

## Chennai airport sees dip in international passenger traffic

Bengaluru airport jumps to the third position in the country in handling international air passengers, pushing Chennai airport to the fourth spot

**Sunitha Sekar**  
CHENNAI

Chennai airport has slipped one rank to become the fourth busiest airport in the country in handling international air passengers as Bengaluru airport has clinched the third spot.

According to the Airports Authority of India (AAI), Bengaluru airport has pushed Chennai airport to the fourth position.

Bengaluru airport recorded a footfall of 4,89,871 international passengers in October this year, and witnessed 24.3% increase in passenger traffic, as compared to October 2023.

Meanwhile, Chennai airport registered 4,53,134 international passengers in October this year and recorded a dip of 1.8%, as compared to October 2023.

Chennai airport started losing out on passenger traffic nearly a decade ago to Bengaluru when the latter became the third busiest airport (both in domestic and international passenger traffic) in the country. This is primarily due to a slump in domestic air passenger growth.

However, Chennai airport continued to be the third busiest in the country in handling international air passenger traffic, up until recently.

With respect to the total air passenger traffic handled, Chennai airport slipped to the sixth spot,



behind Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Kolkata.

### Boosting traffic

AAI officials said they have been taking as many initiatives as possible to boost the air passenger traffic in the airport.

“But it should be noted that AAI had been operating with space constraints, unlike the private airports. We are struggling with limited availability of land. If we could expand, we would have been able to add more aerobridges,” an official said.

Officials highlighted crucial moves such as bringing in more airlines for the city to other destinations and reducing the Value Added Tax (VAT) on the aviation turbine fuel (ATF).

“The decision to add

connectivity from Chennai airport to any other city in the world was taken by the Centre. Also, one of the most important factors that an airline considers is the VAT of a State. Tamil Nadu levies one of the highest VAT for ATF and this increases the operational cost for an airline,” he added.

However, according to a source, authorities should have aggressively promoted the Chennai airport.

### Completion of works

“Over the last decade, various development works were taken up at the airport. Were all of them completed on time? This too contributes to dip in ranking. The airport has not been able to touch the pre-COVID aircraft movement,” he added.

# 150 small airports selected for makeover to boost cargo

AAI to modernize infrastructure for swift shipping of pharmaceuticals to perishables

Dhirendra Kumar & Manas Pimpalkhware  
NEW DELHI

As part of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government's objective of growing India's civil aviation sector, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has selected 150 small airports and airstrips to modernize and develop, to cater to the increasing air cargo and passenger traffic demand, said two people aware of the development.

These airports have been picked from among the over 400 airports and airstrips within the country, most of which are barely operational, under directions from the top level in the government to leverage the existing aviation infrastructure. These include Aizawl, Kota, Muzaffarpur, Satna, Ziro, Jalgaon, Asansol, Malda, Jharsuguda, Khandwa, Panna, Raxaul, Vellore, Tezu, Agatti, Ahola, Belgaum, Cooch-Behar, Gaya, Gorakhpur, Hubli, Kolhapur, Kandla, Kullu, Pantnagar and Rajahmundry, among others.

These new airports will be primarily used for air cargo to ship products such as pharmaceuticals, textiles, electronics and perishables that rely on swift delivery in the backdrop of disruption in the traditional trade routes and geopolitical tensions. The modernization plan, which will be implemented solely by the AAI, involves adding longer runways and other amenities, along with digital technologies. The small airports and airstrips modernization programme also comes in the backdrop of a perceptible shift towards air cargo, supported by rising shipping costs due to delays, increased insurance premiums, and the heightened risk of goods being damaged or seized during transit.

Under the modernization plan, in addition to creating passenger facilities

## Flying past disruptions

These airports have been picked from among the over 400 airports and airstrips within the country.

Select airports to be modernized



in line with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards, infrastructure for cargo handling will be developed," said a senior government official, one of the two people cited

increasing by 18% year-on-year (y-o-y) between October 2023 and March 2024.

From April to August 2024, this growth accelerated, with volumes sur-

fiscal year 2024-25 reached \$211.46 billion, showing a slight increase from \$209.38 billion during the same period in the previous fiscal year.

"This includes satellite freight cities with multimodal transport, cargo terminals, cold storage facilities, automated storage and retrieval systems, mechanized cargo transportation, and computerization, all aimed at boosting the export of agricultural and other value-added goods," the official added.

India's overall cargo volumes are expected to grow by 9-11% y-o-y, reaching 3.6-3.7 million tonnes (mt) this fiscal year. International cargo is projected to grow by 11-13%, while domestic cargo growth is expected to be around 4-6%. Air cargo handled at Indian airports increased by 7% y-o-y to 33.7 lakh tonnes in FY24. India currently has 38 operational domestic cargo terminals, including 27 additional terminals built since 2014 by AAI and its subsidiary, AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Co. Ltd (AAICLAS). Airports Authority of India data shows a 7% y-o-y increase in FY24, with volumes reaching 3.4 mt.

"Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) systems will be developed and interconnected among all stakeholders in the trade sector to streamline operations. The modernisation of airports is aimed at promoting tourism, trade, and bridging gaps in connectivity in remote and sensitive regions," said a second person cited above who also did not want to be named.

EDI refers to a mechanism that enables the electronic exchange of business documents in the trade sector in a standardised format.

"Priority will be given to safety, passenger facilities, and efficient aircraft and cargo handling under the airport modernisation plan," said the first person cited above.

*dhirendra.kumar@livemint.com*  
For an extended version of the story, go to [livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com).

## TAKING WING

**THE** air cargo sector saw volumes rise by 18% y-o-y between October 2023 and March 2024

**FROM** Apr to Aug 2024, volumes rose by an additional 20% to around 967,000 tonnes

**FOR** the first half of fiscal year 2024-25, India's merchandise exports reached \$211.46 billion

**INDIA** currently has 38 operational domestic cargo terminals and 27 additional terminals

above, requesting anonymity.

According to an Iera report, India's air cargo sector has experienced significant growth in recent months, with volumes

growing by an additional 20% to around 967,000 tonnes, the Iera report said. This assumes significance given India's merchandise exports for the first half of



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

28 NOVEMBER 2024

## CCSIA conducts mock drill to test emergency response capabilities

**PNS ■ LUCKNOW**

A bi-annual Full Scale Aerodrome Emergency Exercise (FSAEE) — Sahas 2024 — was conducted at the Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (CCSIA) here on Wednesday, an official statement said.

The event, held in alignment with the regulatory authorities, the district administration and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), aimed to test and enhance the airport's emergency response capabilities and inter-agency coordination.

It simulated a scenario where an 'XYZ' airlines flight — ABC-123 — from Kolkata to Lucknow with 101 passengers burst into flames due to engine failure near the Taxiway Mike on runway No. 27.

The realistic simulation allowed the airport to evaluate the preparedness

and response strategies in handling such emergencies, the statement said. As part of the exercise, the crash fire tenders of the airport rushed to the simulated site, and extinguished the fire to rescued the passengers on board.

The key stakeholders, including the Aerodrome Rescue and Fire Fighting (ARFF) unit, Apron Control, district administration, hospitals, CISF, Indian Air Force, SDRF, Uttar Pradesh, fire brigade, ATC, AAI, BCAS, DGCA, airlines, Customs, immigration and various internal as well as external agencies, actively took part in the drill that started at 10:57 am and concluded at 12:06 pm, the statement said.

The CCSI Airport is managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, a flagship company of the Adani Group.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## Hosur airport development cannot happen till 2033, says Centre citing 150-km clause

**TE Raja Simhan**  
Chennai

While the Tamil Nadu government is keen on developing a greenfield airport at Hosur, the Centre on Thursday clarified that the proposed location falls within 150 km of the Bengaluru airport and a new airport cannot be developed there till 2033.

The information was given by Union Aviation Minister Kinjarapu Rammo-han Naidu in Parliament. The concession agreement between the Civil Aviation Ministry and the Bangalore International Airport Ltd provides that no new or existing airports (except for Mysuru and Hassan airports for domestic purposes only) are permitted to be developed as, or improved or upgraded into, a domestic airport/international airport



**LIMITING CLAUSE.** Hosur airstrip is also excluded from the UDAN plan as it is within 150 km of the Bengaluru airport

within an aerial distance of 150 km of the Bengaluru Airport before the 25th anniversary of its opening date, which is May 24, 2008.

### **HOSUR AIRSTRIP**

There is an existing airstrip at Hosur, owned and operated by Taneja Aerospace and Aviation Ltd as a private airstrip.

In the first round of bidding under the Regional

Connectivity Scheme (RCS) -UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik), Turbo Aviation Private Ltd had submitted a bid for the Chennai-Hosur-Chennai route. However, the route was not awarded owing to the provisions of the Concession Agreement between the Aviation Ministry and BIAL. Thus, Hosur airport was also excluded from the UDAN document for the subsequent rounds of bid-

ding, the Minister said.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu is already planning a greenfield airport at Parandur, about 65 km from Chennai, at an investment of ₹20,000 crore and with a capacity of 100 million passengers a year.

### **SALEM AIRPORT**

On expanding the Salem airport, the Minister said that at present it is suitable for daytime operation of ATR-72 type aircraft under Visual Flight Rules.

For expansion of Salem airport for operation of A-321 type of aircraft with a runway length of 3,200 m, the Airports Authority of India has projected a land requirement of 460 acres in three phases to the Tamil Nadu government.

