

## विमानन सेवाओं का विस्तार : प्रदेश का छठा एयरपोर्ट रीवा में शुरू, ग्वालियर में सबसे कम समय में बनकर तैयार



प्रदेश में विमानन सेवाओं का विस्तार किया जा रहा है। प्रदेश का छठा एयरपोर्ट रीवा में प्रारंभ हुआ है। ग्वालियर में देश में सबसे कम समय में बनकर तैयार हुए, राजमाता विजयाराजे सिंधिया एयरपोर्ट का उद्घाटन भी संपन्न हुआ है। प्रधानमंत्री मोदी की पहल पर सस्ती विमान सेवा का शुभारंभ किया गया है। इससे लोगों को अन्य शहरों से कनेक्टिविटी मिली है। समय की बचत के साथ-साथ व्यावसायिक गतिविधियां भी बढ़ी हैं।

- इंदौर-उज्जैन-देवास-धार को मिलाकर एक तथा भोपाल-सीहोर-रायसेन-विदिशा-ब्यावरा (राजगढ़) को मिलाकर दूसरा महानगरीय क्षेत्र बनाया जाएगा। भारत सरकार के विजन के अनुरूप प्रदेश के सभी संभागीय मुख्यालयों को क्षेत्रीय आर्थिक विकास केन्द्र के रूप में विकसित करने की कार्ययोजना बनाई जा रही है। एकीकृत टाउनशिप नीति भी तैयार की जाएगी जिससे निजी भागीदारी को प्रोत्साहन मिलेगा।
- प्रदेश में संतुलित नगरीय विकास के लिए पुनर्धनत्विकरण तथा पुनर्विकास नीति का प्रस्ताव तैयार किया गया है। प्रधानमंत्री आवास योजना (शहरी) 2.0 में प्रदेश के ऐसे शहरी गरीब परिवारों, जो किसी कारण से योजना के प्रथम चरण में लाभ प्राप्त नहीं कर पाए थे, को भी आवास प्रदान किए जाएंगे।
- प्रदेश में प्रतिदिन गैर-कृषि उपभोक्ताओं को 24 घंटे एवं कृषि उपभोक्ताओं को 10 घंटे गुणवत्तापूर्ण विद्युत प्रदाय किया जा रहा है। अटल गृह ज्योति योजना का लाभ लगभग एक करोड़ घरेलू उपभोक्ताओं को मिल रहा है। योजना में वर्ष 2024-25 के लिए 6 हजार 495 करोड़ की सब्सिडी प्रदान की गई है।
- अटल कृषि योजना से लगभग 26 लाख 59 हजार कृषि उपभोक्ता लाभान्वित हो रहे हैं। प्रदेश में वर्तमान में कुल विद्युत उपलब्ध क्षमता 24 हजार 108 मेगावॉट है। मध्यप्रदेश, विद्युत उत्पादन के क्षेत्र में सरप्लस की स्थिति में है। मध्यप्रदेश के लिए तैयार संसाधन उपयुक्तता योजना में 4 हजार 100 मेगावॉट अतिरिक्त कोल-आधारित विद्युत क्षमता के विकास के लिए भारत सरकार ने कोयला खदान की स्वीकृति प्रदान की है। मध्यप्रदेश को कोल आवंटन एक संजीवनी होगी जो नए थर्मल पावर स्टेशन की स्थापना का आधार बनेगी।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

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## हैदराबाद के हवाई अड्डे पर बम की धमकी

हैदराबाद। हैदराबाद के राजीव गांधी अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे पर फोन के माध्यम से बम की धमकी की सूचना मिली, लेकिन बाद में ये धमकी फर्जी पाई गई। पुलिस ने गुरुवार को बताया कि 29 जनवरी को एक व्यक्ति ने डायल 100 में पुलिस को बम की धमकी दी। फोन करने वाला व्यक्ति तेलंगाना के कामारेड्डी जिले का निवासी है और वह मानसिक रूप से अस्वस्थ है।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

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## Number of passengers who travelled through Dubai airport in 2024

**92.3** In million passengers.  
A record 92.3 million passengers travelled through Dubai's international airport last year, its operator said on Thursday, underlining the Gulf city's economic boom. The figure broke the previous high of 89.1 million in 2018, Dubai Airport said, despite regional tensions caused by the Gaza war and last April's unprecedented floods. AFP



## Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

CHENNAI

30 JANUARY 2025

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### Ganja seized at Chennai airport, three arrested

#### **The Hindu Bureau**

CHENNAI

Three persons of a family were recently arrested at the Chennai airport for possession of 23.48 kg of hydroponic ganja worth ₹23.5 crore.

On January 26, officials of the Chennai Customs intercepted three passengers who flew down from Bangkok.

The officials found that they were in possession of 23.48 kg of hydroponic ganja hidden in packets. They were arrested under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and remanded to judicial custody.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## Two agents held in fake Poland visa racket at IGIA

**PRAJYOT DEOGHARE**

**NEW DELHI:** The IGI Airport Police arrested two Delhi-based agents for facilitating fake Poland visas for two passengers, who were detained during immigration checks. The arrested individuals, Udaypal Singh (42) and Tajinder Singh (51), were implicated in a racket that exploited individuals seeking jobs abroad.

The case began on January 12, when two Indian nationals, Saurav Kumar (25) and Sumit Kumar (27) from Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh, were deported from Dubai after being caught with counterfeit Poland visas. The pair had intended to travel to Poland via Dubai but were detained at Dubai Airport due to suspicious documents.

Upon their return to IGI Airport, a thorough investigation revealed the fake visas on their passports. The passengers disclosed they had paid Rs 10 lakh to an agent, Paramjeet Singh, to facilitate their travel and job arrangements in Poland. Paramjeet was arrested, and further interrogation led to the identification of Udaypal Singh and Tajinder Singh as key players in the racket.

Udaypal, a printing press owner, admitted to producing fake visas and is a repeat offender, previously arrested in 2024 for similar crimes. Tajinder Singh played a pivotal role in coordinating the operations. Authorities continue to investigate other members of the racket and financial connections.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

**कोल्ड प्ले कॅन्सर्ट से नए कीर्तिमान**

## तीन दिन में एयरपोर्ट पर 900 फ्लाइट, दो दिनों में 1500 टन कचरे का निपटारा

**4 लाख से ज्यादा ने  
की मेट्रो की सवारी**

**पत्रिका न्यूज नेटवर्क**  
patrika.com

अहमदाबाद, विश्व भर में प्रसिद्ध ब्रिटिश बैंड कोल्ड प्ले का भारत में सबसे बड़ा कॅन्सर्ट अहमदाबाद में 25 और 26 जनवरी को आयोजित किया गया। दो दिनों के कॅन्सर्ट के लिए 1.3 लाख लोगों ने टिकट खरीदी। इसमें शामिल होने 2.5 लाख लोग शहर में पहुंचे थे। पुलिस, अहमदाबाद महानगर पालिका व अन्य विभागों ने आयोजकों के साथ पूरा सहयोग दिया। तीन दिन में अहमदाबाद एयरपोर्ट पर 900 से ज्यादा फ्लाइट पहुंची जो सामान्य दिनों के मुकाबले दोगुनी संख्या रही।

### मेट्रो को 66 लाख की हुई आवक

दो दिनों में मेट्रो में 4 लाख से ज्यादा लोगों ने यात्रा की। इससे 66 लाख की आय हुई। इससे विश्व कप क्रिकेट के दौरान का रिकॉर्ड टूट गया। इस दौरान मेट्रो के फेरे बढ़ा दिए गए और दो दिनों में कुल

833 ट्रिप किया। प्रधानमंत्री नरेन्द्र मोदी ने भी ओडिशा के भुवनेश्वर में आयोजित कार्यक्रम में भारत में कोल्ड प्ले की सफलता व देश में कॅन्सर्ट इकोनोमी के व्यापक अवसर के बारे में बताया था।

### 14 जेसीबी और 27 ट्रक लगाए

कार्यक्रम के दौरान अहमदाबाद मनपा की ओर से नरेन्द्र मोदी स्टेडियम के आस-पास सफाई के लिए 492 स्वच्छता कर्मचारियों को लगाया गया था। साथ ही 14 जेसीबी और 27 ट्रक आवंटित किए गए थे। 12

स्वीपर मशीनों की मदद से सफाई कार्य किया गया। 5 कॉम्पैक्टर व 10 एसडब्ल्यूएम वाहनों का उपयोग किया गया। इस तरह 48 घंटे के भीतर 1550 टन कचरा एकत्र कर उसका निपटारा किया गया।



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

# Fake visa: Printing press owner among 2 held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

**New Delhi:** Two persons were arrested for allegedly running a fake visa racket. They were identified as Udaypal (42) and Tajinder (51), residents of Vikaspuri and Rani Bagh, respectively. Udaypal was conducting the illegal activity under the guise of his printing press business. Three people were arrested in this case earlier.

Additional commissioner of police (IGI) Usha Rangnani said that on Jan 12, two persons, Saurav Kumar (25) and Sumit Kumar (27), both residents of Baghpat, arrived at IGI Airport from Dubai as deportees. Upon scrutiny of their documents, fake Poland visas were found affixed to their passports, leading to their arrest and the registra-

tion of a case. "During interrogation, they disclosed that some of their friends went abroad for a better livelihood, prompting them to seek the same opportunity abroad for quick money," she said.

The duo further revealed that an agent, Paramjeet, promised to arrange their journey to Poland via Dubai for a fee of Rs 10 lakh. The men deposited Rs 28,000 and Rs 1 lakh in a bank account provided by the agent, with the remaining balance paid in cash. The agent also promised to arrange jobs for them once they reached Poland. The Baghpat residents stated that they handed over their passports to Paramjeet, who then arranged the fake visas and tickets for their journey. However, upon arrival at the Dubai airport, their entry was denied

due to the fake visas, and they were deported back to India.

