व 26 दिसंबर को न्यूनतम तापमान 7 डिग्री तो 27 दिसंबर को 8 डिग्री रिकार्ड होने की उम्मीद है। इस दौरान राजधानीवासियों को अच्छी ठंड का अहसास होगा। वहीं, 27 दिसंबर तक मध्यम से घने कोहरे की परेशानी भी झेलनी पड़ सकती है।

— DELHI AQI 'VERY POOR' | GGM ISSUES WFH ADVISORY FOR PRIVATE FIRMS —

Fog grounds 105 flights, 450+ delayed

AIMAN FATIMA

NEW DELHI: As many as 105 flights were cancelled and over 450 services delayed due to low-visibility conditions amid fog at the Delhi airport on Sunday.

An official said at least 55 arrivals and 50 departures were cancelled at the airport. According to the latest information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, more than 450 flights were delayed and the average delay time was around 36 minutes for departures at the airport.

In a post on X in the evening, Delhi airport operator DIAL said operations are running smoothly. DIAL operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport that generally handles around 1,300 flights daily.

Flight operations have been disrupted for the past many days in Delhi and other airports due to dense fog.

FOG FURY

- » Flight operations have been disrupted for the past many days in Delhi and other airports due to dense fog
- » According to latest information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.com, more than 450 flights were delayed and the average delay time was around 36 minutes for departures at the airport
- » According to the CPCB's Sameer app, 16 out of the 40 monitoring stations in the city reported air quality in the 'severe' category
- » The weather department has forecast moderate fog on Monday with maximum and minimum temperature expected to hover around 21 degrees Celsius and 9 degrees Celsius

The air quality in the national capital was recorded in the 'very poor' category on Sunday morning with an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 377, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

According to the CPCB's Sameer app, 16 out of the 40 monitoring stations in the city reported air quality in the 'severe' category, while the

remaining recorded 'very poor' levels. An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered 'good', 51 to 100 'satisfactory', 101 to 200 'moderate', 201 to 300 'poor', 301 to 400 'very poor', and 401 to 500 'severe', according to the CPCB classification.

Among the key weather monitoring stations, Palam recorded its lowest visibility at 300 metres **Continued on P8**

Fog grounds

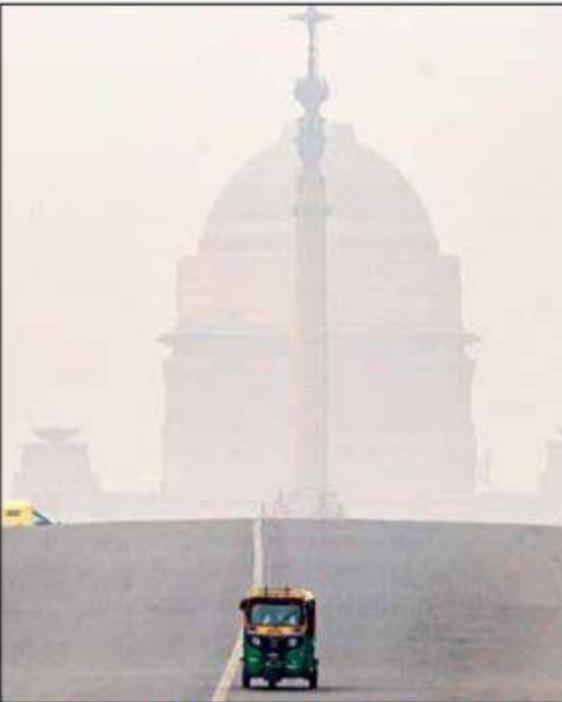
due to moderate fog between 10 pm and 12.30 am IST, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD). The visibility improved to 600 metres in shallow fog but fell back to 350 metres, with east-south-easterly winds blowing at a speed of 7 kilometres per hour, it said.

At Safdarjung, the visibility dropped to its lowest at 200 metres in moderate fog between 1.30 am and 2.30 am IST. It gradually improved to 500 metres in shallow fog by 5.30 am, the IMD said.

The minimum temperature settled at 9.4 degrees Celsius, 1.3 degrees above the season's average whereas the maximum temperature settled at 18.1 degrees Celsius.

The humidity was recorded at 100 per cent at 5.30 pm, as per IMD.

The weather department has forecast moderate fog on Monday with maximum and minimum temperature expected to hover around 21 degrees Celsius and 9 degrees Celsius, respectively.



An auto passes along Kartavya Path as Rashtrapati Bhavan remains barely visible amid low visibility, in New Delhi, Sunday PTI

Adani plans to venture into engine MRO & aircraft conversion space

Besides airports, the diversified conglomerate is also present in the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) & pilots training business

MUMBAI: Adani group plans to foray into engine MRO as well as passenger-aircraft-to-freighter (P2F) conversion, as the diversified conglomerate bets big on the domestic aviation market, according to a top group official. Besides airports, the diversified conglomerate is also present in the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) and pilots training business.

"We have separated the two (aviation). One is the airport infrastructure and the other one is the aircraft services business. So that can include dual use, defence and civilian use. So, between Indamer and Air Works (MROs), we are now combining the platform into a single giant MRO company," Jeet Adani, Director of Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), said. Stating that the MRO is a fast-growing segment, Jeet Adani said, "Now we are expanding that as well to increase our capabilities on landing gear, paint, P2F (passenger-to-freighter) conversions, and hopefully at some point, engines."

The group entered the MRO segment last December following the acquisition of aviation MRO services firm Air Works for an enterprise value of Rs 400 crore, strengthening its foothold



'We have separated the two (aviation). One is the airport infrastructure and the other one is the aircraft services business. So that can include dual use, defence and civilian use,' Jeet Adani, Director of Adani Airport Holdings Ltd (AAHL), said

in the defence MRO sector.

Further expanding its presence in the MRO space, Adani Defence Systems and Technologies Ltd (ADSTL), through its venture Horizon Aero Solutions Ltd, in partnership with Prime Aero Services LLP, last month signed a definitive agreement to acquire a 100 per cent stake in MRO services pro-

vider, Indamer Technics Pvt Ltd (ITPL). And last month, ADSTL said it will buy a 72.8 per cent stake in Flight Simulation Technique Centre (FSTC) for Rs 820 crore, marking the conglomerate's foray into the pilot training segment.

"We are also expanding our bases. So, we are expanding in Ahmedabad which doesn't exist

Highlights

- » The group entered MRO segment last December following acquisition of Air Works for an enterprise value of Rs 400 crore, strengthening its foothold in the defence MRO sector
- » Adani Defence Systems & Technologies Ltd (ADSTL) in November signed a definitive agreement to acquire a 100% stake in Indamer Technics Pvt Ltd (ITPL)
- » And last month, ADSTL said it will buy 72.8% stake in FSTC for Rs 820 crore, marking the group's foray into the pilot training segment

the ability to absorb 40-50 simulators if we are able to execute."

"So now for the next, because it is a recent acquisition, we are just putting in place the right processing systems," he said. "But the clear vision is in the next 2-3 years how do we get this business up to 45-50 simulators all across the country," Jeet Adani said.

Indian carriers are scheduled to induct some 1,700 aircraft over a period of time.

India will need an additional 30,000 pilots once the pending orders for 1,700 aircraft from the Indian carriers are delivered, Union Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu had said last week. On the investment in these businesses, he said, "On the MRO and FSTC side, it's a little early to say because we are still in the process of finalising a long-term strategy and then putting a number to it."

"At the end of the day, we are deep into it and want to keep growing our expertise and our depth," he said. The group last week announced that it will infuse Rs 1 lakh crore in its airports business over the next five years and projected a 10-15 per cent growth in the domestic aviation market, including airports and airlines, during the next 10-15 years.

PM launches new Guwahati airport terminal, showcasing rapid growth in aviation infra

OUR CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the new terminal at Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport (LGBIA), marking the completion of an accelerated infrastructure project delivered from concept to commissioning in under a year, with a strong emphasis on operational readiness.

The terminal's design was unveiled by the Prime Minister in February at Advantage Assam 2.0, and its inauguration now sets the stage for operations to begin by the end of February. The swift execution highlights the pace at which India's aviation infrastructure is being planned, built and prepared for live operations.

A comprehensive Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) programme, supported by an expert team from Munich, Germany, has ensured that systems, processes, personnel and passenger flows are fully aligned for a safe and seamless opening.

Conceived as a modern gateway rooted in regional identity, the terminal—named "The Bamboo Orchids"—draws inspiration from Assam's iconic kopou phool (foxtail orchid) and indigenous bamboo varieties, including Bholuka bamboo from Assam and Apatani bamboo from Arunachal Pradesh.

The architecture blends natural materials, abundant daylight and contemporary design, reflecting the ecological and cultural richness



Prime Minister Narendra Modi, third from left, with Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, centre, Union Minister of Civil Aviation K Ram Mohan Naidu, second from right, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, third from right, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, extreme left, and Adani Group Chairperson Gautam Adani, second from left, during the inauguration of a new terminal of the Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, Assam P11

of the Northeast.

About 140 metric tonnes of locally sourced bamboo have been used, making it one of India's most prominent examples of nature-inspired airport architecture that reinterprets traditional craftsmanship through modern engineering.

The project has been developed by Guwahati International Airport Limited, with operations led by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL). The terminal reflects the Adani Group's integrated approach to infrastructure delivery, combining design, engineering, ORAT-led preparedness and time-bound execution for complex aviation projects.

Placing the inauguration in a broader national context, Prime Minister Modi described

it as part of a wider "Vikas ka Utsav" unfolding across Assam and the Northeast.

He said Assam is emerging as India's eastern gateway under the Act East policy, with the bamboo-themed terminal symbolising strength, sustainability and the state's growing role in advancing Viksit Bharat as India moves toward becoming the world's third-largest economy.

Commenting on the occasion, Gautam Adani, Chairman of the Adani Group, said: "The Guwahati terminal demonstrates how world-class airport infrastructure can be delivered swiftly while remaining deeply rooted in local identity. It will strengthen connectivity, support economic growth across the Northeast, and offer passengers a seamless, modern

Key Points

- » Prime Minister Modi described it as part of a wider 'Vikas ka Utsav' unfolding across Assam and the Northeast
- » 'The Guwahati terminal demonstrates how world-class airport infra can be delivered swiftly while remaining deeply rooted in local identity'
- » The Terminal named 'The Bamboo Orchids', draws inspiration from Assam's kopou phool (foxtail orchid) and indigenous bamboo varieties

travel experience."

Equipped with DigiYatra-enabled processing, smart check-in systems and expansive passenger areas, the terminal is designed to handle 13.1 million passengers annually by 2032. In FY25, Guwahati Airport handled 6.50 million passengers, highlighting the region's rising aviation demand. The airport currently ranks as India's 10th busiest and serves as a critical hub for all eight Northeastern states.

The overall airport development entails an investment of Rs 5,000 crore, including Rs 1,000 crore for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul facilities, alongside planned integrated cargo infrastructure to boost trade, logistics and employment in the region.

Redo Sabarimala airport land acquisition, says HC

Rules that govt failed to determine minimum extent of land required

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

@ Pathanamthitta

THE Kerala High Court has nullified key stages of the land acquisition process for the proposed Sabarimala greenfield airport, ruling that the state government failed to determine the minimum extent of land required for the project as mandated by law, and directed the authorities to restart the process after a fresh assessment.

On December 30, 2022, the state issued an order granting sanction for the acquisition of 2,570 acres of land, comprising the Cheruvally Estate and an additional 307 acres located outside it. Justice C Jayachandran, delivering the judgment on a writ petition filed by Ayana Charitable Trust (formerly Gospel for Asia) and its managing trustee Dr Siny Punnoose, ruled the decision-making process under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land



Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, was legally flawed.

Questioning land acquisition of 2,570 acres of land, the court also noted that “even for the highest type of aircraft, in an airport contemplating IFR (Instrument Flight Rules) operations, the land required in the ideal scenario is 1200 acres.” On the petitioners’ allegation of fraud on power and colourable exercise of authority, the court did not give a final finding. It held that this issue is closely

linked to determining the minimum land required and can only be examined after that exercise is properly completed.

“All the same, it is not ripe for this Court to conclude that the acquisition proceedings are vitiated by fraud on power,” the order read. The court earlier directed the state to restart the process by conducting a fresh social impact assessment (SIA) limited to examining the minimum land requirement, followed by a fresh appraisal by the expert group and reconsideration by the government.

The petitioners had challenged several government actions, including the SIA report, the expert committee appraisal, the state order approving the acquisition, and the subsequent notification.

The land in question, mainly the Cheruvally Estate, is proposed to be acquired for building a new airport intended to serve Sabarimala pilgrims.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

GMR Airports acquires 49.9% stake in DDFS

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

GMR Airports (GAL) has tightened its grip on India's travel retail sector by acquiring a 49.90% equity stake in Delhi Duty Free Services Private Limited (DDFS).

The stake was purchased from Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), another subsidiary of the company, for an aggregate consideration of about ₹183 crore. Following this transaction, GMR Airports' total shareholding in DDFS has increased to 66.93%, up from its previous indirect holding.

The move comes as GAL, which operates under the brand name GMR AERO, transitions from a traditional airport operator to a consumer-first platform.