In the first phase, 177 acres of land have been requested to enable Instrument Flight Rules operations for ATR-72 type aircraft.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## एयरपोर्ट में अब डिजीलॉकर एप या ओरिजिनल आईडी से ही मिलेगी हवाई सफर की मंजूरी

व्हाट्सअप या शार्ट नेम से नहीं होगा मान्य, करना होगा पूरे मापदंडों का पालन

भास्कर न्यूज़ | बिलासपुर

### सिक््युरिटी मीटिंग में लिया गया निर्णय

बिलासा देवी चकरभाठा एयरपोर्ट में अब डिजीलॉकर एप या ओरिजिनल आईडी दिखाने पर ही हवाई सफर की अनुमति मिल पाएगी। धीरे-धीरे ही सही सुरक्षा के लिहाज से अब सभी मापदंडों को लागू किया जा रहा है, जो एहतियातन जरूरी है। मोबाइल से फोटो व्हाट्सअप से आईडी दिखाने पर उसे मान्य नहीं किया जाएगा। बेसिक सुरक्षा के लिहाज से इसे एयरपोर्ट में अनिवार्य कर दिया गया है।

यदि बिलासपुर एयरपोर्ट से हवाई सफर करने की तैयारी में हैं, तब यह तैयारी हवाई सफर करने के साथ-साथ शुरू करनी होगी। ओरिजिनल आईडी या डिजीलॉकर से ही हवाई सफर को मंजूरी मिल

पिछले दिनों सिक््युरिटी की मीटिंग में इसे कड़ाई से लागू करने कहा गया है। एयरपोर्ट में यात्रियों को चेक करने का काम फिलहाल एलायंस एयर के स्टाफ ही करते हैं। एयरपोर्ट में लोकल पुलिस की जो ड्यूटी लगाई जाती है वह भी पूरी तरह अभी ट्रेड नहीं है। इनमें से कुछ की ही ट्रेनिंग हो पाई है। इनमें से कुछ की कोलकाता और कुछ को रायपुर में ट्रेनिंग दी गई है, लेकिन अधिकांश ट्रेनिंग बाकी है। बिलासपुर एयरपोर्ट में रोजाना एक या एक से अधिक उड़ान संचालित होती है। भविष्य के लिए जिस तरह की गतिविधियां तेज हो रही हैं, उसे देखते हुए सुरक्षा के मानकों को पूरी तरह लागू कर दिया गया है।

पाएगी। दरअसल, डिजीलॉकर एप में आधार नंबर या ड्राइविंग लाइसेंस आदि डालने पर वह दिखा देता है कि वह लिंक्ड है या नहीं।

कई मर्तबा हवाई सफर के लिए यात्री मोबाइल से फोटो दिखाकर या व्हाट्सअप के जरिए आईडी दिखाकर हवाई सफर की इजाजत

चाहते हैं। इसे इसलिए मान्य नहीं किया गया, क्योंकि यह एडिट की जा सकती है। इसके अलावा आईडी प्रूफ में शार्ट नेम जैसे एके शर्मा या एसके यादव जैसी आईडी को भी मान्य नहीं किया जाएगा। पूरे नाम वाली आईडी को ही मान्य किया जाएगा।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAI PUR

28 NOVEMBER 2024

देहरादून से पुणे जा रही थी फ्लाइट

## यात्री की तबीयत बिगड़ी, एयरपोर्ट पर इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग



पत्रिका न्यूज नेटवर्क  
patrika.com

जयपुर . देहरादून से पुणे जा रही फ्लाइट में एक यात्री की अचानक तबीयत बिगड़ गई। ऐसे में फ्लाइट की जयपुर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग हुई। यात्री को यहां निजी अस्पताल में भर्ती करवाया गया।

एयरपोर्ट प्रशासन के अनुसार इंडिगो एयरलाइन की फ्लाइट दोपहर 12 बजे देहरादून से पुणे के लिए रवाना हुई थी। करीब डेढ़ घंटे के बाद एक यात्री ने फ्लाइट में क्रू मेंबर्स को तबीयत बिगड़ने की शिकायत की। उसे दवा दी गई लेकिन राहत नहीं मिली। इसके बाद



पायलट ने मेडिकल इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग के लिए जयपुर एयरपोर्ट के एटीसी को सूचना दी।

दोपहर ढाई बजे फ्लाइट यहां एयरपोर्ट पर उतरी। इसके बाद यात्री को एम्बुलेंस से एक निजी अस्पताल में भेजा गया। करीब एक घंटे बाद फ्लाइट फिर से देहरादून के लिए रवाना हुई।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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## UP launches hi-tech township close to Jewar airport



WITH A VIEW to fulfil the dream of home ownership, the Uttar Pradesh government has launched a hi-tech township located just 15 minutes away from the Jewar International Airport. According to the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), 62,865 individuals have purchased brochures for the plots while 34,180 people have registered for it.

FE BUREAU & AGENCIES



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

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## Walkway to link Aqua T2 station with airport

**FPJ News Service**

**MUMBAI**

It's good news for air travellers taking the newly-opened and the city's first underground Metro – Aqua Line 3. Plans are afoot to build a temporary walkway, providing direct connectivity from T2 Metro station to the airport building.

Currently, the passengers have to navigate several turns before finally reaching the airport. The long walk becomes more arduous if one has luggage. Traffic further adds to the woes of travellers, leaving them exhausted even before the start of their journey.

Considering the public travails, the agencies are now planning to build a temporary walkway, which will help commuters to easily skip the roadblocks and seamlessly reach the airport.

Reportedly, officials concerned also carried out an inspection of the T2 Metro station to understand the ground reality and come up with a solution.

Hope the walkway becomes a reality soon. Bon voyage!



## Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

# Soon, temporary walkway to connect airport metro station with terminal 2

**Ateeq Shaikh**

ateeq.shaikh@hindustantimes.com

**MUMBAI:** A temporary walkway will be erected over the next few weeks to facilitate better access between terminal two (T-2) of the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport and the Metro 3 underground station located outside the terminal. Currently, passengers have to take a 15-minute detour from the metro station to reach the terminal as construction of the Metro 7A station to connect the airport with Gundavali is underway.

On Tuesday, officials from the urban development department, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC), Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), Maha Mumbai Metro Operations Corporation (MMMOCL) and Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) visited the T-2 metro station to check the on-ground possibility of erecting a temporary walkway.

"Principal secretary of the urban development department, Aseem Kumar Gupta, instructed all agencies to facilitate a temporary walkway to provide seam-



**Currently, passengers have to take a 15-minute detour from T2 metro station to reach the terminal as construction of the Metro 7A station is underway.**

HT PHOTO

less connectivity between the metro 3 station and T-2," said a metro rail official.

Elaborating further, the official said that MMRC has urged MMRDA to build a temporary steel bridge cum walkway above the Metro 7A underground station to connect the Metro 3 station with T-2 and facilitate passenger movement.

"Our field teams will work

jointly on this now and facilitate construction of the temporary walkway," the official said. Once work on Metro 7A station is completed in December 2025, airport authorities will provide seamless connectivity between metro stations and T-2 through a forecourt above the two underground stations, the official added.

On October 15, a feeder bus

service was started between the Metro 3 station and T-2 to alleviate passenger problems. But response to the service has been tepid, as passengers do not wait for the bus. Ridership from the Metro 3 station outside T-2 has also been low, indicating fliers are yet to shift to public transport. Metro services are largely utilised by airport and allied services staff.

## FLYING IN FROM DOHA

# Eva the cat makes history at Cochin airport

SHAJUPHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
NOVEMBER 28

EVA THE cat was a VIP at Cochin International Airport on Thursday, becoming the first pet to have flown into the airport from abroad in its 25 years of commercial operations.

One-year-old Eva's arrival from Qatar was made possible after the Cochin airport recently acquired the Animal Quarantine and



Eva at Cochin International Airport. [X/@KochiAirport](#)

Certification Services (AQCS) certification, becoming only the seventh airport in the country that can receive pets from abroad. The cat was brought from Doha by K A Ramachandran, who has moved back to Kerala after spending 34 years in Qatar. An automobile mechanic by profession, Ramachandran said his son Rineesh, who is also employed in Doha, insisted that he take Eva along on his return.

"She was found abandoned near our apartment in Doha a

year ago. I took the kitten to my flat and nurtured it. Soon, she became a member of my flat, where she remained in my room. She eats only cooked fish and chicken. Veterinary doctors believe that Eva belongs to a Turkish breed. When I decided to return to Kerala, I could not leave Eva orphaned again in Doha," he said.

Ramachandran, a native of Chelakkara in Thrissur district, said the process of bringing a pet from abroad is an arduous one.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

LOKSATYA

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## ओडिशा के बीजू पटनायक हवाई अड्डे से 2025 से पांच नए गंतव्यों के लिए उड़ान सेवाएं

भुवनेश्वर, एजेंसी। बीजू पटनायक अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से 2025 से कम से कम पांच नए गंतव्यों के लिए उड़ान सेवाएं शुरू की जाएंगी।

हवाई अड्डे के एक अधिकारी ने बताया कि विमानन कंपनी इंडिगो एक जनवरी 2025 से इंदौर के लिए सप्ताह में चार दिन और देहरादून के लिए सप्ताह में तीन दिन उड़ान सेवा शुरू करेगी। भुवनेश्वर से इन उड़ानों का निर्धारित प्रस्थान समय अपराह्न तीन बजे होगा। उन्होंने कहा कि एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस अगले साल तीन जनवरी से भुवनेश्वर से लखनऊ तथा जयपुर के लिए सप्ताह में तीन दिन और कोचीन के लिए दैनिक उड़ानें शुरू करेगी। अधिकारी ने बताया कि हवाई अड्डा अधिकारियों ने चार जनवरी से बेंगलुरु के लिए नई उड़ानें शुरू करने की भी योजना बनाई है।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

PIONEER

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## फिल्म सिटी और जेवर एयरपोर्ट के पास सच साबित हो रहा प्रदेशवासियों के सपनों का घरौंदा

● 62865 से ज्यादा प्रदेशवासियों ने यीडा के रेजिडेंशियल प्लॉट्स के लिए किया आवेदन

पायनियर समाचार सेवा। लखनऊ

योगी सरकार प्रदेशवासियों को उनके सपनों का घरौंदा उपलब्ध कराने के लिए लगातार नयी-नयी योजनाएं लांच कर रही है। इसी के तहत योगी सरकार की मंशा के अनुरूप यीडा ने प्रदेशवासियों को जेवर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट से 15 मिनट, इंटरनेशनल फिल्म सिटी से एक किलोमीटर, यमुना एक्सप्रेस-वे और मोटो जीपी ट्रैक से पांच सौ मीटर की दूरी पर हाईटेक टाउनशिप की सीगात दी है। योगी सरकार इस हाईटेक टाउनशिप का लाभ देने के लिए अब तक 62,865 लोगों ने ब्रोशर खरीदा है,

जबकि 34,180 लोगों ने रजिस्ट्रेशन कराया है। वहीं रजिस्ट्रेशन कराने की अंतिम तिथि 30 नवंबर है, जबकि लॉटरी की डेट 27 दिसंबर रखी गयी है। बता दें कि टाउनशिप को नोएडा के सेक्टर-24 ए में विकसित किया गया है।

