

Metro set to link Hyderabad airport with Future City

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, FEB. 23

Commuters will be able to reach the proposed Future City from the Shamshabad airport in just 40 minutes on the newly proposed Metro Rail corridor.

The route, about 40 km long, will begin at the airport terminal, pass by the proposed Metro Rail depot, and follow the airport's boundary wall for about 5 km along the Mansanpally Road before reaching Pedda Golconda ORR Exit.

"Two high-profile stations are being planned at Bahadurguda and Pedda Golconda to facilitate the development of 1,500 acres of government land at Bahadurguda into a world-class hub," said N.V.S. Reddy, managing director of the Hyderabad Airport Metro Ltd (HAML).

He was outlining the project plans on Sunday during an inspection of the survey work for the Metro Rail corridor from the airport to the under-construction Skill University at Meerkhanpet.

From Pedda Golconda Exit, the track will run on an elevated corridor for about 14 kilometres along the ORR, passing through Tukuguda and Raviryala exits. Beyond Raviryala, it will transition into an "at grade" corridor — built at road level — while heading to the Skill University at Meerkhanpet.

This section will traverse Kongara Kalan, Lemur, Timmapur, Rachalur, Gummadavelli, and Panjaguda, running along the 22-metre-wide central median of the 100-



New metro line with three-lane carriageways.

metre-wide greenfield road being developed by HMDA. The line will be flanked by three-lane main carriageways and service roads on either side.

Reddy emphasised that large-scale infrastructure projects initiated by the Congress government will drive Hyderabad and Telangana's growth. "Just as the successful implementation of the 69-km first phase Metro Rail — built as the world's largest public-private partnership with an investment of about a ₹22,000 crore — HAML will collaborate with HMDA, TSIIC, and government agencies to bring these new projects to life," he said.

"HAML is preparing detailed project reports (DPRs). It will be a key driver in the development of Future City, which will span approximately 15,000 acres. With green corridors along its route, the city is envisioned to be pollution-free, aligning with Chief Minister Revanthy Reddy's vision," he stated.

The DPRs for the Future City Metro Corridor, along with the North City Medchal and Shamirpet corridors, are expected to be completed by March-end and will be submitted to the Centre after securing state government approval.

ON THE RUNWAY Ministry floats note; process likely to be complete by the end of FY26

Govt Puts Airport Privatisation Plan in Flight Mode Again

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: India has restarted the process of privatising 13 airports as the government aims to shore up revenue from asset monetisation. People aware of the development said that the ministry of civil aviation has circulated a note on inter-ministerial consultation on privatising 13 airports. The government aims to complete the process by end of FY26, they said.

During the budget presented on February 1, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that ₹10 lakh crore worth of assets would be monetised in the next five years as a second instalment of the National Monetisation Plan.

The Centre has earmarked a total of 25 airports for asset monetisation over the years 2022 to 2025 under the National Monetisation Pipeline. The board of Airport Authority of India (AAI) had cleared the names of 13 airports for the second round of airport privatisation under the BJP government in 2021. Following that the ministry of civil aviation had prepared a Cabinet note. However, the list was reduced to 11 airports as the Madhya Pradesh government objected to the privatisation of Raipur and Indore airports.

For the first time, the government had clubbed seven smaller airports with six big airports for the privatisation process. Following that Varanasi was clubbed with Kushinagar and Gaya; Amritsar with Kangra; Bhubaneswar with Tirupati, Raipur with Aurangabad, Indore with Jabalpur and Tiruchirappalli with Hubli. The previous National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government took the step after it faced criticism that the policy of privatising profit-making airports is saddling AAI with economically unviable airports and fostering monopoly in the sector; govern-

Action Mode

25 airports earmarked for asset monetisation from 2022 to 2025

2021: Airport Authority of India board cleared names of **13 airports** for second round of airport privatisation

List was later reduced to **11 airports** as MP objected to Raipur & Indore airports

7 smaller airports clubbed with **6 big airports** for privatisation process



ment is planning to rewrite how airports have been privatised in the country.

“The finance ministry has suggested that all ministries related to prepare a list of infrastructure project pipeline for the next three years. This is expected to shake up the slowing investments in the public private partnership route. Airport monetisation is a key part of that plan,” a senior government official said.

However, executives of infrastructure companies and private equity funds that ET spoke to said that there may be muted interest in bidding for the airports unless the government sweetens the deal. They said that the size of airports that are being taken up for privatisation are low which means interest from investors will be limited. Clubbing them with unviable airports will make it more unattractive.

“Private equity investors want up and running assets which they can run efficiently and give return. They are not in the business of developing assets,” said a manager of a private equity fund which has invested in infrastructure assets in India.

DGCA to review readiness of Navi Mumbai airport today

NITIN KUMAR & SANDIP DAS
New Delhi, February 24

THE DIRECTORATE GENERAL of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will meet key stakeholders of Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIAL) on Tuesday to assess the airport's operational preparedness for obtaining an aerodrome licence.

ADGCA aerodrome licence is an official certification confirming that an airport meets all necessary safety, operational and infrastructural requirements to conduct air transport operations.

NMIAL, Adani Airport Holdings (AAHL), the City and Industrial Development Corporation of Maharashtra (Cidco), and representatives from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), are expected to attend the meeting. The Navi Mumbai Airport is managed by NMIAL, a joint venture between AAHL and Cidco.

Sources said that this meeting was prompted by the rejection of NMIAL's aerodrome licence application, submitted in December 2024, due to non-compliance with regulatory guidelines.

Meanwhile, the DGCA has also received an application for an aerodrome licence from Noida International Airport. Yamuna International Airport (YIAPL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Zurich Airport International AG, has applied for the licence, which is currently under review.

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FINANCIAL EXPRESS 

DGCA to review readiness of Navi Mumbai airport today

BOTH AIRPORTS REQUIRE DGCA certification to commence commercial operations. The submission of their applications signals that they are nearing operational readiness.

Both airports have successfully completed their first flight validation tests, which included technical assessments, takeoff, and landing manoeuvres on their respective runways. Validation flights — also known as proving flights — are a critical part of the certification process, ensuring compliance with safety, operational and reliability standards. Data collected during these tests will be



reviewed by the DGCA as part of its evaluation. Regulatory approval for aerodrome licences typically takes up to 90 days.

Both airports have experi-

enced delays in their commissioning. Similarly, Navi Mumbai International Airport has faced multiple delays. Most recently, the Adani Group stated that the airport is set for commissioning in April. Both airports are crucial in decongesting existing air travel hubs and enhancing connectivity. NMIA's first phase will accommodate over 20 million passengers annually, expanding to 90 million passengers and 2.5 million tonne cargo by 2032. Noida International Airport will initially serve 12 million passengers per year, with a future capacity of up to 70 million passengers.

Palghar-Boisar set for infra boom with proposed airport

Bhalchandra Chorghade

NAVI MUMBAI

Mumbai's peripheral regions are on the cusp of transformative growth, with Palghar and Boisar emerging as key real estate and industrial hubs. The government has initiated steps to establish a third airport in Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) at Palghar, complementing the upcoming deep-water port in the area. Alongside the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link, bullet train corridor, and other infrastructure projects, this move is expected to accelerate urbanisation, making the region an attractive destination for both businesses and homebuyers.

The proposed airport is part of a larger vision to position Palghar as 'Mumbai 3.0', an extension of the city's rapid expansion. The Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) has commenced a pre-feasibility study to assess the viability of the project. Swati Pandey, managing director of MADC, stated, "The consultants will determine what is feasible in the area. This is a first step by the government."

Real estate developers are optimistic about the region's prospects. Prashant Khandelwal, president of CREDAI-MCHI Palghar Boisar Unit, noted that the infrastructure push would catalyse demand across commercial, residential and industrial segments. "Boisar-Palghar is rapidly emerging as a real estate hotspot. Along with the proposed airport, the Vadnavan Port, set to be India's largest, will enhance trade routes for Mumbai,



Palghar-Boisar set for infra boom

■ Palghar and Boisar are set for rapid growth

■ Government plans for a third airport, a deep-water port, and improved infrastructure

■ The airport is part of the vision to make Palghar 'Mumbai 3.0,'

■ Feasibility study underway by the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC)

Nashik, and Surat. Improved connectivity will open up new micro-markets and attract national and international businesses," Khandelwal said.