PM inaugurates new terminal of Guwahati airport

TONY DAS

■ Guwahati

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated a new terminal of the Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport (LGBIA). The Integrated Terminal 2 Building is designed to handle 13.1 million passengers per year. Modi also undertook a tour of the new terminal built at a cost of ₹4,000 crore. The airport is named after Assam's first Chief Minister, whose 80-foot statue was also unveiled by Modi outside the airport.

Officials said the total cost of the project is ₹5,000 crore, including ₹1,000 crore earmarked specifically for Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) facilities.

The airport is aimed to be a key aviation hub for Northeast India and a gateway to Southeast Asia, they said. The new terminal has an area of 1,40,000 square metres, and its design draws inspiration from Assam's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, they added.

The new terminal building is the "country's first nature-themed airport", designed to handle 13.1 million passengers per year,



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Assam Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya, Union Minister of Civil Aviation K Ram Mohan Naidu, Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and Adani Group Chairperson Gautam Adani during the inauguration of a new terminal of the Lokapriya Gopinath Bardoloi International Airport in Guwahati, Assam

PTI

officials said. The transition from the old terminal to the new one is scheduled to begin in February, with domestic flights initially operating from the new facility. The process is expected to be completed by the end of March, with both domestic and international flights shifting to the new terminal, while the existing terminal will be converted into a cargo hub, they said.

Designed by Indian archi-

itects, the terminal draws inspiration from Assam's rich biodiversity and cultural heritage, and is "the country's first airport built around a nature theme". Named 'The Bamboo Orchids', the terminal design is inspired by Assam's iconic 'kopou phool' (foxtail orchid) and indigenous bamboo varieties – Bholuka bamboo from Assam and Apatani bamboo from Arunachal Pradesh – celebrating the

ecological and cultural richness of the northeast.

The terminal's architecture reflects the cultural identity of the region while integrating modern technology, sustainability and passenger comfort, in line with India's vision of inclusive, future-ready infrastructure, the officials said. The bamboo-inspired interiors have made use of around 140 metric tonnes of locally sourced northeast bamboo, setting a new benchmark for

sustainable construction in Indian airports, they said.

The terminal also features Kaziranga-inspired landscapes, with lush and environmentally friendly green spaces that mirror Assam's forests. Traditional Assamese headgear 'japis' have been incorporated into various design elements, while the rhino motif, symbolising strength and calmness, features prominently across the terminal. Fifty-seven distinctive columns, designed to resemble bouquets of the foxtail orchid, adorn the departure and arrival areas.

Arriving passengers will also experience a 'sky forest', passing through a lush green zone with around one lakh plants from 100 species of local flora, creating an immersive forest-like ambience.

"This positions Guwahati as a critical passenger and cargo hub for all eight north-eastern states – Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim – enhancing connectivity to destinations known for tea gardens, wildlife reserves, riverine landscapes, living-root bridges and hill tourism," the official said.

Air India Express pilot denies assault allegations at airport

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

The Air India Express pilot, accused of assaulting a passenger at Delhi airport following a dispute over queue-jumping, has denied the allegations and claimed he was subjected to verbal abuse, casteist remarks and threats against his family.

Responding to the allegations, a law firm has put out a statement on behalf of Captain Virender Sejwal said reports on the issue have "misrepresented a personal incident" as a "pilot vs passenger" dispute.

The statement criticised what it termed a "one-sided, incomplete misrepresentation of facts" on social and news media.

"The incident was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport and claimed the facts were being misrepresented," it said

"Captain Virender Sejwal was travelling as a passenger. He was not on flight duty, nor was the incident connected in any manner to his professional responsibilities. It was a purely per-



sonal matter between two passengers," according to the statement.

"Ankit Dewan has selectively presented facts to create a false narrative, wrongly implying a professional conflict and attempting to sensationalise a settled issue. Whereas casteist remarks were made against Capt Sejwal, and absolutely unfathomable threats were made to female members of his family including a child," it says.

Captain Sejwal's statement says Ankit Dewan initiated the confrontation by

verbally abusing the pilot without provocation and "continued using abusive, degrading and threatening language even after being asked to stop".

"The situation escalated into a physical altercation in which Captain Sejwal was also hurt; he also sustained injuries during the scuffle. CISF personnel intervened promptly, repeatedly told Dewan to calm down and stop abusing, yet he refused to relent and continued his misconduct in their presence," it says.

Rejecting this claim, Captain Sejwal's statement said the matter was resolved voluntarily in the presence of CISF officials. "Both parties 'voluntarily signed a statement' confirming that they did not wish to pursue any legal action. Contrary to misleading claims, Mr Ankit Dewan signed willingly, there was no coercion or pressure involved," it said.

"The CISF has publicly confirmed on 'X' that their officers acted promptly, offered the gentlemen the opportunity to file formal complaints, and that it was voluntarily declined.

Allegations of any force or bias against CISF are incorrect and unfounded," the statement added.

The pilot also objected to the incident being linked to Air India Express. The airline has suspended the pilot and will set up an external committee next week to probe the incident.

Dewan, however, alleged that the altercation began when he was travelling with his family, including his four-month-old daughter in a stroller, and was directed by airport staff to use the staff and PRM security check queue.

Soon after the incident on Friday, the Tata Group-owned airline suspended the pilot and the sources said that a show cause notice has also been served to him seeking an explanation.

The proceedings are being carried under the labour laws as a pilot comes under the workmen category.

An external inquiry committee will set up next week to probe the incident, the sources said. The incident occurred at Terminal 1 (T1) of the Delhi airport on Friday.

Kerala HC sets aside Sabarimala airport land acquisition process



Sabarimala Temple

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ Kochi

The Kerala High Court has set aside crucial stages of the land acquisition process for the proposed Sabarimala greenfield airport, holding that the State failed to properly assess the minimum land actually required for the project.

On December 30, 2022, the State Government issued an order granting sanction for the acquisition of 2,570 acres of land, comprising the Cheruvally Estate and an additional 307 acres located outside it. Justice C Jayachandran, delivering the judgment on a writ petition filed by Ayana Charitable Trust (formerly Gospel for Asia) and its managing trustee Dr Siny Punnoose, ruled the decision-making process under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, was legally flawed.

The court, in its December 19 order, directed the State to restart the process by conducting a fresh social impact

assessment limited to examining the minimum land requirement, followed by a fresh appraisal by the expert group and reconsideration by the Government.

The petitioners had challenged several Government actions, including the Social Impact Assessment (SIA) report, the expert committee appraisal, the State Government order approving the acquisition, and the subsequent notification under Section 11 of the 2013 Act. The land in question, mainly the Cheruvally Estate in Pathanamthitta district, is proposed to be acquired for building a new airport intended to serve Sabarimala pilgrims.

The court found that while the State is entitled to acquire land for public purposes, the law clearly mandates that only the "absolute bare minimum" extent of land required for a project can be acquired.

According to the court, this mandatory requirement under Sections 4(4)(d), 7(5)(b), and 8(1)(c) of the 2013 Act was not properly complied with.

Justice Jayachandran

observed that the authorities had shown "manifest non-application of mind" in assessing how much land was genuinely necessary.

As a result, the SIA report, the Expert Committee report and the Government order were declared invalid to the extent they failed to address this crucial requirement.

Since the Section 11 notification could only be issued after a valid completion of these steps, it too was quashed. On the petitioners' allegation of fraud on power and colourable exercise of authority, the court did not give a final finding. It held that this issue is closely linked to determining the minimum land required and can only be examined after that exercise is properly completed.

Before concluding, the court suggested that for technically complex projects like airports, the state should include technical experts in the SIA team to ensure informed and lawful decision-making. The writ petition was accordingly allowed, keeping other issues raised by the petitioners open for future consideration.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

दिल्ली हवाई अड्डा घटना

पायलट को कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी) : एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस शुक्रवार को दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर उसके एक कैप्टन द्वारा एक यात्री पर कथित रूप से हमला किए जाने की घटना की जांच के लिए अगले सप्ताह एक बाहरी

समिति का गठन करेगी। सूत्रों ने यह जानकारी दी। घटना के समय उक्त कैप्टन ड्यूटी पर नहीं थे। सूत्रों ने बताया कि घटना के तुरंत बाद टाटा समूह की इस एयरलाइन ने पायलट को निलंबित कर दिया और उनसे स्पष्टीकरण मांगते हुए एक कारण बताओ नोटिस भी जारी किया गया है। उन्होंने बताया कि पायलट श्रमिक श्रेणी में आते हैं, इसलिए यह कार्यवाही श्रम कानूनों के तहत की जा रही है। घटना की जांच के लिए अगले सप्ताह एक बाहरी जांच समिति गठित की

● एक यात्री पर कथित रूप से हमला किए जाने की घटना की जांच के लिए एक बाहरी समिति का गठन होगा

जाएगी। यह घटना शुक्रवार को दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे के टर्मिनल-1 (टी1) पर हुई। यात्री अंकित दीवान ने शुक्रवार को सोशल मीडिया पर अपने अनुभव को साझा किया था और झड़प के बाद उनके चेहरे पर खून लगे होने

की एक तस्वीर भी पोस्ट की थी। उन्होंने पायलट वीरेंद्र सेजवाल की एक तस्वीर भी साझा की थी। नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने शनिवार को कहा कि उसने इस घटना को गंभीरता से लिया है और एयरलाइन को निर्देश दिया कि पायलट को तत्काल प्रभाव से काम से हटा दिया जाए। मंत्रालय ने दीवान की पोस्ट के जवाब में एक्स पर कहा कि औपचारिक जांच के आदेश दिए गए हैं। बीसीएएस और सीआईएसएफ से विस्तृत रिपोर्ट मांगी गई है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

21 DECEMBER 2025

देश 93 एयरपोर्ट पूरी तरह ग्रीन एनर्जी पर

नई दिल्ली। देश के 93 एयरपोर्ट ने ग्रीन एनर्जी पर काम रहे है। यह एयरपोर्ट अब अपनी बिजली और अन्य ऊर्जा जरूरतें पर्यावरण के अनुकूल स्रोतों से कर रहे है। राजधानी दिल्ली के अलावा अन्य व्यस्त बड़े एयरपोर्ट मुंबई, हैदराबाद और बंगलुरु एयरपोर्ट्स ने भी कार्बन उत्सर्जन घटाने के सबसे ऊंचे स्तर (लेवल-5) के लक्ष्य हासिल कर लिया है। यह उपलब्धि देश के विमानन क्षेत्र में हरित ऊर्जा और पर्यावरण संरक्षण की दिशा में बड़ी सफलता मानी जा रही है। एयरपोर्ट्स इंटरनेशनल काउंसिल के मुताबिक, ये हवाई अड्डे अब कार्बन न्यूट्रल बन चुके हैं, यानी यहाँ से निकलने वाली हानिकारक गैसों लगभग न के बराबर रह गई हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

NSG conducts real-time anti-hijack exercise at Cochin Airport

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA
Kochi, 21 December

The National Security Guard's 52 Special Action Group (SAG), India's designated National Counter Hijack Force, successfully conducted a comprehensive real-time anti-hijack exercise at Cochin International Airport, reinforcing national aviation security preparedness and multi-agency crisis response mechanisms.

The large-scale exercise began on 19 December and culminated in a high-intensity live night operation on 20 December. During the final phase, elite NSG commandos executed precision counter-hijack drills on an actual aircraft under realistic night-time conditions, simulating a



hostile aviation security scenario.

The drill was designed to validate operational readiness, response timelines, command-and-control structures, and coordination among multiple agencies.

The simulated scenario

involved a hijacked aircraft landing at Cochin International Airport, triggering the immediate activation of the Aerodrome Emergency Management Committee (AEMC).

The exercise tested end-to-end emergency response protocols,

including strategic decision-making, inter-agency coordination, negotiation procedures, medical preparedness, crisis communication systems, and passenger safety measures, with minimal to nil collateral damage as the highest priority.

The operation was led by Col Amit Kumar, Group Commander, 52 SAG, NSG. District Collector Priyanka G (IAS), Airport Director G Manu, and Deputy Commissioner of Police Mahesh S (IPS) carried out their respective procedural responsibilities in coordination with participating agencies.

The exercise witnessed seamless coordination among Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL), the Kerala State administration,

Kerala Police and Traffic Police, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), Airports Authority of India (AAI), Health Department and designated city hospitals, Fire and Emergency Services, Air Traffic Control (ATC), IndiGo Airlines, ground handling agencies, and other aviation partners.

Specially trained NSG negotiators initially engaged the simulated hijackers to seek a peaceful resolution. Following the simulated failure of negotiations, the 52 SAG carried out a swift and controlled intervention, demonstrating advanced close-quarter battle techniques, aircraft intervention procedures, and hostage rescue capabilities.



■ Parl panel: Body understaffed, may compromise on safety DGCA 'ill-equipped' to force air rules

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, DEC. 21

The IndiGo crisis, which hit the aviation sector hard in early December, has once again brought the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) under the scanner. The watchdog that regulates and keeps an eye on the entire aviation ecosystem of the country – from runways, planes, air traffic control, airports to pilots and passengers – has no power, no money and no independence to run professionally.