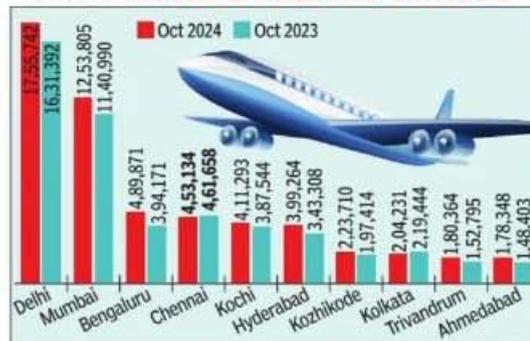
मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ उत्तर प्रदेश को उत्तम प्रदेश बनाने की दिशा में लगातार युद्धस्तर पर काम कर रहे हैं। उनका यह प्रयास रंग भी लाने लगा है। इसी कड़ी में प्रदेशवासियों को जेवर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट, इंटरनेशनल फिल्म सिटी, यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे और मोटो जीपी ट्रैक के पास हाईटेक टाउनशिप की सीगात दी है।

यहां पर प्रदेशवासियों के लिए 451 रेजिडेंशियल प्लॉट्स उपलब्ध कराने जा रहे हैं। इसमें 120 स्क्वायर मीटर के 100, 162 स्क्वायर मीटर के 169 प्लॉट्स, 200 स्क्वायर मीटर के 172

प्लॉट्स, 250 स्क्वायर मीटर के 6 प्लॉट्स और 260 स्क्वायर मीटर के 4 प्लॉट्स शामिल हैं। टाउनशिप में प्रदेश के अन्नदाताओं के लिए 17.5 प्रतिशत प्लॉट्स आरक्षित किये गये हैं। योगी सरकार की इस हाईटेक टाउनशिप का लाभ उठाने के लिए अब तक 62,865 लोगों ने ब्रोशर खरीदा है। इसके लिए उन्होंने 3,77,19,000 रुपये की धनराशि खर्च की है। बता दें कि यीडा की ओर से ब्रोशर की फीस 600 रुपये प्रति आवेदक रखी गयी थी। वहीं 34,180 लोगों ने रजिस्ट्रेशन फीस के रूप में 14,89,50,00,000 रुपये की धनराशि खर्च की है। बता दें कि यीडा की ओर से अलग-अलग प्लॉट्स के लिए अलग-अलग रजिस्ट्रेशन फीस रखी गयी थी जबकि प्लॉट्स का रेट 25,900 रुपये प्रति स्क्वायर मीटर रखा गया है। यीडा ने रजिस्ट्रेशन की अंतिम डेट 30 नवंबर रखी है।

## B'luru airport surpasses city's in int'l flyer traffic

### INT'NL PASSENGER FOOTFALL



Venkadesan.S  
@timesofindia.com

**Chennai:** Chennai International Airport lost its third spot to Bengaluru in international passenger traffic in Oct. Experts say inadequate infrastructure and operational issues are behind Chennai airport's inability to attract international flyers.

While Kempegowda International Airport handled 4.9 lakh international passengers in Oct, registering 24.3% growth compared to Oct 2023, Chennai's Anna International Airport registered a dip to 4.5 lakh, which is 1.8% less than Oct 2023.

Bengaluru, which was in fifth place in Sept with 4.3 lakh international passengers, soared to the third spot, pushing Chennai and Kochi to fourth and fifth places, respectively.

Chennai recorded a decline in international passenger footfall despite introduction of new international routes to destinations such as Brunei and Phuket in Thailand, and increased frequency to Addis Ababa, Jeddah, Sri Lanka, and Muscat in the last few months.

However, from April to

Oct, Chennai was slightly ahead of Bengaluru by 2 lakh passengers. Chennai handled 33.63 lakh international passengers in those six months, while Bengaluru handled 31.73 lakh.

Table-topper Delhi airport handled 17.5 lakh international passengers in Oct, while Mumbai, the second busiest airport, handled 12.5 lakh international passengers.

Captain Mohan Ranganathan, an aviation safety consultant, said poor planning and infrastructure at Chennai airport deter international operators. "Chennai has been the most inconvenient airport for business-class flyers due to its lack of facilities such as easier access to cabs and faster check-in, though it is well within the city limits," he said.

C Mohan, ex-Air India general manager, cited the high tax on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) in Tamil Nadu as one of the reasons pushing international flights to look elsewhere. "In Tamil Nadu, VAT on ATF is 28%, while it is 18% in Karnataka and just 1% in Telangana. Airlines will factor in the cost incurred to decide on operations," he said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CHENNAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

## 2 held for carrying exotic lizards at Vizag airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**Visakhapatnam:** Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials on Wednesday arrested two passengers at Visakhapatnam international airport and rescued six exotic animals - eastern blue tongued lizards, which are listed in Appendix-III of CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) and Schedule-IV of the Wildlife Protection Act 1972.

Acting on specific information, the DRI officials intercepted the duo coming from Bangkok to Vizag and found six live eastern blue tongued lizards on the night of November 23.



**6 EXOTIC ANIMALS RESCUED**

Upon examination duo's baggage, the reptiles were found hid in cake packets. The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau certified that the rescued species are endangered animals and protected under international law.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

MUMBAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

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## Temporary walkway to link Metro 3-airport T2

**Mumbai:** A temporary walkway will be constructed to link Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport's Terminal 2 (T2) with the adjacent underground station of Mumbai Metro Line 3 to alleviate commuter inconvenience. Currently, it takes passengers nearly 15 minutes to cover the distance on foot.

The measure aims to streamline access between the Metro line and the airport while work progresses on Metro Line 7A's T2 station. Passengers face a circuitous route due to construction activities for Metro Line 7A, which extends the existing Metro Line 7 (Gundavali-Dahisar) to T2. The project, managed by Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) is expected to become operational by Dec 2026. On Nov 26, senior officials from the urban development department, Mumbai Metro Rail Corporation (MMRC), MMRDA, Maha Mumbai Metro Operations Corporation Ltd (MMMOCL), and Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) conducted a site inspection to explore temporary connectivity solutions. "Aseem Kumar Gupta, principal secretary, urban development department, has directed all agencies to expedite the construction of a temporary walkway above the Metro 7A site to ensure seamless connectivity and enhance commuter experience," said a Metro official. — **Manthan K Mehta**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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AMAR UJALA

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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एयरलाइनों व हवाईअड्डों को बम  
की 999 फर्जी धमकियां मिलीं  
नई दिल्ली। नागरिक उड्डयन राज्यमंत्री  
मुरलीधर मोहोले ने संसद को बताया कि  
इस साल 14 नवंबर तक एयरलाइनों  
और हवाईअड्डों को बम की 999 फर्जी  
धमकियां मिलीं। पुलिस ने इस संबंध में  
256 शिकायतें दर्ज की हैं और 12 लोगों  
को गिरफ्तार किया गया है। व्यूरो

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# Corporate Communications Directorate

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BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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## SpiceJet shares up 3% on Aircastle case settlement



**Chennai:** SpiceJet's stock price climbed 3 per cent in early trade on Thursday on the BSE after Aircastle Ireland Designated Activity Company withdrew its insolvency case against it. However, the stock closed at ₹62.27, up 1.43 per cent, surrendering part of initial gains due to overall weakness in the market. [OUR BUREAU](#)

# Recent Boeing strike slows down Air India's growth plans

**FACING TURBULENCE.** The airline group was expecting to receive 50 737 Max aircraft by December-end

**Rohit Vaid**  
**Aneesh Phadnis**  
Delhi/Mumbai

The recent strike at Boeing's manufacturing facilities in the US and supply chain constraints have impacted the deliveries of 737 Max aircraft and pushed the refurbishment of the legacy widebody aircraft until mid-2027, Campbell Wilson, Managing Director & CEO, Air India Group, said, adding that delays have slowed down network expansion plans as well.

The airline was expecting to receive 50 737 Max aircraft by December-end. It has received 35 of them, originally built for Chinese carriers. However, deliveries of 15 such aircraft will now stretch to next June.

"The guidance is that it's going to be a six-month-plus delay to the narrow-body deliveries... for all of the airframes, there are supply challenges. Every airline is impacted by it," Wilson said



**SHIFTING FOCUS.** Campbell Wilson, MD and CEO, Air India PTI

in Gurgaon on Thursday. "We just have to adjust our plans with respect to 2025," he said.

## NEW TIMELINES

While the retrofit of Airbus A320Neo aircraft in three class configuration is underway, the refurbishment of wide-body Boeing aircraft will only start next year and is expected to be completed by mid-2027.

In December 2022, Air India had announced a \$400-million plan to fully refurbish its legacy Boeing 777

and 787 aircraft with the latest generation seats and new in-flight entertainment system.

"We had hoped to start retrofitting 787s and 777s by now. Unfortunately, the global supply chains in some areas are still recovering and seats in particular are a challenge. Once it (retrofit) starts in 2025, we will be doing 3-4 aircraft every month until the full legacy 40 wide-body aircraft are completed," Wilson added. As

such, the airline is expected to see most of its expansion in domestic and short haul international routes in 2025.

## 'CLIMB' PHASE

Speaking about the airline's revival plan, Wilson said, "We're now in the growth phase. In the last little over 18 months, we have inducted 100 new aircraft across the group, ... and for the next few months, it's new aircraft arriving on average every six days."

Air India had embarked on a five-year transformation journey that it calls "Vihaan.AI". Under this, the airline completed the first two phases called "Taxi" and "Take-off" and entered the final phase — Climb — earlier this year.

In the "Climb" phase, the focus of the airline is to create a fully integrated airline with the merger of Air India and Vistara, improve customer value propositions and drive profitability. Regarding the future course of action, he said that 2025 will

be about bringing efficiency, consistency, and performance that ultimately "Air India wants to be known for."

## FLAT AIRFARES

On airfares, Wilson cited a IATA report that showed that airfares in India have remained flat when adjusted for inflation and rise in fuel prices, when compared to a baseline of 2015 or 2019.

"Passenger yields have softened a little bit as Covid's impact on air travel has normalised," he added. "However, for Air India, opportunities in ancillary revenue as well as cargo revenue growth have augmented our total revenue."

In the last fiscal year, Air India recorded its highest consolidated annual operating revenues of ₹51,365 crore (up 24.5 per cent over the previous year), driven by growth in capacity to 105,059 million ASKM (up 21 per cent) and improvement in passenger load factor to 85 per cent (82 per cent).



