

PM Modi uses new Air India One aircraft for his visit to Bangladesh

A Monitor Report

Date: 01 April, 2021



Dhaka : Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi on March 26 landed at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh on his first international flight post lockdown in the newly inducted Boeing 777 VVIP aircraft with call sign Air India One.

The custom-made Boeing B777 were inducted last year to replace the ageing 747 used to fly the President of India, Vice President and the Prime Minister on international state visits.

The aircraft has been specially retrofitted with the latest self-defense protection suite for VVIP transport duties. It was originally owned by Air India, and has been handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF), which will use it to ferry the Prime Minister, the President and the Vice President.

The new aircraft has a call sign 'Air India One'. These are a duo of identical aircraft that have been modified at a cost of approximately INR 8,400 crore.

The B777 planes have the state-of-the-art missile defense systems called Large Aircraft Infrared Countermeasures (LAIRCM) and Self-Protection Suites (SPS).

In terms of livery, the aircraft dons the national emblem and the name 'India' and 'Bharat' written in both Hindi and English on either sides of the aircraft, while the national flag is present on the tail wing.

Air India One is operated by pilots of the Indian Air Force and not of Air India.

However, the new wide-body planes are maintained by Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL), which is a subsidiary of the Indian national carrier.

The planes can reportedly fly between India and the US in one go without having to stop for refuelling.

The Air India One planes have similar security measures as the Air Force One planes used by the US President.

Similar to the Air Force One, the Air India One aircraft also has Self-Protection Suites and a massive office space with conference cabins.

In February 2020, the US agreed to sell the two defense systems to India at a cost of USD 190 million. These planes are equipped with advance communication system.

The aircraft was scheduled to arrive in India in July 2020. However, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the handing over of the retro-fitted aircraft was delayed.

It had initially served in the fleet of Air India in 2018 before being flown back to a Boeing facility in San Antonio, Texas, where it was fitted with the latest air defense protection technology.