

## Revue de presse du 1<sup>er</sup> au 29 janvier 2020

New Delhi: **InterGlobe Aviation, parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, on Monday announced redesignating Ronojoy Dutta as the company's whole-time director and CEO.**

Dutta, who is currently the CEO, has been redesignated with immediate effect and his term in the new role would be valid **till 23 January 2024**, according to a release.

"The decision was taken unanimously by the board of directors of the company at its meeting held today (Monday)," it added.

Dutta has been associated with the company as CEO since 24 January 2019.

"During his year-long stint with the company, IndiGo has witnessed aggressive operational and business expansion.

"Dutta's extensive experience in the aviation industry channelled IndiGo's efforts into a mission to boost economic growth and social cohesion in India, by providing air connectivity and affordable airfares across our country and to international destinations, thereby promoting trade, tourism and mobility," the release said.

28/01/20 PTI/First Post

Le gouvernement indien a lancé le processus de privatisation de la compagnie aérienne Air India, 100% du capital étant désormais concerné. Les low cost IndiGo et SpiceJet seraient intéressées, mais il faudra au passage régler les 3,26 milliards de dette restantes après un effacement partiel par l'Etat.

Après un premier échec pour vendre 76% du capital de la compagnie nationale, le gouvernement a fixé les conditions et le calendrier pour sa vente totale. Dans l'appel à expression d'intérêt (EOI) publié le 27 janvier 2020, il fixe au 17 mars prochain la date limite de la première phase, avec le dépôt de « questions » fixé au plus tard au 11 février. La liste des candidats retenus sera publiée au plus tard le 31 mars, une shortlist devant ensuite rassembler ceux qui participeront à la deuxième phase.

Le gouvernement propose de vendre 100% d'Air India, 100% de la filiale low cost Air India Express, et 50% d'Air India SATS Airport Services (une coentreprise avec Singapore Airlines) ; en revanche la compagnie régionale Alliance Air, le catering et l'unité MRO de la compagnie nationale ne sont pas inclus dans la vente. La société Ernst & Young a été nommé conseiller unique pour la transaction. La compagnie nationale ne peut toujours pas être détenue en majorité par un actionnaire étranger, et le ou les acquéreurs devront démontrer leur fiabilité financière (le seuil a cependant été abaissé pour les compagnies locales, permettant à SpiceJet et Vistara de rejoindre IndiGo dans la liste des acquéreurs potentiels). Notamment parce que les repreneurs devront prendre à leur charge 3,26 milliards de dollars de dette, une somme toutefois réduite depuis mars dernier avec la création d'un « véhicule spécial » appelé Air India Assets Holding Ltd. (AIAHL) pour stocker 4,1 autres milliard de dollars, une partie de la dette accumulée au fil des ans par la compagnie aérienne. AIAHL devrait également « accueillir » des filiales d'Air India, dans les opérations au sol, la maintenance ou dans la gestion d'hôtels notamment.

Lors de la précédente tentative de privatisation de la compagnie de Star Alliance, l'échec avait été attribué non seulement au montant de la dette, mais aussi au fait que le gouvernement voulait conserver 24% du capital. Selon le document publié hier, Air India et Air India Express détiennent 12,8% du marché domestique (contre 80% pour les low cost) et 50,64% du marché international en Inde (pour les seules compagnies sindiennes ; 18,4% en comptant les transporteurs étrangers), dans un pays où le trafic aérien a été multiplié par six durant les dix dernières années. Un des actifs mis en avant par le gouvernement est bien sûr les créneaux de vol que la compagnie détient dans les aéroports du pays et à l'étranger, par exemple à Londres-Heathrow.

Côté flotte, Air India opère 121 avions dont 43 gros-porteurs (dont 27 Boeing 787-8 et quinze 777-300ER) et 78 monocouloirs Airbus (dont 27 A320neo tous loués). Sur le total, 32 sont détenus, 33 sont sous contrat de location-financement, 21 sont sous contrat de cession-bail et 35 sont loués à sec. Le total de la flotte comprend en outre 18 avions immobilisés. La low cost Air India Express est répertoriée comme ayant 25 Boeing 737-800 dont 10 en propriété, sept en location-financement et huit en location à sec.

#### Air Journal 28/01/2020

Varanasi: A rat caused considerable commotion in an Air India flight at the Lal Bahadur Shastri airport in Varanasi.

**The aircraft that was taxiing on the runway on Sunday, was brought back after some passengers saw a rat on board.**

All passengers were deboarded and a search for the rat began. The rodent remained elusive and the flight was cancelled after which the passengers created ruckus.

The flight AI 691 from Varanasi to Dehradun was again searched but the rat was nowhere to be found.

The passengers were taken to a hotel and were later adjusted in other flights to their destination.

**A senior AI official said in Lucknow that the flight could not take off with the rat since it could have nibbled away at some wire, causing technical snag during the flight.**

Engineers were later called in from Delhi and renewed efforts were made to find the rat.

When the rat remained untraceable, pesticide was sprayed inside the aircraft to ensure that the missing rat did not survive. The aircraft remained shut for almost 12 hours.

The rat, alive or dead, has still not been found. The aircraft has resumed operation and has flown to Dehradun.

28/01/20 IANS/New Indian Express

Mumbai | New Delhi: **Vistara, the airline majority-owned by the Tata Group, may explore opportunities to bid for Air India, executives close to the matter said, even as industry insiders said they expect the national carrier to finally find a buyer with the government offering to sell 100%**

**stake.**

On the face of it, the 100% divestment offer “does not seem worth rejecting” and therefore makes it as attractive to Tatas as to other industry players, said an executive.

“There is the emotional goodwill part to it too, considering that it was part of the Tatas initially (before the government nationalised Air India). It is too early though to make any blanket statement,” said the executive.

“We have just received the documents and there is a lot of matters that need detailed consideration in terms of its financial status.” Vistara, jointly owned by Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, may consider the opportunity through an alliance with an investor or another airline as it would be a tough task for a single player to handle the acquisition.

Tata Sons declined to comment. Acquiring Air India would give Vistara a significant foothold into the national carrier’s network, something it needs for scale. Vistara, which started with a capital of \$100 crore, has been slow to expand and currently accounts for just 6.1% of the domestic market. It started international flights only last year. Until November last year, Air India and its regional subsidiary, Air India Express, ferried the highest number of international passengers among Indian carriers. In fiscal 2019, it carried around 22.1 million passengers. As of end-November 2019, it had a fleet of 121 planes.

[28/01/20 Kala Vijayraghavan/Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times](#)

Bengaluru: Despite the turbulence in the aviation industry in 2019, the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) was patronised by 33.65 million flyers, giving it a 4.1% growth in traffic compared to the previous year. The highest ever traffic in a single day was recorded almost a year ago (January 20, 2019) with 1,09,174 passengers.

The big story in this growth figure is the handsome upswing of 14% in international passenger volume, said an official release from Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) airport operator. This translated to 4.27 million flyovers in 2019 as compared to 2018.

Domestic traffic grew by a modest 2.6% touching 28.78 million last year as compared to 28.05 million in 2018. The closure of Jet Airways and the grounding of A320 Neo aircraft which caused supply side issues had taken a toll on the industry as a whole. The ripple effect of it at KIA was the reduction of its Air Traffic Movements (Arrival/Departures) with a 0.1%, compared to double digit growth figures annually from 2014 to 2018.

These factors had a ripple effect as the ATMs at BLR Airport were down by 0.1% as against the double-digit figure witnessed annually during the previous five years (2014-2018 ). The total ATMs during 2019 was 2,35,058 as compared to 2,35,190 in 2018. The dip in ATM was mainly due to the slump in domestic movements by 1.8% though international movements soared by 13%. A total of 30,556 international ATMs took place.

In a reversal of positions, domestic cargo growth was positive while international growth went down. Domestic cargo grew by 4.1% with a total of 1,49,603 Metric Tonnes (MT) processed as against 1,43,701 MT in 2018. In the same period, international cargo dropped by 4.1%. This brought down the overall cargo shipment down by 1.0%.

**Hari Marar, MD and CEO of BIAL, said, “The aviation market in India is in recovery mode after a volatile period. We estimate that passenger volumes at BLR Airport will be between 55 and 65**

**million passengers per annum (mppa) in the next five years. To support this growth, BIAL is investing Rs 13,000 crore for infrastructure expansion, including the South Runway, which is operational, and the first phase of Terminal 2."**

28/01/20 New Indian Express

**Pune: MP Girish Bapat, the chairman of the Lohegaon airport advisory panel, on Monday said the frequency of flights had reduced at the facility as the Indian Air Force was not ready to provide additional daytime slots for civil flight movements.**

"It is a cause of concern and once the budget session of the Parliament is over, I plan to hold a meeting with the airlines to find out reasons for flight frequency getting affected. The daytime slot issue can be the reason as it affects profitability of airlines on some routes. We had urged IAF (Indian Air Force) to provide 10 additional daytime slots but there is no reply until now, which indicates that they might not be ready to provide them," Bapat told TOI.

A source said the total flight movements at the airport had decreased from around 200 earlier to 175 at present. One silver lining is that three airlines - IndiGo, GoAir and AirAsia will begin new daytime and direct flights to Prayagraj, Hyderabad and Bengaluru in the next two months. The source said an airline's proposal to start flights to Indore and Varanasi were not approved because of the slot issue.

28/01/20 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

The civil aviation sector in India woke up to a busy Monday morning on January 27 as the union government invited preliminary bids to sell 100 percent stake in the flag carrier Air India, the largest international player among Indian carriers.

The government has also invited preliminary bids for 100 percent stake in Air India Express and Air India's entire 50 percent stake in ground handling company AISATS.

This is the second attempt at divestment of Air India. In 2018, the government had invited bids for 76 percent stake in Air India but got no takers in the preliminary round itself.

The government is hopeful of different results in this round with the airline being offered with a reduced debt burden and relaxations provided in net worth criteria from Rs 5,000 crore to Rs 3,500 crore and lock-in period brought down to one year from three years earlier.

**While the official enquiry window has opened from today, union aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri told CNBC-TV18 in an exclusive interaction that domestic airlines, overseas carriers and private entities have expressed informal interest in buying Air India.**

CNBC-TV18 28/01/2020

The proposed Air India deal offered by the government is sweeter than expected, said a senior executive of a private airline.

**He said that given the number of aircraft owned by Air India and its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express, a buyer can recover a major portion of the investment by adopting sale and lease back of airplanes.**

Under the popular sale and lease back arrangement, an airline acquires the aircraft at an attractive price and sells the aircraft to a lessor at a profit. It then leases it back for its own use.

**As per the bid document, Air India has an aircraft fleet of 121 aircraft (excluding 4 B747-400 aircraft) as on November 2019, mainly comprising Airbus and Boeing aircraft, out of which 65 are owned or on finance lease.**

**Air India's low-cost subsidiary Air India Express has a total of 25 Boeing 737-800 NG aircraft of which 10 are owned and 7 on finance lease. The remaining 8 are on dry lease.**

"The government has addressed most of the issues taking feedback from prospective investors during road shows. The debt issue has been addressed to the extent that it may raise eyebrows," a top government source said.

Following the release of bid document, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said that debt on the books of Air India at the time of transaction would be frozen at Rs 23,286.5 crore which is equivalent to the written-down value of the combined assets of Air India and Air India Express.

While many industry experts described the bid terms as a bold move by the government, concerns remain over substantial interest from private parties to bid for the state-owned airline which has many legacy issues.

"As far as interest level of private parties is concerned only time will tell. There are many factors which will decide this. If external factors turn adverse then participation may not be as expected," said an industry insider.

Multiple sources said that Tatas and Hindujas could evince interest in buying the carrier. IndiGo remains a strong contender but sources pointed out that the airline has reasonably expanded its network internationally and hence may not acquire an entity which is completely different in terms of aircraft type and functioning.

Foreign airlines such as Etihad and Qatar Airways could tie up with local players to place their joint bid to buy out the public sector carrier.

The Modi government's move to sell Air India and its subsidiaries had failed in 2018 as not a single private party evinced interest. While it had earlier offered 76 per cent stake in the airline along with management control, the government has offered to sell its entire stake in the airline this time.

As the government proposed to hold 24 per cent stake in the company and corresponding rights, many prospective buyers had apprehensions about interference and hence stayed away from the bid process. High amount of debt and adverse macro environment such as high fuel prices were cited as

major reasons for the no-show.

"This time the government is willing to go the extra mile to ensure whatever the buyer wants they will probably agree to it," said Rajan Mehra, CEO of Club One Air and former India head of Qatar Airways, suggesting that there would be enormous interest from private companies to buy Air India. [28/01/20 IANS/News Minute](#)

**Mumbai: Flag carrier Air India has kept one of its 423-seater jumbo plane ready in Mumbai for the evacuation of Indian citizens from Wuhan province in China in the wake of coronavirus outbreak in the East Asian country, an official source said on Tuesday.**

**The airline is awaiting necessary approvals from the ministries of External Affairs and Health to operate the special evacuation flight, the source said. The decision follows the government instructions to various ministries to take steps to deal with the issue.**

"We have kept a Boeing 747-400 ready in Mumbai to operate an evacuation flight to China whenever we get a go ahead from the government," the source said. Some 250 Indians are to be evacuated, the source said, adding, "we are awaiting clearances from Ministry of External Affairs and also from Health Ministry.

The Health Ministry's nod is required because the operating crew has to fly in a virus outbreak territory.

" At the Cabinet Secretary meeting on Monday, the government decided that steps may be taken to prepare for the possible evacuation of Indian nationals in Wuhan. Coronavirus is a large family of viruses that causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndromes, but the virus in China is a novel strain and not seen before.

[28/01/20 PTI/Economic Times](#)

Thermal screening of passengers for possible exposure to the deadly novel coronavirus (nCoV) infection will be extended to 20 airports from the existing seven, said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Tuesday and confirmed no case has been detected in India so far.

Vardhan said the government has made four more laboratories functional other than NIV-Pune for testing samples and it will be extended to 10 labs in the coming days.

"Four labs of @ICMRDELHI 's Viral Research & Diagnostics Lab Network (at Alleppey, Bengaluru, Hyderabad & Mumbai) activated for testing samples.This is in addition to @icmr\_niv, Pune," tweeted the Health Ministry.

"Like in 2014, because of our alertness we prevented Ebola from entering the country, we are making all efforts and taking all possible measures to ensure there are no cases of nCoV here," Vardhan said.

At present thermal screening is done at seven designated airports New Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi.

Around 35, 000 passengers have been screened at these airports so far, Vardhan said.

He said samples of 20 persons which have been tested for nCoV so far have all resulted negative.

The Centre has stepped up vigil in areas bordering Nepal in view of a confirmed case of nCoV detected there, he said.

He also said the MEA is in touch with the Chinese government to bring back Indian citizens.

Vardhan said he has also written to all chief ministers, requesting them for personal intervention to review the states' preparedness for control and management of the spread of the virus.

The health minister has urged the passengers who have a travel history to China since January 1, 2020, to come forward for self-reporting to the nearest health facility if they experience any symptoms such as fever, cough, respiratory distress, etc., and also inform their treating doctor.

Three persons with a travel history to China have been kept under observation at an isolation ward of RML Hospital here for a possible exposure to novel coronavirus, officials said.

The Prime Minister's Office on Saturday reviewed India's preparedness to deal with any situation amid mounting global concerns over rising cases in China.

**A 24x7 NCDC Call Centre (+91-11-23978046) has been made operational to monitor the list of contacts furnished by the Ministry of External Affairs, provide details of district and state surveillance officers to those who seek them, and in case of any clinical query, direct the concerned to the relevant Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) officer.**

**On Friday, the Health Ministry also issued a fresh advisory asking the passengers to follow certain dos and don'ts if they are in China or if they are travelling or returning from China.**

The advisory stated that during their stay in China, if they feel sick and have fever and cough, then they should cover their mouth while coughing and sneezing, seek medical attention promptly and report to the Indian Embassy in China.

It said if they feel sick on flight, while travelling back to India from China, they should inform the airline crew about their illness, seek mask and self-reporting format from the airline crew, avoid close contact with family members or fellow travellers and follow other directions of crew and airport health officer.

New Delhi, Jan 28 (PTI)

- **Air India has 121 aircraft in its fleet as of 1 November 2019 out of which it owns (or will own) 65 aircraft**
- **Air India mentions in the PIM that they own 56% of the fleet and other airlines don't own as many aircraft as they do**
- **The aircraft are built for 25 years or more of operation, but the trouble is they are almost on the back of older technology**

In 2018, the government, for the first time, had made an **unsuccessful bid** to sell Air India to prospective buyers and had to eventually close the process without a sale. Reason? **Too much debt, too little in terms of assets, and too much task in terms of control.** The government wanted to retain a 24 percent stake in the national carrier, to be sold later after a turnaround was established for the airline. **This time it's different.**

On Monday, the government released a **220-page preliminary information memorandum (PIM)**, kicking off the sale process of Air India for a second time around. **Learning from the last time, many things have been changed. The prospective buyers are being offered 100 percent of Air India, along with Rs 23,286-crore debt. What comes along is the following:**

- 1) Air India's 100 percent stake along with all its aircraft, slots, employees but keeping aside 4 Boeing 747 aircraft used for VIP operations**
- 2) Air India Express' 100 percent which is the no-frills airline started by Air India to serve the Middle East and South East Asia routes**
- 3) AISATS' 100 percent share, the airport ground operations and cargo handling joint venture with Singapore Airlines.**

What is being kept aside is all the Air India artefacts, paintings, key buildings such as the Air India Building at Nariman Point in Mumbai and the headquarters building in central Delhi. Apart from that, the hotels owned by Air India under the Centaur brand, 100 percent stake in Air India Engineering Services Ltd (AIESL)—Air India's 100 percent owned ground handling company and Alliance Air, which is the regional airline under Air India, will be carved out of the Air India Limited before the sale.

**The attempt this time around, then, is to hand out as much of an airline operation with a robust international and domestic network to the prospective buyers, instead of a whole aviation company with their hands in the other parts of the business as well. What is confusing then, is why is the sale of the 50 percent stake in Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS) being lumped with this sale process.**

From the last time around, Air India has cut down the amount of debt to be taken over by the prospective buyers. The combined debt of Air India and Air India Express is Rs 60,074 crore. The last time around it was expected that Rs 33,392 crore would be taken over by Air India's prospective buyers. This time, the amount to be taken over is less by a third. Accordingly, **Rs 23,286 crore is the amount that Air India asks to be taken over.**

**Ernst & Young, which is the transaction adviser and wrote the PIM, claims that this debt would be backed by the aircraft on the books of Air India.**

A look into the PIM gives out the details of the entire fleet of Air India. Air India has 121 aircraft in its fleet as of 1 November 2019 out of which it owns (or will own) 65 aircraft. Air India Express has 25 aircraft in its fleet out of which 17 are owned by the airline, or will be owned by them. Will be owned indicates that the aircraft is on a financial lease right now, and once the entire amount is repaid to the bank, the title transfers to Air India. Air India mentions in the PIM that they own 56 percent of the fleet and other airlines don't own as many aircraft as they do.

[Live Mint Aviation 27/01/2020](#)

**New Delhi: The government today has invited bids to sell 100% stake in Air India for the second time after a failed attempt in 2018. The last date for submission of bids for the national carrier will be March 17, 2020.**

The government, however, has sweetened the deal this time by offering 100% in the airline as well as reducing the debt of the company to about Rs 23,286 crore from Rs 62,000 crore.

**The debt left with the company are mainly on account of aircraft purchase, which are against government guarantees but those guarantees will go once the airline is purchased by a new owner.**



In 2018, the government had invited bids for sale of 76% in the company but did not get even a single bidder. The government was to hold about 24% in the company with a board membership and there was no proposal to reduce the debt substantially.

In the current offer, the government is offering 100% and has already reduced the debt liabilities of the airline by Rs 29,400 crore from Rs 62,000 crore and will further reduce over Rs 9,300 crore of the total debt and offer the airline with Rs 23,286 crore debt. It had reported it first that the debt would be in the range of over Rs 20,000 crore

The government will also sell the airline by substantially reducing the liabilities of the company too. The company, which is estimated to have liabilities of Rs 22,000 crore, will be sold with a massive reduction in liabilities. It had reported it first that the government will take on liabilities of the airline too.

**The EoI document says that the government will take away liabilities due to the Income tax department, against customs duty, service tax due to the government of India and guarantee fee or penal charge due to the government of India.**

27/01/20 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

**Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, addressing the media on Monday, described the current situation of the national carrier as "very fragile".** The government had earlier released the preliminary information memorandum (PIM) for seeking expression of interest for strategic disinvestment of Air India. Mr Puri added that Air India is under a debt trap due to accumulated debt of around Rs 60,000 crore.

After failing to sell majority stake in Air India in 2018, the government has worked on critical areas this time around to make the disinvestment bid more attractive to the prospective bidder, Mr Puri said.

**The revised disinvestment guidelines include stake sale of 100 per cent in Air India and its subsidiary Air India Express, 50 per cent stake sale in ground operations holding company AISATS and freezing of debt, Mr Puri noted.**

Some parameters in current PIM include transfer of management control and sale of 100 per cent shares of Air India, along with Air India's 100 per cent stake in its subsidiary Air India Express and 50 per cent stake in joint venture AISATS. The debt in Air India has been frozen at Rs 23,286.5 crore, which is approximately equivalent to the written down value of the combined asset of Air India and Air India Express, Mr Puri said.

27/01/20 Abhishek Vasudev/NDTV

**New Delhi: "You don't see the board room issues impacting the performance of the airline," civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday over differences between promoters at IndiGo, which is the country's largest airline.**

His remarks came during a briefing about Air India disinvestment in response to a query on whether sentiments could be impacted as the sale is also happening at a time when there is a possibility of a promoter exiting IndiGo.

"I see no difficulties..." the Minister of State for Civil Aviation said about the possible impact of IndiGo issue on Air India stake sale.

The government on Monday issued a Preliminary Information Memorandum (PIM) for 100 per cent stake sale in Air India.

The differences between co-founders and co-promoters -- Rakesh Gangwal and Rahul Bhatia -- came to the fore in July 2019 after Gangwal sought market regulator Sebi's intervention to address alleged corporate governance lapses at the company. In the wake of the feud, arbitration proceedings are also going overseas between the two promoters' sides.

**"IndiGo is an internal matter. They will get it resolved... it is the largest domestic carrier, it has 300 aircraft on order, you don't see the board room issues impacting the performance of the airline," the minister said.**

Responding to the query, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeeh Singh Kharola said the impact of IndiGo is totally an internal thing.

"If you see, this has been going on for so many months... Performance of IndiGo has not been affected. It is purely an internal matter and they are handling it," he noted.

Against the backdrop of the feud between the promoters, InterGlobe Aviation will convene a meeting of shareholders on **January 29**, at the request of Gangwal, for removing various provisions in a key document of the company.

**The extraordinary general meeting (EGM) would discuss deleting various Articles pertaining to transfer and acquisition of the company's shares, including 'Right of First Refusal' and 'Tag Along Right', in the company's Articles of Association (AoA).**

In November 2019, IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta in November 2019 said there was "zero impact" on the carrier right now as they are on the same page over the airline's strategic direction, while commenting on the differences between the promoters.

**On Monday, IndiGo's parent InterGlobe Aviation reported a steep jump in profit after tax at ₹496 crore in the three months ended December 2019.**

In the year ago period, the same stood at ₹185.2 crore. Shares of the company closed marginally lower at ₹1,492.85 on the BSE.

[Live Mint Aviation 27/01/2020](#)

**NEW DELHI/MUMBAI : InterGlobe Aviation, the parent company of budget carrier IndiGo, on Monday reported a steep rise in profit after tax at ₹496 crore for the three months ended December 2019, mainly helped by higher income.**

The company had a profit after tax of ₹185.2 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing.

Its total income surged a robust 25.5% to ₹10,330.2 crore in the latest December quarter from ₹8,229.3 crore in the corresponding period a year ago.

Of this, passenger ticket revenue was ₹8,770.30 crore, an increase of 24.1% y-o-y, while the ancillary revenue during the quarter stood at ₹1,037.30 crore, registering a growth of 28.8% over the year-ago period, the airline said.

The yield or average ticket price increased 2.1% in the December quarter to ₹3.88 per km, from ₹3.83 per km in the third quarter of 2018-19. At the same time, the fuel cost reduced 2% to ₹334.19 crore as compared to ₹341.04 crore, as per the filing.

"I am very enthusiastic about the way we have been developing our network, connecting cities, large and small, to provide more choice to our customers. We have added small cities, such as Shirdi and Shillong, to our network while extending our reach to major cities such as Hanoi and Guangzhou," IndiGo Chief Executive Officer Ronojoy Dutta said.

The airline started operations on seven new international routes and 17 new domestic routes and operated a peak of 1,634 daily departures during the quarter, he said.

**While expanding, IndiGo has also been paying a lot of attention to its customer service levels and for the quarter, the airline's on-time performance was number one among the Indian carriers, Dutta added.**

**The airline said the year-on-year capacity increase in available seat kilometers (ASK), which is a measure of passenger carrying capacity, is expected to be 20 per cent for the March quarter and 23 per cent for 2019-20.**

**For the financial year 2021, capacity increase in ASKs is expected to be around 20 per cent.**

**Total cash balance stood at ₹20,068 crore, which included ₹9,412 crore of free cash and ₹10,656 crore of restricted cash, according to the filing.**

IndiGo added 12 aircraft during the quarter under review. Its fleet had 257 aircraft, comprising 126 A320XLRs, 96 A320Neos, 10 A321Neos and 25 ATRs at the end of December 31, 2019.

[Live Mint Aviation 27/01/2020](#)

**The aviation ministry has asked airport authorities to screen travellers flying in from China to stop the coronavirus outbreak from spreading to India. So far, seven Indian airports have set up thermal scanners at immigration counters.** Mint explains the mechanics of the scanners.

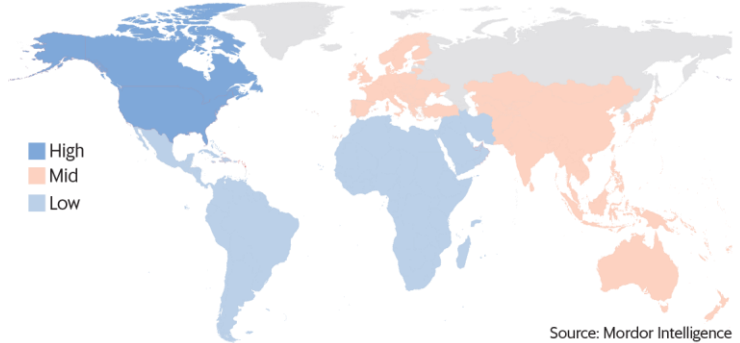
*How do thermal scanners work?*

All live objects emit infrared energy or heat. Unlike regular cameras that record light reflected by objects, thermal cameras use heat sensors that can record heat generated by the body of a person or an object to create a 2D image with differing temperature levels. When a person stands before the cameras, on the computer screens the hotter objects are highlighted with a different colour palette than the rest. These cameras can be calibrated to detect abnormal body temperatures such as over 101 degrees. Every pixel of the image has a temperature associated with it, so a higher resolution camera scan offers more detailed images.

## The heat is on

The growth potential of thermal imaging systems is the highest in the US and Canada, while India is seen offering moderate opportunities.

**Regional growth rates for thermal imaging systems (2019-2024)**



### *When did airports start using them?*

This isn't the first time thermal scanning is being used to screen higher body temperature related to infections that can cause an epidemic. During the 2002-03 outbreak of **SARS** virus, airports in Singapore and China deployed them and have been using them since. Mumbai was one of the first Indian airports to use them during the swine flu outbreak in 2009. During the 2014 **Ebola** outbreak in West Africa, many countries including India used the cameras. India is said to have these cameras at its major international airports. Heat scanners at Nigerian airports was one of the reasons the African country remained Ebola-free.