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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## **IndiGo to revive Boeing 777 on Istanbul routes**

**Mumbai:** IndiGo will reintroduce wet-leased Boeing 777 aircraft on Istanbul routes from December 1, offering passengers higher capacity and shorter travel time. IndiGo's Airbus A320 plane has 180-186 seats compared to 531 seats in Turkish Airlines Boeing 777. Due to a payload restriction, the Airbus A320 also makes a technical halt in Doha, thus increasing travel time. OUR BUREAU

# तयशुदा है भारत में 2 से ज्यादा विमानन कंपनियां होना : विल्सन

दीपक पटेल

नई दिल्ली, 28 नवंबर

**नि**जी क्षेत्र की विमानन कंपनी एयर इंडिया के मुख्य कार्य अधिकारी और प्रबंध निदेशक कैप्टेन विल्सन ने आज कहा कि भारतीय विमान बाजार फिलहाल मजबूत है और स्थिरता के दौर से गुजर रहा है और जैसे-जैसे यह लाभप्रद होता जाएगा निश्चित रूप से देश में दो से अधिक प्रमुख विमानन कंपनियां होंगी।

घरेलू यात्री बाजार में इंडिगो और टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाले एयर इंडिया समूह की फिलहाल 90 फीसदी से अधिक हिस्सेदारी है। 11 नवंबर को विस्तारा के एयर इंडिया में हुए विलय के बाद पहली बार संवाददाता सम्मेलन में पहुंचे विल्सन ने कहा कि एयर इंडिया समूह, जो फिलहाल अपने बेड़े में 300 विमानों का परिचालन करती है साल 2027 तक करीब 400 विमानों तक विस्तार करने की योजना बना रही है।

विल्सन ने यह भी स्पष्ट किया कि साल 2025 में वृद्धि मुख्य तौर पर घरेलू और छोटी दूरी की अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों की होगी क्योंकि विमानन कंपनी अपने चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों को सेवा से बाहर करना शुरू करेगी और अगले साल की पहली छमाही से उन्हें नए पुर्जे जोड़ने के



लिए भेजेगी। उन्होंने कहा, 'तैनाती के लिए मौजूद चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों की संख्या साल 2025 में थोड़ी कम हो जाएगी। साल 2027 तक चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों का बेड़ा पूरी तरह से तैयार हो जाएगा।' उन्होंने कहा कि वैश्विक आपूर्ति श्रृंखला में देरी होने की वजह से एयर इंडिया के चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों में पुर्जे लगाने की योजना में देरी हो रही है।

विल्सन ने कहा कि अगले महीने से विस्तारा के छोटे आकार वाले विमान और एयर इंडिया के पुर्जे जुड़े हुए छोटे

आकार वाले विमानों को महानगर से महानगर वाले मार्गों पर उतारा जाएगा। उन्होंने कहा कि एयर इंडिया के छोटे आकार वाले विमानों में पुर्जे बदलने की प्रक्रिया सितंबर में शुरू हुई थी और यह प्रक्रिया अगले साल के मध्य तक पूरी हो जाएगी। विल्सन ने बताया, 'महानगर से महानगर मार्गों पर हमारी बाजार हिस्सेदारी 55 फीसदी है। शीर्ष 120 मार्ग, जहां घरेलू बाजार हिस्सेदारी 60 फीसदी है वहां हमारी हिस्सेदारी 40 फीसदी है।' भारतीय विमानन बाजार में दो कंपनियों के ही वर्चस्व के सवाल पर

## विस्तार की तैयारी

- एयर इंडिया के मुख्य कार्य अधिकारी ने कहा कि समूह साल 2027 तक अपने बेड़े में 100 विमान जोड़ेगा
- भारत के विमानन बाजार में फिलहाल इंडिगो और एयर इंडिया की ही 90 फीसदी हिस्सेदारी
- अपने चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों में नए पुर्जे लगवाने के लिए भेज रही है कंपनी
- 2027 तक चौड़े आकार वाले विमानों का बेड़ा पूरी तरह से तैयार हो जाएगा

उन्होंने कहा कि यह एक क्षण है, दुनिया के अन्य विमानन बाजार भी इससे गुजर चुके हैं। उन्होंने समझाया, 'अगर आप बीते कई दशकों में दुनिया के अन्य हिस्सों को देखेंगे तो वह भी इस दौर से गुजर चुके हैं और वहां भी ऐसी ही स्थिति रही है, जब कई विमानन कंपनियां आ रही थीं और जा रही थीं। लाभदायक नहीं होने की वजह से कई कंपनियां बंद हो गईं। फिर वे मजबूती के दौर में पहुंचीं, जिससे वे थोड़ी स्थिर हुईं। उसके बाद वे मुनाफाप्रदता बनीं और फिर कई नई कंपनियां आकर्षित हुईं।'

# India will have more than two major airlines: A-I CEO

Tata group's airlines to add 100 planes to fleet by 2027, says Campbell Wilson

DEEPAK PATEL

New Delhi, 28 November

Aviation in India is undergoing a phase of consolidation and stability and as it becomes more profitable, it will “certainly” have more than two major airlines in “due course”, Air India Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director Campbell Wilson said on Thursday.

Air India, run by the Tata group, and IndiGo hold more than a 90 per cent share in the domestic passenger market.

The Air India group of airlines, which operates a fleet of about 300 aircraft, is planning to expand to approximately 400 planes by 2027, Wilson stated during his first press conference following Vistara's merger into Air India on November 11.

Wilson said in 2025 growth would happen primarily on domestic and short-haul international flights because the airline would start taking its widebody planes out of service and start sending them for retrofitting from the first half of next year.

“The number of widebody aircraft that will be available to deploy will shrink a little bit in 2025... The widebody aircraft fleet will be completely retrofitted by 2027,” he added.

He said the plan to retrofit the



widebody planes of Air India had been delayed due to global supply-chain issues.

From next month, Vistara's narrow-body aircraft and Air India's retrofitted narrow body planes will be put on metro-to-metro routes, he stated.

Retrofitting Air India's narrow body planes began in September and this process would be through by the middle of next year, he noted.

“On metro-to-metro routes, we have a market share of 55 per cent.

On the top 120 routes, which account for 60 per cent of the domestic market, our share is 40 per cent,” Wilson mentioned.

When asked about the “duopoly” in the Indian aviation market, he stated this was just a phase, which other aviation markets of the world had gone through.

“If you look at other geographies around the world over the past few decades, each of them went through a period where there was a lot of fragmentation, all of

airlines coming and going, collapsing because it wasn't profitable. And then they go through a phase of consolidation, and that consolidation brings some stability, it brings some professionalism and profitability, and then ultimately, the fact that there's a profitable ecosystem attracts new players,” he explained.

Air India, when it was under government control, was not a profitable airline for a long time and it warped the Indian aviation market.

“It had the effect of making the whole ecosystem not very profitable or not profitable at all. And so you had airlines jumping into the market, suffering losses, not being able to weather the cyclical ups and downs, and so you ended up churn and chaos,” he noted.

On being asked when Air India expected to become profitable, he replied: “We don't give any guidance about profitability. We have internal targets but we don't discuss them publicly.”

Amid human resource concerns after the Vistara merger, Wilson said the enlarged entity offered a “great sort of proposition” for the people and asserted that the airline was a “responsible employer”. There are certain concerns about seniority, retirement age, and other issues after the Vistara merger.

## Airlines got 999 hoax bomb threats till Nov 14 this yr: Govt

Airlines received 999 hoax bomb threats till November 14 this year, and as many as 256 FIRs were filed, the government said on Thursday.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said 1,148 hoax bomb threat messages/calls have been received since August 2022 till November 14, threatening the operations of international and domestic air travel.

While 999 threats were received by airlines during the

period from January to November 14, 2024, the count stood at 122 last year and at 27 for the August-December 2022 period. "256 FIRs have been filed since January 2024 till 14 November 2024, out of which 163 FIRs have been filed during 14 October-14 November 2024. 12 arrests have been made in view of hoax bomb threat since January 2024 till 14 November 2024," the minister said.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## दो से ज्यादा एयरलाइन की जगह बनी रहेगी

बिजनेस संवाददाता | नई दिल्ली

एयर इंडिया के सीईओ और एमडी कैम्पबेल विल्सन ने भारतीय एयरलाइन सेक्टर में मोनोपॉली की आशंका खारिज की है। इस सेक्टर में इंडिगो और टाटा सन्स की एअर इंडिया ग्रुप की बाजार हिस्सेदारी 90% से ज्यादा है। कैम्पबेल ने गुरुवार को कहा, भारत का एवीएशन मार्केट पहले के मुकाबले स्थिर होता नजर आ रहा है।

कंपनियों की आय बढ़ रही है। आगामी महीनों में यदि ऐसे ही हालात रहे तो देश में 2 से ज्यादा बड़ी एयरलाइन्स होंगी, जिनकी बाजार में मजबूत स्थिति रहेगी। अभी एअर इंडिया ग्रुप के पास 300 एयरक्राफ्ट्स का फ्लीट है। 2027 तक कंपनी इसमें करीब 400 विमान और जोड़ने का इरादा रखती है। कैम्पबेल ने स्पष्ट किया कि अगले साल भारतीय एयरलाइन इंडस्ट्री की ग्रोथ मुख्य रूप से घरेलू मार्गों पर ट्रैफिक बढ़ने और छोटी दूसरी की इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट्स की संख्या बढ़ने से देखी जाएगी। यह किसी भी देश में एयरलाइन इंडस्ट्री के मजबूत होने का संकेत होता है। इस चरण के बाद एयरलाइन इंडस्ट्री अमूमन तेज ग्रोथ देखती है।



## Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

28 NOVEMBER 2024

### देहरादून से पुणे जा रही फ्लाइट की जयपुर में इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग

जयपुर एयरपोर्ट; यात्री की अचानक तबीयत हुई खराब

सिटी रिपोर्टर | जयपुर

जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर बुधवार को देहरादून से पुणे जा रही इंडिगो एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट 6ई-402 की जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर दोपहर करीब 2 बजे इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग हुई। एयरपोर्ट से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार देहरादून से पुणे जा रहे शुभम (परिवर्तित नाम) को अचानक छाती में दर्द और बैचेनी महसूस हुई। इस दौरान एयर होस्टेस ने उसे देखा और उसके पास गई। इसकी सूचना उसने तुरंत पायलट को दी। इसके बाद पायलट ने जयपुर एयरपोर्ट एटीसी को इसकी सूचना दी। इसके बाद फ्लाइट की जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर सफल लैंडिंग कराई गई। उधर एटीसी की सूचना



पर पहुंची एम्बुलेंस से यात्री को नजदीकी अस्पताल ले जाया गया। करीब 10 मिनट बाद फ्लाइट को भी पुणे रवाना कर दिया गया। इससे करीब एक महीने पहले 25 अक्टूबर को विस्तारा एयरलाइंस की फ्लाइट UK-829 की इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग हुई थी। यह प्लेन दिल्ली से हैदराबाद जा रहा था। जयपुर के करीब एक यात्री की तबीयत बिगड़ने पर प्लेन की इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग करवाई गई थी।



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE DAILY GUARDIAN

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28 NOVEMBER 2024

TheDailyGuardian

epaper.thedailyguardian.com  
28 Nov 2024 - Page 7

# Airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023: Govt

**TDG NETWORK**  
NEW DELHI

The government has said airfares have moderated in 2024 compared to 2023 and notably, a decline in air ticket prices was observed in various routes during festival seasons.

