



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Govt begins consultation to lease 10 more AAI airports in PPP mode

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

The Centre has kicked off the consultation process for leasing out (privatise) of more than 10 airports under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, sources told *businessline*.

According to the sources, an inter-ministerial consultation process was initiated recently, and a Cabinet note circulated to seek the opinion, and address any concerns, of different ministries on the proposal.

“We have received replies on the note and are now in the consultation phase,” a source told *businessline*.

As per sources, the Cabinet will decide which airports will be leased out and if any new terms and conditions should be added in the concession agreement for the upcoming round.

REGIONAL HUBS

Speculation is rife that airports under consideration may include key regional hubs such as Amritsar, Varanasi, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Raipur and Tiruchi.

Airports in Kushinagar, Gaya, Hubli, Aurangabad and Tirupati could also be considered for leasing out. Besides, the Centre is contem-



FLIGHT PLAN. Under the National Monetisation Pipeline, 25 airports were earmarked for leasing out between 2022-2025

plating bundling profitable and non-profitable airports for the bidding process, which is expected to attract a variety of bidders, sources said.

This bundling approach, the sources said, aims to ensure a “balanced and competitive” outcome.

The initiative falls under the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), which seeks to tap into the private sector’s expertise to revamp and operate key assets, thereby improving passenger experience and driving economic growth.

Under the NMP, 25 airports belonging to the Airports Authority of India were earmarked for leasing out between 2022 and 2025.

These included airports in Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, Amritsar, Tiruchi, Indore, Raipur, Kozhikode, Coim-

batore, Nagpur, Patna, Madurai, Surat, Ranchi, Jodhpur, Chennai, Vijayawada, Vadodara, Bhopal, Tirupati, Hubli, Imphal, Agartala, Udaipur, Dehradun and Rajahmundry. Since 2014, AAI has leased out six of its airports for better operations, management, and development under the PPP model.

50-YEAR LEASE

These airports have been leased out for 50 years, with AAI remaining the owner of the airport land throughout the lease period. Accordingly, the land and other assets would revert to AAI on expiry of the lease period.

In the last round of airport leasing (privatisation) in 2019, Adani Group won bids to operate six airports — Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Mangaluru, Guwahati, Jaipur and Thiruvananthapuram.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Centre plans to lease over 10 airports under PPP mode, begins consultations

Rohit Vaid

NEW DELHI

The Centre has begun consultations on leasing (privatise) over 10 airports under the public-private partnership (PPP) model, sources told *businessline*.

According to the sources, an inter-ministerial consultation process was initiated recently with the circulation of a Cabinet note seeking opinion from different ministries.

“We have received replies on the note and are now in the consultation phase,” a source told *businessline*.

As per sources, the Cabinet will decide which airports will be leased out and if any new terms and conditions should be added in the concession agreement for the upcoming round.

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Airports in Kushinagar, Gaya, Hubli, Aurangabad and Tirupati could also be considered. Besides, the Centre is contemplating bundling profitable and non-profitable airports for the bidding process.

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(The writer is with The Hindu businessline)



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

20 FEBRUARY 2025

HC to AAI: Give height clearance for SRA project

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MUMBAI: The Bombay high court has directed the Airport Authority of India (AAI) to issue a no objection certificate (NOC) for height clearance to developers undertaking a slum rehabilitation project in Chembur. The appellate committee had already approved the height, and it cannot be reversed owing to minor discrepancies in undertakings and certificates, the court clarified.

Three developers – Paradigm Dotom Buildheights LLP, Jai Bhagwati Developers & Builders, and RK Madhani & Co – are jointly executing a slum rehabilitation project in Chembur. The developers had applied for an NOC from AAI, seeking sanction for 84.92-metre tall buildings. The application was approved by the appellate committee of the ministry of civil aviation in 2015, subject to filing of an undertaking.

However, the NOC was subsequently refused due to technical deficiencies. The ministry of civil aviation, on December 17, 2020, notified amended rules pertaining to height restrictions, subjecting developers to acquire a revised NOC.

The developers approached the AAI, saying if the height of 84.92 metres was not utilised, three floors of rehabilitation and sale buildings would be reduced and rehabilitation of approximately 142 slum dwellers would be affected. But the AAI refused to give approval citing time lapse and changes in rules, prompting the developers to approach the Bombay high court.

Senior advocate Dr Virendra Tulzapurkar, representing the developers, submitted that the NOC could not be denied to them

since they had fulfilled the basic terms and conditions required for the approval of the height of 84.92 metres.

"Now that the petitioners have complied with the requirements, the AAI or its appellate committee cannot categorise their applications as if it was a fresh one, and of a category which would be required to be treated as per the changed norms, notified subsequent to the proposal of the petitioners", he said.

Advocate Mayur Shetty, representing AAI, reiterated that the permissible height of the buildings is required to be re-decided as per the current norms, based on fresh aeronautical studies. Moreover, revalidating the NOC would lead to a number of parties approaching the court whose NOCs have lapsed, and the AAI would be required to grant approval in respect of such lapsed cases, he added.

After perusing the facts in the case, the division bench of justices GS Kulkarni and Advait M Sethna observed that while the developers never abandoned the project, an occupation certificate was granted for the approved height. Developers cannot be dis-entitled from benefits of revised NOCs based on ministerial lapse, particularly after the appellate committee had taken the decision to permit the height of 84.92 metres.

Subjecting the developers to new norms would be arbitrary, the bench said in its order on Monday, rejecting the contentions of lapsing of either the developer's application or the decision of the appellate committee in approving the height of 84.92 metres. The court directed the AAI, the general manager, the appellate committee, and the regional executive director, to issue an NOC within four weeks.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CHENNAI

20 FEBRUARY 2025

'Digi buddies' to help flyers cut the queue

Will Help
Passengers
Use DigiYatra
At Airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Chennai: Domestic flyers waiting in long queues to get their ID cards and flight tickets checked by CISF personnel at the departure terminal will soon be taken to the nearest e-gates to register with the DigiYatra portal.

'Digi buddies' near these

HOW DIGIYATRA WORKS

> **Pre-Registration** | Passengers register on the DigiYatra app using their Aadhaar-linked mobile number and upload their ID and a selfie

> **Flight & Passenger Verification** | Passengers enter PNR details to link their identity with the flight booking

> **Airport Entry** | At the airport, passengers go to the DigiYatra entry gate and scan their boarding pass or QR code on the app.

> **Facial Recognition Scan** | The system verifies identity through facial recognition and matches it with flight details

> **Security Check** | After entry, passengers can move through security checks using the same biometric validation without showing documents repeatedly.

> **Boarding** | At the boarding gate, facial recognition allows quick verification, eliminating the need for physical boarding passes.

gates will assist flyers to get digital security clearance. Sources in the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said fo-

ur 'digi buddies' will be posted near each gate from the first week of March. The third-party contract is in the

final stages of approval, an official said. "The airport will have 112 'digi buddies' working in shifts. They can be identified by their uniform and identity card," he said.

DigiYatra, a biometric-based digital boarding system introduced at airports, uses facial recognition technology to verify a traveller's identity for seamless entry, security clearance and boarding without the need for physical documents. Passengers can register on the DigiYatra app, link their flight details and use biometric authentication at designated airport gates.

Chennai airport handles approximately 25,000 domestic flyers on a daily basis, of which only 2,300 passengers use DigiYatra, said an official. On average, less than 15% of flyers use DigiYatra on weekdays. During weekends, usage increases to 18%. The ministry of civil aviation set a target of 10% usage, which most airports across the country achieved. Chennai airport authorities encourage more passengers to use DigiYatra as it reduces queues and waiting time for security clearance.