### *Why are thermal scanners used to screen coronavirus?*

International airports have very high footfalls. Checking every passenger's body temperature using thermometers can be a logistics nightmare and lead to delays at immigration counters. Thermal cameras can scan large crowds and spot people with higher temperature than the rest. Once authorities identify possible vectors, they can segregate them for further screening.

### *How effective are thermal scanners?*

Thermal cameras are effective only to the point of telling who has a higher body temperature or is running a high fever. It may not mean the person is infected with coronavirus. Additional screening systems are needed for that. Studying thermal images is not as simple as observing a camera image. It requires training and understanding of thermal colours and their patterns. As far as their effect on the human body is concerned, these cameras are safe and discreet. There is no proven risk of any form of radiation.

### *Where else are these scanners used?*

Thermal imaging tech is widely used by law enforcement agencies and militaries across the world. It was first used during the Korean War in 1950-53 to detect enemy soldiers in the dark. Firefighters in the US are known to use them to find people through dense smoke. In 2019, police in Minneapolis used them to detect and nab a gang of car thieves in the dark. Companies in the manufacturing and automotive sectors also use thermal cameras to check machines and equipment that might be at risk of catching fire.

[Live Mint Aviation 27/01/2020](#)

**NEW DELHI : The government on Monday invited offers from investors for its entire stake in Air India Ltd, after a costly turnaround plan and a previous effort to sell a controlling stake in the national carrier failed.**

**The government will also sell the state-run airline's low-cost unit, Air India Express Ltd, and ground handling unit Air India SATS (AISATS), a joint venture between Air India and Singapore Airport Terminal Services.**

After last year's offer to sell 76% stake in Air India drew a blank, the government has now offered its entire 100% stake in Air India, Air India Express and 50% stake in AISATS for sale.

To sweeten the deal, the government has also reduced the debt on the two companies' books to about ₹23,287 crore, which gives certainty to investors about the liabilities of the companies. **About ₹56,334 crore of liabilities of the two companies, the bulk of which is Air India's, will be transferred to a special purpose vehicle, Air India Assets Holding Ltd, created to park the debt and certain assets.**

**The minimum net worth criterion to bid for Air India has been set at ₹3,500 crore, but the government has allowed domestic carriers with negative net worth to put in bids on the strength of their consortium partners if the local airline's share in the consortium is limited to 51%.**

**Civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the government is open to "revising and refining" the terms of sale based on suggestions from investors.** The willingness to tweak the terms of sale signals that the government will be responsive to the expectations of potential investors. If the sale goes through, it will prove to be a relief for the government, which has been bankrolling the national carrier with taxpayer funds.

**Puri said Air India's current financial position, burdened by an accumulated debt of about ₹60,000 crore, can be described as "very fragile", but any private investor could turn the airline around and bring operational and financial efficiency.**

"We hope Air India remains a vibrant company and continues to fly forever," he said.

Briefing reporters, Tuhin Kanta Pandey, secretary in the department of investment and public asset management, said Air India's debt liabilities, contingent liabilities and corporate guarantees totalling ₹56,334 crore will be transferred to the SPV, Air India Assets Holding. "The debt (of the airlines) is frozen at ₹23,287 crore. Any extra debt which is being incurred beyond this, post that date will be borne by the SPV," he added. The government will retire the debt of the asset holding company by selling assets transferred to it.

"The debt that is left with Air India now is backed by assets of the airline, which include aircraft. **The new owners of the airline have the option of conducting a sale and leaseback (SLB) of its aircraft to make the company debt-free,**" a person directly involved with the national carrier's sale process said on condition of anonymity.

Air India and Air India Express together have more than 150 aircraft. While at least 82 of these aircraft are owned by the national carrier and its subsidiary, the rest are leased. SLB allows the owner of an aircraft to sell the asset and lease it back. Such deals remove the aircraft, and its associated debt, from the balance sheet of an airline.

EY India is the transaction adviser for the sale process.

**According to government officials, potential investors can send in queries on the sale process from 28 January till 11 February. The government will answer the queries by 25 February, while the respective expressions of interest will have to be submitted by 17 March. The qualified bidders will be informed by 31 March, when the process for submission of financial bids will also begin.**

"Liability of retiring employees will be clarified at the RFP (request for proposal) stage," Puri said. "The government has committed to pay some employee-related dues before closing the transaction."

**"All land and building assets and art and artefacts are not part of the offer,"** he added.

Civil aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said the government has conducted at least eight roadshows across the globe to reach out to potential investors. "The basic purpose was that we wanted to get a feel of the market and to get suggestions. These have been duly factored in the bids," he said.

"The biggest difference is that now we are selling 100% of the government's stake in Air India, and not 76%," Kharola said, clarifying that now the debt that will stay with the companies at the conclusion of the deal has been fixed.

Air India, which had a 12.7% share of the domestic market, carried 18.36 million domestic passengers in 2019, according to data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. It had ferried 17.61 million domestic passengers in 2018.

"A lot of people have come to us directly, to express interest, offer their suggestions. In my view, there is a lot of interest. We are entering the process in a qualitatively different way than in 2018," Puri said.

[Live Mint Aviation 27/01/2020](#)

**New Delhi: Government has decided to sell 100 per cent stake in state-owned carrier Air India. Centre has set March 17 as the final deadline for submission of expression of interest (EOI). The selected bidder will have to absorb Rs 23,286.5 crore of the total Rs 58,282 crore debt of the airline, along with other liabilities.**

**As per the lock-in conditions, for a period of one year from the date of selection of the bidder, it will not -- directly or indirectly -- be allowed to transfer equity securities of Air India. The final bidder can't transfer equity securities of a special purpose vehicle or SPV (in case investment in AI is made through a SPV). The bidder also can't transfer equity securities of Air India subsidiaries, AIXL and AI-SATS, including their legal or beneficial ownership.** The government notification says the selected bidder will have to ensure there's no change in the control of the final bidder of Air India, Air India Express and AI-SATS (Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited).

**Any private limited company, public limited company, limited liability partnership or body corporate can invest in the state-owned airline provided it gets applicable statutory approvals. For submitting EOIs (expression of interest) and for being considered for subsequent qualification, a**

**bidder should have a minimum net worth -- the aggregate value of the paid-up equity share capital and all reserves -- of Rs 3,500 crore. In the case of LLP, the net worth should be calculated as the aggregate value of partners' capital and all its reserves.**

As part of the strategic disinvestment, Air India will also sell 100 per cent stake in low-cost airline Air India Express and 50 per cent shareholding in joint venture AISATS. The Centre has again decided to sell Air India after an attempt to sell a majority stake failed to draw bids around two years back.

27/01/20 Business Today

**Hyderabad:** DRI sleuths registered five cases of gold smuggling in a single day RGI Airport on Thursday and arrested four persons. "All seizures were made within 4-5 hours on Thursday. We seized about **four kilo gold worth Rs 1.66 crore,**" said a DRI official.

Early on Thursday, DRI officers rummaged an Air India flight from Dubai and recovered 841 grams of gold biscuits. "They were wrapped in tape and concealed inside a hollow tube under the seat," said an official.

Later, the sleuths intercepted an Omar Air flight passenger, from Muscat, at the customs check area. In his checked-in baggage, they found 700 grams of gold bars inside a microwave oven.

DRI also intercepted another passenger from Dubai in an Indigo flight and recovered 928 grams of gold paste in capsules in his rectum. Two more passengers from Saudi Arabia in a Saudi Airlines flight also were held for carrying capsules containing gold paste in their rectums. DRI team extracted 797 and 817 grams of gold from the two accused.

25/01/20 Times of India

**New Delhi: A GoAir flight with about 180 people on board returned safely to Bengaluru early on Friday morning after taking off from Phuket, Thailand, following warning that a door may not have been closed properly. The Airbus A320 Neo (VT-WGP) took off as G8-41 at 2.18 am and landed back at 3.12 am.**

"The aircraft was involved in air turn back to Bengaluru due To 'door avionics (AFT) open' indication at 10,000 feet. Cabin rate of climb was not above 150 feet at any point of time. There was no loss of pressurisation. An overweight landing was carried out at Bengaluru. Inspection and rectification is in progress," said a senior aviation official.

A GoAir spokesperson said: "GoAir flight G8 041 from Bengaluru to Phuket with 173 passengers on board did a precautionary air turn back in the interest of safety due to a technical glitch. After turn back, the flight landed safely at the Bengaluru airport. The aircraft has since been changed and departed with the passengers for its destination at 10.44 am. GoAir regrets the inconvenience caused to its passengers."

24/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**As the aviation industry awaits the preliminary information memorandum on the government's divestment plan for Air India, the airline's earnings for the April-December period showed that the national carrier is trying to revive its growth engine.**

Despite a substantial loss of revenue due to closure of Pakistan airspace during 2019, the airline has been able to post an improvement in 9-month earnings, largely due to the recovery of several wide-body aircraft which were grounded earlier for want of maintenance, sources said.

**The airline's net loss narrowed by 46 percent year-over-year, while the yield rose by 6.7 percent, CNBC-TV18 has learnt. Passenger revenue grew by 14.7 percent Y-o-Y to around Rs 17,320 crore with passenger carrying capacity or ASK (Available Seat Kilometers) rising by 4.9 percent.**

**The seat factor rose by 2.6 percent. Cargo revenue also advanced by 10 percent during the April-December period to Rs 1,208 crore.**

Overall, Air India was able to narrow its operating loss to Rs 1,040 crore during the 9-month period as compared to Rs 1,960 crore in the same period last year.

**The airline has also posted better operating performance, with EBITDA turning positive at Rs 460 crore as compared to negative EBITDA figures last year.**

"We have been able to recover most of our wide-body aircraft...the figure is more than eight, including two B777, 5-6 B787 and two B747. We have deployed the jumbo aircraft on domestic metro routes. This has largely helped us in showing a substantial improvement in our operations," a person aware of the development said.

24/01/20 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

Tata Sons, the holding company of the salt-to-software conglomerate, on Friday, clarified that R Venkataramanan, former director of AirAsia India, did not ignore any summons issued by Enforcement Directorate (ED) or other agencies in connection with a money laundering case.

AirAsia India is a joint venture between Tata Sons and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad, both owning 49 percent each. Venkataramanan was the Tata Sons nominee on the board of AirAsia India. He stepped down as managing trustee of the Tata Trusts in March last year and later exited AirAsia India.

**Claiming that media reports of Venkataramanan ignoring summons on three occasions as factually incorrect, Tata Sons said he received the summons for the first time on January 22, 2020.**

**However, based on due enquiry undertaken by Air Asia India, there has been no wrongdoing by Venkataramanan, the company said in a press release.**

**Probe in the PMLA case is related to allegations that the airline tried to manipulate government policies through corrupt means to get the international licence for its Indian venture Air Asia India.**

25/01/20 CNBC TV18



**New Delhi: The pilot-in-command and co-pilot of a Cessna aircraft which had crashed and caught fire while landing at Aligarh airport last year were suspended on Saturday by aviation regulator DGCA for one year and six months respectively,** a senior official said.

Investigation by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) found that the plane, belonging to Air Charter Services Private Limited, was at a very low altitude while approaching the airport runway on August 27 last year, the official said.

It also found that the landing gear of the small plane hit electrical cable located 180 metres ahead of the threshold line of the runway 11.

"The crew subsequently lost control, the aircraft hit the ground and caught fire," the senior official said citing the DGCA investigation.

The aviation regulator then issued show-cause notices to the pilots and the responses received were found to be unsatisfactory.

The DGCA observed that the pilot-in-command failed to follow the procedures and maintain required visual clearance. The first officer too failed to maintain required visual clearance with obstacles in the final phase of landing, according to the official.

25/01/20 PTI/Outlook

**Bhubaneswar: A person was killed and another injured after an under-construction roof of a link building connecting Terminal-1 and Terminal-2 of the Bhubaneswar airport collapsed on Saturday morning.**

The deceased was identified as Antaryami Guru, a helper of a truck engaged in the construction work at the airport.

Another person, who was injured, was identified as a labourer. He has been shifted to the Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar.

25/01/20 Mohammad Suffian/India Today

**Earlier, the Hinduja Group had shown an interest in taking over Jet Airways but did not make a formal bid as it felt Air India offered better opportunities. "We are looking at Air India and will take a decision once the bid documents are in place,"** a source told the publication.

The bidders are now showing interest in Air India because the government transferred Rs 29,500 crore of Air India's debt to a special purpose vehicle — Air India Assets Holding, which reduced the finance cost of the airline substantially.

According to the report, the sale of 100 per cent equity of the airline has also enthused bidders. In May, the government had offered 76 per cent of the equity sale in the last round but it failed to attract any bidder. Interups told the publication that it was waiting for the Indian government to float the bid document on Air India and that it will be a serious contender.

"We have opened a dialogue with the ministry, and our CEO Louise Jones will be in India next week (to discuss the issue). We have some concerns on non-inclusion of maintenance, repair, and overhaul (MRO) assets in the acquisition and would put our appeal before the government, as without MRO, it will be difficult for our identified operators to manage aircraft maintenance," Laxmi Prasad, chairman and chief business architect of Interups told the publication.

25/01/20 Deccan Herald

**New Delhi: A Bangkok-bound passenger was apprehended by CISF personnel on Sunday at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying US dollars worth Rs 12 lakh concealed inside a pair of sandals kept in his bag, officials said.**

Mohammed Waseem was apprehended at the Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport at 5 am when his bag was being scanned, they said.

The CISF personnel seized 17,000 USD worth about Rs 12 lakh from the pair of sandals kept in Waseem's bag, the officials said.

[26/01/20 PTI/Outlook](#)

**Mangaluru: Two bottles of cyanide has been recovered from the bank lockers of Adithya Rao, the accused in the bomb scare that occurred at Mangaluru international airport on January 20.**

Rao was brought to Udupi for further investigation. He was taken to Karnataka Bank's Kunjibettu branch, where he has an account as well as a safe deposit locker.

Upon checking the locker, the police recovered cyanide, which Adithya had stored with an intention of committing suicide. The poison has been sent to lab for tests.

Payments for the bomb materials were done from Karnataka bank Kunjibettu branch account. Rao was also taken to other places, where he resided as well as he worked. Adithya, who surrendered to the DGP at Bengaluru was brought to Mangaluru by the city police team led by ACP Belliappa. He was produced in court and was sent to police custody for 10 days. Since then, police are taking him to all the places where he worked, resided or came in contact with.

[25/01/20 Daijiworld](#)

**A greenfield airport at Mopa in North Goa, being developed by GMR, seems to have finally crossed all hurdles. A Supreme Court bench, comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta, has given its nod for the construction of the airport and asked the National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to oversee the project to ensure that there is no environmental damage.**

The bench directed the concessionaire of the project to adopt a zero carbon programme in the construction and operational phases of the airport. It said conditions imposed by the centre's Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) and the NGT are sufficient to protect the environment and approved the project. Incidentally, the Court had last year found fault with the environment clearance (EC) given to the project and directed the EAC to re-examine it.

Mopa village is situated in Pernem taluka in North Goa, close to the inter-state boundary with Maharashtra. The proposed airport is approximately 35 km north-east of Panaji, the capital of Goa. The site is a lateritic tabletop plateau at a height of 180 m above sea level and is surrounded by steep slopes.

[26/01/20 Debi Goenka/India Legal](#)

**Davos: Boeing Co is looking at setting up a flight simulator for its grounded 737 MAX jet in India to help hasten its return there, according to SpiceJet Ltd, one of the biggest customers for the narrow-body model.**

The US manufacturer is in talks with India about establishing a local facility by April or May, SpiceJet chairman Ajay Singh said on Friday in an interview at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

“We have ongoing discussions with Boeing but I think they will pay for the training,” Singh said. SpiceJet has idled 13 jets after the MAX was grounded globally in March after two crashes, having agreed orders or options on 205.

Boeing said January 8 it had advised regulators that pilots will need more than brief tablet-based instruction before flying the MAX.

That could swell costs by \$5bn, according to Bloomberg Intelligence, since the company will be expected to reimburse airline expenses after selling the jet on the basis that pilots certified for the previous 737 would need minimal additional training.

The manufacturer pushed back the time-line for the MAX’s return on January 21, saying it won’t now make a comeback until mid-2020.

26/01/20 Bloomberg/Gulf Times

**The Mumbai-Nagpur flight of Indigo Airlines was made to land urgently suspecting some technical faults.** The flight that took off from Mumbai was landed back at Santa Cruse Airport on Thursday.

The plane was expected to take off at around 11 o’clock in the morning from Mumbai. The flight then got delayed till 12:30 pm in the afternoon. Finally, it took off at around 1:30 pm.

The flight flew for around 45 minutes but then the passengers were informed about the emergency landing to be made suspecting some technical fault. The passengers, who had been in the air for quite a long time expected to land at Nagpur but were taken aback after the landing. The plane was made to turnaround for landing it back to Mumbai.

26/01/20 Preeti Singh/Nagpur Oranges

**Varanasi: At Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Babatpur on Saturday Air India flight from Varanasi to Dehradun had a technical fault.** A try was made to get better the plane by late evening. The airplane was grounded on the airport as a result of lack of restoration and all passengers had been accommodated in a resort in Varanasi.

Let's say that Air India plane AI 691 takes off from Kolkata Airport at 3:55 am. Arrive at Varanasi Airport at 5:20 pm, then the identical flight takes off from Varanasi Airport at 6 pm and arrives at Dehradun Airport at 7:40 pm. However, as a result of delay, the flight reached Kolkata Varanasi Airport late at 5: 21 pm from Kolkata Airport.

But on Saturday, the plane couldn’t fly from Varanasi Airport to Dehradun as a result of technical fault within the plane. The 118 passengers on board the airplane have been accommodated in a resort in Varanasi metropolis. **Engineers from Air India's Delhi plane will come to Varanasi Airport, then after that the plane shall be repaired.**

26/01/20 Abigale Lormen/OBN

**NEW DELHI: Yet another snag-prone Pratt and Whitney engine (PW) of IndiGo A320 Neo stalled soon after taking off from Mumbai for Hyderabad as 6E-5384 in the early hours of Thursday.** While passing flight level 23,000 feet, one of the engines experienced the now common high vibration with a loud bang sound, stalled and had to be shut down.

Since twin-engine planes can land safely on one engine, this Neo (VT-IJD) with just over 100 people on board made a safe emergency landing in Mumbai at 1.39 am — less than an hour after taking off

from there at 12.43 am. This is the 22nd snag of PW engines on IndiGo Neos in last two years. “During ground inspection, low pressure turbine number 3 of engine number 1 that had done 4,006 hours was found damaged. The Neo is grounded in Mumbai. The other engine was a modified one that had done only 1,198 hours and the plane had landed safely on that,” said a person investigating the latest trouble.

An IndiGo spokesperson said flight 6E-5384 (A320) with 95 passengers “operating Mumbai Hyderabad had an air turn back to Mumbai. During the flight, the pilot observed an engine caution message and followed the laid-down standard operating procedures. The aircraft returned to Mumbai and is under inspection at the Mumbai airport. All passengers were accommodated on another flight to Hyderabad.”

Comments from PW have been sought and are awaited.

In the past few days there has again been a spurt in PW engine snags on A320 Neos. People in the know say that such issues are likely to keep happening till the unmodified and more snag-prone PW engines of the Neos are replaced. But airlines and aviation regulators say they have taken steps to ensure safety till that happens.

**“The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has insisted and ensured that NO A320 Neo flying with PW engines — a combination used by IndiGo and GoAir — has both unmodified engines. The Neos in India, 106 with IndiGo and 41 with GoAir, have at least one modified engine each under their wings. So while the unmodified PW engine may stall inflight, the modified one will ensure the aircraft lands safely,”** said a source.

The decision to allow Airbus A320/321 Neos with IndiGo and GoAir to operate only if they have at least one modified — and hopefully less snag-prone PW engine — has saved the day on multiple occasions as there have been numerous instances on the unmodified Pratt engine going bust and then the Neos landing safely on the one modified engine.

IndiGo needs to change about 137 unmodified PW engines on the A320/321 Neos in its fleet. This means of the 106 A320/321 Neos in IndiGo fleet currently, about 70 require an engine replacement.

The DGCA has extended the January 31, 2020, deadline for having only modified PW engines on all its Airbus A320/321 Neos by four months to May 31. The regulator has stressed that no IndiGo Neo will be allowed fly after that if it still has an unmodified PW engine.

While PW has not commented on the recurring snags on its Neo engines for some time now, IndiGo — the world’s biggest customer of A320 family of Neos with 106 in fleet and over 650 on order — on January 17, 2020, sent a detailed response on this issue.

IndiGo statement of January 17 said: “There are around 560 plus Neo operating with PW-1100G engines with 36 airlines. Globally these aircraft have logged over 20 lakh hours and over 10 lakh cycles (flights). New product and design are associated with issues which get manifested in-service. There have been issues with low pressure turbine stage 3 of Pratt engines. Pratt has identified the root cause and developed a fix with modified low pressure turbine blades made of Inconel. This fix has been implemented since May 2019. **All new engines and spare engines currently being delivered are with modified LPT.**”

“In order to ensure continued safety of operation, Airbus and engines manufacturer and various regulatory authorities like DGCA in India, FAA in US and EASA of Europe have issued directives. Directives of DGCA are much more stringent than FAA and EASA. IndiGo Neo fleet is in full compliance with DGCA directives. At present, none of our Neo aircraft have both unmodified engines

i.e. each aircraft either have both engines modified or at least one engine is modified. We have achieved that EASA guideline 2.5 months prior to the EASA deadline of March 31, 2020. Further **IndiGo is working with original equipment manufacturer to ensure that 100% of IndiGo Neo fleet will have modified engines within the DGCA stipulated timelines which is much ahead of the FAA time line,**" the IndiGo Jan 17 statement added.

Times of India 24/01/2020

**GoAir on Thursday said it is temporarily suspending some flights due to Airbus and Pratt & Whitney deferring delivery of planes and engines, respectively.**

Some scheduled flights and those for which ticket sales are open would be affected, the carrier said.

However, specific details about the number of flights that would be impacted were not disclosed.

In November and December, the airline had cancelled dozens of flights due to delay in aircraft deliveries and non availability of engines.

A320 neo in its fleet have also been facing engine problems.

In the last 4 weeks, the carrier said, it has gone through unplanned grounding of aircraft, which were supporting its current operation of fleet.

**« Now, we have been informed by our business partners Airbus and Pratt & Whitney of their inability to deliver previously promised aircraft and engines through 9 March 2020, that are required to support our current growth » GoAir said in a statement.**

« As a result, we have been forced to temporarily suspend certain flights that are part of our network, schedule and open for sale », it said.

Currently, the airline operates more than 325 daily flights and has around 60 planes in its fleet.

GoAir said it remains on track to receive 12-15 aircraft each year through the end of 2025. On the back of a firm order for 144 A320Neo, the business plan articulates a continued double digit growth through 2025, it added.

Further, the airline said the suspension of flights has been undertaken as far ahead of time as possible to minimize inconvenience to customers.

« Despite our best efforts, we realize that our flight suspensions may inconvenience our customers, which we regret and profusely apologize. We expect – with the support of airbus and Pratt & Whitney – to reinstate these flights and operate at the earliest opportunity », it added.

The airline flies to 36 destinations, including 6 overseas cities.

« We would like to assure our customers and partners that our currently published schedule incorporates a conservative view of aircraft and engine deliveries as provided by airbus and Pratt & Whitney to minimize, or eliminate, the need for flight cancellations in the future ».

First Post 23/01/2020

New Delhi: Public sector companies usually do not attract the attention of the taxman. But officials from the income tax department recently knocked on the doors of a cash-strapped Air India's subsidiary to check if it was depositing the taxes it was deducting at source, such as those it collected from salary or from payments to suppliers.

The airline, which has been delaying salary payments and even GST, however, said nothing was amiss. **"Income tax department routinely conducted TDS survey of AIESL (Air India Engineering Services) recently for past five years. During the survey, certain details were asked, which are being provided,"** Air India spokesman Dhananjay Kumar said.

AIESL operates maintenance, repair and overhaul (MROs) at the airline's major hubs like Mumbai, Hyderabad and Nagpur. A senior official said AI has never defaulted on TDS. "There may have been delays for which we have paid penalties, but never a default," said an official.

The Economic times of India 23/01/2020

New Delhi: **Accidents at flying training schools in 2019 have spiked to five from three the year ago and two in 2017 prompting the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to start auditing these institutes to ensure that number of accidents fall to 2016 levels. During 2015 and 2016, no accidents were reported at these flying training institutes.**

**"The primary reason for incidents is operational, which happens by violating standard operating procedures (SOPs). We have also asked all regional teams to not just audit but also work with flying schools and bring down the number of accidents to zero,"** said a senior DGCA official, who did not want to be identified.

According to DGCA data, **three reasons have been blamed for accidents at flying training institutes in the past four years. Data showed operational reasons account for 70% of the total accidents at flying institutes followed by 20% by engineering and the rest 10% for other reasons.**

**Among the operational reasons, action performed incorrectly constitutes about 56% of the total accidents followed by flight planning and preparation that constituted 22% of the total accidents.**



On basis our preliminary investigation on recent aircraft accidents at flying schools, it has been found that not adhering to SOP causes accidents," said the DGCA official.

He added that the DGCA officials at regional centres have been sensitised to not just audit these institutes but work with them in terms of ensuring that SOP is not compromised at any point in time. "Our offices will also work with institutes to ensure that they follow SOP to the last word, which will

take ensure that accidents decline or come down to zero,” the official added.

Sources in DGCA said that its DG Arun Kumar’s target is to ensure zero accidents and believes that adherence to SOP will help achieve that.

The DGCA has carried out similar checks at various airports in the country to ensure that the procedures are being followed to the last letter.

In August, the aviation regulator initiated an audit of ground handling companies and a safety checklist too was issued to prevent accidents at airports after incidents at the runway side of the airport reported an increase.

A recent audit of GoAir also found that the airline was not following the duty hours of crew and a corrective action followed and the airline has now corrected any discrepancy in the rostering procedure for pilots and cabin crew.

**“A large part of our incidents and accidents will be corrected, if everyone follows the SOP and the regulator’s job is to ensure that it is followed,”** said one of the DGCA official quoted above.

The Economic Times of India 23/01/2020

**MUMBAI: The income tax department has ordered a special audit of Jet Airways, after investigations by its arms found a number of suspicious-looking transactions in the accounts of the now-grounded airline,** people in the know said.

The department has engaged chartered accountancy firm Shah & Taparia to carry out the special audit, the people said.

**“While the investigation wing in its report has detailed out tax irregularities of over Rs 880 crore, the assessment wing has found a lot of other suspicious transactions which amount to over Rs 5,000 crore ... these transactions require a thorough probe and a special audit has been ordered,”** said an official in the know.

According to the provision that allows the assessing officer (AO) to get the accounts of an assessee audited by a chartered accountant, such a decision can be made based on the complexity and volume of accounts, where there are doubts about the correctness of the accounts and multiplicity of transactions, and when the assessee is engaged in a specialised business activity.

One of the main reasons behind calling for the special audit is the alleged non-cooperation by the airline’s promoter, Naresh Goyal, said the people. “Goyal has always evaded the questions asked by the AO and has claimed ignorance. He has blamed everything on the erstwhile management claiming that he wasn’t managing the day-to-day affairs of the company and therefore wasn’t aware of the various transactions with which he was confronted,” said an official.