Amid concerns in certain quarters that air ticket prices are ruling high, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol told Rajya Sabha that airfares are not subject to regulation by the government and airlines have the flexibility to determine their airfares based on their operational needs while adhering to existing rules. "...the government generally refrains from regulating airfares to maintain market competitiveness, however, it remains vigilant, and the government intervenes to shift capacity from one sector to another to prevent exorbitant pricing to ensure passenger comfort and



## AIR INDIA TO FLY ERSTWHILE VISTARA'S A320 PLANES ON 5 KEY METRO TO METRO ROUTES

NEW DELHI: Optimising its network, Air India on Wednesday said it will deploy erstwhile Vistara's A320 planes that offer best narrow body cabin products on five key metro-to-metro routes, including Delhi-Mumbai and Mumbai-Hyderabad. The Tata Group-owned airline, which has embarked on an ambitious transformation journey, will continue to operate one flight with a wide body plane each between Delhi and Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru, Delhi and Hyderabad. Either a Boeing 777 or Airbus A350 aircraft will be deployed for the services. Full-service carrier Vistara, which was well regarded for its services, was merged with Air India earlier this month, and providing a choice to passengers at the time of booking, flights operated with Vistara aircraft have their numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2'.

welfare," he said in a written reply on November 25.

# Indian flights have got 1k bomb hoax calls so far this year: Minister

**Of these, 666 were made in October alone**

**SHEMIN JOY**  
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Various domestic airlines received close to 1,000 hoax bomb threats till November 13 this year, with 666 coming in October alone, the Central government has informed the Rajya Sabha.

A total of 1,143 hoax bomb threat messages and calls came between August 2022 and November 13 this year, of which 27 were during August-December 2022, 122 in 2023, and 994 this year.

followed by Maharashtra with 244.

Karnataka was third in this list, receiving 99 such calls between January 1, 2023, and November 13 this year.

Other South Indian states had lesser numbers: Kerala 59, Tamil Nadu 58, Telangana 48, Andhra Pradesh 21, and Goa 19.

The last three months saw 680 hoax calls, the highest going to IndiGo (197), Air India (178), and Vistara (151).

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol provided the details in written replies on Monday to separate questions by Rajya Sabha members Kartikeya Sharma



**Since January 2023, Delhi topped the states that received the maximum number of hoax calls – 282 – regarding flights, followed by Maharashtra with 244 and K'taka with 90.**

(Independent), Priyanka Chaturvedi (Shiv Sena-UBT), AD Singh (RJD), Parimal Nathwani (independent), and John Brittas (CPI-M).

“The recent threats were hoaxes and no actual threat was detected at any of the airports/aircraft in India. As per the assessment of the Bomb Threat Assessment Committee (BTAC), operations of some of the flights were affected,” said

Mohol, adding that the threats came from random stations and not any specific locations.

Aviation security regulator Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has mandated robust protocols for handling such threats. A bomb threat contingency plan (BTCP) was in place to handle such threats, said the minister.

As part of it, every airport has a designated BTAC that

analyses the threat and acts accordingly.

The BCAS has issued advisories to all the civil aviation installations in India to streamline security measures and prevent any unlawful interference, said Mohol.

“Hoax bomb calls adversely affect operations of some flights, impacting airlines, airports, and other stakeholders,” he added.

To a separate question by Sikender Kumar, Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act of 1982 any person communicating such information that they knew to be false and endangered flight safety would be sentenced to life in prison and also fined.

“Amendment in the above Act and in Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023, is under consultation to make it more comprehensive as per evolving threats,” he said.

TOP EXECS OPEN UP ON THEIR STRATEGIES & MORE

# ‘With Merger, Air India has Over 50% Mkt Share on Metro Routes’

On top 120 routes, AI’s share stands at 40%, efforts on to make operations better: CEO

Arindam Majumder

**New Delhi:** Air India’s move to absorb full-service airline Vistara has made it a dominant force in the Indian civil aviation market with more than half the market share on routes connecting metro cities, chief executive Campbell Wilson said on Thursday. “Air India now has a share of 55% on metro-to-metro routes. Similarly, on the top 120 routes, our share stands at 40%,” Wilson told reporters.

As part of the consolidation of its airline business, Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, merged Vistara into Air India to create a full-service airline, while budget airline AirAsia India has been integrated into Air India Express to compete in the no-frills segment. Vistara, a joint venture of Singapore Airlines and Tata Group, merged into Air India effective November 12.

Air India and Air India Express together operate 298 aircraft, flying to and from 55 destinations in India and 48 overseas. For comparison, market leader IndiGo, which has over 60% share, has 418



FILE PHOTO

aircraft in its fleet and is adding one aircraft per week on average.

While Air India Express is slated to add 15 planes by March, the next tranche of Air India’s aircraft delivery starts from 2026. Wilson said the airline has plans to add 100 planes by 2027. In the meantime, Air India plans to deploy Vistara planes and its brand new aircraft between metro routes and on top international routes such as London and Frankfurt to hold on to high-paying corporate customers who were regular Vistara flyers.

The airline, however, faces significant headwinds on its long-haul international routes to North America due to old Boeing 777 planes. Barely two out of 10 flights to North America operated on time in November. The airline has faced public ire due to this with many complaining about broken seats, non-functioning entertainment systems and dirty lavatories.

Wilson said the carrier is hamstrung due to the limited number of capable aircraft operating on these routes as in case of any bre-

akdown or delay, the entire schedule goes haywire.

“When one of the aircraft is held up due to weather or maintenance issues, the sequence goes for a toss. As we take delivery of new aircraft, this will improve. In the meantime, we are also improving with stronger operations systems, schedule, and crew recovery systems. It takes a while to bring these together and operate them very, very tightly, but a lot of effort is being put in place,” Wilson said.

Air India has embarked on a \$400-million retrofit programme under which it intends to upgrade interiors of around 40 widebody aircraft comprising Boeing 777 and 787s, as well as Airbus A320 and A321 planes.

The retrofitting process has been delayed and is now slated to start only from the middle of 2025 and continue till 2027 due to global supply chain challenges impacting availability of parts.

The retrofit of Air India’s Boeing 787 aircraft will begin in April 2025, with the first of these aircraft expected to return to service by October after installation and certification.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## Airlines receive 999 hoax bomb threats this year

**AIRLINES RECEIVED 999** hoax bomb threats this year till November 14 and as many as 256 FIRs have been filed and guidelines have been issued by aviation security regulator BCAS for objective assessment of threats, the government said on Thursday.

In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, minister of state for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol said a total of 1,148 hoax bomb threat messages/calls have been received since August 2022 till November 14 this year, disrupting the operations of international and domestic air travel.

"Twelve arrests have been made in view of hoax bomb threat since January 2024 till 14 November 2024," the minister said. He said the government is considering amending the Aircraft (Security) Rules, 2023 to put hoax threat messenger in the no-fly list. "It is also being considered to amend Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation for covering Aircraft in flight as well as on ground, airport etc.," he added.

—PTI



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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## SpiceJet lessor withdraws insolvency case, shares rise



AIRCRAFT LESSOR  
AIRCATTLE Ireland  
has withdrawn its  
insolvency case

against SpiceJet after a settlement between the companies, the carrier said in a statement. Following the announcement, SpiceJet shares gained as much as 3.3% to hit their highest level in three weeks. The development came after a settlement for \$5 million, alongside an agreement on the treatment of certain aircraft engines.

AIR INDIA ENJOYS MONOPOLY IN FULL-SERVICE GLOBAL MARKET

# Duopoly will attract more pvt capital: Air India CEO

● Over 90% of industry is now controlled by IndiGo, Air India

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR  
Mumbai, November 28

**THE CONCENTRATION OF** the Indian aviation market being in the hands of just two competitors will attract new players, backed by private funds, eager to grab a slice of the third largest domestic market in the world, a top Air India official said.

Considering the collapse of Jet Airways and more recently Go First, and the merger of Vistara and AirAsia India into the Air India group, the Indian aviation market is undergoing a phase of consolidation.

"Other global aviation markets saw bankruptcies, loss-making airlines collapsing, which started the consolidation phase. This brought some stability, professionalisation and profitability," Campbell Wilson, managing director and CEO, Air India, responded to a FE query.

As more than 90% of the Indian skies is now controlled by IndiGo (63%) and Air India (29%), the market has slipped into a duopoly. Akasa Air and SpiceJet make the rest of the share. On metro to metro

## FLYING HIGH

■ On routes connecting metros, Air India claims to have a market share of 55% and a share of 40% on the top 120 routes, that collectively account for 60% of the domestic traffic

■ About a third of its narrow-body fleet has been upgraded under a \$400-million refit programme, while the rest of the fleet will also be upgraded by the middle of 2025

■ From 300 planes at present, Air India group expects to have a fleet of 400 by 2027



**CAMPBELL WILSON,**  
MD AND CEO,  
AIR INDIA

There is now a lot of private capital, professionalism and stability coming into the system. In due course, there will be profitability coming in too

routes, Air India claims to have a market share of 55% and a share of 40% on the top 120 routes, that collectively account for 60% of the domestic traffic.

"There is now a lot of private capital, professionalism and stability coming into the system. In due course, there will be profitability coming in too. And then the third largest aviation market in the world will certainly have more than 2 airlines," Wilson added.

Air India group (including Vistara) has been enjoying monopoly in the full-service international market since its takeover by the Tata group. The airline competes with the likes of British Airways, Lufthansa, Emirates, Qatar

Airways and partner Singapore Airlines in the long haul and ultra-long-haul segment.