In the T1 domestic terminal, all gates have three dedicated DigiYatra lanes, except

Gate 1, which only has one. At the T4 domestic terminal, all gates, barring Gate 16, have DigiYatra lanes.

Some privately-managed airports have already deployed digi buddies. Apart from aiding flyers to register themselves on DigiYatra, the 'buddies' will also help redress complaints regarding boarding passes not being recognised in the system. They will also guide passengers who want to use DigiYatra once without getting their biometrics recorded.

Chennai airport authorities also plan to extend the DigiYatra facility for international flyers.

जेवर एयरपोर्ट से जुड़ेंगे हरियाणा के प्रमुख शहर, चलेंगी बसें

ग्रेटर नोएडा, 20 फरवरी (देशबन्धु)। यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण क्षेत्र में जेवर के पास बन रहे नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय हवाई अड्डे से अब हरियाणा के प्रमुख शहर भी जुड़ जाएंगे। गुरुवार को हरियाणा रोडवेज और नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट (एनआईए) के बीच बस कनेक्टिविटी के लिए समझौता पत्र पर हस्ताक्षर किए गए। उत्तराखंड के प्रमुख शहरों को बस से जोड़ने के लिए नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पहले उत्तराखंड परिवहन निगम के साथ समझौता कर चुका है। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट, जेवर से अप्रैल-2025 से उड़ानें शुरू हो जाएंगी। जेवर एयरपोर्ट तक अच्छी कनेक्टिविटी बनाने के लिए कई अहम कदम उठाये जा रहे हैं। इसी के तहत यह समझौता है। यात्रियों को एयरपोर्ट के वाणिज्यिक उद्घाटन से पलवल, फरीदाबाद, गुड़गांव,



- हरियाणा रोडवेज और नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के बीच संचालन को लेकर हुआ समझौता
- जेवर से यात्रियों को एयरपोर्ट के वाणिज्यिक उद्घाटन से पलवल, फरीदाबाद, गुड़गांव, कुरुक्षेत्र, चंडीगढ़, हिसार, नारनौल, पानीपत और अंबाला जैसे गंतव्यों तक सीधी बस सेवा मिलेगी

कुरुक्षेत्र, चंडीगढ़, हिसार, नारनौल, पानीपत और अंबाला जैसे गंतव्यों तक सीधी बस सेवा मिलेगी। यह साझेदारी क्षेत्रीय संपर्क को मजबूत करने में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है और एक निर्बाध यात्रा अनुभव प्रदान करने

की एनआईए की प्रतिबद्धता के अनुरूप है। यमुना एक्सप्रेस वे के किनारे स्थित जेवर एयरपोर्ट दिल्ली एनसीआर और हरियाणा सहित पड़ोसी राज्यों के लिए एक प्रमुख प्रवेश द्वार के रूप में स्थापित होगा।

यात्रियों को मिलेगा सुगम-कुशल यात्रा का अनुभव

राज्य परिवहन विभाग (हरियाणा रोडवेज) के अतिरिक्त निदेशक ने इस मौके पर कहा कि, हमें नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के साथ अपनी साझेदारी को घोषणा करते हुए गर्व हो रहा है। जो नोएडा और पलवल, फरीदाबाद, गुड़गांव, कुरुक्षेत्र, चंडीगढ़, हिसार, नारनौल, पानीपत और अंबाला जैसे प्रमुख शहरों के बीच क्षेत्रीय संपर्क बढ़ाने की दिशा में एक परिवर्तनकारी कदम है। यह सहयोग हवाई और सड़क परिवहन को सहजता से एकीकृत करेगा, जिससे यात्रियों को एक सुगम, कुशल यात्रा अनुभव मिल सकेगा। नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के सीईओ क्रिस्टोफ रनेलमैन ने कहा कि हरियाणा रोडवेज के साथ हमारी साझेदारी नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट को एक सहज क्षेत्रीय परिवहन केंद्र के रूप में स्थापित करने के हमारे लक्ष्य की दिशा में एक महत्वपूर्ण कदम है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Fairfax raises stake in BIAL to 74%

FAIRFAX INDIA HOLDINGS on Thursday announced that it has completed the acquisition of an additional 10% equity in Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) through its wholly-owned subsidiary. The stake was bought from Siemens Project Ventures GmbH, part of Siemens Financial Services, for ₹2,220 crore. As a result of the closing of the transaction, Fairfax India's aggregate share ownership in BIAL has increased to 74%.

-FE BUREAU



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

एयरपोर्ट से हरियाणा के लिए बस चलेगी



ग्रेटर नोएडा, चरिष्ठ संवाददाता। नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट जेवर से हरियाणा के गुरुग्राम, फरीदाबाद और चंडीगढ़ समेत कई शहरों के लिए बस चलेगी। इसके लिए यमुना इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट लिमिटेड (यापल) और हरियाणा राज्य परिवहन निगम के बीच समझौता हुआ है। बस सेवा एयरपोर्ट से व्यावसायिक उड़ानों के साथ शुरू कर दी जाएगी।

नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट से

पहले चरण का काम पूरा

यापल के सीईओ किस्टोफ श्नेलमैन ने कहा कि एयरपोर्ट के पहले चरण का काम लगभग तैयार होने को है। पहले चरण में एक रनवे और एक टर्मिनल होगा, जिससे हर साल 1.2 करोड़ यात्री यात्रा कर सकेंगे। चौथे चरण तक यह संख्या बढ़कर सात करोड़ हो जाएगी।

अप्रैल में उड़ानें प्रस्तावित हैं। पश्चिमी उत्तर प्रदेश से जुड़ा यह एयरपोर्ट परिवहन केंद्र के रूप में कार्य करेगा। एयरपोर्ट पर 150 किलोमीटर या फिर इससे अधिक दायरे से यात्री विमान सेवा का लाभ पाने के लिए पहुंचेंगे। ऐसे में फरीदाबाद, गुरुग्राम के अलावा

उत्तराखंड के लिए भी करार

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट से उत्तराखंड के प्रमुख शहरों देहरादून, हरिद्वार, ऋषिकेश और हल्द्वानी आदि तक सीधी बसें चलाने के लिए भी उत्तराखंड परिवहन निगम (यूटीसी) के साथ समझौता हो चुका है। ये बसें सेवा एयरपोर्ट से व्यावसायिक उड़ानों के साथ शुरू कर दी जाएगी।

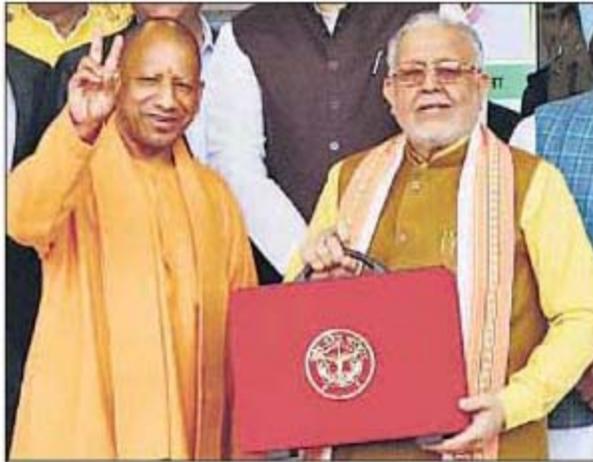
हरियाणा के पलवल, कुरुक्षेत्र, हिसार, नारनौल, पानीपत और अंबाला जैसे प्रमुख शहरों तक सीधी पहुंच के लिए बस शुरू करने का निर्णय लिया गया है। फिलहाल एयरपोर्ट पहुंचने के लिए कोई सुविधा उपलब्ध नहीं है। मेट्रो शुरू होने में कई वर्ष लग सकते हैं।