“Also, with the erstwhile employees, who were responsible for preparing the audit and managing the affairs of the company, no more associated with the grounded airline, it was difficult to understand certain transactions,” the official added.

Goyal had repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.

**At least three agencies — the income-tax department, Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) — are probing Jet Airways. While the tax department is probing alleged tax evasion, the SFIO is looking into the affairs of the company and the ED is probing allegations of money laundering.**

The ED has confronted Goyal with documents related to 19 privately held companies, of which 14 are registered in India and five abroad, the people said.

The central agency has also gathered details of the offshore entities with which Jet and its group companies entered into lease and maintenance and general sales agreements, on the basis of information shared by the Egmont Group.

Toronto-based Egmont is an international network of 164 financial intelligence units formed for combating money laundering as well as terror financing, they said. The ED has questioned Goyal based on this information as well.

Meanwhile, **the probe agencies suspect that entities related to Jet Airways' founder and his associates used thousands of bogus bills to launder around Rs 8,000 crore from the nowdefunct airline in tax havens**, people aware of the probe details claimed.

The Economic times of India 23/01/2020

A total of **43 flights and 9,156 passengers were screened for novel coronavirus** till Tuesday at the seven identified airports including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata, Union Health Secretary Preeti Sudan said on Wednesday.

Till now, no cases have been detected through these screening efforts, she said.

Sudan further said the Indian Embassy in China has been regularly providing the health ministry with updates on the status of the infected cases in that country.

The Embassy has informed that a total of 440 cases of pneumonia with novel coronavirus were confirmed in China and nine people have died till Wednesday.

"Cases have been reported in 14 provinces (including Taiwan) and municipalities as well," the health secretary told PTI.

New Delhi, Jan 22 (PTI)

**NEW DELHI : The health ministry has screened over 9,150 passengers of 43 flights for the Coronavirus disease at seven airports. After the outbreak of the virus in China, India has stepped up its preparedness to prevent entry of the virus in the country.**

"Till now, no case has been detected through these screening efforts. We are on alert ... Passengers travelling from China are being requested to report to the nearest public health facility in case they feel any symptoms," said Preeti Sudan, secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

**The health and civil aviation ministries have issued travel advisory and shared it on their Twitter handle for wider circulation.**

The health ministry has instructed airport health organisations at Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Cochin to screen passengers coming from mainland China at these seven international airports.

"Signages have been put up at prominent locations in these airports for encouraging public about self-reporting of illness. Immigration officers manning the counters have been sensitized at these airports. Close coordination is being maintained with Ministry of Civil Aviation to coordinate the screening effort and dissemination of information to inbound passengers through in-flight announcements," a health ministry statement said. "The Health Ministry is constantly reviewing the evolving scenario working closely with Ministry of Civil Aviation, Ministry of External Affairs, department of Health Research and the Indian Embassy in China."

The ministry has consulted the World Health Organisation (WHO) for updates on technical inputs.

"Series of meetings have been held to review the evolving scenario, preparedness in terms of disease surveillance, laboratory support infection prevention and control, logistics, risk communication and,



in particular, hospital preparedness and need for coordination and collaboration with other Ministries," said a senior health ministry official.

The health ministry has also written to all states and union territories to review their preparedness, identify gaps and strengthen core capacities needed to prepare for, detect and respond to possible outbreaks.

National Institute of Virology, Pune, and 10 laboratories under Indian Council of Medical Research's Viral Research and Diagnostics Laboratories network have geared up to test samples of the virus. Medical stores have maintained adequate stock of equipment for personal protection, the health ministry said.

The death toll from the coronavirus has risen to nine in Wuhan, China, with several cases reported across the country. US has also reported a case of the virus, raising concerns across the world.

The World Health Organization convened an emergency meeting in Geneva on Wednesday for deciding whether the fast spreading outbreak is a "public health emergency of international concern", and what recommendations should be made to tackle it.

Coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV).

A novel coronavirus (nCoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. The outbreak is that of a new, unknown form of pneumonia, which has so far infected at least 400 patients across central China, spreading from the city of Wuhan, where the first case was identified on 31 December and killing six. As per latest reports, the deadly virus has also travelled to South Korea and a case was reported in Thailand, and Japan each

[Live Mint Aviation 22/01/2020](#)

Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has directed for all logistics support and arrangements to be made immediately with regard to screening of passengers arriving in India from China including Hong Kong at the identified airports i.e. **Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Cochin apart from three airports at Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata identified earlier**. This is in continuation to the Advisory from Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and National Centre for Disease Control, Directorate General of Health Services, under Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India regarding **threat of 'Novel Corona Virus Disease (nCoV) in Wuhan, Hubei province of China**.

MoCA has called for immediate implementation of the action plan and strict adherence by identified airports and all concerned airlines. The action plan among others includes the following

- In order to facilitate early isolation, In-flight announcements to be made by the airlines (which are directly coming from any airport in China including Hong Kong) requesting passengers with history of fever and cough and history of travel to Wuhan City in last 14 days to self-declare at port of arrival or to State Health Authorities.

- Airlines staff to guide the passengers in filling up the self-reporting forms before disembarkation so that the filled up format can be checked by APHO staff on arrival.
- Airport signage to be displayed boldly at the strategic locations of these seven identified airports
- **Health Screening at Airports: Thermal Screening of passengers to be undertaken.** Provision of space at the pre-immigration area with logistics to install the thermal cameras to be made at these airports. **Airlines staff to bring the passengers to the Health counters before the immigration check.**
- Operational procedures recommended by International Air Transport Association (IATA) with regard to managing suspected communicable disease on board an aircraft.
- All passengers and crew who are otherwise healthy should be allowed to continue their onward journey. If the ill passenger or crew member is confirmed as a probable case of Wuhan Corona Virus, public health authorities should be notified about the contacts using the Passenger Locator Form.

PIB 22/01/2020

New Delhi: **Commerce Ministry's proposal to cut the quota for purchasing liquor at dutyfree shops to one bottle has left private airport operators in a tizzy.**

**A senior official of a private airport said that the proposal, if accepted by the Finance Ministry, would also hit newcomers such as Zurich Airport International and Adani Enterprises.**

While Zurich has bagged the contract to build the Greater Noida airport, Adani has successfully won the right to upgrade and manage six international airports, including Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Jaipur.

"Both Adani and Zurich have won the bids promising to share highest revenue share per passenger. If the quota for purchasing liquor is halved, then their maths will go wrong," the executive said. He added that the proposal would also affect investor sentiment at a time when the Airports Authority of India (AAI) is planning to bid out six more airports on public private partnership (PPP).

Satyan Nayar, Secretary General at Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) said that the proposed move to slash liquor purchase quota would result in substantially affecting the non-aeronautical revenue of airport firms.

**"This will necessitate increase in landing and parking charges by the airport regulator. As a result, the cost of operations for airlines will go up. The airlines would pass on this cost to passengers. So, airport operators, airlines and passengers will be affected,"** Nayar said.

As per an estimate, liquor accounts for 60-65 per cent of total sales at duty-free shops at international airports. Mumbai and Delhi airports would see the maximum impact of this as earnings from duty-free shops contribute significantly to their total non-aeronautical revenues.

20/01/20 IANS/Economic Times

Mangaluru: **A bag placed inside the Mangalore International Airport sent the police into a tizzy on Monday, sparking panic in the area. When the bag, spotted by a CISF official, was unwrapped, a low-intensity IED was discovered.** The authorities immediately swung into action and called the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS). The bag was taken in an isolated bay. It is learnt that the manager of the Mangalore International Airport also received a call threatening to blow up the airport.

As soon as the alert was sounded, Mangaluru Police Commissioner PS Harsha rushed to the airport along with a police team. An extensive search operation began with the help of bomb disposal and

dog squads, and metal detectors.

"The CISF had found a suspicious bag, handled it as per the safety protocols and quickly informed the police control room. We have placed the bag in the isolation bay as per the safety protocol," Harsha later said in a video message.

The police commissioner said the citizens had been kept away from the bag, adding that the situation was peaceful and the police were taking all precautions.

A CCTV installed near the Mangalore International Airport revealed more.

The CCTV footage shows a man placing a bomb, wrapped in a bag, at the Mangalore International Airport between 8.45-9.00 am on Monday. The man took a private bus from Mangalore bus stand to the airport. Upon reaching the Mangalore International Airport, he boarded an auto-rickshaw to move inside the premises. He then got down the auto-rickshaw and left. The prime suspect was seen donning a white cap. The bomb was later defused.

[20/01/20 T Raghavan/India TV](#)

**Mangaluru: It is learnt that IndiGo Airlines flight that was bound to Hyderabad from city reportedly received a bomb threat call.** The flight is presently at Mangaluru International Airport.

The flight was about to take off, when air traffic control (ATC) received a call about bomb on the aircraft.

All the passengers were disembarked, it is learnt.

It is also said that the flight will be checked thoroughly as one more suspected bag is found on the flight. In addition, all the flights that are at Mangaluru International Airport are subjected to intense security check to rule out any bomb threat.

[20/01/20 Daijiworld](#)

**According to air passenger traffic data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the domestic air traffic registered an annual growth of 3.74% in 2019 as against the 18.60% growth registered in 2018.**

**The domestic airlines ferried a record 14.41 crore passengers in 2019 as against the 13.89 crore in 2018.**

Also, air passenger traffic grew at a mere 2.56% in December 2019 over the 11.18% growth witnessed in November on account of the festive season.

Passenger load factor, the metric that measures the percentage of seats filled by an airline, of all major airlines – Air India, SpiceJet, GoAir, IndiGo, AirAsia India and Vistara – declined in December 2019 as compared to November last year.

**IndiGo maintained its lead position with 47.5% share of the domestic passenger market in December 2019, while SpiceJet's increased its market share from 16.1% in November to 16.5% in December.**

**The market share of Air India, GoAir, AirAsia India and Vistara was 11.9%, 10.2%, 7% and 6.1% respectively in December.**

The air passenger traffic grew every month last year, barring April which registered negative growth, due to the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft and shutting down of Jet Airways.

The month of December also saw a cancellation rate of 2.34%, largely on account of inclement weather.

The last month also witnessed a total of 957 passenger-related complaints by the domestic airlines, which came to 0.74 grievances per 10,000 passengers.

Air India topped the list of with 2.3 complaints per 10,000 passengers in December, while GoAir was on number two position with 0.9 complaints per 10,000 passengers.

20/01/20 Sagar Kulkarni/Deccan Herald

**Low cost airline SpiceJet has terminated the contract of a 57-year-old expat Boeing 737 pilot, in the middle of his 21-day leave, and has told him that he need not report back for flying duties.**

The pilot said he was later told that the airline was letting go of a number of pilots owing to the crisis stemming from the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX in March last year.

The pilot, with more than 37 years of flying experience, expressed shock at the manner in which his contract was terminated. "I completed a training schedule with the airline and went on home leave till January 26 to spend time with my wife and daughter. I get an email informing me that I have already been fired without even a notice!", the pilot told Mirror.

An email from a senior operations executive read: **"This mail is in regards to your employment contract which is valid till Jan 27, 2020. As decided by the management your contract will not be further renewed. Currently you are on your leave rotation till 26-Jan-20, so you are requested not to report back for flying duties."**

The pilot, who has worked with international airlines in the US, China, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela, said his valuables and personal belongings have also been taken out of the room at the hotel he was living in at Chennai "because SpiceJet stopped paying for my housing". "I had left behind my watches, personal documents, my computer—stuff which I didn't need when I was going to relax with my family," he said.

He said another senior operations executive from SpiceJet later called him up and apologised for the rude manner in which the contract was terminated. "The person told me that they were happy with my work but due to financial crisis involving 737 Max, they had to let go of a number of pilots. At least two other 737 pilots also got these emails. I will return to India as scheduled on January 26 and I will go to the SpiceJet headquarters the next day," he said.

SpiceJet denied that the termination was arbitrary. "To say that the said pilot was fired without being given notice is absolutely wrong, baseless, illegal and an attempt to twist facts. As clearly stated in the letter, the contract of the said pilot was getting over on January 27, and the company decided not to renew the contract. A contract between an employee and a company clearly lays down the period of service. In this employee's case, it was no different. The pilot was employed for his full contract period. So the question of him being fired without being given notice does not arise," said a spokesperson.

The airline also denied that it was cutting down on pilots.

SpiceJet had to ground 13 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in March 2019 after they were grounded globally following two major air accidents in Indonesia and Ethiopia.

20/01/20 Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

**New Delhi: More than four years after India and Russia signed an inter-governmental pact allowing Russia to supply 200 Kamov Ka-226T helicopters, the price negotiations have been concluded. A formal contract may be signed in the next few months.**

The price for the 200 copters would be around \$4 billion (Rs 28,000 crore approximately), sources said. This would also include transfer of 50% technology, including structure of the copter, its blades

and landing gear, all important for metallurgy and transfer of technology.

The Kamov 226T uses an engine made by French major Safran. India's Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Safran already have an existing joint venture to produce engines for the advanced light helicopter made by the HAL. **A facility to manufacture KA-226T helicopters in India has been created at HAL's newly set up plant at Tumkuru, near Bengaluru. A new created entity called Indo Russian Helicopter Pvt. Ltd. (IRHL) will produce these copters. Once the domestic demand is met, India and Russia also intend to export Kamov-226Ts to other countries.**

[19/01/20 Ajay Banerjee/Tribune](#)

**Mumbai: Civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri has asked disinvestment-bound Air India to set up an internal mechanism committee comprising members from the management and its various trade unions to sort out privatisation-related issues of employees, a source said on Monday.**

At a meeting between the minister and representatives of over a dozen Air India unions in New Delhi on Monday, the minister also "assured" the employees of full payment of their arrears, according to the source.

The nearly hour-long meeting was also attended by Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola, Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani and airline's Director for Personnel Amrita Sharan, the source who was present at the meeting said.

**"The minister during the meeting told Air india to set up an internal mechanism committee with members both from the management and the unions to sort out the employees issues related to privatisation,"** the source said.

"Puri also assured the employees, mainly the pilots that the government was committed to full payment of their dues in the face of the privatisation," the source added.

**As per the source, the minister also told employees that contours about payment of dues are likely to be incorporated in the Expression of Interest (EoI) document.**

**On January 7, a group of ministers headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah approved the draft EoI and Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) for the disinvestment of Air India.**

At his first meeting with the unions on January 2, Puri had said privatisation was inevitable and cooperation of the employees was necessary in carrying out the exercise.

[20/01/20 PTI/News18.com](#)

Qatar Airways is expecting to reduce its losses in the fiscal year ending in March after a surge in sales had led to an improvement in load factors, claimed the Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Akbar Al Baker at a media briefing during the Kuwait Aviation Show 2020, and attended by Bloomberg.

"Our losses are half of what we budgeted," Al Baker said on January 15. Reducing costs and "being very aggressive in the way we sell" has resulted in the improvement. The CEO explained that the losses were not caused by the Saudi Arabia-led blockade of the country but were due to higher operating expenses, including increased fuel prices, and that he expected that the airline would break-even in the next financial year (FY) and could post profits in FY2021-22.

**Al Baker also discussed his continued interest in acquiring a stake in IndiGo Airlines (6E, Delhi Int'l). The Oneworld carrier is ready to buy as much as the Indian airline "can give us" said the CEO. The two airlines already have a codeshare agreement and are looking to increase capacity on the**

**busiest routes between India and Qatar in the wake of Jet Airways' demise in April last year.**

**Also during the media briefing, Al Baker stated that Qatar Airways would continue to fly to Iran despite the recent tensions between the Middle East country and the US, and the Ukraine International Airlines (PS, Kyiv Boryspil) B737-800 crash.** The Middle Eastern carrier flies from Doha Hamad Int'l 38x weekly to Iran, with 22x weekly flights to Tehran Imam Khomeini, daily routes to Mashad and Shiraz, and a 2x weekly service to Isfahan Int'l.

19/01/20 ch-aviation

**Due to the Republic day parade rehearsals and security requirements, the Delhi airspace is being closed for two hours for specific dates — January 18, January 20-24, and January 26, 2020**

Under this, the Delhi airport will turn into a no-fly zone between 1035 hours and 1215 hours.

Indian carriers like Spicejet, Vistara and Indigo have issued travel advisory on flight delays and disruptions for passengers flying on the mentioned dates.

Indigo said, "Due to heightened security owing to Republic Day, passengers may face rush at the airports. We request all passengers to reach the airport at least three hours prior to departure to avoid any hassle."

Vistara said in a tweet, "Flights to and from Delhi on January 18, 20th – 24th and 26th Jan might be affected due to airspace restrictions for Republic Day rehearsals. Please SMS UK<flight no> to 9289228888 for updated flight status."

20/01/20 Sanchita Nambiar/Business Traveller

**New Delhi: A senior SpiceJet executive has asked pilots flying its Q400 aircraft to follow "some work ethics", telling them in an email that if they don't get salary for a month they will automatically give up the "trivial" issues that are taking priority over flight operations.**

Pramod Malik, who is the fleet captain for Q400 aircraft, said, "Please learn to prioritise your work because if you don't get salary for a month then automatically those trivial priorities will vanish (leading to) 'No Money No Honey' situation."

"This is not a threat but advice to prioritise primary vs secondary and follow some work ethics," Malik stated in his Saturday's email, which has been accessed by the PTI.

He told the pilots to just "pause" and think before every situation and then decide "whether to commit or not to commit for some occasion".

**Asked about the "trivial issues" mentioned in the communication, a SpiceJet spokesperson said, "The said letter is a standard periodic communication from the management to its employees to motivate and guide them to prioritise their core responsibilities in the organisation." "SpiceJet strives to achieve a healthy work culture with emphasis on safeguarding work ethics, work-life balance and well-being of its employees."**

The rostering followed for all the pilots (including Q400 fleet) is at par with the best in the industry and ensures a patient hearing to employee feedback," he said.

"I get to hear very trivial issues taking priority over flight operations (for which you have been hired by the company and you are getting paid). These individuals need to take advice from their near and dear ones if they themselves are not able to decide how to prioritise," he added.

20/01/20 PTI/Outlook

Scottsdale: **Discover the World, a leading global travel sales and marketing specialist has partnered with GoAir, Asia's most trusted, punctual and fastest growing airline to expand the carrier's reach into previously untapped offline territories. The initial agreement covers Australia, Canada, France, Greece, Israel, UK and USA markets.**

From January, this year Discover the World will leverage its close trade relationships to promote GoAir's offering across key target audience segments including the group travel.

Aiden Walsh, Airline Account Manager - EMEA Region at Discover the World says: "GoAir offers a reliable and great value product, which is exactly what the market wants. I know that our trade partners will welcome the choice, reassurance and quality that they will now be able to offer onwards to their travellers."

**GoAir is part of the 283-years-old Indian conglomerate, The Wadia Group. The airline has received the highest approval rating of four-out-of-four star from 1.4 million passengers - certified, validated and verified by US-based APEX, a non-profit organization. Thus, GoAir is the only airline in its category to receive such an accolade in the entire Central Asia Region. The airline was also awarded 'Asia's Most Trusted Brand 2019' by International Brand Consulting (IBC) Corporation, USA and voted as the number one airline in 'Best Seat Comfort' and 'Best Cabin Service' category. The airline is seeking to capitalise on this recent success through the new partnership with Discover, which will focus on introducing its popular offering to connecting customers in new markets around the world.**

[20/01/20 Travel Daily News](#)

**In what may come as a relief to the airlines operating in India, the central government is reported to be considering shifting aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to specific rate of duty instead of the current system of imposing ad valorem duty.**

**The difference between the two is that with the ad valorem duty, the cost of ATF keeps going up or down with the price of the fuel whereas with the specific duty it is per litre irrespective of the price. Petrol and Diesel enjoy the specific rate of duty currently. ATF is currently chargeable at 11% ad valorem rate of excise duty.**

The modification in the duty structure may be part of the announcements in the Union Budget to be presented to the Parliament by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1, 2020.

[20/01/20 News Minute](#)

**Five women from Myanmar were detained with 3 lakh US dollars at Gaya airport on Sunday, police said.**

The Customs department has caught the women with illegal currency at the airport's checking point. These women were scheduled to leave for Myanmar in an international flight with 3 lakh US dollar, said Customs Commissioner LT Bhutia.

The foreign nationals were interrogated as to where did they get money, as well as, their local connections.

[20/01/20 ANI/Mizzima](#)

**Kochi: A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight from Cochin international airport was delayed by almost an hour on Monday after the security agencies raised 'doubts' over some objects found in the checked-in baggage of a passenger,** airport sources said.

The flight 6E 298 scheduled to depart for Mumbai at 8 a.m left at 8.56 a.m, the sources added. Security officials carried out a thorough check of the baggage of a wheelchair-bound passenger travelling in a group of seven people on the Delhi-bound flight via Mumbai and found Rs 1.5 lakh in it, they said.

However, he was later allowed to travel by the same flight after it was found the amount found in the baggage was within permissible limits, the sources said.

20/01/20 Simran Kashyap/One India

**New Delhi: All passengers flying into Mumbai from China will have to undergo a thermal screening “as a matter of precaution”, due to the outbreak of pneumonia caused by Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan city of Hubei province.** Airport health officials (APHO) teams at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) have activated a health counter and thermal scanners at the pre-immigration area for arriving passengers.

Mumbai currently has two airlines — Air China and Rwand Air — with flights to and from China.

“The airport has now expanded its existing passenger safety measures in compliance with the latest directive given by the World Health Organization (WHO) in case if any traveler is detected with the symptom. The concerned passenger will be immediately shifted to the isolation hospital earmarked for CSMIA on advice of the APHO team. The airport will share a daily report with the ministry on the scanning of passengers,” a statement issued by CSMIA said.

“As reported by Chinese authorities, this is a new type of coronavirus and is different from all other human coronaviruses. WHO has reported symptoms such as fever, difficulty in breathing and chest radiographs showing bilateral lung infiltrates as the cause of the pneumonia,” it added.

18/01/20 Times of India

Indian low-cost carrier IndiGo in the first quarter of 2020 is expanding service to Saudi Arabia, including 3 routes to **Dammam**, a new destination in its network.

All schedules listed below is effective 29MAR20 for summer season.

**Hyderabad – Dammam** *eff 15FEB20* 1 daily

6E1225 HYD0030 – 0250DMM 320 D

6E1226 DMM0350 – 1020HYD 320 D

**Kozhikode – Jeddah** *eff 29MAR20* 1 daily

6E1842 CCJ0855 – 1220JED 320 D

6E1843 JED1320 – 2135CCJ 320 D

**Mumbai – Dammam** *eff 07MAR20* 1 daily

6E1837 BOM1925 – 2050DMM 320 D

6E1838 DMM2150 – 0410+1BOM 320 D

**Thiruvananthapuram – Dammam** *eff 07MAR20* 1 daily



6E1356 TRV0920 – 1140DMM 320 D

6E1357 DMM0055 – 0820TRV 320 D

Routes Online 20/01/2020

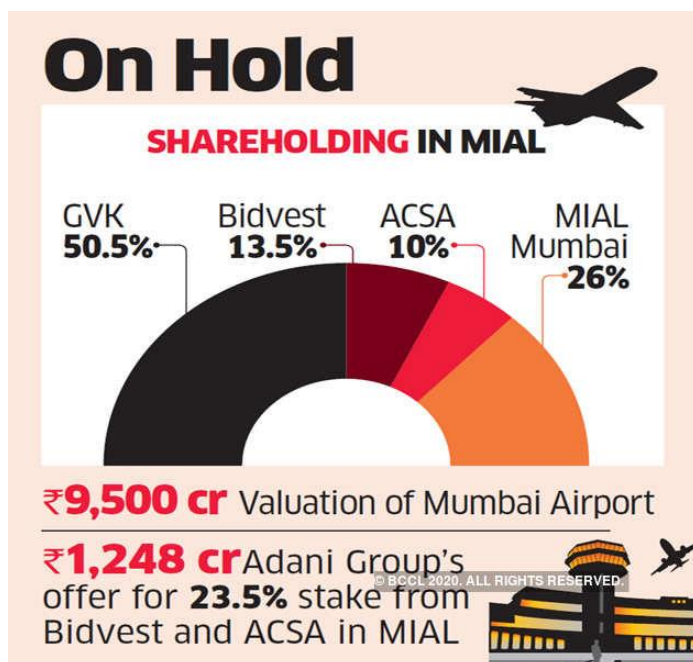
**The arbitration tribunal has restrained South African firm Bidvest Group or Bid Services from transferring its stake in GVK Airport Holdings, the main holding company for the Mumbai International Airport, dealing a major blow to the Adani Group's bid.**

The arbitration tribunal hearing a dispute between the later and its joint venture partner GVK has restrained any transfer of stake till "final disposal" of the arbitration proceedings.

The arbitration tribunal was hearing the case after the Supreme Court in December had directed it to take a call on the sale of Bidvest's 13.5% stake in Mumbai International Airport (MIAL).

"It is directed that pending the hearing and final disposal of the arbitration proceedings, Bid Services or anyone acting on behalf of or under Bid Services is restrained from alienating by way of transfer to anyone or in any manner encumbering its 1.62 crore equity shares in Mumbai International Airport..." said a tribunal bench headed by retired justices, Madan B Lokur, KPS Radhakrishnan and AK Patnaik.

In March this year, Bidvest entered into an agreement with Adani Group to sell Bidvest's entire stake in the airport for Rs 1,248 crore or at Rs 77 a share. "If the injunctive relief sought by GVK is not granted, irreparable damage will be caused to it in the sense that PP Purchase shares will be transferred to the third party and would no longer be available for purchase by GVK," observed the tribunal in its order. "The induction of a third party in the affairs of MIAL would have its own consequences and it is difficult to foresee them," it observed.



GVK has been able to satisfy all the parameters required for the grant of an interim direction in its favour.

**The arbitration tribunal is hearing a dispute between the GVK and Bidvest where the Hyderabad-based infrastructure company, which owns the first right of refusal to buy out Bidvest's stake, is also in the race to acquire the same stake.**

Currently, GVK owns around 50.5% in Mumbai International Airport. While Bidvest and another South African investor ACSA collectively owns 23.5% and the remaining stake is with the Airport Authority of India (AAI).

**Last year, in April, Bidvest had given a notice to GVK and ACSA Global, other shareholders in MIAL, which had the right of first refusal, intimating them about proposed sale to Adani. Later, GVK exercised its right of first refusal. However, it failed to purchase the stake within the prescribed time period.**

Subsequently, the GVK had approached the Delhi High Court as well as the Supreme Court to seek relief. In December, the Supreme Court had directed the arbitration panel to decide the case expeditiously.

The Economic Times of India 21/01/2020

**Govt may cap airport contracts at two per firm**

**Plan part of gov't's bid to ensure level playing field in airport privatization**

**Move comes after Adani Enterprises snapped up all six contracts in 2019 despite having no experience in running airports**

New Delhi: **Private bidders vying for future airport privatization projects are likely to be restricted to a maximum of two contracts in each round of auction**, two government officials said.

**The proposed rules are set to be implemented before the next round of airport privatization that the government is planning**, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

"A list of projects to be bid out in the near future and the modalities of the auction will be finalized very shortly. Discussions are on in the direction of limiting award of concessions to two per developer," said one of the officials.

The review of the rules comes after Adani Enterprises Ltd, the company controlled by billionaire Gautam Adani, snapped up all six contracts for upgrading airports in 2019 despite having no experience in running them. This, the government believes, had made it vulnerable to accusations by opposition parties of favouring a particular company.