Paramjeet was subsequently arrested in Delhi. He disclosed the names of his two associates, Udaypal and Tajinder, who were subsequently arrested in Hari Nagar and Rohini, respectively. Udaypal worked at a printing press in Narayana for years, where he developed skills in printing. "Udaypal then started his own printing company but struggled financially. While working, he met agents who were involved in fraudulent visa schemes to send people abroad. Seeking quick and easy money, he began working with the agents, producing fake visas at his company based on their orders," another officer said.

Udaypal revealed that Paramjeet took the promised amount from Saurav and Su-

mit and contacted his associate, Tajinder, to arrange the fake Poland visas. Tajinder reached out to Udaypal, who created the counterfeit visas. "Udaypal admitted to creating a total of 11 fake visas," the officer added.

### Meta Analysis

Delhi Police arrested 203 agents involved in facilitating illegal immigration through fake documents in 2024, more than double the 98 arrests made in 2023. The offences included forging visas, facilitating illegal travel via donkey routes, forging passports and tampering with immigration stamps, and falsifying travel histories using fake stamps.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

30 JANUARY 2025

# Air fares to Prayagraj drop up to 50%

**Rohit Vaid**

New Delhi

Airfares to Prayagraj corrected 30-50 per cent on Wednesday on major routes after airlines deployed additional capacity amidst the Centre's advisory, sources said.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) held several rounds of review meetings with airlines on high airfares on the Prayagraj route during the last few days and advised them to deploy more capacity.

On Wednesday, Union Minister of Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu met airline representatives to review the adequacy of air connectivity to Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh from across the country while ensuring reasonable fares during the once-in-144-years Mahakumbh Mahotsav.

"Regular coordination meetings are being held to provide a seamless and comfortable travel experience for millions of devotees attending the world's largest religious gathering from January 13 to February 26, 2025," he wrote on his social media handle on X (formerly Twitter).

### STAMPEDE AFTERMATH

Besides, airlines fearing an impact on passenger traffic to and from Prayagraj after the stampede that occurred at Mahakumbh, have further

reasons to lower airfares, sources added. However, the industry is yet to fully gauge the impact of the tragedy on passenger traffic.

On Wednesday, the price of a one-way flight ticket from Delhi to Prayagraj declined sharply. Prices dropped to ₹13,000 (lowest) and ₹20,000 (highest) as against ₹22,000 (lowest) and ₹33,000 (highest) reported a few days ago.

Normally, a one-way flight ticket from Delhi to Prayagraj is priced at about ₹5,000-7,000.

### SPOT FARES

The data from the ixigo portal showed that average spot fares for flights from Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai to Prayagraj are ranging from ₹13,000-30,000 till February 4. Ticket fares on some of these routes had crossed ₹45,000 prior to the lowering exercise.

The additional capacity introduced by the airlines contributed significantly in bringing down prices, a source told *businessline*.

"Airlines are trying to comply with the advisory issued by the Centre to deploy additional capacity," an industry insider said.

"The Centre has aggressively taken up the issue of capacity and fares with airlines. Since Monday, several rounds of meetings have been held with their representatives to discuss the is-

sue." On their part, airlines and online travel agencies said that additional capacity was deployed from Wednesday.

According to an IndiGo spokesperson, the airline has brought down fares on all routes to Prayagraj by 30-50 per cent.

Currently, SpiceJet, IndiGo, Air India, Akasa and Alliance Air have flights to Prayagraj.

These flights serve the demand between Prayagraj and Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Bilaspur, Raipur, Lucknow, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Kolkata, Guwahati, Chandigarh, Dehradun and Indore. About 81 new flights were added to the schedule in January 2025. Currently, there are 132 flights per week operating with about 80,000 monthly seats to Prayagraj from across India.

Apart from scheduled air carriers, private operators are also flying to the Prayagraj airport, which has recently been upgraded and refurbished.

The development comes after airfares to Prayagraj had risen more than 100 per cent from different cities as pilgrims flock in large numbers to take a dip in the Ganges during the ongoing Mahakumbh.

At present, Prayagraj is directly connected to 17 cities via flights as against eight cities in December 2024.

# To enable easier credit, Centre mulls infra tag for aircraft loans

**AVIATION BOOST.** MoCA proposed the move foreseeing a huge demand for airplanes

**Rohit Vaid**  
New Delhi

To boost the aviation sector, the Centre is considering granting infrastructure status to aircraft as an asset, sources told *businessline*.

The proposed move, if implemented, has the potential to ease the financing needs of airlines for aircraft acquisition.

Besides, the infra tag will enable airlines to seek loans (for aircraft acquisition) at cheaper rates under the 'Priority Sector Lending' (PSL) scheme.

The PSL scheme is regulated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). It mandates banks to allocate a portion of their lending to specific sectors of the economy.

Speaking to *businessline*, sources said that the move was proposed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), which foresees tremendous demand for aircraft from domestic airlines.

Over 1,500 aircraft have been ordered by India-based airlines. Currently, India has more than 800 commercial aircraft. Per Boeing's 2024 Commercial Market Outlook for South Asia, over



**BIG PUSH.** The proposed move has the potential to ease the financing needs of airlines for aircraft acquisition VV KRISHNAN

2,700 airplane deliveries are expected by 2042. India will dominate the South Asian market, representing more than 90 per cent of total deliveries.

Sources said a committee had been formed by the Ministry of Finance to look into the proposal.

### FILLIP TO AVIATION

The Centre, sources said, is keen on giving a fillip to the aviation industry by the way of easier access to credit.

Notably, by granting infrastructure status to aircraft loans, the Centre hopes to enable airlines in accessing financing from a wide spectrum of lenders at lower interest rates.

The move, sources said, is extremely beneficial for start-up airlines. Further, the status is expected to encourage banks to lend more to the sector, which has traditionally found it difficult to access credit.

However, the move might face headwinds, especially opposition to the granting of infra status to a moveable asset such as an aircraft.

### SET GUIDELINES

On the other hand, industry insiders feel the status should come with a set guidelines that mandate Indian-owned aircraft to be on the regulator's registry and governed by domestic laws, thereby giving comfort to

bankers over jurisdiction matters and the ability to repossess the asset in the event of default.

"The move is expected to ease the ability to finance the acquisition of the aircraft and help airlines move from expensive operational leases to far more efficient finance leases," Fly91's MD and CEO Manoj Chacko said.

"On the whole, the domestic banking industry has been hesitant in entering this area. Besides, the domestic interest rates are too high in comparison to foreign-backed lending arrangements. However, the infra status that allows for PSL norms should resolve these problems."

Chacko said loans denominated in Indian rupees will save precious outflow of forex as more aircraft are expected to join the fleets of India-based airlines.

"If aircraft purchases are granted infrastructure status, it will unlock new funding sources for buyers, including insurance companies," Jagannarayan Padmanabhan, Senior Director & Global Head (transport, mobility and logistics) at Crisil Market Intelligence and Analytics, said.

# All aboard feared dead as jet, chopper crash in US

American Airlines confirmed 60 passengers and four crew members were on the plane; rescue ops underway as 28 bodies said to have been recovered so far

REUTERS  
Washington, 30 January

More than 60 people were feared dead after an American Airlines regional passenger jet collided with a US Army Black Hawk helicopter on Wednesday and crashed into the frigid Potomac River near Reagan Washington National Airport.

"At this point we do not believe there were any survivors," District of Columbia fire chief John Donnelly said at a Thursday press conference.

Donnelly said 28 bodies had been recovered from the river so far, in what was shaping up to be the deadliest US air disaster in more than a decade. "We will work to find all the bodies and reunite them with their loved ones," he said.

American Airlines confirmed 60 passengers and four crew members were aboard the jet, while US officials said the helicopter was carrying three soldiers on a training flight. Officials told Reuters that helicopter flights had been paused for the

Army unit involved in the incident.

Passengers on the flight included ice skaters, family and coaches returning from events in Wichita, Kansas, including Russian-born former world champions Yevgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov.

"We have been told that there are no survivors. We mourn with all those who have been impacted," Wichita mayor Lily Wu said at a news conference.

CBS News reported that a dive team had recovered one of the two data recorders, the so-called black boxes, from the plane.

The mid-air collision occurred as the passenger jet was approaching to land at Reagan. Radio communications between the air traffic control tower and the Black Hawk showed the helicopter crew knew the plane was in the vicinity.

US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said both the helicopter and the airplane had been flying standard flight patterns, and there had been no breakdown in communication.



Rescuers next to the wreckage of the Black Hawk helicopter that collided with the American Eagle flight 5342 and crashed into the Potomac River, outside Washington, on Thursday

PHOTO: REUTERS

"Everything was standard in the lead-up to the crash," he said. "Do I think this was preventable? Absolutely." Airspace is frequently crowded in the US capital region,

home to three commercial airports and several major military facilities, and officials have raised concerns about busy runways at Reagan National Airport, just across the river

from Washington. There have been several near-miss incidents that have sparked alarm, including a near-collision in May 2024.

The helicopter was flown by a

"fairly experienced crew" that was wearing night-vision goggles on an annual proficiency training flight, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said in a video statement.

US President Donald Trump will hold a briefing about the crash at 11 am Eastern time (1600 GMT), the White House said.

In an earlier post on Truth Social, Trump questioned the actions of the helicopter crew and air traffic controllers. "This is a bad situation that looks like it should have been prevented. NOT GOOD!!," he wrote.

American Eagle Flight 5342 was operated by PSA Airlines, an Ohio-based regional subsidiary of American Airlines. The plane was a CRJ-700, the airline said, from a line of regional jets made by Canada's Bombardier, later sold to Mitsubishi. American Airlines CEO Robert Isom said the pilot had about six years of flying experience.