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट के लिए 1550 करोड़ मिले



लखनऊ/नोएडा/गाजियाबाद, हिन्दुस्तान टीम। योगी सरकार ने गुरुवार को पेश किए गए अपने नौवें बजट में युवाओं, महिलाओं और इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर के लिए खजाना खोल दिया। नोएडा अंतरराष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट के तीसरे और चौथे चरण में होने वाले विकास कार्यों के लिए 1550 करोड़ रुपये का ऐलान किया गया है। वहीं, गाजियाबाद में हरनंदीपुरम टाउनशिप बसाने के लिए 400 करोड़ रुपये मंजूर किए गए।

उत्तर प्रदेश के वित्तमंत्री सुरेश खन्ना ने वित्तीय वर्ष 2025-26 के लिए बजट पेश किया। इसका आकार 8 लाख 8 हजार 736 करोड़ रुपये है। यह पिछले बजट के मुकाबले 9.8 प्रतिशत अधिक है। बजट में 28,478 करोड़ रुपये की नई योजनाएं हैं। सबसे अधिक 22 फीसदी रकम चार नए एक्सप्रेसवे, पुल, फ्लाईओवर, रिंग रोड, मेट्रो, सड़क समेत अन्य परियोजनाओं पर खर्च होगी। शिक्षा पर 13, खेती-किसानी पर 11, चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में 6 प्रतिशत राशि खर्च होगी। कॉलेज जाने वाली मेधावी छात्राओं को निःशुल्क स्कूटी दी जाएगी।



लखनऊ स्थित विधानसभा में गुरुवार को यूपी का बजट पेश करने के लिए जाते मुख्यमंत्री योगी आदित्यनाथ और वित्त मंत्री सुरेश खन्ना। • हिन्दुस्तान

एयरपोर्ट का विस्तार होगा

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट के तीसरे और चौथे चरण में जमीन अधिग्रहण के लिए 1500 करोड़ और भवन निर्माण के लिए 50 करोड़ का प्रावधान किया गया है। एयरपोर्ट के विस्तार के लिए 14 गैंग की 1888.98 हेक्टेयर जमीन का अधिग्रहण होना है। एयरपोर्ट से अप्रैल में व्यावसायिक विमानों की उड़ानें प्रस्तावित हैं। पहले चरण में 1334 हेक्टेयर में एयरपोर्ट का 80 प्रतिशत तक काम पूरा हो चुका है। वहीं, दूसरे चरण की 1365 हेक्टेयर जमीन का अधिग्रहण भी कर लिया गया है।

जिम्स के लिए दो सौ करोड़

राजकीय आधुनिकीकरण संस्थान (जिम्स) में 56 एकड़ में विकसित हो रहे 700 बिस्तरों के अस्पताल एवं कॉलेज का निर्माण गति पकड़ेगा। इसे वर्ष 2026 अंत तक पूरा करने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। इस बार के बजट में यूपी सरकार ने 100 करोड़ की बाधा दूर कर दी है। इसके अलावा 100 करोड़ दूसरे कार्यों के लिए दिए। संस्थान को 40 करोड़ का बजट पूर्व में मिल चुका है। जिम्स के निदेशक ब्रिगेडियर डॉ. आरके गुप्ता ने बताया कि नए कॉलेज में 250 सीट एमबीबीएस की होंगी, जो अभी 100 हैं।

चार नए एक्सप्रेसवे बनेंगे

गंगा एक्सप्रेसवे को मेरठ से हरिद्वार तक जोड़ने के लिए नया एक्सप्रेसवे बनेगा। आगरा-लखनऊ एक्सप्रेसवे से गंगा एक्सप्रेसवे कौंसिया, फर्रुखाबाद तक ग्रीनफील्ड एक्सप्रेसवे बनेगा। गंगा एक्सप्रेसवे को प्रयागराज, मिर्जापुर, वाराणसी से जोड़ने के लिए विन्ध्य एक्सप्रेसवे बनेगा। बुन्देलखण्ड रीवा एक्सप्रेसवे भी बनेगा।

बांके बिहारी मंदिर कॉरिडोर

श्री बांके बिहारीजी महाराज मंदिर मथुरा-वृन्दावन कॉरिडोर के निर्माण के लिए जमीन खरीदने को 100 करोड़ रुपये और निर्माण के लिए 50 करोड़ रुपये बजट में रखे गए हैं। बिजनौर स्थित विदुर कुटी के साथ ही महाभारत सर्किट में मथुरा, वृन्दावन, गोकुल, गोवर्धन और अन्य धार्मिक स्थल जुड़ेंगे।

आवास के लिए प्रावधान

गाजियाबाद में रहने वालों की आवासीय समस्याओं का समाधान करने के लिए 1366.21 करोड़ रुपये खर्च किए जाएंगे। गाजियाबाद विकास प्राधिकरण यह टाउनशिप बसाएगा। बजट में इसके लिए पहली किस्त के रूप में 400 करोड़ रुपये मंजूर किए गए। 15 दिन में यह रकम प्राधिकरण को ट्रांसफर हो जाएगी। इसमें प्राधिकरण भी अपने स्तर से 400 करोड़ मिलाएगा। फिर 800 करोड़ रुपये टाउनशिप के लिए जमीन खरीदने से लेकर विकास कार्यों पर खर्च होंगे।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

BANGALORE

20 FEBRUARY 2025

20kg hydroponic weed seized from five at KIA

Bengaluru: Narcotics Control Bureau arrested five persons at Kempegowda International Airport and seized 20kg of high-grade cannabis (hydroponic weed) from them.

Interrogation of the five, in the age group of 25-35 years, revealed they were being used as mules to bring the contraband from Thailand by people unknown to them.

According to NCB, the unknown persons, believed to be part of a trans-national drug trafficking syndicate, sponsored leisure trips for the arrested individuals to Thailand. They were promised that while returning to India, they would have to carry a bag, containing cannabis. They were led to believe that the business of cannabis was not an offence in India and, in case they were intercepted, arrangements would be made for their release. TNN



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ASIAN AGE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025



Air India partners with Lufthansa to offer new routes

Air India announced the expansion of its codeshare partnership with Lufthansa to offer 60 additional routes across 12 cities in India and 26 in Europe. Air India entered into a new codeshare agreement with Austrian Airlines and expanded existing codeshare agreements with Lufthansa, and Swiss International Air Lines. Air India will now offer its customers a total of 26 destinations across Europe and 3 in the US.



Corporate Communications Directorate

AMAR UJALA

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

दुबई जा रहे बांग्लादेशी विमान की नागपुर में आपात लैंडिंग

नागपुर। ढाका से संयुक्त अरब अमीरात (यूएई) के दुबई जा रहे एक बांग्लादेशी विमान



को बुधवार रात नागपुर एयरपोर्ट पर आपात लैंडिंग कराई गई।

विमान बांग्लादेश एयरलाइंस की इस

फ्लाइट में 396 यात्री और 12 कू सदस्य सवार थे। एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने बताया कि विमान के हॉल्लैंडिंग एरिया में धुआं दिखने और फ़ायर अलार्म बजने के बाद इमरजेंसी लैंडिंग कराई गई। जांच में आग के निशान नहीं मिले। एजेंसी



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Singapore Airlines posts 146% rise in Q3 profit on non-cash accounting gains

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

Singapore Airlines (SIA) Group on Thursday, reported a rise of over 146 per cent in its net profit during the third quarter of FY25, predominantly due to non-cash accounting gains resulting from Vistara's merger with Air India.