With its affordable property rates compared to Mumbai and Thane, Boisar has already gained traction among homebuyers and investors. The area's social infrastructure - comprising schools, hospitals, malls and commercial hubs - has made it a self-sustaining community. Additionally, the government's plan for a sports complex in North Mumbai promises to generate employment and further fuel urban development.

The concept of a third airport in MMR has been in discussion for several years. Former chief minister Uddhav Thackeray had explored potential locations in Kelva-Mahin or Dapchuri.

JEWAR: THE MAKING OF A NEW PROPERTY MARKET

Demand for real estate in the area has taken off thanks to the Noida International Airport

Machhuma Nandy
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JEWAR, BENGALURU

When Sandeep Kaushal told his wife Pooja that their application to buy a plot near the Noida International Airport in Jewar did not make it in the lucky draw, she was upset.

The Kaushals, who live in a rental apartment in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, were among the over 100,000 applicants for residential plots along the Yamuna Expressway, a 165-km stretch connecting Greater Noida with Agra. There were only 451 plots available in the scheme launched by the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (Yeida).

"We applied for a 200 square metre plot, which would cost around ₹52 lakh. In Greater Noida or Noida, land is sold mainly through online auctions to builders. The Yeida scheme was a good opportunity for people like us to buy a plot. We will apply again when their next scheme opens," Kaushal said.

Earlier last year, Yeida had launched another scheme with 361 plots. That scheme attracted over 200,000 applications. A third one is expected to be launched soon.

The tremendous response to Yeida's housing schemes is a testament to the surge in demand for property in the area. That demand has been driven by a single factor: the upcoming airport in Jewar, a small town in western Uttar Pradesh.

Real estate experts believe that once operational, the new airport will be a gamechanger, not only for real estate along the Expressway, but also in Greater Noida and Noida.

REALTY GAMECHANGER

Even after the Yamuna Expressway opened over a decade ago, the real estate market around it never took off. Despite the launch of large townships and decent connectivity, the livability quotient in the area was questionable.

That perception changed with the new airport. Suddenly, Jewar became a sought-after market. Last September, the Uttar Pradesh government approved Master Plan-2041, based on which all industrial and urban development around the Noida International Airport, and in areas along the Expressway, will happen.

"It's a massive plan involving 5,000 hectares of land and several mega projects. Vast expanses of empty land in the area bear signboards for various industrial parks, such as 'Medical device park', 'Data centre park', 'Apparel park', 'Semi-conductor park'. There is also Film City coming up. Manufacturing units of companies such as Priya Gold, Bilazo and Avery Dennison are already up and running.

"The airport is expected to have a multiplier impact on the real estate and tourism sectors. We are already witnessing signs of this. The demand for all types of real estate, including residential, commercial, and industrial, is substantially high," said Nand Gopal Gupta Nandi, minister for industrial development, export promotion, NRI and investment promotion, Uttar Pradesh.

The promise of development has already impacted prices. A recent report by property advisory Colliers India said land prices in the area have shot up 40% over the past five years.

On top of that, prices in and around Jewar are projected to rise 50% by 2030 thanks to the airport, metro rail extension and themed city projects. The advisory firm reported average land price at Jewar, in 2024, at ₹7,000 per sq. ft—higher than many hot micro markets in India, including Bengaluru's Doddaballapura (₹3,800).

"Jewar is rapidly transforming into a prominent investment destination and the upcoming airport is the biggest catalyst for urbanisation in Uttar Pradesh," the Colliers report said.

Key infrastructure projects such as airports have the ability to heat up surrounding property markets. For instance, the new airport in Mopa, Goa, created a land-buying frenzy. It has to be seen if the Jewar and Navi Mumbai real estate markets take off because of their airports. Both airports are scheduled to be inaugurated on 17 April.

THE FUTURE IS HERE

One wall of the Yeida office compound in Greater Noida features a painting of a giant orange aeroplane against a blue sky, with 'Noida International Airport' written on it. The painting also features the airport's logo, a Saras crane in flight. The crane, which is the world's tallest flying



Clockwise from top left: The Noida International Airport terminal building under construction; signboards that announce an upcoming data centre and medical devices parks; the wall of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority's office compound in Greater Noida.

bird, has a natural habitat in the wetlands of Uttar Pradesh, where it is the state bird.

Inside the office, the corridors are bustling. There is visible urgency as executives rush from one room to the other carrying stacks of files. New project schemes are being finalized; tenders for plotted and housing projects are being uploaded on the agency's website; land acquisition proposals are being sent; there are back-to-back meetings held in different rooms over rounds of ginger tea.

Shalendra Bhatia, nodal officer, Noida International Airport, says a new city is being built in Jewar and the surrounding areas. Once the airport is operational, and other developments take shape, it will be like Greater Noida—a planned city with a lot of greenery.

"In fact, we have tried to better it compared to Greater Noida," said Bhatia, who has been associated with the Jewar development project since 2007, the year Prime Minister Modi laid the foundation stone for the airport.

Bhatia pointed at the Yamuna Expressway masterplan behind him to show the scale of what is being planned. Yeida's motto 'Future is here' is printed in bold. The entire area along the Yamuna Expressway up until Jewar has been demarcated sector-wise.

"The airport will be a major driver for industries. Everyone wants a piece of land; whatever land we have auctioned or allotted through lottery has been taken up. More land needs to be acquired for many other projects we are planning," said Bhatia.

Yeida's plans are ambitious. Besides the many projects sanctioned, there are more in the pipeline. A detailed project report is being prepared for a fintech city, on the lines of GIFT City in Gujarat. Land has been earmarked—and needs to be acquired—for Japanese and Korean clusters. A proposal for a 2,000-acre logistics and industrial park at Tappal, 20 km from the airport, has been made. The list is endless. However, the entire plan depends on one key component: land, and its acquisition.

LAND ACQUISITION

Vikrant Kumar is giving the signboard of his car repair shop, less than a kilometre from the new airport terminal site, a fresh coat of paint. "Near Jewar airport gate" has been added to

'Kishorepur, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Jewar' on the signage.

Vehicles taking a left turn from Yamuna Expressway towards the airport pass by a number of small repair shops and tea stalls. Kumar has had his repair shop for four years now, but business has only picked up in the last year or so.

"The number of cars and trucks in this area has gone up a lot, and many stop by for some service or the other. My income has more than doubled. Once the airport opens, it will get even better. I have heard that many apartment complexes and hotels will come up nearby. But right now, we can only see land everywhere," he said.

The Jewar-Yamuna Expressway masterplan fits well into what a well-planned real estate market should look like. But much of the plan is still on paper and seems a little futuristic because most projects are still at the land stage, either to acquire it or begin construction. Dharendra Singh, member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly from Jewar, has played an important role in the mediation between farmers and the UP government on land acquisition.

"Chief minister Yogi Adityanath has increased the rates for agricultural land to ₹4,300 per square metre (including the rehabilitation package) for the third and fourth phases, from ₹3,100 per sq. metre in the second phase. We have got 40% approval from farmers, and the process is on," said Singh. "It is important that the land acquisition happens smoothly because Jewar will hugely benefit from the development plans," he added.

Santhosh Kumar, vice chairman at Anarock Property Consultants, said that while plots have found favour with investors, group housing schemes are aimed at end-users, and will gain steam once the airport is functional.

RESIDENTIAL BUILDUP

It is tough to miss 'Gaur Yamuna City', a township sprawling over 250 acres, opposite the Buddha International Circuit motor racing track along the Yamuna Expressway. Back in 2013, developer Gaur Group had bought the land, which was part of Jaypee Sports City, for ₹1,500 crore from Jaypee Group.

Now, with the upcoming Jewar airport, and Yeida's ambitious development plans, developers are again looking at the

mint SHORT STORY

WHAT

Though the Yamuna Expressway opened over a decade ago, the real estate market around it never took off despite the launch of large townships and decent connectivity.

AND

The livability quotient along the expressway was questionable with investors, rather than end users, driving the market, leading to unoccupied housing.

NOW

Realty experts believe that once operational, the new airport at Jewar will be a gamechanger for real estate along the expressway, Greater Noida and Noida.

Expressway. The projects will be launched after they get RERA revalidation.

Though a Godrej Properties, DLF or Prestige Group is yet to enter the area, regional developers are already making a headline for the Yeida e-auctions. Residential projects on these lands will be launched in the coming months.

After acquiring a plot through a Yeida e-auction last year, Eideco Group has been shortlisted in the recent group housing e-auction as well. Manish Jaiswal, Eideco's group chief operating officer, said land prices in the Expressway area are under control.

