

## Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICAL

HYDERABAD

22 MAY 2026

# Thermal screening begins at RGIA amid Ebola surge

DEEPIKA PASHAM | DC  
HYDERABAD, MAY 21

As a precautionary measure following the Ebola outbreak in some African countries, the Airport Health Organisation (APHO) has installed thermal screening systems at the international arrivals section of the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad. Officials said all international passengers arriving at the airport would undergo thermal screening to ensure early detection of suspected cases and strengthen public health and safety measures. According to the Directorate General of Health Services of the Union health ministry, monitoring is being carried out for passengers arriving from or transiting through high-risk countries including the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and South Sudan.

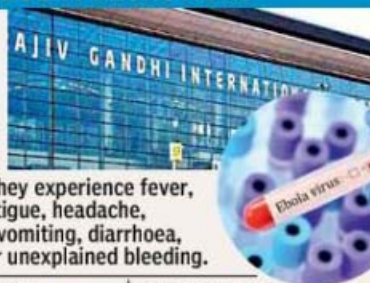
An APHO officer told *Deccan Chronicle* that each flight there are two

### EBOLA PRECAUTIONS

• Travellers must report to APHO officers or health desks before immigration clearance if they experience fever, weakness, fatigue, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea, sore throat or unexplained bleeding.

• Passengers who had direct contact with the blood or body fluids of suspected or confirmed Ebola patients have also been asked to immediately inform APHO authorities.

• Any traveller developing symptoms within 21 days of arrival should seek immediate medical care and inform healthcare authorities about their travel history.



or three passengers, and mostly in Ethiopian flights there are people from Uganda. The procedure is that if they are suspected after thermal screenings, the state health department must provide referral centres and they will be taken to that hospital. However,

nobody has been suspected until Thursday-late evening.

Authorities said the measures are being implemented in line with international health regulations to ensure passenger safety and prevent any possible spread of the disease.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

## हवाई जहाज उड़ने को तैयार पर हेलीपोर्ट का इंतजार



नोएडा, प्रमुख संवाददाता। जेवर एयरपोर्ट से हवाई जहाज उड़ने को तैयार है। 15 जून से एयरपोर्ट से पहला जहाज उड़ान भरेगा। वहीं, नोएडा में हेलीपोर्ट बनने का इंतजार अभी बाकी है। यहां से करीब 32 शहर, धार्मिक स्थानों के लिए हेलीकॉप्टर सेवा शुरू की जानी प्रस्तावित है।

नोएडा के सेक्टर-151ए में हेलीपोर्ट बनाया जाना प्रस्तावित है। यहां

हेलीपोर्ट बनाए जाने की योजना नोएडा ने वर्ष 2020 में तैयार की थी। उस समय दावा किया था कि दो साल के अंदर हेलीपोर्ट बना देश के मुख्य शहरों के लिए सेवा शुरू कर दी जाएगी। पीपीपी मॉडल पर तैयार होने वाले इस परियोजना की डीपीआर को मंजूरी शासन से मिली हुई है। डीपीआर के मुताबिक परियोजना की अनुमानित लागत 43.12 करोड़ रुपये है। जो भी एजेंसी इस हेलीपोर्ट को बनाकर तैयार करेगी, नोएडा प्राधिकरण उसे यह हेलीपोर्ट 30 साल के लिए संचालन को सौंपेगा। हेलीपोर्ट में छह हेलीकॉप्टर खड़े हो सकेंगे। साथ ही हेलीकॉप्टर की मरम्मत भी हो सकेगी।

## Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

PATNA

23 MAY 2026

# Darbhanga airport gets CAT II lighting upgrade

**Bishnu K Jha**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**DARBHANGA:** Darbhanga airport has received a major operational upgrade with the installation and notification of CAT II-compatible approach lighting infrastructure, a development expected to significantly improve flight operations during dense fog and poor visibility conditions, officials familiar with the matter said on Friday.

According to Airport Authority of India sources, the CAT II lighting system for 550-metre Runway Visual Range (RVR) operations has been installed and formally notified, while the required NOTAM (Notice to Airmen) procedures have also been prepared. The airport already operates with an Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT I facility, which officials said is proposed to be upgraded to ILS CAT II in the next phase.

The newly installed infrastructure includes Touchdown Zone Lighting (TDZL) across the first 900 metres of the runway, a key requirement for CAT II operations. Officials said the advanced lighting system would provide improved visual guidance to pilots during approach and landing in low-visibility conditions, particularly during winter when north Bihar experiences prolonged fog.