The DGCA, under the ministry of civil aviation (MoCA), is dependent on the ministry for orders on

every big and small decision. The national watchdog functions with just 553 odd staff. These are the ones who, apart from daily functioning, also firefight situations like air crashes, traffic congestions, air traffic control spoofing and the recent IndiGo situation. Working with just about 50 per cent of the staff against its sanctioned strength of 1,630, and lacking technical experts on its payroll right from the top, the DGCA is ill-equipped to handle delicate situations in aviation.

"The DGCA is presently overloaded with increasing work of safety over-

■ THE DGCA website in September posted vacancies for consultants to work on a one-year contract in airworthiness and air safety areas. Besides, there were 10 vacancies advertised for deputy director of operations.

sight, understaffed, under-equipped and lagging behind in its capacity and capabilities as a safety regulator and hence may compromise on the safety of the travelling public if not restructured and strengthened at the earliest," the parliamentary panel headed by

JD(U)'s Sanjay Jha said in its report in August 2025.

The DGCA had 794 unfilled vacancies till November 30, 2025, against its sanctioned strength of 1,630. MoCA minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu says by the yearend they will be able to hire 190. But there is still a lot of gap. Much of DGCA work is done by consultants hired for short durations, sometimes borrowed from other organisations, instead of proper appointments of technical experts who can be made answerable for lapses.

The DGCA website in September posted vacancies for consultants to

■ Turn to Page 4

DGCA 'ill-equipped' to force rules

■ Continued from Page 1

work on a one-year contract in airworthiness and air safety areas. Besides, there were 10 vacancies advertised for deputy director of operations and 26 for assistant directors of airworthiness, and so on. There are crucial vacancies which should have been filled in time. As per sources, lack of autonomy and financial freedom impedes the DGCA's ability to attract talent. As a result, several vacancies requiring expertise remain "chronically unfilled". A parliamentary panel even noted that DGCA cannot hire even a casual employee in case of urgency without going through the ministry.

Another panel noted that unlike its international counterparts, the DGCA remains entirely dependent on government allocations and procedural controls, making it impossible to attract and retain the highly skilled professionals like experienced pilots, airworthiness inspectors and flight operations specialists who are essential for conducting surveillance of the private aviation industry.

The parliamentary panels have also noted that the root of the DGCA's staffing crisis lies in a recruitment model that is not matched for a modern, specialised technical regulator.

The MoCA itself agrees that a significant number of vacancies are pending recruitment through the Union Public Service Commission, which is a "slow and inflexible" process resulting in huge delays in filling critical regulatory positions that require niche expertise. But the ministry has no plans to bypass this system.

"There is no autonomy, no authority, and there are too many bureaucratic hindrances. Yet, whenever there is a crisis, the first blame comes to the DGCA. With this kind of functioning,

people either lose interest or get tired," said a source familiar with the functioning of the DGCA. There are also allegations of political interference in the day-to-day functioning of the DGCA.

Interestingly, when IAS officer Naseem Zaidi moved as civil aviation secretary in the ministry after having served as the director-general of civil aviation, he initiated the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) Bill in 2013 to give autonomy to the DGCA. People in the sector say that having served as the DGCA, Mr Zaidi knew the problems of the body, which is why he initiated the law to break free the regulatory body from the government's daily control and make it an independent body. However, the bill lapsed with the fall of the UPA government and the present NDA government has not shown any inclination to revive it in the last 12 years. The joke in the aviation sector is that if the DGCA is made independent, then the MoCA will have no work to do and it will not be able to wield power over the airlines, particularly ever since Air India moved out of its control.

"The challenge is that you are the world's third largest domestic aviation market, fifth largest global market, yet you have no proper machinery, system and structure. These issues of autonomy come to the fore during a crisis and then go back. Your aviation sector has grown multiple folds with so many aircraft, passengers, and airports. Now it is time to have an independent board, like SEBI and RBI. Bring in domain experts for quick decision-making. The current DGCA needs major overhauling," said sources in MoCA. A set of questions sent to MoCA on the questions of staff shortage and autonomy to DGCA remain unanswered at the time of publishing.

LINE & LENGTH.



TCA SRINIVASA RAGHAVAN

IndiGo pilots say they are overworked. They probably are. But that's nothing new. Ever since commercial aviation started in the mid-1930s, pilots have been asking for reduced duty time.

There have been lots of strikes during this period. More often than not, airline owners and their managements have had to give in because the cost of a plane on the ground doing nothing for a long period is completely unaffordable.

This being so, it is very surprising that the pilots of IndiGo have never struck work. They have at best gone on mass sick leave.

There are around 5,000 of them and even if 10 per cent threatened the management with a proper strike, they'd get what they wanted. IndiGo has over 400 aircraft and can't afford to have a quarter of them sitting on the ground.

But the IndiGo story is now old. Only my two-and-a-half-year-old granddaughter is yet to express her views.

Like Gautam Gambhir being blamed for all the ills of Indian cricket, the management of IndiGo is now the target of public ire. But as in his case, some of it

is the management's fault. But a lot isn't.

The term 'public' in the IndiGo case is misleading. It is minuscule but highly vocal and entitled upper middle class which doesn't have time for other dysfunctionalities and mismanagement like, say, of roads or in the railways. Both are still quite dangerous.

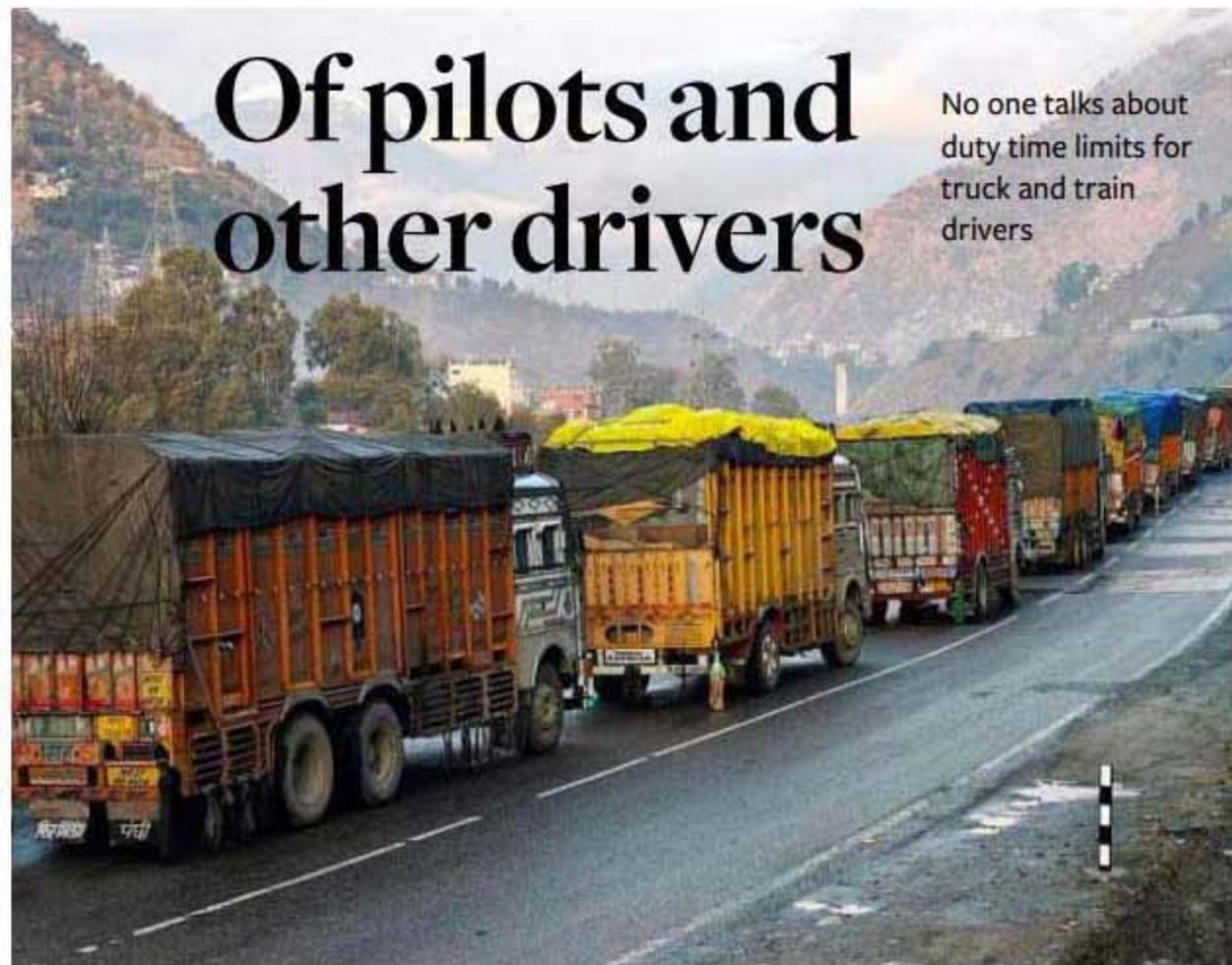
That's why this article is about truck and train drivers. I was a consultant for two decades at the Asian Institute of Transport Development. So I have some idea of the problems that they face.

The short point is this: that the drivers of trucks and locos are doubly and triply overworked compared to the pilots. But who gives a damn?

TRUCKERS AND TRAIN DRIVERS

Truck drivers can expect to earn ₹1 lakh annually when they start to about ₹5 lakh when they retire, usually around 45 years of age. Compare this to the pilots.

They have 12-14 hour working days. Most of them are barely literate. They spend a lot of time waiting. They drive in terrible conditions. Their cabins are not air conditioned. The trucks mostly don't



Of pilots and other drivers

No one talks about duty time limits for truck and train drivers

have power steering. They have to cope with overloading by the owners and completely unruly traffic conditions. They have to deal with corrupt police and road transport officials. Their owners are usually small truck companies with 3-10 trucks and are very harsh on the people who work for them. There is, obviously, no job security.

The fate of engine drivers isn't much better. It's nearly identical to truck drivers. They also suffer from a lot of physical and mental stress. Their cabins are hot and full of fumes. They tend to be very lonely and their resting facilities are

The Indian transport industry has perfect competition at one end (trucking) and a monopoly at the other (railways). Airlines lie in the middle with varying degrees of oligopoly

crude. They also suffer from exhaustion resulting from working for extra hours because of staff shortages.

In other words, the lives of truck and train drivers are much worse than that of pilots. But who captures the attention of the government and the media?

THE ECONOMICS OF IT ALL

In the end it all boils down to economics on the one hand and commercial considerations on the other. The economics is that the transport industry has three types of market structure and the commercial bit is the degree of technology intensity.

The Indian transport industry has perfect competition at one end (trucking) and a monopoly at the other (railways). Airlines lie in the middle with varying degrees of oligopoly.

Perfect competition means that there are virtually no barriers to entry and exit. It also means each firm is a price taker. This makes a huge difference to operations.

Monopoly means that there is only one producing firm. It can set its own

prices by restricting output. Paradoxically, in India, it has been the other way around: Indian Railways keep prices low and expand output. We have to thank democracy for that.

Oligopoly means there are a few firms that compete on volumes rather than margins. They also follow a revenue maximisation model rather than a profit maximising one. This is an example of Ramsey pricing. You can google it.

So here's the problem: all these segments can achieve their goals if, and only if, they flog their labour by keeping the capital-labour ratio in the firm high. That is, the amount of labour per a given amount of capital is much less than what it should be.

So regardless of whether it's trucking or railways or airlines there is always a shortage of those who operate the trucks, locomotives and planes. Exhausted drivers and pilots are inherent to transport. That is, high capital/labour ratios. It's simply the nature of the beast that those who drive will continue to be overworked and exhausted.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Adani Group plans heliport, hub for air taxis at Navi Mumbai

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Passengers will now be able to ride in helicopters and air taxis to/from Navi Mumbai airport.

The Adani Group plans to develop a heliport and vertiport at Navi Mumbai for connectivity with other parts of Mumbai and Pune. This will be independent of the Navi Mumbai airport and will not impact flight operations

there, Adani Group Director (airports) Jeet Adani told media persons.

It is learnt that the Adani Group has sought a two hectare plot from City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) for developing a heliport and vertiport at Navi Mumbai. The proposal is being considered by CIDCO.

HELICOPTER CORRIDOR
Pune-Mumbai is a very busy helicopter corridor with

around 20-30 daily flights to Juhu or Mahalaxmi racecourse helipads.

At present, the corridor crosses over Navi Mumbai airport. The Airport Authority of India has now developed alternate routes that bypass the airport and these will come into effect from Wednesday.

A standard operating procedure too has been prepared for helicopter operations between Mumbai and Pune. Industry executives

say development of a heliport near Navi Mumbai airport will definitely benefit corporates and business persons from Pune.

"Passengers taking off or landing at Navi Mumbai airport would be able to avail helicopter services to various locations in Maharashtra. To make it feasible and reduce road travel, a dedicated road could be earmarked for exclusive access to heliport from the Navi Mumbai airport. This will make com-

mute easier and encourage helicopter charter operations for business and tourism purposes," said Captain Nitin Welde, a helicopter pilot.

