



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

25 MARCH 2025

Close shave for HP dy CM, DGP as plane skids at Shimla airport

Shimla, March 24: An aircraft carrying over 30 passengers, including Himachal Pradesh deputy chief minister Mukesh Agnihotri and director general of police Atul Verma, from Delhi missed the landing spot at Jubbarhatti Airport Monday morning.

According to eyewitnesses, the aircraft crossed the runway and hit the studs at the edge of the airstrip. No casualties were reported.

The flight had taken off from Delhi after routine checks and engineers are inspecting the aircraft to determine if there was a tech-



Mukesh Agnihotri

nical glitch, airport authorities said.

"The runway is small and we cannot deny this fact. As a layman, I can say that while landing, the plane did not touch the ground where it was supposed to and came to the end of the airstrip," Mr Agnihotri told reporters.

"Only the airport authority or the directorate-general of civil aviation can tell what happened, but I can say that

there was a problem in landing," the deputy CM said, adding, "We could see that the runway was ending."

Mr Agnihotri said all passengers stayed on the plane for about 20-25 minutes and the Dharamshala flight was cancelled.

Chief minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said he would speak to the civil aviation minister to discuss the matter. "I have been told that the emergency brakes had to be applied after the tyre burst and I would speak to the civil aviation minister in this regard," Mr Sukhu said. —PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

25 MARCH 2025

BJP seeks Adilabad airport

MLA Shankar asks state to seek Indian Air Force station

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, MARCH 24

The BJP on Monday urged the government to reopen communication with the Centre on the setting up of an Indian Air Force station in Adilabad, with party MLA Payal Shankar saying that the Union government was still ready to take the project forward if the state stepped in and agreed.

Speaking in the Assembly during a discussion on demands for grants for various depart-



Payal Shankar

ments, Shankar said the previous BRS government had refused to accept the Centre's proposal for developing the old aero-

● **BJP MLA Payal Shankar** said the previous BRS government had refused to accept the Centre's proposal for developing the old aerodrome in Adilabad town as it wanted the Bison Polo Ground in Secunderabad in return.

drome in Adilabad town, as it wanted the Bison Polo Ground in Secunderabad in return from the defence department.

The then defence minister Nirmala Sitharamam had written five letters in all to the then BRS government but to no avail and the Congress government should write to the Centre and express willingness to provide around 2,000 acres required for the facility. If the IAF station is developed, the defence ministry was willing to allow its use for civilian aircraft. The new airport will bring jobs, act as a hub for developing mining of valuable minerals in the district, Shankar said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK NAVJYOTI

JAIPUR

25 MARCH 2025

जयपुर अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट को डिजिटल पहल के लिए मिला राष्ट्रीय सम्मान

ब्यूरो/नवज्योति, जयपुर। जयपुर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट को परिचालन दक्षता बढ़ाने तथा यात्री अनुभव को बेहतर बनाने के लिए कम लागत वाले डिजिटल और ऑटोमेटेड प्रोजेक्ट्स के लिए तीन प्रतिष्ठित पुरस्कारों से सम्मानित किया गया है। यह पुरस्कार जयपुर एयरपोर्ट को सीआईआई के राष्ट्रीय प्रतियोगिता के 10वें संस्करण में प्रदान किए गए। जयपुर एयरपोर्ट को विमान नेविगेशन सुरक्षा के लिए स्मार्ट मॉनिटरिंग सिस्टम के लिए सर्वोच्च प्लेटिनम पुरस्कार से सम्मानित किया गया। अंतरराष्ट्रीय यात्रियों के लिए वाई-फाई डिस्कोसिंग कियोस्क के लिए स्वर्ण पुरस्कार

और एयरपोर्ट के माहौल को बेहतर बनाने के लिए मोबाइल आधारित सुगंध प्रणाली के लिए कांस्य पुरस्कार मिला। 230 से अधिक कॉर्पोरेट्स द्वारा विभिन्न क्षेत्रों से 175 से अधिक केस स्टडीज जूरी के समक्ष प्रस्तुत की गईं। मोबाइल आधारित सुगंध प्रणाली ने दिखाया कि यात्रियों की सुविधा के लिए मोबाइल एप्लीकेशन के माध्यम से एयरपोर्ट के माहौल को आसानी से नियंत्रित और प्रबंधित किया जा सकता है। यह पुरस्कार जयपुर एयरपोर्ट के सभी यात्रियों के लिए यात्रा को आसान और निर्बाध बनाने के निरंतर प्रयासों तथा प्रतिबद्धता का प्रमाण है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

25 MARCH 2025

'Hyderabad Airport named after Rajiv Gandhi despite having no role in its development'

METRO INDIA NEWS | HYDERABAD

Senior BJP leader Syed Shahnawaz Hussain on Sunday claimed that Hyderabad's International Airport was named after former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, despite having no role in its development.

'Hyderabad airport was named after Rajiv Gandhi, but three people played a major role in its construction. The land belonged to the Defence Ministry. George Fernandes, Chandrababu Naidu, and I, then Civil Aviation Minister worked together to build this airport,' he said while speaking at the 'Bihar Diwas 2025' event organized by the BJP.

'When Congress got the op-



portunity, there was no mention of Chandrababu Naidu, George Fernandes, or me. Instead, the airport was named after Rajiv Gandhi, who had no role in its construction,' he claimed.

The BJP national spokesperson further stated that regular meetings were held at the PMO, with close monitoring of the project.

Every week, the Civil Aviation Minister, Defence Minister, and Chief Minister met to oversee the airport's construction, he said.

'I want to emphasize that it is an excellent airport, and along with Chandrababu Naidu, two Biharis George Fernandes and I played a key role, as did former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in its construction,' Hussain claimed.

The airport at Shamshabad was inaugurated in 2008 by then-UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, during Congress rule in undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Hussain also highlighted that several airports are now being built in Bihar under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership.

Centre urges Delhi to cut jet fuel VAT, cites Noida airport's rates

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: The Union government has urged the Delhi government to slash the value added tax (VAT) on jet fuel from 25% to 4%, citing lower levies in 25 other states and Union territories, including Uttar Pradesh, which will likely operationalise a new international airport in the national capital region at Greater Noida.

The appeal was made by civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu in a letter dated March 19 and addressed to Delhi's chief minister Rekha Gupta.

There was no such rate change proposed in the Budget presented by Gupta on Monday.

The minister stated that civil aviation is highly price-sensitive, and at the same time, connectivity directly promotes tourism growth, output growth, and employment, in addition to various indirect benefits to the economy.

His letter, seen by HT, read,



The proposal seeks to lower VAT from 25% to 4%. Noida Airport, which will begin operations soon, has 1% VAT on jet fuel. PTI

"The price of ATF is a major component of the operating cost of airlines, and the tax on ATF significantly contributes to the ATF price. The Ministry of Civil Aviation has been emphasizing the need for the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council to consider bringing Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) within the ambit of GST at the earliest. For the con-

tinuing financial health of domestic airlines, it is important to eliminate the tax disadvantage faced by them compared to competing foreign carriers."

"Our ministry has also pursued the matter of reducing VAT on ATF. Currently, 25 states/UTs have reduced VAT on ATF to around 1%-4%, signalling their interest in attracting air connec-

tivity to their states," the minister stated, adding that "Delhi continues to be one of the few states/UTs with a high rate of 25% VAT on ATF for general flights, which needs to be rationalised to align with other states, i.e., in the range of 1%-4%."

The Uttar Pradesh government had, in December 2024, cut VAT on ATF to make Noida Airport a competitive aviation hub, a move Naidu referenced as he expressed concerns about Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport. "Noida airport in Uttar Pradesh is expected to commence operations soon, and the applicable VAT rate there will be 1% on ATF, compared to 25% on ATF at Delhi airport. This cost disparity will impact Delhi airport, making it uncompetitive and depriving it of a level playing field. This will clearly affect the offtake of ATF at Delhi airport and may impact the revenue of the Delhi government."

A similar letter requesting reduction on ATF was also sent

to Delhi lieutenant governor VK Saxena by the Air Travellers Association on March 17.

Similar concerns have been raised by the industry. Manish Singhal, secretary general of ASSOCHAM, in a letter on March 24 wrote to Naidu, stating, "Delhi's 25% VAT on ATF makes the airport less competitive compared to other airports, such as those in UP, which charge only 1% VAT. This discrepancy could cause airlines to shift operations to the new Noida airport, making Delhi less competitive."