He said the company was cooperating with the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates accidents.

### Rescue efforts

The skaters on board were returning from a camp following an event in Wichita, governing body US Figure Skating said.

"We are devastated by this unspeakable tragedy and hold the victims' families closely in our hearts," it said.

Russian media said Shishkova and Naumov, who were married and working as coaches, were returning from Wichita with a group of young skaters. Russia's *Mash* news outlet published a list of 13 skaters, many of them the children of Russian emigres to the US, who it said were believed to have been on the plane.

The Kremlin offered condolences to the families of Russians killed and said there were no plans for contacts for now between President Vladimir Putin and Trump.

Washington DC fire chief Donnelly said conditions were cold and windy, making the operation "extremely rough" for the 300 responders on the scene.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## Maha Kumbh stampede: Crowd management efforts ramped up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Prayagraj, 30 January

Millions of devotees flocked to the Triveni Sangam and other ghats at the Maha Kumbh to take a dip on Thursday with the Uttar Pradesh government ramping up efforts to ensure crowd management and safety of people a day after the stampede tragedy.

With the focus on crowd control after the stampede left at least 30 people dead and 60 injured, the state government said no VIP protocols will be enforced by the administration on the special bathing days of February 3, 12 and 26. "This initiative aims to ensure a smooth and memorable experience for general pilgrims," officials said.

Additionally, the government has mandated that VIP and VVIP movements must be notified at least one week in advance.

DIG Maha Kumbh Vaibhav Krishna said the police are actively working on security arrangements for the upcoming Amrit Snan on Basant Panchami Snan (February 3), ensuring tight measures in the mela area.

He said all bridges have been reopened, allowing smoother movement within the mela area.

Following Wednesday's incident, the 30 pontoon bridges in the mela area were operating under a one-way traffic system. This

meant that each bridge allowed movement in only one direction, with a parallel pontoon bridge designated for return routes.

Superintendent of Police (Traffic) Anshuman Mishra said the area would remain a no-vehicle zone until the crowd disperses completely. Essential services such as police administration vehicles, ambulances and suction machines would, however, be allowed entry.

Meanwhile, the three-member judicial commission set up by the Uttar Pradesh government to probe the stampede will visit the site on Friday. UP Chief Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh and Director General of Police Prashant Kumar visited Swaroop Rani Nehru Hospital on Thursday to meet the injured devotees.

### Airfares cool down

Akasa Air has reduced ticket prices for flights to Prayagraj by 30-45 per cent and increased number of flights to the city, sources said on Thursday in the wake of the government asking airlines to maintain reasonable fares. IndiGo on Thursday said airfares have stabilised for the Prayagraj flights and that the airline has significantly increased the number of flights on the route to 900 for the Maha Kumbh.

### About 3 mn foreign tourists expected: Tourism minister

The government has doubled its estimate for foreign tourists visiting Mahakumbh Mela to 3 million, buoyed by the overwhelming response, Minister of Tourism and Culture Gajendra Singh Shekhawat said on Thursday.

"We used to expect about 1.5 million people (foreign tourists) to visit Mahakumbh. Considering the kind of response and the inflow we have seen, we have revised our estimation, which is double our initial estimate," he said at a travel trade show.

The minister said 170 million people had visited the Hindu festival at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj till Wednesday, the 17th day of the 45-day festival which ends on February 25. This year's festival is also considered unique due to an astronomical calculation of a constellation alignment witnessed once every 144 years.

ROSHNI SHEKHAR



# Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## बड़ी उड़ान • इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर 47% हुआ शेर विदेशी कंपनियों को टक्कर दे रही भारतीय एयरलाइंस

बिजनेस संवाददाता | नई दिल्ली

भारतीय एयरलाइंस का देश से जुड़े इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर दबदबा बढ़ रहा है। बीते साल 2024 के शुरुआती 9 महीनों के दौरान इन रूट्स पर भारतीय विमानन कंपनियों की हिस्सेदारी बढ़कर रिकॉर्ड 47 फीसदी के स्तर पर पहुंच गई। कोविड से पहले 2019 में यह हिस्सेदारी महज 34.7 फीसदी थी।

नागरिक विमानन नियामक डीजीसीए के ताजा आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, जनवरी-सितंबर 2024 के दौरान नौ महीनों में सात भारतीय एयरलाइंस ने 1.75 करोड़ यात्रियों को विदेश यात्रा कराई। इससे पहले तक मूल रूप से भारत से जुड़े इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर एमिरेट्स, एतिहाद एयरवेज, कतर एयरवेज, सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस जैसी विदेशी एयरलाइंस का दबदबा था। लेकिन बीते कुछ महीनों से ये ट्रेंड बदल रहा है। देश की प्रमुख एयरलाइंस एअर इंडिया और इंडिगो विमानों के बेड़े के साथ ही इंटरनेशनल रूट्स

### प्रीमियम मार्केट में पहुंच बढ़ रही एअर इंडिया

• एअर इंडिया ने इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर अपनी दैनिक उड़ानों की संख्या 3 साल में दोगुनी यानी 313 कर दी है। 3 साल पहले ये संख्या 157 थी।

• इनफ्लाइट एंटरटेनमेंट सिस्टम और एडवांस्ड सीटिंग कम्फर्ट देने वाले नई पीढ़ी के विमानों के साथ एअर इंडिया 48 इंटरनेशनल डेस्टिनेशन तक सेवाएं दे रही है।

• देश की सबसे बड़ी एयरलाइंस इंडिगो ने पिछले दो वर्षों में 11 नए इंटरनेशनल डेस्टिनेशन जोड़े हैं। इससे इंडिगो की इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर फ्लाइट की संख्या 26 से बढ़कर 37 हो गई।

का विस्तार भी कर रही हैं। इसे देखते हुए आने वाले वर्षों में भारतीय एयरलाइंस का दबदबा और तेजी से बढ़ेगा। एअर इंडिया के करीब 2.6 करोड़ यात्रियों ने लंबे रूट्स पर यात्रा की थी। इससे कंपनी को करीब 1.4 लाख करोड़ रुपए की आय हुई थी।

## भास्कर खास • दुनियाभर के एयरपोर्ट कमाई बढ़ाने के लिए रिटेल-हॉस्पिटैलिटी इंफ्रा विकसित कर रहे एयरपोर्ट को उड़ानों के ऑपरेशन से ज्यादा रिटेल, फूड, हॉस्पिटैलिटी से हो रही कमाई, दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट की आय में इसका हिस्सा 57%

अभिजीत कुमार | नई दिल्ली

क्या आप सोचते हैं कि बड़े-बड़े एयरपोर्ट की कमाई में ज्यादातर हिस्सा उड़ानों से आता है। यदि जवाब हां में है तो आप बिल्कुल गलत हैं। नया ट्रेंड यह है कि एयरपोर्ट की कमाई उड़ानों से अधिक नॉन-एविएशन एक्टिविटीज से हो रही है। इसके तहत रिटेल स्टोर्स, हॉस्पिटैलिटी, एडवर्टाइजिंग और फूड सर्विस जैसे सेगमेंट आते हैं। डेटा एजेंसी एसीआई वर्ल्ड के मुताबिक 2019 तक एयरपोर्ट की कमाई में 60% हिस्सा एविएशन एक्टिविटीज और एयरपोर्ट ऑपरेशन से आता था। इसमें एयरक्राफ्ट लैंडिंग फीस, टर्मिनल फीस, पार्किंग चार्ज और पैसेंजर सिक्योरिटी फीस से कमाई होती थी। लेकिन अब यह ट्रेंड पलट गया है। सिंगापुर के चांगी एयरपोर्ट की कुल कमाई में 55% हिस्सा नॉन-एविएशन एक्टिविटी से आता

### पहली बार दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट में तीन महीने में 2 करोड़ यात्री



है। कमर्शियल रेवेन्यू की ओर ये बदलाव एक रणनीतिक कदम है, क्योंकि एयरपोर्ट ज्यादा टैफिक वाले इलाकों से अधिकतम कमाई करने के लिए रिटेल और हॉस्पिटैलिटी सर्विसेज का इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर विकसित कर रहे हैं। देश का सबसे व्यस्त दिल्ली का इंदिरा गांधी इंटरनेशनल

दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट देश में सबसे व्यस्त है। अक्टूबर-दिसंबर 2024 तिमाही के दौरान इस एयरपोर्ट से रिकॉर्ड 2 करोड़ से ज्यादा यात्रियों ने यात्रा की। इस दौरान पैसेंजर टैफिक में 8.3% और कमाई में 8.1% की बढ़ोतरी हुई। वित्त वर्ष 2024-25 के पहली नौ महीनों में, दिल्ली ने भारत के घरेलू हवाई यातायात का 17% और इंटरनेशनल एयर टैफिक का 28% हिस्सा संभाला।

(आईजीआई) एयरपोर्ट भी इस नए ट्रेंड से अछूता नहीं है। यहां भी एविएशन सर्विसेज कमाई के मामले में पीछे छूट गई है। मौजूदा वित्त वर्ष 2024-25 के पहले नौ महीनों में एयरपोर्ट की कुल कमाई में एयरपोर्ट ऑपरेशन की कमाई का हिस्सा महज 20% रह गया। 57% कमाई

नॉन एविएशन एक्टिविटीज से हुई। इसमें रिटेल और ड्यूटी फ्री सेल्स का योगदान 28% रहा।