DGCA FRAMEWORK
The Directorate General of Civil Aviation is developing a framework for integration of eVTOLs (electric vertical take off and landing aircraft) or air taxis into civilian airspace.

In 2023, InterGlobe En-

terprises had tied up with Archer Enterprises to launch electric air taxis in India.

Firms such as ePlane Company and Sarla Aviation have proposed manufacturing eVTOLs in India.

Globally, demonstration and test flights of eVTOLs are being carried out but these are not in commercial service yet. For instance, Joby Aviation and Dubai's Road and Transport Authority carried out a crewed air taxi flight last month.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Facts are being misrepresented: A-I Express pilot's lawyer

The lawyer of Captain Virender Sejwal, who was involved in an altercation with a passenger at the Delhi airport, on Sunday said the incident was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport and claimed the facts were being misrepresented. Air India Express will set up an external committee next week to inquire into the incident wherein the off-duty captain assaulted a passenger, sources said. Soon after the incident, the airline suspended the pilot. Sources told *PTI* that a show cause notice has also been served to him seeking an explanation. The passenger, Ankit Dewan, on Friday, shared his experience in a social media post, along with a photo showing blood on his face after the altercation.

PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBANDHU

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

परेशानी

भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र के लिए चुनौतियों भरा रहा पूरा साल

अहमदाबाद हादसे से इंडिगो संकट तक देश को झकझोरा

नई दिल्ली, 21 दिसम्बर (एजेसियां)। भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र के लिए साल 2025 बेहद चुनातीपूर्ण रहा - साल के पूर्वार्द्ध में जहां एयर इंडिया विमान हादसे ने पूरे देश को झकझोर दिया, वहीं अंतिम महीने में 'इंडिगो संकट' लाखों यात्रियों के लिए परेशानी का सबब बना और विमान सेवा कंपनियों के प्रति उनके विश्वास को कमजोर किया। विमानन क्षेत्र के लिए मार्च तक सब कुछ काफी अच्छा चल रहा था।

साल के पहले तीन महीने में यात्रियों की संख्या भी 10.35 प्रतिशत बढ़कर 4.32 करोड़ पर पहुंच गई थी और उम्मीद की जा रही थी कि गर्मी की छुट्टियों के दौरान पहली बार यात्रियों की मासिक संख्या डेढ़ करोड़ के पार पहुंच जाएगी। इसके बाद 22 अप्रैल को पहलगाम में आतंकवादी हमला हुआ और लोगों ने जम्मू-कश्मीर की टिकट रद्द करनी शुरू कर दी।

241 लोगों की मौत हो गई थी देश ने जून महीने में अपने



विमान सेवा कंपनियों के प्रति विश्वास कमजोर हुआ

विमानन इतिहास से सबसे बुरे हादसों में से एक का समाना किया। एयर इंडिया की उड़ान संख्या 171 ने गुजरात के अहमदाबाद हवाई अड्डे से 230 यात्रियों और चालक दल के 12

हजारों उड़ानें रद्द करनी पड़ी

डीजीसीए ने 01 नवंबर से फ्लाइट ड्यूटी के नियमों में बदलाव का दूसरा चरण लागू किया। इन शर्तों को पूरा करने के लिए पहले से अधिक पायलट की जरूरत थी। इस कारण घरेलू यात्रियों के मामले में 60 प्रतिशत से अधिक की हिस्सेदारी रखने वाली इंडिगो ने नवंबर में 1,200 के अधिक उड़ानें रद्द कीं और उसकी उड़ानों में देरी के मामले भी बढ़ते गये। दिसंबर आते-आते उड़ानों में देरी बहुत अधिक बढ़ गई और 03 दिसंबर से बड़ी संख्या में उड़ानें रद्द हुईं। सबसे बुरा हाल 05 दिसंबर को रहा जब एयरलाइंस ने 1,500 से अधिक उड़ानें रद्द कीं। दिसंबर के पूरे पहले सप्ताह में इंडिगो ने हजारों की संख्या में उड़ानें रद्द कीं जिससे लाखों लोगों को परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा।

सदस्यों के साथ लंदन के उड़ान भरी थी। विमान में सवार गैटिवक हवाई अड्डे के लिए 241 लोगों की मौत हो गई।



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

21 DECEMBER 2025

Passenger allegedly beaten by AI pilot

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, DEC. 20

SpiceJet passenger has accused an Air India Express pilot of assaulting him following a dispute over allegedly cutting the boarding queue at Indira Gandhi International Airport's Terminal 1 in an incident that has triggered widespread attention on social media. The passenger, Ankit Dewan, took to X, sharing a photograph showing blood on his face.

He claimed that the incident unfolded in front of his seven-year-old daughter, who, he said, has been deeply traumatised after witnessing the attack. Tagging the Delhi Police on social media,

Dewan questioned why he could not register a complaint after returning from his trip.

"Why can't I file a complaint after coming back? Must I sacrifice my money too, to seek justice? Will the CCTV footage disappear in the next two days till I make it back to Delhi?" he asked. The Delhi



Police, however, claimed that no formal complaint had been received in connection with the incident.

"The matter has come to the knowledge of the police through a social media post. Whenever a written complaint is received by the victim in this regard, appropriate legal action will be taken," the police said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

KANPUR

21 DECEMBER 2025

बेंगलुरु की डेढ़ घंटे, मुंबई की फ्लाइट 50 मिनट लेट

कोहरे का असर फ्लाइट पर भी पड़ रहा है। शनिवार को बेंगलुरु की फ्लाइट डेढ़ घंटे और मुंबई की फ्लाइट 50 मिनट लेट रही। देरी से आने के कारण इनके उड़ने का समय भी देर से रहा। तीनों फ्लाइट से 580 यात्री आए और 594 गए। शनिवार को बेंगलुरु, दिल्ली और मुंबई की फ्लाइट का शेड्यूल रहता है।

शनिवार को बेंगलुरु की फ्लाइट आने का समय दोपहर 12:50 और जाने का समय 1:25 रहता है। बेंगलुरु की फ्लाइट दोपहर 1:20 बजे आकर दोपहर 2:20 बजे उड़ान भर सकी। इस उड़ान में 231 यात्री आए और यहां से 227 गए। दिल्ली की फ्लाइट दो बजे आकर 2:40 बजे जाती है। दिल्ली की

फ्लाइट 1:54 बजे आई और 2:52 बजे जा सकी। दिल्ली के विमान से 165 यात्री आए और 181 यात्रियों ने दिल्ली के लिए उड़ान भरी। मुंबई की फ्लाइट 2:35 बजे के बजाय 3:34 पर आई। यहां से 3:15 बजे की बजाय शाम 4:25 बजे गई। 184 यात्री आए व 186 गए। 160 ट्रेनें भी देरी से आईं पेज ● 6

विमान पर मंडराई मधुमक्खियां लखनऊ की टीम से कराया स्प्रे

जागरण संवाददाता, कानपुर : दिल्ली से आए विमान की उड़ान में मधुमक्खियों का झुंड बाधक बन गया। इसकी वजह से विमान करीब 20 मिनट देरी से उड़ पाया। बताजा गया था कि मधुमक्खियां विमान के अंदर भी पहुंच गई थीं। हालांकि हवाई अड्डा प्रशासन ने इस बात से पूरी तरह इन्कार किया है। मामला शुक्रवार का है। खतरा देख शनिवार को दोबारा लखनऊ से टीम बुलाकर चकेरी हवाई अड्डे के रनवे पर केमिकल का छिड़काव कराया गया। एहतियात के तौर पर रनवे के आसपास पक्षियों को आने से रोकने के बंदोबस्त परखे गए। रनवे की निगरानी के लिए अतिरिक्त स्टाफ भी लगाया गया है।

हवाई अड्डे से थोड़ी दूरी पर स्थित कुछ पेड़ों पर मधुमक्खियों के छत्ते हैं। शुक्रवार को दिल्ली की फ्लाइट शुक्रवार को दो बजे के बजाय आधा घंटे देरी से 2:30 बजे आई थी। विमान वापस जाने से पहले रनवे पर मधुमक्खियों का झुंड विमान के ऊपर मंडराने लगा। इस पर क्रू मेंबर से केमिकल स्प्रे कराया गया। इस दौरान कुछ यात्रियों ने मधुमक्खियों के मंडराने की फोटो खींची ली। केमिकल स्प्रे कराने से

- करीब 20 मिनट की देरी से उड़ सकी था दिल्ली की उड़ान
- हवाई अड्डा निदेशक ने विमान के अंदर जाने की बात नकारा



चकेरी हवाई अड्डा • जागरण आर्काइव

उड़ान में 20 मिनट और देर हुई। यह उड़ान 3:48 बजे जा सकी थी। हवाई अड्डा निदेशक प्रदीप यादव ने बताया कि शुक्रवार को कुछ मधुमक्खियां विमान की सीढ़ी तक पहुंच गई थीं। सतर्कता बरतते हुए शनिवार को रनवे पर केमिकल का छिड़काव कराया गया।

चूहे की वजह से तीन घंटे रोकना पड़ा था विमान: इससे पहले 21 सितंबर को चकेरी हवाई अड्डे पर दिल्ली जाने वाले इंडिगो का विमान एक चूहे की वजह से तीन घंटे तक उड़ान नहीं भर सका था। एक यात्री ने चूहे को विमान के अंदर दौड़ता देखा। इससे हड़कंप मच गया और क्रू मेंबर को सूचना दी गई। सभी यात्रियों को उतारा गया था।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

CAPACITY GROWTH FORECAST REVISED DOWNWARDS

IndiGo may delay global expansion

● Pilot shortages, regulatory action lead to rethink

YARUQHULLAH KHAN
New Delhi, December 21

INDIGO IS LIKELY to defer parts of its international expansion plan as it grapples with a persistent pilot shortage and increased regulatory scrutiny following the recent spate of flight cancellations, according to sources aware of the airline's plans.

The country's largest carrier had earlier planned to add five new international destinations to its direct network by the end of March 2026. Those plans are now likely to be pushed to around July-August, after the airline strengthens its pilot roster and stabilises operations, sources said.

OPERATIONAL STRAIN

■ The airline had planned adding 5 new foreign destinations by March 2026

■ Those plans are now likely to be pushed to around July-August

■ The carrier is looking to build greater flexibility into its network planning for next financial year



Plans to launch direct flights to European cities such as Paris, Brussels and Birmingham by the end of the current fiscal, have been put on hold. The focus, sources said, has shifted to ensuring adequate crew availability so that operational disruptions on one part of the network do not cascade across domestic and international services.

Alongside this, IndiGo is looking to build greater flexibility into its network planning for the next financial year, allowing it to respond more effectively to operational challenges such as aircraft-on-ground situations, pilot shortages and weather-related delays.

Continued on Page 5

IndiGo may delay global expansion

EMAILS SENT TO IndiGo seeking comment did not elicit a response till the time of going to the press. The recalibration of international ambitions comes even as IndiGo emerged as the country's largest airline by international passenger traffic in the July-September 2025 quarter, for the first time. During the quarter, the airline carried 4.13 million global passengers, marginally ahead of the combined Air India and Air India Express network, which transported 4.11 million passengers, accord-

ing to data from DGCA.

IndiGo had set itself a target of operating direct flights to 50 global destinations from India by the end of the current fiscal. It currently flies directly to 45 international destinations across 30 countries.

To support its long-haul push, the airline has entered into a damp lease arrangement with Norse Atlantic Airways. Under this, four Boeing 787-9 aircraft are currently deployed on European routes, with two more expected to join the fleet. IndiGo

is also slated to receive its first Airbus A321XLR aircraft in January 2026, which it plans to deploy on direct services from Delhi and Mumbai to Athens.

However, operational pressures have intensified in recent weeks. Earlier this month, the civil aviation ministry directed IndiGo to cut its overall flying schedule by 10% after nearly 4,000 flights were cancelled between December 3 and December 9. Of these, around 800 were international flights, as per DGCA data.

Festive season sparks fare turbulence on Goa flights

■ **ROUTE TRENDS MIRROR LAST YEAR WITH HIGHER PEAKS**
■ **TRAIN SERVICES ALSO RUNNING AT FULL CAPACITY**

THE GOAN NETWORK

PANAJI

As Goa enters its Christmas-New Year peak, airfares from major Indian cities are rising sharply in the days leading up to Christmas, before softening again towards New Year's Eve -- pattern that broadly mirrors last year, though with steeper spikes on select routes and wider daily swings.

A comparison of fares for December 21 to 31 shows that Goa remains relatively accessible from nearby metros such as Mumbai and Bengaluru, while travellers from northern and rival leisure destinations are paying a festive premium.

From Bengaluru, one of Goa's biggest feeder markets, fares start at a modest Rs 3,826 on December 21 and dip to Rs 3,521 on December 22.