The idea, officials explained, is to ensure that privatizing civil aviation infrastructure in the fast-growing domestic market steers clear of political controversies. Although airport development concessions are awarded through a process of competitive bidding to private players, which take the investment risk of redeveloping facilities, officials concede that the government is being extra cautious because it does not want the modernization process to be disrupted by legal challenges.

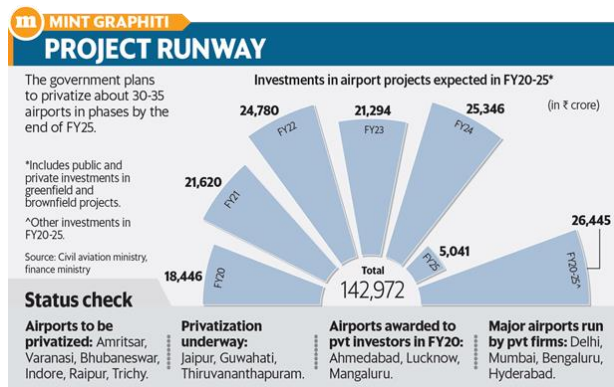
"Limiting the number of projects to be awarded to one player in an auction seems to be a fair approach as there will not be a dependence on a few groups," Anupama Arora, vice president and

sector head of corporate ratings at ICRA Ltd, said, adding that it is also important to have experienced airport operators as part of the consortiums modernizing them.

**The government plans to privatize about 30-35 airports in phases over the next five years. These, along with the greenfield projects to be initiated during the same period, will see about ₹1.4 trillion of investments flowing into airport infrastructure, according to government estimates.**

Operation of India's airports is now dominated by the state-run Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The ambitious privatization plan, under which the right to manage airports will be granted for about 50 years based on a revenue sharing (per passenger) model, is also part of the government's efforts to attract investments into the economy, add new jobs and meet growing demand.



The government is aiming to connect smaller cities by building new airports and upgrading existing ones (Graphic: Sarvesh Kumar Sharma/Mint)

Currently, about 25 of the 50 busiest airports in the country operate at near-full capacity. The government is aiming to connect smaller cities by building new airports and upgrading existing ones.

Last year, the government initiated the privatization of six airports in which Adani Enterprises emerged as the highest bidder in terms of revenue per passenger to be shared with AAI.

Letters of award have been issued in the case of Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru airports to the highest bidder.

Awarding operation, management and development rights in the case of three others—Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram airports—which got delayed due to various issues, is being resolved.

"Privatizing airports is a great initiative and our experience so far has been excellent. We get better infrastructure and service, apart from revenue to the exchequer," said Dhiraj Mathur, a former civil servant and senior adviser-sustainable infrastructure at PTC India Financial Services Ltd. "Award of airports through competitive bidding is a very transparent affair. There is nothing wrong in one investor winning more than one project but it is the government's discretion to set the norms."

[Live Mint Aviation 19/01/2020](#)

**With 5 years of operations under its belt, Tata Group-Singapore Airlines backed passenger carrier -- Vistara -- plans to double its international ports of call in 2020.**

In an interaction with IANS, Vistara's Chief Executive Leslie Thng said the airline plans to double the number of international destinations that it connects with India.

At present, the airline operates to Singapore, Dubai, Bangkok and Colombo and will commence services to Kathmandu.

However, long-haul flights will only start after the airline inducts the Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft. The aircraft is expected to enter the airline's service by February.

The airline plans to commence flights to Europe and northeast Asia which also depends upon the receipt of regulatory clearances.

When asked about the airline's plans for destinations in China, Japan or South Korea, Thng said that these will depend upon the flying time and regulatory clearances, nonetheless, he did not deny the passenger carrier's interest in these stations.

"We feel that an Indian carrier to destinations in Japan can provide quality service which will be sought after. There are potential destinations in northeast Asia," he told IANS.

Vistara had inaugurated international operations in August 2019 with Singapore as its first destination, followed by Dubai and Bangkok.

In addition, the airline plans to commence direct services to one of the airports near London.

From February, the airline will start services to Nepal by operating a daily flight between Delhi and Kathmandu.

Besides destinations, the airline will expand its fleet size to 42 aircraft by March-end 2020 including 787 and 321.

Last year, it placed an order for 50 aircraft from the Airbus A320neo family for the domestic market as well as short and medium-haul international operations, with deliveries scheduled between 2019 and 2023.

Additionally, the airline has purchased six Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft that are scheduled to be delivered between 2020 and 2021, and will be used for long-haul international operations.

Presently, the airline connects with 35 destinations, operates nearly 200 flights a day served by a fleet of 32 Airbus A320 and seven Boeing 737-800NG aircraft.

It has also established interline agreements with 26 airlines around the world and entered codeshare agreements with Singapore Airlines, SilkAir, British Airways, Japan Airlines and United Airlines.

The airline commenced commercial operations on January 9, 2015 and has flown more than 20 million customers since starting operations in 2015.

New Delhi, Jan 19 (IANS)

Mumbai, Jan 19 (PTI) **Aviation consultancy firm CAPA has said it expects the second international airport in Goa to be ready for operations in next three years.**

The Supreme Court on Thursday cleared the decks for construction of an international airport by the GMR Group at Mopa in North Goa by lifting suspension on environmental clearance (EC) granted for the project.

Immediately after SC's order, the GMR Group said it plans to start work soon for the new aerodrome.

The top court had early last year suspended the EC granted for the greenfield airport and had directed the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) to revisit the decision in light of its impact on the ecology there.

"Delays in critical infrastructure projects is costly for the economy and the consumer. It is good that GMR Group's Mopa project finally got clearance. We can look forward to new airport in next three years," CAPA South Asia Chief Executive Officer Kapil Kaul told PTI.

The state government had initially given September 2020 as the deadline for commissioning of the estimated Rs 3,000 crore airport project after GMR Group won bids for development and operations of the aerodrome in 2016, beating state-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) and Essel Infra-Incheon. However, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said in the Assembly last year that he was expecting the airport to be completed by 2021.

Kaul also said that the the delay is likely to push up the project cost, but its impact could be minimised.

19/01/20 PTI/Outlook00

Kochi: Demonetised currency notes are still a headache for enforcement agencies. **A 56-year-old Swedish woman in possession of invalid notes amounting to Rs 51,500 was detained at the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) last Tuesday.**

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel detected 49 old Rs 1,000 currency notes and five Rs 500 notes during the baggage screening at the airport. According to the airport authorities, there have been a few such incidents at the airport after the demonetisation in November 2016. If detected, a case is registered under IPC Section 489 C (possession of forged or counterfeit currency notes) and section 7 of the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Act, 2017.

"The Swedish woman had visited India in 2014 and the currency notes have been in her possession since then. She was not aware of the demonetisation," said M S Faizal, sub-inspector, Nedumbassery police station. She paid a fine of Rs 2.5 lakh at the First Class Judicial Magistrate court, at Angamaly before leaving for Colombo on Saturday.

A case was registered as per the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Act, 2017. According to the officers, the Act prohibits possession of more than 10 pieces of the old notes by individuals and more than 25 pieces for study, research or numismatics purpose. An offence under the Act attracts a fine of Rs 10,000 or five times the cash held, whichever is higher.

19/01/20 New Indian Express

**Billed as Asia's largest exposition on civil aviation, Wings India 2020 will come alive at Hyderabad's Begumpet airport from March 12 to 15. Besides static displays of commercial, business, regional**

**and cargo aircraft, the event will also see CEOs forum, conferences and more.**

**But the focus will also be on business. Over the next 20 years, Indian companies are estimated to acquire 2,100 new aircraft worth the US \$ 290 billion.**

“Three hundred business jets, 300 small aircra and 250 helicopters are expected to be added to the current fleet of Indian carriers in the next five years,” informs the Union Civil Aviation Ministry. The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has estimated that by 2022, the Indian aviation market will be third largest globally, aer the United States and China. By 2040, the passenger traic will grow from 315 million to 1.1 billion, as AAI Member (Operations) I N Murthy informed at a promotional event for Wings India 2020 here on Saturday.

AAI, he said, will invest US\$ 3.5 billion over the next five years in airports and other related infrastructure. The land requirement is about 1.5 lakh hectares.

19/01/20 Deccan Herald

**Bengaluru has the potential to become the aviation capital of the country, said Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola** on Friday at the Wings India Summit, organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Bidar will be the next operational airport and is expected to start operations on January 26. The first flight will be from Bidar to Bengaluru.

“We have airports in all directions of the State now. A couple of months ago, the Gulbarga (Kalaburagi) airport was made operational. **Aviation has become an engine of economic growth,**” the secretary said at the summit.

The aviation secretary further said that five airports will become operational in Karnataka in the next two years — Vijayapura, Shivamogga, Karwar, Chikkamagaluru and Bidar.

**“We have operationalised nearly 40 airports in the last five years and the target in the next five years is to double the number of operational airports and helipads in the country,”** the aviation secretary further said.

Kapil Mohan, the Principal Secretary of Infrastructure Development told the Hindu that a Gulbarga Airport Development Authority is being considered. “We launched the Kalaburagi airport with the Airports Authority of India, and the response has been very good. To improve regional connectivity, there will be developments regarding Vijayapura, Shivamogga, Karwar, Hassan or Chikkamagluru airports in the next two years,” he said.

The state government has proposed to complete airport projects in Vijayapura, Shivamogga, Karwar and Chikkamagaluru over the next two years, as Kapil Mohan, Principal Secretary of the State Infrastructure Development Department informed.

These new airports are part of the Centre’s UDAN scheme. 13 flights will be operating out of Belagavi. TruJet has already started flight operations from Belagavi to Tirupati, Mysuru and Hyderabad daily. Flights operate to destinations such as Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Surat, Jodhpur and others.

19/01/20 Bhatkallys.com

“Over the last decade, India has witnessed a robust civil aviation market, and through ‘Wings India 2020’ we aim to provide a congenial forum that will cater to the rapidly changing dynamics of the sector, focusing on new business acquisitions, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity,” said Pradeep Singh Kharola, Union Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation.

**Kharola, taking part in the road show for ‘Wings India 2020’ — a civil aviation event, said**

**“Bengaluru being the IT capital of India, it has the potential of becoming the aviation capital of**

**India.”**

Wings India 2020, a flagship event of India’s civil aviation industry will be held at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad, from March 12 to 15. **The four-day event themed “Flying for All” is an international platform focused on new business acquisitions, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity in the civil aviation industry.**

Wings India 2020 is also Asia’s largest and most popular gathering in the industry. Organised jointly by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation, AAI and FICCI, the event is expected to attract top leaders, special invitees from foreign countries in civil aviation sector, global CEOs, suppliers, strategic partners, organisations and the media.

Dr S Unnikrishnan Nair, Director, Human Space Flight Centre, ISRO, said, “India is set to trigger revival of the global aviation sector. The civil aviation and space industry together will have a world-class training facility for pilots and astronauts. We are sure that the exhibition for aviation as well as space fraternity is a platform to develop new growth spots that can be targeted to ensure a positive curve.”

18/01/20 Anil Urs/Business Line

**According to airline safety and product review portal AirlineRatings.com, India’s IndiGo is the world’s safest low-cost carrier for 2020 after Air Arabia (UAE), Flybe (UK), Frontier (US), and HK Express (Hong Kong). The other five in the list are JetBlue (US), Volaris (Mexico), Vueling (Spain), Westjet (Canada), and Wizz (Hungary).**

The annual rating of airlines is based on a range of factors including “audits from aviation’s governing and industry bodies, government audits, airline’s crash and serious incident record, profitability, industry-leading safety initiatives, and fleet age,” according to the portal. IndiGo is given seven out of seven-star safety rating and four out of five-star product rating.

IndiGo — India’s largest airline has over 250 planes in its kitty and has a market share of over 47 per cent. DGCA has given the carrier more time to replace the Pratt & Whitney engines fitted to its Airbus A320neo planes which have been linked to in-flight engine shutdowns, PTI reported citing a statement by DGCA. The watchdog had asked the airline in November to replace the engines by January 31 after four incidents of in-flight engine shutdowns within a week caused “serious concern”. The safety rating depends on IATA operational safety audit certification, not blacklisted by European Union, maintaining fatality-free record for the past 10 years, the US Federal Aviation Authority’s endorsement, meeting eight safety parameters by the International Civil Aviation Organisation and whether it has been grounded by the respective country’s aviation authority for safety issues. The product rating, on the other hand, hinges on personal in-flight entertainment, cabin space and comfort, beverages, food and seat recline.

19/01/20 Financial Express

**Lucknow: An unemployed postgraduate man was duped of Rs 5 lakh on the pretext of a clerical job in Air India by a man who claimed to be an officer in the company.**

The man lodged an FIR of cheating at Gomtinagar police station on Friday evening.

Vinay Khand resident Manish Kumar Yadav, who has a commerce degree, said he had been applying for government and private jobs but could not get success.

In 2017, a man named Sunil Kumar Bhardwaj met him, claiming to be a senior officer at Air India. He offered Yadav a clerical job but demanded Rs 7 lakh from him.

Yadav "convinced" Bhardwaj to seal the deal for Rs 5 lakh. He gave Bhardwaj Rs 3 lakh in cash and Rs 2 lakh through bank transactions and began waiting for an appointment letter. For two years,

Bhardwaj remained in contact with Yadav, telling him he would get a letter soon. However, recently, he had started ignoring his calls and messages. Yadav asked him to return his money but Bhardwaj blocked his number.

19/01/20 Times of India

**Over a 1,000 drones have been registered on the government portal in the last two days as drone owners rush to avoid penalty. India has notified that all kind of drone operators need to register themselves on the Digital Sky platform of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) till January 31.**

The deadline for drone registration was set the government noticed several drone operators and drones without the mandatory Unique Identification Number, Unnamed Aircraft Operator Permit and other operational requirements.

The government has provided for a “one-time” voluntary disclosure as has clarified that the condition of No-Permission-No-Takeoff is not mandatory for this purpose.

Drone operators can visit <https://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in> and obtain a drone acknowledgement number and an ownership acknowledgement number which will help in the validation of their drone operations.

**Further (beyond January 31), ownership of drone(s) in India without a valid DAN or OAN shall invite penal action as per applicable laws.** This database will be used to process each case as per the regulations by seeking further information,” the civil aviation ministry has said.

Any clarification can also be sought from [support-digisky@gov.in](mailto:support-digisky@gov.in).

In India, usage of drones has picked up specifically in photography since last year. They are considered useful in the areas of shipping, delivery, search and rescue operations, storm tracking, geographic mapping, and precision crop monitoring.

18/01/20 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

**Financial viability of airlines needs to be addressed urgently as it is proving to be a big challenge for the aviation sector in the country, Civil Aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said in Bengaluru on Saturday. He also urged all state governments to bring down tax on ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel) to improve the financials of these airlines. Currently, the Central government charges an excise duty of 11 per cent, while the state-level taxes can go as high as 30 per cent.**

Fuel expense, of which a big chunk includes state tax, is a major cost factor for airlines. Kharola also briefed upon various factors to help improve the sector faced with multiple challenges. **“To cater to the growth in air traffic, we need to improve the airport infrastructure further.** At the same time, we need to have more skilled manpower. **There is a requirement of around 700-800 pilots in India in a year, but India produces only around 350 pilots a year. This needs to be addressed and steps should be taken to fill the gaps. Though we have also expanded big on the domestic front, we need to do well in long and mid-haul flights; otherwise, foreign airlines will take away the market,”** said Kharola.

18/01/20 Abhinav Singh/The Week

New Delhi: **The Centre is likely to issue the expression of interest (Eoi) and the Share Purchase Agreement (SPA) for Air India’s disinvestment early next week.** With the losses of the airline mounting, the disinvestment of Air India is among the top priorities of NDA 2.0 government. Sources said that the expression of interest and the SPA are likely to be in public domain by next week.



The proposal for disinvestment was approved in a group of ministers (GoM) meeting recently on January 7 headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Commerce Minister and Railways minister Piyush Goyal and Civil Aviation minister Hardeep Puri were also part of that meeting.

**Sources said to attract investors, government has also approved major debt transfer of the national carrier to a special purpose vehicle (SPV). They said that nearly 80 per cent of total debt will be transferred and the government is likely to keep only Rs 10,000 crore debt in the airline's books. Earlier, nearly Rs 29,400 crore was transferred to the SPV.**

18/01/20 New Indian Express

**Nashik: The defence PSU, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL), has started waiving off operational charges for all civilian flights using the Ozar airport near Nashik city under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS).**

The instructions for the same were issued by the ministry of defence (MoD). **Moreover, HAL has also started providing night landing facility to all commercial flights and aircraft at the Ozar airport if they inform HAL about the same at least 10 hours prior to the landing.**

HAL sources said that the MoD recently issued instructions to the company to waive off operational charges at the airport including landing and parking fees for all flights operating to and from Nashik Airport under the Centre's Udan or RCS scheme.

The ministry also asked the airlines to rope in more flights for Nashik. At present, Nashik airport facilitates air connectivity to Hyderabad, Pune and Ahmedabad.

**Alliance Air, a subsidiary of Air India, is operating from Nashik to Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Pune. In addition, private airline Trujet is also operating on the Nashik-Ahmedabad route on a daily basis.**

"Following the instructions from the union ministry of defence, we have waived all operational charges at the airport for the flights operating under the RCS. The ministry had recently issued such circular directing us waive of all the charges," said HAL sources.

**The Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had also given its approval to the night landing for passenger aircraft at the Ozar airport.**

"Earlier, we would provide services at the airport till 7 pm. But, after the DGCA's approval for landing for passenger aircraft, we have extended our service hours till midnight. The night landing facilities are also free for flights under the Udan scheme," said HAL sources.

18/01/20 Tushar Pawar/Times of India

**New Delhi: A thick blanket of fog engulfed the national capital early this morning affecting rail and flight operations as visibility dropped below 100 metres.** Conditions on the city roads were no different as vehicles were seen moving at low speeds with emergency lights on.

"The visibility was nearly zero. I had to switch on emergency lights of my car as I commuted for work," said Anuj Srivastava, who works at a firm in Noida near Delhi. He said it took him close to two hours to reach his workplace, which is around 30 kms from his home in west Delhi.

Mahesh Palawat, a top official at weather agency Skymet Weather, a private forecaster, tweeted that visibility at Palam airport was below 100 metres.

Vistara has also asked its passengers to check updated status of their flights before leaving for airport.

Visibility was reduced to 50 metres in Palam at 5.30 am, a MeT Department official said.

At least 20 Delhi-bound trains were delayed due to fog in several parts of Northern India, news

agency IANS said, quoting railway officials.

18/01/20 NDTV

Mumbai: GMR Airports Ltd has bagged the contract for duty-free shops at Kannur international airport in Kerala.

Kannur airport began commercial operations in December 2018. As part of its concession agreement signed with Kannur International Airport Ltd (KIAL), the airport arm of the GMR group will finance, develop, operate and manage duty-free shops (DFS) at the Kerala's fourth international airport for seven years, a release said.

The DFS contract is extendable by another three years, it added.

**This is the first duty free concession outside GMR's airport portfolio, as per the release.**

18/01/20 PTI/Outlook

Bengaluru: **Immigration officials at Kempegowda International Airport arrested a Sri Lankan national after he was deported to Bengaluru from Siberia.**

**Kiyesuyen Jude Donal (24) has been booked under various sections of the passport and foreigners act, and remanded in judicial custody.**

Upon inspection of Donal's documents and subsequent questioning it was found that he was born in Kaarunagar in Jaffna, Sri Lanka. His parents came to India in 1991 as refugees during India-Sri Lanka war and stayed in Namakkal, Tamil Nadu.

Donal is said to have procured an Indian passport, using fake documents to prove Indian citizenship from the Coimbatore passport office.

18/01/20 Udayavani/Bhatkallys.com

Chennai: **Customs officials at Chennai airport seized gold worth Rs 1 crore and undeclared foreign currency valued at Rs 10.8 lakh on Thursday and Friday. One passenger was arrested.**

Customs said that on Thursday, four passengers — Shahul Hameedu Badhusha, 37, Yasar Arabath, 20, Azarudeen, 34, of Ramanathapuram and Usoof Moulana, 42, of Chennai — arrived from Colombo by Sri Lankan Airlines flight UL 127, and were intercepted and searched. They were found concealing 12 packs of gold paste in their rectum. On extraction, 947g of gold valued at Rs 38.8 lakh was recovered. The officers also recovered a gold chain weighing 50g and valued at Rs 2 lakh from the trousers of one of the passengers.

In another incident on Thursday night, Ramanathan, 27, of Ramanathapuram, who was bound for Bangkok by Indigo flight 6E 91 was intercepted and checked as he was proceeding towards immigration. He was found carrying 13,700 euros, 3,400 Thai bahts, 225 Malaysian ringits and \$121 in various denominations, equivalent to Rs 10.8 lakh.

18/01/20 Times of India

**UK-based Hinduja Group did not submit its interest for Jet Airways Ltd by the Wednesday deadline, a lender that is part of the airline's committee of creditors told VCCircle, locking shares of the airline in the lower circuit band of 5% at Rs 47.75 on the BSE on Thursday.**

**On the brighter side, South America-based Synergy Group and New Delhi-headquartered asset reconstruction company Prudent ARC Ltd have put in their expressions of interest, the lender said.**

Now, the binding bids have to be submitted by February 15.

In December, the committee of creditors called for a fresh round of expressions of interest, the decision coming after the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved extending the period for Jet's insolvency resolution by 90 days.

The NCLT had also directed the creditors to expedite their decision on seeking fresh bids after two new undisclosed investors had shown interest in the grounded airline. By then, Synergy Group was the sole known potential bidder for Jet.

A senior executive at State Bank of India, leader of the 26-member banks' consortium to Jet, is not too optimistic of the resolution plans so far. "We are yet to see the financial capability and strength of Prudent ARC and Synergy Group," the person said.

16/01/20 Beena Parmar/VCCircle

**TruJet has started daily flight operations from Belagavi to Tirupati, Mysuru and Hyderabad under the government's RCS-UDAN scheme. TruJet was awarded the routes under the RCS-UDAN-3 bidding process last year. The airline will be operating daily flights from Belagavi airport to Tirupati, Mysuru & Hyderabad.**

Due to the non-availability of direct flights earlier, Belagavi residents had to travel at least 18 hours on train or 15 hours by road to reach Hyderabad. Similarly, it took 14 hours by train and 16 hours by road to reach Tirupati from Belagavi. To reach Mysuru from Belagavi people had to bear an 11 hour journey by road or travel 13 hours journey by train.

TruJet will operate 6 flights everyday. It will deploy ATR 72(500), 72 seater luxury aircraft on these routes. It currently operates 32 flights under RCS-UDAN. With the addition of Tirupati-Mysuru-Hyderabad there will be 38 flights under its umbrella.

17/01/20 Business Today

New Delhi: State-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI) has once again written to Solicitor General of India (SG) seeking his opinion on the proposed investment by Tata Group consortium partner GIC, the Singapore government's sovereign wealth fund, in home-grown airport major GMR group's airport business.

The move was necessitated after the Tata Group rejigged the transaction to lower its stake to comply with local regulations but in the process, GIC's stake went up.

"It has been pointed out by some airlines that GIC may also be one of the investors in airlines operating to and from India and hence can not hold more than 10 per cent stake in the Delhi International Airport Pvt Ltd (DIAL). After Tata rejigged investment, the GIC stake has gone up. We have, therefore, written to the SG for his opinion," an official source told IANS.

DIAL is a special purpose vehicle with GMR group being the lead consortium partner and having 64 per cent stake. The AAI holds 26 per cent and Fraport AG the remaining 10 per cent in the country's busiest airport.

As per a clause in concession agreement for the Delhi airport, an airline company cannot hold more than 10 per cent stake in it, either directly or indirectly. Tata Group controls and runs two airlines -- Vistara and Air Asia India.

Citing this, the Federation of Indian Airlines (FIA), representing three carriers GoAir, IndiGo and SpiceJet, objected to the deal saying it breached the rules which barred companies running an airline to hold more than 10 per cent stake in DIAL.

[17/01/20 IANS/Outlook](#)

**Vijayawada: A Vijayawada-bound TruJet flight from Kadapa made an emergency landing soon after it took off from Kadapa airport, on Thursday afternoon.**

According to airport officials, the pilot was quick to report that **bird had** hit the flight within seconds of taking-off, informed the control tower and landed back at Kadapa airport.

A total 110 passengers—including the Andhra Pradesh government chief advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy—were on the flight at the time of the incident. Soon after landing, maintenance crew conducted thorough checks and eventually grounded the flight. The same flight was also scheduled to go to Chennai from Vijayawada and hence, both services were cancelled.

[17/01/20 Times of India](#)

New Delhi: All passengers flying into Mumbai from China will have to undergo a thermal screening “as a matter of precaution”, due to the outbreak of pneumonia caused by Novel Coronavirus in Wuhan city of Hubei province. Airport health officials (APHO) teams at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) have activated a health counter and thermal scanners at the pre-immigration area for arriving passengers.

Mumbai currently has two airlines — Air China and Rwand Air — with flights to and from China.

“The airport has now expanded its existing passenger safety measures in compliance with the latest directive given by the World Health Organization (WHO) in case if any traveler is detected with the symptom. The concerned passenger will be immediately shifted to the isolation hospital earmarked for CSMIA on advice of the APHO team. The airport will share a daily report with the ministry on the scanning of passengers,” a statement issued by CSMIA said.

“As reported by Chinese authorities, this is a new type of coronavirus and is different from all other human coronaviruses. WHO has reported symptoms such as fever, difficulty in breathing and chest radiographs showing bilateral lung infiltrates as the cause of the pneumonia,” it added.

[18/01/20 Times of India](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airl)<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/industry/transportation/airl>

The newly appointed Chairman of Airports Authority of India, Arvind Singh said that AAI will invest **Rs. 25,000 crores in the next five years for building airport infrastructure, creating new facilities for passengers, new runways and upgradation of technology** in the country.

[The Economic Times 17/01/2020](#)

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has summoned top brass of Malaysian based AirAsia group including its chief executive officer (CEO) Tony Fernandes to join its ongoing probe on January 20. Tony Fernandes and others stand booked by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on charges of criminal conspiracy under the Prevention of Corruption Act. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also probing allegations of money laundering.

CBI registered the FIR on May 29, 2018 following a case registered by the Enforcement Directorate

(ED) on charges of money laundering.

According to CBI's first information report (FIR), "the shareholders and Indian partners at the joint venture, including the board members, were not only aware of these intentions but also consciously ensured violated the then FIPB norms."

However, the role of officials under the current government's tenure had also come under the CBI's scanner. "Source information" meetings with government servants were arranged by lobbyists hired by Fernandes and kickbacks running into crores were paid, the FIR said.

In the AirAsia case, information with CBI suggests that the seeds of conspiracy to get the 5/20 rule amended were sown during second term (2009-14) of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government.

AirAsia was emboldened by the approvals given by the FIPB despite irregularities in its application. As per available information, AirAsia submitted applications to the FIPB in February 2013 and received formal approval in April 2013. The 5/20 rule was relaxed in June 2016 to remove the five years of operation requirement.

**According to the agency, a basic violation of foreign direct investment (FDI) norms was allegedly overlooked by the FIPB. AirAsia India was indirectly controlled and operated by Malaysia-based AirAsia Group and particularly AirAsia Berhad, thereby violating the rules that mandated local control.**

**The said arrangement (company structure) was formalised on April 17, 2013, which indirectly made AirAsia India a "de-facto subsidiary rather than a joint venture."**

AirAsia had denied the accusations after it was booked by the agencies. In a press statement issued in 2018 it had said "AirAsia India Ltd (AAIL) refutes any wrongdoing and is cooperating with all regulators and agencies to present the correct facts". It added: "AirAsia India Ltd (AAIL) refutes any wrongdoing and is cooperating with all regulators and agencies to present the correct facts."