Experts said Delhi has typically had a high VAT by virtue of it being India's capital. Mark D Martin, aviation expert and founder of Martin Consulting said if the levy is reduced, it is unlikely airlines will pass the cost benefits to customers. "It is less likely that airlines will pass on the cost save benefit on to passengers as operating costs have shot up due to long-term dollar rate soon likely to breach 87 to the rupee," he added.

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट का निर्माण अधूरा, अप्रैल से उड़ानें शुरू होने के आसार कम

■ फिलहाल तैयार नहीं हो सकी टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग ■ लेकिन उड़ान लाइसेंस 15 मई तक ही है संभव ■ अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें शुरू होने में अभी लगेगा वक्त

ग्रेटर नोएडा (भाषा)।

नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से अप्रैल में व्यावसायिक उड़ानें शुरू होने की संभावना कम है। इसकी वजह टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग का अधूरा निर्माण बताया जा रहा है।

मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ ने 10 मार्च को समीक्षा के दौरान हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण कार्य में हो रही देरी पर नाराजगी जताई थी। साथ ही उन्होंने निर्माण कार्य में तेजी लाने और सभी विभागों के

अधिकारियों की समीक्षा करने की जिम्मेदारी तय की थी। इस महिने के अंत तक हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण कार्य की समीक्षा करने के लिए राज्य के मुख्य सचिव मनोज कुमार सिंह आ सकते हैं। ऐसे में हवाई अड्डे के निर्माण कार्य को तेजी से अंतिम रूप दिया जा रहा है।

अब 15 मई तक नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) से व्यावसायिक उड़ान सेवाएं शुरू करने के लिए एयरोड्रम लाइसेंस मिलने की संभावना है।

टर्मिनल का काम तेजी से चल रहा है। शुरुआत में यात्रियों को विमान तक ले जाने के लिए छह एयरोब्रिज लगाए जाएंगे। यमुना विकास प्राधिकरण के मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी डा. अरुणवीर सिंह ने बताया कि एयरोब्रिज हवाई अड्डे पर एक ऐसा पुल है जो यात्रियों को सीधे टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग से विमान के दरवाजे तक ले जाता है। फिलहाल टर्मिनल के प्रवेश द्वार का काम चल रहा है। उन्होंने बताया कि धरेलू टर्मिनल का काम लगभग पूरा हो



चुका है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय टर्मिनल के काम में कुछ महिने लगेगे। डलाईर आदि के काम में भी देरी होगी,

इसलिए हवाई अड्डे पर पहले दिन से अंतरराष्ट्रीय सेवा शुरू होना मुश्किल है। अब पहले दिन से

सिर्फ धरेलू और कार्गो उड़ानें शुरू करने की योजना बनाई जा रही है। ऐसे में शुरुआत में हवाई अड्डे पर सिर्फ छह एयरोब्रिज ही लगाए जाएंगे। पहले यहां 10 एयरोब्रिज लगाए जाने थे, जो 'साइट' पर पहुंच चुके हैं।

नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर पुलिस थाना बनाया जाना है। इसके लिए हवाई अड्डे के पास करीब एक हजार वर्ग मीटर जमीन प्रस्तावित है। जमीन निःशुल्क देने के लिए अपर पुलिस महानिदेशक मुख्यालय से पत्राचार

किया गया, लेकिन हवाई अड्डे का निर्माण करा रही कंपनी यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड (वाईएपीएल) ने निःशुल्क जमीन देने से इनकार कर दिया है।

इस एक हजार वर्ग मीटर में पुलिस थाने के साथ डीसीपी-एयरपोर्ट का मुख्यालय बनाया जाना है। कंपनी ने जमीन के एवज में एक करोड़ रुपये की मांग की है। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के सीईओ डा. अरुणवीर सिंह ने प्रमुख सचिव (गृह) से मामले में निर्देश जारी करने की मांग की है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

25 MARCH 2025

Gold worth ₹2.7cr hidden in waistbands seized at airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Two passengers smuggling gold were apprehended by the Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) of the customs department on Sunday. The duo was found in possession of 3kg of gold with a market value of Rs 2.76 crore.

Based on intelligence inputs, the two passengers were intercepted and apprehended after they got off the flight from Abu Dhabi. "Both passengers were carrying gold in plastic strips inside the waistbands of their jeans. The gold was in the form of a semi-solid substance mixed with chemicals. In addition, the passengers were carrying two gold chains and one gold coin," according to a release by the agency.

The confiscated goods also included three 24-carat gold bars.

The two passengers were arrested after they were found in possession of about 1.5kg of gold each.



The two flyers were apprehended after they got off the flight from Abu Dhabi. They were carrying 3kg of gold in the plastic strips inside the waistbands of their jeans

Sources said that increased vigilance on the usual gold smuggling route, combined with operations against smuggling networks, have resulted in increased gold seizures in recent months.

Sunday's detection is the latest among the series of busts that have had officials seizing gold concealed in equipment, body cavities and in paste form.

"The smuggling cycles are often associated with the fluctuation in gold prices. When the yellow metal gets pricier here, the illegal activity intensifies due to a higher margin of profit," an official said.

Sources added that the carriers hired are often without any criminal record so



that they do not draw any suspicion.

They are often promised lucrative rewards to hand over the smuggled goods to a point person once they get out of the airport.

The officials said they are studying the different modus operandi employed in order to detect such cases.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

25 MARCH 2025

Close shave for Dy CM as aircraft overshoots Shimla airport runway

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MARCH 24

A major mishap was averted when an Alliance Air 42-seater aircraft, carrying Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri and over 30 passengers, landed using the emergency brakes to prevent the plane from overshooting the runway at the Jubbarhatti airport, 22 km from here, today.

"We were on the flight from Delhi to Shimla when there was some glitch, resulting in the use of the emergency brakes to land. Landing was not up to the mark and there was some problem as there was sudden application of the brakes to prevent the plane from overshooting the runway," said Agnihotri.

"We all are aware that the Jubbarhatti airport near here has a small runway. The plane landed almost close to where the runway ends and crossed the studs — the last point on the runway," said Agnihotri.

Confirming the emergency

Emergency brakes applied after glitch; aircraft grounded

OVER 30 PASSENGERS WERE ON BOARD

- DGP Atul Verma was also on the Delhi-Shimla flight, which landed at 8.22 am
- There were over 30 passengers, who were allowed to de-board only after 8.40 am

landing, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said he learnt from the police that the Delhi-Shimla flight made an emergency landing at the Jubbarhatti airport this morning. "I was told that the emergency brakes had to be applied for landing as the tyre of the plane burst during landing," said Sukhu.

Director General of Police Atul Verma was on the Delhi-Shimla flight which landed at 8.22 am. The passengers were allowed to de-board only after 8.40 am. There were over 30

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Close shave for Dy CM...

passengers on the plane. Agnihotri said the same plane was scheduled to fly to Dharamsala for a return flight to Shimla, but was grounded. "Due to the glitch, the plane was grounded, resulting in the Dharamsala-Shimla flight being cancelled, forcing many MLAs to take the road journey to reach the state capital for the Assembly session," he said.

"Since the DGP was also on board when the unusual landing took place, I'm sure he

has taken it up with the Director General of Civil Aviation," Agnihotri said when asked if the state government had taken up the issue with the Department of Civil Aviation.

The Shimla airport was made by flattening a mountain top and has a runway of 1,230 metres. It is located at an altitude of 2,196 metres. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) said the plane had been grounded to ensure proper inspection.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TRIBUNE

DELHI

25 MARCH 2025

Centre should build airports, railway tracks: Dy CM

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

SHIMLA, MARCH 24

Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri today said the Centre should construct airports and railway lines for Himachal Pradesh while responding to a question on the Bhanupali-Bilaspur railway track in the House today.

"Himachal was not financially viable when it was made. We do not have a large tax base, so the Centre should consider building airports and railway tracks in the state," said Agnihotri, adding that he had a narrow escape today when the plane he was travelling in did not stop at the scheduled spot at the "small Shimla airport". "If the Centre can build air-



ports in Bihar, why can't it be done in Himachal?" Agnihotri asked.