The spike begins on December 23, with prices climbing to Rs 5,172 and peaking at Rs 6,765 on Christmas Eve. Christmas Day itself remains

TICKET PRICES A ROLLERCOASTER RIDE

■ BENGALURU-GOA:

Fares start at Rs 3,826 (Dec 21), dip to Rs 3,521 (Dec 22), spike to Rs 6,765 (Dec 24), stay high on Christmas (Rs 5,978), drop on Dec 27-28 (Rs 3,521), rise again on Dec 30 (Rs 6,184), and ease on Dec 31 (Rs 3,521)

■ NEW DELHI-GOA:

Prices stay elevated, from Rs 7,114 (Dec 22) to a peak

of Rs 8,834 (Dec 24); Dec 31 fares are Rs 6,189, slightly lower than last year

■ **MUMBAI-GOA:** Most price-sensitive route; fares begin at Rs 3,675 (Dec 21), cross Rs 5,900 (Dec 23-24), fluctuate through

the week, and drop to Rs 3,525 (Dec 31)

■ **JAIPUR-GOA:** Costliest route; fares cross Rs 11,000 (Dec 21), near Rs 12,000 (Dec 28), peak at Rs 13,598 (Dec 30); cheapest is Rs 6,817 (Dec 22).

expensive at Rs 5,978.

The post-Christmas dip is brief. While fares fall back to Rs 3,521 on December 27 and 28, they rise again to Rs 6,184 on December 30 before easing to Rs 3,521 on December 31.

Last year, Bengaluru-Goa tickets hovered between Rs 4,000 and Rs 7,500 around Christmas but plunged to as

low as Rs 2,250 on New Year's Eve.

From New Delhi, fares remain elevated throughout the period. Prices range from Rs 7,114 on December 22 to a peak of Rs 8,834 on December 24. Even on December 31, tickets cost Rs 6,189 -- slightly less than last year's New Year's Eve average of about Rs 6,500.

Mumbai continues to be the most price-sensitive route as fares open at Rs 3,675 on December 21, surge past Rs 5,900 on December 23 and 24, and then fluctuate through the week. December 31 tickets are available at Rs 3,525, which is close to last year's rock-bottom rates of under Rs 3,000.

From Jaipur -- a rival lei-

sure and high-end travel destination -- fares to Goa are the steepest. Prices cross Rs 11,000 on December 21, rise to nearly Rs 12,000 on December 28, and touch a high of Rs 13,598 on December 30. Even the cheapest day, December 22, costs Rs 6,817.

In 2024, long-haul domestic routes to Goa largely stayed within the Rs 7,000-Rs 10,000 range during Christmas week. This year's Jaipur fares indicate both limited capacity and a willingness among travellers to pay more for Goa's year-end pull.

Train services to Goa are also running at full capacity, with most tickets on waiting lists carrying less than a 50 percent chance of confirmation, indicating heavy festive-season demand.

Meanwhile, the Goa Police, including the Traffic Police, have devised a comprehensive strategy to manage crowds during the peak festive period, particularly along the coastal belt.

Cold wave, dense fog grip state; flights disrupted

20 districts to experience very dense to moderate fog

OUR STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh remained in the grip of a cold wave on Saturday as dense fog prevailed across several regions, disrupting flight operations. Bangalore-Bhopal-Bangalore flight was cancelled at Raja Bhoj Airport. The fog cover since morning has resulted in poor visibility on roads and streets.

West Madhya Pradesh specially experienced cold wave conditions along with dense fog due to Western Disturbances bringing intense winter weather. Impact of the Cold Wave prevailed in Indore, Kalyanpur (Shahdol), Seoni districts. Cold Day pre-



vailed in Umaria, Kalyanpur and (Shahdol) districts in the last 24 hours. Cold wave-like condition is due to western disturbance, according to teratological department officials.

Orange alert has been issued for Very Dense Fog in Gwalior, Datia, Morena, Singrauli, Sidhi, Rewa, Maunjanj. Similarly, dense fog is likely in

Cities	temp°C	Bhopal	6.2
Shahdol	2.8	Chhindwara	6.8
Umaria	4.3	Raisen	6.8
Anuppur	4.6	Datia	7.1
Pachmarhi	5.2	Satna	7.1
Rajgarh	5.4	Mandla	7.3
Rewa	5.5	Damoh	7.4
Indore	5.6	Khajuraho	7.4
Malanjkhanda	5.6	Khajuraho	7.4
Nowgong	6.1	Betul	7.5

Bhind, Satna, Panna, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Niwari. Moderate Fog At Isolated Places Shahdol, Umaria, Damoh, Katni, Jabalpur, Maihar

Cold Wave At Isolated Places Indore.

At the temperature front, Bhopal recorded day temperature (maximum temperature)

25.3 degrees Celsius while it recorded 6.2 degrees Celsius night temperature (minimum temperature) which was 4.1 degrees below normal. Indore recorded 27.1 degrees day temperature while it recorded night temperature 5.6 degrees Celsius which was 5.1 degrees below normal.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

यात्री से मारपीट का मामला

एआई एक्सप्रेस का पायलट सस्पेंड और कारण बताओ नोटिस भी जारी

एजेसी नई दिल्ली

यहां के इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर एक चौंकाने वाली घटना सामने आई है। एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के एक ऑफ-ड्यूटी पायलट द्वारा यात्री के साथ मारपीट किए जाने के मामले ने नागरिक उड्डयन क्षेत्र को हिला दिया है। अब एआई एक्सप्रेस ने पायलट के खिलाफ सख्त कार्रवाई करते हुए उसे तत्काल प्रभाव से निलंबित कर दिया है और कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी किया है। यह घटना शुक्रवार को दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट के टर्मिनल-1 पर हुई। आरोपी पायलट वीरेंद्र



एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस

सेजवाल उस समय किसी दूसरी एयरलाइन से यात्री के रूप में यात्रा कर रहा था। इसी दौरान उसका यात्री अंकित दीवान से विवाद हो गया, जो देखते ही देखते मारपीट में बदल गया। अंकित दीवान ने सोशल मीडिया पर अपनी आपबीती साझा करते हुए चेहरे पर खून के निशान वाली तस्वीर भी पोस्ट की।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

सौ से ज्यादा उड़ानें रद्द, यात्री परेशान

सांसत

नई दिल्ली, प्रमुख संवाददाता। राजधानी समेत देश के बड़े हिस्से में छाए कोहरे का असर रविवार को भी विमान सेवाओं पर देखने को मिला। दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर आने वाली और यहां से उड़ान भरने वाली सौ से ज्यादा उड़ानों को कम दृश्यता के चलते निरस्त कर दिया गया।

तीन सौ के लगभग विमानों के अपने निर्धारित समय से देरी से संचालित किए जाने का समाचार है। दिल्ली में खासतौर पर मध्य रात्रि के समय मध्यम स्तर से लेकर घने स्तर का कोहरा देखने को मिला। कोहरे के चलते दृश्यता का स्तर प्रभावित हुआ। जिसका असर

८८ मैं सुबह से हवाई अड्डे पर बैठा हूं, लेकिन घने कोहरे की वजह से मेरी उड़ान बार-बार टलती रही और आखिरकार रद्द कर दी गई। इससे मुझे काफी परेशानी झेलनी पड़ी। - गिरीश, यात्री

८८ मेरी कनेक्टिंग फ्लाइट थी और कोहरे के कारण पहली ही उड़ान देर से चली। इसके बाद सारी योजना बिगड़ गई। इस हालात में यात्री पूरी तरह मुश्किल में फंस गए हैं। - गगन, यात्री

विमानन सेवाओं पर भी पड़ा है। जानकारी के मुताबिक घने कोहरे के चलते रविवार को राजधानी पहुंचने वाली 59 और यहां से उड़ान भरने वाली 51 उड़ानों को निरस्त करना पड़ा। जबकि, तीन सौ के लगभग उड़ानों को आधे घंटे या उससे ज्यादा देरी से संचालित किया गया।

कोहरे के चलते उड़ानों के संचालन में आई दिक्कतों से लोगों को बचाने के लिए डायल को ओर से हर दो घंटे पर परामर्श जारी किया गया। इसमें लोगों को सलाह दी गई कि अपनी उड़ान की जानकारी के लिए अपनी विमान कंपनी के संपर्क में रहें, जिससे किसी भी परिवर्तन का समय से पता चल सके।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

पायलट ने यात्री पर जातीय टिप्पणी का आरोप लगाया

मारपीट मामला

नई दिल्ली, प्रमुख संवाददाता। इंदिरा गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर पायलट-यात्री विवाद थमने का नाम नहीं ले रहा है। शनिवार को यात्री द्वारा मारपीट का आरोप लगाने के बाद अब पायलट ने पलटवार किया है।

पायलट ने कहा कि यात्री ने जातिवादी टिप्पणी की थी इस कारण वहां पर दोनों के बीच हाथापाई हुई। दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर पायलट यात्री के बीच हुए विवाद के बीच जांच समिति का गठन किया जाएगा। यह समिति मामले की जांच करके जिम्मेदारी तय करेगी। सूत्रों के मुताबिक इस संबंध में

सीआईएसएफ व बीसीएस से भी विस्तृत रिपोर्ट मांगी गई है। दूसरी ओर, सीआईएसएफ ने यात्री को मदद नहीं पहुंचाने के आरोप का खंडन किया है। राजधानी के इंदिरा गांधी हवाई अड्डे पर शुक्रवार को एक पायलट द्वारा यात्री पर कथित तौर पर हमला किए जाने का मामला सामने आया था।

सूत्रों की मानें तो इस संबंध में एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस द्वारा अगले सप्ताह तक बाहरी समिति का गठन किया जाएगा। जिस समय की यह घटना है उस वक्त वह पायलट ड्यूटी पर नहीं थे। सूत्रों का कहना है कि घटना के बाद ही विमानन कंपनी ने पायलट को निलंबित कर दिया और उनसे स्पष्टीकरण मांगते हुए कारण बताओ

पीड़ित ने सोशल मीडिया पर बयां किया था दर्द

पीड़ित यात्री ने सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट में शनिवार को लिखा कि 19 दिसंबर को अपने परिवार और चार महीने के मासूम बच्चे के साथ स्टाइसजेट की फ्लाइट से यात्रा कर रहे थे। उन्होंने लिखा कि स्ट्रॉलर और बच्चे की वजह से उन्हें स्टाफ सिक्वोरिटी लाइन में भेजा गया था। उनका आरोप है कि वहां मौजूद एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के ऑफ-ड्यूटी पायलट कतार तोड़ रहे थे। जब उसने आपत्ति जताई, तो पायलट ने उन्हें अनपढ़ कहकर अपमानित किया और उनके चेहरे पर मुक्का जड़ दिया, जिससे वे लहलुहान हो गए। उन्होंने एक गंभीर आरोप लगाया कि घटना के बाद उन पर मामले को आगे न बढ़ाने के लिए दबाव बनाया गया था। पीड़ित के अनुसार, उन्हें यह कहकर डराया गया कि यदि वे कानूनी कार्रवाई या पुलिस के चक्कर में पड़ते हैं, तो बुकिंग खत्म हो सकती है।

नोटिस भी जारी किया गया है। पायलट चुंकि श्रमिक श्रेणी में आते हैं इसलिए यह कार्यवाही भी श्रम कानूनों के तहत की जा रही है। घटना की जांच के लिए अगले सप्ताह तक बाहरी समिति का

गठन किया जाएगा। नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने भी इस मुद्दे पर शनिवार को कहा था कि घटना को गंभीरता से लिया गया है और विमानन कंपनी को निर्देश दिया गया है कि पायलट को तत्काल

प्रभाव से काम से हटा दिया जाए। मंत्रालय ने कहा था कि औपचारिक जांच के आदेश दिए गए हैं और बीसीएसएफ और सीआईएसएफ से विस्तृत रिपोर्ट मांगी गई है।

दूसरी ओर, आरोपी पायलट बयान जारी करके कहा है कि यह मुद्दा उसी दिन सीआईएसएफ अधिकारियों की मौजूदगी में सुलझ गया था। उन्होंने जातिवादी टिप्पणियां किए जाने का भी आरोप लगाया।

वहीं, सीआईएसएफ ने कहा है कि अपने ऊपर लगे आरोपों का खंडन किया है। सीआईएसएफ ने कहा है कि उनकी ओर से यात्री से औपचारिक शिकायत दर्ज कराने की सलाह भी दी गई थी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Air India issues notice to pilot in passenger assault incident

Air India Express will set up an external committee next week to inquire into the incident of one of its off-duty captain assaulting a passenger at the Delhi airport on Friday, sources said. Soon after the incident, the Tata Group-owned airline suspended the pilot and the sources said a show-cause notice had also been served on him seeking an explanation. The proceedings are being carried under the labour laws as a pilot comes under the workmen category. The incident occurred at Terminal 1 of the Delhi airport. On Saturday, the Civil Aviation Ministry said it has taken serious cognisance of the incident and directed the airline to ground the pilot with immediate effect. PTI

AIR INDIA EXPRESS PILOT ON CONFRONTATION AT DELHI AIRPORT

‘Incident misrepresented on social media as pilot-passenger dispute’

Express News Service
New Delhi, December 21

A DAY after the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) ordered a formal investigation into the alleged assault of a passenger by an off-duty Air India Express pilot at Delhi airport’s Terminal 1, the pilot, Virender Sejwal, on Sunday claimed that the incident had been “misrepresented” on social media, “unfairly projecting it as a ‘pilot vs passenger’ dispute”.

