

IndiGo to introduce fatigue analysis tool for pilots

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Mumbai : IndiGo will soon introduce a wrist gadget and use a ground device to detect fatigue among pilots and check their level of alertness before and after flying an aircraft.

The airline will partner with French aerospace conglomerate Thales Group to work on the Fatigue Analysis Tool, it said in a statement. The technology will enable the airline to collect and process data from pilots to prepare flight patterns and rosters aimed at reducing pilot fatigue.

“The programme will use real-time data, historical information, and predictive analytics, with all data collected being de-identified. We remain committed to our pilots’ well-being, ensuring their health and mental well-being, ultimately enhancing passenger safety,” the airline’s statement read.

This program will offer details about the demographic data, including routes, pairings, crew profiles, among other factors.

It will also conduct a proof-of-concept trial to assess the alertness of pilots over the next few months. Once this process is completed, the airline will evaluate the accuracy of the recorded data.

IndiGo's bases in cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai will host the ground devices initially where pilots will undertake a five-minute test.

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Moreover, the carrier will continue with the current system where pilots can excuse themselves from their duties in case they feel fatigued or tired.

The airline operates around 1,900 flights per day and has over 4,000 pilots operating up to four take-off and landings per day.

The airline's development to introduce technology to detect pilot fatigue comes days after one of IndiGo's pilots, Manoj Subramanyam, aged 40, died due to sudden cardiac arrest at the Nagpur airport in August, just before boarding a flight that he was scheduled to fly to Pune.

Last month, an IndiGo captain told media that the pilots have raised issues related to fatigue, especially after consecutive night flights, with the management.

The IndiGo pilot's death had raised questions about Indian carriers' internal procedures and the flight duty time limitation (FDTL) norms which were incorporated by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in 2019.

As per the 2019 rules, a pilot can be asked to fly commercial passenger flights for two consecutive nights (between 12 AM-5 AM) once in a week. This was not allowed under the 2011 FDTL rules, which were replaced by the 2019 rules.

Under the 2011 rules, a pilot was allowed to fly only cargo flights for two consecutive nights, after which he or she was mandated to take rest for at least 54 hours.

"Flight time" means time taken to operate a single flight while "flight duty period" is time taken to operate a consecutive series of flights by a pilot.

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The 2019 rules allow the airlines -- under "unforeseen operational circumstances" -- to extend a pilot's flight time by maximum 4.5 hours and his or her flight duty period by maximum 9 hours on a cumulative basis for a consecutive period of 28 days.

Under the 2011 rules, the limit was three hours for flight time, and six hours of flight duty period, over 30 days.

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