

AI Express cancels some flights due to rostering system issues

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI/ MUMBAI: Air India Express cancelled some flights on Wednesday as the airline grapples with crew rostering system issues, according to sources.

The Tata Group-owned carrier, which generally operates around 380 flights daily, has moved to a new rostering system. Since there are some issues with the system, it is impacting the scheduling for cabin crew and pilots, the sources said.

At the Delhi airport, seven Air India Express flights -- four departures and three arrivals -- for the period between 1.50 am and 8 pm have been cancelled for Wednesday, sources said.

There were also flight cancellations at a few



other airports, the sources added.

However, the total number of flight cancellations could not be immediately ascertained.

There was no comment from Air India Express.

The latest development comes a week after the airline witnessed disruptions due to a section of cabin crew reporting sick to protest against the alleged

letters issued to 25 cabin crew following a conciliation meeting convened by the chief labour commissioner in the national capital.

The meeting was attended by representatives of the airline and Air India Express Employees Union (AIXEU).

In a release on May 12, the union said all the cabin crew who had reported sick have joined back and "as such there is no delay on the part of the cabin crew".

"All the cabin crew members who reported sick have joined their duty by May 11, 2024. However, due to a glitch in the company's scheduling software as it was recently introduced, it is still showing that staff are reported sick," it had said.

Senior Cong leader Subhash Chawla joins BJP in Chandigarh

STATE TIMES NEWS
CHANDIGARH: Senior Congress leader and former Chandigarh mayor Subhash Chawla on Wednesday joined the BJP here.

Chawla expressed his dissatisfaction with the Congress-AAP coalition in Chandigarh, citing its detrimental effects on the grand old party's standing in the city.

"Leaving the party, which I joined at the age of 21, was a harsh decision for me to take. However, I cannot ignore the damage AAP's presence inflicted on Congress in the recent municipal corporation election," said Chawla, who has also served as president of Congress' Chandigarh wing.

"AAP is a party which indulges in petty politics.



And Congress's decision to join hands with AAP for the Lok Sabha seat will destroy its presence in the union territory," he added.

The former mayor was welcomed into the party fold by BJP national vice president Saroj Pandey, the party's Chandigarh Lok Sabha candidate Sanjay Tandon and Chandigarh BJP chief Jitender Pal Malhotra, according to a party statement.

BJP nominee Tandon said, "The Chandigarh BJP has been further

strengthened with the joining of Subhash, who has been the strongest pillar of the Chandigarh Congress."

"I have known him (Chawla) for 25 years and have interacted with him both at a political and personal levels," Tandon said, assuring the new joiner that he would "find an important place in the heart of the world's largest political party".

Polling for the lone Chandigarh parliamentary constituency will take place on June 1 in the last phase of Lok Sabha elections.

Rajasthan mine collapse: Chief vigilance officer of Hindustan Copper dies, 14 rescued

STATE TIMES NEWS
JAIPUR: Hindustan Copper Limited's Chief Vigilance Officer Upendra Kumar Pandey died after a lift collapsed at a mine in Rajasthan's Neem Ka Thana, police said on Wednesday.

Fourteen others were pulled out and sent to a hospital in Jaipur in a rescue operation that lasted several hours following the accident Tuesday night.

An HCL vigilance team from Kolkata and others were being lowered down a shaft in a "cage" Tuesday night when its cable snapped, trapping them at a depth of 1,875 feet, police said.

Additional Director General (ADG) of Rajasthan Police Anil Paliwal said the rescue team recovered the body of Chief Vigilance Officer Pandey from the mine.



A vigilance team of 15 personnel of HCL, a Central government enterprise, had gone down the mine for an inspection and while returning, the cable of the cage broke, police said, adding the rescue team pulled out the personnel in multiple rounds on Wednesday.

In a statement, the HCL said, "An accident occurred at Kolihan copper mine of Khetri Copper Complex (a unit of HCL), Khetrinagar, Rajasthan at around 7.30 pm on May 14."

It further said that in the accident, one person died

and 14 others suffered serious injuries. The company is taking all steps to bring normalcy and resume operations at the mine.

In Delhi, Mines Secretary V L Kantha Rao said an inquiry will be ordered in the incident.

"I had been in the same lift a few months back. It was all good...we will get an enquiry done and find out what happened," Rao told reporters.

Earlier, police said the SDRF control room received information about the incident at around 10

pm on Tuesday following which a rescue team was rushed from Jaipur.