"This is still an affordable market, with investor and end-user interest in plots and apartments respectively. Not many big developers want to go there yet. But it's an affordable market, where first-home buyers can buy at a price lower than other markets," said Jaiswal. "New launches can be priced at ₹7,500 per sq. ft, compared to other nearby micro markets where it's tough to sell below ₹8,000 per sq. ft, because land prices are higher."

Demand is picking up, attracting investors, and it will only increase in the next one-two years. Prices of housing, commercial and industrial plots have risen between 30-50% in the last four years.

"The Jewar Airport project has significantly impacted real estate in the surrounding regions. Areas adjacent to the airport site have experienced rapid development, with land acquisition for both airport-related and private projects," said Manish Aggarwal, senior managing director, North and East, India at property advisory JLL.

The good thing is Yeida ensures timely development of the allotted plots, Aggarwal added. This means an occupancy certificate must be obtained within three years, and if the building is not constructed, a fee will be levied annually on the premium of the plot, which varies from 3% to 6%.

MORE INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDED

The entire market along the Yamuna Expressway has largely been investor-driven so far, leading to housing that is not occupied. The new airport is a driver for real estate, but for end-users to come in, it needs more.

"The demand is good and prices of plots will rise further, but what developers need to do is bring habitation and create livability, by creating social infrastructure to

make it a desirable market," said Jash Panchamia, executive director, JLL.

Gulam Zia, executive director, Knight Frank India, said that if commercial offices are not built, job creation, which is critical for a real estate market to perform, does not happen. He cited the case of Navi Mumbai, which has abundant land and is more affordable than Mumbai, but isn't a thriving office market.

"A commercial business district, like a Banura Kuria Complex, needs to be set up. Otherwise, people will live in Navi Mumbai or Jewar because it's affordable, but they have to travel far for work," Zia said.

Conceived in the 1970s as a satellite city near Mumbai, Navi Mumbai has grown into a sizeable property market with planned infrastructure. It offers affordable living options compared to the financial capital Mumbai, which remains the most expensive real estate market in the country.

Despite the proximity, Navi Mumbai never gained the pricing or premium status that Mumbai's real estate enjoys. The 2024 opening of the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (also called Atal Setu), a 22 km expressway connecting Navi Mumbai and Mumbai, and now, the Navi Mumbai International Airport, could give the satellite city a much-needed boost.

Niranjan Hirani, chairman, Hiranandani Group, believes that the centre of gravity will shift there with the new airport and a slew of new projects being planned. "The Noida airport may have a slower impact, but the Navi Mumbai airport will be impactful the day it starts," opined Hirani, who is developing a 300-acre township in Panvel. For Jewar, the commercial potentials are huge. But like Navi Mumbai, its success will depend on the development of other infrastructure.

"Jewar's real estate market is closely tied to the timely completion of the airport and associated infrastructure, including Regional Rapid Transit System and Mass Rapid Transit System connectivity. Its success depends heavily on job creation within the region, which Yeida is working towards," said JLL's Aggarwal.

The good news is that this year, the new Faridabad-Jewar Expressway, which will connect the NCR city in Haryana to the Noida airport in just 15-20 minutes, will get ready. Once all of the infrastructure in the area is ready and functioning, Jewar may well come into its own.



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MACHHUMA NANDY/NTV

\$240 MILLION GWADAR INT'L AIRPORT

No passengers, no planes, no benefits. Pak's newest airport is bit of a mystery

GWADAR (PAKISTAN): With no passengers and no planes, Pakistan's newest and most expensive airport is a bit of a mystery. Entirely financed by China to the tune of USD 240 million, it's anyone's guess when New Gwadar International Airport will open for business.

Located in the coastal city of Gwadar and completed in October 2024, the airport is a stark contrast to the impoverished, restive southwestern Balochistan province around it. For the past decade, China has poured money into Balochistan and Gwadar as part of a multibillion dollar project that connects its western Xinjiang province with the Arabian Sea, called the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor or CPEC.

Authorities have hailed it as transformational but there's scant evidence of change in



Gwadar. The city isn't connected to the national grid — electricity comes from neighboring Iran or solar panels — and there isn't enough clean water.

An airport with a 400,000 passenger capacity isn't a priority for the city's 90,000 people.

"This airport is not for Pakistan or Gwadar," said Azeem Khalid, an interna-

tional relations expert who specializes in Pakistan-China ties. "It is for China, so they can have secure access for their citizens to Gwadar and Balochistan."

Caught between militants and the military

CPEC has catalysed a decadeslong insurgency in resource-rich and strategically located Balochistan. Separatists, aggrieved by what they

Takeaways

- » CPEC has catalysed a decadeslong insurgency in resource-rich and strategically located Balochistan
- » Separatists, aggrieved by what they say is state exploitation at the expense of locals, are fighting for independence

say is state exploitation at the expense of locals, are fighting for independence — targeting both Pakistani troops and Chinese workers in the province and elsewhere.

Members of Pakistan's ethnic Baloch minority say they face discrimination by the government and are denied opportunities available elsewhere in the country, charges the government

denies. Pakistan, keen to protect China's investments, has stepped up its military footprint in Gwadar to combat dissent.

The city is a jumble of checkpoints, barbed wire, troops, barricades, and watchtowers. Roads close at any given time, several days a week, to permit the safe passage of Chinese workers and Pakistani VIPs.

Gwadar locals see little benefit from China's CPEC, with jobs scarce and heavy security stoking resentment. Many residents recall better times before water shortages and economic struggles.

Protests erupted over poor living conditions but yielded no progress. Security concerns delayed the airport's inauguration, and locals were excluded from jobs. Rising militancy and government crackdowns fuel tensions. **PTI**



Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

24 FEBRUARY 2025

No passengers, no planes: China-funded \$240m Gwadar airport sits idle

Gwadar: With no passengers and no planes, Pakistan's newest and most expensive airport is a bit of a mystery. Entirely financed by China to the tune of \$240 million, it's anyone's guess when New Gwadar International Airport will open for business. Located in the coastal city of Gwadar and completed in Oct 2024, it's a stark contrast to the impoverished, restive southwestern Balochistan province around it.

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ected to the national grid — electricity comes from Iran or solar panels — and there isn't enough clean water. An airport with a 400,000 passenger capacity isn't a priority for the city's 90,000 people.

"This airport is not for Pakistan or Gwadar," said Azeem Khalid, an international relations expert who specialises in Pakistan-China ties. "It is for China, so they can have secure access for their citizens to Gwadar and Balochistan."

CPEC has catalysed a decades-long insurgency in resource-rich and strategically located Balochistan. Separatists, aggrieved by what they say is state exploitation at the expense of locals, are fighting for independence — targeting Pakistani troops and Chinese workers in the province and elsewhere. Members of Pakistan's



MADE BY CHINA, FOR CHINA? Completed in Oct 2024, the New Gwadar International Airport a stark contrast to the impoverished and restive Balochistan province around it. 'This airport is not for Pakistan or Gwadar,' said Azeem Khalid, an international relations expert. 'It is for China, so they can have secure access for their citizens to Gwadar and Balochistan'

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Gwadar to combat dissent. The city is a jumble of checkpoints, barbed wire, troops, barricades, and watchtowers. Roads close at any given time, several days a week, to permit the safe passage of Chinese workers and Pakistani VIPs.

Intelligence officers monitor journalists visiting Gwadar. Its fish market is deemed too sensitive for coverage.

Many locals are frazzled. "Nobody used to ask where we are going, what we are doing, and what is your name," said Khuda Bakhsh Hashim, 76. "We used to enjoy all-night picnics in the mountains or rural areas. We are residents. Those who ask should identify themselves as to who they are."

Hashim recalled when Gwadar was part of Oman, not Pakistan, and was a stop for passenger ships heading to Mumbai. People didn't go hungry and found work easily, he said.

But Gwadar's water has dried up because of drought and unchecked exploitation. So has the work. Govt says CPEC has created some 2,000 local jobs but it's not clear wh-

om they mean by "local" — Baloch residents or Pakistanis from elsewhere in the country. Authorities did not elaborate.

There is a perception Gwadar is dangerous or difficult to visit — only one commercial route operates out of its domestic airport, three times a week to Karachi, Pakistan's largest city. There are no direct flights to Balochistan's provincial capital of Quetta, or national capital of Islamabad.