**In its FIR, the CBI has also named Rajender Dubey, Director of Singapore-based HNR Trading pvt Ltd, Sunil Kapur, Chairman Total Food Services, Mumbai and Deepak Talwar, Principal and Founder DTA consulting, New Delhi and the company HNR Trading as alleged lobbyists who used their influence to get 5/20 rule relaxed before General Elections of 2014.**

The Economic Times of India 16/01/2020

High vibrations on yet another PW engine forced an IndiGo A320 Neo flying from Pune to Jaipur to divert safely to Mumbai.

The Economic Times of India 16/01/2020

NEW DELHI: As government puts Air India on the block, the management has brought in a slew of cost cutting or rationalisation initiatives to strengthen the airline's financial before the sale.

While one initiative of moving to one ticket booking software for domestic flight bookings would save about Rs 519 crore in 2020, the other initiative of putting a bigger aircraft on Delhi-London route and smaller Dreamliner on Delhi-Washington route would add about Rs 100 crore to airline's bottom line, said senior Air India officials.

**The airline also expects to add over Rs 120 crore with the launch of new destinations strengthening network on the existing ones.**

“These initiatives are set to add to our balance sheet and we expect our numbers to improve further with launch new flights to London from Mumbai and upgrade of equipment to flights to London from Delhi,” said Vinod Hejmadi, director (finance) at Air India.

Air India has launched new flights to Nairobi, Dubai, Kuwait, Toronto, Standsted and converted the flight to Seoul to direct.

“We have added 9 new flights, 3 additional flights on existing routes and converted one stopover flights to direct. All these new flights have been launched with the same fleet, only by utilising them more and bringing them back from flying from being on-ground,” Hejmadi further said.

**Air India, which had about 9 long-haul aircraft (Boeing 777, 787 and 747) on ground due to want of spares, have brought all of them to flying.**

**However, the airline still had about 12 narrow body aircraft on ground due to want of spares but the airline does not have funds to bring them back to flying.**

The other initiative that is set to save a substantial amount for the national carrier is shifting to single ticket booking system called the GDS or Global Distribution System.

**Starting January 1, 2020, the airline has shifted to Travelport’s booking system exclusively. This is estimated to save over Rs 500 crore in the first year itself.**

“Our decision to shift to single GDS was purely financial and intended to save money on booking cost. We have not just shifted to new GDS but also got a better deal, which saves a lot of cost for us,” said Meenakshi Malik, commercial director at Air India.

She added that the company has not lost any revenues on account of moving to Travelport.

“There is always that risk of loss of booking, when the airline moves to single GDS, which means restricting our flights to lesser number of agents. But we have been working with the agents and there is not decline in booking during the first ten days of shifting to single GDS,” Malik further said.’

**According to the data shared by Air India, there has been a single digit increase in domestic booking on flights during the first ten of 2020, as compared to the same period last year.**

**The government plans to divest 100% in Air India and is the process of deciding on bidding documents, which might come this week or early next week.**

The Economic Times of India 16/01/2020

NEW DELHI: The last mile is always the hardest and the situation is no different for Air India as it awaits the outcome of the government’s second move to sell it off. The airline, which is yet to pay December salary, has almost completely run out of funds and is now struggling to keep flying in the absence of equity infusion this fiscal.

Sample this: **One of AI’s Airbus has been grounded in Vadodara for almost a week as it requires an engine replacement. The Maharaja has a spare engine for this aircraft in Delhi but is unable to send it as it can’t raise the e-way bill because of GST dues. “Our GST dues are about Rs 100 crore and because of that the paperwork required to send the engine to Vadodara is not being done,” said a senior official.**

The airline hopes to pay the GST dues on Thursday, along with salary to employees. "We have raised the cash to pay for these things from our ticket sales. Hopefully, we will be able to send the engine to Vadodara once some GST dues are paid on Thursday, and then we raise the e-way bill required for that shipment," said the official.

Amid a life-threatening fund crunch, AI and the government are trying to restore faith among flyers to book tickets. Last November, aviation minister H S Puri said in Parliament that AI "would have to be closed down if not privatised". After that, the airline saw a sharp dip in advance bookings. "On a year-on-year basis, we have witnessed 10-15% drop in advance bookings," said a person in the know.

In the past few days, the government has been trying to assure passengers that AI will keep flying till it is sold off. "Mo-CA (ministry of civil aviation) reiterates that the government, while going ahead with the disinvestment, would ensure that AI continues to operate uninterruptedly and improves its operations also. There is no cause for worry to any of its stakeholders," the ministry tweeted on Tuesday to allay concerns of both travellers and the airline's unpaid employees.

Before this, AI chairman Ashwani Lohani — who has informed the government about the airline's frail financial health — had tweeted on January 4, "Rumours regarding AI shutting down or closing operations are all baseless." After these assurances, the dip in bookings has ebbed.

[The Economic Times of India 16/01/2020](#)

### **Bankrupt Jet Airways plans to sell its Netherlands business to KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, according to a regulatory filing.**

The domestic full-service carrier, which shuttered operations last April, is undergoing insolvency resolution process.

The insolvency resolution professional managing the affairs of Jet Airways said **various options are being explored for the "company's resolution and maximising the value for its stakeholders"**, as per the filing on Friday.

Providing an update, the company said **there is a separate liquidation proceeding ongoing in the Netherlands and that the resolution professional has agreed a co-operation protocol with the Dutch trustee appointed by the local court.**

"In this context, the company and Dutch trustee have entered into a conditional sale and purchase agreement with Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij NV, on January 13, 2020, for the proposed resolution of business activities of the company in the Netherlands as approved by the committee of creditors," it added.

Koninklijke Luchtvaart Maatschappij NV is KLM, the flagship carrier of the Netherlands.

**"The proposed resolution is subject to the completion of several conditions including statutory and regulatory clearances, both under Indian law and Dutch laws,"** the filing said.

**If completed, the transaction would only involve a sale of part of the Jet Airways business activities and would not impact the shareholding pattern of the company in any manner,** it added.

Shares of Jet Airways were trading 4.92 per cent lower than their previous close on BSE at Rs 45.40 a piece.

[The Economic Times of India 16/01/2020](#)

Zurich Airport International AG will soon be applying to Union Ministry of Home Affairs for security clearance as it plans to begin construction of the Jewar airport this year, officials said on Wednesday. **A team of the Switzerland-based developer including CEO Stephan Widrig, CFO Lukas Brosi among others met the officials of Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL) in Greater Noida and later visited the project site in Jewar.**

**The visiting team held a meeting with NIAL officials including CEO Arun Vir Singh during which a detailed presentation was made regarding the upcoming international greenfield airport, billed to be the biggest in India when fully operational.**

"A presentation was made by project consultant PwC and various aspects about development of the project discussed. The Zurich Airport team then visited the airport site and made observations about overall infrastructure," Shailendra Bhatia, NIAL's Nodal officer, said.

He said the visitors expressed satisfaction over the good road connectivity already available -- the Eastern Peripheral Expressway and the Yamuna Expressway -- nearby.

"Now the developer will prepare a master plan for airport development and present it to the government as well as to NIAL. It'll also soon apply to the MHA for getting security clearance for the project," Bhatia told.

The Swiss firm had on November 29 emerged as the highest bidder to develop the Jewar airport on the outskirts of Delhi, outbidding competitors like Adani Enterprises, DIAL and Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holding.

**The entire project will be spread over 5,000 hectares and estimated to cost Rs 29,560 crore, officials said.**

**The airport, the third in the national capital region after Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport and Ghaziabad's Hindon airport, is touted to have six to eight runways, the most in India, when fully built, according to officials.**

The first phase of the airport would be spread over 1,334 hectare and cost Rs 4,588 crore as it is expected to be completed by 2023, the officials said.

[The Economic Times of India 15/01/2020](#)

Presqu'un an après la fin retentissante des opérations de Jet Airways, le ciel indien, qui connaît l'une des progressions les plus importantes au monde, poursuit sa réorganisation et **Air India, la compagnie publique, entend bien faire de 2020 son année.**

Le 7 janvier, le gouvernement indien, propriétaire à 100%, a finalement approuvé le processus de privatisation de la compagnie, en difficulté financière depuis plusieurs années, et a fait savoir qu'un document de manifestation d'intérêt serait rendu public dans les jours à venir. **Une annonce de vente sera en outre publiée dans les médias internationaux d'ici la fin du mois de janvier.**

Pour rendre l'offre plus attractive, **une grande partie de la dette sera transférée**, ce qui n'avait pas été le cas lors des premières tentatives de privatisation. « *En principe, une approbation a été donnée pour éliminer une partie de la dette et certains passifs* », a déclaré un haut-fonctionnaire au *Business Standard India*.

D'après les comptes audits d'Air India à la fin 2019, **les dettes accumulées s'élèveraient à près de 8 milliards de dollars.**



A noter également que la compagnie a considérablement réduit ses effectifs ces dernières années, **passant de 23 000 employés en 2014 à 12 000 en 2018**

Face aux rumeurs de faillites et de fermetures qui ont couru dernièrement, Ashwani Lohani, P-DG de la compagnie, avait la semaine dernière publié un message pour rassurer clients et partenaires de part le monde.

*« Air India continuera à voler et à se développer également et il n’y aura aucune inquiétude que ce soit pour les voyageurs, les entreprises ou les agents. Air India, le transporteur national, est toujours la plus grande compagnie aérienne de l’Inde »,* pouvait-on y lire.

Pour autant, il y a trois semaines, le même homme avait exprimé ses inquiétudes devant le ministère indien de l’Aviation civile.

*« Il faut aussi admettre que la situation financière globale est extrêmement intenable et que la compagnie ne pourrait pas être en mesure de maintenir ses opérations en l’absence d’une intervention et d’un soutien gouvernemental immédiat, demandé à plusieurs reprises dans le passé »,* expliquait une lettre envoyée au gouvernement.

Ce dernier s’est voulu ces derniers jours rassurant. Lors d’une rencontre qui s’est tenue le 2 janvier 2020 avec les pilotes de la compagnie, Hardeep Singh Puri, ministre de l’aviation civile en Inde a **assuré qu’Air India continuerait d’être pleinement opérationnel jusqu’à la fin d’un processus de privatisation** qui apparaît comme indispensable à la survie de la grande compagnie indienne.\* Face aux rumeurs de faillites et de fermetures qui ont couru dernièrement, Ashwani Lohani, P-DG de la compagnie, avait la semaine dernière publié un message pour rassurer clients et partenaires de part le monde.

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Tour Mag 13/01/2020

**Les Boeing 777-300ER utilisés par Air France sur le réseau COI (Caraïbes - Océan Indien) changent. La compagnie a présenté les nouvelles cabines qui seront installées tout au long de l'année 2020**

**sur dix appareils et qui entreront en service régulier avec le premier Triple Sept réaménagé le 15 janvier sur la liaison entre Paris (Orly) et Pointe-à-Pitre - Fort-de-France devant l'accueillir le lendemain. Le programme de rafraîchissement et de densification représente un investissement de 120 millions d'euros.**

Les fauteuils de classe affaires, jusqu'ici pas horizontaux et disposés en 2-3-2, ont laissé la place à quatorze Optima (Safran Seats) conformes aux standards 3F (full flat, full privacy et full access, en 1-2-1), qui illustrent la montée en gamme. Transformables en lits plats de près de 2 mètres, ils sont également dotés d'une position « *relax* » prédéfinie. Air France a gardé le coffre de rangement présent sur les autres appareils de la flotte et a fait installer des écrans HD de 18,5 pouces. Les couleurs choisies et l'ambiance lumineuse qui sera appliquée doivent donner une impression de sobriété et de douceur aux voyageurs.

Derrière la classe affaires se trouve une Premium Economy qui perd quatre fauteuils et passe à 28 places. Les sièges ont été modifiés pour offrir davantage d'espace pour les jambes et davantage de confort, avec de nouvelles mousses et de nouveaux accoudoirs. Mesurant 48,8 cm de large, ils sont dotés d'une coque fixe, peuvent s'incliner à 130° et disposent d'un écran de 13,3 pouces.

La classe économique a quant à elle pu s'agrandir. Conservant ses dix sièges de front, elle passe de 422 à 430 places. Là aussi, un travail a été fait sur les mousses et les têtes pour améliorer le confort, la tablette a été élargie, tandis que l'inclinaison du fauteuil peut atteindre 118°. Chaque fauteuil dispose d'un écran de 11,6 pouces.

Par ailleurs, le système de connectivité Air France Connect a été installé. La totalité de la flotte devrait être équipée d'ici la fin de l'année.

Les 777-300ER réaménagés seront placés sur la Guadeloupe et la Martinique en priorité, puis sur La Réunion (dès cet été), l'île Maurice, Cancun, La Havane, Saint-Domingue et Punta Cana.

[Le Journal de l'aviation 13/01/2020](#)

**Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Udan Academy (IGRUA), the pilot training institute that was the brainchild of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, will soon be in private hands with the Modi government deciding to privatise it.**

**“The view is that the government should not be in this business of running a pilot training institute and a decision has been taken to give it to private players for a period of 50 years,” said a senior government official on condition of anonymity.**

A cabinet note on this is being prepared and will be sent for approval soon, the official added.

**The move has the approval of the Prime Minister’s Office, people in the know said. The PMO’s view is that the government should “facilitate private companies to start pilot training institutes at airports and airstrips that are lying idle” instead of operating those, said one of them.**

The institute is located at Amethi, the constituency that Rajiv Gandhi, a former Indian Airlines pilot, had represented in the Lok Sabha. His wife Sonia and son Rahul too had represented the constituency, which was considered to be a Gandhi family bastion, before BJP’s Smriti Irani won it in 2019.

**The institute is making losses averaging around Rs 6 crore annually, and the government does not see any merit in funding its losses**

IGRUA, founded in 1985, is the largest pilot training institute in the country with over 150 students undergoing training at present and a fleet of 24 planes. Other institutes in India average around twothree planes.

One of the key reasons for the institute to post losses is the aircraft, which are expensive to operate, a government official said. **“The aircraft operate on aviation gas, which costs double of jet fuel, and is the biggest reason for the high cost of operations at IGRUA,”** he added.

**This person said replacing the engines on these planes would require about Rs 8-9 crore each, which the institute did not have and the government was not willing to lend.**

**Of the two dozen planes at the aviation training academy, about 19 are operating and the rest are on ground for maintenance. Of the 19, about nine are old (over 20 years) and need to be replaced immediately. The cost on this will be borne by the entity that wins the contract to run the institute, the official added.**

Meanwhile, the aviation ministry is also internally working on the finances of the institute to wipe out its losses. “The idea is not to make profits from the institute but to reduce losses to zero by the next fiscal,” said another official, who also did not want to be named.

The Economic Times of India 14/01/2020

NEW DELHI: When Iranian missiles slammed into US bases in Iraq last week in response to the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, airline executives in India were keenly following the fallout. **They were on edge because a flare-up in crude oil prices—at a time when the Indian aviation industry is at a crucial crossroad—could signal not just deeper losses but also the potential shutdown of at least one leading private airline.**

**Two of India’s leading airlines —IndiGo and GoAir—are already struggling with repeated snags in Pratt and Whitney (P&W) engines on their fleet of Airbus 320neo aircraft, while another, SpiceJet, has been hit by the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX planes** after emerging as one of the largest global customers for the aircraft, which has been in the middle of a global firestorm after two suspicious crashes.

**Meanwhile, debt-ridden state-run Air India faces a possible shutdown if a second attempt at privatization fails.** The aviation sector in India suddenly looks a lot like the spooked telecom sector.

Both in telecom and aviation, the clock seems to have come a full circle in the two decades since the late-1990s. Despite exits and business failures along the way, customers managed to get a relatively good deal. But that extended party seems to have come to a sudden end. With telecom tariffs going up after a long lull, the question is: will a similar turn of events play out on the aviation front too? If even one airline goes under, a capacity crunch— which surfaced following the collapse of India’s largest private airline Jet Airways last April—may re-emerge.

**In their quest to capture the capacity vacuum left by Jet Airways, airlines had cut fares and added capacity, but nearly every incumbent is now facing a profit squeeze. They had also bet on ordering the latest and most fuel-efficient engines and aircraft to squeeze out a profit wherever they could. But that strategy appears to have spectacularly backfired.**

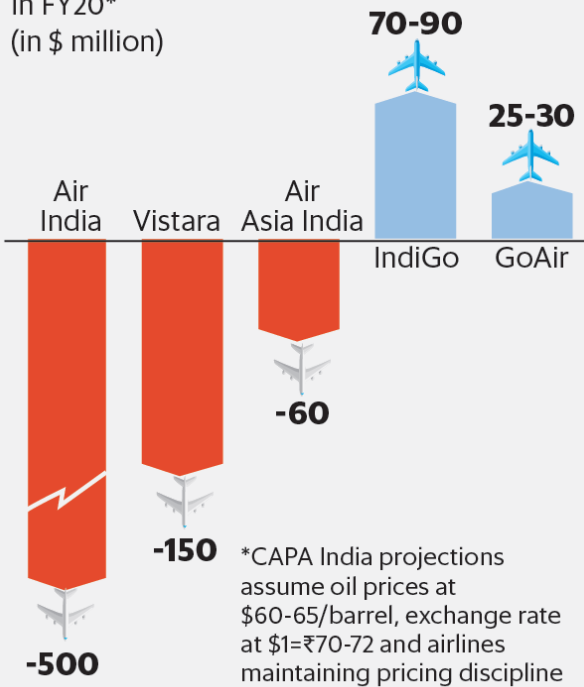
Airlines are now facing either long-delayed aircraft deliveries—such as Boeing 737 MAX for SpiceJet—or tight timelines mandated by aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to replace faulty P&W engines for the Airbus 320neo aircraft in the case of IndiGo and Go Air. Anticipated volatility in fuel prices is now only adding to this combustible mix.

#### *Volatile crude prices*

If the crude oil price rises by another \$4-5 a barrel, another airline could go bust," said a senior airline official, speaking in hushed tones, hunched over a table. "Airlines are finding it difficult to make money," the official, who requested anonymity, said, adding that the situation is looking like the proverbial double whammy as airlines are finding it difficult to increase airfares due to cut-throat competition.

## TURBULENCE AHEAD

Profit/loss estimates of Indian airlines in FY20\* (in \$ million)



**\$600 mn** is the projected cumulative loss for India's airlines in FY20

**30%** rise in Brent crude prices over the past year

**4.5%** is the passenger growth in FY20, against double-digit rates in past 5 years

**98** A320neo aircraft belonging to IndiGo have been facing engine woes

Source: CAPA India Aviation Outlook FY20

### Turbulence ahead

Airlines are likely to end this fiscal year with huge losses, hampered by their ability to raise fares even during the traditionally strong October-December quarter. Since the closure of Jet Airways, airlines have seen a couple of good quarters, followed by quarters that saw huge losses.

**Indian airlines are expected to lose over \$600 million in FY20 as compared to a previous estimate of a full-year profit of \$500-700 million, consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) India said in a recent report.**

The cash position of the industry remains under pressure, with corresponding risks. Most airlines other than IndiGo are precariously placed, with cash balances available—in some cases—to cover only a few days or weeks of expenses, it added.

The Capa India report assumes crude oil price to remain at \$60-65 per barrel. Crude oil prices are currently trading at around \$65-66 a barrel. Though tensions in the Middle East have eased a bit, matters could easily heat up again if there are any violent incidents.

Airlines are likely to remain under pressure not only because of high oil prices, but also due to the weakening of the rupee against the dollar, said Kapil Kaul, chief executive officer and director of CAPA South Asia. "Expect pricing (of air tickets) in Q4 (January-March 2020) to be soft as was seen in November," he added.

Brent crude prices have risen by more than 30% in the last one year, while the rupee has slipped against the dollar, which has further increased cost pressures given India's dependence on fuel imports. The burden is being felt more acutely by the country's airlines as taxes on aviation fuel are also one of the highest in the world.

Aviation fuel purchases make up 30-50% of an airline's total costs, which is why the simmering tensions in the oil-rich Middle East have made the country's airlines all the more vulnerable.

"Most Indian airlines are comfortable when oil price stays at about \$60-65 a barrel, and rupee at 60-65 per dollar. When the rupee or oil prices breach this mark, airlines find it difficult to control costs," said a senior official with a New Delhi-based low-cost airline.

#### *Faulty aircraft and snags*

Problems for SpiceJet in getting deliveries of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft—which has been grounded since March following two fatal crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia—appear to be growing amid fuzzy timelines for an approval from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Only last week, internal documents from Boeing Corp. showed that the company's employees called India's DGCA "fools" and "stupid" for having approved the aircraft earlier.

SpiceJet had ordered as many as 205 of these planes in 2017, out of which 13 have been delivered but have been grounded due to the ongoing FAA review. In the July-September quarter, SpiceJet reported a consolidated net loss of ₹461 crore, with fuel cost accounting for nearly 40% of its revenue of ₹3,076 crore.

If delivery of the aircraft is delayed beyond 2020, then the airline could potentially face more trouble, said an aviation analyst, requesting anonymity.

Its rivals IndiGo and GoAir are unlikely to fare much better due to snags in the P&W engines on Airbus 320neo planes, with frequent incidents of trouble reported every few days leading to temporary grounding of the aircraft.

"There will be a drag on capacity as well as on costs due to the problems with the Pratt and Whitney engines," said an airline executive with direct knowledge of the matter. "It looks like the engine will take some time before stabilizing." The problems were mainly on account of the engine being new to India, he added.

IndiGo has 98 A320neo family aircraft, comprising 91 A320neos and seven A321neos, all with P&W engines. DGCA has extended a deadline to modify older P&W engines on Airbus A320neo aircraft to 31 May from an earlier deadline of 31 January 2020. While the relaxation may help the airline to

avert grounding of its aircraft, it would still have to contend with capacity challenges in carrying out the programme.

IndiGo plunged to a wider-than-expected quarterly loss during the September quarter, with higher maintenance and overhaul costs outweighing the increase in passenger traffic. The country's largest domestic airline posted a loss of ₹1,062 crore in the September quarter, compared with a loss of ₹652 crore a year ago.

With airlines desperate to cut costs, they are tempted to often overwork both men and machines. An official at DGCA said the regulator had cautioned IndiGo about the manner in which it revved up engines on A320 planes at full thrust in order to burn less fuel. "It is wearing the engines down," said the official.

But regulations that could hit profits always face pushback. "Any low cost carrier will fly aircraft 14 and half to 15 hours a day, including IndiGo and GoAir," said Mark Martin, founder and CEO of aviation consultancy Martin Consulting Llc. "Airlines are bound to utilize engines as long as they can. I believe P&W will have to take responsibilities for engine woes and not airlines."

The regulator also had to recently warn GoAir against overworking pilots and crew, potentially causing safety issues. The airline had last month cancelled several flights on successive days after it was found violating a flight duty time limitation, which lays down mandatory rest periods for the crew.

#### *Killing each other on fares*

**With no airline willing to raise fares, ballooning costs mean that the sector has entered into a worrying unsustainable cycle, prompting aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri to warn industry participants to stop "predatory pricing".**

"We can't regulate airfares," said Puri, adding that the market must correct itself within the "deregulated" frame. Puri, however, maintains that excess capacity is not the key reason for low fares. "There is 11% (annual) growth in the sector with about 8% penetration (percentage of population who fly). Air traffic is not slowing down," he added.

Another airline official, who declined to be identified, said: "Airlines are reducing fares on certain routes to attract traffic. But, this is not a robust model. You have to choose between flying half empty planes with higher fares and flying full planes with very low fares. And the latter always seems more sensible."

Industry observers say the combination of high structural costs and mindless growth is hurting the sector.

"We are all held captive to the actions of the stupidest competitors, whoever they may be on a given day. They set the price and other airlines have no option but to follow," said a third senior airline executive on condition of anonymity. "This has been causing a lot of financial distress in the sector."

"All it takes is one discount, and the entire pricing discipline collapses like a pack of cards," said the executive. "And, of late, the pricing discipline in the period of a week to a fortnight before departure has vanished."

Previously, this booking period was considered a prime time slot where discounts offered would be minimal, but the country's sluggish economy has prompted airlines to offer lower fares, said the second airline official mentioned above. "This is not a feasible model. Casualties in terms of closure of airlines are bound to happen," the executive added.

**The high double-digit growth in passenger volumes that the sector witnessed during past years is also unlikely to be seen again in the foreseeable future. Rating agency Ica Ltd expects a muted domestic capacity growth, and domestic passenger traffic to grow under 4.5% during 2019-20, after five years of double-digit growth**

"Despite the expected passenger growth over the medium-term and the ongoing cost rationalisation initiatives of airlines, the financial health of the industry will continue to deteriorate," said Kinjal Shah, vice president and co-head of corporate sector ratings at Ica.

SpiceJet promoter and managing director Ajay Singh has said that the aviation sector could follow the telecom industry into a bloodbath due to the intense price wars among competitors, which has resulted in a low-fare regime.

There are lessons to be learnt from the current state of telecom sector and the learning needs to be implemented to improve the health of domestic airlines, Singh told CNBC-TV18 in November.

"There is a struggling public sector unit in both sectors which the government is supporting...the system is heavy on regulations and high on taxes...and the largest player has a substantial share of the market," he added.

#### *The maharaja's burden*

**The elephant in the room, in the midst of all the turbulent weather, is Air India. The first casualty of the current climate could be the state-run airline, which most experts say may struggle to find buyers despite having attractive airport slots.**

Air India's losses have mounted to about ₹69,576 crore over the past decade, burdened not only by a large workforce but also by government obligations that require it to fly a number of loss-making routes.

For FY19, the airline's net loss is provisionally estimated at ₹8,556.35 crore. The government is hoping to divest its 100% stake in Air India and its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express after failing to attract a single bid during a similar endeavour last year.

The process of Air India's sale got off to a start last week, with the government approving a draft document inviting expressions of interest that is to be issued before the month-end.

While all eyes will be on how that process pans out, the state of the rest of Indian aviation doesn't inspire much confidence. And the fate of India's first-generation air passengers hangs in the balance.

[Live Mint Aviation 14/01/2020](#)

**NEW DELHI: All drone operators in India will have to register their unmanned aerial vehicles from Tuesday. A government order issued on Monday wants registrations on digital sky platform by January-end to regulate drone numbers.**



Any unregistered drone operated beyond January 31 will invite penal action, said the order issued by the aviation ministry. It said the presence of unregistered drones had come to the notice of the government and operating them violates the norms prescribed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

“In order to facilitate the identification of civil drones and drone operators, a one-time opportunity for voluntary disclosure of such drones and drone operators is now being provided,” said an aviation ministry order signed by joint secretary SK Mishra.

It asked people to collect details of the submission process by visiting <http://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in>. “On successful completion of voluntary disclosure of possessing drone, a Drone Acknowledgement Number (DAN) and Ownership Acknowledgement Number (OAN) will be issued online which will help in validation of operations of drones in India. However, the DAN or OAN do not confer any right to operate drone (s) in India, if it does not fulfil the provisions given in the civil aviation rules,” said the order.

The DGCA had announced the rules to regulate drones in 2018 and had categorised drones into five categories based on weight, starting from 250 grams to 150 kilograms and above. The government had also categorised airspace where drones could operate.

**Airspace has been partitioned into Red Zone (flying not permitted), Yellow Zone (controlled airspace) and Green Zone (automatic permission). The red zone areas are closer to airports, military areas and international borders.**

**After the first set of drone regulations, the government is also working on the second set of regulations that would allow operations of drones beyond the line of sight.**

A senior government official said that allowing drones beyond line of sight had its own complications in a congested country like India. “It is easier to allow drones beyond line of sight in countries like the US with large open areas, but in a congested country like ours there are a lot of complications in allowing such operations,” said the official, who did not want to be identified.