स्पेस रेंटल का 18% और कार्गो ऑपरेशन का हिस्सा 14% रहा। फूड एंड बेवरेजेस (एफएंडबी) की बिक्री का योगदान 10% रहा। सालाना आधार पर एफएंडबी की बिक्री में 23% की सबसे तेज बढ़ोतरी देखने को मिली। दिसंबर 2024 को समाप्त होने वाले नौ महीनों के लिए दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट ने 3,775 करोड़ रुपए की कुल कमाई की। इतनी मजबूत कमाई के बावजूद एयरपोर्ट की प्रॉफिटेबिलिटी कम है क्योंकि उसे अपनी कमाई का 45.99% सरकार के साथ साझा करना होता है। दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट का संचालन करने वाले भारत के सबसे बड़े प्राइवेट एयरपोर्ट ऑपरेटर जीएमआर एयरपोर्ट्स ने दिल्ली और हैदराबाद में रिकॉर्ड यात्री यातायात के बावजूद अक्टूबर-दिसंबर 2024 के दौरान 49 करोड़ रुपए का घाटा दर्ज किया।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

30 JANUARY 2025

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## भुवनेश्वर की फ्लाइट एक घंटा 40 मिनट देरी से गई

जयपुर | एयरपोर्ट पर बुधवार को एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की भुवनेश्वर की फ्लाइट डेढ़ घंटा 40 मिनट देरी से रवाना हुई। मामला फ्लाइट आईएक्स-2802 का है, जो जयपुर से सुबह 10:45 बजे रवाना होती है। सूत्रों के अनुसार आने वाली फ्लाइट लेट आने के कारण 1.40 घंटे की देरी से दोपहर 12:25 बजे भुवनेश्वर के लिए रवाना हुई।

## इंडिगो के सीईओ ने लगाई कुंभ में डुबकी, बोले- 'अविस्मरणीय अनुभव'

जागरण संवाददाता, महाकुंभ नगर : इंडिगो एयरलाइंस के मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी (सीईओ) पीटर एल्बर्स ने भी महाकुंभ आकर पवित्र संगम में डुबकी लगाई। उन्होंने अपनी आध्यात्मिक अनुभूति को साझा किया। इंटरनेट मीडिया पर अपनी तस्वीर साझा करते हुए इस अद्भुत आयोजन की भव्यता पर अपनी बात रखी। लिखा, 'महाकुंभ प्रयागराज में। यह एक ऐसा आयोजन है, जो 144 वर्षों में एक बार होता है... यह पृथ्वी पर मानवता का सबसे बड़ा संगम है।' महाकुंभ मेले के विशाल स्तर को रेखांकित करते हुए बताया कि '45 दिनों में 45 करोड़ यानी 450 मिलियन लोग इस आयोजन में शामिल होते हैं। इसकी विशालता को समझना कठिन है... यह यूरोप की पूरी आबादी के समान है और अमेरिका से भी अधिक है।' उन्होंने लिखा है कि यह जीवन का 'एक बार मिलने वाला दिव्य क्षण है।'



त्रिवेणी में इंडिगो एयरलाइंस के सीईओ पीटर एल्बर्स ●सौ. इंटरनेट मीडिया

### प्रयागराज के लिए किराया स्थिर, इंडिगो की बढ़ी उड़ानें

नई दिल्ली, प्रेद्र: इंडिगो एयरलाइंस ने गुरुवार को कहा कि प्रयागराज के लिए उड़ानों का किराया स्थिर हो गया है और उसने महाकुंभ के लिए इस मार्ग पर उड़ानों की संख्या बढ़ाकर 900 कर दी है। सरकार ने एयरलाइंस कंपनियों से टिकट की कीमतें स्थिर रखने के साथ-साथ इस मार्ग पर और अधिक उड़ानें संचालित करने को कहा है।

# *Holy Dip* Airfares to Prayagraj Plunge After Govt Intervenes

IndiGo, Air India Express also increase flights to cater to the high demand among flyers travelling to attend the Maha Kumbh

**Arindam Majumder**

**New Delhi:** Airfares to Prayagraj dropped over 50% after government intervention. Amidst growing concerns over soaring airfares during Kumbh Mela, civil aviation regulator directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday directed airlines to maintain reasonable ticket prices. Airlines have also increased flights to the city to cater to the high demand. According to the government's estimate, more than 450 million devotees are expected to attend the Maha Kumbh 2025, including around 1.5 million foreign tourists.

Fares on the booking platforms showed that flights from Delhi to Prayagraj were priced at an average of ₹10,000 against earlier fares of ₹29,000. Airline executives said that there has been a decline of around 50% in fare due to the addition of more flights. A total of 81 additional flights were introduced in January, increasing monthly

seats to Prayagraj to roughly 80,000, the civil aviation ministry said.

India's largest airline IndiGo on Thursday said airfares have stabilised for the Prayagraj flights and that the airline has

significantly increased the number of flights on the route to 900 for the Maha Kumbh. Besides the additional capacity already activated, IndiGo said it is working on reallocating capacity from other

parts of its network to add more flights to cater to the influx of passengers.

Air India Express will commence daily direct flights between Delhi and Varanasi from February 5, 2025. Additionally, Beng-

aluru-Varanasi flights will increase from three to four per day, while Hyderabad-Varanasi, which already operates daily, will see the addition of thirty more flights in February and March.

Akasa has started daily flights connecting Prayagraj with Pune, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Bengaluru via Delhi.

Additionally, between January 28, 2025, and February 26, 2025, the airline will operate special direct flights connecting Ahmedabad and Bengaluru with Prayagraj. Prayagraj is now directly connected to 17 cities, including new destinations such as Srinagar and Visakhapatnam, with indirect connectivity to 26 cities nationwide. "Airfares remain in check as the festival's peak days approach, particularly during the forthcoming Shahi Snan on January 29, February 3, and other important Snan dates on February 4, February 12, and February 26. DGCA has advised airlines to maintain sufficient capacity to accommodate passengers," the ministry noted.



PRAYAGRAJ NOW DIRECTLY CONNECTED TO 17 CITIES



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

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## ■ Sirius Airlines in Talks to Buy 20 Aircraft



**MUMBAI** Air charter services operator Sirius Aviation Airlines is in advanced discussions with the US-based Textron Aviation to acquire 20 Cessna Citation Longitude aircraft for \$600 million, according to sources privy to information. The acquisition is aimed at bolstering the company's operational capabilities in the business aviation segment, they added. The company, which launched its operations in August 2023, in partnership with Dubai-based Transworld Group, last November said it is targeting a fleet size of 50 private jets.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

30 JANUARY 2025

## Akasa Air well-capitalised, set to expand with new destinations: CEO

**PTI**  
NEW DELHI

Akasa Air, India's youngest airline, is well-capitalized and plans to add 5-10 new destinations, including international routes, next year as it aims to maintain its position as the country's fastest-growing airline, CEO Vinay Dube said.

Dube, in an interaction with PTI, also projected an "incredibly bright" outlook for the next 30 years and said the delay in the delivery of one or two aircraft does not change the fundamentals of the airline's business or growth tra-



jectory as it has built an extremely "strong and stable" platform.

The nearly two-and-a-half-year-old Rakesh Jhunjhunwala family-backed Akasa Air currently has a fleet of 27 Boeing 737 Max planes and commanded a 4.6 per cent market share in CY2024.

"It is no secret that Boeing has been delayed in its

delivery stream. No secret about that, either from us or Boeing or any other airline whether one or two aircraft were late or not, is not something that changes the fundamentals of our business. It does not change the growth trajectory," Dube said in response to a question on aircraft deliveries.

However, he said that Akasa has stopped giving guidance on deliveries because "the story changes focus from Akasa being the fastest growing airline in India or the world, to two aircraft were late."



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण  
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MUMBAI

30 JANUARY 2025

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NEW DELHI

## **AI to resume Delhi-Tel Aviv direct flights**

Air India on Wednesday announced that it will restart its non-stop flights between Delhi and Tel Aviv, with the first flight scheduled to take off on March 2. Resuming flights is part of the airline's efforts to expand its international routes and improve travel options between India and Israel, it said in a statement. The airline will operate five flights a week on this route, using its Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## प्रयागराज समेत चार शहरों के लिए उड़ान जल्द शुरू होगी

ट्रांस हिंडन, वरिष्ठ संवाददाता। हिंडन एयरपोर्ट से गोवा, कोलकाता और बंगलुरु के लिए एक मार्च से फ्लाइट शुरू हो रही है, जबकि प्रयागराज, लखनऊ, वाराणसी और अयोध्या के लिए भी जल्द उड़ान शुरू होगी। सांसद अतुल गर्ग ने बताया कि इनके लिए प्रयास चल रहे हैं। जल्द ही हिंडन एयरपोर्ट इन प्रमुख शहरों से भी जुड़ेगा।

सांसद ने बताया कि वह गाजियाबाद के सभी विधायकों समेत 50 पदाधिकारी और कार्यकर्ताओं के साथ पहली

फ्लाइट से गोवा जाएंगे। वाणिज्यिक उड़ान को लेकर कोर्ट का स्टे हटने के बाद इसकी कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाने के प्रयास शुरू हो गए हैं। सांसद ने एयरपोर्ट अथॉरिटी ऑफ इंडिया के चेयरमैन को पत्र लिखा है। उन्होंने प्रयागराज में चल रहे महाकुम्भ का हवाला देते हुए हिंडन से प्रयागराज की उड़ान जल्द शुरू कराने के लिए लिखा है। साथ ही प्रदेश की राजधानी लखनऊ, वाराणसी और अयोध्या के लिए यहां से उड़ान शुरू कराने की मांग की है।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

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## Passengers can't carry satellite phones, DGCA tells airlines

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday instructed domestic and international airlines to make mandatory in-flight announcements to inform passengers that carrying satellite phones into India is not permitted. The airlines have been instructed to make the announcements on all flights landing in India. They also have to sensitise passengers about the restriction through their commercial offshoots overseas as well as in their in-flight magazines.

# Trump blames DEI for mid-air collision in DC

## Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump on Thursday blamed diversity policies under Barack Obama and Joe Biden for poor safety standards after a deadly crash in which a military helicopter collided with a passenger plane over Washington.