Responding to the question raised by the BJP MLA Trilok Jamwal, Agnihotri said the Bhanupali-Bilaspur railway track will be completed by 2027. When BJP MLA Randhir Sharma pointed out that railway track is scheduled to go up to Beri beyond Bilaspur and the land was not being acquired for it, Agnihotri snapped why the MLA was worried about Adani, who has a

STATE DOES NOT HAVE A LARGE TAX BASE

"Himachal was not financially viable when it was carved out. We do not have a large tax base, so the Centre should consider building airports and railway tracks in the state.

Mukesh Agnihotri, DEPUTY CHIEF MINISTER

cement factory near Beri. "If the railway track has to go up to Beri and any businessman is benefiting from it, he should also contribute in constructing the line," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister further said that the 63.1-km-long track would cost Rs 6,753 crore and Rs 5000 crore had already been spent on the project. "The state has given around Rs 850-900 crore for the project," he said.

Asked why the government had shifted the mon-

ey meant for the railway track to the state treasury from banks, Agnihotri said the money would be released to the departments as and when they need to make payments for the project. "Also, we are requesting Railways to put us in the category where Centre pays for the land acquisition," he said.

Responding to the question by Kuldeep Rathore, MLA Theog, over the Kurpan water supply scheme, the Deputy Chief Minister said the project, which

would cater to 54 panchayats having population over one lakh, would be completed by 2026. "An amount of Rs 321 crore will be spent on this project, out of which Rs 276 crore has already been spent. We only need to arrange Rs 45 crore needed more, which will be arranged," he said.

Responding to the question by Hardeep Bawa, MLA Nalagarh, over the slow pace of the Pinjore-Baddi-Nalagarh National Highway expansion, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said the slow pace of work on this vital stretch was hampering the industrial growth. "We will discuss this with the NHAI and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari to expedite the process," he said.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

यात्री ने उड़ान के बीच आपात द्वार खोलने की कोशिश की, मामला दर्ज

हैदराबाद। पुलिस ने दम्मम से हैदराबाद पहुंची एक फ्लाइट के लैंडिंग के दौरान आपातकालीन निकास द्वार को खोलने की कोशिश करने के आरोप में एक यात्री के खिलाफ मामला दर्ज कर लिया है। निजी एयरलाइन के केविन क्रू की ओर से दर्ज कराई गई शिकायत के मुताबिक, 58 वर्षीय ये यात्री एक निजी संगठन का कर्मचारी है। उसने कथित तौर पर राजीव गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाईअड्डे पर फ्लाइट उतरने से ठीक पहले दरवाजा खोलने की कोशिश की और चालक दल के साथ बहस की। पुलिस मामले की जांच कर रही है। एजेसी



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Stakeholders urge Delhi govt to reduce VAT on jet fuel

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Key civil aviation stakeholders have urged the Delhi government to reduce the value-added tax (VAT) on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to between one and four per cent. This move aims to lower airfares and maintain strong connectivity to and from the national capital's IGI Airport.

At present, Delhi levies a VAT rate of 25 per cent on ATF for general flights from IGIA, while the rate is four per cent on jet fuel sold for regional flights. While the VAT at Hindon airport is about one per cent on ATF, a similar rate will be applicable at the upcoming Noida International Airport, thereby creating a disadvantage for IGIA.

Consequently, stakeholders, including Civil Aviation Minister Rammohan Naidu, have urged Delhi Chief Minister Rekha Gupta to slash VAT on ATF by 1 to 4 per cent.

In a letter dated March 19, the Minister said the revenue collected from VAT on ATF is an insignificant proportion of the overall State finances and "in any case any shortfall in revenue collection due to reduction in VAT on ATF will be more than offset by the positive impact of the air connectivity to the State".

Besides, Naidu pointed out that the civil aviation sector is "very price sensitive" but at the same time air connectivity directly promotes tourism growth, output growth and employment generation, in addition to various indirect benefits to the economy.

He also cited that the price of ATF is a major component of the operating cost of airlines and that the VAT con-

tributes significantly to its overall price. Per industry estimates, ATF prices constitute over 33 per cent of the total operating cost of an airline.

The Centre, through the Ministry of Civil Aviation, has been urging the GST Council to bring ATF under the ambit of GST at the earliest.

TAX DISADVANTAGE

"For the continuing financial health of domestic airlines, it is important to eliminate the tax disadvantage faced by them vis-a-vis competing foreign carriers.

"I am happy to recall that many State or UT governments have reduced State VAT on ATF and currently 25 States or UTs have reduced VAT rates to around 1 to 4 per cent. Delhi, however, continues to be one of the few States/UTs to have a high rate of 25 per cent VAT on ATF for general flights, which needs to be rationalised for all flights (to be) on a par with other States."

In addition, he said Noida airport is expected to commence its "operations soon and the applicable rate there would be 1 per cent VAT on ATF".

"This will impact Delhi airport due to prohibitive cost difference of ATF to airlines, thereby making Delhi airport uncompetitive, depriving level-playing support. This will affect the off-take of ATF in Delhi airport and may affect the revenue of Delhi government," Naidu said.

Industry body Assocham also urged the Delhi government to reduce VAT on ATF. It stated that unless the VAT is brought down to 1 per cent, Delhi airport "will become uncompetitive forcing airlines to shift to new airport at Noida."



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Air India's first 'refreshed' legacy wide-body B777 to join fleet by April

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

The Tata Group-backed Air India will soon be pressing its first "refreshed" wide-body B777 into service, sources told *businessline*.

The airline had initiated a "heavy refresh" programme for its fleet of legacy Boeing 777 aircraft last month to provide an upgraded ultra-long-haul flying experience for its passengers.

However, Air India's leased 11 Boeing 777s are not a part of this exercise.

REFRESH PROGRAMME

Last year, *businessline* reported that Air India was planning a phased "hard or heavy" refresh programme for its fleet of legacy B777 aircraft to ensure its passengers on the ultra-long-haul flights have an elevated experience in the cabin till the time these B777 aircraft undergo a total makeover under the retrofit programme.



The programme includes changes to seat-covers, carpets and curtains in sync with Air India's new branding aspects

The 'retrofit' plan has been delayed due to global supply-chain issues.

'TO JOIN IN APRIL'

"The refreshed Boeing 777 is expected to join the fleet by next month. It is currently undergoing a makeover in Singapore," sources told

businessline. "By the year-end, all legacy 777s will receive a refresh. However, timelines are dependent on supply chains." When contacted, Air India did not elicit a response.

SYNC WITH BRANDING

The programme includes changes to seat-covers, carpets and curtains, in sync with Air India's new branding aspects.

Features such as armrests, fascia and trim panels, as well as overhead bins, meal tables and stowage systems will be refurbished.

Currently, Air India's B777 aircraft operate on ultra-long-haul routes to cities in the US and Canada.

The airline plans to expand its global network gradually.

With its newly refreshed cabins, Air India aims to position itself as a competitive player in the global aviation market, attracting both business and leisure travellers alike.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Air India modifies travel policy, opens more premium seats for sale

Aneesh Phadnis

Mumbai

All Air India employees, including its top management, will travel in economy class on domestic routes from April 1 as the airline alters its travel policies.

The move, which is expected to free up more premium economy and business class seats for sale, will come into effect in two phases in April and June.

This comes in the backdrop of retrofit in aircraft, improvement in on-time performance and increased demand for premium cabins.

Employees will be allowed to upgrade to premium economy or business class if those seats remain unsold 50 minutes before a flight departure.

CUSTOMER FOCUS

An Air India spokesperson said the move demonstrates its customer centricity.

A senior official said on-time performance has improved to 83 per cent in the past six weeks

with a combination of factors contributing to improvement. These include better availability of components, maintenance support and changes in network and scheduling.

Air India is also seeing an improvement in yields, the official said.

RETROFIT OF PLANES

While retrofit of aircraft has increased the number of premium seats, growth in corporate sales and revenue management strategies is helping the airline target more high yielding traffic. Sales in foreign markets are increasing too, he added.

Earlier this month, the first of its 27 legacy Airbus A320 aircraft rejoined service after a retrofit.

The retrofit of all 27 planes will be completed by the third quarter of 2025.

With this, all Air India's A320 planes will have a three-class configuration, comprising eight business, 24 premium economy and 132 economy seats.