The altercation was a “purely personal matter between two passengers” and had “no connection whatsoever” with his professional responsibilities, the pilot underlined in a statement issued by his lawyer on his behalf.

The passenger, Ankit Dewan, had earlier alleged on social media that during the security check for his SpiceJet flight on December 19, he and his family members, including a four-month-old baby, were guided to use the security check meant for staff and persons with reduced mobility. He said he had an argument with Sejwal, who was among airline staff members cutting the



A screengrab of the video shows Air India Express pilot Virender Sejwal.

CREDIT: X/ANKITDEWAN

queue, after which the pilot assaulted him and left him injured.

Following the incident, the MoCA ordered a formal inquiry, directed Air India Express to ground the pilot with immediate effect and sought reports from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF). Air India Express said it had removed Sejwal from official duties, pending investigation, and would take disciplinary action based on the findings.

However, in a statement, Sejwal on Sunday alleged that Dewan verbally abused him without provocation and con-

tinued using “abusive, degrading and threatening language” even after being asked to stop. The statement also claimed that “casteist remarks were made against Capt Sejwal, and absolutely unfathomable threats were made to female members of his family including a child”. As per the statement, the social media portrayal was “one-sided”.

“The situation escalated into a physical altercation in which Captain Sejwal was also hurt; he also sustained injuries during the scuffle. CISF personnel intervened promptly, repeatedly told Mr Dewan to calm down and stop abusing, yet he refused to relent and continued his misconduct in their presence,” it read.

The statement added, “The incident between the two passengers was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport. Both parties ‘voluntarily signed a statement,’ confirming that they did not wish to pursue any legal action. Contrary to misleading claims, Mr. Ankit Dewan signed willingly—there was no coercion or pressure involved.”

In a series of posts on X

Dewan on Friday shared images showing injuries on his face and alleged that the CISF personnel failed to act promptly. He also alleged that he was forced to write a letter stating that he will not pursue this matter further. He claimed he had only two options – file a complaint and miss the flight, which would have wasted Rs 1.2 lakh that he and his family had spent on their holiday bookings; or continue with his journey along with his family.

In one of the posts, Dewan wrote, “@DelhiPolice, why can’t I file a complaint after coming back? Must I sacrifice my money too, to seek justice? Will the CCTV footage disappear in the 2 days till I make it back to Delhi?”

The CISF, however, rejected allegations of inaction, saying its personnel intervened immediately, separated the two individuals and arranged medical assistance. It also said Dewan was advised to file a formal complaint but declined to do so at the airport, recording this in writing.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Police said it has not yet received a complaint yet.

पायलट को कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी

यात्री से मारपीट के आरोप में एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के पायलट को किया गया था निलंबित

जनसत्ता ब्यूरो
नई दिल्ली, 21 दिसंबर।

एअर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस शुक्रवार को दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे पर एक कैप्टन द्वारा एक यात्री पर कथित रूप से हमला किए जाने की घटना की जांच के लिए अगले सप्ताह एक बाहरी समिति का गठन करेगी। सूत्रों ने यह जानकारी दी। घटना के समय उक्त कैप्टन ड्यूटी पर नहीं थे। सूत्रों ने बताया कि घटना के तुरंत बाद टाटा समूह की इस एअरलाइन ने पायलट को निलंबित कर दिया और उनसे स्पष्टीकरण मांगते हुए एक कारण बताओ नोटिस भी जारी किया है। इससे पहले भी इस साल यात्रियों और एअरलाइंस कर्मियों के बीच विवाद की कुछ घटनाएं हुई हैं।

उन्होंने बताया कि पायलट श्रमिक श्रेणी में आते हैं, इसलिए यह कार्रवाई श्रम कानूनों के तहत की जा रही है। घटना की जांच के लिए अगले सप्ताह एक बाहरी जांच समिति गठित की जाएगी। घटना शुक्रवार को दिल्ली हवाई अड्डे के टर्मिनल-1 (टी1) पर हुई। यात्री अंकित दीवान ने शुक्रवार को सोशल मीडिया पर अपने अनुभव को साझा किया था और शडप के बाद

पायलट ने एअरलाइन को बताया, जातिगत टिप्पणी की गई थी



पर हुई एक घटना में हमारे एअरलाइंस के कर्मी की दूसरी एअरलाइन के एक यात्री के तौर बहस हो गई थी। एअरलाइंस ने ऐसे व्यवहार की कड़ी निंदा करते हुए कहा कि संबंधित कर्मचारी को जांच पूरी होने तक तुरंत प्रभाव से ड्यूटी से हटा दिया गया है। इस मामले की हम एक निष्पक्ष और पूरी प्रक्रिया के तहत जांच और कानून प्रवर्तन अधिकारियों को पूरा सहयोग करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध हैं।

उनके चेहरे पर खून लगे होने की एक तस्वीर भी पोस्ट की थी। उन्होंने पायलट चिरेंद्र सेजवाल की एक तस्वीर भी साझा की थी। नागर विमानन मंत्रालय ने शनिवार को कहा कि उसने इस घटना को गंभीरता से लिया है और एअरलाइन को निर्देश दिया कि पायलट को तत्काल प्रभाव से काम से हटा दिया जाए।

मंत्रालय ने दीवान की पोस्ट के जवाब में एक्स पर औपचारिक जांच के आदेश दिए गए हैं। बीसीएस और केंद्रीय औद्योगिक सुरक्षा बल (सीआइएसएफ) से विस्तृत रपट मांगी गई है। एअरलाइन ने साफ कहा कि इस तरह के व्यवहार को किसी भी सूरत में बर्दाश्त नहीं किया जाएगा। पायलट को कारण बताओ

नोटिस जारी कर उससे स्पष्टीकरण मांगा गया है। समिति घटना के हर पहलु की जांच करेगी और उसी के आधार पर आगे की अनुशासनात्मक कार्रवाई तय की जाएगी। एअरलाइन अधिकारियों ने पीड़ित यात्री से भी संपर्क किया है और सहयोग का आश्वासन दिया है।

DGCA grapples with technical void at top

Digital Ranka
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The operational meltdown by IndiGo, India's largest airline, in the first week of December has brought back to the fore the need for experienced specialists running the country's aviation regulator, rather than letting it stay a revolving door for the government's bureaucrats.

Experts have raised concerns that ten generalist officials have served at the top office at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in the last 17 years—all serving or retired bureaucrats from the government's elite Indian Administrative Service, or IAS, cadre, and lacking specialist knowledge critical in running a sector like aviation.

The last non-IAS officer to



The last non-IAS officer to head DGCA was Kanu Gohain.

head the DGCA was Kanu Gohain, a technocrat who rose through the ranks of the aviation regulator to the top job before retiring in 2008. Since then, all 10 director generals have been bureaucrats, including Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, who took over in January.

TURN TO PAGE 8

IndiGo crisis exposes technical void at DGCA's highest levels

FROM PAGE 1

In early December, IndiGo cancelled more than 4,500 flights due to a pilot shortage, failing to meet new DGCA regulations capping pilots' flying hours from midnight to 6 am. A nationwide uproar prompted the aviation ministry and DGCA to launch an investigation, slash IndiGo's daily flights by 10%, and demand explanations from IndiGo chief executive officer (CEO) Pieter Elbers and the airline's chief operating officer Ildre Parqueras.

While the IndiGo cancellations seem to have been a case of mismanagement by the airline, the role of ministry of civil aviation and DGCA came under

the lens for lapses.

"They did not spot the cracks in time, they did not prune the expanded schedules in time, nor did they verify if they had the pilots for the schedule, even when they saw the troubles brewing in November," said Sanjay Lazar, aviation safety specialist and CEO of Avialaz Consulting.

Six months ago, Air India's Flight 171 crashed seconds after takeoff from Ahmedabad, with at least 260 fatalities. The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau is still investigating what caused the country's worst civil aviation disaster.

"There is a clear need for a DG with technical skills and knowledge, it ended with Kanu

Gohain, who retired after extensions, which followed the appointment of IAS officers. You need someone with domain knowledge and qualified experience in the regulator's post; you cannot bring someone who doesn't know the subject," said Captain Motan Ranganathan, a former airline instructor pilot.

Emails sent to DGCA and the ministry of civil aviation did not elicit a response.

The wisdom of a specialist leading DGCA has been made several times in the past including in a report commissioned on aviation safety more than 25 years ago. "This concern is not new. As far back as 1997, Air Marshal J.K. Seth, in a land-



In early December, IndiGo cancelled more than 4,500 flights due to a pilot shortage.

mark report, underscored the need for an autonomous aviation regulator staffed by sector specialists," said Amit Singh, CEO of aviation safety think

tank, Safety Matters Foundation, and a former pilot. The Seth report's recommendations, including that of an independent regulator, were never

implemented.

The DGCA should be headed by someone who has spent time as a pilot, engineer, or technical expert, added Lazar.

The current director general Kidwai, a 1996-batch IAS officer, previously served as the additional secretary in the Department of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

The trend of non-specialists leading DGCA is in contrast to aviation regulators in other countries. The US aviation regulatory body is the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), headed by Bryan Bedford, a former CEO of Republic Airways with over three decades of aviation experience.

The head of Europe's main

aviation regulator, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency, Florian Guillemet, also had aviation experience. Guillemet worked at France's DSNA, the agency responsible for air traffic control, communications, and information for France, and Air France.

At the UK, Sir Stephen Hillier, formerly chief of the Royal Air Force, chairs the Civil Aviation Authority. Its CEO Rob Bishston is a qualified commercial pilot with stints at easyJet and other airlines, according to the UK regulator's website.

Beyond the issue of technical expertise, experts also pointed out that the short term of the IAS officers at the helm of the regulatory body for only one or

two years led to leadership instability at the DGCA.

"The Director General is often a serving officer on deputation, promoted and moved out within a year or two, preventing continuity in regulatory oversight," said Singh, adding that DGCA requires a long-term head who understands the complexities of India's aviation ecosystem.

The fast expansion in aviation necessitates urgent changes in the sector's regulation, experts said. India's top three carriers, IndiGo, Air India, and Akasa Air, expect to increase their fleets by nearly 1,800 planes by 2035.

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



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Air India Express to set up external inquiry panel to probe IGIA assault

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI: Air India Express will set up an external committee next week to inquire into the incident of one of its off-duty captain assaulting a passenger at the Delhi airport on Friday, sources said.

Soon after the incident on Friday, the Tata Group-owned airline suspended the pilot. According to sources, a show cause notice has also been served to him seeking an explanation.

The proceedings are being carried under the labour laws as a pilot comes under the workmen category. An external inquiry committee will set up next week to probe the incident, the sources said.

The incident occurred at Terminal 1 (T1) of the Delhi airport on Friday.

The passenger Ankit Dewan, on Friday, shared his experience in a social media post, along with a photo showing blood on his face after the altercation. He also shared a photo of the pilot Virender Sejwal.



“Civil aviation ministry has taken serious cognizance of the incident and directed the airline to ground the pilot with immediate effect”

On Saturday, the civil aviation ministry said it has taken serious cognizance of the incident and directed the airline to ground the pilot with immediate effect.

“A formal enquiry has been ordered. Detailed reports have been sought from BCAS and CISE,” the ministry had said in a post on X in a response to a

post by Dewan.

In a statement on Friday, Air India Express said it is aware of an incident at the Delhi airport involving one of its employees, who was travelling as a passenger on another airline, and had an altercation with another passenger.

“We unequivocally condemn such behaviour. The employee concerned has been removed from official duties with immediate effect, pending investigation.

“Appropriate disciplinary action will be initiated based on the findings of the inquiry,” the airline had said.

Air India Express officials had also contacted the passenger.

Sejwal’s lawyer said the incident was resolved in the presence of CISE officials, with both parties voluntarily signing a statement agreeing not to pursue legal action. The lawyer claimed social media reports misrepresented facts and that threats were made against Sejwal’s family, stressing the matter is personal and unrelated to his professional duties.

एयरलाइंस कंपनी ने आरोपी पायलट को दिया नोटिस



कैप्टन वीरेन्द्र सेजवाल (बाएँ) पर लगा था यात्री अनिकेत (दाएँ) को पीटने का आरोप

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■ नई दिल्ली : दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट के टी-1 पर 19 दिसंबर की दोपहर एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के कैप्टन वीरेन्द्र सेजवाल द्वारा कथित रूप से स्टाइसजेट की फ्लाइट पकड़कर दिल्ली से उदयपुर जा रहे यात्री अंकित चौबान के साथ मारपीट मामले में एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने पहले उन्हें छत्रंड़ किया, फिर समझ और इसके बाद कारण बताओ नोटिस भेजा है। जिसमें पायलट वीरेन्द्र को 48 घंटे का समय देते हुए इस मामले में स्पष्टीकरण मांगा गया है कि उन्होंने ऐसा क्यों किया ?