From 300 planes presently, Air India group expects to have a fleet of 400 by 2027, though Campbell acknowledged the delays from the US-based plane-maker Boeing, due to their industrial issues. Air India had previously spoken about a target of inducting one new aircraft every six days.

In February 2023, the former flag carrier placed orders for 470 planes with both Boeing and Airbus consisting of a mix of narrow and wide-body aircraft. While news reports later in the same year said that Air India had ordered an additional 85 planes, Wilson called

it speculative when asked about it.

About a third of its narrow-body fleet has been upgraded under a \$400 million refit programme, while the rest of the fleet will also be upgraded by the middle of 2025. Retrofit of the of the older wide-body planes will commence next year.

"We had very much hoped to commence the retrofit of Boeing 787 and Boeing 777 by now. Unfortunately, the global supply chain is still recovering from Covid-19. There is clarity on the timeline, once the work begins in 2025, we would be doing 3-4 aircraft every month until the whole 40 wide-bodies are fixed," Wilson added.





# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

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## Air India optimises key domestic metro routes post Vistara merger

**IAN S**  
NEW DELHI

Post Vistara-integration, national carrier Air India on Wednesday announced an optimisation of its domestic route network that will prioritise deployment of its best narrowbody cabin products on five key metro-to-metro routes, beginning December 1.

This will see all flights operated with erstwhile Vistara A320-series aircraft offering business, premium economy and economy class.

The routes are Delhi and



**The merger of Vistara into AI has unlocked many new opportunities, Wilson said**

Mumbai; Delhi and Bengaluru; Delhi and Hyderabad; Mumbai and Bengaluru and Mumbai and Hyderabad, Air India said in a

statement.

These flights will operate with 'AI'-prefixed four-digit flight numbers beginning with '2', such as AI2999 from Delhi to Mumbai.

"The merger of Vistara into Air India has unlocked many new opportunities to improve our customer offering. By combining the strengths of both full-service carriers, we are able to consolidate our best narrowbody offering on routes where there is desire for a high-frequency, full-service product," said Campbell Wilson, CEO and Managing Director, Air India.

## Airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023: Govt

**PTI**

**NEW DELHI**

The government has said airfares have moderated in 2024 compared to 2023 and notably, a decline in air ticket prices was observed in various routes during festival seasons.

Amid concerns in certain quarters that air ticket prices are ruling high, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol told Rajya Sabha that airfares are not subject to regulation by the government and airlines have the flexibility to determine their airfares based on their operational needs while adhering to existing rules.

"...the government generally refrains from regulating airfares to maintain market competitiveness, however, it remains vigilant, and the government intervenes to shift capacity from one sector to another to prevent exorbitant pricing to ensure passenger comfort and welfare," he said in a written reply on November 25.

Airfares are dynamic and is a function of demand and supply.

With continuous engagement with airlines & Online Ticketing Agents (OTAs) and keeping a watch on the movement of airfares by the government, Mohol said airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023.



**Notably, during festival seasons, a decrease in airfares was observed in various sectors, Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol said**

"The airlines have also been sensitised to ensure reasonability while fixing the airfares and to keep passengers' interest in mind. Notably, during festival seasons, a decrease in airfares was observed in various sectors," he added.

According to him, the trends in airfare prices in India exhibit considerable seasonality, prevailing fuel price, the capacity of the aircraft operating on the route, competition on the sector, season, holidays, festivals, long weekends and events.

Besides, he said the pricing is significantly influenced by operational constraints at airports, adding that the combination of constrained capacity and elevated demand leads to fluctuations in airfares.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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HARI BHUMI

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## एयर इंडिया की बढ़ेगी अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानें

नई दिल्ली। एयर इंडिया के प्रमुख  
कैपबेल विल्सन ने बताया कि  
2025 में उनके हवाई यातायात में



ज्यादातर वृद्धि  
घरेलू और कम  
दूरी की  
अंतरराष्ट्रीय  
उड़ानों से होगी,  
क्योंकि उसके  
बेड़े में और

अधिक संकीर्ण बॉडी वाले विमान  
शामिल हो रहे हैं, साथ ही अगले  
साल पुरानी चौड़ी बॉडी वाले  
विमानों को भी बदला जाएगा।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## एयर इंडिया घरेलू उड़ानों में वृद्धि हासिल करेगी

नई दिल्ली, एजेंसी। एयर इंडिया के सीईओ कैम्पबेल विल्सन ने गुरुवार को कहा कि हवाई यातायात में अधिकांश वृद्धि 2025 में घरेलू और कम दूरी की अंतरराष्ट्रीय उड़ानों से देखने को मिलेगी।

कंपनी के बेड़े में ज्यादातर विमान छोटे आकार वाले शामिल हो रहे हैं और बड़े आकार वाले पुराने विमानों को अगले वर्ष नया रूप देने के लिए भेजा जाएगा। एयरलाइन को उसके बेड़े में 2027 तक 400 विमान होने की उम्मीद है।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

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## AI foresees growth from short international, domestic flights

Air India will see most of the air traffic growth coming from domestic and short-haul international operations in 2025 as more narrow-body planes are joining the fleet and legacy wide-body aircraft will be going for retrofit next year, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson said on Thursday. The Tata Group-owned airline, which has embarked on a five-year transformation journey, expects to have a fleet of 400 planes by 2027. PTI



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

# Air India group to have 400 aircraft by '27: CEO

**Neha LM Tripathi**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** The Tata Group-owned Air India will have a fleet of 400 aircraft by 2027, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson said on Thursday.

"Air India group will have a fleet size of 400 aircraft by 2027, we currently have 300 aircraft in our fleet," Wilson, the airline's chief executive officer (CEO) and managing director (MD), told reporters. He, however, noted that there is a delay in getting the white tail aircraft (originally manufactured for a particular airline and later taken by another) used by Air India Express due to a recent strike at Boeing headquarters in Seattle.

Wilson clarified that not all 50 white tail Boeing 737 MAX aircraft are able to join the fleet by December as planned, and that they will be pushed up to June. "The Boeing strike lasted a while. I think the 737 production was

also slow for an even longer period than that, which did have an impact on the construction of their aircraft... So the guidance is that it's going to be six months plus delayed to narrow body deliveries."

He said Air India is aiming to improve passenger convenience for which retrofit of its legacy wide-body aircraft will begin early next year, admitting the programme was delayed due to global supply chain issues.

"We had hoped to start retrofitting 787s and 777s by now. Unfortunately, the global supply chains in some areas are still recovering and seats in particular are a challenge," he added.

However, he assured that once retrofit starts in 2025, the airline will be doing three to four aircraft every month until all the 40 legacy wide-body aircraft are retrofitted. Wilson also addressed the issue of rising passenger complaints on the flights to North America.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

## Aircastle, SpiceJet reach \$5.6 million settlement

**Krishna Yadav**

krishna.yadav@livemint.com

**NEW DELHI:** In a relief to SpiceJet, Ireland-based aircraft lessor Aircastle has withdrawn its insolvency case against the budget airline after reaching a \$5.6 million settlement.

Both parties informed the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) in Delhi about the settlement on Wednesday, after which the court approved the withdrawal of the case.

This marks another instance of the airline settling its disputes with creditors after raising ₹3,000 crore through a qualified institutional placement (QIP).

In October, the airline had announced the resolution of a \$23.39 million dispute with Aircastle (Ireland) Designated Activity Co. and Wilmington Trust SP Services (Dublin) Ltd. The matter was settled for \$5 million, along with an agreement regarding the treatment of certain aircraft engines.

Aircastle was among the first lessors to file an insolvency plea



**Aircastle was among the first lessors to file an insolvency plea against SpiceJet in 2023.** PTI

against SpiceJet in 2023 for defaulted rental dues, as the airline faced mounting insolvency claims from lessors and vendors in Delhi's insolvency court.

On 9 October, the airline resolved a \$131.85 million claim with Horizon Aviation 1 Ltd., Horizon II Aviation 3 Ltd., and Horizon III Aviation 2 Ltd., managed by Babcock & Brown Aircraft Management, for \$22.5 million. On 24 September, the airline settled a claim with Engine Lease Finance Corp., reducing its dues from an initial \$16.7 million.

# Mega aviation package to cut levies, ease rules soon

Niti Aayog leads effort towards building hub, involving multiple central ministries

**Dhirendra Kumar & Manas Pimpalkhare**

[dhirendra.kumar@livemint.com](mailto:dhirendra.kumar@livemint.com)

**NEW DELHI:** The Union government is working on a comprehensive package for the aviation sector involving lower user fees, relaxed regulations and tax concessions, three government officials aware of the development said.

Federal think tank Niti Aayog is leading the initiative, holding consultations with the ministries of aviation, commerce, finance, home, petroleum and environment for the package, the people cited above said on the condition of anonymity.

While the civil aviation ministry is focused on regulatory relaxations and route allocation, the commerce ministry will work to align the package with India's trade goals and encourage foreign investment. The finance ministry will examine tax concessions, particularly on aviation turbine fuel (ATF),



The finance ministry will examine tax concessions, particularly on aviation turbine fuel.

PTI

while the petroleum ministry will work with states to rationalize value-added tax.

Meanwhile, the environment ministry will ensure sustainability norms, and the home ministry will work on efficient immigration and security protocols. State governments are expected to support regional airport development, the people cited above added.

"An official announcement is expected in the coming months, with Niti Aayog tasked with providing policy guidance for ensuring economic viability. Several rounds of inter-ministerial discussions on the matter have

been held, and another round of dialogues is being planned in the coming months," one of the three officials said. Other proposals under consideration include minimizing procedural delays in permitting new airlines, aircraft acquisition, route additions and easing restrictions on hiring foreign pilots. Easier norms on digital ticketing, security checks and customer services to improve passenger convenience are also likely.

India is the world's third-largest domestic aviation market, behind the US and China. Ratings agency Icra projects India's domestic air passenger traffic in

FY25 to grow by 8-13%, reaching 165-170 million. Meanwhile, international passenger traffic is set to surpass the FY19 peak in the current fiscal year.

*Mint* reported earlier that the Centre is working on a plan to reduce ATF prices to compete with global hubs. ATF is not under the goods and services regime, meaning states are free to tax them. ATF prices in India are nearly 60% costlier than in Dubai, Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Since ATF costs make up almost 40% of airlines' operating costs, reducing their prices would be a significant breather for airlines, helping them bring down fares and raise air traffic. That dovetails with the government's objective of growing India's aviation sector by adding airports, pushing local manufacturing, and developing repair hubs.