पर्यावरण के अनुकूल विमानन ईंधन भारत के लिए अवसर : एयरबस

एयरबस के मुख्य कार्य अधिकारी गियौम फाउरी ने कहा है कि कार्बन उत्सर्जन को कम करने में मदद करने वाला टिकाऊ विमानन ईंधन (एसएएफ) भारत के लिए एक अवसर बन सकता है। एयरबस को भारत में बहुत अधिक संभावनाएं दिखाई देती हैं, जो दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते विमानन बाजारों में शामिल है।

उन्होंने कहा कि कंपनी के लिए भारत का मतलब 'वृद्धि' है। भारतीय एयरलाइन कंपनियों ने एयरबस को सैकड़ों विमानों के ऑर्डर दिए हैं। कंपनी के पास भारत में सी295 विमान के लिए संयुक्त उद्यम में 'फाइनल असेंबली लाइन' (एफएलए) है और इस साल हेलीकॉप्टर एच125 के लिए एक

एफएएल स्थापित किया जाएगा। फाउरी ने सोमवार कहा, 'एसएएफ भारत के लिए एक अवसर है। टिकाऊ ईंधन भारत के एजेंडा में सबसे ऊपर है। भारत में वैश्विक विमानन कारोबार का बड़ा हिस्सा है। इसलिए भारत की वैश्विक व्यवस्था में बड़ी भूमिका और बड़ी जिम्मेदारी है।' वह टूलूज में एयरबस शिखर सम्मेलन 2025 के दौरान बात कर रहे थे। वैश्विक कार्बन उत्सर्जन में विमानन क्षेत्र की करीब 2-3 प्रतिशत हिस्सेदारी है।

एसएएफ इस उत्सर्जन को कम करने में मदद कर सकता है। उन्होंने टिकाऊ ईंधन के इस्तेमाल को विमानन क्षेत्र में एक बड़ी क्रांति बताया और कहा कि इस लक्ष्य को अभी हासिल किया जाना है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Indian carriers to operate 5.5% more flights this summer

Indian carriers are set to operate 25,610 flights per week during the upcoming summer season, marking a 5.5 per cent increase compared to the same period last year, the DGCA announced on Tuesday. The aviation summer season this year runs from March 30 to October 25. Air India will operate 4,310 flights per week, an 89.2 per cent increase from last year. Its subsidiary, Air India Express, is scheduled to operate 3,375 flights – 38.5 per cent more flights than during the corresponding period a year ago.

BS REPORTER



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Staff to travel economy from Apr: A-I

REUTERS
New Delhi, 25 March

Air India said on Tuesday that all staff, including top management, would travel in economy from April 1 to free up seats for paying customers, as the airline works on improving its image following criticism over flight delays.

Staff would be upgraded to premium economy and business class seats on a flight only if these remained unsold 50 minutes prior to departure. The Times of India said in a report, confirmed by the airline.

"With this, we want to ensure that our premium seats... for which we are seeing huge demand - are available for booking to our customers first, demonstrating a culture of customer-centricity in the new Air India," a spokesperson said.

The formerly state-owned Air India was taken over by the Tata Group in 2022, and merged with Vistara - a joint venture between the Tatas and Singapore Airlines - last year. Billions of dollars have already been spent on an ambitious turnaround for the carrier, which involved ordering new jets, changing its logo, and upgrading interiors for over half its fleet, since the 2022 takeover.



Air India seeks clarity on Mumbai airport's terminal shift

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 25 March

Air India on Tuesday asked the Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) to clarify how it plans to shift flights to Terminal 2 and also to the upcoming Navi Mumbai airport from Terminal 1,

which will be razed and redeveloped to increase capacity beginning October this year.

The question from an Air India executive came during an Airports

Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) meeting on Mumbai airport's new tariff rates, Business Standard has learnt.

In response, Adani Group-led MIAL said that there was no clear answer at the moment and that such discussions would need to happen individually with each airline.

Global airlines body

International Air Transport Association (IATA) asserted during the meeting that airlines should not be forced to move operations from Mumbai airport to Navi Mumbai airport solely due to Terminal 1's demolition. SpiceJet, Air India and IndiGo are members of IATA.

The AERA on Tuesday afternoon conducted a three-hour long meeting with aviation sector stakeholders to discuss the aeronautical charges (landing charges, user development fees, parking charges, etc.) that MIAL can collect till 2028-29.

During the meeting, an Air India executive asked, "We will send a list of questions later for more clarifications and details. I have just one question at this forum ... how does MIAL plan to mitigate the impact of closing down Terminal 1, even as it makes enhancements to Terminal 2."

To this, MIAL executive said that the reconstruction of the entire Terminal 1 is "nec-

essary for ensuring the safety and security for smooth conduct of airport operation". He said that the operator will hold discussions with each airline separately for smooth shifting of flights. T1 and T2 of the Mumbai airport currently have an annual passenger handling capacity of 15 and 40 million passengers. MIAL said that T1 would be demolished in October this year and its reconstruction is expected to be done by September 2028.

During the reconstruction phase, about 5 million passengers of T1 would be shifted to T2, while the remaining 10 million passengers would be shifted to the Navi Mumbai airport.

It is not clear how this shift will impact each airline's flight network. The Navi Mumbai airport is being built by MIAL's subsidiary Navi Mumbai International Airport Private Limited. It is scheduled to start commercial flight operations from June.

More on business-standard.com

133 aircraft of various airlines out of 813 grounded: MoS Civil Aviation to RS

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI

A total of 133 aircraft are grounded of the total 813 aircraft in the fleet of various domestic airlines, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha also said that of the remaining 680 opera-



tional aircraft, 319 belong to IndiGo while 198 planes are in the fleet of Air India and

101 with Air India Express.

The rest planes are spread across other airlines, the Minister said.

He also said that Indian carriers have placed orders for a total of 1,359 new aircraft in the previous two years, of which 999 new aircraft orders were placed in 2023 and 360 new orders in 2024.

Currently, 680 aircraft are

operational for passenger travel and 133 are grounded spread across various airlines, Mohol said.

Regarding regulations for maximum permissible age for aircraft, the Minister said that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has not prescribed guidelines specifying life for an aircraft to fly in India.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

KANPUR

25 MARCH 2025

फ्लाइट की टिकट बुक करते ही वाट्सएप पर मिलेगी जानकारी

नई दिल्ली, एएनआइ : नागरिक विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने यात्रियों की सुविधा के लिए दिशानिर्देश जारी किए हैं। डीजीसीए ने सभी एयरलाइनों को निर्देश दिया गया है कि वे टिकट बुक होने के बाद नागरिक उड़्डयन मंत्रालय पर उपलब्ध यात्री चार्टर का आनलाइन लिंक यात्री को (एसएमएस/वाट्सएप) मैसेज के रूप में भेजें ताकि यात्रियों को उनके अधिकारों के बारे में जानकारी मिल सके।

JEWAR AIRPORT'S 1% VAT ON JET FUEL MAY ALTER AIRLINES' PREFERENCE FOR DELHI AIRPORT

Cut VAT on ATF or Risk Flight Diversion, Delhi Told

Aviation minister urges CM to reduce levy to 1-4% from the current 25%

Forum Gandhi

Mumbai: Civil aviation minister Ram-mohan Naidu Kinjarapu has urged newly sworn-in Delhi chief minister Rekha Gupta to reduce the Value Added Tax (VAT) on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) to 1-4% from 25%, arguing potential traffic diversion to the soon-to-be operational Greater Noida airport where the fuel will be competitively priced.

In a letter, reviewed by ET, the minister said: "Delhi continues to be one of the few states/UTs with a high VAT on ATF, which needs to be rationalised."

Fuel make up nearly 40-45% of the operating costs for an Indian carrier.

The minister, in the letter dated March 19, warned that the Uttar Pradesh airport's lower 1% VAT could divert airlines from IGIA to the upcoming facility. "This will impact Delhi airport due to the prohibitive cost dif-



Fear of Business Loss

Uttar Pradesh VAT on ATF: 1% | Delhi VAT on ATF: 25%

25 states/UTs have reduced VAT on ATF to below **5%**

ATF costs make up **40-45%** of airline operating expenses

Aviation sector impact:
3.25x output multiplier,
6.1x employment multiplier

Jewar airport is expected to start commercial flights later this year. And, with a benefit of 1% VAT on ATF, it becomes a preferred spot for refuelling of aircraft

ference of ATF," Kinjarapu said.

Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) in Delhi is India's busiest airport, handling over 73.6 million passengers in FY24, including 19 million international travelers — a 24% increase from the previous year.

The greenfield airport at Jewar in Uttar Pradesh, off the Greater Noida suburbs to Delhi's southeast, is expected to be the second aviation gateway for the Capital, and its location might make it the preferred airport for those living in the eastern suburbs of Delhi and its satellite townships. The airport is expected to start commercial flights later this year. And, with a benefit of 1% VAT on ATF, it becomes a preferred spot for refuel-

ling of aircraft, which, in turn, is a matter of concern for the GMR-operated Delhi airport.

SLASHING LEVIES

Lowering VAT is seen as essential to maintaining IGIA's competitiveness and supporting its role in tourism, trade, and employment.

ATF is subject to VAT, which ranges from 0% to 29% across states.

"The high VAT in Delhi significantly impacts airline operations and cost structures, making fuel one of the biggest expenses for carriers," said an industry executive.

Over the years, airlines including Indi-Go and Air India have sought government intervention on VAT and fuel costs.

"A reduction in VAT will have a direct impact on operational expenses, allowing airlines to offer more competitive fares and expand their networks," said a top airline executive, requesting anonymity.

Amid geopolitical tensions in the Middle East, ATF prices have surged. As of March 1, 2025, IOCL data shows ATF in Delhi costs ₹95,311 per kilolitre for domestic flights and \$848.32 per kilolitre for domestic airlines on international routes.

Assocham has also called for a VAT reduction, emphasizing the need to retain economic activity in Delhi. "If airlines find a more cost-effective alternative, there is a risk that flights and related business activities may shift away from Delhi, impacting jobs and the local economy," a source said. The aviation sector now awaits the Delhi government's response.

VAT on ATF is a state matter. According to a Rajya Sabha response on March 24, 28 states/UTs levy VAT on ATF at 5% or less.

"This will impact Delhi airport due to prohibitive cost differences, making it uncompetitive and affecting ATF sales and government revenue. Considering Delhi is one of the busiest airports in the country, I urge the Delhi government to reduce VAT on ATF to 1-4% to boost air travel and its economic benefits," the minister said.

ET GRAPHICS

How Summer Flies

Airlines will operate **barely 2% more flights** in the summer than in the ongoing winter as supply chain problems have curtailed their growth. The summer season starts from March 30. Data shared by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) shows the regulator has approved **25,610** weekly flights in the summer schedule, compared to **25,007** weekly flights in the winter season.

Compiled by ARINDAM MAJUMDER



Market leader **IndiGo** will beef up capacity and operate **467** more flights in the summer than in winter

10% less flights to be operated by **Air India** in summer as its aircraft are undergoing refurbishments



Largest cut in growth has come from financially distressed **SpiceJet**



SpiceJet has got approval to operate **1,240** flights in the summer schedule, a fall of **4%** from the winter schedule

Status Check

Airlines	Departures per week in summer 2025	Departures per week in winter 2024-25	Growth (%)
IndiGo	14,158	13,691	13.7
Air India	4,310	2,586	66.7
Air India Express	3,375	2,832	19.2
SpiceJet	1,240	1,297	-4.4
Akasa Air	1,089	989	10.1
Vistara	-	2,193	-
Others	1,438	1,419	0.1
Total	25,610	25,007	2.4

Source: DGCA





Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

New Policy: Air India CEO, Top Execs to Fly Economy from Apr

Mumbai: Air India CEO, top-notch executives and senior commanders may be seen flying in the airline's economy class across Indian cities as part of the carrier's new travel policy for its staff,



which comes into effect in phases from next month, according to sources.

The airline, which went back into the hands of its original owner Tata Group in January 2022, has seen a rising demand for premium class seats—business and premium economy – in the last 27 months, making the management come up with such a policy in the interest of the customers, they said.

For the top management (vice-president and above), the policy would be effective from April 1 while for senior commanders from June 1, according to sources. The policy also offers an upgrade option, which can be availed if a business or premium class seat remains unsold or unoccupied 50 minutes prior to the flight departure, as per the sources.— **PTI**

Move aimed at freeing up seats for customers in premium economy, business class

AI staff to fly economy from April

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR
Mumbai, March 25

AIR INDIA'S EMPLOYEES, including top management led by Campbell Wilson, would travel economy class on domestic flights from April 1 to free up seats for paying customers in business and premium economy segments.

The airline employees will be considered for upgrade only if there are any unsold seats in this category. "With this, we want to ensure that our premium seats, both business and premium economy – for which we are seeing huge demand – are available for booking to our customers first," said an Air India spokesperson.

"We want to ensure that more premium seats are available for customers who are ready to pay for them. Like all customers, Air India employees are free to choose their seats when they would be paying for

ALL-IN-ONE CLASS

■ All Air India employees, including MD and CEO Campbell Wilson will travel economy on domestic flights for official trips starting April 1.

■ Since the takeover of the airline in January 2022, there has been a **two-fold increase** in demand for premium seats

■ The carrier wants to ensure that more premium seats are available for customers who are ready to pay for them

■ The company is retrofitting **27 narrowbody planes** and upgrading **40 widebody aircraft** under a **\$400-mn** revamp exercise

■ Due to global supply chain issues, the pace of Air India's retrofitment programme has slowed down



it," said an Air India source. The directive, for now, is not applicable on international flights.

The move comes at a time when the Tata group airline is preparing to spruce up its total supply of premium class seats (business and premium economy combined). Efforts are underway to improve the air-

line's capacity through retrofitment of planes. While business class seats will see a slight moderation, premium economy class seats will increase significantly by 30% to 65,000 seats per week from 50,000 seats per week.

Since the takeover of the airline in January 2022, there has

been a two-fold increase in demand for premium seats, the Air India source added.

The company is retrofitting 27 narrowbody planes and upgrading 40 widebody aircraft under a \$400-million revamp exercise.

Continued on Page 11

AI staff to fly economy from April

THROUGH THE MERGER of Vistara, 53 A320 planes with three-class configuration belonging to the erstwhile carrier, were absorbed into the Air India fleet.

Owing to a global supply chain crisis hurting the seats category, the pace of Air

India's retrofitment programme has slowed down. The airline is now pushing for upgradation of the rest of the plane's interior, keeping the seats upgrade programme subject to availability of seats at a later date.

IndiGo and SpiceJet are the

only other carriers to offer business class or premium economy seats. IndiGo started with business class on select routes only a few months ago whereas SpiceJet, which calls its premium economy class as SpiceMax, has been offering it since 2014.



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

25 MARCH 2025

Flight aborted after bird hit

A bird struck IndiGo flight 6E 6629 during takeoff from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport on Monday morning, leading to the flight's cancellation. The aircraft, scheduled to depart for Bengaluru at 7:30 am, was accelerating down the runway when the incident occurred, causing the pilots to abort the takeoff. Passengers reported a sudden jolt as the brakes were applied.



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

25 MARCH 2025

Airlines refuse to share fare data

After airlines refused to share airfare data with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the aviation regulator on Monday said. "We want to study the trend of air ticket prices following complaints by the public about high fares during peak seasons. Recently, during Mahakumbh, there were many such complaints. Tata Consultancy Service, the digitisation vendor for the DGCA, has been tasked with analyzing the matter," the official said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

उड़ान के बीच खोला आपातकालीन द्वार

हैदराबा। दम्मम से हैदराबाद आ रही एक फ्लाइट के उतरने के दौरान आपातकालीन द्वार खोलने के प्रयास में मंगलवार को एक यात्री के खिलाफ मामला दर्ज किया गया है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

5% more flight ops likely this summer

Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Indian airlines are set to operate more than five per cent additional departures this summer compared to the previous year, according to data shared by the civil aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The data pertains to the summer schedule, which outlines the flying slots airlines will receive—though some may choose not to fly as many services.

“Summer Schedule 2025 (effective from 30th March 2025 till 25th October 2025) of the scheduled domestic airlines has been finalised... there are 25,610 departures per week which have

been finalised to/from 129 airports as per summer schedule 2025 compared to 25,007 departures per week from 124 airports in winter schedule 2024,” the DGCA stated.

