

## **Rats on a plane! Packed passenger jet bound for London forced to make mid-air diversion after rodent spotted in the cabin**

*By John Hutchinson, Mail Online, 30 December 2015, London*

- Plane was six hours into flight out of Mumbai to London Heathrow
- However pilot forced to turn Boeing 787 around when rat spotted
- Back in May a number of Air India aircraft grounded after rats spotted

A plane carrying 240 passengers en route to London from India was forced to return to Mumbai when a rat was spotted in the cabin.

Air India flight 131 was flying over Tehran in Iran, heading to Heathrow, earlier this morning when the passengers raised the alarm.

The pilot took the decision to turn the plane around to land back in Mumbai. The aircraft had been flying for six hours.

It is expected passengers will endure a total delay of over 11 hours.

A spokesperson for Air India told the Hindustan Times: 'AI 131 Mumbai to London returned to Mumbai today due to suspected rat sighting.'

'Though the presence of the rodent was not confirmed but keeping passenger safety in mind, the aircraft was brought back.'

'Air India gives utmost importance to safety.'

The Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft left Mumbai at 7am, having first set out of Ahmadabad.



The engineering team is investigating the incident, with the aircraft being fumigated, and the passengers were put on another flight to the UK.

MailOnline Travel has contacted Air India for comment.

In May this year Air India was forced to ground one its planes after stowaway rats were spotted on board.

The Airbus A320 was taken out of service to be fumigated after it landed in Leh, a district in the Himalayas in northern India.

Rats pose a serious threat to the safety of passengers and crew, and planes must be fumigated even when there is an unconfirmed sighting.

The rodents have been known to sneak onto aircraft via catering vehicles loaded with food, and can disrupt vital systems on board if they chew through wires.

According to the Times of India, the plane in question was out of service longer than usual because the airport in Leh does not have the equipment needed to fumigate aircraft.