BIG GAINS

Accordingly, Singapore Airlines Group's net profit rose \$967 million to \$1,626 million, on the back of a \$1,098 million non-cash accounting gain resulting from the merger that took place in November 2024.

"Despite the lower operating profit, the Group's net profit was \$268 million (12.8 per cent) higher on the back of the non-cash accounting gain following the merger of



Last year, SIA and Tata Sons completed the merger of Air India and Vistara, giving the former a 25.1 per cent stake in the enlarged Air India Group.

Vistara with Air India in November 2024," the airline group said in a regulatory filing.

Last year, SIA and Tata Sons completed the merger of Air India and Vistara, giving the former a 25.1 per cent stake in the enlarged Air India Group.

Besides, the airline group

cited that Air India and SIA added 51 new codeshare destinations from October 2024, "offering customers enhanced travel options between Singapore and India, as well as beyond."

"Both airlines are exploring opportunities to deepen their strategic relationship across a wide range of commercial activities."

In 2024, Singapore Airlines Group had said that it expects a non-cash accounting gain of approximately SGD 1.1 billion (\$832.45 million) once the Air India-Vistara merger is completed.

In addition, the group pointed out that revenue reached a record \$5,219 million in the three months ended 31 December 2024, up \$137 million (2.7 per cent) from the same period last year, "spurred by robust demand for air travel in the third quarter of FY2024-25."



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

PE funds seek CCI nod to pick stake in Akasa Air



KR Srivats
New Delhi

Private equity investors PI Opportunities Fund-I Scheme-II, Claypond Capital Partners and 360 ONE Private Equity Fund have submitted a combination notice to the Competition Commission of India (CCI) seeking approval for their proposed acquisition of a stake in Akasa Air.

The investment aims to strengthen the airline's financial position and support its expansion in both domestic and international markets.

Akasa Air, a relatively new entrant in the aviation industry, commenced operations in 2020 and provides domestic and international passenger transport services, air cargo, and other aviation-related services.

The airline has been rapidly expanding its fleet and route network, positioning itself as a competitive player

in the low-cost carrier segment. The investors bring diverse financial expertise to the table. POF, an alternative investment fund registered with SEBI, focuses on long-term equity investments in high-growth companies.

Claypond Capital Partners, linked to the Pai Family Group, has investments across multiple sectors. The 360 ONE Private Equity Fund, another SEBI-registered AIF, is active across various industries in India and globally.

DIRECT COMPETITION

The transaction does not pose any direct competition concerns, as the investors do not have any existing aviation businesses.

However, there may be potential vertical overlaps between Akasa Air's operations and portfolio companies of the acquirers in areas such as travel agency services and corporate travel solutions.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025



DIGITAL LICENCE. Union Minister for Civil Aviation Ram Mohan Naidu launching the Electronic Personnel Licence for pilots in New Delhi.

India will require 20,000 pilots in the near future: Civil Aviation Minister

Rohit Vaid
New Delhi

The aviation sector will need approximately 20,000 pilots in the near future as the industry is witnessing exponential growth, Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said on Thursday.

The Minister was speaking at the launch of the 'Electronic Personnel Licence (EPL) for Pilots', which is a digital version of a personnel licence, that will replace traditional physical licences.

The new system will be securely accessible via the 'eGCA Mobile Application' to ensure a seamless and transparent process in alignment with the Centre's 'Ease of Doing

Business' and 'Digital India' initiatives.

HEALTHY GROWTH

The aviation sector is witnessing healthy growth. The country plans to create 50 airports during the next five years. Besides, domestic airlines have ordered 1,700 aircraft. India has over 800 aircraft.

"Pilots are the backbone of civil aviation, and with eGCA and EPL, we are leveraging innovative, tech-driven solutions to enhance their comfort and employability globally, while providing real-time access to their credentials to support security operations," the Minister said. Per the Ministry of Civil Aviation, India has now become the second country,

after China, to implement this advanced system following approval from the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

According to MoCA, prior to the EPL, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation was issuing licences to pilots in the smart card format. The regulator had issued 62,000 card licences, to date.

PRINTED CARDS

The total licences issued in the 2024 requiring printed cards stood at approximately 20,000, which is an average of 1,667 cards per month. "With the launch of EPL, the need for printed cards will be reduced in a phased manner, significantly streamlining the licensing process," the Ministry said in a statement.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

DGCA sticks to pilot duty norms, proposes 2-phased rollout

Our Bureau
Mumbai

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has proposed two-phased implementation of pilot duty time norms, turning down airlines' pleas for revision. However, airlines have time till November 1 to execute the rules regarding night operations.

The regulator has submitted the plan in an affidavit to the Delhi High Court which is hearing petitions against the earlier version of the rules. Last January, the DGCA introduced new duty norms for pilots but these were put on hold following opposition from the airlines.

The rules provide 48 hours of weekly rest (instead of the current 36) and restrict the number of flights a pilot can operate during night.

As per DGCA's affidavit, 15 clauses, including the one for enhancing weekly rest to 48 hours, will be implemented from July 1.

Seven clauses, including those on night duty, would come into effect from November 1.

IndiGo and SpiceJet had opposed the amendment to the rules governing night duty.

Also, the number of landings a pilot can make will be restricted to two, and the definition of night will be changed from midnight to 6 am instead of 5 am.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Premji Invest, Ranjan Pai await CCI nod to invest in Akasa Air

Tech tycoon Azim Premji's global investment arm, Manipal Group Chief Ranjan Pai's family office, and 360 ONE Asset have sought approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to acquire stakes in domestic carrier Akasa Air's parent company SNV Aviation. "The proposed transaction involves the acquisition of certain shareholding by each of PIOF, Claypond and 360 Fund (through its various schemes and affiliates) in Akasa Air," said a notice filed with the CCI on Wednesday. PIOF is a Sebi-registered alternative investment fund owned and controlled by Premji Invest, while Claypond is an arm of the Pai family group.

PTI



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Airbus sees jet deliveries rising 7% in '25



Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury hints at MBDA-like venture for European space merger

Airbus flagged short-term production pressures and confirmed a delay to its A350 freighter as it predicted a 7 per cent increase in deliveries to around 820 jets this year, while continuing to clean up troubled space and defence projects. Europe's largest aerospace group took a fresh charge of \$312.84 million for its troubled Space business, while highlighting potential risks to the long-term future of its slow-selling A400M military transport aircraft.

Guillaume Faury, the CEO of Airbus said he would be happy if space merger talks with Thales and Leonardo led to a venture like the MBDA European missile project and hopes EU antitrust regulators will take a looser stance than in the past.