Aviation experts said the upgrade is expected to improve operational reliability by allowing aircraft movements in lower visibility conditions than those permitted under the existing CAT I system. The enhanced infrastructure is also likely to reduce flight diversions, delays and cancellations caused by adverse weather.

Sources added that all major electrical and electronic systems required for night landing operations have been installed and are operationally ready, marking a crucial step towards advanced all-weather capability at the airport.

Officials nevertheless described the development as a significant milestone for aviation infrastructure in the Mithila region, with the upgraded system expected to benefit thousands of passengers travelling to and from north Bihar.

Meanwhile, JD(U) working president and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Kumar Jha on Friday met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and discussed issues related to the operationalisation of night landing facilities at the airport.

During the meeting, Jha submitted a memorandum seeking additional Indian Air Force personnel and technical support for commencement of night flight operations.

Jha said passenger traffic at the airport has grown steadily since the launch of the interim civil enclave under the UDAN scheme in November 2020. He noted that the Centre has already granted in-principle approval for declaration of Darbhanga as an international airport, while the Bihar government has nearly completed acquisition of around 90 acres for extension of the runway to 3,700 metres.

He also informed the Defence Minister that construction of the permanent civil enclave is underway and that land acquisition for a proposed logistics park near the airport is expected to be completed by July. At present, around 18 flights operate daily from the airport, though airlines have been seeking additional evening slots beyond 5 pm amid rising passenger demand.

Jha urged the Centre to facilitate extension of ATC watch hours and provide additional operational support to strengthen future expansion and improve regional air connectivity.

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu on Thursday said Darbhanga airport was emerging as an important hub for agricultural cargo movement under the Centre's Krishi UDAN initiative.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

PIONEER

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

# Two Thai nationals arrested at IGI Airport with weed worth ₹48 crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE

■ New Delhi

Customs officials at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport have seized nearly 48 kilograms of suspected hydroponic weed from two Thai nationals. The suspects arrived from Bangkok. This marks one of the biggest narcotics seizures at the airport in recent times.

Officials said the two passengers arrived in Delhi on an Air India flight from Bangkok on May 22. They were intercepted after crossing the Customs Green Channel.

Acting on specific profiling inputs, customs officers stopped the passengers. Their baggage was subjected to detailed scrutiny due to suspicious travel indicators. During a thorough physical examination, officials recovered six vacuum-sealed packets suspected to contain hydroponic weed. These were concealed inside their luggage.

Of the total seizure, four packets weighing around 29



kg were recovered from one passenger's baggage. Two packets weighing approximately 19 kg were found in the second passenger's luggage.

The total weight of the suspected narcotics was 47.805 kg, officials said. Customs officials estimated the international market value at about ₹48 crore.

Officials described this as one of the highest drug seizures at IGI Airport in recent years. It underscores growing concerns over efforts to smuggle high-value narcotics through interna-

tional routes. The two passengers, both Thai nationals, were intercepted based on advanced profiling and suspicious travel patterns, officials said, adding that the exact source and intended destination of the consignment are being probed. Customs officials have launched a detailed investigation to identify possible links to international drug trafficking networks.

They want to know if the accused acted alone or as part of a larger syndicate. Further investigation into the case is underway.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

STATESMEN

KOLKATA

23 MAY 2026

### *Andal airport records unprecedented VVIP rush during poll season*



**DEBAJYOTI CHAKRABORTY**  
*Durgapur, 22 May*

West Bengal's first greenfield private airport, Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport (KNIA) in Andal, West Burdwan, witnessed an unprecedented surge in VVIP traffic during the April poll season. The influx of unscheduled chartered flights generated crores of rupees in parking fees, with Air Traffic Controllers working overtime to manage the busy schedule.

Even yesterday, Chief Minister Suvendu Adhikari arrived at Andal in a chartered flight from Kolkata to attend his first administrative meeting in Durgapur, before flying to New Delhi in the evening for a two-day tour. He was accompanied by Chief Secretary Manoj Agarwal

and DGP Siddhinath Gupta. The CM was received by BAPL President and CFO Anju Madeka and KNIA Director Kailash Mondal. The state government holds a significant stake in BAPL through WBIDC, alongside Changi Airports of Singapore.

Operational for nearly a decade, KNIA has previously handled VVIP traffic during the 2019, 2021, and 2024 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. However, the 2026 Assembly elections shattered all records. In April alone, the airport managed 158 unscheduled flights in addition to 266 scheduled arrivals and departures, taking the total tally to 428 flights. There were 79 landings and 79 unscheduled take-offs, four diversions, and 266

scheduled flights in April. With only four parking bays, we had to adopt non-standard parking plans to accommodate the additional traffic. The poll season has underscored KNIA's strategic importance for South Bengal and western Jharkhand," said Kailash Mondal, Director of KNIA.

