

News

A committee appointed by the Bombay High Court will review the airport's amenities for the elderly and disabled.

It is anticipated that the committee would confer with stakeholders, including travelers, and suggest guidelines to allow wheelchair users and senior persons to travel comfortably.



A three-person committee was established by the Bombay High Court on Tuesday to investigate whether airports in India have the facilities necessary to meet the demands of the elderly and disabled, especially in regards to the lack of wheelchairs.

In addition to a senior representative from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the committee would be chaired by retired **Justice Goda Raghuram**, a former Andhra Pradesh High Court judge.

The ruling establishing the committee was issued by a Division Bench consisting of **Justices GS Kulkarni and Advait M Sethna**.

"A committee is being formed. A committee that works. Very, very helpful. We don't believe this has any negative aspects. Speaking to **Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Anil Singh**, who represented the DGCA, the Court stated, "In fact, it is going to be useful for DGCA."

The DGCA concurred that the committee's activities would be beneficial after the announcement.

In accordance with the Court's directive, the committee will discuss the issues raised during hearings, confer with petitioners, passengers, and other interested parties, and suggest necessary standards to allow wheelchair users and senior citizens to travel comfortably.

An 81-year-old woman and her daughter submitted one of the two petitions the court was considering after they suffered severe anguish at the Mumbai International Airport in September 2023 as a result of insufficient wheelchair assistance.

Since there was only one mobility aid available when she arrived, the elderly mother had to give up her wheelchair for her daughter, who has severe arthritis. A 53-year-old guy who was also a petitioner raised similar concerns.

The Bench voiced serious concerns about the dearth of adequate airport amenities for the elderly and people with disabilities during the hearing on April 21.

According to Justice Kulkarni, *"nobody should suffer."*

The Court vehemently disagreed with the DGCA's affidavit, which claimed that the lack of wheelchairs was due to overbooking.

The High Court clarified at Tuesday's reopening of the case that the committee's function is solely advisory and not adversarial, and that the DGCA is ultimately responsible for taking the committee's recommendations into account and reaching a decision that is suitable and

allowed by law.

The next hearing on the case is scheduled for June 30.

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