REUTERS



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

पहली बार कुछ विदेशी एयरलाइन पर एआई कोड एअर इंडिया के यात्रियों के लिए 60 नए ट्रेवल रूट खुले

38 शहरों के लिए एअर
इंडिया-लुफ्थांसा के बीच
कोडशेयरिंग करार

विजनेस संवाददाता | नई दिल्ली



एअर इंडिया के पैसेंजर्स को अब देश के 12 और यूरोप के 26 शहरों में 60 अतिरिक्त रूट्स पर ट्रेवल सुविधा मिल सकेगी। एअर इंडिया ने गुरुवार को कहा कि उसने ऑस्ट्रियन एयरलाइंस के साथ कोड शेयरिंग समझौता किया है। साथ ही, जर्मन एयरलाइंस लुफ्थांसा और स्विस् इंटरनेशनल एयरलाइंस के साथ मौजूदा कोड शेयरिंग समझौते का विस्तार किया है।

नए करार की बदौलत एअर इंडिया, लुफ्थांसा और स्विस् के बीच कोड शेयरिंग रूट्स की कुल संख्या 55 से बढ़कर करीब 100 हो गई है। एअर इंडिया और ऑस्ट्रियन एयरलाइंस के बीच 26 और कोड शेयरिंग रूट पर समझौता हुआ है। एअर इंडिया की यूनाइटेड एयरलाइंस, एयर कनाडा, जेटस्टार एयरवेज, एयर न्यूजीलैंड, क्वॉंटस एयरवेज और वर्जिन ऑस्ट्रेलिया सहित करीब 20 इंटरनेशनल एयरलाइंस के साथ भी 100 से ज्यादा रूट्स पर पार्टनरशिप है। पहली बार ऑस्ट्रियन एयरलाइंस

एअर इंडिया की इंटरनेशनल फ्लाइट तीन साल में दोगुनी

एअर इंडिया का लक्ष्य एक मॉडल मार्केट हब बनाकर लंबी दूरी के इंटरनेशनल मार्केट और प्रीमियम ट्रेफिक की डिमांड वाले मार्केट में पहुंच बढ़ाना है। कंपनी ने इंटरनेशनल रूट्स पर दैनिक उड़ानें 3 साल में दोगुनी यानी 313 कर ली है। एअर इंडिया अब 48 इंटरनेशनल डेस्टिनेशन तक सेवाएं दे रही है, जो पहले 39 थी। इस्का नेटवर्क एशिया, उत्तरी अमेरिका, अफ्रीका और यूरोप समेत 31 देशों में फैला है।

सहित लुफ्थांसा समूह की एयरलाइनों द्वारा संचालित कुछ सर्विसेज पर 'एआई' डेजिनेटर कोड होगा। एअर इंडिया के चीफ कमर्शियल ऑफिसर निपुण अग्रवाल ने कहा, 'इस साझेदारी के साथ हमारे ग्राहकों को लुफ्थांसा ग्रुप की फ्लाइट्स पर यूरोप में पहले से ज्यादा डेस्टिनेशन पर ट्रेवल की सुविधा मिलेगी।'



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

DGCA Tells HC to Dismiss Pilots' Petition on Rest Norms

Regulator to start rolling out pilot rest rules from July 1

Our Bureau

Mumbai: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has urged the Delhi High Court to dismiss a writ petition filed by the Federation of Indian Pilots, saying that it is ready with a two-phased timeline for the roll out of pilot rest regulations.

The pilots' body had petitioned the court about a delay in the implementation of the new rules. The DGCA, in its affidavit filed with the court, said 15 clauses of the revised Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) will come into effect July 1. The remaining seven clauses will be implemented by November 1, it said.

The DGCA unveiled the new duty rules for pilots in January last year, but paused their implementation after airlines raised objections. The proposed rules increase the weekly rest time to 48 hours from the existing 36 and limit the number of night flights a pilot can operate.

No-frills carriers IndiGo and SpiceJet opposed the changes to night duty regulations. The revised rules cap night flight time at eight hours with a maximum of two landings, and redefine the night period as midnight to 6 am, instead of the current midnight to 5 am. IndiGo warned that expanding the night window would cause a "severe operational impact".

Airlines have time until November 1 to comply with the new night operation rules. The DGCA outlined this phased rollout in its affidavit to the Delhi High Court, which is reviewing petitions against the earlier version of the rules.

The second phase, from November 1, 2025, introduces complex operational limits. "Clauses concerning night duty, maximum flight time and duty period extensions during unforeseen circumstances will be enforced from 01.11.2025," the affidavit said. Pilots on ultra-long-range routes will receive "a period of at least 120 hours free of all duties". In case of unforeseen delays, "flight time may be extended by a maximum of 1 hour and the flight duty period by a maximum of 2 hours," with caps to control cumulative fatigue, it said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

■ AI Expands Codeshare Pact With Lufthansa



MUMBAI Private carrier

Air India on Thursday announced the expansion of its codeshare partners-

hip with Lufthansa Group to offer 60 additional routes across 12 cities in India and 26 in Europe. Air India, in a statement, said that as part of this expansion, it has entered into a new codeshare agreement with Austrian Airlines and expanded its existing codeshare agreements with Lufthansa, and Swiss International Air Lines (SWISS). The Tata Group-owned Air India said it will now offer its customers a total of 26 destinations across Europe and three destinations in the Americas beyond its gateways in Europe (Frankfurt, Vienna, and Zurich), with the 'AI' designator code placed on certain services operated by airlines in the Lufthansa Group, including Austrian Airlines for the first time. Air India and the three Lufthansa Group carriers are members of Star Alliance.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Airbus sees deliveries rising 7% in 2025, unveils new charges

GIANLUCA LO NOSTRO
& TIM HEPHER
February 20

AIRBUS FLAGGED SHORT-TERM production pressures and confirmed a delay to its A350 freighter as it predicted a 7% increase in deliveries to around 820 jets this year, while continuing to clean up troubled space and defence projects.

Europe's largest aerospace group took a fresh charge of 300 million euros (\$312.84 million) for its troubled Space business, while highlighting potential risks to the long-term future of its slow-selling A400M military transport aircraft.

Airbus reported adjusted operating income of 5.35 billion euros for 2024, down 8% and in line with expectations, including 2.56 billion in the fourth quarter as it grappled with ongoing snags in its supply chains.

Annual revenue rose 6% to 69.23 billion euros, of which 24.72 billion was generated in the three months to December 31.

Analysts had on average expected fourth-quarter core operating profit of 2.6 billion euros on sales of 24.68 billion, according to a company-compiled consensus survey.

The planemaker, which delivered 766 jets last year, roughly in line with its target, has been facing industrial



delays due partly to problems in the aerospace supply chain, which have also hampered the recovery of embattled US rival Boeing.

"Specific supply chain challenges, notably with Spirit AeroSystems, are currently putting pressure on the ramp up of both the A350 and the A220," Airbus CEO Guillaume Faury said.

Airbus said it was delaying a new freighter version of its A350 wide-body jet by around a year to the second half of 2027, confirming a development delay previously reported by Reuters.