On peak days, such as 14 April, the airport handled 31 flights, including 21 unscheduled movements. On 22 April, it managed 21 flights, while VVIP transits were operated daily during the first and second phases of polling on 23 and 29 April.

The passenger manifest featured top leaders across parties, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath,

Odisha Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and several Union Cabinet ministers. The surge has provided a significant revenue boost to the airport, long debated for its economic viability. Operators now hope to leverage this momentum to highlight KNIA's commercial potential and its role in connecting the "Ruhr of India" with the rest of the country. Industry voices have called for KNIA's upgradation to international status. "We demand that the central government upgrade KNIA to an international airport, like Bagdogra in North Bengal. A new terminal building is under construction and will be completed by 2028. The airport serves not only the Rahr Bangla region but also Jharkhand districts such as Dhanbad and Bokaro. Flights to Southeast Asian capitals can be operated from here," said Sandeep Bhalotia, National Vice President of the Indian Council of Small Industries. He urged all nine MLAs of West Burdwan to press for the upgrade.

Meanwhile, starting 21 May 2026, KNIA has introduced a direct bus service between Burdwan and Andal Airport to improve passenger convenience.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

23 MAY 2026

# Cleaners axed in airport crackdown

SANJAY MANDAL

**Calcutta:** Nine cleaning staff engaged by a private agency at Calcutta airport have been terminated for not performing their duties, in a disciplinary crackdown that unions had successfully resisted in the past.

As part of the fresh clean-up drive, stalls opposite the old domestic terminal have been shut down, although they are yet to be dismantled. However, cars allegedly operated by touts charging fliers exorbitant fares were still parked illegally opposite the terminal on Friday.

The nine workers, employed by Rakshak Securitas Private Limited, were deployed in the departure area of the airport. "Nine persons were terminated from service on May 12 for not doing their job. Earlier, several notices were served on them for negligence, but they continued to violate rules," an official of the agency told **Metro** on Friday.

Rakshak Securitas, which got the housekeeping contract around one-and-a-half years ago, had about 250 contractual housekeeping staff at the airport. Most of them had also worked with the previous agency.

"We did not receive any phone calls from political leaders after the nine workers were terminated, nor was there any demonstration by other workers," an airport official said.

Sources said complaints against the dismissed workers included absence from duty posts, misbehaviour with officials and passengers, and failure to wear uniforms.

"The private agency for housekeeping at the departure



Closed food stalls near Calcutta airport's old domestic terminal on Friday



level has taken disciplinary action against some workers. These workers had earlier been served several notices," said Vikram Singh, director of Calcutta airport. "We are constantly trying to improve the cleanliness of washrooms, check-in portals and other areas of the terminal building," he said.

According to Singh, deep cleaning of washrooms and check-in portals is now being carried out periodically. The process includes the use of specialised chemicals to remove stains and fix ventilation and other technical problems.

Airport officials had earlier reported facing major difficulties in ensuring that unionised cleaning staff employed through private agencies carried out assigned duties. The impact was visible across the terminal building, with passengers complaining about dirty and foul-smelling washrooms, stained floors and overflowing garbage bins.

"Our aim is to maintain



Illegally parked cars in the area opposite the airport's old terminal building on Friday

high standards of cleanliness, as we do at other airports and facilities. But at Calcutta airport, because of resistance from a section of the staff, it was difficult. Now, with support from the authorities, conditions have improved," an official of Rakshak said.

This newspaper has on several occasions reported that cleaners were often missing from washrooms even when the facilities were dirty. Previous attempts by airport authorities to take action against workers had triggered pro-

tests, with union leaders pressuring authorities to reinstate them.

Although the new agency took over housekeeping at the airport, it had to retain workers engaged by earlier contractors.

Last year, an airport official sent an email to senior authorities alleging that a supervisor of the housekeeping agency had left the terminal several hours before the end of her shift. A complaint email from another airport official had said a cleaning staff mem-

ber had left duty much before schedule.

In December, cleaners at the departure level stopped work for about 40 minutes after one of them was told to either wear his uniform or go on leave. "He had said that workers routinely did not wear uniforms and that he was being singled out," an airport official said.

A passenger travelling from Calcutta to Delhi on Thursday morning said the washrooms in the boarding area were significantly clean-

er. "There was no stench. The floor was dry and there was a cleaner present inside the washroom," he said.

### Stalls, touts

The airport authorities are also trying to clear encroachments near the old domestic terminal. Food stalls opposite the terminal remained shut on Friday, though the structures had not yet been removed.