Security concerns delayed the inauguration of the international airport. There were fears the area's mountains — and their proximity to the airport — could be the ideal launchpad for an attack. Instead, PM Shehbaz Sharif and his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang hosted a virtual ceremony. The inaugural flight was off limits to media and public. **AP**

Corporate Communications Directorate

ASSAM TRIBUNE

GUWATI

24 FEBRUARY 2025

Flying high

There can be little doubt that, after the ending of a Covid-19 pandemic-induced hiatus, the Indian civil aviation industry is once again flying high. This can be inferred from the comment made by the Union Civil Aviation Minister, K Rammohan Naidu, while launching the Electronic Personnel Licence (EPL) for pilots, a significant step towards digital transformation and enhancing security and efficiency of civil aviation in India, that looking at the growth, the country will require at least 20,000 pilots in the coming years to keep up with the increasing demand for air travel. Naidu also asserted that the aviation sector is poised for significant growth in the future, with 50 new airports planned in the next five years, and the expansion of domestic routes, including 120 new destinations, over the next decade. It may be recalled that, as early as 2019, the Ministry of Civil Aviation released a report entitled 'Vision 2040' outlining a roadmap for the future of civil aviation in India. The report projected a whopping six-fold increase of air passenger traffic to 1.1 billion by 2040, including 821 million domestic and 303 million international passengers. The report estimated that around 2,359 aircraft would be needed by 2040, with the industry having at least 190-200 airports by that year. Considering the burgeoning growth witnessed in the last three years, such figures do not appear to be unviable and exaggerated.

However, in order to cater to the rapid burgeoning of air traffic, there has to be a commensurate development in the supporting infrastructure if the industry is not to be overwhelmed by the sheer increase in the number of passengers. For instance, if the number of pilots required is to be reached, more flying clubs to train them must be set up. It is surprising, indeed, that there is not a single flying club in the entire Northeast, which has seriously deprived youths of this region of opportunities in this sphere. At the same time, the endeavour to establish a commercial aircraft manufacturing base in India has to commence, with the Union government playing a leading part in the essay, if the commercial aviation industry is not to be held hostage by giant aircraft-making corporations in the US and Europe. Moreover, given that operators in the aviation industry are running at stupendous losses, there will have to be concessions afforded to them to make it more sustainable, including lowering the cost of vital components such as aviation fuel. The airport passenger handling facilities and the amenities provided to fliers would need to witness constant upgradation, including that of smaller air-transport hubs like Guwahati. It must be kept in mind that India is expected to overtake China and the United States as the world's third-largest air passenger market in a decade, which entails appropriate action if the aviation industry is to keep flying high.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

न्यूयॉर्क से दिल्ली आ रहे विमान में बम की धमकी के मामले में केस दर्ज

नई दिल्ली। न्यूयॉर्क से दिल्ली आ रहे अमेरिकन एयरलाइंस के विमान में बम की धमकी मिलने के बाद उसे रोम डायवर्ट कर दिया गया। जब प्लेन के क्रू मेंबर्स को बम की धमकी के बारे में बताया गया, उस समय जहाज कैस्पियन सागर के ऊपर था। इटली एयरफोर्स के फाइटर जेट्स ने इसको एस्कोर्ट करते हुए रोम में सुरक्षित लैंडिंग कराई। फाइटर जेट्स से हवा में प्लेन के एस्कोर्ट किए जाने का वीडियो अब सोशल मीडिया पर वायरल हो रहा है। आईजीआई एयरपोर्ट जिला पुलिस उपायुक्त उषा रंगरानी ने बताया कि न्यूयॉर्क से दिल्ली आ रही फ्लाइट AA-292 में 23 फरवरी को बम रखे होने का ई-मेल मिला था। इस संबंध में अमेरिकन एयरलाइंस की तरफ से 24 फरवरी को शिकायत मिली थी। शिकायत के आधार पर भारतीय न्याय संहिता (बीएनएस) की धारा 217/351 (4) और नागरिक उड्डयन सुरक्षा के खिलाफ गैरकानूनी कृत्यों के दमन अधिनियम की धारा 3 के तहत एक प्राथमिकी दर्ज की गई है। उन्होंने बताया कि मामले की जांच की जा रही है। ब्यूरो



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

ePlane strengthens global footprint with Empire Aviation to scale eVTOLs in UAE and South-East Asia

Our Bureau
Chennai

The ePlane Company, an electric Vertical Take-Off and Landing (eVTOL) manufacturer incubated at IIT Madras, and Dubai's Empire Aviation Group, announced a collaboration to fast-track the deployment eVTOL air-taxis and air-ambulances across India, UAE, Thailand and Indonesia. The collaboration was signed at the re-

cently held Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru.

The Empire Aviation Group will leverage its deep expertise in aviation operations, including safety protocols, SOPs and fleet management, to ensure seamless market entry for ePlane's cutting-edge eVTOL aircraft. It will consider investment in ePlane in the next round of funding, subject to mutually agreed terms.

As the eVTOL ecosystem matures, both companies an-

ticipate further strategic collaborations, including maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) services, regulatory engagement, and infrastructure development. Additional commercial and licensing agreements will be detailed in due course, the release said. Paras P Dhamecha, Founder and Managing Director of Empire Aviation Group, said as the market for urban air mobility continues to take greater importance, Empire

Aviation has entered into a partnership with ePlane to provide inputs in the development, certification, operational and customer experience aspects of the eVTOL.

Satya Chakravarthy, CEO of The ePlane Company, said by combining our patented technology with Empire's operational expertise across multiple geographies, the company is confident in its ability to deliver safe and reliable urban air mobility solutions.

Air India finalises \$20 b fleet insurance; premium unchanged

MEGA DEAL. Carrier bags good rates as premiums are set to rise due to recent mishaps

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Air India has finalised an insurance cover of \$20 billion for its expanded fleet, post the Vistara merger, at existing rates.

While the sum insured has increased from \$12 billion to \$20 billion, the premium outgo will remain unchanged around \$30 million.

While globally, aviation insurance premiums are expected to inch up following a spate of accidents in the past few months, Air India managed to secure good rates.

This is because of overall softness in aviation insurance market, deft negotiations, the airline's risk management practices and absence of major claims, sources said.

The \$20 billion insurance will cover against damage to aircraft from incidents, accidents or war. This covers 300-plus planes belonging to



SAFE AND SOUND. The \$20 billion insurance covers 300 plus planes of Air India and Air India Express

Air India and Air India Express. There is a separate cover for passenger and third-party liabilities.

Tata AIG is the lead insurer for Air India, taking a significant portion of risk. Public sector insurance firms and ICICI Lombard have a smaller share of the sum insured. The entire risk has been underwritten by London-based reinsurers. Air India declined to comment.

"TATA AIG is a proud insurance partner of Air India, which has demonstrated un-

wavering commitment to operational excellence and diligent risk and safety management. Insurers are generally inclined to respond positively to such clients with strong safety record and robust growth trajectories," said Deepak Kumar, Senior Executive Vice-President & Head (Reinsurance, Credit & Aviation Insurance), TATA AIG General Insurance.

ACCIDENTS & SEIZURES

For the past couple of years, there has been overcapacity in aviation insurance with

more reinsurers willing to underwrite risk. This has led to intense competition and softer premium rates.

However, recent accidents and the outcome of litigation between lessors and insurers over seized aircraft in Russia are expected to influence premiums this year.

Insurance companies make a provision in their accounts of the claim amount. While it is easier to reserve a hull loss, claims related to passenger liability are finalised after seeking opinion from lawyers.

While there have been accidents in Azerbaijan, Canada and Korea, the fallout of the recent American Airlines crash in the US is being watched by the sector.

"Insurers are closely monitoring the financial impact of liability claims (arising from accidents) and their reactions will likely become more definitive as the scope of these claims becomes clearer," Kumar added.

Shankh Air plans to lease first aircraft by next month

Rohit Vaid

New Delhi

The newest entrant in India's civil aviation sector — Shankh Air — plans to lease its first aircraft by next month, a senior official with the airline told *businessline*.

According to Shankh Air's Co-Founder and Executive Director Anurag Chhabra, the airline is currently in talks with aircraft lessors for narrow-body aircraft to start operations.

"In all probability, we are expecting our first aircraft to arrive by March 2025. We will be leasing at least two aircraft to start with and will take the count to five within the first year of operations as per the conditions laid down by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation," Chhabra told *businessline*.

Breaking from tradition, Shankh Air plans to go in for narrow-body aircraft with a seating capacity of around 180 passengers to start operations.