SDRF team commander Ravi Verma along with nine jawans and the rescue team of HCL reached the injured with the help of another lift. They gave first aid to the seriously injured and brought them from -72 metre level to zero metre level (sea level) with the help of a trolley, police said.

The injured were taken out to the base at plus 64 metre level with the help of an improvised stretcher, a pulley and a rescue rope.

Thereafter, the injured were taken out from the base by mine vehicles and sent to the hospital, police said, adding three people were taken out in the first round, five in the second round, and the remaining seven including Pandey were taken out in the third round.

Pandey had taken charge of the CVO of HCL in June last year.

The 14 personnel who were rescued are Khetri Copper Complex unit head GD Gupta, Kolihan Mine Deputy General Manager AK Sharma, Senior Manager Vidyut Vinod Singh Shekhawat, Assistant Deputy General Manager AK Bera, Chief Manager (Mine) Arnava Bhandari, Assistant Deputy General Manager Yashoraj Meena, Assistant Deputy General Manager (Vigilance) Vanendu Bhandari, Photographer Vikas Pareek, Senior Manager Research Niranjan Sahu, Security Officer Karan Singh, Manager Preetam Singh, Senior Manager Mine Ramesh Narayan Singh, Harsi Ram and Bhagirath.

They were admitted to a private hospital in Jaipur.

Woman stabbed to death over rejection of love proposal in Karnataka

STATE TIMES NEWS
H U B B A L L I (KARNATAKA): Just weeks after college student Neha Hiremath was stabbed to death by her former classmate, a 21-year-old woman was murdered inside her house by an acquaintance here for allegedly rejecting her love proposal on Wednesday.

Vishwa alias Girish Sawant, 23, knocked on the door of Anjali Ambigera's residence at Veerapur Oni area here at around 5.45 am.

When she opened the door, Girish stabbed her to death with a knife and fled the place, a senior police officer said, adding that her sister was a witness to the brutal murder.

A case of murder under Section 302 of the Indian Penal Code has been registered against the accused, police said, adding that teams have been formed to nab him.

Neha Hiremath, 23, was stabbed to death by her former classmate Fayaz Khodunaik inside her college campus in Hubballi on April 18.

"Girish was harassing my sister Anjali for sometime

now. He expressed his love to her but my sister declined. He even pressured my sister to go with him to Mysuru. He had also threatened her that she will meet the same fate as that of Neha Hiremath," Anjali's sister Yashodha told reporters here.

"When we informed police about his threats, they didn't pursue it seriously and today see, my sister is dead," she said.

Anjali's family and local residents staged a protest here demanding strict action against the accused. Later, the police reached the spot and dispersed them, assuring them that justice will be delivered. Anjali's father Mohan said that around seven months ago she had told them that Girish was harassing her. "I had warned him (Girish). But today morning, unfortunately my daughter was murdered by this same person. The accused has to be punished," he said. No girl should be in the situation that Anjali has been in, her family said, and demanded strict action against the accused who is still at large.

Meanwhile, Congress

Councillor Niranjan Hiremath -- father of Neha -- met the deceased's family and slammed the state government over the "deteriorating" law and order situation in north Karnataka and also sought suspension of Police Commissioner of Hubballi-Dharwad Renuka Sukumar for alleged "failure."

Talking about the brutal murder of Anjali, he said that despite the accused openly threatening the victim that she would meet the same fate as that of Neha, the police did not take the issue seriously when the woman's family approached them to complain.

"In less than a month of my daughter's murder, another brutal and unfortunate murder happened this morning. I have been repeatedly urging the state government and the Home Minister (G Parameshwara) to bring an appropriate law (for such incidents). The police have failed to catch the culprit in Anjali's case. He openly threatened her with Neha's incident and yet the police did not take any preventive measure," he told PTI Videos.

Kerala court sentences woman to 20 years' imprisonment for abetting rape of minor stepdaughter

STATE TIMES NEWS
KOZHIKODE (KERALA): A Kerala court on Wednesday sentenced a 43-year-old woman to 20 years' imprisonment for abetting the rape of her minor stepdaughter in 2021 at their home and another place, the perpetrator's residence near Valayam here.

The Nadapuram Fast Track Special Court (FTSC) also sentenced a 44-year-old man -- who repeatedly raped the class seven student -- to a cumulative punishment of 40 years, and the child's 44-year-old father to six months' imprisonment for not reporting the crime under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

FTSC (POCSO) Judge Suhaib M sentenced the main accused, Anil, to varying durations of punish-

ments for separate offences under the POCSO Act for a total of 40 years, Public Prosecutor Manoj Aroor said.