—REUTERS



Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

उड़ान भवन में नायडू ने ईपीएल की शुरुआत की भारत को आने वाले वर्षों में होगी 20,000 पायलट की जरूरत : नागर विमानन मंत्री

एजेसी » नई दिल्ली

नागर विमानन मंत्री के. राममोहन नायडू ने बृहस्पतिवार को भारत को दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते विमानन बाजारों में से एक बताते हुए कहा कि देश में बढ़ती हवाई यात्रा की मांग को पूरा करने के लिए आने वाले वर्षों में कम से कम 20,000 पायलटों की जरूरत होगी।

'उड़ान भवन' में पायलटों के लिए 'इलेक्ट्रॉनिक परसनेल लाइसेंस' (ईपीएल) की शुरुआत करने के बाद वहां उपस्थित लोगों को संबोधित करते हुए मंत्री ने कहा कि विमानन क्षेत्र हमेशा से संपर्क, आर्थिक वृद्धि और प्रौद्योगिकी की रीढ़ रहा है। उन्होंने कहा कि अगले पांच वर्ष में देश में 50 और हवाई अड्डे होंगे। पिछले 10 साल में हवाई अड्डों की संख्या दोगुनी होकर 157 हो गई है।

भारतीय बेड़े में बढ़ेंगे विमान

नायडू ने कहा, " हम एक बहुत महत्वकांक्षी आंकड़े की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं... यदि आप विमानन क्षेत्र को देखें, तो हमारे पास 1,700 विमान के ऑर्डर हैं जो भारतीय बेड़े में आने वाले हैं। आने वाले दिनों में हम इतनी अधिक वृद्धि देखेंगे... निकट भविष्य में कम से कम 20,000 पायलट की आवश्यकता होगी।"



- भारत दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते विमानन बाजारों में से एक
- अगले पांच वर्ष में देश में 50 और हवाई अड्डे होंगे
- हमारे पास 1,700 विमानों के ऑर्डर अभी लंबित बने हुए हैं

भारत के विमानन क्षेत्र में बड़ा परिवर्तन

नायडू ने लिखा, " यह सुरक्षा, अंतर-संचालन क्षमता को बढ़ाने और हमें वैश्विक सर्वोत्तम व्यवहार के साथ जोड़ भारतीय विमानन के लिए एक बड़ा परिवर्तन है। नागर विमानन सचिव कुमलमंगल कुअलनम और डीजीसीए के महानिदेशक (डीजी) फैज अहमद किचवई भी इस कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित रहे।"

ईपीएल लागू करने वाला भारत दुनिया का दूसरा देश

ईपीएल की शुरुआत के साथ ही भारत चालक दल के सदस्यों के लिए ईपीएल लागू करने वाला दुनिया का दूसरा देश बन गया है। वैन पहले ही ऐसी सुविधा लागू कर चुका है। नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) द्वारा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक परसनेल लाइसेंस (ईपीएल) का कार्यान्वयन सरकार की कारोबार सुगमता तथा डिजिटल इंडिया पहल के अनुरूप है।

लाइसेंस अधिक आसानी से प्राप्त कर पाएंगे

मंत्री ने कहा कि उनका मंत्रालय बड़े पैमाने पर प्रौद्योगिकी का उपयोग कर रहा है। नायडू ने कहा, "ईपीएल की शुरुआत के साथ, हम यह सुनिश्चित कर रहे हैं कि पायलट अब अपने लाइसेंस को अधिक आसानी और दक्षता के साथ प्राप्त कर सकें। यह पहल भारत सरकार के डिजिटल इंडिया मिशन के अनुरूप है, जो नागरिकों और बड़े पैमाने पर उद्योग के मुद्दों के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी का लाभ उठाने के प्रति हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को दृढ़ करती है।"

पायलट के लिए ईजीसीए ऐप बना सुरक्षित

ईपीएल को अपजाने से विमानन नवोन्मेषण में भारत की अग्रणी स्थिति और मजबूत हुई है। इससे भारत ने न केवल अपने विमानन क्षेत्र की आवश्यकताओं को पूरा किया है, बल्कि अन्य देशों के लिए अनुकरणीय मिसाल भी पेश की है। इसके बाद, मंत्री ने सोशल मीडिया मंच 'एक्स' पर लिखा कि पायलट अब ईजीसीए ऐप के जरिये किसी भी समय अपने लाइसेंस तक सुरक्षित पहुंच कायम कर सकते हैं।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HARI BHUMI

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

एअर इंडिया-लुफ्थांसा आर टाय

कोडशेयर साझेदारी से यूरोप के शहरों में सेवा

एजेसी नई दिल्ली

निजी विमानन कंपनी एअर इंडिया ने गुरुवार को लुफ्थांसा समूह के साथ अपनी कोडशेयर साझेदारी के विस्तार की घोषणा की, जिसके तहत भारत के 12 शहरों और यूरोप के 26 शहरों में 60 अतिरिक्त मार्गों पर सेवाएं दी जाएंगी। एअर इंडिया ने एक बयान में कहा कि इस विस्तार के हिस्से के रूप में, उसने ऑस्ट्रियन एयरलाइंस के साथ



एक नया कोडशेयर समझौता किया है और लुफ्थांसा और स्विस् इंटरनेशनल एयरलाइन्स के साथ अपने मौजूदा कोडशेयर समझौतों का विस्तार किया है।

टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली एअर इंडिया के मुख्य वाणिज्यिक अधिकारी निपुण अग्रवाल ने कहा कि कंपनी अब अपने ग्राहकों को यूरोप में कुल 26 गंतव्यों और यूरोप में अपने गेटवे (फ्रैंकफर्ट, वियना और ज्यूरिख) से अलग अमेरिका में तीन गंतव्यों तक सेवाओं की पेशकश करेगी। विस्तारित समझौतों से एअर इंडिया, लुफ्थांसा और स्विस् के बीच कोडशेयर मार्गों की कुल संख्या 55 से बढ़कर लगभग 100 हो जाएगी। इसके अतिरिक्त, एअर इंडिया और ऑस्ट्रियन एयरलाइंस के बीच एक नए समझौते से 26 और कोडशेयर मार्ग जुड़ गए हैं। भारत और जर्मनी या स्विट्जरलैंड के बीच उड़ानें कवर की जाएंगी।



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

देश में बीस हजार पायलट की जरूरत होगी : मंत्री

नई दिल्ली, वि.सं.। केंद्रीय नागर विमानन मंत्री राममोहन नायडू का कहना है कि भारत में विमानन क्षेत्र तेजी से आगे बढ़ रही है। ऐसे में आने वाले वर्षों में देश के अंदर 20 हजार पायलट की आवश्यकता होगी।

गुरुवार को पायलटों के लिए इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पर्सनेल लाइसेंस (ईपीएल) की शुरुआत के अवसर पर कहा कि अगले पांच वर्ष में देश में 50 और हवाई अड्डे होंगे। चीन के बाद भारत दुनिया का दूसरा देश है जहां पायलट के लिए ईपीएल की व्यवस्था

लागू हुई है। उन्होंने कहा, बीते 10 साल में हवाई अड्डों की संख्या बढ़कर 157 (दोगुनी) हो गई है। उन्होंने कहा कि देश में विमानन क्षेत्र के अंदर तेजी से विकास हो रहा है।

हवाई अड्डों के विस्तार के बीच हमने अतिरिक्त विमानों की जरूरत है। हमारे पास 1,700 विमान के ऑर्डर हैं जो निकट भविष्य में भारतीय बेड़े में शामिल होंगे। ईपीएल की शुरुआत के साथ हम यह सुनिश्चित कर रहे हैं कि पायलट अब अपने लाइसेंस को आसानी और दक्षता के साथ प्राप्त कर सकें।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Pilots could get weekly rest of 48 hours from July 1: DGCA affidavit

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The weekly rest for pilots could be raised from 36 hours to 48 hours with effect from July 1, and revised night flying hours 'rolled out' from November 1, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said in a detailed scheme for implementing relaxed duty norms for cockpit crew submitted before the Delhi High Court on Thursday.

The liberalised norms governing duty and rest periods for pilots to combat concerns over rising fatigue levels were announced in January 2024, and were to be implemented from June 1, 2024. But they were put on hold after stiff opposition from airlines, forcing pilots' unions to approach the court. After several rounds of court-ordered mediation held by



Pilots have been demanding the scrapping of two consecutive nights of flying.

the DGCA between Air India and the pilot bodies, the regulator agreed to a phased implementation.

