

## Air India proposes lower landing charges for long-haul flights

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Dhaka: Tata Group-owned Air India has urged the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to implement incentives to boost international-to-international (I2I) transit traffic at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.

The airline has also called for a reduction in landing charges for long-haul and ultra-long-haul flights to strengthen India's position as a global aviation hub.

The suggestions were made as part of the airline's response to the tariff proposal for Delhi airport's 2024-29 control period.

Air India, which is steadily expanding its wide-body fleet and network, believes these measures will help meet the rising demand for international air travel.

Speaking to the media, Air India CEO and MD Campbell Wilson stressed the need for an economic structure that supports India's ambition of becoming a major aviation hub.

"The ambition of the government is to build India as an aviation hub and to use that as a catalyst for economic activities that aviation brings.

Currently, a lot of these benefits go to foreign countries where significant traffic from India is handled. More wide-body services and developing a hub at Delhi or Mumbai will increase transit traffic," Wilson said.

Delhi International Airport (DIAL), the airport operator, has proposed variable user fees based on cabin class and peak/off-peak hours.

However, Air India has suggested that AERA introduce incentives specifically to boost I2I traffic at the airport.

The airline has also recommended a 30pc reduction in landing charges for long-haul and ultra long-haul flights on a per-metric-tonne basis.

Typically, flights exceeding nine hours are classified as long-haul, while ultra long-haul flights extend beyond 16 hours—such as Air India's routes to North America.

Additionally, Air India has proposed a waiver of landing charges and a 20pc reduction in User Development Fees (UDF) for domestic wide-body flights, encouraging greater deployment of such aircraft on domestic routes.

Highlighting the strategic role of Delhi and Mumbai as major transit hubs for both I2I and Domestic-to-International (D2I) travel, the airline noted that the current tariff framework will play a crucial role in shaping India's aviation landscape.

With India's aviation sector witnessing rapid growth, Air India's proposals reflect a broader push to strengthen the country's position in global air travel while making its airports more competitive.

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