No-Fly List - Airlines

Why in news?

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The Civil Aviation Ministry has recently implemented India's first no-fly list measure which bans passengers from flying if they misbehave.

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What is a no-fly list?

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- The No-fly list specifies a list of passengers who are banned from flying for a minimum of three months to more than two years.
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- The behaviours for which a passenger can be barred has been categorised into three levels -
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1. Level 1: Unruly Behaviour (physical gestures, verbal harassment, etc.) - Ban up to 3 months
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2. Level 2: Physically Abusive Behaviour - Ban up to 6 months
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3. Level 3: Life Threatening Behaviour - Minimum ban of 2 years with no upper limit.
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- The flying ban rules will be applicable to foreign carriers as well.
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- The pilot-in-command is the final authority to assess the situation and accordingly inform the airline's central control.
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How does it work?

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- The rules impose certain obligations on airlines which include establishing Standard Operating Procedures and training their cabin crew, flight crew and ground staff.
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- **Internal Committees** - Constituted by the airlines, the committee will be headed by a retired judge, a representative of another airline and a member of a passenger association.
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- The airline can ban a passenger initially for 30 days, during which the committee will adjudicate on complaints and decide on the ban tenure.
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- **DGCA** - The airline will send the decision of the committee to the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).
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- DGCA will maintain a list of these passengers on its website and it will be visible to the public.
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- **Appellate committee** - formed by the aviation ministry it will be headed by a retired high court judge, with a representative from passenger association and a senior airline official.
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- Passengers can appeal within 60 days to this committee against the airlines, if they feel the airline has been unfair.
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- **Other clauses** - If the committee is unable to give its verdict in thirty days, the passenger is free to fly.
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- Also, during these 30 days the passenger can fly with other airlines if they do not ban him/her.
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- No compensation will be offered to the passenger in case the allegations of the airline are proven wrong.
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- Besides, there is a provision for the **Ministry of Home Affairs** to identify certain individuals as a national security threat.
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- This will not be part of the public no-fly list but will be shared only with the airlines.
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What lies ahead?

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- The no-fly list measure will empower airlines to address the issues of misbehaviour, and check passenger angst and air rages.
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- However, passenger associations are sceptical of the no fly list as it would give too many powers to the airlines.
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- Also, the special provision with the Home Ministry should be reconsidered as it seems to give no powers to the DGCA to differ or refuse.
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- The imposition of the no-fly ban should thus be used only as a last resort.
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Source: The Hindu, Livemint

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