The Economic Times of India 14/01/2020

L'agence européenne de la sécurité aérienne (AESA) a recommandé aux compagnies aériennes européennes d'éviter de survoler l'Iran « jusqu'à nouvel ordre », à la suite du crash d'un Boeing 737-800 d'Ukraine International Airlines abattu par erreur, qui a fait 176 morts mercredi près de Téhéran.

« En se fondant sur toutes les informations disponibles, la recommandation dans les conditions de sécurité actuelles est que le survol de l'Iran à toute altitude devrait être évité jusqu'à nouvel ordre, par mesure de précaution », a déclaré hier l'AESA dans un communiqué.

La plupart des compagnies aériennes internationales avaient déjà modifié leurs plans de vols dans la région en début de semaine, avec l'escalade militaire entre l'Iran et les Etats-unis. Dès mardi, soit un jour avant le crash d'Ukraine International Airlines, « Air France a décidé de suspendre jusqu'à nouvel ordre tout survol des espaces aériens iranien et irakien. Les plans de vols sont ajustés en temps réel en

*fonction des décisions des autorités françaises et régionales, partout dans le monde, afin d'assurer le plus haut niveau de sécurité des vols », a confirmé un porte-parole de la compagnie française à l'AFP.*

Les autres compagnies européennes (KLM, Lufthansa, SWISS, LOT Polish, etc.), ainsi que Qantas, Air Canada, Aeroflot et aussi les compagnies asiatiques (Vietnam Airlines, Singapore Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, China Airlines, Air India, etc.) survolant la région en ont fait de même cette semaine. Dès mardi également, l'Agence fédérale de l'aviation américaine (FAA) a interdit aux avions civils américains le survol de l'Irak, de l'Iran et du Golfe. Parmi les grandes compagnies internationales, seules Turkish Airlines et des compagnies arabes continue à survoler les espaces aériens iranien et irakien.

#### Air Journal 12/01/2020

Le Bureau d'Enquêtes et d'Analyses (BEA) français a confirmé avoir reçu la demande de l'Iran de gérer l'exploitation des **enregistreurs de vol** de l'avion de la compagnie aérienne **Ukraine International Airlines** (UIA), abattu par un missile iranien la semaine dernière. Cette exploitation se déroulera **en Ukraine**.

Un cours message du BEA sur les réseaux sociaux le 11 janvier 2020 a confirmé qu'il effectuera les « travaux techniques » sur l'enregistreur des données de vol (**FDR**) et l'enregistreur des voix du cockpit (**CVR**) du **vol PS752**, dont les 176 passagers (dont le plus jeune était né en 2018) et membres d'équipage ont trouvé la mort mercredi, peu après le départ du **Boeing 737-800** immatriculé UR-PSR devant relater l'aéroport de **Téhéran-Imam Khomeiny** et sa base à **Kiev-Boryspil**. Hassan Rezaeifar, le directeur du Bureau d'enquête sur les accidents de l'Organisation de l'aviation civile de l'Iran, a expliqué à l'agence IRNA que « *l'Iran n'ayant pas les moyens techniques pour examiner le contenu des boîtes noires* », il avait demandé aux USA, au Canada et à la France d'apporter dans le pays les équipements nécessaires ; devant leur refus, il a été décidé que l'examen se fera par la France, pays « accepté » par l'Ukraine, la Suède, la Grande Bretagne, le Canada et les Etats-Unis. Le BEA précise que toutes les communications sur le sujet seront de la responsabilité des autorités iraniennes de l'aviation civile.

La décision aurait été prise selon M. Rezaeifar avant que l'armée iranienne a finalement reconnu samedi avoir abattu accidentellement l'appareil, apparemment avec un **missile sol-air TOR-M1** (SAM-15 Gauntlet selon l'OTAN), **un général ayant expliqué qu'un soldat n'avait eu que « dix secondes pour décider » s'il s'agissait d'un missile de croisière. Un commandant de la Garde Républicaine a plus tard précisé que l'équipage n'aurait pas répondu durant ce laps de temps à une demande d'identification. Ce que seul l'examen du CVR pourra confirmer ou infirmer.**

#### Air Journal 13/01/2020

### **Russie, États-Unis, Israël, Iran : ces États qui ont abattu des avions civils**

**Plusieurs pays, dont probablement la France, ont tiré sur des jets par erreur. Retour sur des crashes évitables, qui ont fait 1 500 morts depuis 1938.**

L'histoire de l'aviation civile est marquée par de nombreux accidents liés à des défaillances techniques et humaines, par des actes terroristes, mais aussi par **des crashes causés par des erreurs de tir de la part de militaires ou de groupes armés**. Ces catastrophes évitables, dont nous avons dressé une liste non exhaustive, ont fait au moins 1 500 morts depuis les débuts de l'aviation commerciale. En zone de conflit, l'identification des avions de ligne pose toujours problème et des

consignes sont régulièrement émises pour que les appareils contournent les régions dangereuses. Par exemple, l'examen des trajectoires de vol du 12 janvier 2020 sur l'application FlighRadar montre bien que les avions évitent la Syrie, l'Iran, le Yémen ou encore l'Ukraine. Mais ils doivent bien passer quelque part : la frontière est de l'Irak fait ici figure de moindre risque...

Dès les premières années de développement du transport aérien civil, un premier avion est abattu par des chasseurs. En pleine guerre entre le Japon et la Chine, le 24 août 1938, un DC-2 de la compagnie China National Aviation Corporation, opéré par la Pan Am, est touché par des chasseurs japonais. Le pilote américain réussit à poser l'avion en catastrophe sur une rivière et tout le monde en sort indemne, mais les appareils japonais le mitraillent méthodiquement au sol, tuant 14 des occupants. Le pilote, l'opérateur radio et une passagère s'en sortent. L'objectif des Japonais aurait été de tuer le fils du président chinois, qui devait être à bord, mais il avait raté son vol... Le Japon dit avoir abattu l'appareil, car il s'est comporté de manière suspecte, fuyant dans les nuages à la vue des chasseurs. Il ne s'agit donc pas d'une erreur de tir, mais cet incident montre que les avions civils ne sont plus sacrés. Ironie du sort, ce même DC-2 est remis en condition de vol, mais sera de nouveau détruit le 29 octobre 1940 par des avions japonais, faisant cette fois 9 morts.

**Le 30 juin 1962**, le vol Aeroflot 902 (Khabarovsk-Moscou, SU902) est abattu par erreur au-dessus de la Sibérie, faisant 84 morts. Moscou n'a jamais confirmé l'hypothèse la plus probable : un missile antiaérien soviétique aurait été perdu durant un exercice de défense aérienne dans la région et aurait frappé le Tupolev Tu-104A.

**Le 11 septembre 1968**, le vol Air France 1611 (Ajaccio-Nice, AF1611) s'écrase au large d'Antibes, trois minutes avant son atterrissage prévu, faisant 95 morts. Officiellement, la caravelle a subi un incendie suivi d'une perte de contrôle. Mais, rapidement, la thèse d'un tir de missile accidentel par l'armée française émerge. L'Élysée fait obstruction pendant plusieurs décennies, mais, en mars 2018, un juge relance l'enquête, jugeant « sérieuse » la thèse du tir accidentel de missile. Pour les 50 ans du crash, en septembre 2018, le président de l'association des familles des victimes Mathieu Paoli assure que la Caravelle d'Air France « s'est abîmée en mer (...) suite au tir accidentel d'un missile non armé qui aurait touché le réacteur gauche ». En septembre 2019, le président Macron demande la levée du secret-défense. Début 2020, les proches et les enfants des victimes attendent toujours. Ils décèdent un à un, sans avoir vraiment pu faire leur deuil.

**Le 21 février 1973**, le vol Libyan Arab Airlines 114 (Tripoli-Le Caire, LN114) se perd en raison du mauvais temps et de défaillances techniques. Le Boeing 727 dévie de son chemin jusqu'en Israël, où il est intercepté par deux chasseurs F-4 Phantom II, qui lui intiment l'ordre d'atterrir. Le pilote français, employé d'Air France sous contrat avec la compagnie libyenne, comprend que ses instruments sont défaillants et essaie de rejoindre Le Caire en Égypte. Aux yeux des Israéliens, l'appareil semble refuser d'obtempérer, car il s'éloigne vers la frontière égyptienne. Les militaires ouvrent le feu avec leurs canons et endommagent gravement l'avion, qui tente un atterrissage d'urgence mais s'écrase dans les dunes, tuant 108 passagers et membres d'équipage. Cinq personnes survivent, dont le copilote. Il ne s'agit pas ici d'une erreur de tir : le chef d'état-major israélien lui-même a donné son feu vert.

**Le 27 juin 1980** au soir, le vol Itavia 870 (Bologne-Palermo, IH870) s'abîme en mer Méditerranée, près de l'île d'Ustica, proche de la Sicile. Aucun des 81 passagers et membres d'équipage ne survit. De fortes suspicions pèsent sur l'armée de l'air française alors que l'appareil du colonel Kadhafi volait dans le même espace aérien ce soir-là. Le 18 juillet 1980, la carcasse d'un MiG-23 libyen est retrouvée au sud de l'Italie et le pilote semble décédé depuis trois semaines : cela renforce l'hypothèse d'un combat avec des appareils libyens le 27 juin. Une théorie affirme que l'avion de

Mouammar Kadhafi se serait, ce soir-là, « caché » aux yeux des radars en volant à quelques mètres du DC-9 d'Itavia, dans son sillage : le vol civil aurait alors été touché par erreur. Selon le témoignage d'un ancien officier italien, le soir du drame, un général transalpin envoie un télex urgent au patron du SDECE (l'ancêtre de la DGSE, les services secrets extérieurs français) demandant : « Qu'avez-vous fait ? »

Du côté français, on affirme que la base aérienne de Solenzara, en Corse, avait suspendu ses activités à 17 heures, avant de reconnaître des années plus tard que des vols ont bien eu lieu tard dans la nuit, comme le prouvent les enregistrements radars. Ces derniers montrent au moins 11 chasseurs et un porte-avions (vraisemblablement le *Clemenceau*, mais peut-être un porte-avions américain) sur zone, en plus d'un avion radar américain Awacs qui a forcément tout vu. Mais la loi du silence règne... Le contrôleur du radar civil, un sous-officier de l'armée italienne qui avait affirmé à sa famille que la guerre avait été évitée de justesse ce soir-là, se suicide en 1987 après une formation en France. Quatre généraux italiens sont accusés de haute trahison, après avoir détruit ou caché des éléments cruciaux aux enquêteurs, mais ils ne sont pas condamnés. En 2011, l'État italien est reconnu coupable d'avoir dissimulé des informations et doit payer 100 millions d'euros aux proches des victimes. Les magistrats italiens estiment qu'un missile air-air français a très vraisemblablement touché l'avion civil. À partir de 2014, la France semble vouloir ouvrir ses archives, mais, début 2020, les proches des victimes n'ont toujours pas obtenu d'explications.

**Le 1er septembre 1983**, le vol Korean Air 007 (Anchorage-Séoul, KE007) dévie de sa trajectoire et pénètre dans une zone interdite, au-dessus de l'Union soviétique, probablement en raison d'une erreur des pilotes lors de la configuration de l'ordinateur de bord. En pleine guerre froide, le Boeing 747 coréen est considéré comme un avion-espion américain et abattu par un missile air-air tiré par un intercepteur russe Su-15. Les 269 passagers et membres d'équipage sont tués, la tension redouble entre Washington et Moscou. Parmi les mesures prises après cette catastrophe, l'administration Reagan autorise la commercialisation de versions civiles du système militaire de géolocalisation : le GPS.

**Le 3 juillet 1988**, le vol Iran Air 655 (Téhéran-Dubai, IR655) est abattu par le croiseur américain *USS Vincennes*, qui confond l'Airbus A300 avec un chasseur F-14 iranien, notamment en raison d'une interface utilisateur trompeuse dans le système radar. En effet, dans les secondes précédant le tir, l'identifiant du vol civil est « recyclé » par l'ordinateur pour désigner ensuite un F-14 iranien dans la même zone. Le capitaine du navire de l'US Navy affirme avoir effectué dix tentatives de contact sur des fréquences civiles et militaires avant d'ordonner le tir, mais, compte tenu du message partiel émis, l'équipage de l'Airbus ne peut pas comprendre que les appels lui sont destinés. Enfin, lorsque l'équipage du navire essaie de vérifier les horaires des vols civils dans la région, il dispose d'une liste papier difficilement lisible dans la lumière défaillante du poste de contrôle, et sur laquelle les horaires sont indiqués à l'heure de Bahreïn et non à celle de Téhéran. Les 290 passagers et membres d'équipage meurent dans la catastrophe.

**Le 4 octobre 2001**, le vol 1812 de Siberia Airlines (Tel-Aviv-Novosibirsk, S71812) est abattu par l'armée ukrainienne au-dessus de la mer Noire alors que des exercices conjoints sont en cours avec l'armée russe. Cause probable : le tir d'essai d'un missile antiaérien. Les 78 passagers et membres d'équipage du Tupolev-154 meurent dans le crash.

**Le 17 juillet 2014**, le vol Malaysia Airlines 17 (Amsterdam-Kuala Lumpur, MH17) est abattu au-dessus de l'Ukraine par un missile de l'armée russe, tiré depuis le territoire ukrainien contrôlé par les séparatistes pro-russes, selon les conclusions de l'enquête menée par les experts néerlandais. Ce jour-là, l'espace aérien est fermé au trafic civil du côté russe de la frontière, mais pas du côté

ukrainien. Il est vraisemblable que les militaires russes aient confondu le vol MH17 avec un appareil de transport de l'armée ukrainienne. Les 298 passagers et membres d'équipage du Boeing 777 meurent dans le crash. Moscou n'a jamais reconnu sa responsabilité.

**Le 8 janvier 2020**, le vol Ukraine International Airlines 752 (Téhéran-Kiev, PS752) est abattu par l'armée iranienne. Après trois jours de mensonges, le pouvoir iranien reconnaît sa responsabilité et explique que, dans un contexte de très fortes tensions avec les États-Unis (cinq jours plus tôt, Washington avait assassiné le général iranien Qassem Soleimani, et l'Iran venait de répondre avec le tir de dix missiles balistiques sur des bases irakiennes abritant des soldats américains), l'avion civil a été pris pour une menace américaine et abattu à la suite d'une « erreur humaine et de manière non intentionnelle ». Les 176 passagers et membres d'équipage meurent dans le crash. C'est « une grande tragédie et une erreur impardonnable », selon le président iranien Hassan Rohani.

**À chaque crash, le débat sur l'installation de systèmes antimissiles sur les avions civils refait surface. Il est techniquement possible d'installer des boîtiers permettant de, peut-être, tromper les missiles. Si un missile est détecté, l'avion projette alors automatiquement des leurres. Deux obstacles se dressent contre l'installation massive de ces équipements : d'une part leur prix, plusieurs centaines de milliers d'euros par appareil, et d'autre part le risque supplémentaire d'intégrer ces systèmes hautement inflammables dans un avion, un milieu où le feu est le pire ennemi.**

Le Point 14/01/2020

# Foreign Carriers Won't Get Air India's Pilot Seat

Will not be able to bid for more than 49%, get full operational control as government rejects proposal to relax norms

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**New Delhi:** Overseas carriers will not be able to bid for more than 49% of Air India and won't get full operational control as the civil aviation ministry has rejected a proposal to relax the Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) clause. The government wants to privatise the state-owned national carrier, having failed to sell stakes in it in 2018.

"There was a proposal to relax the SOEC norms but the aviation ministry has rejected the proposal on the grounds that it would give away the airline sector to foreigners and would mean the Indian government losing control over airlines running in India," said a senior government official.

The official said there was no precedent of any government ceding control of carriers to overseas ones. "No country can afford to lose total control over its airlines," he said. The SOEC clause ensures that airlines operating in India are controlled and managed by nationals.

Two-thirds of board members and the chairman have to be Indians, even at carriers with 49% foreign airline ownership, under SOEC. Operational headquarters have to be located in India.

## Flight Plan

Ministry rejects relaxation in Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) norms

Foreign cos had sought the relaxation

Norms ensure Indian control over airline

Under SOEC, two-thirds of board members and chairman have to be Indians

Also, operational headquarters have to be located in India

## Air Divestment

Amit Shah-led committee okayed Air India divestment on Jan 7

Committee of secretaries likely to finalise EoI details this week

Govt may give 30-45 days to bid for Air India



The official said the suggestion had been discussed within the government but not put up before the home minister-led panel that's overseeing the airline's sale.

A relaxation would have meant that a foreign airline, along with an investment authority from its country of origin, could buy 100% in the national carrier and control Air India from headquarters based anywhere in the world.

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## Move Could Lower Interest in Airline

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This could mean a lessening of interest in Air India on the part of foreign carriers. ET had reported on December 31, 2019, that Etihad and IndiGo are considering participation. "Airlines have shown interest in Air India but we would like to wait for the final bids to come. The expectation is that not an airline but a consortium would bid for an airline of this size," said the official.

The government had sought to sell a 76% stake in the airline in 2018, but did not receive any bids. The Amit Shah-led committee approved the proposal to divest 100% stake in Air India on January 7 and the document seeking Expressions of Interest (EoIs) is likely to be issued either by the end of this week or next.

"The committee of secretaries is set to meet during the second half of this week to finalise the EoI, which will then be issued," said another official on condition of anonymity.



The government has also decided to offer various incentives including restructuring of debt and liabilities to lower them to ₹20,000 crore from ₹82,000 crore and allowing the new owner to offer a voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) to employees.

According to the approved plan Air India will be put on sale along with low-cost international subsidiary Air India Express as well as a 50% stake in ground-handling company Air India Singapore Airport Terminal Services Alliance Air and the ground handling and engineering subsidiaries will be sold separately.

In order to facilitate the identification of civil drones and drone operators, a one-time opportunity for voluntary disclosure of such drones and drone operators is now being provided by the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA). The persons in possession of drones are required to submit the information to the government, **starting from 14<sup>th</sup> January 2020** by visiting the Digital Sky portal at <https://digitalsky.dgca.gov.in>. Drones and Drones operators have to obtain Unique Identification Number (UIN), Unmanned Aircraft Operator Permit (UAOP) and other operational requirements as per the guidelines issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) which regulates the use of drones in the Indian Airspace.

It was brought to the notice of the Government of India that such drones and drone operators are not complying with the CAR mentioned above. The conditions of No Permission-No Takeoff (NPNT) as envisaged in the aforesaid CAR are not mandatory for this purpose whereas if drones are operated without due permission, the aforesaid process of CAR is violated. **The deadline to submit the required information to the Government is 31<sup>st</sup> January 2020.**

On successful submission of voluntary disclosure of possessing drone, a Drone Acknowledgement Number (DAN) and an Ownership Acknowledgement Number (OAN) will be issued online which will assist in validation of operations of drones in India. However, the DAN or OAN does not confer any right to operate a drone(s) in India, if it does not fulfill the provisions given in the CAR. Further, ownership of drone(s) in India without a valid DAN or OAN shall invite penal action as per applicable laws.

PIB, 14/01/2020

Due to mounting losses and pricing pressures, aviation is suddenly looking a lot like the spooked telecom sector. Industry observers say high structural costs and mindless growth is hurting the sector. Indian aviation is at a crunch moment and any hike in airfares could hit already weak demand

**NEW DELHI:** When Iranian missiles slammed into US bases in Iraq last week in response to the killing of Iranian General Qasem Soleimani, airline executives in India were keenly following the fallout. They were on edge **because a flare-up in crude oil prices—at a time when the Indian aviation industry is at a crucial crossroad—could signal not just deeper losses but also the potential shutdown of at least one leading private airline.**

**Two of India's leading airlines —IndiGo and GoAir—are already struggling with repeated snags in Pratt and Whitney (P&W) engines on their fleet of Airbus 320neo aircraft, while another, SpiceJet, has been hit by the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX planes after emerging as one of the largest global customers for the aircraft, which has been in the middle of a global firestorm after two suspicious crashes.**

Meanwhile, **debt-ridden state-run Air India faces a possible shutdown if a second attempt at privatization fails.** The aviation sector in India suddenly looks a lot like the spooked telecom sector.

Both in telecom and aviation, the clock seems to have come a full circle in the two decades since the late-1990s. Despite exits and business failures along the way, customers managed to get a relatively good deal. But that extended party seems to have come to a sudden end. With telecom tariffs going up after a long lull, the question is: will a similar turn of events play out on the aviation front too? If even one airline goes under, a capacity crunch— which surfaced following the collapse of India's largest private airline Jet Airways last April—may re-emerge.

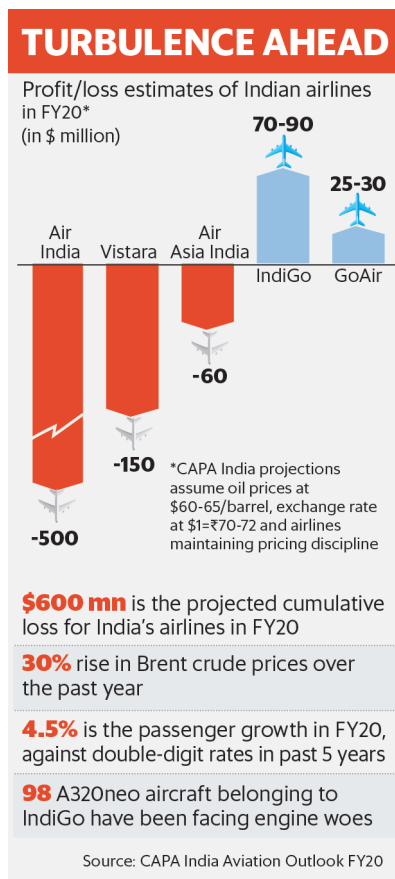
**In their quest to capture the capacity vacuum left by Jet Airways, airlines had cut fares and added capacity, but nearly every incumbent is now facing a profit squeeze. They had also bet on ordering**

the latest and most fuel-efficient engines and aircraft to squeeze out a profit wherever they could. But that strategy appears to have spectacularly backfired.

Airlines are now facing either long-delayed aircraft deliveries—such as Boeing 737 MAX for SpiceJet—or tight timelines mandated by aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to replace faulty P&W engines for the Airbus 320neo aircraft in the case of IndiGo and Go Air. Anticipated volatility in fuel prices is now only adding to this combustible mix.

### Volatile crude prices

If the crude oil price rises by another \$4-5 a barrel, another airline could go bust," said a senior airline official, speaking in hushed tones, hunched over a table. "Airlines are finding it difficult to make money," the official, who requested anonymity, said, adding that the situation is looking like the proverbial double whammy as **airlines are finding it difficult to increase airfares due to cut-throat competition.**



Airlines are likely to end this fiscal year with huge losses, hampered by their ability to raise fares even during the traditionally strong October-December quarter. Since the closure of Jet Airways, airlines have seen a couple of good quarters, followed by quarters that saw huge losses.

**Indian airlines are expected to lose over \$600 million in FY20 as compared to a previous estimate of a full-year profit of \$500-700 million,** consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) India said in a recent report.

The cash position of the industry remains under pressure, with corresponding risks. **Most airlines other than IndiGo are precariously placed, with cash balances available—in some cases—to cover only a few days or weeks of expenses,** it added.



The Capa India report assumes crude oil price to remain at \$60-65 per barrel. Crude oil prices are currently trading at around \$65-66 a barrel. Though tensions in the Middle East have eased a bit, matters could easily heat up again if there are any violent incidents.

**Airlines are likely to remain under pressure not only because of high oil prices, but also due to the weakening of the rupee against the dollar**, said Kapil Kaul, chief executive officer and director of CAPA South Asia. "Expect pricing (of air tickets) in Q4 (January-March 2020) to be soft as was seen in November," he added.

**Brent crude prices have risen by more than 30% in the last one year, while the rupee has slipped against the dollar, which has further increased cost pressures given India's dependence on fuel imports.** The burden is being felt more acutely by the country's airlines as taxes on aviation fuel are also one of the highest in the world.

Aviation fuel purchases make up 30-50% of an airline's total costs, which is why the simmering tensions in the oil-rich Middle East have made the country's airlines all the more vulnerable.

**"Most Indian airlines are comfortable when oil price stays at about \$60-65 a barrel, and rupee at 60-65 per dollar. When the rupee or oil prices breach this mark, airlines find it difficult to control costs,"** said a senior official with a New Delhi-based low-cost airline.

#### **Faulty aircraft and snags**

Problems for SpiceJet in getting deliveries of the **Boeing 737 MAX** aircraft—which has been grounded since March following two fatal crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia—appear to be growing amid fuzzy timelines for an approval from the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

Only last week, internal documents from Boeing Corp. showed that the company's employees called India's DGCA "fools" and "stupid" for having approved the aircraft earlier.

**SpiceJet had ordered as many as 205 of these planes in 2017, out of which 13 have been delivered but have been grounded due to the ongoing FAA review.** In the July-September quarter, SpiceJet reported a consolidated net loss of ₹461 crore, with fuel cost accounting for nearly 40% of its revenue of ₹3,076 crore.

**If delivery of the aircraft is delayed beyond 2020, then the airline could potentially face more trouble,** said an aviation analyst, requesting anonymity.

**Its rivals IndiGo and GoAir are unlikely to fare much better due to snags in the P&W engines on Airbus 320neo planes, with frequent incidents of trouble reported every few days leading to temporary grounding of the aircraft.**

"There will be a drag on capacity as well as on costs due to the problems with the Pratt and Whitney engines," said an airline executive with direct knowledge of the matter. "It looks like the engine will take some time before stabilizing." The problems were mainly on account of the engine being new to India, he added.

IndiGo has 98 A320neo family aircraft, comprising 91 A320neos and seven A321neos, all with P&W engines. DGCA has extended a deadline to modify older P&W engines on Airbus A320neo aircraft to 31 May from an earlier deadline of 31 January 2020. **While the relaxation may help the airline to avert grounding of its aircraft, it would still have to contend with capacity challenges in carrying out the programme.**

IndiGo plunged to a wider-than-expected quarterly loss during the September quarter, with higher maintenance and overhaul costs outweighing the increase in passenger traffic. The country's largest domestic airline posted a loss of ₹1,062 crore in the September quarter, compared with a loss of ₹652 crore a year ago.

**With airlines desperate to cut costs, they are tempted to often overwork both men and machines. An official at DGCA said the regulator had cautioned IndiGo about the manner in which it revved up engines on A320 planes at full thrust in order to burn less fuel. "It is wearing the engines down," said the official.**

But regulations that could hit profits always face pushback. "Any low cost carrier will fly aircraft 14 and half to 15 hours a day, including IndiGo and GoAir," said Mark Martin, founder and CEO of aviation consultancy Martin Consulting Llc. "Airlines are bound to utilize engines as long as they can. I believe P&W will have to take responsibilities for engine woes and not airlines."

**The regulator also had to recently warn GoAir against overworking pilots and crew, potentially causing safety issues.** The airline had last month cancelled several flights on successive days after it was found violating a flight duty time limitation, which lays down mandatory rest periods for the crew.

#### **Killing each other on fares**

**With no airline willing to raise fares, ballooning costs mean that the sector has entered into a worrying unsustainable cycle, prompting aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri to warn industry participants to stop "predatory pricing".**

"We can't regulate airfares," said Puri, adding that the market must correct itself within the "deregulated" frame. Puri, however, maintains that excess capacity is not the key reason for low fares. "There is 11% (annual) growth in the sector with about 8% penetration (percentage of population who fly). Air traffic is not slowing down," he added.