अंदेश यह भी बताया जा रहा है कि आरोपी पायलट को टर्मिनल भी किया जा सकता है। सूत्रों ने बताया कि शुकवार दोपहर को जब यह घटना हुई। भले ही तब टी-1 पर तैनात सीआईएसएफ ने आरोपी पायलट वीरेन्द्र को रोकने की बजाए उन्हें बंगलुरु वाली इंडिगो की फ्लाइट पकड़ने दी, लेकिन बंगलुरु पहुंचने के बाद जब पायलट को यहां से एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की एक फ्लाइट को फ्लाई करने की ड्यूटी लगी थी। उसके लिए एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस ने उन्हें रोक दिया था। वहां एयरलाइंस ने पायलट को फ्लाइट उड़ाने की परमिशन

नहीं दी थी। आरोपी पायलट को वहीं से घर जाने के लिए बोल दिया गया था।

बताया जाता है कि आरोपी पायलट स्टाइसजेट से करीब दो साल पहले एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस में आए थे। अब दोनों ही एयरलाइंस में इनका ट्रेक रिकॉर्ड खंगला जा रहा है। इसमें इनके बिहेवियर और साइकोलॉजिकल टेस्ट के बारे में भी जानकारी जुटाई जा रही है। पायलट वीरेन्द्र ने जिस तरह की मारपीट की। यह नो फ्लाई

IGI के टी-1 पर एक यात्री के साथ मारपीट का मामला

लिस्ट में डालने के लिए ग्रेड-2 लेवल पर आती है। यानी यह घटना ग्रेड-1 में कहासुनी से कहीं अधिक खतरनाक स्तर से पहले वाले स्तर की थी। जिसमें इन्हें तीन महीने से लेकर एक

दो या तीन साल तक नो फ्लाई लिस्ट में डाला जा सकता है। क्योंकि, उस वक्त यह ऑन ड्यूटी नहीं बल्कि यात्री के रूप में सफर कर रहे थे।

हालांकि, अभी तक आरोपी पायलट वीरेन्द्र सेजवाल को नो फ्लाई लिस्ट में नहीं डाला गया है। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस का कहना है कि चूंकि आरोपी पायलट इंडिगो की फ्लाइट का पैसेंजर था। ऐसे में नियमानुसार नो फ्लाई लिस्ट में डालने का काम इंडिगो और दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट ऑपरेटर डायल को करना होगा। वह तो अपने स्तर पर जो एक्शन लेना है, उसकी जांच कर ही रहे हैं।

‘पायलट को नहीं खोना चाहिए था आपा’

एविएशन एंड टूरिज्म एक्सपर्ट कमिटी, इंडियन चैम्बर ऑफ कॉमर्स के चेयरमैन सुभाष गोयल का कहना है कि एजेन्सियों को तुरंत बीच में आकर इसे रोकना चाहिए था। जब मारपीट सीआईएसएफ के सामने हुई तो आखिर सीआईएसएफ ने आरोपी पायलट को वहां से जाने कैसे दिया। उसे पकड़कर ज्यों नही पुलिस के हवाले किया गया। गोयल का कहना है कि पायलट अगर ड्यूटी पर नहीं भी था तो उन्हें किसी भी सूरत में अपना आपा नहीं खोना चाहिए था। वही CAPA

इंडिया के सीईओ और डायरेक्टर कपिल कोल का कहना है कि यह बड़ी ही रेयर घटना है। उन्होंने कहा कि जिस तरह से कोई यात्री अगर क्रू के साथ बदसलुकी करता है उसे नो फ्लाई लिस्ट में डाल दिया जाता है। ठीक इसी तरह से पायलट के साथ भी यही करना चाहिए। कपिल का कहना है कि निश्चित रूप से पायलट को अपना आपा नहीं खोना चाहिए था। यह पूरी एविएशन इंडस्ट्री और पायलट फेडरेशन के लिए गंभीर विषय है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

पायलट नहीं, इंडिगो के रोस्टर सिस्टम में गड़बड़ी से मची थी अफरातफरी!

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■ नई दिल्ली : इंडिगो की वजह से देश के एविएशन सेक्टर में पिछले दिनों मची अफरा-तफरी की अहम वजह पायलटों की कमी होना नहीं बल्कि इंडिगो का खुद का ऑटोमैटिक रोस्टर सिस्टम गड़बड़ाना बताया जा रहा है।

सूत्र ने बताया कि नवंबर महीने में कई घटनाएं घटीं। इसमें सबसे बड़ी समस्या अमेरिका में 30 अक्टूबर को जेट ब्लू एयरलाइंस की एयरबस-320 वाली एक फ्लाइट में घटी घटना रही। जिसके बाद दुनियाभर में एयरबस-320 फैमिली के सभी प्लेन में एक सॉफ्टवेयर को अपग्रेड करने के लिए कहा गया। 29 नवंबर से 30 नवंबर की सुबह 5:29 बजे तक



सॉफ्टवेयर अपग्रेड करना था। इंडिगो को 200 प्लेन में सॉफ्टवेयर अपग्रेड करना था। प्रेशर में इंडिगो ने भारत में अपने छह मॉडर्न सेंटरों पर सभी प्लेन को किसी ना किसी एक सेंटर में होते हुए उड़ाया। इससे उसके प्लेन और पायलटों का रोस्टर गड़बड़ा गया।

AI Image

■ दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर सिस्टम फेल होने और ग्लोबल सॉफ्टवेयर अपग्रेड ने दिक्कतें बढ़ाईं।

■ नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय ने 5 दिसंबर को जांच कमिटी बनाई है।

इंडिगो का सिस्टम इसे सहन नहीं कर पाया। सूत्रों ने बताया कि इसके बाद इंडिगो ने अपने इस रोस्टर को मैन्युअली और ऑटोमैटिक दोनों तरीके से चलाने की कोशिश की। लेकिन यह संभल नहीं पाया और दो दिसंबर से हालत बंद से बदतर होते गए।

110 flights cancelled due to low visibility



PIONEER NEWS SERVICE
■ New Delhi

A total of 110 flights were cancelled and over 370 services delayed due to low-visibility conditions amid fog at the Delhi airport on Sunday.

An official said 59 arrivals and 51 departures were cancelled at the airport. On the railway front, over 50 trains operated by Northern Railways have been delayed due to adverse weather conditions and fog.

According to the latest information available on flight tracking website Flightradar24.Com, more than 370 flights were delayed and the average delay time was around 26 minutes for departures at the airport.

Palam recorded its lowest visibility at 300 metres due to moderate fog between 10 pm and 12.30 am IST, which later improved to 600 metres in shallow fog. East-south-easterly winds were blowing at around 7 kmph, the IMD said.

At Safdarjung, visibility dropped to its lowest at 200 metres in moderate fog between 1.30 am and 2.30 am IST. It gradually improved to 500 metres in shallow fog by 5.30 am IST, according to the IMD. The IMD further said that visibility at Palam again

fell to 350 metres, with east-southeasterly winds at 7 kmph, while shallow fog continued at Safdarjung with visibility around 500 metres and variable winds till 9 am IST. The weather department has forecast moderate fog for Monday with maximum and minimum temperature expected to hover around 21 degrees Celsius and 9 degrees Celsius.

In a post on X in the evening, Delhi airport operator DIAL said operations are running smoothly. DIAL operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), the country's largest airport that generally handles around 1,300 flights daily.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) issued an advisory on Sunday, warning that fog conditions in parts of northern India are affecting visibility and may lead to delays or changes in flight operations at select airports.

"Fog conditions in parts of Northern India are affecting visibility and may lead to delays or changes in flight operations at select airports. Passengers are advised to check flight updates with their airlines through official channels and allow extra time for airport travel and formalities," AAI's advisory read.

Delhi airport's passenger

advisory at 10 am on Sunday said that flight operations at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport "continue to be normal", but advised passengers to "consult" with their respective airlines for updated flight schedules. "Operations at Delhi airport continue to be normal. For updated flight schedules, please consult your airline or visit the official airport website. We wish all passengers a safe and pleasant journey," the advisory on X read.

Flight operations have been disrupted for the past many days in Delhi and other airports due to dense fog.

The air quality in the national Capital was recorded in the 'very poor' category on Sunday morning with an overall Air Quality Index (AQI) reading of 377, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

According to the CPCB's Sameer app, 16 out of the 40 monitoring stations in the city reported air quality in the 'severe' category, while the remaining recorded 'very poor' levels. The minimum temperature settled at 9.4 degrees Celsius, 1.3 degrees above the season's average whereas the maximum temperature settled at 18.1 degrees Celsius.

IndiGo to issue ₹10,000 voucher to stranded passengers from 26 Dec



AGENCIES
New Delhi, 20 December

Indian carrier IndiGo will start compensating passengers affected by widespread flight cancellations earlier this month, from next week.

The airline will begin issuing travel vouchers worth Rs 10,000 from 26 December to passengers who were severely impacted and stranded at airports for several hours on 3, 4, and 5 December, according to multiple reports.

These vouchers are over and above the compensation of Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 mandated under government norms. The decision was taken at a high-level review chaired by Aviation Secretary Samir Sinha, and the government has asked IndiGo to ensure payments reach all eligible passengers without further delay.

A decision was made at the meeting that payments should begin within a week for passengers who booked directly through IndiGo's website, since their data is already with the airline.

IndiGo was directed to collect passenger details from travel agents and online travel agencies and ensure direct payments to affected customers.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has been tasked with monitoring the

WHILE INDI GO HAS INITIATED REFUNDS FOR CANCELLED FLIGHTS, MANY PASSENGERS WHO BOOKED THROUGH ONLINE TRAVEL AGENCIES (OTAs) REMAIN UNPAID, INDICATING COORDINATION GAPS BETWEEN AIRLINES AND BOOKING PLATFORMS

successful dispersion of compensation, and the civil aviation ministry will monitor the process through its Air Seva grievance portal.

While IndiGo has initiated refunds for cancelled flights, many passengers who booked through Online Travel Agencies (OTAs) remain unpaid, indicating coordination gaps between airlines and booking platforms, the reports said.

MakeMyTrip had processed refunds worth nearly Rs 10 crore so far after direction from DCGA, even before receiving payments from IndiGo, the report said.

IndiGo Chairman Vikram Singh Mehta had earlier said that the airline's Board will bring in external technical experts to work with the management and identify the root causes behind last week's massive flight disruptions.

He said the experts will help ensure that such large-scale operational failures never happen again.

Why aviation crisis caused a meltdown

SHREY MADAAN

Every few years, India gets a reminder of just how fragile its aviation ecosystem really is. This time, it took a week-long meltdown at IndiGo a prominent airline service, hundreds of cancellations, airports reduced to holding zones for luggage, and passengers stranded across the country, to expose a truth policymakers prefer to ignore: when a major chunk of the market is controlled by just two airlines, one company's internal crisis becomes a national emergency.

IndiGo's shortage of pilots, triggered by the rollout of long-delayed fatigue-management rules, should have disrupted one airline. Instead, it paralysed India's entire aviation network. Fares shot up to Rs40,000-80,000, refunds lagged for days, and alternative carriers simply didn't have the capacity to absorb the shock. In a competitive market, passengers would have options. In India's duopolistic one, they had none.

The fatigue rules themselves were not the villain. Pilot exhaustion is a well-documented safety threat globally, and aligning India's Flight Duty Time Limitations (FDTL) with international norms is long overdue. But the transition was mishandled on every side. Regulators announced the rules almost two years ago,

then delayed and re-delayed their enforcement, only to push through implementation abruptly, leaving airlines scrambling. IndiGo, famous for tight turnarounds and a "lean-staffing" model, underestimated how many additional pilots it needed. The regulator underestimated how quickly a brittle system can collapse.

This combination, poor planning meets a market with almost no buffers, is why passengers ended up paying the price. What's missing from the conversation is the structural cause: India's aviation sector lacks depth. When just two airlines, IndiGo and Air India, hold over 90 per cent of market share, the entire system depends on their ability to function flawlessly. No modern industry should operate on this kind of razor's edge. The German aviation sector didn't collapse when Lufthansa suffered an IT system outage. The US doesn't grind to a halt when Delta faces a staffing shortfall. In those markets, multiple players create resilience. In India, passengers face a system where when "one airline falters, everyone suffers."

And consumers suffered immensely. People missed job interviews, medical appointments and weddings. Some reached airports at dawn only to discover their flights cancelled with no SMS alert. Refunds trickled in only after government orders.



A country aiming to become the world's third largest aviation market cannot operate with outdated passenger protection norms. India needs a clear and enforceable Air Passenger Bill of Rights, one that guarantees automatic funds, timely alerts and fair compensation for last minute cancellations, without burdening airlines under knee-jerk regulations.

But consumer rights alone won't fix a market with too little competition. For genuine resilience, India must remove barriers that make it hard for new airlines to scale: high ATF

taxes that erode margins, slot allocation policies that reward incumbents, and regulatory unpredictability that discourages investment. The government says India has room for five major airlines. That won't happen without policy reforms that make market entry easier and ensure a level playing field.

IndiGo's crisis wasn't just about fatigue rules or rostering miscalculations. It was a stress test for the entire sector, and the system failed. India's aviation future depends on embracing what every competitive,

consumer-friendly market eventually learns: choice is stability. The more players in the sky, the fewer passengers will ever be stranded because one airline miscalculated.