According to the DGCA data, Air India will operate 4,310 weekly departures in the summer schedule, compared to 2,278 in the same period last year, showing an apparent 89.20% increase. However, this significant jump reflects the absorption of Vistara’s operations following the merger of the two airlines completed in late 2024, rather than organic growth.

Vistara, which operated 2,324 weekly departures in the summer schedule 2024, no longer appears in the 2025 schedule as

its operations have been fully integrated into Air India. When considering the combined operations of both airlines in 2024 (4,602 weekly departures), Air India’s 2025 schedule actually represents a 6.35% decrease in total flights post-merger.

Air India Express, which will operate under the same ownership group as Air India, shows a substantial increase of 38.49% in weekly departures — rising to 3,375 from 2,437 last year.

IndiGo, India’s largest carrier, will operate 8.49% more weekly departures this year, with 14,158 flights compared to 13,050 in 2024. This growth reinforces IndiGo’s dominant position in the market, commanding over 55% of the domestic capacity.

Akasa Air, India’s newest airline, will operate 1,089 weekly departures this year, up from 903 last year, marking a 20.60% increase as it continues to expand its network across the country. Among the smaller carriers, Star Air shows the strongest growth with a 58.31% increase in weekly flights, rising from 319 last year to 505 this year. Regional carrier Fly91 will increase its operations from just 20 weekly departures last year to 123 this summer, a 515% jump.

However, not all airlines are expanding. SpiceJet will reduce its flights by 25.17%, operating 1,240 weekly departures compared to 1,657 in 2024, as the airline continues to navigate financial challenges.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

As premium demand soars, AI downgrades seats for employees

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Tata Air India on Monday announced a significant change to its staff travel policy, mandating that all employees, including top management and CEO Campbell Wilson, will fly in confirmed economy seats during domestic work travel instead of the previously reserved business class seats. The policy shift comes amid surging demand for premium cabin space following the Air India-Vistara merger and will be implemented in two phases — April 1 for vice presidents and above, and June 1 for all other staff.

"We want to ensure that our premium seats, both Business and Premium Economy – for which we are seeing huge demand – are available for booking to our customers first, demonstrating a culture of customer centricity in the new Air India," an Air India spokesperson told HT. According to airline officials, demand for premium seats has more than doubled since Tata Group acquired the carrier in January 2022.

The merger with Vistara, whose 53 aircraft were the only ones in the combined fleet with premium economy sections, has further intensified demand as Air India staff also became eligible for these seats. Air India has since inducted 14 more jets with these premium configurations.

The announcement was communicated to employees via email on Monday, specifying that staff on duty could still be upgraded to business or premium economy if seats remain vacant. However, confirmation of unoccupied seats typically comes only 50 minutes before departure.

Aviation expert Capt Mohan Ranganathan offered qualified support for the changes. "The

operating crew after heading back need to be given a confirmed premium seat," he said. "The overall policy for staff not travelling after or before operating a flight is fair."

The airline is working to expand its premium offering across its fleet.

Of Air India's 198 operational aircraft, those from the A320 family currently feature only economy and business configurations. The carrier is retrofitting 27 such aircraft to introduce premium economy sections, with one already completed. Additionally, 14 new A320Neo aircraft with three-class configurations have been inducted.

Currently, the airline offers approximately 50,000 premium economy seats weekly, primarily on the 53 former Vistara A320 family aircraft now operated by Air India post-merger. This capacity is projected to increase to 65,000 weekly seats once the retrofit programme completes in October.

A former airline official, speaking on condition of anonymity, pointed to another factor contributing to premium seat scarcity: "The airline sees a heavy number of staff that fly to and from Delhi for the regular refreshment courses required by civil aviation rules. This follows the airline's closure of training centres in Mumbai and Hyderabad, forcing staff to fly to the airline's Gurugram headquarters."

The person cited above estimated that at least 1,000 weekly seats are occupied by crew travelling to Delhi for simulator training. "Air India currently has a little over 3,200 operating pilots, including erstwhile Vistara pilots. By implementing this policy, the airline is undoubtedly trying to ensure more occupancy but at the same time being inhuman towards the operating crew," the former official added.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

25 MARCH 2025

Fleet of operational aircraft totals 680, IndiGo tops list

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Indian airlines currently have 680 operational aircraft for travellers, minister of state for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol informed Parliament on Monday.

While replying to MP Parimal Nathwani, Mohol gave details of operational aircraft with the Indian airlines.

According to government data, the largest fleet is held by IndiGo, with 319 aircraft currently in service, making it the dominant player in the Indian

aviation market. Air India follows with 198 operational aircraft, reflecting its extensive network and legacy status. Other notable players include Air India Express with 101 aircraft, serving mainly international routes, and Akasa, a relatively new entrant, with 27 aircraft.

Smaller carriers like SpiceJet operate 19 aircraft, while regional carrier Star Air has eight. Just Udo Aviation, a low-cost airline, operates two aircraft. When asked if there were rules of a maximum permissible age for aircraft to be used for passenger travel, Mohol, in his



IndiGo, with 319 aircraft in service, has the largest fleet currently.

HT

written reply stated, "The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has not prescribed guidelines specifying life for an aircraft to fly in India. Aircraft

are considered airworthy provided the maintenance is as per approved schedule laid down by the manufacturer. Aircraft registered in India may operate as long as the type certificate is valid to the type of Aircraft and the aircraft is under production/maintenance support provided by the Manufacturer for the continuous operation of the aircraft."

"The aircraft may be withdrawn from operation by an operator, in case it becomes 'beyond economic repair' or is 'permanently withdrawn from use' due to any reason such as

spares not available," the reply read.

In recent years, Indian airlines have placed significant orders for new aircraft to expand and modernise their fleets. The new additions aim to improve operational efficiency, reduce fuel consumption, and meet growing passenger demand in the country's rapidly expanding aviation market. Mohol also said that the DGCA's regulations align with international standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) and the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Boeing gets lifeline in deal for most expensive jet fighter ever

Sharon Terlep
feedback@livesmint.com

The U.S. is entrusting its most expensive jet-fighter program in history to a company that hasn't successfully launched a commercial or military aircraft in a decade.

Boeing was selected last week by the Pentagon to build the Air Force's next-generation manned jet fighter, beating out Lockheed Martin in a move that surprised Wall Street and left Lockheed disappointed.

The Pentagon's decision couldn't come at a more crucial time for Boeing, which is

trying to pull itself out of a nose dive after a series of safety problems with its 737 MAX jet, a crippling strike and six straight annual losses. Not only did Boeing lock down a contract that could top \$50 billion, the deal is structured to guarantee a profit through the development stage of the project—something Boeing



Boeing was selected by the Pentagon to build the Air Force's next-generation manned jet fighter, beating out Lockheed Martin. AP

solely needs Boeing's defense business represents around one-third of the company's revenue but has lost billions of dollars over the past several years, while Boeing says it has been locked into money-losing Pentagon contracts.

The new manned fighter,

dubbed the F-47, is designed to fight with semiautonomous drones and will have new stealth and long-range strike capabilities. It is the type of sophisticated air-to-air war-

plane the Air Force says is vital to deterring China's military in the decades ahead.

Boeing wasn't the obvious choice to build the next-generation jet fighter.

"It's not the fighter central that it once was," Bank of America analyst Ron Epstein said of Boeing, adding that the company would need to hire engineers capable of pulling off the project.

The Boeing jet fighters currently in flight were developed and launched before the company's 1997 merger with rival McDonnell Douglas. Lockheed and Northrop Grumman make the Air Force's mainstay F-35 jet fighter and B-21 bomber, respectively. Unlike Lockheed, Boeing has never before built a stealth aircraft. Boeing's T-7 trainer was developed and manufactured jointly with Saab.

Boeing has faced delays and glitches on many programs,

including its Air Force One replacement and its 777X wide-body jet.

Delivery on the new Air Force One is so far behind that Boeing told the Air Force last year that it would likely happen after President Trump's second term. The initial contract, struck with Trump during his first term, called for delivery in 2023. Frustrated with the delays, Trump has been pushing for a faster timeline, which Boeing Chief Executive Kelly Ortberg has said the company is trying to meet.

