



## AIRLINE USERS RIGHTS AND GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL FORUM

Kochi – 682017

20<sup>th</sup> May 2024

**Subject: Memorandum to the Hon. Minister for Civil Aviation, Government of India: Seeking appropriate remedial measures to address sudden Flight interruptions and cancellations due to unexpected operational issues/mismanagement by Airlines**

Respected Sir,

Greetings from AURGRF!!!

In light of the recent unfortunate and unwelcome incidents in the Indian aviation industry, particularly the sudden flight disruptions caused by the cancellation of over 100 Air India Express flights, we urge immediate attention. These cancellations, resulting from a shortage of cabin crew due to employee protests against airline management, have severely impacted passengers, especially those traveling to Gulf countries.

The sudden strike by Air India Express employees has caused immense hardship for hundreds of passengers who had already checked in for their flights. This includes employees needing to return to duty, families reuniting, business travelers, and tourists. Canceling flights without prior notice, especially after passengers have checked in and received boarding passes, constitutes a serious violation of passengers' rights and has led to chaos, posing a significant challenge to the traveling public.

The airline's inability to stabilize its network has caused further inconvenience and continues to do so. While the privatization of Indian aviation allows commercial freedom for airlines in pricing and services, this freedom should not compromise passengers' rights or come at the cost of the traveling public. Airlines must ensure that service disruptions do not adversely affect travelers. The "nine freedoms of the air" are intended to facilitate smooth and convenient travel for passengers, not to exploit them for commercial gains.

Tons of vegetable cargo, including perishable goods and newspaper dailies, have been offloaded or returned, resulting in millions of rupees in losses. Given the pre-planned nature of this situation, it is doubtful whether all safety measures have been adequately considered or implemented, posing a significant safety risk to the traveling public.

The Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF), represented by President Biji Eapen and General Secretary Adv Ajith Marath, urges the Ministry of Civil Aviation to take immediate steps to prevent such occurrences in the future. We believe that improved management and communication within the airline industry are essential to protect passengers' rights, especially as the Indian aviation industry surges ahead with passenger traffic exceeding 4.8 lakh per day across 139 airports in India.



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AURGRF

We request the Ministry of Civil Aviation to instruct the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to implement necessary regulatory changes to curtail such incidents in the future, which occurred due to oversight by respective airline management. Indian passengers deserve transparency, accountability, and the protection of their rights while availing services of airlines.

Therefore, we respectfully request the Honourable Minister for Civil Aviation, Government of India, to initiate the formation of an "Advisory Committee" for the Aviation Industry. This committee should include appropriate representation from all industry stakeholders, including the DGCA, airlines, air passenger associations, airline employee associations, airport handling agencies, safety and security departments, and other relevant government departments.

Your prompt action on this matter will significantly contribute to the stability and growth of the Indian aviation industry while ensuring passenger rights and safety.

Sincerely

For Airline Users Rights and Grievances Redressal Forum (AURGRF)

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