However, as the sentences are to be served concurrently and the highest of the jail terms given to the man is 20 years, he will serve 20 years in prison, Aroor said.

The stepmother is already serving a 20-year jail term in Kannur women's prison for sexually assaulting the girl in 2021.

She was sentenced to a cumulative 75 years of imprisonment by the Nadapuram special court in September last year, Aroor said.

As the highest of the varying sentences awarded to her back then was 20 years, she is serving that presently, he said.

The father too was sentenced in that case for six

months for the offence of not reporting the assault on his daughter, the prosecutor said.

Both of them are also facing trial in another case of sexual assault of the same child, he said.

In the instant case, the main accused repeatedly raped the girl at her home and at his residence, the prosecutor said.

When she told her father and stepmother, they told her not to disclose it to anyone.

After being subjected to repeated assaults on various occasions, the girl was taken to a rehabilitation centre where she disclosed what had happened to her and who all were involved, the prosecutor said.

Subsequently, the police lodged a case against the father, stepmother and the main accused, he said.

Janhvi on paying tribute to MS Dhoni with 'Mr. & Mrs. Mahi': I hope we honour his philosophy

STATE TIMES NEWS
MUMBAI: Actor Jhanvi Kapoor on Wednesday said her upcoming sport drama "Mr. & Mrs. Mahi" is a hat tip to cricket legend Mahendra Singh Dhoni, whose statement from a press event served as an inspiration for the film.

Directed by Sharan Sharma of "Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl" fame, the movie features Kapoor and Rajkumar Rao as the titular couple -- Mahendra, a former cricketer, and Mahima, who is a doctor.

After Mahendra spots the cricketing talent in his wife, he encourages her to chase her dream and becomes her coach.

"He (Dhoni) gave an interview where he said, 'It's not about the result but about the process. If you do your process with honesty and



hard work, the result will be seen at the end and even if you fail, it doesn't matter.' This film is made on that line by Mahendra Singh Dhoni. I hope we honour his philosophy," Janhvi told reporters here at the launch of the film's song "Dekha Tenu".

Rao, who earlier collaborated with Kapoor for the 2021 horror comedy "Roohi", said he believes there is a lot to learn from Dhoni.

injuries during the process. "A lot of hard work has gone into it. I trained for almost two years. I started training while promoting 'Mili'. Our director is a purist and works with a lot of honesty, so he wanted me to become a cricketer for the film. He didn't want to use VFX or do anything halfheartedly."

"I suffered a lot of injuries as well while prepping, both my shoulders were dislocated, but I'd like to give all the credit to him, the director, and both my coaches Abhishek Nayar and Vikrant sir who have done a lot of hard work and held my hand at every turn," she said.

Sharma, who collaborated with Kapoor for his debut film "Gunjan Saxena", praised Kapoor for her dedication and pushing the envelope with the sports drama.

"I think I pushed her very hard to achieve the cricket level we needed for this film. There is no cringe shot in the film which could give me a

sleepless night. We pushed her very hard and she endured the torture. The cricket fan in me is thrilled with what she has done in the film," he added.

On collaborating with Rao for the first time, the filmmaker said he is a "lethal actor".

"He has the hunger of a first timer and the skills of a legend which is a rare combination. I am only blessed that I got to work with Raj on my second film. It's fair to say he is one of the greatest actors of all time in India," he said.

The song "Dekha Tenu" is derived from a stanza from the hit song "Shava Shava" from Karan Johar's "Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham". The track is composed by Jaani and sung by music reality show winner Mohammad Faiz.

Produced by Zee Studios and Dharma Productions, "Mr. & Mrs. Mahi" is scheduled for release in theatres on May 31.

was arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police on October 3. The judge further directed Purkayastha not to contact any witnesses or approver, Amit Chakravarty, in the case. The judge also directed the accused not to leave the country without the prior permission of the court.

The Supreme Court declared as "invalid" the arrest of Purkayastha in the case, and directed that he be released from custody. According to the FIR, the news portal allegedly received huge funds from China to "disrupt the sovereignty of India" and cause disaffection against the country. It also alleged that Purkayastha conspired with a group, People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS), to sabotage the electoral process during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Six pollution-hit villages in Gujarat to get Rs 25 lakh compensation after SC order



STATE TIMES NEWS
AHMEDABAD: Six villages in Gujarat's Rajkot district that were affected by pollution due to a landfill will collectively get Rs 25 lakh compensation following a recent order of the Supreme Court, an NGO said on Wednesday.