"I put safety first. Obama, Biden and the Democrats put policy first," Trump said. "They actually came out with a directive: 'too white.' And we want the people that are competent."

The US Army helicopter that collided with a passenger jet was being operated on a training flight by a "fairly experienced crew" with night-vision goggles, US Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Thursday, as the Pentagon ordered a 48-hour pause in flying for the Virginia-based unit involved.

In addition, Daniel Driscoll, President Donald Trump's nominee for Army secretary, told a Senate hearing that the crash on Wednesday night appears to have been preventable, and he raised questions about whether training should take place near a busy airport.

The Black Hawk helicopter struck an American Airlines passenger jet near Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, with both aircraft plunging into the Potomac River.

Authorities have said there were no survivors.

The cause of the crash is under investigation. The airport is located in Arlington, Virginia, across the river from Washington.

In a video statement, Hegseth said there was a crew of three soldiers on the training flight. Officials have not identified the soldiers involved.



Emergency response units search near the crash site in the Potomac River after the flight crashed on approach to Reagan National Airport, on Thursday, in Arlington, Virginia.

AFF

"It was a fairly experienced crew and it was doing a required annual night evaluation," Hegseth said in the video.

"We anticipate that the investigation will quickly be able to determine whether the aircraft was in the corridor and at the right altitude at the time of the incident," Hegseth added.

During an appearance later with Trump at the White House, Hegseth told reporters that there appears to have been an elevation issue with the Black Hawk, and said Army investigators were on the ground looking into the matter.

The helicopter was from the 12th Aviation Battalion, which is based at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The unit, which is responsible for helicopter flights in the US capital area and can be used to carry senior US government officials, will be grounded for 48 hours, Hegseth said. Reuters

was first to report on the operational pause.

One official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said that other helicopters, like those from the National Guard, could be allowed to help in recovery efforts following the crash.

Driscoll appeared on Thursday at his confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

"I am seeing the same things I believe you are, on television. It is an accident that seems to be preventable from what we can tell today," Driscoll told the senators.

Driscoll added that if he was confirmed there would be a focus on a culture of safety in the Army.

"I think we might need to look at where is an appropriate time to take training risk, and it may not be near an airport like Reagan," Driscoll added.

# Flight, chopper collide in DC shocker; 67 killed

## Agencies

letters@hindustantimes.com

**WASHINGTON:** Sixty-seven people were presumed dead after an American Airlines passenger jet collided with a US army Black Hawk helicopter on Wednesday and crashed into the frigid Potomac River near Reagan Washington National Airport.

Officials said 28 bodies had been recovered from the river till the time of going to press, in what was shaping up to be the deadliest US air disaster in more than a decade.

American Airlines confirmed 60 passengers and four crew members were aboard the jet,

while U.S. officials said the helicopter was carrying three soldiers on a training flight. Officials told Reuters that helicopter flights had been paused for the army unit involved in the incident.

Passengers on the flight included ice skaters, family and coaches returning from events in Wichita, Kansas, including Russian-born former world champions Yevgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov.

"We have been told that there are no survivors. We mourn with all those who have been impacted," Wichita mayor Lily Wu said at a news conference.

CBS News reported that

continued on → 13

## Mayhem near US Capitol



1. The US Army Blackhawk helicopter (in yellow) approaching the Bombardier CRJ 701 jet (in blue); 2. The collision, seconds later.

### WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR

- The jet was about to land at Reagan National Airport at an altitude of about 400 feet when it suffered a rapid loss of altitude.
- Minutes before landing, air traffic controllers asked the jet to adjust its path, land on Runway 33.
- Less than 30 seconds before the crash, an air traffic controller asked the helicopter if it had the plane in sight. The controller made another radio call to the helicopter moments later: "PAT 25 pass behind the CRJ (helicopter)."
- Seconds after that, the two aircraft collided.

## US AIR ACCIDENT

dive team had recovered one of the two data recorders, the so-called black boxes, from the plane.

The midair collision occurred as the passenger jet was approaching to land at Reagan. Radio communications between the air traffic control tower and the Black Hawk showed the helicopter crew knew the plane was in the vicinity.

U.S. Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said both the helicopter and the airplane had been flying standard flight patterns, and there had been no breakdown in communication.

"Everything was standard in the lead-up to the crash," he said. "Do I think this was preventable? Absolutely."

Airspace is frequently crowded in the U.S. capital region, home to three commercial airports and several major military facilities, and officials have raised concerns about busy runways at Reagan National Airport, just across the river from Washington. There have been several near-miss incidents that have sparked alarm, including a near-collision in May 2024.

The helicopter was flown by a "fairly experienced crew" that was wearing night-vision goggles on an annual proficiency training flight, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said in a video statement.

U.S. President Donald Trump will hold a briefing about the crash at 11 a.m. Eastern time (1600 GMT), the White House said. In an earlier post on Truth Social, Trump questioned the actions of the helicopter crew and air traffic controllers.

"This is a bad situation that looks like it should have been prevented. NOT GOOD!!!," he wrote.

American Eagle Flight 5342 was operated by PSA Airlines, an Ohio-based regional subsidiary of American Airlines. The plane was a CRJ-700, the airline said, from a line of regional jets made by Canada's Bombardier, later sold to Mitsubishi. American Airlines CEO Robert Isom said the pilot had about six years of flying experience.

He said the company was cooperating with the National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates accidents.

Air traffic control recordings appear to capture the final attempted communications with the helicopter, call sign PAT25, before it collides with the CRJ jet.

"PAT25, do you have a CRJ in sight? PAT25, pass behind the CRJ," an air traffic controller says at 8:47 p.m. (0147 GMT) on Wednesday, according to a recording on liveatc.net.

Seconds later, another aircraft calls in to air traffic control, saying, "Tower, did you see that?" - apparently referring to the crash. An air traffic controller then redirects planes heading to runway 33 to go around.

## COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THE AIR TRAFFIC CONTROL TOWER AND THE BLACK HAWK SHOWED THE HELICOPTER CREW KNEW THE PLANE WAS IN VICINITY

Webcam video of the crash showed the collision and an explosion lighting up the night sky.

"I just saw a fireball and then it was just gone. I haven't seen anything since they hit the river," an air traffic controller was heard saying over the radio.

John Potter, head of the regional airport authority, said flights would resume at Reagan National at 11:00 a.m. Eastern time (1600 GMT).

## Rescue efforts

The skaters on board were returning from a camp following an event in Wichita, governing body U.S. Figure Skating said.

"We are devastated by this unspeakable tragedy and hold the victims' families closely in our hearts," it said.

Russian media said Shishkova and Naumov, who were married and working as coaches, were returning from Wichita with a group of young skaters. Russia's Mash news outlet published a list of 13 skaters, many of them the children of Russian emigres to the U.S., who it said were believed to have been on the plane.

The Kremlin offered condolences to the families of Russians killed and said there were no plans for contacts for now between President Vladimir Putin and Trump.

Washington DC fire chief Donnelly said conditions were cold and windy, making the operation "extremely rough" for the 300 responders on the scene.

Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin told Reuters that the bodies of most of those involved in the collision had been recovered. "Everything was routine up to the point of the accident," he said. "Something went wrong."

In 1982, Air Florida Flight 90 crashed into the 14th Street Bridge over the Potomac River, killing 70 passengers and four crew members. Only four passengers and one crew member survived.

The National Transportation Safety Board has investigated nine accidents or incidents at Reagan National airport this century, including two that were fatal, records show.

The last deadly major crash involving a commercial airliner in the U.S. was in 2009, when all 49 people aboard a Colgan Air flight died when the plane crashed in New York state. One person was also killed on the ground.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

30 JANUARY 2025

{ CONSUMER AFFAIRS MIN WRITES TO DGCA }

# Govt steps in to arrest airfares amid Maha Kumbh

**HT Correspondent**

letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** Union consumer affairs minister Pralhad Joshi on Wednesday said that his ministry has written to the airline regulator, the directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA), to take steps to “reduce” exorbitant airfares, which have made it difficult for devotees to attend the Maha Kumbh, the massive Hindu religious gathering currently underway in Prayagraj.

The consumer affairs ministry has urged the DGCA to review the spike in airfares and the sectors that have seen a sub-

stantial jump in base fares, apparently due to a steep rise in travel demand due to the Maha Kumbh.

“Mahakumbh is witnessing huge influx of devotees on a daily basis. The prices of airfares being exorbitantly high has made it difficult for people to make travel plans to attend Mahakumbh,” Joshi wrote in a post on X.

It came after consumer affairs secretary Nidhi Khare wrote to the regulator.

“Keeping consumers interest in mind, we have written to DGCA to take steps to reduce the prices of the air fares,” Joshi

added.

Both the civil aviation officials and DGCA held high-level meetings with major airlines — including IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet and Akasa Air — to review airfares, an official said, adding that airlines should keep the larger consumer interest in mind despite a jump in demand.

The consumer affairs ministry is of the view that airlines should add more capacity, especially during the forthcoming “Shahi snan” (royal bath) days on February 3, 4, 12 and 26.

Ahead of the royal bath on Mauni Amavasya (on Wednesday) and other auspicious bath-

ing days for the Maha Kumbh Mela, airfares to Prayagraj from major cities have skyrocketed, HT reported on Wednesday.

While the ticket costs for Delhi-Prayagraj flights have soared to ₹20,000 or more from ₹5,000, the cost of an air ticket from Mumbai to Prayagraj ranged anywhere between ₹20,000 and ₹56,000. Similarly, the price of tickets for SpiceJet’s direct flight from Mumbai to Prayagraj starts at ₹20,482; IndiGo’s tickets are priced at ₹27,851 and above. However, flights with layovers are priced much higher, ranging from ₹30,000 to ₹56,159.

