

# Air India fined over passenger's mid-air urination scandal

January 21, 2023

**The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk:** Air India has been fined \$37,000 for its handling of an incident in which a drunk senior US bank executive was accused of urinating on a female passenger, Indian media reported. The man allegedly relieved himself on the 72-year-old woman seated in business class on a 26 November flight from New York to New Delhi, an incident dubbed "peegate" by the media.

The Indian Directorate General of Civil Aviation also fined Air India's director of in-flight services 300,000 rupees in addition to the carrier's penalty of three million rupees (\$37,000), reports on Friday and Saturday said. The flight's pilot also had his license suspended for three months for "failing to discharge his duties" to ensure safety and discipline. The banker, Indian national Shankar Mishra, was allowed to disembark as normal when the aircraft landed in India and no immediate action was taken.

The woman complained and, after the story was widely reported in the Indian media, police arrested Mishra weeks later after he went to ground and reportedly switched off his phone. US bank Wells Fargo fired him from his job as vice president of its Indian operations after the "deeply disturbing" allegations. Air India faced severe criticism for its handling of the woman's complaint and the airline's chief executive was forced to issue an apology. "Air India acknowledges that it could have handled these matters better, both in the air and on the ground and is committed to taking action," chief executive Campbell Wilson said.

Mishra has been refused bail. His lawyer, Ramesh Gupta, told a hearing last week that the woman, an Indian classical dancer, had in fact urinated on herself. According to Indian media, Gupta also said that, because of where she was seated, it was impossible for Mishra to have urinated on her without also doing so on another woman who has "made no such complaint". The case is the latest embarrassing incident to be reported in India's booming airline sector in recent months, including shirtless brawls and passengers having heated arguments with cabin crew. Another inebriated man was accused of urinating on the blanket of a woman on a flight from Paris to India last month but no action was taken after he issued a written apology, reports said.