

IndiGo pilots temporarily blinded by laser

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Kolkata: A serious safety concern arose as a powerful laser beam intruded the cockpit of an IndiGo flight from Bengaluru to Kolkata.

The incident occurred when the flight was just a kilometer away from landing, with 165 passengers and six crew members onboard.

The pilots were momentarily blinded by the laser, raising alarms about the dangers posed by such actions. Both pilots and airlines have urged the Bidhannagar Police to take strict action against individuals using lasers near airports, emphasizing the need to ensure flight safety.

Airport officials revealed that the captain of IndiGo flight 6E 223 encountered the laser intrusion near Kaikhali, as the plane descended rapidly towards the runway. The rate of descent was reported to be between 1,500-2,000 ft per minute, highlighting the critical timing of

the incident.

Any distraction or vision impairment during this crucial phase of flight could have catastrophic consequences. Such incidents can force pilots to abort landings and initiate a go-around for a fresh approach, adding to the risks and delays.

The matter has been escalated to the NSCBI Airport police station, and authorities are awaiting an action-taken report from the police. The incident has brought attention to the ongoing issue of laser lights posing hazards to flights, which was discussed at the Airport Environment Management Committee meeting attended by Bengal's home secretary, Nandini Chakravorty, last week.

In response to such incidents, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) mandates an 18.5km-radius exclusion zone for laser lights around airports to protect pilots from being blinded during critical phases of flight, such as landing.

Bidhannagar City Police had previously imposed a ban on drones and laser lights at night for event organizers, but the recent incident has prompted authorities to consider extending this ban to other festive occasions and marriage ceremonies in the region.

Pilots approaching the airport from Rajarhat have frequently reported incidents of laser beams during festive seasons, highlighting the need for stricter regulations and enforcement measures to ensure the safety of air travel in the area.

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