Airport authorities had recently written to the NSCB Airport police station seeking the removal of food stalls on airport land, along with cars parked illegally in front of the old domestic building.

Police asked those operating the stalls and vehicles to vacate the area.

However, while the stalls were closed on Friday, cars allegedly operated by touts charging exorbitant fares from passengers were still parked there.

"We will take up the issue again with the police," an airport official said.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

### FROM 1.6 CR TO 7.9 CR PASSENGERS IN 20 YEARS



### END OF AN ERA

# DELHI AIRPORT'S TERMINAL 2 MAY BE 'ABANDONED' BY 2033

DIAL plans to build fifth pier at T3, to submit master plan to ministry in a few months, reports **Saurabh Sinha**

**New Delhi:** The countdown has finally begun for the 1986-era Terminal 2 of Delhi Airport, which is likely to be "abandoned" by 2033. The mammoth T3 is set to get even bigger. The GMR-run Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) is evaluating when T3 should get its fifth pier, which will have a capacity of handling 1.2 crore passengers annually (CPA) — the same as that of T2. Once that happens, the domestic traffic being handled by T2 will move to T3's new Pier E. The timing of the proposed Pier E and the upcoming air train are the key elements of the new master plan being worked out for IGIA.

"We will submit the master plan to the aviation ministry in a few months. Our primary focus is on when Pier E should be



built — whether sometime soon or in a decade — and having the automated people mover operational in 30 months. T2 can be used for a maximum of six to seven more years, and then it will have to be abandoned. The future use of T2 site will be decided in next few years depending on how traffic

shapes up then," GBS Raju, chairman of GMR Airports, told **TOL**.

To determine the timing of Pier E, which will come up closest to the ramp leading to T3, the operator is in talks with airlines to understand when they would require the additional capacity depending on the

latter's aircraft induction schedules. Delivery of ordered Airbus and Boeing planes has been getting delayed due to supply chain issues affecting the aviation industry on all fronts, including seats and engines. The ongoing US-Iran war has compounded the uncertainty, as no one can say at this time when oil prices will cool down and demand for travel will resume.

"The master plan will be aligned with airlines' strategy. Due to the West Asia crisis, it is taking a little longer to finalise the plan," he said. Getting the timing right is key, as T3 expansion requires significant work on multiple fronts apart from building the new pier. These include widening the ramp leading to T3 and extending the forecourt to the left.

"With the conversion

of Pier C from domestic to international, T3 has now three international piers that can handle upto 3.4 CPA. Pier D, the only domestic pier at T3 for now, can handle 90 lakh passengers annually. There are options for future use of the T2 site, as we have to be very agile in a dynamic world," said Raju.

DIAL's new master plan is focussing on Pier E and automated people mover as the other big-ticket works in GMR's first 30-year concession period, which gets over in a decade, have been completed in terms of terminal and airside capacity and connectivity. Whether Pier E comes up now or in the second 30-year concession period that GMR is eligible for a second concession period subject to the nod of the then govt remains to be seen.

# Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

## INTERVIEW

### Traffic at IGIA unaffected by Iran war; daily flyer numbers same as pre-Feb 28: GMR Airports chairman

**H**andling commercial flights since 1962, Delhi's Palam Airport has over the decades come a long way to become India's busiest and make it to world's top 10 hubs. It has been growing its wings through developments like getting T2 in 1986 that gave it the current name of IGI Airport. In 2005, the then UPA govt decided to expand and modernise the existing airports in Delhi and Mumbai on PPP model by giving them to private players for 30 years in 2006 and conditionally allowing another second 30-year concession period. The GMR Group this month completed 20 years of its first concession period. GMR Airports chairman **GBS Raju** spoke to TOI on the way ahead. Excerpts.



#### What are your priorities now for the Delhi airport?

■ Delhi International Airport Ltd has created a capacity for handling 10.5 crore passengers per annum between IGIA's three terminals, four runways and infra to support the same. Last fiscal year (FY 26), we handled close to 7.9 crore passengers. So, the capacity is there for the next five to six years. The airside capacity has been optimised and we are capable of handling 1,700 aircraft movement per day. This can increase to 2,000+ with technology upgradation and training of air traffic controllers for which we are working very closely with Airports Authority of India.

Kiran Kumar Grandhi (Raju's brother) and Srinivas Bommidala (Raju's brother in law) who headed the airport vertical before me laid a very strong founda-

tion with their focus on areas like connectivity, new businesses and city side development. Today, all three terminals have multimodal city side access. We are working closely with govt on various initiatives to further enhance cityside connectivity.