If India wants a resilient aviation ecosystem, it must stop firefighting and start enabling competition. The skies need more carriers, more capacity, and more consumer choice. Otherwise, this won't be the last time passengers pay for a crisis they didn't create.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

21 DECEMBER 2025

Flyer assaulted by off-duty pilot

AMHYA KUMAR
KUSHWAHA

New Delhi: An off-duty Air India Express pilot allegedly assaulted a passenger at Delhi airport on Friday, prompting the airline to suspend him pending investigation.

The civil aviation ministry has taken cognisance of the incident and directed the airline to ground the pilot with immediate effect. The ministry has also initiated an inquiry and sought a detailed report from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and the Central Industrial Security Force.

The incident occurred during the security check at the airport when the passenger, Ankit Dewan, objected to Air India Express captain Virender Sejwal jumping the queue.

According to Dewan's social media post, the pilot called him "anpadh (uneducated)"



Ankit Dewan, who was allegedly assaulted by off-duty Air India Express pilot Virender Sejwal (right) at the Delhi airport. (@ankitdewan/X via PTT)

for not reading the signs that said the entry was meant only for staff members.

Dewan said he and his family were allowed to use the security check that the staff uses because they had a four-month-old baby in a stroller. "The staff was cutting the queue ahead of me. On calling them out, Capt. Virender, who himself was doing



the same thing, asked me if I was *anpadh* (uneducated), and couldn't read the signs that said this entry was for staff," Dewan posted on X.

He said that a squabble broke out and the pilot physically assaulted him. He posted pictures showing his bloodied face and that of the accused pilot.

Dewan, who was able to

catch his flight, said his holiday had been ruined.

"I have no clue how DGCA & Air India Express can allow such pilots to fly. If they can't keep their cool in a scuffle, can they be trusted with the lives of hundreds of people in the sky?" he said. "I was forced to write a letter stating that I will not pursue this matter further... It was either write that letter, or miss my flight and throw the 1.2 lakhs holiday bookings down the drain. Delhi Police, why can't I file a complaint after coming back? Must I sacrifice my money too, to seek justice? Will the CCTV footage disappear in the 2 days till I make it back to Delhi?" he posted.

The Air India Express spokesperson said the pilot had been removed from duty and disciplinary action would be initiated based on the findings of the inquiry.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

21 DECEMBER 2025

Dhaka turmoil triggers flight fare frenzy

**SANJAY MANDAL,
DEBRAJ MITRA AND
SAMARPITA BANERJEE**

Calcutta: The turmoil in Bangladesh has caused a sharp rise in airfares for flights from Calcutta to Dhaka, with a considerable number of people seeking to return home. According to officials at the airport and tour operators, flights between these two locations are fully booked.

Tour operators said the average one-way fare between Calcutta and Dhaka for Sunday and Monday was showing more than ₹16,000 on Saturday evening. The average one-way fare on the route is ₹8,000, said tour operators and airline officials.

IndiGo is operating an Airbus A320 between Calcutta and Dhaka on Sunday. The aircraft has 180 seats. On Saturday evening, only one seat was left on the flight. It came at nearly ₹16,000, sources said.

On Monday, the airline will operate an Airbus A321 Neo, a 186-seater aircraft. "The flight

is full. The last ticket sold at around ₹17,000," said a source.

The US-Bangla flights are also going full. The airline now operates three flights a week.

"There is a rush among Bangladeshis in Calcutta to return home. Indians in Bangladesh also want to come back as soon as possible," said an official of an airline.

Biman Bangladesh is operating one flight daily, which is also full at the moment, according to airport sources.

"Many Bangladeshis in India want to cut their stay short and push forward their tickets because of the turmoil. Many Indians in Bangladesh are coming back. The fares are likely to remain high for the next few days. Once the travel demand subsides, the fare will come down," said Anil Punjabi, chairman of the Travel Agents Federation of India (TAFI), eastern region.

Asifur Islam, 27, was among those who cut their trip short. Islam, who hails from Bandarban in Chittagong, now lives in Dhaka, where



Tourists from Bangladesh who were staying in hotels in the Marquis Street area board a car to go to the Calcutta airport on Saturday afternoon. Picture by Bishwarup Dutta

he studies business management. He came to Calcutta for medical reasons on December 11. His appointments at a south Calcutta hospital are done with.

"I was supposed to stay for another week because I had some work and also wanted to do some festive shopping for my family members. But my parents called on Wednesday and said they wanted me back as soon as possible,"

said Islam.

The same day, he booked an air ticket for ₹10,000. "I came on a ticket that cost ₹5,000," said Islam, who suffers from a ligament problem in his right leg.

Islam was staying at a hotel on Marquis Street and was waiting for an app cab on Saturday afternoon to go to the airport when Metro met him. He has to take a train from Dhaka to his hometown.

"The journey is scenic. But I saw videos of violent flare-ups along the same route. They are scary," said Islam.

Ariful Islam, 33, a resident of Dhaka, was in Calcutta with his wife, also for medical reasons. They want to return as early as possible. "But two tickets will cost close to ₹40,000. It is way too much," said Islam, who runs a travel agency himself. He bought two tickets on a bus that leaves Calcutta on Sunday morning. The tickets cost him ₹7,000.

"We want to return as soon as possible because we know of more than one friend who got stranded in India when the unrest first began in Bangladesh in August 2024," said Asha, Ariful's wife.

The couple lives in the Shonir Akhra neighbourhood in Dhaka. "In August 2024, the streets were burning. Blackouts would last more than 12 hours. There was a complete shutdown on the Internet, and we were confined to our homes, often hearing gunshots outside. I don't know

what to expect this time," she said.

Souvik Mazumdar, 52, who landed in Calcutta on Saturday on a Biman Bangladesh flight, did not have to pay extra because the ticket was booked well in advance. Mazumdar works in the pharmaceutical sector and was in Calcutta on a scheduled work trip.

"It is a relief to be back home now when the situation in Bangladesh is so tense. I have been residing in Bangladesh for 23 years. For the past year, the country has been witnessing lawlessness. It is much safer to be home. I have come here for work, but I have to return to Bangladesh after a week. My family is worried," he said.

Mazumdar also said that on Thursday night, while returning from his office, he saw a mob heading towards the *Prothom Alo* office.

"I saw a mob heading towards the *Prothom Alo* newspaper office. Later, I found out that it was set on fire," he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

Pilot alleges casteist remarks, threat to kin

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Air India Express Captain Virender Sejwal, who got into a brawl with a passenger, Ankit Dewan, at Delhi airport's Terminal 1 last Friday, has accused the latter of making "casteist remarks" and issuing "absolutely unfathomable threats to female members of his family, including a child."

In a statement on the pilot's behalf on Sunday, his advocate Sonali Karwasra Joon said: "Ankit Dewan initiated the confrontation by verbally abusing Captain Sejwal without provocation and continued using abusive, degrading and threatening language even after being asked to stop. The situation escalated into a physical altercation in which Capt Sejwal was also hurt. He also sustained injuries during the scuffle. CISF personnel intervened promptly, repeatedly told Dewan to calm down and stop abusing, yet he refused to relent and continued his misconduct in their presence."

"The incident between the two was resolved in the presence of CISF officials.... Both parties 'voluntarily signed a statement' confirming that they did not wish to pursue any legal action. Contrary to misleading claims, Ankit Dewan signed willingly — there was no coercion or pressure involved.... Allegations of any force or bias against CISF are incorrect and unfounded," the lawyer's statement added. The captain, grounded by AI Express pending a probe, "has full faith in authorities that he will not be denied justice and the incident will be looked at impartially, considering all facts and without the overbearing social media narrative," the statement said.

Captain Sejwal was travelling as a passenger and "was not on flight duty, nor was the incident connected in any manner to his professional responsibilities," it added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

From March 1, AI to stop non-stops to SF from Mum, B'luru

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Bengaluru: Air India will discontinue non-stop San Francisco services from Bengaluru and Mumbai from March 1, citing aircraft deployment challenges and higher costs due to airspace restrictions. The move has triggered confusion and concern among passengers from the two cities who have made bookings, particularly for travel beyond Feb 28.

The Tata-owned airline will, however, scale up its services from Delhi to San Francisco and Toronto to 10 flights a week. While the expanded Delhi services are expected to absorb some of the displaced demand, withdrawal of direct connectivity from Bengaluru and Mumbai is likely to inconvenience tech professionals and business travellers who rely heavily on non-stop links to the US West Coast.

"The airline has made changes to its North America schedule to better deploy capacity and manage rising costs linked to ongoing airspace restrictions," an AI spokesperson told **TOL**. Increase in Delhi-San Francisco and Delhi-Toronto flights are a part of the rejig.

Passengers affected by withdrawal of Bengaluru-San Francisco and Mumbai-San Francisco routes will be accommodated on alternative services or offered full refunds. AI indi-



The airline will, however, scale up its services from Delhi to San Francisco and Toronto

cated the two services could be restored later. "Air India will seek to reinstate non-stop service from Bengaluru and Mumbai should airspace restrictions ease," the spokesperson said.

The words failed to allay worries. "I have flights booked on BLR-SFO (with return) in May and DEL-SFO (with return) on May 26. What do I do?" a passenger wrote on X.

Others questioned the rationale behind the move, noting Bengaluru-San Francisco route is largely operated using Boeing's long-range 777-300ER aircraft. "We booked months ago to avoid last-minute hassles — now, everything is uncertain," said Nakul Tirtha, a Bengaluru-based techie.

Another flyer posted: "I have family travel planned for May. What happens to our return tickets?" An AI official said they will reach out to affected flyers.

Not enough pilots, no new institution on cards — aviation crisis likely to worsen

Only 40 DGCA-approved flying training institutes for 62 bases | 8K pilots for 834 aircraft

SHEKHAR SINGH
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 21

India's aviation sector is soaring on ambition, orders and expansion plans, but behind the glossy growth story lies an uncomfortable truth, the country is fast running out of trained people to fly and manage its aircraft.

As airlines prepare for one of the largest fleet expansions in the world, official disclosures and ministerial warnings point to a system struggling to keep pace, raising serious questions about whether India's aviation boom is being built on shaky foundations.

The warning came into sharp focus on November 15, when Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu spoke at a session on the sidelines of the CII Partnership Summit in Visakhapatnam.

Cutting through the optimism around record aircraft orders, the minister said India would need around



FILE PHOTO

WILL NEED 30K MORE PILOTS

- At a recent event, Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said India would need around 30,000 more pilots in the coming years as domestic airlines await the delivery of nearly 1,700 aircraft from Boeing and Airbus.
- Currently, India has only about 8,000 pilots operating a fleet of 834 aircraft, a gap that is widening faster than the training pipeline meant to fill it.

30,000 more pilots in the coming years as domestic airlines await the delivery of nearly 1,700 aircraft from Boeing and Airbus.

The numbers told a stark story. India currently has only about 8,000 pilots operating a fleet of 834 aircraft, a gap that is widening faster than the training pipeline meant to fill it.

This mismatch was again laid bare in a written reply tabled in the Lok Sabha on December 18, in response to an unstarred question on the

status of aviation training institutes.

The government disclosed that the country has just 40 flying training organisations, which are approved by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), operating across 62 flying bases. These institutes form the backbone of pilot training in India, yet their numbers remain modest against the scale of fleet expansion being planned.

The reply also detailed the limited training infrastructure supporting other critical

roles in aviation. There are 56 DGCA-approved aircraft maintenance engineering training institutes under CAR-147 (Basic) and 20 approved CAR-147 type training organisations.

For air traffic control, only three air traffic services training organisations are currently functioning, located in Prayagraj, Gondia and Hyderabad. Training in aircraft rescue and fire fighting is confined to just two Airports Authority of India institutes in Delhi and Kolkata.

Beyond this, the government listed 233 DGCA-authorised remote pilot training organisations for drone operations, six DGCA-approved training organisations offering type-specific training to pilots, and eight aviation English language training organisations related to air traffic controllers across major cities. Besides, 37 centres are providing training in communication, navigation, surveillance and automation systems for technical aviation staff.

The government also replied in negative when asked if it had assessed existing training capacity against projected demand over the next 10 years.

The ministry further admitted that there was currently no proposal to establish new aviation training institutes or to expand existing DGCA-approved facilities through public-private partnership or with the support of state governments.



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THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

22 DECEMBER 2025

AI Express issues show-cause notice to pilot in airport assault case

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 21

The Air India Express will set up an external committee next week to inquire into the incident of one of its off-duty captain assaulting a passenger at the Delhi airport on Friday. Besides, a show-cause notice has been served to him seeking an explanation, sources said.

Soon after the incident that took place occurred at Terminal 1 (T1) of the Delhi airport on Friday, the airline had suspended the pilot.

A passenger, Ankit Dewan, had shared his experience in a social media post, along with a photo showing blood on his face after the altercation. He also shared a photo of the pilot Virender Sejwal.

Meanwhile, Sejwal's lawyer on Sunday said the incident was resolved in the presence of CISF officials at the airport and claimed the facts were being misrepresented. "Dewan has selectively presented facts to create a false narrative. Castiest remarks were made against Capt Sejwal, and threats were made to female members of his family," said a statement by the lawyer — PTI