Another airline official, who declined to be identified, said: "Airlines are reducing fares on certain routes to attract traffic. But, this is not a robust model. You have to choose between flying half empty planes with higher fares and flying full planes with very low fares. And the latter always seems more sensible."

**Industry observers say the combination of high structural costs and mindless growth is hurting the sector.**

"We are all held captive to the actions of the stupidest competitors, whoever they may be on a given day. They set the price and other airlines have no option but to follow," said a third senior airline executive on condition of anonymity. "This has been causing a lot of financial distress in the sector."

"All it takes is one discount, and the entire pricing discipline collapses like a pack of cards," said the executive. "And, of late, the pricing discipline in the period of a week to a fortnight before departure has vanished."

Previously, this booking period was considered a prime time slot where discounts offered would be minimal, but the country's sluggish economy has prompted airlines to offer lower fares, said the second airline official mentioned above. "This is not a feasible model. Casualties in terms of closure of airlines are bound to happen," the executive added.

**The high double-digit growth in passenger volumes that the sector witnessed during past years is also unlikely to be seen again in the foreseeable future. Rating agency Icra Ltd expects a muted domestic capacity growth, and domestic passenger traffic to grow under 4.5% during 2019-20, after five years of double-digit growth**

"Despite the expected passenger growth over the medium-term and the ongoing cost rationalisation initiatives of airlines, the financial health of the industry will continue to deteriorate," said Kinjal Shah, vice president and co-head of corporate sector ratings at Icra.

SpiceJet promoter and managing director Ajay Singh has said that the aviation sector could follow the telecom industry into a bloodbath due to the intense price wars among competitors, which has resulted in a low-fare regime.

**There are lessons to be learnt from the current state of telecom sector and the learning needs to be implemented to improve the health of domestic airlines, Singh told CNBC-TV18 in November.**

**"There is a struggling public sector unit in both sectors which the government is supporting...the system is heavy on regulations and high on taxes...and the largest player has a substantial share of the market,"** he added.

#### **The maharaja's burden**

The elephant in the room, in the midst of all the turbulent weather, is Air India. **The first casualty of the current climate could be the state-run airline, which most experts say may struggle to find buyers despite having attractive airport slots.**

Air India's losses have mounted to about ₹69,576 crore over the past decade, burdened not only by a large workforce but also by government obligations that require it to fly a number of loss-making routes.

For FY19, the airline's net loss is provisionally estimated at ₹8,556.35 crore. **The government is hoping to divest its 100% stake in Air India and its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express after failing to attract a single bid during a similar endeavour last year.**

**The process of Air India's sale got off to a start last week, with the government approving a draft document inviting expressions of interest that is to be issued before the month-end.**

While all eyes will be on how that process pans out, the state of the rest of Indian aviation doesn't inspire much confidence. And the fate of India's first-generation air passengers hangs in the balance.

[Live Mint Aviation 14/01/2020](#)

**NEW DELHI: An IndiGo pilot, who had threatened two woman passengers while disembarking the flight at Bengaluru airport, was taken off duty following an intervention by Union Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. The IndiGo pilot is alleged to have misbehaved with the lady and even threatened her with jail after she asked for a wheelchair for her 75-year-old mother.**

Supriya Unni Nair's tweet narrating her ordeal caught Puri's attention who then asked his office to contact the budget airline. "I requested my office to contact IndiGo as soon as I saw the tweet by Ms Supriya Unni Nair about the pilot's behaviour with her & her 75 year old mother in need of wheelchair assistance. The airline has informed the ministry of civil aviation that the pilot has been off-rostered pending full enquiry," Puri wrote on Twitter.

I requested my office to contact @IndiGo6E as soon as I saw the tweet by Ms @SupriyaUnniNair about the pilot's behaviour with her & her 75 yr old mother in need of wheelchair assistance. The airline has informed @MoCA\_GoI that the pilot has been off-rostered pending full enquiry <https://t.co/NVkJr6ubti>

— Hardeep Singh Puri (@HardeepSPuri) January 14, 2020

Nair claimed that when the wheelchair was brought to take her mother at the Bengaluru airport, the pilot prevented the 75-year-old diabetic to be taken from the plane.

She alleged that the pilot also threatened to get them detained and make them spend a night in jail. "He prevents the wheelchair people from taking my mom out of the aircraft threatening us that he will ensure we are detained and spend a night in jail. Disbelievingly i ask him whether he is serious? Shut up. Who do you think I am? I'll get my CEO to make sure you spend a night in jail, "we" will teach you some manners, he says," the Bengaluru woman tweeted.

.@IndiGo6E Your captain on 6E 806 from Chennai to Bangalore on January 13 Jayakrishna harrassed, threatened and prevented me and my 75-year old diabetic mom from disembarking the flight and threatened to arrest us because we asked for wheelchair assistance.

[LiveMint Aviation 14/01/2020](#)

**NEW DELHI: A high-level appointment at state-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) has raised eyebrows over the last-minute inclusion of a candidate and his selection by the Public Enterprises Selection Board (PESB).**

**On January 8, two days before the interview for selection of the most-deserving candidate, the PESB partially modified its earlier communication to the authorities concerned and added the name of 1987 batch Indian Railways Accounts Service (IRAS) officer K. Vinayak Rao in the list of shortlisted candidates.**

**On January 10, the Board recommended the name of Rao for the key post. There were 11 candidates including Rao with six senior executives from the AAI.**

"In partial modification to PESB's communication of even number dated December 27, 2019 on the subject mentioned above, this is to state that Mr K Vinayak Rao, Finance Member, DDA (Indian Railway Accounts Service) has been included in the list of shortlisted candidates against the pool of Central Government category," the PESB letter dated January 8 said.

Rao is currently Member, Finance at DDA which comes under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs. The AAI comes under the administrative control of Civil Aviation Ministry.

Hardeep Singh Puri is the Minister for both Housing and Civil Aviation.

Many AAI senior executives have been questioning the process of selection in private discussion but declined to talk about it openly fearing disciplinary action.

"How can someone be entertained after the cut-off date for submitting application? In case the name had to be extended, why the date for submission of application was not extended for all the candidates?" asked a senior executive.

"The laid-down terms have been bypassed in this case," he added.

The post of Member, Finance, at AAI had fallen vacant after resignation by S. Suresh in May, 2019. Following this, an advertisement was issued to fill the vacancy with November 28, 2019 as the last date for submitting the application.

[LiveMint Aviation 14/01/2020](#)

**New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Ministry on Tuesday said it would ensure that Air India continues to operate uninterruptedly and improve its operations even as the government plans to go ahead with the national carrier's disinvestment process.**

The statement comes after Air India chief Ashwani Lohani told the ministry in December that the carrier's financial situation was "grossly untenable" for sustaining operations. However, Lohani on January 4 stated that rumours about the airline's shutdown are "all baseless".

The ministry said on Twitter, "MoCA reiterates that the Government, while going ahead with the disinvestment, would ensure that Air India continues to operate uninterruptedly and improves its operations also."

"There is no cause for worry to any of its stakeholders," it added.

While Air India's net loss in 2018-19 was around ₹8,556 crore, its current total debt is around ₹80,000 crore.

[LiveMint Aviation 14/01/2020](#)

**New Delhi: Foreign airlines will be allowed to invest only up to 49 per cent in Air India and they won't get complete operational control as the Centre has rejected a plan to ease the Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) clause. The government has decided to divest its entire stake in Air India and its no-frill subsidiary Air India Express.**

"There was a proposal to relax the SOEC norms but the aviation ministry has rejected the proposal on the grounds that it would give away the airline sector to foreigners and would mean the Indian government losing control over airlines running in India," a senior government official familiar with the matter told the Economic Times.

**Under SOEC, even at airlines with 49 per cent foreign airline ownership, more than 60 per cent of board members and the chairman have to be Indians. Operational headquarters have to be located in India.** The official states that the proposal had been discussed within the government but not sent to the home minister-led committee that's supervising the national airline's sale.

**Last week, the government had finalised the draft Expression of Interest (Eoi) document for the privatisation of the ailing national carrier.** Plus, the committee also approved all proposals, including the transfer of Air India's debt of around Rs 60,000 crore to the special purpose vehicle. In 2018, the government had failed in its attempt to sell a 76 per cent stake in Air India due to a lack of interest from bidders.

[13/01/20 ETNowNews.com](#)

**The US Federal Aviation Administration (USFAA) eased the ban on American airlines flying over the Iranian and Iraqi airspaces as well the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman. The American aviation regulator has now permitted American airlines to fly in and out of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, Dubai, Doha, Muscat, and Sharjah.**

**However, Indian authorities are still reviewing the scenario. The DGCA had asked all the Indian airlines to “reroute their flights (from affected airspaces) to ensure complete safety of passengers”.** This announcement came after the US FAA prohibited their airlines to fly over the Gulf region and Iranian and Iraqi airspaces.

**According to a report of Times of India, the sources suggest that India may allow its flights to go into Iranian airspace.**

Aviation authorities here are closely watching the situation and could soon resume their pre-Wednesday routes between India and the west.

**If the situation between Iran and US does not heat up, Indian airlines may resume flying there in a day or two, say sources.**

Post the release of the FAA Notam on Wednesday, Air India had stopped its flights between India and the west in the Iranian airspace. The flying time from Delhi to Air India’s western locations has spiked by 20 minutes whereas, from Mumbai and southern cities, this time has increased by 40 minutes.

12/01/20 Indica News

**New Delhi (Sputnik): India’s federal government has put the debt-ridden national air carrier, Air India, under the hammer. As the government has yet to receive an expression of interest from any buyers, it had offered to take on some part of the debt to make the sale offer more attractive.**

**To add to the troubles of Air India, a number of employees have called for a nation-wide strike, demanding a pay hike and that other issues be addressed.** The Aircraft Maintenance Technicians of Air India have demanded a salary hike, the payment of overdue wages and that other issues be addressed. Wearing black bands, they however, worked to run flight operations smoothly. In a letter to the management, the employees listed their demands along with their grievances. The letter said, there has been no revision to their salaries since 2017 while its subsidiary pays higher salaries to employees, with the same qualifications and level of experience.

The employees have also demanded that they should be released from their employment contracts, which bind them to working for a minimum agreed-upon period of time after being hired, so that they may opt for avenues outside Air India.

The employees also raised concerns over the delay in salaries and absence of allowance such as housing, medical, passage, etc.

11/01/20 Sputnik

**Air India Express is working on a major expansion in its operations in the Middle East, after the airline received government approval to buy three aircraft,** a senior executive of the airline has said. "Air India Express has been given permission recently to acquire 3 new aircraft. **We will soon be floating tenders for acquisition of them,**" the Air India Express executive, who did not wish to be identified, told Arabian Business.

"The fleet expansion will be used to expand our operations in the Gulf sector," the airline executive added.

**The airline is understood to be going for acquisition of Boeing 737 800 NG aircraft, as it wants to maintain single fleet type.**

"Maintaining single fleet aircraft is necessary to save costs on engineering, maintenance and pilot training," the airline executive said.

Airline industry sources, however, said Air India Express may have to go for second hand 737 800 NG aircraft if it wants to induct the aircraft on an urgent basis, as Boeing currently has a long order book position for this aircraft model.

13/01/20 James Mathew/Arabian Business

**Srinagar: The fifth spell of snowfall engulfed Kashmir Valley in a white blanket on Sunday, causing disruption of air traffic.** The snowfall began early on Sunday as was predicted by the Meteorological Department. The fall of varying intensity was received across the Kashmir valley, including in the city, as well as at various tourist resorts of the region. In Srinagar, the snowfall was light and continued intermittently. By afternoon, several inches of snow had accumulated in the city. Tourist resorts of Pahalgam in south Kashmir and Gulmarg in north Kashmir were also engulfed in a white blanket. The latest spell of inclement weather caused a major disruption of air traffic as multiple flights were cancelled and others were delayed. At least 16 flights scheduled to arrive at and depart from the Srinagar airport were cancelled and at least one was diverted. The flow of traffic along the Srinagar-Jammu highway, a crucial route for essential supplies to Kashmir Valley, also remained disrupted even as the vehicles which were stranded for the last several days were allowed to head towards Srinagar.

13/01/20 Tribune

**The country's largest airline, IndiGo, got a major relief when the aviation regulator, DGCA, extended the deadline for the budget carrier to replace all 135 unmodified Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines from 31 January to 31 May.**

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) stated on Monday that it believes that the unmodified PW engines do contain an "unsafe condition, which is prone to undesirable outcomes" and therefore, need to be dispensed with, reported PTI.

"Post DGCA order dated 1st November 2019, all stake holders i.e. the airline and the aircraft and the engine manufacturer have made significant efforts towards completion of the task. They have jointly and severally submitted a complete action plan, which finds the change of engines for the entire fleet feasible by the end of June 2020," said the regulator.

"It involves procurement of about 135 engines and month wise details have been worked out to achieve the goal. Needless to say, the timeline looks impressive if we recall that originally it was expected to be accomplished in 14 months i.e. from November 2019 to December 2020," it added. However, DGCA felt that it can be compressed further and should be achievable by May 2020.

"Therefore, the revised timeline for complete removal of unmodified engines from the fleet is 31 May 2020. **It is further laid down that no aircraft with unmodified engine in Indigo fleet shall be allowed to fly after that,**" said the regulator on Monday.

The PW engine-powered A320 neo planes in the fleets of IndiGo and GoAir have been facing glitches both mid-air and on-ground since their induction way back in 2016.

[13/01/20 First Post](#)

**Aittiana (Raikot): Farmers who were hoping to earn mega bucks from acquisition of land for the international airport at Halwara will have to contend with a compensation amount much lower than what they were expecting.**

Farmers in Aittiana were hoping they would get anything between Rs 1.5 crore and Rs 2 crore per acre for the project, just like the amount which was paid to farmers in Mohali for Chandigarh International Airport. However, a top source in the Greater Ludhiana Area Development Authority (Glada) said the land compensation amount won't be so high as there was a difference in the value of land between Aittiana and Mohali.

According to the source, data collected by Glada from the area showed that the value of land in the area was around Rs 8 lakh per acre for three years and the farmers could be offered around Rs 22 lakh per acre for the project. The source added that 90 families would be paid an additional Rs 5.5 lakh as relief and resettlement amount for their land being acquired for the project.

The relief amount has been approved by the divisional commissioner of Patiala division on the basis of a social impact survey by Panjab University. Also, the process of land acquisition could take time as farmers said corrections were needed in revenue records when it came to ownership in 70% cases. When contacted, Glada additional chief administrator Bhupinder Singh, who is also the land acquisition collector (LAC), confirmed that they collected data of land rates in the area for last three years and also looked at the amount demanded by the 200 farmers whose land was to be acquired for the project. He said this data had been sent to the state housing and urban development department and the rates will be approved by the government.

A source said if the farmers were not happy with land rates, they could approach the divisional commissioner for enhancement of rates or move court. "But they cannot say no to land acquisition for a development project," added the source.

The LAC said once the rates were approved by the government, they would then make a draft award and final award, after which farmers could collect the compensation. He said they would try to complete the process in January itself.

[13/01/20 Shariq Majeed/Times of India](#)

**Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has entered into an agreement with KUNZ GmbH to manufacture, supply, commission and maintain specialized Disabled Aircraft Recovery Equipment (DARE) for the Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB).** The commissioning of this equipment will make KIAB the first airport in the country with the capability effect recovery of disabled aircraft up to Code F category, enabling the faster resumption of operations during aircraft incidents on runways, BIAL said in a statement.

**As part of this agreement, KUNZ GmbH has agreed to jointly establish a center for disabled aircraft recovery training with BIAL,** making BLR Airport the first in the region to have such a facility. This facility will develop and expand the skill set in India, it said.

"The acquisition of this equipment boosts BLR Airport's operational capability during runway emergencies, said Thomas Hoff Andersson, Chief Operating Officer, BIAL. BIAL has constituted a team of Recovery Managers who will undergo extensive hands-on training at KUNZ GmbH's recovery training facility in Germany.

[13/01/20 Devdiscourse](#)



**New Delhi: A green panel of the Union Environment Ministry has deferred its decision on the Airport Authority of India's (AAI) proposal to construct a greenfield domestic airport in Dhalbhumgarh, 60 km away steel city Jamshedpur in Jharkhand, questioning its feasibility besides taking exception that the site was a habitat of the large number of elephants.**

Situated at Dhalbhumgarh in Ghatshila subdivision, about 60km from the Steel City Jamshedpur, the airport is being built on an abandoned World War II airfield. The airstrip was extensively used by the armed forces during the 1962 and 1971 wars, too.

About 96.761 hectares (239.1 Acres) of reserve forest land will be required for the development of Dhalbhumgarh airport project to be set up at the cost of Rs 100 crore.

Refusing to give go-ahead, the Expert Appraisal Committee (EAC) of the Ministry in a recent meeting has sought details of forest/ecological sensitive areas around the proposed site which falls in the forests which are habitat of large number of elephants. Dalma Wildlife sanctuary is very near to the site. Elephants travel from Dalma to West Bengal through this forest. Every year there are number of man elephant conflict cases in these areas.

13/01/20 Archana Jyoti/Pioneer

**NEW DELHI: Over the past few days, seven Afghan nationals who were detained upon landing at the IGI Airport here have been made to excrete a fortune worth more than Rs 10 crore.**

As many as **177 capsules of heroin**, which the seven "couriers" had ingested for smuggling into the country, have been recovered by the Narcotics Control Bureau in a major haul of contraband linked to an international cartel possibly led by a Taliban leader in Kandahar.

Officials said 10 dozen bananas, fed to the detained men over the past few days, aided the process of recovery after x-ray tests had shown the presence of the drug in their stomachs.

In all, nine Afghan nationals, the seven men along with two receivers based in Delhi, have been arrested so far, narcotics officials said.

The operation started a few days ago when NCB sleuths led by zonal director K P S Malhotra swooped on the suspects who had landed at IGI in an Ariana Afghan Airline flight (FG 313) after receiving a tip-off.

13/01/20 Times of India

**Passenger traffic at the Mumbai and Delhi airports is picking up after witnessing a fall last year, the first such decline since 2008.**

The **primary reason for the dip in annual passenger traffic was the closure of Jet Airways**. In Mumbai, the airline's closure on April 17 led to a reduction of 142 flights a day for about two months. But improvement in load factors, coupled with an increase in seat capacity after Jet's slots were allotted to low-cost airlines, has resulted in a 4 per cent increase in daily passenger traffic over past two months, sources said. Mumbai International Airport executives expect growth to continue through the year. On an average, the airport handled 142,000 passengers each day in November and December, which was 4 per cent higher on a year-on-year (YoY) basis.

Delhi airport, too, has seen monthly traffic grow since October and expects it to rise further as better navigation procedures have resulted in an increase in daily flight movements. At present, Delhi is handling around 1,300 flights daily, which is around 100 movements more compared to last January.

**"The good news is the increasing number of aircraft available and low fares. We have 646 aircraft flying in the country now. Three ATR aircraft were added to the fleet on Friday. Demand will pick up. It is just a matter of time. Hopefully, we will be back to double digit growth in 2020,"** said Arun Kumar, Director General of Civil Aviation.

The suspension of Jet Airways operations in April hit passenger traffic at Mumbai and Delhi — the two busiest airports in the country. The airports were also hubs for Jet Airways. According to aviation consultancy CAPA, Jet accounted for 28-30 per cent of all domestic and international seat capacity in Mumbai and 14-16 per cent in Delhi.

[12/01/20 Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard](#)

The week starting Monday is set to be action-packed as the **high-level task force on infrastructure and the inter-ministerial group (IMG) on Air India disinvestment are scheduled to hold their crucial meetings.**

The task force headed by Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) secretary with CEO (NITI Aayog), secretary (expenditure), secretary of the administrative ministries, and additional secretary (investments), DEA as members would hold its final meeting on Monday and decide projects worth nearly Rs 3 lakh crore to be taken up under National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP).

Announcing Rs 102 lakh crore worth of infrastructure projects across various sectors, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman had earlier said that projects worth Rs 3 lakh crore would be added shortly.

"Another set of projects would be finalised for taking up under the NIP. This will be the final meeting of the task force," an official said.

During the fiscals 2020 to 2025, these projects the majority of which are in sectors such as energy (24 percent), roads (19 percent), urban (16 percent), and railways (13 percent) would be executed. These key sectors account for about 70 percent of the projected capital expenditure in infrastructure in India.

The IMG on Air India would be chaired by Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey to resolve pending issues of airline disinvestment. The meeting is scheduled on January 15.

[12/01/10 IANS/CNBC TV18](#)

**Kolkata, Jan 12: An AirAsia flight on Sunday going from Kolkata to Mumbai had to make a mid-air turn and perform an emergency landing after a passenger threatened to blow up the aircraft, officials said.**

Reportedly, a 25-year-old woman passenger, Mohini Mondal, who boarded the AirAsia flight I5316, allegedly gave a note to one of the cabin crew after the flight took off and asked the letter to be delivered to the flight captain.

According to the officials, the note allegedly written by her mentioned that there were bombs strapped to her body and she would detonate them any moment.

The pilot not taking any risk then decided to return the flight to Kolkata.

According to reports, on Saturday the flight took off at around 9:57. An hour later, the flight informed the air traffic controller (ATC) about the shocking incident that it was returning to Kolkata due to the bomb threat. An emergency landing was done and full alert was declared by the ATC at 11 pm. The plane was taken to the isolation bay at 11:46 pm after it landed at Kolkata airport.

[12/01/20 Akriti Dixit/OneIndia](#)

**As Boeing 737Max recertification process enters the last phase, the civil aviation regulators of the US and Europe have decided to jointly conduct safety test flights from January 15.**

**The Indian civil aviation regulator will conduct its own tests before re-certifying them.**

According to industry insiders, the Federal Aviation Administration-European Aviation Safety Agency joint tests are expected to take place in the US and will use their combined expertise to vet the aircraft.

Boeing 737 Max has been grounded around the world after two crashes, since last year.

In terms of India's safety regulations, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will conduct its own assessment tests, once the FAA-EASA test results are declared.

"We are aware of the joint tests. We will wait for the certification process to fructify," a DGCA official told IANS.

In terms of India's aviation scenario, the tests are crucial for SpiceJet, which has a fleet of thirteen 737Max aircraft. The airline's international expansion plans are heavily dependent on the early return of the aircraft.

At present, SpiceJet's fleet stands at 119. Once re-certified, the airline will be able to get 30 or more aircraft for operations.

[12/01/20 IANS/New Indian Express](#)

**Mumbai: Tata-SIA joint venture airline Vistara has started phasing out nine Boeing 737 planes, which it had leased after the grounding of Jet Airways, from this month amid induction of the latest batch of A320 neos in the fleet.**

The airline is returning two of these nine leased B737 from January and the rest seven will be exited the fleet between 2022-23 as they are on long term lease, a Vistara spokesperson told PTI. The government has temporarily reallocated as many as many as 488 Jet Airways' slots to Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Vistara, GoAir and AirAsia India to fill the capacity gap in the wake of the airline ceasing operations mid-April last year.

A slot is a specific date and time at which an airline can arrive or depart at an airport. "Two of our Boeing 737-800NG aircraft are exiting fleet this month as their lease tenure ends. The remaining seven have longer lease duration and most of them will exit fleet between 2022 and 2023," a Vistara spokesperson said in response to a PTI query.

**The spokesperson also said that by the time Vistara phases out all these leased Boeing planes, it would induct more than 50 narrow-body and wide-body aircraft in its fleet from Airbus and Boeing additionally.** After the government put a rider that temporary allocation of ex-Jet Airways slots was subject to aircraft induction, Vistara leased nine Boeing 737-800 planes to reportedly secure as many as 110 additional slots of the 488 slots.

[12/01/20 PTI/Economic Times](#)

The flight for the aviation sector went through a turbulent patch last year due to various factors ranging from board room battles to the ban on certain airplane models -- the industry withstood a lot, only to hope for a better 2020.

At a recent event, Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri said that India's aviation sector was all set to witness exponential growth in the coming times.

In 2019, the leading companies in the sector had their troublesome story and they also saw tough times as a whole. Indigo saw a battle between the co-founders which made the management weaker for a while. The ban on Boeing 737 Max meanwhile, meant a major setback to the expansion plans for SpiceJet. The company was betting a huge stake of its growth on this airplane model, after all. During this time the sector also bid adieu to long term player Jet Airways. This not only left several

jobless, but also created a temporary vacuum for flights connecting the country and the Middle East. The state-owned Air India was not far away on this bumpy road. A temporary closing of air space by Pakistan and an ever-increasing debt on its balance sheet has left the airline dried and without any prospective buyers. The government has made an attempt to sell its stake in the airline for the third time but has not attracted much attention. A sale of stake for Air India however might happen in the next financial year.

With a slow and strenuous year, there were certain opportunities for the sector that are expected to strengthen the pillars of the aviation industry. A vacuum in flights to the Middle East gave other players such as IndiGo a scope to expand.

IndiGo is set for take-off for Doha and Dubai and an increase in flight routes is expected to soon follow. We are also witnessing a growth in the regional air connectivity in aviation which presents itself as one of the biggest opportunities for 2020.

[12/01/20 Gaurav Garg/Moneycontrol.com](#)

**Over 165 passengers of SpiceJet scheduled to travel to Thiruvananthapuram, including some passengers who arrived early in the morning from Dubai, were stranded at Mumbai airport for more than 12 hours.**

Flight SG 6437 from Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram, which was scheduled at 3:10 pm was delayed by three hours. The airline informed passengers shortly after noon that the flight has been rescheduled for 6:30 pm. However, it was rescheduled again at 7 pm. But when the flight was delayed, angry passengers creates a ruckus forcing GVK security to intervene and calm them down.

Air India management decided to cancel the remaining flights to Dubai which include AI 995/996 Delhi -Dubai, AI 983/984 Mumbai-Dubai, AI 951/952 Hyderabad-Dubai and 905/906 Chennai- Dubai. "Some passengers which include the elderly and children have been waiting here from 6 am when they arrived from Dubai.

The airline did inform that the flight has been rescheduled but they are not clearly telling us when we can fly. No food or accommodation has been offered. Now after we confronted the SpiceJet officials, they told us that they will arrange for a plane and it will leave at 11:05 pm," said passenger Vinay Raj.

When contacted, a SpiceJet spokesperson said « **The flight has been delayed for operational reasons.** It has now been rescheduled to depart at 11:05 pm »

[12/01/20 Satish Nandgaonkar/Mumbai Mirror](#)

**Jaipur: Reversing a 2006 decision, the Union Cabinet on December 24, 2019, approved international airlines from three countries — US, Canada and Australia — to carry out their own ground handling.**

**Earlier, foreign carriers were barred from operating beyond the check-in area.**

**According to an official, even though the amendment is made for allowing the three countries, it will be effected only for the US, reported The Hindu.**

This move is seen as an effort to appease the US. It had earlier objected to India denying bilateral rights while pointing out the discrepancy between the ground handling rules and the Air Services Agreement of 2005. On July 30, 2019, the US had banned Air India from self handling, following several warnings.

It must be noted that Air India does not self-handle in the US. "There were also warnings that Air India may be asked to submit details about its flight schedule afresh, causing inconvenience to the airline, which is the only Indian carrier operating between the two countries following the collapse of

Jet Airways," an official explained.

**The US airlines will now have access control to the aircraft, they could screen unaccompanied baggage, conduct secondary check of passengers at the ladder point and also attain security control of cargo.**

**Prior to the amendment, foreign carriers were required to enter into an agreement with an Indian airline for performing these tasks.**

12/01/20 Wire

**Trichy: The security hold area (SHA) at the international airport here has been expanded to ease the congestion felt during peak hours.** The area which had a capacity to accommodate only 450 passengers has 120 more seats now which were installed at a cost of Rs 37 lakh.