The company responsible for the pollution had been directed by the top court to deposit the money as per a 2013 order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

The NGO, Paryavaran Mitra, said they will now follow up with the authorities to get the amount released.

As per the case details, the Rajkot Municipal Corporation had signed an agreement with

Hanjer Biotech Energies Private Limited (HBEPL) in 2003 to set up and run a solid waste disposal site at Nakrawadi village near Rajkot city.

However, due to improper handling of solid waste and dispersion of untreated garbage in nearby areas, people from six villages in the vicinity faced health issues and other problems like groundwater contamination and degradation of farmland, said NGO director Mahesh Pandya.

About 7,500 people live in these villages - Nakrawadi, Paliya, Nagalpar, Hadmatiya, Khijadiya and Rajgadhi.

"We had filed a petition with the NGT, which found merit in

our case. Through an order in December 2013, the NGT had asked the company to deposit Rs 25 lakh with the collector for disbursement as compensation to these five village panchayats," said Pandya.

While the company challenged the NGT order in the Supreme Court, which directed it to first deposit Rs 25 lakh with the collector, it became bankrupt during the pendency of the appeal, he said.

"We are of the opinion that during the rainy season the air and water pollution is caused on account of water slippage from the landfill site because of untreated solid waste which flows along with rainy water from the slope of a small hillock towards the village side," the NGT had said in its order 2013 order.

"We also find that HBEPL failed to take proper precaution for maintenance of landfill site," the green court had added.

In its order dated May 7, the SC "disposed of" the appeal of HBEPL and directed the Rajkot collector to distribute Rs 25 lakh to the affected villages.

It has come over a decade after the NGT passed its order about compensation, said Pandya.

"Our team will soon meet the Rajkot collector and municipal commissioner with the demand that the interest on Rs 25 lakh be included in the final amount. Moreover, we will also ask RMC (Rajkot Municipal Corporation) to give separate compensation to the villagers," said Pandya.

After HBEPL became bankrupt, the Rajkot civic body signed an agreement with another company to manage the landfill. "The new company is managing solid waste at the site systematically," he added.

Gold jumps Rs 450; silver surges Rs 900

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Gold price jumped Rs 450 to Rs 73,400 per 10 grams in the national capital on Wednesday amid a rally in precious metal rates internationally, according to HDFC Securities.

The yellow metal had closed at Rs 72,950 per 10 grams in the previous close.

Silver price also surged by Rs 900 to Rs 86,900 per kg. In the previous session, it had ended at Rs 86,000 per kg.

"Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 73,400 per 10 grams, up by Rs 450 amid a positive trend in the overseas markets," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst, Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Globally, spot gold at Comex was trading at

USD 2,365 per ounce, up by USD 26 from the previous close.

Gold rose during European trading hours on Wednesday, buoyed by a weak US dollar and falling bond yields, Qandhi said.

Silver also quoted higher at USD 28.80 per ounce. In the previous session, it had ended at USD 28.35 per ounce.

"The prices witnessed buying on the positive forecast for US CPI data to be released in the evening, hinting at inflation cooling off, which could prompt the US Federal Reserve to cut rates sooner."

"The bullish trend in gold prices remains intact as long as prices stay above Rs 70,000 in MCX," Jateen Trivedi, VP Research Analyst of Commodity and Currency, LKP Securities, said.

NewsClick case: Delhi court directs Prabir Purkayastha not to tamper with evidence

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: A Delhi Court on Wednesday directed NewsClick founder and editor-in-chief Prabir Purkayastha, accused in a case of allegedly receiving money to peddle pro-China propaganda through its stories, to not comment on the merits of the case or tamper with the evidence. Additional Sessions Judge (ASJ) Hardeep Kaur imposed the condition while issuing the release order for Purkayastha in pursuance of the Supreme Court order passed earlier on Wednesday, declaring his arrest in the case as "invalid in the eyes of law".

The ASJ directed the accused to submit a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh and two sureties of like amount in the case lodged under the anti-terrorism law, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). He

was arrested by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police on October 3. The judge further directed Purkayastha not to contact any witnesses or approver, Amit Chakravarty, in the case. The judge also directed the accused not to leave the country without the prior permission of the court.

The Supreme Court declared as "invalid" the arrest of Purkayastha in the case, and directed that he be released from custody. According to the FIR, the news portal allegedly received huge funds from China to "disrupt the sovereignty of India" and cause disaffection against the country. It also alleged that Purkayastha conspired with a group, People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism (PADS), to sabotage the electoral process during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.