"The other key components of the package will be reduced user charges, route optimization, and regulatory relaxations. The rationalization of ATF prices is a key component of this package. Consultations are underway with states and oil marketing companies to align prices, as our current rates still exceed global trends," the second official said.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

28 NOVEMBER 2024

# Emirates unveils Airbus A350 to be flown on Indian routes next year

**Jagriti Chandra**

DUBAI

Emirates's brand new Airbus A350 unveiled on Wednesday will be deployed for flights to Mumbai and Ahmedabad beginning February as part of the airline's capacity "optimisation" in a market where it remains constrained by bilateral agreements on seats between Dubai and India as well as amid larger concerns over delay in aircraft delivery from Boeing leaving it "frustrated".

The first of the 65 Airbus A350-900 on order to join Emirates fleet was unveiled at an exclusive event showcase in Dubai. The first scheduled flight on



Tim Clark

this aircraft type will be to Edinburgh on January 3, 2025. The first batch of planes have a range of 12 hours and will be primarily used for the regional market, and will be followed by those with an ultra-long haul range that will include crew rest area and will join the fleet in June or July, explained Emirates President Tim Clark. "The big constraint is the size of our aircraft given the number of

seats we are allowed to use. So we're having to mix and match. Sometimes we put an aircraft and are not allowed to sell some of the seats," Mr. Clark told *The Hindu* reiterating the airline's demand for doubling of seat capacity between Dubai and India as the travel demand had tripled in this market since 2015 when the agreement was last drawn.

The Emirates A350 has a seating capacity of 312 passengers in 3 cabin classes, which include Business Class lie-flat seats, 21 Premium Economy seats and 259 Economy Class seats.

*(The writer was in Dubai at the invitation of Emirates)*

## Air India transformation journey a test match, we are at lunch on day three: CEO

**SUKALP SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 28

WHEN CAMPBELL Wilson took over the reins of the then recently-privatised Air India, the task before him was an onerous one—to turn a long-neglected and struggling airline into a world-class carrier. Over the past couple of years, the Air India group has embarked upon an ambitious turnaround plan that has seen, among other things, a massive \$70-billion order for 470 aircraft and the consolidation of the four Tata group airlines into two carriers—one full-service and one low-cost.

Wilson, while noting that a lot of work remains to be done to transform Air India, appears satisfied with the progress so far. Transforming Air India, according to the New Zealander, is a “test match, not a T20”, and the airline group is about at “lunch on day three” of the match.

“I acknowledge that we are not where we ultimately aspire to be. We have some work yet to do. But there is a reason why The Economist said that this is the ‘Everest of corporate turnarounds’. There is a reason why our Vihaan.ai (transformation) programme was five years...we are little over two years into that whole journey. We have a few years yet to go, but I think if we look at the first two years, it has been a good start,” Wilson said.

The Air India CEO described



**Air India CEO Campbell Wilson**

the first phase of the airline’s transformation plan being really about the stabilisation of a carrier “that was really in terminal decline and triage”.

“Then it was about building the capabilities and capacities and systems necessary to have a foundation for growth. And we are now very clearly in that growth phase,” Wilson said.

Under Tata ownership, the Air India group has invested heavily in technology upgradation, fleet modernisation, network development, sprucing up of the product offerings, and building training infrastructure, among other things. It has also stepped up hiring across verticals, and managed to merge four airlines into two in just about one year. According to Wilson, the results have started showing and will build up further overtime. Air India has managed to cut losses and increase revenue post privatisation. The airline’s loss reduced by 60 per cent year-on-year to Rs 4,444 crore in 2023-24, with revenue rising nearly 24 per cent to

### Boeing strike, production slowdown delaying aircraft deliveries to Air India

*New Delhi:* The slowdown in production at Boeing and the recent strike at the plane makers’ manufacturing facilities in the US are causing delays in aircraft deliveries to the Air India group, with some deliveries of already-manufactured jets that were earlier scheduled by December now stretching up to June of 2025.

As for line-fit aircraft—planes to be built specifically for Air India—the airline is not sure yet about the likely delays and its impact.

“There were 50 (Boeing 737

MAX) white-tails and all of them were supposed to have come by December. As it stands now, they will stretch out until June of next year. That in itself has a little bit of an impact. As for the line-fit (aircraft), there are two contributing factors here. One is the slowdown in production that they (Boeing) had, and then there was the strike. So, it is not clear to us, and I think even to Boeing yet, quite how long the impact is going to be,” Air India’s CEO and managing director Campbell Wilson said. **ENS**

Rs 38,812 crore.

The Air India group, which currently has a collective fleet of 300 aircraft, plans to grow it to 400 planes by 2027. In the past 18 months or so, the airline group has inducted 100 new aircraft. Over the last year, it has inducted a new aircraft on average every six days, and the trend is likely to continue for a few months.

Air India has also embarked upon a massive \$400-million fleet refit programme, to revamp its legacy aircraft from government ownership days. The narrow-body upgradation is expected to be completed by the middle of 2025, while the wide-body refit programme is likely to start early

next year.

The airline currently has a cumulative domestic market share of 29 per cent, which is significantly higher than the market share during its government ownership days.

According to Wilson, on metro-to-metro routes, the group’s share is 55 per cent, while on the top 120 domestic routes, the Air India group has a market share of around 40 per cent.

The group includes an expanded Air India—formed by the merger of Vistara and Air India—and an enlarged Air India Express, which emerged out of the combination of AIX Connect and Air India Express.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024

## AI to expand fleet size by a third by 2027: CEO

[Dharmendra](#)  
dharmendra@govmint.com  
NEW DELHI

**T**ata Sons-owned Air India is aiming to increase the group's fleet capacity by a third to 400 aircraft by 2027, its chief executive Campbell Wilson said on Thursday.

In a media roundtable held at its headquarters in Gurugram, Wilson also said aircraft deliveries in 2025 are expected to be slower compared to 2024. The seven-week long strike at Boeing's manufacturing facilities in the US is one of the reasons for the slow deliveries, followed by supply chain challenges.

Responding to *Mint's* question, he said, "Boeing strike lasted a while, the 737 production was also slowed through an even longer period than that. That does have an impact on the construction of their aircraft, so the guidance is that it's going to be six months-plus delay to the narrow body deliveries. Every airline is impacted by it and we just have to adjust."

He also said there is a slowdown in deliveries of 50 white tail aircraft. "Out of the total 50 white tail Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, at least 35 have rejoined the fleet... all of them were to come by December this year. They will stretch up to June next year and that in itself has a little bit of impact," said Wilson. White tail aircraft are those that were originally manufactured for a particular airline, but were later delivered to another carrier.

On 12 November, Air India completed its merger with Vistara to create an integrated airline, partly owned by Singapore Airlines, that will fly 120,000 passengers daily and connect more than 90 destinations.

For an extended version of the story, visit [livemint.com](#).



# Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

29 NOVEMBER 2024



Resolution professional counsel submitted CoC's recommendation to NCLT for approval. REUTERS

## Go First CoC votes for new liquidator

**T**he Committee of Creditors (CoC) of the bankrupt airline Go First has voted to appoint Dinkar Venkatasubramanian as the liquidator for the airline's liquidation proceedings.

The resolution professional counsel submitted the CoC's recommendation to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for approval on Thursday.

However, the NCLT did not pass the approval order on Thursday and deferred the decision, scheduling the next hearing for 6 December. It is expected that the tribunal will pass the liquidation order and may approve the CoC's proposed liquidator at that time.

Venkatasubramanian is a Chartered Accountant and is registered as an Insolvency Professional with the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India. He is a partner at Ernst & Young Restructuring, specializing in crisis stabilization, liquidity management, and the restructuring and turnaround of distressed companies. He is an expert in sectors such as retail, industrial products, infrastructure, healthcare, and automotive components.

KRISHNA YADAV

## AI facing delays in Boeing aircraft deliveries: CEO Campbell Wilson

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @ New Delhi

AIR INDIA CEO and MD Campbell Wilson said on Wednesday that the airline is experiencing delays in receiving aircraft deliveries from Boeing, largely due to a strike at the aircraft manufacturer's U.S. factory.

Wilson revealed that the delivery of 50 "white tail" aircraft, initially expected to be completed by December this year, has been pushed to June 2025. "50 white tail aircraft, all of them were to come by December this year... They will stretch up to June next year and that in itself has a little bit of impact...", Wilson said, adding that the two factors - a slowdown in production by Boeing and the strike - are likely to have contributed to the delay.

"It is not clear for how long the impact will be. Six months is reasonable for some aircraft...", he said.

Out of the total 50 white-tail Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, at least 35 have joined Air India's fleet. These planes are being operated by Air India Express. Generally white-tail planes are those that were originally man-



We had hoped to start retrofit of 787s and 777s by now. Unfortunately, the global supply chains in some areas are still recovering and seats in particular are a challenge

Campbell Wilson, CEO and MD

ufactured for a particular airline and later taken by another airline. Currently, the Air India Group operates a fleet of around 300 aircraft. It is expected to add 100 new planes between 2026 and 2027.

However, Wilson noted that deliveries in 2025 will be slower compared to 2024. The CEO also highlighted the importance of domestic and short-haul international markets for Air India's growth in 2025, as the airline expands its narrow-body fleet while sending its older wide-body aircraft for retrofitting. "We had hoped

to start retrofit of 787s and 777s by now. Unfortunately the global supply chains in some areas are still recovering and seats in particular are a challenge... Once it (retrofit) starts in 2025, we will be doing 3-4 aircraft every month until the full legacy 40 wide-body aircraft are completed," Wilson said.

"So, we took the view that there is an opportunity, appetite for growth in the market and that we should take it. On balance, we have taken millions of people on these aircraft. People are happy that the service exists," he noted.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE PIONEER

DELHI

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## Airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023, says Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has said airfares have moderated in 2024 compared to 2023 and notably, a decline in air ticket prices was observed in various routes during festival seasons. Amid concerns in certain quarters that air ticket prices are ruling high, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol told Rajya Sabha that airfares are not subject to regulation by the government and airlines have the flexibility to determine their airfares based on their operational needs while adhering to existing rules. "The government generally refrains from regulating airfares to maintain market competitiveness, however, it remains vigilant, and the government intervenes to shift capacity from one sector to another to prevent exorbitant pricing to ensure passenger comfort and welfare," he said in a written reply on November 25. Airfares are dynamic and is a function of demand and supply.