TURN TO PAGE 6

Boeing seeks to withdraw guilty plea agreement—PI0

Boeing gets lifeline in Pentagon deal to build most expensive jet fighter ever

FROM PAGE 1

Delays also plague Boeing's commercial business. The 777X, designed to connect the globe's major cities, was initially set to begin deliveries in 2020 and now might not fly until next year or later. Two new 737 MAX variants also are behind schedule because of issues with an anti-icing system and heightened regulatory scrutiny following last year's fuselage-panel blowout on an Alaska Airlines flight.

Lockheed's own woes with the F-35 program—including delays, cost overruns and design and software challenges—probably didn't help its case with the Pentagon, either.

Pulling out of a nose dive
Boeing's storied military past includes a raft of jet fighters, bombers, helicopters, transport planes and missiles. But in recent years, Boeing has been beaten out by rivals in several high-profile competitions for U.S. government programs.

The latest deal was a contest Boeing couldn't afford to lose.



The 777X was initially set to begin deliveries in 2020 and now might not fly until next year or later. AFP

The company spent \$2 billion to expand its St. Louis complex where the F-47 is expected to be built, and Boeing has been flying an experimental version of the jet fighter for years. The company's defense arm made the biggest investment in its history to prepare for the F-47 bid, Boeing's interim defense chief Steve Parker said.

The company spent \$2 billion to expand its St. Louis complex where the F-47 is expected to be built

Neither Boeing nor the Trump administration released cost estimates for the entire program. The development phase, in which the company will develop and test the aircraft, is covered by a so-called cost-plus agreement, meaning that the Pentagon will cover Boeing's expenses, as well as other fees. That is a change from some

of Boeing's previous Pentagon deals—fixed-price agreements in which the company had to swallow unexpected costs. Ortberg, Boeing's CEO, has vowed to avoid such deals going forward.

The stakes for Boeing are high.

The jet fighter's name appears to be a homage to Trump, who is now serving as the 47th U.S. president. And Trump has made the F-47 a personal priority.

The president—who in news conferences and on social media has questioned Boeing's competence—took the unusual step of announcing the F-47 contract in an Oval-Office press conference, marveling at the technology involved in Boeing's experimental version of the aircraft.

"There's never been anything even close to it from speed to maneuverability to what it can have to payload," Trump said. The aircraft is the "most advanced, most capable, most lethal aircraft ever built."

©2025 DOW JONES & CO. INC.



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

Air India announces change in its staff travel policy

Tata Air India on Monday announced a significant change to its staff travel policy, mandating that all employees, including top management and chief executive officer Campbell Wilson, will fly in confirmed economy seats during domestic work travel instead of the previously reserved business class seats.

The policy shift comes amid surging demand for premium cabin space following the Air India-Vistara merger and will be implemented in two phases—1 April for vice presidents and above, and 1 June for all other staff.

“We want to ensure that our premium seats, both Business and Premium Economy—for which we are seeing huge demand—are available for booking to our customers first, demonstrating a culture of customer centricity in the new Air India,” an Air India spokesperson told *HT*.

As per airline officials, demand for premium seats has more than doubled since Tata Group acquired the carrier in January 2022. The announcement was communicated to employees via email on Monday. **NEHA LM TRIPATHI**



All employees, including top management and CEO Campbell Wilson, will fly in confirmed economy seats during domestic work travel. **MINT**



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

25 MARCH 2025

Narrow escape: Aircraft carrying deputy CM misses landing at Shimla's Jubbarhatti Airport

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SHIMLA: An aircraft carrying over 30 passengers, including Himachal Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Mukesh Agnihotri and Director General of Police Atul Verma, from Delhi missed the landing spot at Jubbarhatti Airport Monday morning.

According to eyewitnesses, the aircraft crossed the runway and hit the studs at the edge of the airstrip. No casualties were reported.

The flight had taken off from Delhi after routine checks and engineers are inspecting the aircraft to determine if there was a technical glitch, airport authorities said.

"The runway is small and we cannot deny this fact. As a layman, I can say that while landing, the plane did not touch the ground where it was supposed to and came to the end of the airstrip," Agnihotri told reporters.

"Only the airport author-

ity or the Directorate General of Civil Aviation can tell what happened, but I can say that there was a problem in landing," he said, adding, "We could see that the runway was ending."

Agnihotri said all passengers stayed on the plane for about 20-25 minutes and the Dharamshala flight was cancelled.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu said he would speak to the Civil Aviation minister to discuss the matter. "I have been told that the emergency brakes had to be applied after the tyre burst and I would speak to the civil aviation minister in this regard."

Jubbarhatti Airport, situated about 15 km from the state capital, has a 1,230-metre airstrip and is considered one of the most challenging airports due to its tabletop structure, where the runway is perched on an elevated plateau with steep drops on both sides.



Corporate Communications Directorate

RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

JAIPUR

25 MARCH 2025

ऐनवक्त पर अमृतसर- वाराणसी फ्लाइट रद्द



जयपुर @ पत्रिका जयपुर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर वाराणसी जाने वाली स्पाइस जेट एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट का संचालन लगातार प्रभावित हो रहा है। इससे यात्रियों को परेशानी से जूझना पड़ रहा है। जानकारी के अनुसार सुबह 8:25 बजे जयपुर से वाराणसी जाने वाली, दोपहर 1:40 बजे जयपुर से अमृतसर जाने वाली स्पाइस जेट की फ्लाइट का संचालन ऐनवक्त पर रद्द कर दिया गया। ऐनवक्त पर फ्लाइट रद्द होने की वजह ऑपरेशनल बताई गई।



Corporate Communications Directorate

RASHTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

26 MARCH 2025

भारत के लिए एक अवसर है टिकाऊ विमान ईंधन

टूलूज (फ्रांस), (भाषा)।

एयरबस के मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी (सीईओ) गियौम फाउरी ने कहा है कि कार्बन उत्सर्जन को कम करने में मदद करने वाला टिकाऊ विमानन ईंधन (एसएएफ) भारत के लिए एक अवसर बन सकता है।

एयरबस को भारत में बहुत अधिक संभावनाएं दिखाई देती हैं, जो दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते विमानन बाजारों में शामिल हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि कंपनी के लिए भारत का मतलब 'वृद्धि' है। भारतीय एयरलाइन कंपनियों ने एयरबस को सैकड़ों विमानों के ऑर्डर दिए हैं। कंपनी के पास भारत में सी295 विमान के लिए संयुक्त उद्यम में 'फाइनेल असेंबली लाइन' (एफएएल) है और इस साल हेलीकॉप्टर एच125 के लिए एक एफएएल स्थापित किया जाएगा।

फाउरी ने सोमवार को कहा, 'एसएएफ भारत के लिए एक अवसर है। टिकाऊ ईंधन भारत के एजेंडा में सबसे ऊपर है। भारत में वैश्विक विमानन कारोबार का बड़ा हिस्सा है। इसलिए भारत की वैश्विक व्यवस्था में बड़ी भूमिका और बड़ी जिम्मेदारी है।'



Corporate Communications Directorate

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

25 MARCH 2025

हवाई यात्रियों की सुविधा के लिए नियामक का बड़ा कदम

नई दिल्ली। नागरिक विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने सभी एयरलाइनों को यात्रियों से जुड़े कुछ दिशा-निर्देश जारी किए हैं। नियामक ने विमान सेवा प्रदाता कंपनियों को यात्रियों से जुड़े विनियमों और ग्राहकों के अधिकारों से संबंधित प्रावधानों का प्रचार-प्रसार करने का निर्देश दिया है। डीजीसीए ने सभी एयरलाइनों को निर्देश दिया गया है कि वे टिकट बुक होने के बाद नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय पर उपलब्ध यात्री चार्टर का ऑनलाइन लिंक यात्री को संदेश (एसएमएस/व्हाट्सएप) के रूप में भेजें। इसका मतलब है कि अब जब भी यात्री हवाई टिकट बुक करेंगे तो अब उन्हें अपने अधिकारों और सुविधाओं की पूरी जानकारी मिलेगी। इस आदेश के तहत सभी एयरलाइंस कंपनियों को यह सुनिश्चित करना होगा कि वे यात्रियों को टिकट बुकिंग के तुरंत बाद एक