Generally, start-up airlines in India lease turboprop aircraft or smaller jets.



FLIGHT PLAN. Shankh Air plans to commence its first flight from Lucknow to New Delhi

"We have secured a 'full service national carrier' licence, and hence, to start with, we are looking for only jet aircraft."

On the other hand, Chhabra acknowledged the difficulty in leasing out aircraft due to the global supply chain shortages.

However, he exuded confidence in receiving the desired number of planes within a short period of time.

Besides, Chhabra said, the airline is currently in the process of getting AOC (air operators certificate or permit) as per the required DGCA guidelines.

"Once we secure our AOC, we would be able to plan our

launch and accordingly plan our ticket sale process," he said.

The airline plans to commence its first flight from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, to New Delhi. Mumbai is slated to be the airline's second destination.

EXPANSION PLANS

It is speculated that the airline would commence operations to the upcoming airports at Greater Noida and Navi Mumbai to take advantage of slot availability.

However, there is no clarity yet on the aeronautical charges that would apply at these destinations. Furthermore, Chhabra, cited the air-

line has hired key personnel for various departments, who he said "have started their work".

"We have also started the hiring activity for pilots."

Regarding the challenges faced by new entrants in the country's aviation sector, Chhabra pointed out that India's aviation market offers significant growth opportunities, especially given the burgeoning middle class and expanding travel demand.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

"However, setting up of an airline in India involves navigating a highly complex landscape which involves regulatory hurdles, high initial capital investment, fierce competition, and infrastructure limitations, these challenges make it essential for new entrants to be well-capitalised, patient, and prepared for the challenges," he said.

"Nonetheless, with the right strategy and long-term planning, the Indian aviation market offers significant rewards for those able to successfully navigate these complexities," he further noted.

Honeywell to decarbonise shipping, aviation biz in India

Company exploring ways to increase production of sustainable jet fuel

PUJA DAS

New Delhi, 24 February

One of America's major industrial conglomerates, Honeywell is exploring increasing sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production and decarbonising Indian aviation and shipping industries through technology transfer in the biofuel supply chain.

It is looking at up to 11 pathways for feedstock variability, including solid waste and cooking oil for this.

Additionally, Honeywell plans to licence at least an ecofining processing unit and operationalise it in India, said senior executives of Honeywell India. This initiative follows Honeywell's collaboration with AM Green on February 11, aimed at advancing carbon capture and SAF efforts in India. "In terms



of biofuels, we believe India has substantial potential after ethanol in the transport sector. We are also exploring feedstock variability alongside methanol and ethanol. Universal oil products (UOP) can utilise 11 different pathways for feedstock conversion. We can process used cooking oil, waste fats, ethanol, methanol, CO₂, and even municipal solid waste to create fuels. These are diesel, naphtha, SAF, green olefins, and other green molecules that represent building blocks of the future," Ranjit Kulkarni, vice-president and general manager, energy and sustainability solutions, Honeywell India, told *Business Standard* during India Energy Week.

Kulkarni added, "Currently, we are seeking region-specific solutions tailored for local needs across the country. Each option will have its specific application, and we are endeavouring to implement these solutions in relevant areas."

Last year, Honeywell launched a new technology aimed at producing 3-5 per cent more SAF while enabling a cost reduction of up to 20 per cent. Also, it minimised byproduct waste compared to commonly used hydroprocessing technologies.

Rajesh Gattupalli, president of Honeywell UOP, emphasised the current global reliance on core energy resources. He said, "Today, we need core oil and gas

to sustain ourselves until renewable energy sources are fully realised. Renewables are still in the early stages. Currently, SAF meets less than 1 per cent of global jet fuel demand, indicating that we have a long way to go. As a technology provider, we are committed to supporting the sector in increasing SAF usage to meet net-zero goals sustainably."

Currently, the aviation sector uses aviation turbine fuel (ATF) while the shipping sector typically relies on heavy oils or bunker fuel.

SAF is a biofuel that can be produced from waste oils and fats, green waste, and non-food crops, potentially reducing CO₂ emissions by up to 80 per cent, depending on the feedstock and technology used.

India aims to achieve a 1 per cent SAF blend in jet fuel for international flights by 2027, which will increase to 2 per cent by 2028. This goal is a significant step towards reducing aviation emissions in the country and is part of India's objective to attain net-zero emissions by 2070.

In 2016, the International Civil Aviation Organization adopted the Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation to address CO₂ emissions from international flights, with India expected to implement it by 2027.

The company is actively engaging with developers on all fronts regarding various feedstock pathways.

While commercial applications are anticipated soon, their feasibility will depend on factors such as offtake agreements, pricing agreements, and feedstock confirmation over the next 10-15 years.

Regarding the licensing and operationalisation of ecofining processing units in India, they indicated that the company is eager to proceed and is awaiting customers.

“IN TERMS OF BIOFUELS, WE BELIEVE INDIA HAS SUBSTANTIAL POTENTIAL AFTER ETHANOL IN THE TRANSPORT SECTOR. WE ARE ALSO EXPLORING FEEDSTOCK VARIABILITY”

RANJIT KULKARNI, VP & GM, Energy & sustainability solutions, Honeywell India

Corporate Communications Directorate

DANIK BHASKAR

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

दावा • अब पंजाब भाजपा प्रमुख जाखड़ ने टूटी सीट की तस्वीरें साझा कीं

टूटी सीटें सिर्फ एअर इंडिया के विमान में नहीं, इंडिगो में भी हैं

भास्कर न्यूज़ | नई दिल्ली

इंडिगो ने दी सफाई... कुशन ढीले हो सकते हैं, पर सुरक्षा से समझौता नहीं

केंद्रीय मंत्री शिवराज सिंह चौहान के बाद अब पंजाब के भाजपा प्रमुख सुनील जाखड़ ने विमान में टूटी सीटों का मुद्दा उठाया है। जाखड़ ने सोशल मीडिया पर लिखा- 'ऐसा लगता है कि विमान में टूटी सीटें केवल एअर इंडिया की समस्या नहीं है। यहां 27 जनवरी की एक इंडिगो चंडीगढ़-दिल्ली फ्लाइट की कुछ तस्वीरें हैं, जिनमें कई सीटों पर ढीले कुशन दिख रहे हैं, जो सुरक्षा मानकों के अनुरूप नहीं हैं।' जाखड़ ने कहा कि केबिन क्लू ने उन्हें इंडिगो की



वेबसाइट पर शिकायत दर्ज करने की सलाह दी। उन्होंने कहा कि वह यह मुद्दा इसलिए उठा रहे हैं ताकि नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय सुनिश्चित करे कि इन दो प्रमुख एयरलाइनों का

इंडिगो ने जाखड़ की सोशल मीडिया पोस्ट का जवाब देते हुए कहा कि उनके विमान की सीटें हटाने योग्य कुशन के साथ डिजाइन की गई हैं, जो वेल्करो से सुरक्षित होती हैं, ताकि सफाई और मेंटेनेंस में आसानी हो सके। कभी-कभी ये कुशन ढीले हो सकते हैं और बेहतर आराम के लिए इन्हें ठीक करने की आवश्यकता हो सकती है। सुरक्षा हमारे लिए सर्वोपरि है और हम आपको आश्वस्त करते हैं कि सीट डिजाइन में सुरक्षा मानकों से कोई समझौता नहीं किया गया।

'चलता है' रवैया सुरक्षा मानकों का पालन करने में बाधा न बने। इससे पहले, 22 फरवरी को शिवराज सिंह चौहान ने भोपाल से नई दिल्ली की एअर इंडिया की उड़ान में उन्हें 'टूटी

हुई सीट' बेचने का आरोप लगाया था। मंत्री ने कहा कि ऐसी सीटों को पूरा किराया लेकर बेचना अनैतिक है और यात्रियों के विश्वास के साथ धोखा है।

विमान में बम की धमकी पर प्राथमिकी

अमेरिकन एक्सप्रेस की **शिकायत** पर आइजीआई थाना पुलिस ने दर्ज किया केस

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली: न्यूयार्क से नई दिल्ली आ रहे अमेरिकन एक्सप्रेस के विमान में बम होने की सूचना मिलने के बाद उसे रोम डायवर्ट किए जाने के मामले में आइजीआई थाना पुलिस ने विमान प्रबंधन एजेंसी की शिकायत पर प्राथमिकी दर्ज कर ली है। समाचार लिखे जाने तक इस विमान की लैंडिंग आइजीआई एयरपोर्ट पर नहीं हुई थी। मामले की जांच जारी है।