This sharp rise in fares has raised questions about the fairness of pricing.

An official of IndiGo, on the condition of anonymity, defended the price hikes, saying: “The airlines have not overcharged anyone; most of the fares are reasonable. However, some flights that involve one or two layovers naturally cost more due to the increased distance. Our dynamic fares need to be competitive.”

On Wednesday, however, IndiGo reduced its ticket prices to Prayagraj by 30% to 50%, the airline’s officials confirmed, without divulging details.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

30 JANUARY 2025

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{ **MY INDIA** } WEST ASIA TENSIONS

## **Air India to resume direct Tel Aviv flights**



**Air India will resume direct flights to Tel Aviv** from March 2, after suspending the services in August last year amid tensions in West Asia. Five weekly flights will be operated from Delhi to Tel Aviv, the airline said in a release on Wednesday. The airline will deploy its Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft having 18 flat beds in Business Class and 238 seats in Economy Class on the route. The non-stop flights will be operated on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays, it added. The decision to resume operations follows the requisite approvals. **HTC**



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE HINDU

CHENNAI

30 JANUARY 2025

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## Centre asks airlines to curb airfare hike for Kumbh Mela

Following concern over “spiralling” airfares for flights to Prayagraj during the ongoing Maha Kumbh festival, the Centre on Wednesday advised airlines to ensure “reasonable” ticket prices for devotees. IndiGo said it had slashed airfares by 30% to 50% on all routes to and from Prayagraj. Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu held a meeting with airline representatives “to review adequacy of air connectivity to Prayagraj from across the country while maintaining reasonable fares during the once in 144 years Maha Kumbh Mahotsav,” the Ministry posted on X.

**PENTAGON SAYS COPTER HAD 'FAIRLY EXPERIENCED CREW'**

# No survivors as plane carrying 64 collides with army chopper over DC

28 bodies found, Trump claims diversity in hiring 'caused' disaster

DAVID SHEPARDSON & STEVE HOLLAND  
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 30

MORE THAN 60 people were dead after an American Airlines regional passenger jet collided with a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter Wednesday and crashed into the Potomac River near Reagan Washington National Airport.

"At this point we do not believe there were any survivors," District of Columbia fire chief John Donnelly said at a Thursday press conference. Donnelly said 28 bodies had been recovered from the river so far, in what was shaping up to be the deadliest US air disaster in more than 20 years.

"We will work to find all the bodies and reunite them with their loved ones," he said. American Airlines said 60 passengers and four crew members were aboard the jet, while US officials said the helicopter was carrying three soldiers on a training flight. The helicopter had a "fairly experienced crew" that was operating with night vision goggles, US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Thursday, as the Pentagon ordered a 48-hour pause in flying for the unit involved in the crash.

"We have been told that there are no survivors. We mourn with all those who have been impacted," Wichita mayor Lily Wu said. The collision occurred as the jet was approaching to land at Reagan. Radio communications showed the chopper crew knew the plane was in the vicinity.

US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said both the helicopter and the airplane had been flying standard flight patterns, and there had been no breakdown in communication. Airspace is frequently crowded in the U.S. capital region, and officials have raised concerns about busy runways at Reagan National Airport.

"We do not know what led to this crash, but we have some very strong opinions and ideas," President Donald Trump said. He blamed diversity requirements at the Federal Aviation Administration and his two Democratic predecessors for the collision saying that standards for air traffic controllers had been too lax. "For some jobs, we need the highest level of genius," he said.

REUTERS, WITH NYT INPUTS



Emergency workers investigate the wreckage in the Potomac River in Washington DC on Thursday. NYT

## 'I SAW A FIREBALL, THEN IT WAS JUST GONE'

The collision occurred at around 9 pm in some of the world's most tightly controlled and monitored airspace, just over 5 km south of the White House and the US Capitol.

### A few minutes before crash

- Air traffic controllers ask American Airlines Flight 5342 if it could land on a shorter runway. Pilots agree.
- ATC clears the jet to land. Plane adjusts approach to new runway.

### 30 seconds before crash

- A controller asks the helicopter if it had the plane in sight.
- Moments later, controller makes another radio call to helicopter: 'PAT 25 pass behind the CRJ' — apparently telling copter to wait for the Bombardier CRJ-701 twin-engine jet to pass.
- There is no reply.



### Seconds later

- Aircraft collide. Plane's radio transmitter stops transmitting about 732 m short of runway.
- 'Crash, crash, crash, this is an alert three,' says a controller.

### The aftermath

- 'It was... out in the middle of the river,' says another controller. 'I saw a fireball and then it was just gone. I haven't seen anything since they hit the river.'

## RUSSIAN SKATING DUO, '94 WORLD CHAMPIONS, WERE ON BOARD PLANE

St Petersburg: Russian-born ice skating coaches and former world champions Yevgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov were among those aboard the American Airlines plane that crashed into the Potomac River in Washington on Wednesday night, the Kremlin and state media said.

Shishkova and Naumov, who were married to each other, won the world championships in pairs figure skating in 1994. They had lived in the US since at least 1998, where they trained young skaters. Shishkova and Naumov were reported to have been returning from a National Development Camp held alongside the US Figure Skating Championships in Kansas, and travelling with a group of young skaters. REUTERS

## Congested airspace shared by civil, military planes

DAVID SHEPARDSON  
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA, JAN 30

THE CRASH of an American Airlines passenger jet and a U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopter near Reagan Washington National Airport Wednesday highlighted issues around the congested airspace shared by civilian and military aircraft over the US capital.

Military helicopters and passenger airplanes are a common

sight along the Potomac River in the Washington region, where the collision happened. The area is home to numerous military bases and three major airports.

There have been several near-miss incidents at Reagan Airport that have sparked alarm, including a near-collision in May 2024 between an American Airlines jet and a small airplane and one in April 2024 between Southwest and JetBlue airplanes.

The close calls coincide with a shortage of air traffic controllers that has delayed flights and raised safety concerns across the US. The FAA in October opened an audit into runway incursion risks at the 45 busiest US airports after a series of near-miss incidents. Reagan National is particularly busy. From 2016 to 2019, there were 88,000 helicopter flights within 48 km of Reagan Airport, including about 33,000 military and 18,000 law

enforcement flights, the Government Accountability Office said in 2021.

US Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy said Thursday the flight paths of the two aircraft were not unusual for the area and that both the helicopter and the airplane had been flying standard flight patterns. Over the last two years, a series of near-miss incidents have raised concerns about U.S. aviation safety and the strain on understaffed air-traffic-control operations. REUTERS



# All passengers feared dead as jet, chopper crash in DC

There was no immediate word on the cause of the midair collision

AP  
feedback@livemint.com  
ARLINGTON, US

Everyone aboard an American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members that collided with an Army helicopter was feared dead in what was likely to be the worst US aviation disaster in almost a quarter century, officials said Thursday.

At least 28 bodies were pulled from the icy waters of the Potomac River after the midair collision Wednesday night when the helicopter apparently flew in the path of the jet as it was landing at Ronald Reagan National Airport near Washington, officials said.

Crews were still searching for other casualties but did not believe there were any survivors, which would make it the deadliest US air crash in nearly 24 years.

"We are now at the point where we are switching from a rescue operation to a recovery operation," said John Donnelly, the fire chief in the nation's capital. "We don't believe there are any survivors."

The body of the plane was found upside down in three sections in waist-deep water. The wreckage of the helicopter was also found. Donnelly said first responders on Thursday were searching an area of the Potomac River as far south as the Woodrow Wilson Bridge, roughly 4.8 kilometres south of the airport.

There was no immediate word on the cause of the collision, but officials said flight conditions were clear as the jet coming from Wichita, Kansas, with US and Russian figure skaters and others aboard, was making a routine landing when the helicopter flew into its path.

"On final approach into Reagan National it collided with a military aircraft on an otherwise normal approach," American Airlines chief Robert Isom said. "At this time we don't know why the military aircraft came into the path of the ... aircraft."

Three soldiers were onboard the helicopter during a training flight, an Army official previously said.

Images from the river showed boats around the partly submerged wing and the mangled wreckage of the plane's fuselage.

Investigators will try to piece together the aircraft's final moments before their collision, including contact with air traffic controllers as well as a loss of altitude by the passenger jet.

"I would just say that everyone who flies in American skies expects that we fly safely," transportation secretary Sean Duffy said. "That when you depart an airport, you get to your destination. That didn't happen last night and I know that President Trump, his administration, the FAA, the DOT, we will not rest until we have answers for the families and for the flying public. You should be assured



Crews were still searching for other casualties but did not believe there were any survivors.

that when you fly, you're safe."

Reagan Airport will reopen at 11 a.m. Thursday, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announced. The FAA previously said it would be closed until 5 a.m. Friday.

Duffy was asked if he could reassure Americans that the US still has the safest airspace in the world.

"Can I guarantee the American flying public that the United States has the most safe and secure airspace in the world? And the answer to that is, absolutely yes, we do," he said.

The night was clear, the plane and helicopter were both in standard flight patterns and there was standard communication between the aircraft and the tower, Duffy said.

"We have early indicators of what happened here," Duffy said, though he declined to elaborate further pending an investigation.

It was not unusual to have a military aircraft flying the river and an aircraft landing at the airport, he said. Asked if the plane was aware that there was a helicopter in the area, Duffy said he would say that the helicopter was aware that there was a plane in the area.

Asked about President Donald Trump suggesting in an overnight social media post that the collision could have been prevented, Duffy said, "From what I've seen so far, do I think this was preventable? Absolutely."

Defense secretary Pete Hegseth did not appear at the Thursday morning press conference. He was expected to brief reporters at the Pentagon later.