The biggest focus now is on doing an automated people mover, which will be completed in 30 months. The alignment and designing are done. We are going to issue the bid shortly. A call on the timing of the new Pier E at T3 will be taken in discussion with airlines.

#### What has been the impact of the US-Iran war on air traffic? What makes you confident for incurring the capex despite the dip in air travel being seen currently?

■ There will be a short term impact. But in the medium to long term, we are very bullish on the prospects of the Indian economy as a whole and aviation. Before the West Asia crisis, the highest traffic in a day was 2.5 lakh passengers while the average was 2.2 lakh. That is what we are doing today also. Traffic to the Middle East is impacted. But the majority of that was transfer traffic in nature and not origin-destination. Some foreign airlines have added flights

for a few months.

Today, we are a \$3.9 trillion economy with close to \$3,000 per capita income. Aviation is under-penetrated here right now compared to many other countries. In the long term, the growth here will be huge as the GDP rises to \$5 trillion, \$7 trillion and so on. This West Asia issue, in my view, is a short term one. Like how we had the pain during Covid and then post that we became the country that saw the fastest rebound in air travel. Our airlines are also getting stronger.

#### What impact do you see of the Noida airport opening next month on IGIA footfalls?

■ The Noida airport will have minimal impact on us. Aeronautical charges at the Delhi airport are competitive and lower vis-à-vis the tariff of the Noida airport. Given its connectivity, IGIA is the most cost-efficient and convenient for all classes of travellers to use. Delhi govt's decision to reduce VAT to 7% makes our position stronger. The catchment areas of both the airports are different, and I believe that the entire air travel market within the region will grow.

#### Your plans for cargo at IGIA?

■ We are developing a cargo city in 1 crore square feet across two sites at the airport in the next 20 months. One 50 lakh square feet site is at Shahbad Mohammadpur that has direct airside access. We have signed up with Fedex for the same, and are in advanced talks with airlines, who also want direct airside access for cargo carriage. The other 50-lakh square feet site is within the airport premises.

# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

## दिल्ली में खराब मौसम के कारण एक घंटा चक्कर काटता रहा विमान

जगरण संवाददाता, लखनऊ : चौधरी चरण सिंह अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट से रवाना हुआ एक विमान शनिवार को दोहरे संकट में फंस गया। दिल्ली का मौसम खराब होने के कारण विमान को वहां उतरने की अनुमति नहीं मिली, जिसके चलते वह आसमान में चक्कर काटता रहा।

इस दौरान विमान एयर टर्बुलेंस (हवा के तेज झोंके) में फंस गया, जिससे यात्री कुछ देर के लिए भयभीत हो गए। हालांकि करीब एक घंटे आसमान में चक्कर काटने के बाद विमान को दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर उतरने की अनुमति मिल गई। एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के विमान आइएक्स-1167 ने शनिवार सुबह 7:50 बजे लखनऊ एयरपोर्ट से उड़ान भरी थी।

# Corporate Communications Directorate

FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

## Air India to trim domestic flights from Mumbai

● 280 weekly departures to be withdrawn

AKBAR MERCHANT  
Mumbai, May 23

**AIR INDIA WILL** cut around 280 weekly domestic departures from Mumbai between June 1 and August 1, marking the airline's first major reduction in domestic capacity, close on the heels of recent cuts in its international network. The revised schedule has not yet been officially announced by the airline. An email sent to Air India seeking confirmation and comments on the planned reductions did not receive a response till the time of going to press.

Sources said the Tata-owned carrier will reduce frequencies across several major metro and trunk routes from Mumbai, with Delhi witnessing the steepest cut of nearly 50 weekly flights, though the route will still retain close to 300 weekly services.

Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Kolkata will each see around 21 fewer weekly departures, while Bengaluru, which is one of the country's busiest business travel routes, will also witness a reduction of roughly 21 weekly flights, taking total frequencies to below

### FLIGHT PLAN



#### Weekly flight cuts\*

Mumbai-Delhi: 50  
Mumbai-Ahmedabad: 21  
Mumbai-Hyderabad: 21  
Mumbai-Kolkata: 21  
Mumbai-Bengaluru: 21

#### Temporary suspensions\*

Mumbai-Nagpur  
Mumbai-Varanasi  
Mumbai-Patna  
Mumbai-Bhopal

(\* Applicable from June 1-August 1)

70 per week.

In addition to frequency reductions, Air India will temporarily suspend services from Mumbai to Nagpur, Varanasi, Patna and Bhopal during the two-month period.

