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Air India Flight's Power Unit Catches Fire After Safe Landing in Delhi

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An Air India flight arriving from Hong Kong experienced a fire in its auxiliary power unit shortly after safely landing at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport on Tuesday, July 22, 2025. The incident was swiftly contained, with no injuries reported, and has led to a formal investigation by aviation authorities.

Flight AI 315, operating an Airbus A321, had completed its journey from Hong Kong when the fire broke out in the **auxiliary power unit (APU)**, a critical system that provides energy to the aircraft while it is on the ground. The fire occurred after the aircraft had parked at the gate, with passengers already beginning to disembark. According to the airline, the APU's safety mechanisms worked as designed, automatically shutting down to prevent further escalation.

Air India confirmed in a statement that all passengers and crew members were evacuated without incident, and ground personnel responded promptly. The aircraft has been grounded pending a full inspection, and the matter has been formally reported to the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA),** India's regulatory body overseeing aviation safety and operational standards.

The timing of this event comes amid increased scrutiny within the aviation sector. Earlier this month, the DGCA issued precautionary checks across all Indian carriers for **fuel control switch (FCS)** mechanisms on Boeing 787 and 737 models. Air India, in compliance with the directive, completed its inspections and reported no irregularities.

While the damage from this fire appears limited, the occurrence highlights the critical importance of ongoing aircraft maintenance and the effectiveness of built-in safety technology. Events like these, though rare, show the need for rigorous operational oversight and rapid emergency protocols, particularly in high-traffic hubs like Delhi.

Aviation analysts suggest the incident serves as a timely reminder of the complexities involved in managing large, international fleets. "Redundancy systems and routine safety drills are not just regulatory obligations; they are what keep incidents like this from becoming disasters," said retired pilot and aviation safety consultant Rajeev Sharma in a phone interview.

The investigation will focus on potential technical or maintenance failures that could have led to the fire, including a review of recent service logs and onboard system diagnostics. Outcomes from the probe are expected to inform future maintenance procedures and reinforce risk mitigation practices across India's aviation network.

As urban air traffic grows, particularly in strategic centers like Delhi, ensuring passenger confidence hinges on both system reliability and institutional accountability. Incidents such

as this are not merely operational footnotes; they shape public trust in the broader transport infrastructure that supports economic connectivity and national mobility.

In this case, swift action by the crew and automated systems ensured a safe outcome. The follow-through clear answers, transparent investigation, and preventive steps will determine whether this is viewed as a one-off event or a warning sign of deeper systemic issues.