If everyone aboard the plane was

killed, it will make it the deadliest US airline crash since 12 November 2001, when an American Airlines flight just after takeoff crashed into a residential area of Belle Harbor, New York, killing all 260 people aboard.

The last major fatal crash involving a US commercial airline occurred in 2009 near Buffalo, New York. Everyone aboard the Bombardier DHC-8 propeller plane was killed, including 15 passengers, two pilots and two flight attendants. Another person on the ground also died, bringing the total death toll to 50. An investigation determined that the captain accidentally caused the plane to stall as it approached the airport in Buffalo.

Passengers on Wednesday's flight included a group of figure skaters, their coaches and family members who were returning from a development camp that followed the US Figure Skating Championships in Wichita.

"We are devastated by this unspeakable tragedy and hold the victims' families closely in our hearts," US Figure Skating said in a statement.

Two of those coaches were identified by the Kremlin as Russian figure skaters Evgenia Shishkova and Vadim Naumov, who won the pairs title at the 1994 world championships and competed twice in the Olympics. The Skating Club of Boston lists them as coaches and their son, Maxim Naumov, is a competitive figure skater for the US.

The FAA said the midair crash occurred before 9 p.m. EST in some of the most tightly controlled and monitored airspace in the world, just over

three miles south of the White House and the Capitol.

American Airlines Flight 5342 was inbound to Reagan National at an altitude of about 400 ft and a speed of about 225 kmph when it suffered a rapid loss of altitude over the Potomac River, according to data from its radio transponder. The Canadian-made Bombardier CRJ-701 twin-engine jet, manufactured in 2004, can be configured to carry up to 70 passengers.

A few minutes before landing, air traffic controllers asked the arriving commercial jet if it could land on the shorter Runway 33 at Reagan National and the pilots said they were able. Controllers then cleared the plane to land on Runway 33. Flight tracking sites showed the plane adjust its approach to the new runway.

Less than 30 seconds before the crash, an air traffic controller asked the helicopter if it had the arriving plane in sight. The controller made another radio call to the helicopter moments later: "PAT 25 pass behind the CRJ." Seconds after that, the two aircraft collided.

The plane's radio transponder stopped transmitting about 2,400 ft short of the runway, roughly over the middle of the river.

Video from an observation camera at the nearby Kennedy Centre showed two sets of lights consistent with aircraft appearing to join in a fireball.

The US Army described the helicopter as UH-60 Blackhawk based at Fort Belvoir in Virginia. The helicopter was on a training flight. Military aircraft frequently conduct training flights in and around the congested and heavily-restricted airspace around the nation's capital for familiarization.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

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MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

30 JANUARY 2025

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### Air India to resume Delhi-Tel Aviv flights

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**NEW DELHI:** Air India will resume direct flights to Tel Aviv from March 2, after suspending the services in August last year amid tensions in the Middle East.

Five weekly flights will be operated from the national capital to Tel Aviv in Israel, the airline said in a release on Wednesday.

The airline will deploy its Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner aircraft having 18 flat beds in Business Class and 238 seats in Economy Class on the route.

The non-stop flights will be operated on Mondays, Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

The decision to resume operations on the Delhi-Tel Aviv route follows the requisite approvals, the release said.



In August 2024, the airline had suspended the direct flights in view of the escalating tensions between Israel and Iran.

On Tuesday, Israel's tourism minister Haim Katz said he was pushing for direct flight from Mumbai to Tel Aviv by Air India and Israeli airline EI AL.

AGENCIES



## Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

30 JANUARY 2025

# Government asks airlines to maintain reasonable airfares for Prayagraj flights

### MPOST BUREAU

**NEW DELHI:** Amid persisting concerns over exorbitant airfares for Prayagraj flights, the Civil Aviation Ministry on Wednesday asked airlines to maintain reasonable prices, and sources said the country's largest carrier IndiGo has reduced the fares to Prayagraj in the range of 30-50 per cent.

The development also comes on a day when Consumer Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said airfares for Prayagraj flights are "exorbitantly high" and urged aviation watchdog DGCA to take steps to reduce the prices.

In the wake of the Kumbh Mela and resultant travel demand, airfares have surged for flights to Prayagraj and the civil aviation ministry had asked airlines to rationalise the ticket prices.

On Wednesday, Civil Avi-

ation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu, along with Secretary V Vualnam, DGCA Director General Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, and senior officials met airline representatives regarding Prayagraj flights.

They reviewed the "adequacy of air connectivity to Prayagraj from across the country while maintaining reasonable fares during the once in 144 years Maha Kumbh Mahotsav", the ministry said in a post on X.

According to the ministry, regular coordination meetings have been held to provide a seamless and comfortable travel experience for millions of devotees attending the world's largest religious gathering from January 13 to February 26, 2025.

The sources said IndiGo has reduced the airfares for flights to Prayagraj in the range of 30-50 per cent.

There was no comment from the airline.

IndiGo's fares for Delhi-Prayagraj flights from February to 16 is now a little over Rs 13,500. For January 31, the ticket price is over Rs 21,200 and the lowest is around Rs 9,000 for February 12, as per its website.

Currently, IndiGo, the country's largest airline, operates services from Lucknow, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Ahmedabad to Prayagraj.

Air ticket prices are deregulated in the country and there is no cap or floor for the fares.

Earlier in the day, Joshi said the airfares being exorbitantly high has made it difficult for people to make travel plans to attend the Maha Kumbh.

"Keeping consumers interest in mind, we have written to @DGCAIndia to take steps to reduce the prices of the air

fares," he said in a post on X.

There were no immediate comments on the Prayagraj flight airfares from Air India, Akasa Air, and SpiceJet.

On Monday, the civil aviation ministry said steps are being taken to rationalise airfares for flights to Prayagraj and the number of flights has been increased to cater to the rising traffic demand.

Currently, there are 132 flights operating with approximately 80,000 monthly seats to Prayagraj from various Indian cities. Prayagraj is connected directly with 17 cities against eight in December 2024.

The ministry, on Monday, said Prayagraj is well connected with direct and connecting flights reaching 26 cities, including Srinagar and Visakhapatnam.

The Maha Kumbh, which started on January 13, will conclude on February 26.



# Corporate Communications Directorate

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THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

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## **Maha Kumbh: Akasa flies more Prayagraj flights**

NEW DELHI: Akasa Air has reduced ticket prices for flights to Prayagraj by 30-45% and increased number of flights to the city, sources said on Thursday in the wake of the government asking airlines to maintain reasonable fares. Airfares for the flights to Prayagraj have been on the rise in view of the Maha Kumbh, which commenced on January 13 and will conclude on February 26. On Wednesday, civil aviation ministry asked airlines to increase flights and maintain reasonable airfares for Prayagraj flights. *ENS*



# Corporate Communications Directorate

PIONEER

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## महाकुंभ के बीच प्रयागराज के लिए किराया हुआ स्थिर, उड़ानें बढ़ाई : इंडिगो

नई दिल्ली। एयरलाइन कंपनी इंडिगो ने बृहस्पतिवार को कहा कि प्रयागराज के लिए उड़ानों का विश्वास स्थिर हो गया है और उसने महाकुंभ के लिए इस मार्ग पर उड़ानों की संख्या बढ़ाकर 900 कर दी है। एयरलाइनों की बढ़ती मांग के चलते प्रयागराज की उड़ानों पर किराया में बढ़ोतरी को लेकर लगातार चिंता बनी हुई है और सरकार ने एयरलाइन कंपनियों से टिकट की कीमतों स्थिर रखने के साथ-साथ इस मार्ग पर और अधिक उड़ानें संचालित करने को कहा है। महाकुंभ 13 जनवरी से शुरू हुआ है और 26 फरवरी को समाप्त होगा। पहले से सक्रिय की गई अतिरिक्त क्षमता के अलावा, इंडिगो ने कहा कि वह अपने नेटवर्क के अन्य हिस्सों से क्षमता का पुनः आवंटन करने पर भी काम कर रही है, ताकि यात्रियों की बढ़ती संख्या को देखते हुए अधिक उड़ानें जोड़ी जा सकें। इंडिगो ने बयान में कहा, एयरलाइन ने किराया को स्थिर रखना भी सुनिश्चित किया है और अपने सभी वाहनों को सर्वोत्तम समय तक अनुभव प्रदान करने के लिए प्रतिबद्ध है। बुधवार को सूने ने बताया था कि इंडिगो ने प्रयागराज की उड़ानों के किराया में 30-50 प्रतिशत तक की कमी की है। एयरलाइन के अनुसार, उसने महाकुंभ अवधि के दौरान प्रयागराज हवाई अड्डे से उड़ानों की संख्या और सीट क्षमता में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि की है। बयान के अनुसार, इस विशेष अवधि के लिए, एयरलाइन अब प्रयागराज से के लिए 1,65,000 से अधिक सीटों का संचालन करेगी, जो हवाई अड्डे की इसकी सामान्य क्षमता से दो गुनी से भी अधिक है। कंपनी ने बयान में कहा, इस अवधि के दौरान, इंडिगो प्रयागराज को भारत में 10 स्थानों से जोड़ेगी। इनमें दिल्ली, मुंबई, बंगलुरु, हैदराबाद, रायचूर, सयपुर और मुंबई-पुणे से मौजूद संपर्क के अलावा अहमदाबाद, कोलकाता और जयपुर से उड़ानें भी शामिल होंगी। इसके अलावा, इंडिगो ने कहा कि उसने प्रयागराज से के लिए मौजूद मार्गों पर बड़े विमान ए321 के परिचालन और घेरे बढ़ाकर क्षमता में वृद्धि की है। इंडिगो ने कहा, पूर्ण मिश्रण, एयरलाइन प्रयागराज से के लिए लगभग 900 उड़ानें संचालित करेगी, जो कि 490 निर्यात सेवाओं की तुलना का लगभग दो गुना है। प्रयागराज की उड़ानों के लिए अत्यधिक विश्वास व्यक्त करने के बीच मंत्रालय विमानन मंत्रालय ने बुधवार को एयरलाइन कंपनियों से उचित टिकट कीमतें बनाए रखने को कहा था। साथ ही, उपरोक्त मामलों के नगरी प्रहसद जोड़ी ने विमानन निर्यातक नगर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) से कीमतों को कम करने के लिए कदम उठाने का आग्रह किया था।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

**एयर इंडिया**

**ट्रेडिंग  
न्यूज**

**दिल्ली-तेल अवीव उड़ानें होंगी बहाल**

नई दिल्ली @ पत्रिका. एयर इंडिया दो मार्च से नई दिल्ली से इजरायल के तेल अवीव के लिए सीधी उड़ानें बहाल करेगी। इजरायल-हमास युद्ध के कारण पिछले साल अगस्त में ये उड़ानें निलयित कर दी गई थीं। तेल अवीव के लिए पांच साप्ताहिक उड़ानें संचालित की जाएंगी।



# Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## Hotels, airlines see upswing in profits amid Mahakumbh

### AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, 29 JANUARY

The Mahakumbh mela has become a boon for the hospitality sector and airlines with profits expected to firm up amid soaring demand. This is being reflected in the rise in the share prices of companies such as Benares Hotels, a subsidiary of the Tata Group's Indian Hotels.