Sources said the scale of reductions is marginally higher than what was seen last year, particularly from Mumbai, which remains one of the airline's key domestic hubs.

The move comes amid elevated aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices, mounting operational cost pressures and seasonally weaker travel demand during the monsoon months.

Continued on Page 2

## Air India to trim ops from Mumbai

**INDUSTRY EXECUTIVES SAID** fuel continues to account for a significant share of airline operating costs, while volatility in global crude prices and intense fare competition in the domestic market are forcing carriers to rationalise capacity more aggressively.

The domestic cuts follow Air India's recent decision to withdraw around 280 weekly international services and suspend eight overseas routes until August. The airline had then attributed the reductions to higher fuel costs and longer flying times caused by rerouting around restricted airspace. Despite the cuts, Air India had said it continues to operate over 1,200 international flights every month across five continents.

As far as domestic flight cuts go, sources indicated that additional domestic

reductions from other Air India hubs such as Delhi and Bengaluru are likely in the coming weeks. Some cuts are also expected from Air India Express, the group's low-cost arm, as the airline recalibrates operations during the lean travel season.

The trend is not limited to Air India. IndiGo has also undertaken a broad reshuffle of its domestic network in recent weeks, reducing departures from Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata while increasing international frequencies from Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. July to September is traditionally a weaker quarter for India's domestic aviation, with airlines trimming capacity by around 10%. However, this year's reductions are steeper than normal across major carriers.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

23 MAY 2026

# State's Air India bldg takeover just a week away

**FPJ Political Bureau**

**MUMBAI**

The state government's acquisition of the 23-storey Air India building at Nariman Point has reached its final stage. The state finance department has transferred ₹1,601 crore to the executive engineer of the Mumbai city

division of the Public Works Department (PWD), which will conduct the transaction with AIAHL (Air India Assets Holding Ltd), the company established to manage Air India's non-core assets and liabilities. The purchase process is expected to be completed within about a week, said executive engineer Vidyadhar

Pataskar.

After receiving the funds, the PWD prepared draft documents required for the agreement and sent them to the law and judiciary department for final approval. Chief Secretary Rajesh Agrawal has made special efforts to ensure that the building is transferred to the state as soon as possible.

After the June 21, 2012 fire at Mantralaya, several government departments were relocated and scattered across different locations away from the main administrative headquarters. The state government has been spending more than ₹200 crore annually on rent for these offices. Once the state gets

possession of the Air India building, 46,470 sq mt of space will become available for government offices.

The Air India building was designed by architect John Burgee of a New York-based architectural firm. It was constructed in 1974 on land owned by the state government.

## Corporate Communications Directorate

PUNJAB KESARI

DELHI

24 MAY 2026

# फ्लाइट में खराब खाने की शिकायत पर फैसला करे डीजीसीए : हाईकोर्ट

नई दिल्ली, (पंजाब केसरी): दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट ने नागरिक विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) और नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय को निर्देश दिया है कि 16 घंटे की फ्लाइट में खाने की कमी को लेकर एयर इंडिया के खिलाफ मिली शिकायत पर तुरंत फैसला लें। यह यह शिकायत दो यात्रियों ने दर्ज कराई थी।

उन्होंने कहा कि एयर इंडिया ने अपनी दिल्ली-सैन फ्रांसिस्को फ्लाइट में उन्हें सिर्फ एक बार गर्म खाना और कुछ ही स्नैक्स दिए, जबकि उन्हें पता था कि उन्हें डायबिटीज और हाइपरटेंशन की बीमारी है। चीफ जस्टिस देवेन्द्र कुमार उपाध्याय और जस्टिस तेजस कारिया की खंडपीठ ने डीजीसीए को निर्देश दिया है कि वे इस शिकायत की समय पर जांच करें। कोर्ट ने कहा कि अगर शिकायत निवारण की प्रक्रिया अभी तक पूरी नहीं हुई है, तो



उसे अपील करने वालों और रैस्पोंडेंट एयर इंडिया द्वारा दिए गए लिखित जवाबों पर विचार करने के बाद जल्द से जल्द पूरा किया जाए और छह सप्ताह के अंदर एक तर्कसंगत आदेश

पारित किया जाए। यह मामला 11 नवंबर, 2020 को नई दिल्ली से सैन फ्रांसिस्को जाने वाली एयर इंडिया की फ्लाइट से जुड़ा हुआ है। दो यात्रियों ने आरोप