With continuous engagement with airlines & Online Ticketing Agents (OTAs) and keeping a watch on the movement of airfares by the government, Mohol said airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023.

"The airlines have also been sensitised to ensure reasonability while fixing the airfares and to keep passengers' interest in mind," he added.

## Air India sees growth from domestic, short international flights in 2025



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India will see most of the air traffic growth coming from domestic and short-haul international operations in 2025 as more narrow-body planes are joining the fleet and legacy wide-body aircraft will be going for retrofit next year, the airline's chief Campbell Wilson said on Thursday. The Tata Group-owned airline, which has embarked on a five-year transformation journey, expects to have a fleet of 400 planes by 2027. Currently, the total fleet strength of Air India Group, including Air India Express, is around 300 aircraft. During a select media briefing, Wilson, who has been at the helm of Air India for more than two years, said the airline group has a domestic market share of around 29 per cent and 55 per cent on the metro to metro routes. On top 120 domestic routes, the market share is about 40 per cent, he said. According to him, the retrofit of legacy wide-body aircraft will start in early 2025. "We had hoped to start retrofit of 787s and 777s by now. Unfortunately, the global supply chains in some areas are still recovering and seats in particular are a challenge..." "Once it (retrofit) starts in 2025, we will be doing 3-4 aircraft every month until the full legacy 40 wide-body aircraft are completed," Wilson said. About growth for 2025, he

said it will primarily come from domestic and short-haul international flights as most of the aircraft that are coming in are narrow-body ones. "We are also taking the aircraft for the retrofit programme. So, the number of wide-body aircraft available will shrink a little bit," he added. As part of Tata Group consolidating its airline business, Air India has merged Vistara with itself and AIX Connect has been integrated with Air India Express. The CEO and MD of Air India noted that there is a delay in getting all the 50 white tail aircraft, which were earlier expected to join the fleet by December this year. Out of the total 50 white tail Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, at least 35 have joined the fleet. These planes are being operated by Air India Express. "50 white tail aircraft, all of them were to come by December this year. They will stretch up to June next year and that in itself has a little bit of impact." Wilson said while responding to a query about delays due to issues at Boeing, including the recent strike. "It is not clear for how long the impact will be. Six months is reasonable for some aircraft," he said. Generally, white tail planes are those that were originally manufactured for a particular airline and later taken by another airline.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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## Airfares have moderated in 2024 relative to 2023, says Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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## 1,000 bomb hoaxes on airlines this yr

**New Delhi:** Airlines have received almost 1,000 bomb hoax messages so far this year. Junior minister for civil aviation Murlidhar Mohol on Wednesday said in Parliament: "As many as 27 hoax bomb threat calls were received between Aug and Dec 2022. The number increased to 122 in 2023, while the current year alone witnessed a sharp rise, with 994 calls reported as of mid-Nov 2024."

Govt data given in reply to another question says last three months have seen 680 hoax messages, with IndiGo, Air India, Vistara and Akasa receiving most of them. TNN

# AI rule isn't music to guitarists' ears

## 'Check Instrument In, Or Buy An Extra Seat'

Manju.V@timesofindia.com

**Mumbai:** Guitarists travelling with Air India have found that, unlike earlier times, the airline no longer allows the carriage of guitars in the passenger cabin. At the airport counter, the ground staff give them two options: Either check in the guitar or buy an extra seat to carry it in the cabin. The move has drawn criticism from musicians, with particular concern for struggling guitarists who can't afford either of the two options offered. Others have moved on as their contracts now specify not to book Air India.

Last week, guitarist Ehasaan Noorani of the musical trio Shankar-Ehasaan-Loy was stopped by Air India ground staff from carrying his guitar on board an Air India Mumbai-Varanasi flight. They eventually relented, though. But the experience left him wondering how this 'new rule' would play out for artists who are starting out or those who aren't financially stable. "We can afford to pay for the extra seat, but what about all those musicians who do a show for as little as Rs 10,000? How can they buy an extra seat or check in a guitar knowing that the airline takes no responsibility for damage or loss?" Noorani said. Moreover, each flight at the most might have a guitar or two and not more, so it's not a matter of inconvenience, he added.

Mahesh Tinaikar, a guitarist who was asked by Air India staff to check in his guitar or buy an extra seat



Made with Google AI

### OLD RULE, NEW TROUBLE

on the Goa-Mumbai flight, said: "Air India claims they don't allow guitars on board to not inconvenience other passengers. But I've been travelling with a guitar in the cabin for the past 20 years and not once has a passenger complained, so why have they come up with this new policy?"

A Air India spokesperson said: "There has been no change in Air India's policies on the carriage of items, including musical instruments, inside the cabin conforming to the stipulated dimensions." While other carriers such as IndiGo clearly state in their baggage policy guidelines that guitars are allowed as carry-ons, Air India's guidelines don't make an exception for musical instruments like guitars. The Air India website states that the maximum permissible dimension for carry-on in economy class is a height of 55 cm, a length of 40 cm, and a width of 20 cm, and the to-

tal dimension should not exceed 115 cm. But a standard guitar softboard has much larger dimensions: 110 cm, 40 cm, and 7 cm. The confusion arose as all these years, Air India ignored its carry-on baggage dimension limitations to allow guitars on board. What is new now is not the policy, but the enforcement of the old policy.

The Air India spokesperson added: "Small musical instruments, which adhere to the specified dimensions, and which are not likely to inconvenience other passengers or create any safety hazard during turbulence, can be carried onboard free of charge. Any musical instrument, which exceeds the specified dimensions, can be carried in the cabin but only by booking an additional adjacent seat. Large, bulky, or odd-sized musical instruments are to be carried as checked-in baggage only."

While airlines worldwide have their own guidelines for carry-on bags, some regulators, such as the US regulator, for instance, support musicians. "In the US, airlines either put the guitar in the overhead bin or in the coat closet. It has never been a problem," said Noorani. In 2015, the US Department of Transportation stipulated that airlines "must allow a passenger to carry into the cabin and stow a small musical instrument, such as a violin or a guitar, in a suitable baggage compartment, such as the overhead bin or under the seats" in accordance with its civil aviation regulator's safety regulations.

# AI revival at midway of a 5-day match: CEO

**Saurabh.Sinha**  
@timesofindia.com

**New Delhi:** The revival of Air India, “the Everest of corporate turnarounds”, is “not a T20 match but a five-day one currently at lunch on day three”. That’s how Air India MD & CEO Campbell Wilson on Thursday described the Tata Group’s mammoth task at hand with the Maharaaja, weeks after merging erstwhile Vistara and AirAsia India into AI and AI Express, respectively.

Amid continuing poor cabin product, flight delays and integration issues, the veteran from Singapore Airlines admitted, “We have work to do but what we have achieved in just over two years has few pa-

“ Revival of AI is not a T20 match... We have work to do but what we have achieved in just over two years has few parallels among airlines globally

“ By mid-2025, all our narrow body planes will have upgraded cabin product. The \$400 million upgrade programme for 40 old wide body (B777s & B787s) will start next year and complete in two years



“ We have hired 9,000 people. Average employee age has dropped from 54 to 34. By 2027, we will have 100 more planes in our current combined fleet of 300

—CAMPBELL WILSON | MD & CEO, AIR INDIA

ralles among airlines globally.” While passengers on costly but delayed intercontinental flights with broken seats have begun questioning the pace of change, reviving AI, which saw no investment in its last few years as a cash-strapped PSU, is an uphill task.

Crippling global supply

chain constraints are leading to longer than expected waits for inducting new planes. This has made the task of revamping old legacy fleet more difficult, despite Tatas spending billions of dollars on getting JRD’s baby back into shape.

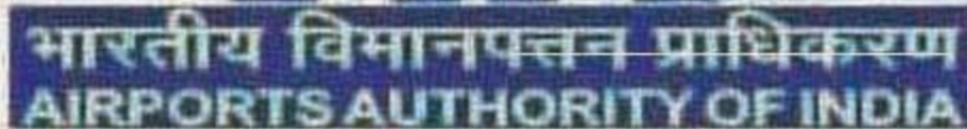
Asked if AI had bitten off

more than it could chew in its current state, Wilson said: “The health of (AI’s legacy planes, especially wide bodies) is not as good as we would like it to be. Coupled with weather and airspace issues, when even one factor causes a delay, it takes a while to catch up. There are (less than required) non-stops to North America but no wide body aircraft are available globally as of now. We had an opportunity to lease some of these planes (to add flights). There is a demand to travel. Had we not taken these planes and added flights, there would have been a long wait to do so. Yes, we wish (the wide body non-stops) were more smooth (on-time).” AI has 51 weekly non-stops to North America.

While that remains work

in progress, AI has been more successful in some other tasks. The average age of cabin crew has now dropped to 28 from earlier 40s in AI’s state-owned days. “We have hired 9,000 people. The average employee age has dropped from 54 to 34. By 2027, we will have 100 more planes in our current combined fleet of 300,” Wilson said.

Most of the aircraft coming over the next few months will be narrow body and then wide body will be taken out of service for revamping. So, the growth will come mainly from domestic and nearby international sectors for about one-two years. When revamped old wide bodies and new ones join the fleet, this segment will grow.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

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## SpiceJet lessor takes back insolvency case

**New Delhi:** SpiceJet said aircraft lessor Aircastle has withdrawn the insolvency case against the airline following a "mutually agreed upon settlement". The settlement was reached for an aggregate sum of \$5 million. AGENCIES



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

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## **AI to fly Vistara's upgraded A320s on 5 routes from Dec 1**

**New Delhi:** Starting Dec 1, Air India will deploy erstwhile Vistara's narrow body Airbus A320s, which have a better cabin product than that of the Maharaja's ageing planes, on five key metro-to-metro routes. All flights between Delhi and Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru, Delhi and Hyderabad, Mumbai and Bengaluru, and Mumbai and Hyderabad will get these planes with business, premium economy and economy class cabins. These routes have a significant demand for premium class travel. IndiGo has recently started a business class to cater to this segment.

These flights will operate with AI-prefixed four-digit flight numbers beginning with 2, like AI-2999 for a Delhi-Mumbai service. The airline had earlier announced that passengers who already had bookings on Vistara flights post-Nov 12, the date of its merger with Air India, will get the same aircraft, product and service for a few months. **TNN**