

British F-35B Stealth Jet Remains Grounded in India After Emergency Landing

July 1, 2025

— Categories: *Defense & Security*



A British F-35B Lightning II stealth fighter jet remains grounded at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport in Kerala, India, after making an emergency landing on June 14 due to low fuel and adverse weather conditions. The aircraft, assigned to the Royal Navy and reportedly worth over \$100 million, was forced to divert from its flight path and has since

been unable to return to service due to a significant hydraulic failure discovered shortly after landing.

Initial repair efforts by Royal Navy personnel were unsuccessful, prompting the UK to dispatch a specialized 40-member engineering team along with towing and diagnostic equipment to the site. The Indian authorities have provided logistical support and offered access to a secure maintenance hangar to aid in the recovery operation. Until the necessary equipment is installed, the jet remains parked in an exposed bay at the airport, under constant surveillance by India's Central Industrial Security Force.

Despite the technical setback, the incident has underscored the growing defense cooperation between the United Kingdom and India. Indian defense and aviation personnel responded promptly to the emergency, offering refueling support and coordinating closely with British defense officials. The British High Commission expressed its gratitude for India's swift assistance and ongoing cooperation throughout the situation.

There are ongoing discussions regarding the logistics of recovering the aircraft. If repairs cannot be completed on-site, the jet may be transported back to the UK using a Royal Air Force C-17 Globemaster, though current efforts are focused on resolving the issue locally. Meanwhile, reports suggest the UK may be liable for daily parking fees estimated at approximately ₹26,000, though this is expected to be managed through existing defense agreements.

The situation remains closely monitored by both governments. While the F-35B continues to sit idle on Indian soil, the response from both sides has been marked by professionalism and collaboration. As technicians

work to return the aircraft to service, the episode serves as a reminder of the operational risks involved in deploying high-value military assets across global theaters.