आइजीआई जिला पुलिस की अतिरिक्त आयुक्त उषा रंगनानी ने बताया कि 23 फरवरी को इस विमान में बम होने की जानकारी ईमेल से मिली थी। इसके बाद सुरक्षा प्रोटोकाल का पालन करते हुए विमान को सुरक्षित जगह लैंड कराया गया। फिलहाल इस मामले

न्यूयार्क से नई दिल्ली आ रहे अमेरिकन एक्सप्रेस के विमान की रोम में लैंडिंग कराई गई, जांच में कोई संदिग्ध वस्तु नहीं मिली

ज्यादा नहीं बता रहे हैं, लेकिन सूत्रों का कहना है कि जांच में न सिर्फे, भारत बल्कि अमेरिकन एजेंसियां भी जुटी हैं।

पुलिस अधिकारियों का कहना है कि सूचना तब मिली, जब विमान उड़ान पर था। इसके बाद बम थ्रेट असेसमेंट कमेटी की तत्काल बैठक हुई। विमानन व पुलिस से जुड़े नियमों को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह निर्णय लिया गया कि विमान को किसी भी नजदीकी एयरपोर्ट पर लैंड कराया जाए। बम होने की सूचना मिलने के बाद अमेरिकन एजेंसियां

लिया गया कि तत्काल उड़ान को डायवर्ट कर यूरोप के किसी देश में लैंड कराया जाए। इसके बाद रोम का विकल्प उपयुक्त समझा गया। रोम में विमान की लैंडिंग कराई गई, लेकिन जांच में कोई भी संदिग्ध वस्तु नहीं मिली।

अधिकारियों का कहना है कि

जिस आइपी एड्रेस का इस्तेमाल ईमेल भेजने में हुआ है, उसकी तकनीकी जांच की जा रही है। जांच एजेंसियों के लिए जांच का सबसे महत्वपूर्ण विषय यह है कि सूचना देने वाले की मंशा क्या थी। क्या उसने मजाक में ऐसा किया या फिर उसने सोच समझकर ऐसा किया।

Corporate Communications Directorate

RS DANIK JAGRAN

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

पायलटों को हफ्ते में 36 के बजाय 48 घंटे मिलेगा 'आराम'

जागरण संवाददाता, नई दिल्ली

दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट ने सोमवार को नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) को निर्देश दिया कि वह एक जुलाई से चरणबद्ध तरीके से पायलटों के लिए ड्यूटी और आराम के घंटों पर संशोधित मानदंडों को लागू करने के लिए समय-सीमा का सख्ती से पालन करे। डीजीसीए के अधिवक्ता ने न्यायमूर्ति तारा वितस्ता गंजू को बताया कि नागरिक उड्डयन आवश्यकता (सीएआर) के 22 संशोधित खंडों में से 15 को एक जुलाई, 2025 से लागू किया जाएगा। शेष को एक नवंबर तक लागू किया जाएगा। मामले की अगली सुनवाई एक अप्रैल को होगी।

याचिकाकर्ता पायलट संघों के अधिवक्ता ने अदालत से यह निर्देश पारित करने का अनुरोध किया कि हलफनामे में प्रतिवादियों द्वारा निर्धारित

डीजीसीए ने हाई कोर्ट को दी पायलटों के साप्ताहिक विश्राम अवधि में जुलाई से संशोधन की जानकारी

समय-सीमा का सख्ती से पालन किया जाना चाहिए। इस पर डीजीसीए के अधिवक्ता ने दलील दी कि हमने पहले ही हलफनामा दाखिल कर दिया है और हम उससे बंधे हुए हैं।

डीजीसीए के हाई कोर्ट को सौंपे गए रोडमैप में एक जुलाई, 2025 से पायलटों के साप्ताहिक आराम को 36 घंटे से बढ़ाकर 48 घंटे करने का प्रस्ताव है, और काकपिट क्रू के लिए ड्यूटी मानदंडों में छूट के हिस्से के रूप में, एक नवंबर, 2025 से रात की उड़ान को कम करने का प्रस्ताव है। डीजीसीए ने कहा कि एयरलाइंस सुनिश्चित करेंगी कि संशोधित मानदंडों के तहत एक साप्ताहिक विश्राम अवधि के अंत और अगले की

शुरुआत के बीच 168 घंटे से अधिक का समय न हो।

ये संशोधन नागरिक विमानन आवश्यकता (सीएआर) उड़ान ड्यूटी समय सीमा से संबंधित है, जो पायलटों की थकान पर चिंताओं के बीच पायलटों के लिए अधिक आराम का समय सुनिश्चित करती है। शुरुआत में इसे एक जून, 2024 से लागू किया जाना था। डीजीसीए ने एयरलाइंस, पायलट समूहों और नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय के प्रतिनिधियों के बीच बैठकों की चर्चा के परिणामों पर विचार करने के बाद रोडमैप को चरणबद्ध ढंग से लागू करने को लेकर अदालत में हलफनामा पेश किया। सीएआर के अनुसार, रात में अधिकतम उड़ान समय आठ घंटे और ड्यूटी 10 घंटे तक सीमित होनी थी। रात में लैंडिंग की संख्या छह के बजाय दो लैंडिंग तक सीमित होनी थी।



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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

24 FEBRUARY 2025

NY-Delhi flight diverted

An American Airlines flight from New York to New Delhi was diverted to Rome due to a "possible security issue", according to a media report. American Airlines flight AA292 departed New York's JFK International Airport on February 22 and was scheduled to arrive at Delhi but was diverted to Rome. A report in ABC News quoted the airline as saying that the American Airlines flight from New York to Delhi was diverted to Rome over a "possible security issue." Italy's ANSA news agency said that the diversion was caused by an "alleged bomb threat".





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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

24 FEBRUARY 2025

Scare on NY, Delhi Flight

An American Airlines flight from New York to Delhi was diverted to Rome on Sunday after receiving a bomb threat on email. Following the bomb threat, the flight is scheduled to land at the Rome airport for checking. The flight will take off for Delhi after receiving security clearance at the Rome airport, according to sources. The Boeing 787 Dreamliner had taken off from New York on the evening of February 22 and was flying over the Caspian Sea, an online media report said.



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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

पायलट ड्यूटी के नियमों का सख्ती से पालन हो: कोर्ट

नई दिल्ली, प्रसं। दिल्ली हाईकोर्ट ने सोमवार को नागरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय को निर्देश दिया कि वह 1 जुलाई से चरणबद्ध तरीके से पायलटों

के लिए ड्यूटी और आराम के घंटों पर संशोधित मानदंडों को लागू करने की अपनी समयसीमा का सख्ती से पालन करे।

न्यायमूर्ति तारा वितस्ता गंजू की पीठ को डीजीसीए के वकील ने सूचित किया कि उन्होंने एक हलफनामा दावर किया है जिसमें कहा गया कि सीएआर के 22 संशोधित खंडों में से 15 को 1 जुलाई, 2025 से लागू किया जाएगा और शेष को 1 नवंबर तक लागू किया जाएगा। पीठ ने एक अप्रैल को मामला स्थगित करते हुए कहा कि प्रतिवादी 19 फरवरी, 2025 के हलफनामे की सामग्री से बंधे हैं।

Why are pilots asking for more rest hours?

Why were the relaxed rules brought out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in 2024 opposed by airlines? How many days of leave do pilots get? What has the Delhi High Court ruled with respect to duty norms for pilots?

EXPLAINER

Jagriti Chandra

The story so far:

After at least a year-long tussle over the new relaxed duty norms for pilots brought out by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Delhi High Court on February 24, ruled that a vast chunk of these rules would come into effect from July 1, 2025. This brings to a close a six-year battle in Delhi High Court waged by pilot unions against the punitive provisions of the DGCA's 2019 norms that raised permissible night flying from one night to two consecutive nights, slashed rest periods including for ultra-long range flights, and allowed airlines special dispensation for utilising pilots during unforeseen circumstances such as inclement weather or emergencies.

What did the High Court rule?

The Delhi High Court ruled that a vast chunk of the liberalised duty and rest norms for pilots that were unveiled in January 2024, but put under abeyance after opposition from airlines, would come into effect from July 1, 2025. These include provisions such as increased weekly rest from 36 hours to 48 hours. Airlines would also be required to submit quarterly reports of fatigue complaints filed by pilots as well as subsequent action taken by airlines to the DGCA.