लगाया कि फ्लाइट में परोसे गए खाने की गुणवत्ता और मात्रा बहुत ही कम थी। उन्होंने यह भी दावा किया कि एयर इंडिया द्वारा परोसा गया खाना खाने के बाद उनमें से एक को फूड पॉइजनिंग, डिहाइड्रेशन और कमजोरी हो गई। आगे यह भी आरोप लगाया गया कि फ्लाइट के दौरान एक यात्री को बार-बार हाइपोग्लाइसीमिया के दौर पड़े। कोर्ट को बताया गया कि उसे मजबूरन चीनी और मोठे पेय पदार्थ पीने पड़े। यात्रियों ने यह भी आरोप लगाया

कि केबिन कू उस मेडिकल स्थिति को ठीक से पहचान या संभाल नहीं पाया। उनके अनुसार, इससे यह पता चलता है कि उन्हें पर्याप्त ट्रेनिंग नहीं मिली थी। यात्रियों ने 2021 में हाई कोर्ट का दरवाजा खटखटाया था। उन्होंने मांग की थी कि एक स्वतंत्र समिति बनाई जाए, जो फ्लाइट में यात्रियों को परोसे जाने वाले खाने की गुणवत्ता और मात्रा की समीक्षा करे। बता दें कि इससे पहले दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट की एकल पीठ ने पिछले साल अप्रैल में जारी आदेश में कहा था कि नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय को निर्देश दिया था कि वह इस याचिका को एक शिकायत के तौर पर देखे। मंत्रालय से कहा गया था कि वह कानून के अनुसार इस पर विचार करे। इन्हीं शर्तों के साथ यात्रियों की याचिका को बंद कर दिया। बाद में, यात्रियों ने अप्रैल 2025 के आदेश को वापस लेने के लिए आवेदन दायर किए, क्योंकि उन्हें चिंता थी कि आदेश में दिए गए निर्देशों का पालन नहीं किया गया था और फिर डिवीजन बेंच के सामने अपील दायर की।

# Corporate Communications Directorate

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## Airfare surge grounds travel plans

**RETHINKING TRIPS** Travellers Reassess As Aviation Fuel Cost Sends Fares Soaring

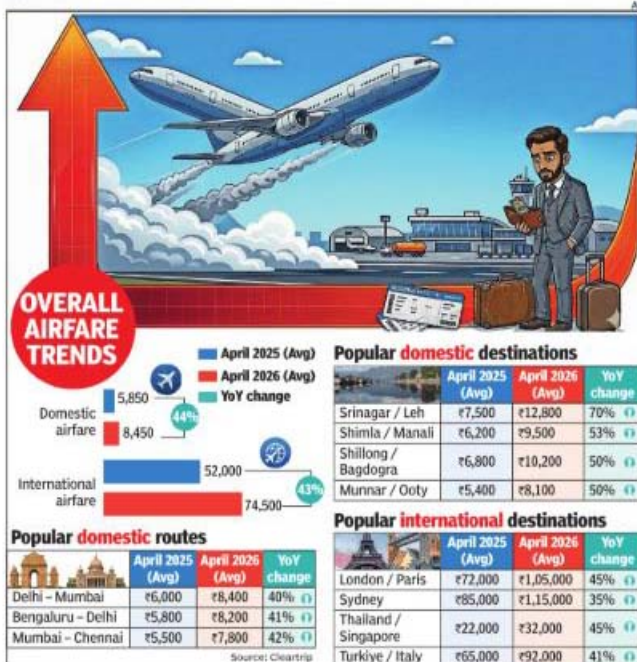
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**Bengaluru:** Travel plans of many Bengalureans have hit turbulence as airfares have skyrocketed by up to 30%, forcing many people to rethink their holiday plans or opt for cheaper, closer destinations instead. On April 1, the Centre increased ATF (aviation turbine fuel) prices for domestic airlines by 25% to Rs 1,04,927 per kilolitre.

According to travel operators, interest in domestic travel remains strong, but higher airfares are impacting demand. Destinations such as Leh, Srinagar, Shimla, Chandigarh, Assam, Gangtok, Andaman and Lakshadweep are seeing the highest inquiries, especially because of the weather.

"Even domestic airfares to places in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Kashmir, and Ladakh have risen by Rs 6,000-7,000 per ticket. Our assessment is that travel interest has dropped by at least 30%," Vignesh Kamath, founder and managing director, Travel Bird Vacations, Banashankari, said.

Many travellers are now opting for nearby destinations such as Gokarna and Ooty for holidays. Rajesh Jain, from ABF Travel Solutions, Basaveshwaram, said: "Compared to last year, holiday bookings have fallen drastically. Earlier, we used to handle over 100 bookings during May and June, but now it has reduced to barely 10-15 bookings. Most people now prefer nearby destinations such as Goa, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Ooty, and are largely travelling by car or bus to save costs."