"Out of 22 clauses, 15 clauses would be implemented from 01.07.2025 and the remaining 7 clauses would be rolled out from 01.11.2025," said the affidavit before the Delhi High Court signed by the DGCA's Assistant Director

(Operations), Himanshu Srivastava. The next hearing is on Monday.

Key among the provisions recommended for implementation from July 1 is the weekly rest period of "continuous 48 hours". Night duty will be during the hours between midnight and 6 a.m. instead of the present midnight to 5 a.m. As airlines are allowed to assign pilots only to two consecutive nights of flying, this provision will bring down the time of night flying. Further, the DGCA has capped the number of night landings a pilot can do to two.

Pilots have been demanding the scrapping of two consecutive nights of flying, introduced in April 2019, as night duties disrupt the natural sleep-wake cycle, cause fatigue and impact alertness levels. They say that in the

recent past, due to increased international flying, the quantum of night flying has increased exponentially.

The DGCA has used the term "roll-out" and not implementation for the set of rules delayed until November 1, sources in pilots' unions said, indicating that the regulator could be planning a staggered enforcement. Airlines have strongly opposed the DGCA's proposal for restricting night flying. IndiGo had said in a submission to the DGCA in December that expanding the definition of night flying would have "a severe operational impact" and it should therefore remain unchanged.

Air India said it would implement the new definition after the regulator brought a modern, data-based fatigue risk management system.

DGCA phased roll out: More rest for pilots, tighter limits for night

Shruti Kakkar

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NEW DELHI: India's aviation regulator has proposed a new, phased roadmap to introduce stricter limits on when and how long pilots can fly in order to minimise fatigue among air crew in a submission to Delhi high court.

The Director General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) roadmap, submitted to the Delhi high court, proposes increasing pilots' weekly rest from 36 to 48 hours starting July 1, 2025, and phasing in reduced night flying from November 1, 2025, as part of relaxed duty norms for cockpit crew.

DGCA, in its affidavit before the high court, stated that of the 22 proposed clauses pertaining to Flight Duty Time Limitation (FDTL), 15 would be implemented from July 1, 2025, while the remaining would be rolled out from November 1, 2025.

The regulator's phased approach follows stiff opposition from airlines, which led to the postponement of the original implementation date of June 1, 2024. The revised timeline was submitted after several rounds of court-ordered mediation between Air India and pilot unions, facilitated by DGCA.

The next hearing on the matter is scheduled for February 24.

Among the provisions deferred to November 1 is a revised definition for night duty, wherein duty periods falling between midnight and 6am will be classified as night duty, instead of the current midnight to 5am standard.

Given that airlines can assign pilots to only two consecutive nights of flying, this modification is expected to reduce the extent of night flying. Additionally, DGCA has capped the number of night landings per pilot to two if



DGCA said that 15 of the 22 proposed clauses would be implemented by July 1. HT PHOTO

their duty period extends into the night duty window.

For ultra-long-haul flights, pilots operating across two consecutive nights, including routes to and from the US, will receive an additional 24 hours of rest, increasing the mandated rest period from at least 120 hours to at least 144 hours. Pilots have long demanded the elimination of two consecutive night duties, arguing that they disrupt natural sleep cycles, induce fatigue, and compromise alertness.

Airlines, on their part, have strongly opposed the DGCA's plan to restrict night flying. In a submission to the regulator last December, IndiGo warned that the broader night flying definition would have a "severe operational impact" and urged for the current standard to remain unchanged. Air India, too, has resisted the new norm, stating it would implement the change only after a modern, data-driven fatigue risk management system is introduced.

DGCA first announced the new FDTL rules in January 2024 to address rising fatigue concerns among pilots, initially planning for implementation by June 1, 2024. However, the regulator deferred the rollout in March 2024 following resistance from airlines, which argued that the changes would require hiring 10-20% more pilots and could lead to flight cancellations during peak travel periods.

A case of multiple failures, at too many checkpoints

In yet another instance that raises more questions than it answers, the director general of civil aviation (DGCA) transferred the director in the directorate of flying training (DFT) to drone operations with no explanation or reason. The director had taken charge of flying training only in August 2024, but he was transferred on January 30, well before his three-year term was over.

Nobody barring a few might know the actual reason, but here's what the industry has surmised. A complaint letter by the president of the association of flight training organisations (FTOs) sent on January 21 to the head of flight safety raises a red flag with regard to the training operations of a Kanpur FTO. The FTO in question was using its aircraft to train students and violating a few civil aviation requirements in the process.

Three primary violations were brought to the attention of the authorities: One, the aircraft of the flying school were not equipped with transponders, an electronic device that sends and receives signals with air traffic control (ATC) and other aircraft. Transponders are essential for safe and efficient flight operations and a civil aviation requirement (CAR) was issued over two decades ago in 2003 that all aircraft must be fitted with these. Two, the FTO's aircraft were flying at times when the visibility was below the required level, stoking the possibility of collision with both India Air Force's fighter aircraft and civil flights operating from Kanpur. The aircraft of the FTO operated on a different VHF band from the IAF fighters and commercial jets, which meant aircraft within its vicinity would not even be able to hear them. What is also of concern is that trainee pilots typically start flying solo with as little as 25-30 hours of experience, as per the DGCA and international norms — probably safer when done in low-traffic environments.

Low visibility, aircraft operating on different frequencies and no transponders on some aircraft are a recipe for disaster and could lead to a serious incident or even accident, according to experts in the sector.



Low visibility, aircraft operating on different frequencies and no transponders on some aircraft are a recipe for disaster and could lead to a serious incident. HT PHOTO

Equipment and machines can only enhance safety to a degree and cannot substitute self-discipline and internal checks by those conducting operations. While the letter from the association head refers to and tries to establish collusion between DGCA officials and the violating FTO, I will stay off this subject as the bigger concern is with systemic flaws and failings rather than the individuals in question.

Ever since the complaint was filed and the matter came to the attention of the DGCA, ministry of civil aviation and the IAF, many actions have followed, including the transfer of the director of flying training. But many questions remain, which I will raise here.

Why was the FTO operating in visibility conditions that are less than optimal for safe flying in the prescribed airfield? What is the desperation and why can't this training be carried out during better visibility? Is it worth risking the lives of your instructor, students and the lives of the occupants of other aircraft in the vicinity, be it a commercial aircraft full of passengers or a fighter aircraft? If an incident or accident were to occur, would it not mar the credibility, or even mean the end, of the FTO in question? Many global airline accidents with fatalities have marked the end of the business in the past. Seen against these, the FTO's actions defy logic.

But a lot of things in India are left to fate and defy logic. So, I will ask this: Why were the aircraft of the said FTO not meeting the most basic requirement of being equipped with transponders? This CAR, after all, has been around for so long that no FTO can claim ignorance or unfamiliarity with it.

But, in India, special exemptions are always possible, even the norm in certain cases. It appears that some of the FTOs in India who did not want to bear the extra cost or pull aircraft out (thus foregoing revenue) to get these retrofitted with transponders had sought special exemptions from the authorities, which sounds penny-wise and pound-foolish. Also, as someone flying such an aircraft on a daily or weekly basis to train students, why would a commander or instructor not insist on something that makes his own situation safer?