Some of the more contentious provisions have been postponed for implementation on or before November 1. This includes the new definition of night duty – 00:00 hrs to 05:00 hours being widened to 06:00 hours – which would bring down the quantum of night flying as pilots can't be rostered for more than two consecutive nights of flying. The number of landings for flights encroaching night duty will be capped to two; while on night duty pilots can also not be assigned more than eight hours of flying duty or 10 hours of total duty that encompasses pre and post flight tasks. The special dispensation given to airlines in the event of unforeseen circumstances has been tightened where the additional duration for which pilots can be utilised has been brought down from three hours to two hours, and their rest in such events has been raised.

Pilots were forced to go to Delhi High Court in May 2024, after the DGCA put its own January 2024 rules on hold because of stiff opposition from airlines. Several airlines had told the DGCA that provisioning for more rest and reduced flying would require them to hire more pilots which would need time, in the absence of which there could be flight cancellations and increase in airfare.

The volte face from the DGCA though came after it had admonished airlines for engaging in scaremongering and pressed for an urgent "wake-up call" as there had been incidents of pilot deaths "ostensibly due to punishing rosters". On August 17, 2023, IndiGo's Captain Manoj Balasubramani died due to a cardiac arrest at the boarding gate of Nagpur airport minutes before his flight to Pune.

Why are there demands for rest?

Following the resurgence in travel post COVID-19, pilots say their share of daily flying has increased considerably, which includes upto four landings in a day that entail a flying duty of upto 10 hours and total duty period of 12-13 hours. As approaches and landings demand a higher level of concentration and complex decision-making, more flights



Long hours: An Air India aircraft takes off as an IndiGo aircraft waits at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport in Ahmedabad, in 2017. REUTERS

mean a substantial increase in workload.

Since a change in DGCA's rules in 2019, airlines are also allowed to deploy pilots on two consecutive nights of flying, which is one of the most staunchly opposed provisions because it requires pilots to stay awake against their natural body clock, with the window of circadian low, between 2am and 6am, being the toughest. When these night flights are combined with 3-4 landings per day involving a duty period of 10 to 13 hours, pilots are often at their tether's end. With low-cost carriers massively increasing their short-haul international flying over the past decade, there has been a spurt in night flying. Over the years, this has become more hectic with airlines removing hotel rest at the destination, and requiring pilots to operate the return leg to improve cost and manpower efficiency. Pilots are known to overshoot their mandatory duty hours on routes in the Gulf such as to Bahrain and Jeddah.

While pilots typically fly between 50 to 90 hours in a month, their monthly duty period that include pre and post flight tasks could be upto 140-150 hours. While this may seem like a much lighter schedule than the average 200 hours a month for anyone working a 9-5 job, there are many factors that need to be considered. For instance, the legal entitlement of weekly rest within 168 hours provided by the DGCA implies that pilots get their weekly off only on the eighth day. There are no public or government holidays and only six casual leaves, 12 sick leaves and 30 privilege leaves (Air India) which have to be applied for a year in advance. IndiGo provides 42 PLs to pilots in command, and 22 to First Officers. This may also be due to the nature of the business that requires rostering and commercial teams to ensure sanctity of flight schedules which have been sold to passengers.

Then there is the cockpit environment that makes flying fatiguing. These include factors such as movement restriction, poor air flow, low light levels, background

noise, and vibration as well as multiple cycles of changes in oxygen pressurisation requiring one's body to constantly adjust to rapid shifts resulting in fatigue. Automation has replaced hands-on flying in the cockpit, making greater demands on the crew to perform vigilant monitoring which is tiring.

Erratic or unstable rosters in some airlines are widely infamous for disturbing how pilots plan their rest. For example, a 10am reporting time could be rescheduled to 4pm duty time that concludes at 2am allowing one little window for re-jigging their pre-flight rest after waking up at 6am or 7am. Alternating night and day shifts, unlike a fixed night or duty shift for a specific number of days, where the human body's natural circadian rhythm struggles to adjust to disruptions, does take its toll.

While the DGCA norms are broadly based on those framed by the U.S. and European aviation regulators, the Federation Aviation Administration and European Union Aviation Safety Agency, pilot unions underline that these are only prescriptive outer limits that are further negotiated by various airline unions, whereas cockpit crew in India have no such negotiating power as their unions are not recognised by airlines, who enforce only the upper thresholds laid down by the DGCA.

The impact of the exacting rosters is such that pilots are known to sleep inside the cockpit for 1.5 to 2.5 hours even on domestic and short-haul international flights of upto five hours

Add to these, the revised contract implemented by Air India and Air India Express since 2023, where pilots get a fixed pay equivalent to 40-hours of flying, down from 70-hours earlier, further pushing pilots to fly more to earn more.

What do the airlines say?

"Air India is committed to the safety and wellbeing of its crew members and has been implementing robust fatigue management protocols. Fatigue

Management is a key area of our operation, and we follow a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management (FRM) process to assess any such report. This involves engaging the bio-mathematical fatigue tool (Jeppesen Boeing Alertness Model -BAM) for risk analysis and a dedicated review committee – Fatigue Safety Action Group (F-SAG) – besides, sustained monitoring by the regulator," the airline spokesperson told *The Hindu*. They added that they also have a non-punitive, confidential nature of fatigue reporting system for proactive and transparent feedback from the pilots. There was no response from IndiGo on its fatigue management practices.

Air India has over 3,500 pilots, which it said was more than adequate for the existing fleet and the "current" DGCA norms on pilot rest and duty times.

While there is a surge in travel demand, allowing airlines to raise airfares and witness record profits, they are also faced with the need to closely watch their costs as airport tariffs have gone up post-pandemic and an acute shortage of new aircraft due to supply-chain challenges has pushed the cost of the few available on lease by 20-30% higher than in 2019. Profit margins in airline business are slim, and according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), net profits are expected to be \$36.6 billion in 2025 with a 3.6% net profit margin which translates into average net profit per passenger being \$7.0. Flight crew salaries and expenses account for the third biggest cost for airlines globally at 8.7% of the total cost.

There were 11,775 pilots employed across airlines in the country as of November 2024, with a fleet size of nearly 800 aircraft. As the world's fastest growing aviation market, which has 1,000 aircraft on order between Air India and IndiGo alone set to be delivered by 2035, the demand for more pilots is expected to continue to grow and so will efforts to optimise their utilisation.

THE GIST

The Delhi High Court ruled that a vast chunk of the liberalised duty and rest norms for pilots that were unveiled in January 2024, but put under abeyance after opposition from airlines would come into effect from July 1, 2025.

Following the resurgence in travel post COVID-19, pilots say their share of daily flying has increased considerably, which includes upto four landings in a day that entail a flying duty of upto 10 hours and total duty period of 12-13 hours.

The impact of the exacting rosters is such that pilots are known to sleep inside the cockpit for 1.5 to 2.5 hours even on domestic and short-haul international flights of upto five hours



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

Passengers stranded, FIR lodged as Delhi flight diverted to Rome

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Passengers aboard the New York-Delhi American Airlines flight that was unexpectedly diverted to Rome following a hoax bomb threat on Sunday remained stranded on Monday, people aware of the matter said, even as the Delhi Police registered a case in connection with the incident.

"The flight is expected to land on Tuesday. However, airport officials have yet to receive an alert regarding its expected arrival time," an official at the Delhi airport said.

According to the website of Rome's Leonardo da Vinci Airport, a flight to Delhi was scheduled to depart from Rome at 12 pm local time on Tuesday.

The New York-Delhi flight AA292 was diverted to Rome on Sunday after an alleged bomb threat was made. The aircraft was escorted by Italian Air Force fighter jets and safely landed in Rome. Passengers were then

THE NEW YORK-DELHI FLIGHT WAS DIVERTED TO ROME ON SUNDAY AFTER A HOAX BOMB THREAT

instructed to disembark.

"All passengers have been disembarked and have followed the required safety procedures for situations like this. Those with valid passports showing entry into European territory have already been transferred to hotels. Passengers without a visa or passport allowing entry into European territory will be accommodated in the available lounges for the airport," Leonardo da Vinci Airport spokesperson Federica Pistola was quoted as saying in a video message the airport shared with PTI.

Despite repeated inquiries, officials from the aviation ministry did not respond to questions related to the incident.

Deputy commissioner of police at IGI Airport Usha Rangnani said: "Security threat prompted the diversion of American Airlines Flight AA-292, travelling from New York to Delhi, to Rome, Italy, on February 23."