Similarly, Sudheer Pokarna, founder of Pragathi Travels, who has been in the business for the past 12 years, said: "Airfares have increased by more than 30% after the fuel price surge. Earlier, Bengaluru-Mumbai tickets used to cost Rs 3,200-3,300 on average, but now fares are between Rs 4,500 and Rs 6,000. Bengaluru-Delhi fares, which were around Rs 6,500 earlier, have gone up to Rs 8,000-8,400."

### Expensive foreign trips

Travel agencies also said international fares have increased and airfares to popular destinations such as Thailand, Singapore, and Sri Lanka have nearly doubled in some cases, leading to a drop in bookings during the peak vacation season. For example, before the Iran-US war began, Bangkok tickets cost around Rs 30,000; airfares have now nearly doubled to Rs 56,000.

Pokarna said: "Tickets to destinations such as Singapore have gone up by Rs 15,000-20,000, while Sri Lanka round-trip fares, which earlier averaged Rs 20,000-22,000, have now touched Rs 34,000. Because of this, many families are reconsidering their travel plans, as package costs that earlier came to around Rs 3 lakh are now nearing Rs 4 lakh."

Despite all these problems, demand for short-haul

foreign destinations is not dropping. "This summer, travellers aren't cutting back on trips — they're travelling smarter. Despite airfare hikes driven by fuel costs, a weaker rupee, and limited international capacity, demand remains strong. We're seeing a sharp shift toward high-value short-haul destinations, with bookings to the Philippines tripling and strong growth seen across Thailand, Malaysia, Bali, Vietnam, Colombo, Singapore, and Almaty. Travellers are also opting for more flexible booking options, showing that while they are cautious, the appetite for travel remains robust," a Cleartrip spokesperson said.

### Operators worried

Meanwhile, travel operators appear to be worried. Niranjan S Bhargava, president of the Travel Agents' Association of India (TAAI), Karnataka chapter, said: "Essential and business travel will continue, but discretionary corporate and leisure travel has been hit as people recalibrate budgets. While travellers who booked holidays months in advance were unaffected initially, many are now reconsidering plans, with families opting for closer and cheaper destinations like Kodakkanal instead of expensive long-distance or international trips."

He added: "The biggest concern is not profits but the decline in overall business sentiment, especially in the corporate segment. We are already in dialogue with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and authorities regarding the challenges being faced by the travel agency community and the industry."

# Diversions give rise to 19-min Mumbai-Navi Mumbai flights

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**Mumbai:** The commissioning of Navi Mumbai airport last Dec is beginning to reshape diversion patterns in the Mumbai airspace, allowing flights from Mumbai and Navi Mumbai to divert to each other instead of heading to distant alternate airports in Maharashtra, Gujarat and Goa. This week, two flights diverted in this pattern and then flew between the two airports of the Mumbai metropolitan region, operating one of India's shortest flights of 19 minutes' duration.

The same short diversions have started between Pune and Navi Mumbai as well.

On May 21, a Star Air flight from Solapur to Mumbai was diverted to Navi Mumbai around 4 pm due to operational reasons. Two hours later, the aircraft operated from Navi Mumbai to Mumbai, with the flying time reported to be about 19 minutes. A similar situation arose on Friday involving an IndiGo aircraft operating from Madurai to Navi Mum-



bai. It was to land at Navi Mumbai at 6 pm, but it diverted to Mumbai. The aircraft later operated from Mumbai to Navi Mumbai. On Friday, a Kishangarh to Pune Star Air flight was diverted to Navi Mumbai. Three hours later, at 7.20 pm, the flight took off from Navi Mumbai and landed in Pune in 24 minutes. Navi Mumbai airport is not as congested as Mumbai airport, and so it is turning into the preferred airport to divert to. These diversions have unwittingly created one of the shor-

test commercial flight sectors operated in India, and the diversion between the two airports of Goa too makes for a short journey from the diverted airport to the original destination. Before Navi Mumbai airport became operational, flights unable to land in Mumbai due to congestion, weather or operational disruptions were typically diverted to airports such as Ahmedabad, Rajkot, Hyderabad or Goa, often resulting in long delays, additional fuel burn and inconvenience for passengers.

Aviation experts, however, pointed out that airports located so close to each other are generally not preferred as primary alternates in flight planning because adverse weather affecting Mumbai could also impact Navi Mumbai at the same time.

Despite that limitation, the presence of a second airport within the Mumbai metropolitan region gives airlines an additional nearby diversion option during certain operational situations, reducing disruption significantly.