Further, why would the air traffic personnel involved or functioning in the area not be vigilant to this? Would they not be held accountable if some mishap took place involving two aircraft? How could this have happened under the very nose of the IAF, known for its adept management of almost all things under its ambit? And what do the commercial airlines operating in the area think of this if they were aware?

Last, but not least: Is the DGCA seized of this case? What actions have been taken against the FTO that violated the CARs? Has the regulator examined how many other such cases there are, operating flouting the rules across airfields and in the airspace of our vast country? Are people only to be transferred or held accountable when an infraction comes to light or enters the public domain? In general, are passengers supposed to fly on a wing and collective prayers? I'll end here with this series of questions in the hope of some answers.



Anjali Bhargava



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

21 FEBRUARY 2025

Premji arm, others eye Akasa Air stake

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NEWDELHI

Tech tycoon Azim Premji's global investment arm, Manipal Group chief Ranjan Pai's family office and 360 ONE Asset have sought approval from fair trade regulator CCI to acquire stakes in domestic carrier Akasa Air's parent company SNV Aviation.

"The proposed transaction involves the acquisition of certain shareholding by each of PIOF, Claypond and 360 Fund (through its various schemes and affiliates) in Akasa Air," said a notice filed with the Competition Commission of India (CCI) on Wednesday.

PIOF is a Sebi-registered alternative investment fund owned and controlled by Premji Invest, while Claypond is an arm of the Pai family group. The 360 Fund is a Sebi-

registered alternative investment fund.

SNV Aviation Pvt. Ltd, which operates Akasa Air, is engaged in domestic and international scheduled air passenger transport services and air cargo transport services.

In its submission to the CCI for the assessment of the proposed transaction, PIOF, 360 Fund and Claypond said the transaction does not lead to any competition concerns whatsoever, as there are no overlaps between the parties.

However, the application acknowledges a notional vertical relationship between Akasa Air and the portfolio companies of one of the acquirers in the upstream and downstream markets.

These include the markets for domestic and international air transportation, as well as travel agency and corporate travel services.



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

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MINT

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21 FEBRUARY 2025

\$30,000

THE COMPENSATION Delta Airlines said it would pay to each passenger involved in the plane crash at Toronto Pearson International Airport on 17 February.



Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

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चीन के बाद अब भारत भी देगा पायलटों को डिजिटल लाइसेंस

■ NBT रिपोर्ट, नई दिल्ली : केंद्रीय नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री राम मोहन नायडू ने कहा कि भारत के एविएशन सेक्टर में जबरदस्त बढ़ोतरी हो रही है। हमें निकट भविष्य में करीब 20 हजार पायलटों की जरूरत होगी। पायलट एविएशन सेक्टर की रीढ़ हैं। इनके लाइसेंस अब पहले की तरह कार्ड सिस्टम वाला नहीं बल्कि EPL यानी इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पर्सनल लाइसेंस बनाए जाएंगे। यह बात उन्होंने कमर्शल पायलट लाइसेंस (CPL) सिस्टम को बदलकर डिजिटल सिस्टम में आए EPL को लॉन्च करते हुए कही।

इसी के साथ भारत दुनिया में चीन के बाद ऐसा दूसरा देश बन गया है। जहां पायलटों के लिए ईपीएल जारी किया जाना शुरू किया जाएगा। यह सिस्टम इंटरनेशनल सिविल एविएशन ऑर्गनाइजेशन (ICAO) के 2022 में तमाम देशों से ईपीएल बनाने की दिशा में काम करने के लिए कहने के बाद भारत में भी शुरू किया गया है। ईपीएल सिस्टम को शुरू करने से पहले डीजीसीए पायलटों को स्मार्ट कार्ड के रूप में सीपीएल जारी करता था। डीजीसीए ने आज तक 62



हजार कार्ड लाइसेंस जारी किए हैं। पिछले साल 2024 में ऐसे 20 हजार सीपीएल जारी किए गए। जो की औसतन हर महीने 1667 कार्ड रहे। ईपीएल तेजी से बन सकेंगे।

केंद्रीय मंत्री ने कहा कि ईपीएल एक व्यक्तिगत लाइसेंस का डिजिटल संस्करण है जो पायलटों के लिए पारंपरिक लाइसेंस की जगह लेगा। यह भारत सरकार की 'ईज ऑफ डूइंग बिजनेस' और 'डिजिटल इंडिया' पहल के अनुरूप एक सहज और पारदर्शी प्रक्रिया है। यह ईपीएल एक मोबाइल ऐप के माध्यम से सुरक्षित रूप से उपलब्ध होंगे। उन्होंने कहा कि पिछले 10 सालों में देश में एयरपोर्ट की संख्या दो गुना होकर 157 हो गई है।

आने वाले वर्षों में भारत को होगी 20 हजार पायलट की जरूरत

■ दस वर्षों में देश में एयरपोर्ट की संख्या 157 पर पहुंची ■ अगले पांच वर्षों में देश को मिलेंगे 50 नए हवाईअड्डे

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।

नागर विमानन मंत्री के. राममोहन नायडू ने बृहस्पतिवार को भारत को दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते विमानन बाजारों में से एक बताते हुए कहा कि देश में बढ़ती हवाई यात्रा की मांग को पूरा करने के लिए आने वाले वर्षों में कम से कम 20,000 पायलटों की जरूरत होगी।

'उड़ान भवन' में पायलटों के लिए 'इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पर्सनल

लाइसेंस' (ईपीएल) की शुरुआत करने के बाद वहां उपस्थित लोगों को संबोधित करते हुए मंत्री ने कहा कि विमानन क्षेत्र हमेशा से संपर्क, आर्थिक वृद्धि और प्रौद्योगिकी की रीढ़ रहा है।

उन्होंने कहा कि अगले पांच वर्षों में देश में 50 और हवाईअड्डे होंगे। 10 साल में हवाईअड्डों की संख्या दोगुनी होकर 157 हो गई है। नायडू ने कहा, 'हम एक बहुत महत्वाकांक्षी आंकड़े की ओर बढ़ रहे हैं यदि आप विमानन क्षेत्र

को देखें, तो हमारे पास 1,700 विमान के आर्डर हैं जो भारतीय



बड़े में आने वाले हैं। आने वाले दिनों में हम इतनी अधिक वृद्धि

देखेंगे। निकट भविष्य में कम से कम 20,000 पायलट की

आवश्यकता होगी।' मंत्री ने कहा कि उनका मंत्रालय बड़े पैमाने पर

प्रौद्योगिकी का उपयोग कर रहा है।

नायडू ने कहा, 'ईपीएल की शुरुआत के साथ, हम यह सुनिश्चित कर रहे हैं कि पायलट अब अपने लाइसेंस को अधिक आसानी और दक्षता के साथ प्राप्त कर सकें। यह पहल भारत सरकार के डिजिटल इंडिया मिशन के अनुरूप है, जो नागरिकों और बड़े पैमाने पर उद्योग के मुनाफे के लिए प्रौद्योगिकी का लाभ उठाने के

प्रति हमारी प्रतिबद्धता को दृढ़ करती है।' ईपीएल की शुरुआत के साथ ही भारत चालक दल के सदस्यों के लिए ईपीएल लागू करने वाला दुनिया का दूसरा देश बन गया है। चीन पहले ही ऐसी सुविधा लागू कर चुका है।

नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) द्वारा इलेक्ट्रॉनिक पर्सनल लाइसेंस (ईपीएल) का कार्यान्वयन सरकार की कारोबार सुगमता तथा डिजिटल इंडिया पहल के अनुरूप है।