On February 23, an email was received regarding a potential threat to Flight AA-292 (New York to Delhi), Rangnani said. "Following standard security protocols, the flight was diverted and safely landed in Rome, Italy." She added that American Airlines filed a complaint on Monday, which led to the registration of an FIR.

"The FIR was lodged under Sections 217/351(4) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 3 of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation Act. The matter is under investigation, and security agencies are taking all necessary measures to ensure passenger safety," Rangnani said.

The airline operates a daily flight between New York and New Delhi.



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HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

24 FEBRUARY 2025

NY-Delhi flight lands in Rome over bomb scare

Agence France-Presse

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ROME: An American Airlines flight from New York to New Delhi was diverted to Rome Sunday afternoon following an "alleged bomb scare", an Italian airport spokesman said.

The Boeing plane carrying 199 passengers plus crew landed at Rome's Fiumicino airport at 5.22pm (local time) without incident.

The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) confirmed the plane had landed safely "after the crew reported a security issue".

The flight was escorted by two military fighter planes, the Italian airport spokesman said, and "all passengers were disembarked and received assistance"

at Rome's airport.

Airport operations were not affected, the person said. The plane was over the Caspian Sea when the airline warned the crew of a bomb threat.

The flight took off from New York's John F Kennedy International Airport on Saturday at around 811 pm local time (01:11 GMT Sunday), according to flight tracking website Flight Aware.

American Airlines is one of the largest US air carriers, and is headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas.

The airline did not immediately respond to an AFP request for comment. Its international operations serve more than 60 countries outside of the United States, according to the airline's website.



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HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

24 FEBRUARY 2025

DGCA suspects tech glitches behind false hijack alarm

Neha LM Tripathi

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NEW DELHI: India's aviation regulator suspects a technical fault caused a false hijack alarm on an Air India flight last month, triggering an emergency response at two of the country's busiest airports, two officials have said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) believes the incident was likely caused by a transponder malfunction on the Mumbai-bound flight from New Delhi, according to officials who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Indian Air Force, which first detected the alarm, has submitted its report indicating technical error, one of the officials said. "As of now it's appearing to be an error in codes," a ministry official confirmed.

The incident occurred at 8.40pm on January 27 when Air India flight AI 2957, carrying 126 passengers, transmitted a "squawk 7500" code shortly after take-off from New Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport. The emergency signal remained active for three minutes.

In aviation, transponders use

four-digit codes ranging from 0000 to 7777 to identify aircraft to air traffic control. The code 7500 specifically indicates a hijacking attempt, while 7600 signals radio failure and 7700 denotes a general emergency.

Despite the pilot's immediate notification that it was a false alarm, authorities were compelled to follow full emergency protocols. "How can air traffic control assume that the pilot is not being pressured? What if he is at gunpoint?" explained a former air traffic control official, speaking on background.

Airfares soar as pvt buses stay off roads

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MUMBAI: Nearly all bus operators between Maharashtra and Karnataka, including private players, have halted their services fearing for the safety of passengers and staff. The services will not be resumed till tensions die down, bus operators told Hindustan Times.

“Almost all private bus operations between the two states have come to a halt over simmering tensions in the border areas of both states,” said Murad Naik, vice chairman of the Mumbai Bus Malak Sangathana.

Belgavi and its neighbouring areas in north Karnataka have been the focal point of a decades-long territorial and linguistic dispute between Karnataka and Maharashtra. Last week, tensions erupted afresh after a KSRTC bus conductor was allegedly assaulted in a Belagavi village.

KSRTC and its arms run at least 120 buses every day from Belgavi to different parts of Maharashtra while MSRTC runs another 250 daily services to the southern state. Additionally, around 500 daily services are operated by private players. The simmering tension in border areas have led to the suspension of nearly all these interstate bus services, said sources. The services would not be resumed till tensions died down, the sources added.

Among the routes affected are those originating/terminating at Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Dharashiv, Sangli, Solapur, Kol-

hapur, Sawantwadi, Belgavi, Mysuru, Bengaluru, Bijapur and Niphani.

Passengers who had booked tickets on these routes are being refunded the fare, said Naik from the Mumbai Bus Malak Sangathana. “People are also cancelling their tickets and opting for other modes of transport,” he said.

Sohail Kazi, who wanted to travel from Mumbai to Bengaluru, said he had to alter his travel route owing to the simmering tensions and suspension of bus services.

“Instead of taking a direct bus to Bengaluru, I will now head to Goa and take another bus from there for the onward journey,” he said. Though travelling via Kolhapur in Maharashtra was also an option, Kazi feared being stranded there or being fleeced by taxi drivers willing to cross the state border, he said.

The developments have sent air fares between Mumbai and Bengaluru soaring, up to ₹30,000 in some cases. On Sunday, tickets on Indigo’s late evening flight from Mumbai to Bengaluru were selling for ₹17,500, while Akasa Air’s late night flight was priced at ₹12,000. The most expensive was Air India’s flight at 9.30pm, with each ticket costing ₹30,000. For flights from Bengaluru to Mumbai, fares on Sunday ranged from ₹10,000 to ₹23,000.

Both state governments are assessing the law and order situation prior to taking a call on resuming public transport, said senior officials monitoring the developments.



American Airlines flight to New Delhi diverted to Rome

An American Airlines flight from New York to Delhi was forced to divert to Rome on Sunday evening. The Italian Air Force scrambled fighter jets to escort the aircraft to the airport. American Airlines Flight AA292 took off from New York on Saturday for a 14-hour journey. With four hours left to reach the destination, the aircraft took a U-turn after crossing Azerbaijan, according to flight tracking website Flightradar24. Flightradar reported that the diversion was due to a bomb threat. However, there was no official statement from the airline. After being escorted by Italian Eurojet fighter planes, the flight landed at Rome's Fiumicino airport.

Corporate Communications Directorate

MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

25 FEBRUARY 2025

FIR lodged after bomb threats to NY-Delhi flight

SHEKHAR SINGH @ New Delhi

THE Delhi Police registered an FIR on Monday, a day after an American Airlines flight from New York to New Delhi made an emergency landing in Rome following a mid-air bomb threat.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (IGI Airport) Usha Rangnani said the threat was received via email on February 23. "Following standard security protocols, the flight was diverted and safely landed in Rome, Italy. The airline later filed a complaint, and an FIR was registered in connection with the incident," the DCP confirmed.

The case has been lodged under Sections 217 (false information) and 351(4) (criminal intimidation by anonymous communication) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), along with Section 3 of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act at IGI airport police station.

Security agencies are probing the origins of the threat and ensuring the safety of future air travel. Meanwhile, the passengers with the required visas from the affected flight were provided accommodation in local hotels, while the rest stayed in airport lounges. A re-



Passengers with the required visa provided accommodation

The passengers with the required visas from the affected flight were provided accommodation in local hotels, while the rest stayed in airport lounges. A replacement flight, AA9603, is scheduled to depart for Delhi on Tuesday after the original Monday service was cancelled. The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner was midway over the Caspian Sea when the situation took a dramatic turn.

placement flight, AA9603, is scheduled to depart for Delhi on Tuesday after the original Monday service was cancelled.

The Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner, carrying 199 passengers and 15 crew members, was midway over the Caspian Sea when the situation took a dramatic turn. Flight tracking data revealed that the aircraft, scheduled for a 14-hour journey suddenly reversed near the Black Sea, setting a new course for Rome's Leonardo da Vinci International Airport (FCO).

As the plane approached Italian airspace, fighter jets were scrambled to escort the aircraft—a chilling indication of the severity of the threat. The

flight landed safely at 5:30 pm local time, and Italian law enforcement immediately secured it. Following an extensive security sweep, American Airlines confirmed the development and said the aircraft was cleared to continue its journey.

"Flight 292 was inspected by law enforcement and cleared to re-depart," the airline said in a statement. However, the mystery behind the bomb threat remains unsolved.

This incident adds to a growing list of mid-air bomb threats that have rattled the aviation industry in recent months, including several involving Indian carriers like Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet and Vistara.



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TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

24 FEBRUARY 2025

Flight diverted

■ **NEW YORK:** An American Airlines flight from New York to New Delhi was diverted to Rome because of a "possible security issue", according to a media report. Italy's ANSA news agency said the diversion was caused by an "alleged bomb threat". The flight has landed safely at the Leonardo da Vinci Rome Fiumicino Airport, the airport authorities told ABC News. ११