The share price of Benares Hotels Ltd in the morning trade on Wednesday went up to Rs 10,610.00 on the BSE which represents an 11.50 per cent increase from the previous closing price of Rs 9,552.95 on Tuesday.

The stock price of this smallcap hotel company has been rising amid decline in the BSE Sensex and smallcap segment.

Benares Hotels Ltd operates Taj Ganges and Taj Nadesar Palace in Varanasi and Ginger, Gondia in Maharashtra. The Indian Hotels Company Limited (IHCL) is the ultimate Holding Company of Benares Hotels.

For the third quarter (October-December), Benares Hotels announced a 20 per cent year-on-year (YoY) increase in net profit at Rs 13.6 crore. The company's revenue rose 16.2 per cent to Rs 40.1 crore during the quarter.

According to the company, the Kumbh Mela and related travel in the region have led to an increase in domestic demand and the revenue is expected to surge.

Airlines are another segment that has benefited from the high demand resulting from the increase in

fares during Mahakumbh as demand has surged.

Airfares to Prayagraj from major cities have skyrocketed. While the ticket costs for Delhi to Prayagraj flights have soared to 20,000 or more from 5,000 earlier, the Mumbai to Prayagraj flights are costing between 20,000 to 56,000.

Flying non-stop from Delhi to Prayagraj with Akasa Airlines will cost one 24,262 while Air India is charging 28,739 for the same route. Flights with layovers are even more expensive.

Similarly, the price of tickets for SpiceJet's direct flight from Mumbai to Prayagraj starts at 20,482.

Direct flights from Hyderabad to Prayagraj were fully booked till the last week of February, forcing travelers to go for connecting flights.

The fastest route, involving a one-hour layover in Mumbai, takes five hours and is priced at 28,901 for January 29. A day later, on January 30, the same flight is priced at 36,901.

Meanwhile, an ICRA report has stated that the Indian hotel industry is poised for a 7-9 per cent revenue growth in FY2025, driven by strong domestic leisure travel demand and events like weddings and business travel.

ICRA expects occupancy to hit decadal highs, with tier-II cities and spiritual tourism contributing significantly.

While domestic tourism remains a key driver, foreign tourist arrivals have yet to rebound fully post-Covid, contingent on the global economic climate.



## Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025



# The right to travel with dignity

In a groundbreaking move, an international airline is set to become the world's first Autism Certified Airline. Over 30,000 of the airline staff will be trained in autism awareness and sensory sensitivities among other things. The idea, says the official communication, is to ensure a more inclusive travel experience for families and caregivers of persons with special needs.

Research indicates that 78% of families with autistic members are hesitant to travel, and 94% would do so more frequently if staff were trained in autism awareness. We all know why.

Air travel can be overwhelming, especially for those on the autism spectrum, due to unfamiliar environments

and sensory overload.

And most airline staff are clueless about handling such a situation. In 2022, at Ranchi airport, a child with special needs was denied boarding, citing his agitated state as a safety concern. The airline faced widespread criticism for its lack of empathy and was subsequently fined ₹5 lakh by the DGCA.

The insensitivity does not end with autistic persons. Last year, Arushi Singh, a wheelchair-bound passenger with a lifelong disability, was asked multiple times to stand up during a security check at the Kolkata airport.

**World's first 'Autism Certified Airline' trains staff on how to assist neurodiverse passengers**

Arushi took to social media to call out the CISF's lack of understanding and assistance and filed a petition in the Supreme Court. It shook up the system well enough for the apex court to mandate enforcement of additional airport guidelines "for Dignified Assistance to Persons with Disabilities."

This aviation milestone is an urgent reminder that true accessibility must extend beyond airports and airlines to every aspect of public life. As any car-

giver will tell you, our public spaces, modes of mass transport, our streets and entertainment arenas, make no

concessions for those who

need assistance. Reunions, birthdays, weddings, dinner with family and friends or enjoying a long weekend away – all the simple joys of life we take for granted – do not come easy for them.

For most, it is about choosing seats with extra legroom, or a favourite beverage. For persons with disabilities and their families, it is something as basic as travelling with dignity.

In a world where everyone's forever on the move, one hopes no one is left behind.

# All 67 feared dead as airliner, army copter collide, crash into DC river

## Deadliest US Air Disaster Since '01

**Washington:** Sixty seven people were feared dead after an American Airlines passenger jet collided with a US Army Black Hawk helicopter on Wednesday night and crashed into the frigid Potomac River near Reagan Washington National Airport.

Sixty passengers and four crew members were aboard the jet flying from Wichita

► **Air accident deaths per million over the years, P 20**

in Kansas, while the chopper was carrying three soldiers on an annual proficiency training flight.

The crash site was reported to be barely miles from White House and Pentagon.

Photo: NYT

## BARELY MILES FROM WHITE HOUSE AND PENTAGON

► **Flight conditions clear** as American Airlines jet from Kansas is about to land at Washington's Reagan airport

► Both plane & Black Hawk in **standard flight patterns; no breakdown in communication** between the two and ATC

► Suddenly, the helicopter comes into jet's path. Video shows collision and explosion

► **Russian ice-skating couple — ex-world champs — dead.** So is their son, an ice skater, and many of his teammates

► **Trump blames army pilot and ATC controllers.** Also accuses Obama and Biden of 'lowering air safety standards'

► **Pentagon launches probe,** in new defence secretary Pete Hegseth's 1st big test

► **300 near collisions involving commercial airlines in US in past 12 mths**

► **43 yrs ago, a plane crashed into a nearby bridge & fell into the same Potomac river, leaving 74 people dead**

**FULL COVERAGE | P 20**



The wreckage of the Bombardier CRJ 700 against the backdrop of Reagan airport on Thursday

"We have been told there are no survivors," Wichita mayor Lily Wu said. Twenty eight bodies had been recovered from the river till reports last came in.

It's not known what led to

the crash — the deadliest US air disaster since Nov 12, 2001 — considering radio communications between ATC and the Black Hawk showed its crew knew the plane was in the vicinity. "Everything was

standard in the lead-up to the crash," US transportation secretary Sean Duffy said. "Do I think this was preventable? Absolutely." REUTERS

► **Skating couple, P 20**

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

31 JANUARY 2025

## AIR CRASH DEATHS VS TOTAL DEATHS GLOBALLY

Year	Deaths in air accidents	Total deaths (million)	Air accident deaths per million total deaths
2014	638	55.5	11.5
2015	99	56.3	1.8
2016	198	56.8	3.5
2017	19	57.6	0.3
2018	512	57.8	8.9
2019	240	58.4	4.1
2020	125	63.5	2
2021	121	69.7	1.7
2022	158	62.3	2.5
2023	72	61.7	1.2
<b>10yrs total</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>599.5m</b>	<b>3.6</b>



*Air accident deaths from International Air Transport Association (IATA)*

## Worst fatal crash of commercial jet in US since '09

The crash on Wednesday was the most serious air disaster involving a commercial jet in US in over a decade. In Feb 2009, Colgan Air flight 3407 crashed into a house outside Buffalo before it was to land, killing 49 aboard and one person in the house. There has not been a fatal commercial plane crash in US in almost 16 years.

### Notable air disasters in US:

2006, Kentucky | Comair aircraft crash kills 49  
2001, New York | American Airlines flight hits a residential area, all 260 on board die

2001 | 3,000 die as 19 al-Qaida hijackers seize control of four jetliners; 2 planes crash into NYC WTC; third into Pentagon; fourth into a field in Pennsylvania  
2000, California | Alaska Airlines flight falls into Pacific Ocean, killing 88

1996, New York | Trans World Airlines flight crashes in the Atlantic Ocean, 230 die  
1996, Florida | ValuJet Airlines flight crash kills 110  
1994, Indiana | American Eagle flight crash kills 68  
1994, Pittsburgh | USAir flight crashes, 132 die  
1989, Iowa | United Airlines

flight crash kills 111  
1987, Michigan | Northwest Airlines flight crashes, 154 die  
1985, Texas | Delta Airlines flight crashes kills 134  
1982, Louisiana | Pan American flight crash kills 145. AP

### 43 years ago, a plane crash on Potomac left 78 dead

On Jan 13, 1982, a jet bound for Florida, struck a bridge over Potomac river after taking off from Washington National Airport in a snowstorm, leaving 78 dead. Air Florida Flight 90 hit cars before splitting into pieces. Five of 79 aboard survived. NYT