ऑनलाइन लिंक के माध्यम से उनके अधिकारों के बारे में उन्हें सूचित करें। इस लिंक में यात्रियों के अधिकारों, नियमों और शिकायत निवारण की पूरी जानकारी होगी, जिससे उन्हें किसी भी समस्या के समाधान में आसानी हो। डीजीसीए के इस आदेश से यात्रियों को सहूलियत होगी। उन्हें उनकी उड़ान से संबंधित अधिकारों के बारे में स्पष्ट जानकारी मिलेगी। क्योंकि आम तौर पर यात्री फ्लाइट कैसिल होने, बोर्डिंग डिनायल, बैगेज खोने या डैमेज होने जैसी समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ता है। लेकिन ज्यादातर यात्रियों को यह नहीं पता होता कि वे इन परिस्थितियों में क्या कर सकते हैं। अब वे डीजीसीए के इस नए निर्देश से यात्रियों को न केवल उनकी सुविधाओं की जानकारी मिलेगी, बल्कि वे अपनी शिकायतों का समाधान भी करा सकेंगे।

इंसोलेशन एनर्जी : सोलर पैनल मैनुफैक्चरिंग कंपनी इंसोलेशन एनर्जी लिमिटेड (आईएनए सोलर) ने आगामी टी-20 सीजन 2025 - 27 के लिए लखनऊ सुपर जायंट्स के एसोसिएट पार्टनर बनने की घोषणा की है। यह साझेदारी भारत में अक्षय ऊर्जा के उपयोग को बढ़ावा देने और देश को नेट जीरो उत्सर्जन की दिशा में आगे बढ़ाने के लिए एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम मानी जा रही है। आईएनए सोलर के चेयरमैन श्री मनीष गुप्ता ने इस अवसर पर कहा, लखनऊ सुपर जायंट्स के साथ यह साझेदारी हमारे माननीय प्रधानमंत्री के 2070 तक नेट जीरो उत्सर्जन के लक्ष्य को प्राप्त करने की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है। क्रिकेट देश के हर कोने तक पहुंचता है, और हम इस माध्यम से अक्षय ऊर्जा के प्रति जागरूकता बढ़ाने और इसे अपनाने के लिए प्रेरित करना चाहते हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

25 MARCH 2025

DGCA instructs airlines to inform passengers about rights via SMS, WhatsApp

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 24 MARCH

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has instructed all airlines to actively inform passengers about their rights and passenger-centric regulations.

Airlines must share the online link to the passenger charter, available on the Ministry of Civil Aviation's website, via SMS or WhatsApp when a ticket is booked.

This information should be prominently displayed on airline tickets and websites to ensure passengers are aware of their rights, the DGCA said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

25 MARCH 2025

TMC ex-MP slams Air India of selling same seat to 2 passengers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, 24 MARCH

Former Trinamul Congress (TMC) Rajya Sabha MP Santanu Sen has slammed Air India and the civil aviation ministry, alleging that he was forced to stand throughout his flight from Mumbai to Kolkata despite having a valid ticket. Taking to the social media, Sen claimed that despite

holding a confirmed ticket and a valid boarding pass for seat 15-D, he found another passenger occupying the same seat when he boarded the aircraft.

The former MP accused Air India of selling the same seat to two different passengers, causing him immense inconvenience. "I was assigned seat 15-D with a valid boarding pass. But upon boarding, I

found someone else already sitting there. Air India sold the same seat to two people. Even after raising the issue, I was not provided with an alternative seat and had to stand throughout the journey while the other person remained seated," he alleged. Expressing his anger, Sen lashed out at Air India and the central government, calling the incident "horrific." He

criticised the airline's mismanagement and questioned the accountability of the authorities responsible for passenger safety and comfort.

This complaint comes at a time when Air India has been facing multiple allegations of service mismanagement from passengers. The airline has yet to officially respond to the allegations made by the former MP.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

25 MARCH 2025

Flight scare

■ **SHIMLA:** An aircraft carrying over 30 passengers, including Himachal Pradesh deputy chief minister Mukesh Agnihotri, from Delhi missed the landing spot at the Jubbarhatti airport on Monday. Eyewitnesses said the plane crossed the runway and hit the studs at the edge of the airstrip. The aircraft is being inspected for technical glitches, airport authorities said. **PTI**



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

25 MARCH 2025

'Airlines placed orders for 1,359 aircraft in 2 yrs'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Gandhinagar: Airlines in India placed orders for a total of 1,359 new aircraft in 2023 and 2024. Of these, 999 aircraft orders were placed in 2023 and 360 in 2024, the Union govt informed the Rajya Sabha during the ongoing parliament session.

In response to a question by Rajya Sabha member **Parimal Nathwani**, Union minister of state for civil aviation **Murlidhar Mohol** said that currently, 680 aircraft are operational for passenger travel



and 133 are grounded, spread across various airlines. The minister said in his reply that there are 105 aircraft over 15 years old, and out of these, 43 belong to Air India and 37 to Air India Express. Amongst the 680 operational aircraft, 319 belong to InterGlobe Aviation Ltd (IndiGo), 198 belong to Air India, 101 are of Air India Express, and the rest are spread across other airlines.

In his reply, the Union minister said that the largest number of aircraft orders were placed by IndiGo: 500 in 2023 and 40 in 2024 plus 30 firm orders for A350 aircraft. The second-highest orders in these two years combined were placed by Air India.

RS DATA



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

25 MARCH 2025

5 cheetahs wander out of Kuno, get pelted with stones

Bhopal: Five cheetahs, a mother and its cubs, wandered out of Kuno National Park to check out their surroundings and ran into stone-pelting humans on Monday. Foresters are trying to counsel villagers that cheetahs pose no harm to them, reports P Naveen.

There are 17 cheetahs in Kuno's wild, including 11 India-born cubs. Cheetahs are curious animals, known to range far and free. The ones that went on a stroll this time were Jwala and its four cubs who were released from enclosures on Feb 21.

They were resting in the shade of trees near Sheopur-Gwalior railway tracks when they saw a herd of calves and a bunch of humans. Word of the cheetah sighting spread quickly, and scores of villagers arrived.

Watched by their mother, the cubs began circling the herd. The cattle broke and ran, even as the men started hollering at the cheetahs to shoo them away. The cubs charged after two calves and brought down one. Social media videos showed villagers running towards the cheetahs and hurling sticks and stones at them.

The sudden attack caused the cubs and their mother to abandon the hunt and run back into the forest.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

25 MARCH 2025

Come April 1, Air India top brass to fly in economy

Saurabh Sinha
@timesofindia.com

New Delhi: Passengers on yet-to-be-improved Air India (AI) don't exactly feel like a "Maharaja" or royalty on its old planes. Neither will the airline brass, at least on domestic flights. The airline has decided that from April 1, the default class of domestic travel for all its staff, including top management like the CEO, will be economy.

Only if 50 minutes prior to departure, any premium economy or business class seats on that flight remain unsold, will the brass be upgraded to premium economy (PY) and business class, said several officials. For senior pilots, this policy will come into effect from June 1.

Keen to be seen as a premium airline, AI wants the premium seats to be fully available for paying passengers and not be blocked through pre-booking by senior employees. "After privatisa-



CUSTOMER FIRST

tion, AI has seen the sale of premium seats double. We want the best seats to be available for our paying customers. From next month, even the airline CEO will be upgraded to PY or business on a domestic flight only if there are vacant seats in those classes 50 minutes before departure time," an official said.

The move comes as AI, on which Tatas are spending billions of dollars to make it a world class airline with a premium image, is betting big on the successful PY cabin of erstwhile Vistara, which merged into AI last Nov.

"Fifty-three Airbus A320 family planes of erstwhile Vistara have 24 PY seats each. Sixteen A320 family planes of AI have so far got a similar PY cabin. And 25 more legacy A320s of AI will get the same by this Oct following a cabin retrofit. As of now, we offer 50,000 PY seats per week on 39 domestic routes. This number will increase to over 65,000 by Oct," said an official.

After taking over AI & AI Express in Jan 2022, the Tatas have announced a \$400 million cabin retrofit programme for the legacy fleet. Due to global supply chain constraints leading to issues like replacement seats being available at a much slower than initially estimated pace, that work is taking much longer. While the entire legacy narrow body fleet is expected to be revamped by this Oct, the wide body fleet of old Boeing 777 and B787s will take 2-3 years to shed off their shoddy past.