Airport authorities said passengers can experience a hassle-free journey without any rush from now on. Airport Authority of India's officiating regional executive director, southern region, V B Chandrakumar inaugurated the expanded facility here on Saturday. The area originally had a seating capacity of only 250, but it was expanded with 200 additional seats by the then airport director B C H Negi a few years ago. The rising international passenger traffic has necessitated further expansion, a senior AAI official said.

"Though 120 more seats have been arranged on the newly expanded security hold area, there is still enough space to accommodate 80 more passengers. That space will also be utilized effectively", he added.

12/01/20 Times of India

**India at major airports is likely to monitor symptoms of new pneumonia following an outbreak in Wuhan City, initiating international passengers, particularly from China.**

China reported the first death after the outbreak on Saturday. A preliminary diagnosis showed that 41 people were suffering from the new pneumonia, the PTI news agency said in a statement from the Wuhan City Health Commission.

**According to the World Health Organization (WHO), a new type of coronavirus is the cause of the outbreak in China. Symptoms include fever, cough and chest congestion. In severe cases, this can lead to lung collapse and multi-organ failure.**

The Union Ministry of Health met with WHO representatives on Wednesday to monitor the situation. "There has been a meeting with WHO representatives on the subject and the final details of what needs to be done at this stage are being worked out," said a representative from the Ministry of Health on condition of anonymity.

"As a precaution, airport officials are currently being instructed to step up vigilance," said the official.

12/01/20 Sharon Gandy/DGW

**In three separate incidents on Saturday, customs officials at Chennai International airport seized a total 1.53 kilograms of gold, worth Rs 63 lakhs.**

40-year-old Abdul Rahman, hailing from Kurumbalangode in Kerala, who arrived from Riyadh on a Gulf Air flight, was intercepted at the exit of the customs arrival hall based on information. Upon searching his check-in-luggage, gold plates were found concealed inside two emergency lights. A total of 8 gold plates, weighing 593 grams and valued at Rs 24.3 lakhs, was recovered and seized

from him, following which Abdul was arrested.

In two other cases, 46-year-old Yaseen from Chennai and 35-year-old Mohammad Panis of Pudur in Tamil Nadu, who arrived from Dubai by an Air India flight, were intercepted at the exit based on their suspicious movements.

On persistent questioning, they admitted to having concealed gold paste bundles in their rectum. A total of 4 bundles were recovered and upon extraction, 944 grams of gold valued at Rs 38.7 lakhs were recovered and seized. Further investigation is currently underway.

[12/01/20 News Minute](#)

**Mumbai: Employees of US aircraft manufacturer Boeing, in their internal communications pertaining to the design and certification of the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, had ridiculed airline officials and various countries' regulators, including the Indian aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), two years ago. According to reports published on Friday, after calling regulators of other countries "morons", a Boeing employee went on to say that India's DGCA "is apparently even stupider".**

The revelations came after Boeing sent the documents - over 100 pages of internal communication by Boeing pilots and engineers on email and instant messaging - to the US House committee on transportation that has been probing the design and certification of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. The aircraft was involved in two fatal accidents in 2018 and 2019 that claimed 326 lives.

Responding to a TOI query about the statements made against the DGCA, Boeing said, "These communications do not reflect the company we are and need to be, and they are completely unacceptable. We regret the content of these communications, and apologise to the DGCA, SpiceJet (which flies Boeing aircraft), and to the flying public for them." Boeing added that it had "made significant changes as a company to enhance our safety processes, organizations, and culture".

The company said the language used in these communications, and some of the sentiments they express, are inconsistent with Boeing values, and the company is taking appropriate action in response. "This will ultimately include disciplinary or other personnel action, once the necessary reviews are completed," the statement added.

**DGCA chief Arun Kumar said he was aware of the comments made by Boeing employees. "They had made it in 2018," he said.**

Boeing had equipped its 737 MAX aircraft with a software that overrides pilots to push the aircraft nose down when it senses, correctly or erroneously, that the nose is pitched dangerously high. But the company had wilfully stayed silent about this software and the fatal role it could play till the first accident occurred.

**The internal communications released this week revealed how Boeing employees convinced airline officials and regulators that there was no need for simulator training pertaining to the software.** In several messages, Boeing employees insulted FAA officials who were certifying the plane. In one of the exchanges, an employee says the Boeing presentation to FAA on the Boeing 737 MAX was so complicated that for the agency officials "it was like dogs watching TV". In another message, sent in February 2018, an employee wrote, "Would you put your family on a MAX simulator trained aircraft? I wouldn't."

Both crash investigations, Lion Air in October 2018 and later Ethiopian Airlines in March 2019, zeroed in on the controversial software and its malfunctions that caused the aircraft nose to pitch down, leading to the crashes. A month after the Lion Air crash, Boeing issued a safety bulletin to airline pilots that gave information on how to handle the software malfunction

[11/01/20 Manju V/Times of India](#)

**New Delhi: “India, being the third largest domestic Civil Aviation market in the world and showing a robust growth, is poised for greater heights. With the kind of fleet expansion underway, India will soon have about 2000 civil aviation aircrafts in the sky, we will be doubling the number of airports with Airports Authority of India (AAI) readying to invest more than Rs.25,000 crores in Airport infrastructure and we have a structured privatisation program in place” said Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State(I/c) for Civil aviation at the launch of the Curtain Raiser of ‘Wings India 2020’, here, yesterday.**

Wings India 2020, a flagship event of Indian Civil Aviation industry will be held at Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad from 12-15 March 2020. Also present at the event was the Guest of Honour, Shri K T Rama Rao, Minister for IT, Electronics & communication Department, Government of Telangana and Mission of Heads in India of Various foreign countries among other senior officers of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

**‘Wings India 2020’- a four-day event themed: “Flying for All” is an international platform focused on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity in civil aviation industry.**

Launching the Curtain Raiser Video for “Wings India 2020” Shri Puri further added, “Wings India 2020 is a platform for the aviation fraternity to discuss challenges along with new developing growth spots that can be targeted to ensure a positive curve. The aviation sector will provide win-win opportunities for not just players within the country but also abroad. Privatisation will strengthen the civil aviation sector and will contribute towards its massive expansion. In the coming years Delhi and upcoming Jewar airports combined will be bigger than any other airport in the world. We look forward to this year’s show as an opportunity to address challenges of Civil aviation sector, highlight fuel efficiency, reliable and capable airplanes, enabling airlines in India to open new routes and stay profitable in this ever-competitive market.”

[10/01/20 Orissa Diary](#)

New Delhi: India is considering further opening up its insurance and aviation sectors to foreign investors to help spur the economy, according to people familiar with the matter.

**The Finance Ministry has suggested increasing the limit on foreign direct investment in insurance and pension companies to 74% from the present 49% and allowing foreign airlines to own Indian carriers, the people said, asking not to be identified as the plan is not public.**

It also wants to allow 100% foreign investment in railway operations, education, and rental housing management companies, the people said. FDI is currently prohibited in railway operations.

The government wants to increase the amount of FDI to as much as 6% of gross domestic product, the people said, compared with less than 2% now.

A spokesman for the Finance Ministry wasn’t immediately available to comment.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi wants to double the size of the economy to \$5 trillion by 2025. With government revenue under pressure amid an economic slowdown, authorities are banking on

private investment to drive growth.

10/01/20 Abhijit Roy Chowdhury/Vrishti Beniwal/Print

**Mumbai: The rehabilitation of more than 17,000 slum-dwellers from airport land to Kurla has hit a roadblock, as the 37 buildings constructed on the plot where the Premier Factory once stood – where they were going to be housed – are in such a state of disrepair that they are no longer habitable.**

The buildings, constructed by the now bankrupt Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) in lieu of transferable development rights (TDRs), have been picked clean by vandals and thieves, who have made away with doors, windows, plumbing, wiring, tiles, etc. One official described the site as “ghost town”.

In January 2019, the state housing department had written to the Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) to sign two MoUs with Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL) and send them to the Airport Authority of India for its consent. The first MoU was for the rehabilitation of the 17,000 families after repair of the 37 buildings, and the second was for in situ rehabilitation of the other squatters (numbering around 63,000).

“The problem is HDIL is now bankrupt,” an SRA official told Mirror. “There was an agreement between HDIL and MIAL whereby MIAL was going to clear all encroachment from airport land. MIAL didn’t have land of its own to rehabilitate the slum-dwellers and had an agreement with HDIL – they had the biggest parcel of land in the area – to move 80,000 affected families.”

The official pointed towards another problem with the project: The final list 17,000 people is not out yet. MIAL and Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority were supposed to identify encroachers and conduct a survey. “Since that survey isn’t complete, we don’t know exactly who is eligible,” he said.

11/01/20 Linah Baliga/Mumbai Mirror

**Air travel may become cheaper soon as the Ministry of Civil aviation has decided to waive off Fuel Throughput Charges. The FTC was levied on fuel companies by airports across the country for the transportation of jet fuel to airline operators. The exemption can potentially reduce the operational cost of airlines as fuel accounts for the major expense companies have to bear.** Airlines companies may be able to save up to Rs 500 crore in a year as fuel expenses account for approximately 40% of the total expenses incurred by the companies. The FTC varies at different airports and added up with GST and VAT pushes the cost of running airlines higher. The ministry called the move taken to make air travel and air cargo transportation affordable and sustainable. **The Civil Aviation Ministry has decided to compensate all airports as well as the Airport Authority of India for the revenue loss that will occur because of this waiver. Ministry’s circular addressed to the Chairperson of the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Balwinder Singh Bhullar and a joint secretary in the ministry Rubina Ali revealed these details.**

The circular from the MCA further states “ Numerous rounds of stakeholder consultations have been held by the Ministry in order to rationalize the present mechanism of invoicing of ATF fuel throughput charges. These duly incorporated the deliberations of the two industry Working Groups on the subject comprising of representatives of airline operators, airports, fuel infrastructure facility providers, into-plane fuel service providers, and oil marketing companies without prejudice to the outcoming of judicial proceedings on the matter of classification of fuel throughput charges as aeronautical or nonaeronautical services initiated by some PPP/JV airport operators.”

10/01/20 Financial Express



**Pune airport is among eight airports across the country selected by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to carry out trials of a smart baggage-screening system, powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI). The system is an AI-based solution developed to enhance security at airports, said AAI officials.**

Baggage AI is a first-of-its-kind threat detection system for security X-ray machines. The technology can automatically detect dangerous objects and other threats from X-ray images during the screening of baggage, and alert the operators.

“In our efforts to consistently provide better services and improve the infrastructure at airports in India, AAI had organised the ‘Innovate for Airports Programme’ under the Startup India initiative. As part of this programme, start-ups across India got a chance to submit innovative solutions for airports... Over 350 start-ups were screened across the country and eight were selected to implement their solutions at various airports in India,” said officials.

AAI officials believe that ‘baggage AI’ can add another layer of security, and operate like a second pair of eyes. The system has been developed by Dimensionless Technologies.

11/01/20 Indian Express

Air Security Group (ASG) personnel of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at Mangaluru International Airport thwarted an attempt by a Dubai bound passenger to smuggle foreign currency. The incident came to light when the ASG personnel noted suspicious item in the hand baggage of passenger, Sahul Hameed Theruvath, during the security check.

Shahul Hameed was bound to travel by SpiceJet flight SG 059 to Dubai. The thorough check of bag revealed **foreign currencies of various countries worth Rs 5.48 lakh. The seized currencies were 76 US dollars of 100 denomination, Chinese Yuan, Malaysian Ringgits and Turkish Lira of smaller denomination.** The currencies that were in his possession did not have any legal permission.

11/01/20 Naina JA/Deccan Herald

**Nagpur: Even though GMR Airports has bagged the tender for modernization of the Nagpur airport, the central government may ask Mihan India Limited (MIL) to go for retendering, said Union transport minister Nitin Gadkari during the inaugural function of the Liberty Cinema to Mental Hospital flyover on Friday evening.**

Gadkari didn’t mention the reason and expressed hope that the Centre would not take this decision as it would delay the project.

**TOI had reported on December 4, 2019 that the union civil aviation ministry had questioned MIL regarding the need for privatizing the airport.**

**This was because GMR, which emerged as the highest bidder with an offer to share over 14% of the revenue, would have given less than what MIL, the current operator, earns on its own.**

In 2019, the earnings of airports were Rs49 crore. After roping in GMR, the figure may have come down to Rs15 crore.

Commenting on the broad gauge Metro project, Gadkari said that it had got in principle approval.

“After the Nagpur-Nagbhid narrow gauge line is converted to broad gauge, we will run a Metro up to Wadsa. Before that, BG Metro will connect Bhandara, Narkhed and Wardha with Nagpur. Later, we will run a BG Metro between Chandrapur and Gondia,” he added.

On Phase II of Nagpur Metro, Gadkari said that it was expected to get approval of the union cabinet soon. “Then Metro will connect Hingna, Pardi, Dattawadi, Butibori and Kanhan with the centre of

Nagpur. People living in adjoining areas will get a fast mode of connectivity to the city," he added.  
11/01/20 Ashish Roy/Times of India

**While the first attempt to divest Air India might have been a damp squib, the government is confident that the efforts to sell the national carrier will be successful this time, says Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.**

Speaking to CNBC-TV18, Puri said the government was willing to bite the bullet on the carrier, which currently has around Rs 60,000 crore debt, to make it an attractive buy.

"There is nothing like failure to teach you a few lessons. I wouldn't use the word failure but that was an effort that took place at a politically not a very propitious time. You were short of the election by a year-and-half, plus it is a mindset issue. We wanted to hang on to Air India, if possible hang on to it 100 percent, and that is why we are in this situation," he said.

Puri believes that the government should not be running airlines. "If I am not able to hang on to Air India as per the mindset, let me hang on to 26 percent or whatever. One of the professional evaluations is that you need a helpful external environment. Don't look at the privatisation programme from the point of view of what you are interested in, look at it from the point of view of the guy who wants to come in. If somebody is going to bid seriously, then that entity will be making the evaluation and that is a transition we have completed commendably and **today we are ready to let go 100 percent," the minister observed.**

10/01/20 CNBC TV18

New Delhi: **This is the fifth consecutive month that the Indian national carrier has failed to pay salaries to its employees on time.** Generally, the airline disburses salaries by the 30th or the 31st of every month.

Debt-ridden Air India, which has not paid salaries to its employees for the month of July, on Friday said it is making 'all efforts' to disburse them by this week. The salaries have been delayed due to the reasons beyond the airline's control, it said in a communication to its staff.

This is the fifth consecutive month that the national carrier has failed to pay salaries to its employees on time. There were delays in payments in March, April, May and June as well.

'We regret to inform the delay in payment of salaries for the month of July due to circumstances beyond the control of the management,' said Air India general manager for human resources.

The national carrier, which is facing acute financial crunch, is set to get an additional funding of Rs 980 crore from the government. Air India has more than 11,000 permanent staff.

09/01/20 MENAFN

Hyderabad: **The Telangana government has sought the central government's help to re-activate old airports as well as establish a chain of greenfield airports and heliports to connect the remote parts of the state**

"It would help connect distant districts such as Adilabad and allow easy access to tourist destinations such as Yadadri... we will request the central government's funding support for creating the infrastructure and request the ministry for necessary approvals," Telangana IT and industries minister KT Rama Rao said while addressing participants at a curtainraiser for WINGS 2020 at New Delhi. The event will be held at Begumpet airport in the city during March 12-15.

Rao said the state government is working towards making Warangal airport functional as it will boost regional air transport and support the upcoming Kakatiya Mega Textile Park.

**"We also intend to open a heliport at Warangal airport on a subsidy basis so that investors and operators find it viable,"** he said, adding that a greenfield airport is being planned at Kothagudam that can connect the coal belt, mines and power sector ecosystem around Khammam district and an

airport is also proposed at Jakranpally, which will support the upcoming Pharma City NIMZ.  
[10/01/20 Times of India](#)

**Reaching double digits for the first time since January 2019, domestic passenger traffic growth in India jumped to 11.3 per cent in November as compared to the corresponding month of 2018, said global airlines body IATA on Thursday.**

**"However, economic growth (in India) in the third quarter was the weakest in around six years amid a broad-based slowdown that is affecting many sectors of the economy. This will present a more challenging environment for the industry going forward," said a statement issued by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).**

IATA, which represents around 290 airlines comprising 82 per cent of global air traffic, measures passenger growth in revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs), which is calculated by multiplying the number of passengers to the distance travelled by them.

[09/01/20 PTI/Economic Times](#)

**New Delhi: In a marginal relief to airlines as oil prices shoot up, the aviation ministry has decided to discontinue levy of airport operator charge or fuel throughput charge at all airports, airstrips and heliports across India with immediate effect.** It said Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) "should take into account the amount in this revenue stream and duly compensate the airport operator / Airports Authority of India by suitably recalibrating other tariffs during their determinations of airport tariffs."

The decision has been taken to "uphold affordability and sustainability of air passenger and air cargo transportation."

The ministry order says: **"Fuel-related charges are charged variously either in three parts as (a) Airport Operator Charges, (b) Fuel Infrastructure Charges (FIC), and (c) Into Plane (ITP) Charges or as a composite of the three, generally called Fuel Throughput Charge (FTC), at the airports, airstrips and helipads across the country. At some airports, fuel supply is provided on open access basis."**

[09/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India](#)

**In order to enhance call and network connectivity for its international flight passengers, Goair has partnered with Matrix Cellular, a leading mobile and data solutions provider in India.**

As a part of this, customers booking international flights on the Indian low-cost carrier's website can now buy a Matrix international sim card and collect it from the Matrix outlet at the airports.

Travellers can also **avail mobile wireless communication (mifi)** through Matrix Cellular — this device will act as a wifi router and can connect up to five devices at a time.

The lowest price plan starts at Rs.599 for Thailand. Other price plans include Rs. 999 for the UAE; Rs.799 for Malaysia, Rs.1199 for China, Hong Kong and Macao and Rs.1149 for Sri Lanka. Passengers can review plans available under Goair-Matrix partnership [here](#).

Following this, Goair boasts being the only Indian airline to offer its customers with ease of purchasing sim/mifi online.

[10/01/20 Sanchita Nambiar/Business Traveller](#)

**In the run-up to its international expansion, Vistara is at an advanced level of discussions with several airlines to lease slots at London's Heathrow airport, the busiest airport of Europe.**

"London is a popular destination. It makes sense for Vistara to launch operations to London.

However, since slots at such a busy airport are a scarce commodity, we are talking to several carriers to take slots on lease. Simultaneously, we are also looking at London Stansted but we are trying to get Heathrow," sources aware of the development said.

Central London is over 20 km away from Heathrow and nearly 70 km far from Stansted.

The five-year-old joint venture of Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines started operations in January 2015 with two aircraft and two destinations. Its fleet has now expanded to 39 aircraft, increasing its coverage to 34 destinations. Of the 39 aircraft, there are 32 Airbus A320 and rest seven are Boeing 737-800 NG.

**The airline's fleet is expected to expand with the induction of 11 aircraft, out which four are likely to be the wide-body B787 planes, two are expected to be A321neo and A320neos will comprise remaining five,** CNBC-TV18 has learnt. However, the airline will witness a net addition of four planes as the lease of two B737 is expiring and five A320neos are retiring.

**In July 2018, the airline had signed a letter of Intent for 13 A320neo aircraft and committed to an additional 37 A320neo Family aircraft from lessors, taking the total incoming neo family fleet at 50. In the same year, it had also entered into a \$2.8-billion agreement to order six 787-9 Dreamliners, with options for four more jets at the 2018 Farnborough International Airshow.**

[10/01/20 CNBC TV18](#)

**RG Group, an investment vehicle for co-founder Rakesh Gangwal and his family, has called an Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) for shareholders of IndiGo Airlines, in which it is seeking to change rules governing share transactions.**

The Indian low-cost carrier said in a stock market filing that the EGM is scheduled to take place on **January 29, 2020. In it, RG Group is proposing to amend the airline's Articles of Association, effectively making it easier for existing shareholders to sell or buy shares in the company.**

Currently, if either of the two main shareholders (RG Group or Rahul Bhatia's InterGlobe Enterprises Private Limited - IGE Group) wishes to sell any of their shares, the other has priority in buying them. The Articles of Association also restrict the key shareholders' options when it comes to increasing their shareholdings, and effectively ban them from taking the company private by delisting it from the stock market. If the EGM approves the changes, all of these provisions will be removed.

RG Group controls a 37% stake in IndiGo Airlines with IGE Group owning 38%. The balance of shares is publicly traded on the Indian National Stock Exchange.

[09/01/20 ch-aviation](#)

**Wings India 2020, an international exhibition and conference on civil aviation sector, will be held at Begumpet Airport in Hyderabad from March 12 to 15.**

At a curtain raiser event here, Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri sought active participation from the stakeholders for the same. Pursuant to the success of Wings 2019, MOCA and FICCI is organising WINGS India 2020, "providing a congenial forum catering to the rapidly changing dynamics of the sector, focusing on new business acquisition, investments, policy formation and regional connectivity."

The event will provide a fillip to the aviation and restructured focused forums will be instrumental in attaining the objective of connecting the buyers, sellers, investors and other stakeholders at a common forum.

Puri on Thursday said that privatisation will strengthen the civil aviation sector in the country.

**"We are currently in the process of a privatisation programme for our flight carriers. According to projections, privatisation will strengthen the civil aviation sector and contribute to the expansion of the sector both in the short and medium term,"** he said.

**The Union Minister expressed confidence that the Indian civil aviation sector will soon have 2,000 flights operating in the country.**

10/01/20 Business World

New Delhi: **Vistara, the Tata Sons-Singapore Airlines (SIA) JV that has just turned five, will offer inflight Wi-Fi on its single aisle Airbus A321 and the wide body Boeing 787 Dreamliners. The full service carrier (FSC) will have back-of-the-seat inflight entertainment (IFE) screens on its Dreamliners, said a senior official.**

**The airline is preparing to launch medium haul international flights to destinations like London and Tokyo by this April.**

**"In the first phase, we will use our Boeing 787-9s for flights to Europe and far east. We have ordered six of these Dreamliners and will get them in over a year, starting next month. In the second phase we will look at flying to America and Australia for which we require a modified version of the B787-9** (that has an extra fuel tank, more thrust and higher maximum takeoff weight). We can get four more Dreamliners as option as part of the previous order and could go for the ultra-long/long range version to do that," said the official.

The airline currently has ten A321s and six B787s on order. All of these planes, which will be used for medium haul international routes, will have onboard WiFi. "We will use the single aisle A321s for up to 6-hour-long flights. The longer routes will be on the Dreamliners," the official added.

Vistara will be the first Indian carrier to offer inflight Wi-Fi. SpiceJet also planned to do so on its Boeing 737 Max but that aircraft is globally grounded since last March. Other Indian carriers like Air India and Jet Airways (that shut down last April) also toyed with this idea but their precarious finances did not allow them to do so despite being the only Indian carriers till now to fly to distant places like Americas and Australia.

09/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**Pune: Come April, e-gates and body scanners will be a permanent fixture at the city airport.**

"Both the projects are high-priority. The trial run of the body scanner is going on. Before making it a permanent facility, we want to ensure that there are no glitches in the services offered. The decision for both the projects would take a concrete shape soon," Pune airport director Ajay Kumar told TOI. At present, Lohegaon airport has a body scanner machine installed. The facility was set up by a Germany-based company, having a base in Delhi.

**Tokyo-based NEC Technologies will set up three e-gates to make the entry into the airport easy and seamless.** "E-gates equipped with facial recognition technology will be installed at three points — the entrance of the airport, security holding area and the boarding gate area," a spokesperson of the Tokyo-based company had said earlier.

"The company chosen to install the facial recognition gates (e-gates) has conducted a survey of the airport and the work on its installation would start soon," another official said.

10/01/20 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

**Airports Council International (ACI) has announced that four Airport Authority of India international airports Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Varanasi, and Trivandrum have met all the requirements to upgrade to Level 2: "Reduction" by reducing the carbon emissions at airports. Airports can participate at 4 levels of Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) Programme – Level 1: Mapping, Level 2: Reduction, Level 3: Optimisation, Level 4: Neutrality.**

"In line with national as well as global climate change initiatives, AAI has initiated carbon management program at four of these airports with an objective of ensuring sustainable development of aviation industry," said the AAI release.

Carbon mapping occurs when the airport has policy commitment to emissions reduction and development of a Carbon Footprint for the airport's scope-1 & scope-2 emissions, which are under its control.

Carbon reduction occurs when the airport shows the reduction in carbon emissions as compared to base year. AAI had achieved Level-1 accreditation during December 2018 for these four airports and has upgraded now to next level of accreditation i.e. Level 2: Reduction.

09/01/20 ITLN

**Hyderabad: GMR Infrastructure Ltd on Thursday informed the bourses that its step-down subsidiary, GMR Hyderabad Aerotropolis Limited (GHAL), has entered into a joint venture with ESR Hyderabad 1 Pte Limited (ESR), a subsidiary of Hong Kong-headquartered ESR Cayman Limited, to develop a logistics and industrial park at the Hyderabad airport city.**

The park, which is proposed to be developed over 66 acres at a project outlay of Rs 550 crore, will be developed by a special purpose vehicle, GMR Logistics Park Private Limited, in which ESR and GHAL will hold 70% and 30% stake, respectively. GHAL is a subsidiary of GHIAL, which operates the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad, Hyderabad.

GMR group said in a regulatory filing **that the JV will develop a flagship airport centric logistics and industrial park with state-of-the-art facilities for warehousing, distribution centers and non-polluting industrial units such as light assembly facilities.**

ESR India country heads Abhijit Malkani and Jai Mirpuri said the collaboration reiterates ESR's strategic mission to strengthen its facilities and key positions across the country.

"This new facility at Hyderabad Airport is our latest investment to support national and global trade to and from Telangana. Being strategically located, this facility, showcasing smart, sustainable and human-centric design, will pave way for Indian and global companies to capitalize on the immense growth opportunities available in the Indian market," Malkani said.

10/01/20 Times of India

**New Delhi : Airport Authority of India (AAI) chairman Arvind Singh on Thursday said that new greenfield airports and existing profitable airports will be privatised in the coming time and participation is expected from both domestic and international companies in this process.** "Going ahead, I see more and more participation where new greenfield airports and existing profitable airports will be privatised because that is the stated policy and we expect more participation from both domestic and international companies in this privatisation process," Singh told ANI. **He said that there is an established and robust privatisation program in the country.** "It started almost 14 years ago, when Delhi and Mumbai airports were privatised. We saw more private airports coming up in Hyderabad and Bangalore. We have a very established and robust policy," Singh said. "If you compare the revenues, the revenues that we were getting from Delhi and Mumbai in the first year of privatisation has grown exponentially. Today, AAI gets almost Rs 3,000 crores annually from Delhi

and Mumbai airports." he added. Singh said that airport authorities are debt free companies, "which is why significant investment can be made in the sector for adequate infrastructure expansion without raising any money either from the budget or loans."

10/01/20 ANI/Sify

**Agartala: The officials the Airport Authority of India (AAI) on Thursday said they will recruit transgender persons and people with Down Syndrome at airports across the Northeast.**

Addressing a news conference at Maharaja Bir Bikram (MBB) Airport here in the afternoon, AAI Northeast regional executive director Sanjeev Jindal said the initiative aims to bring these people to mainstream society.

"We are bringing the transgender persons into the mainstream of employment ecology. The first transgender employee was recruited at Imphal airport last year," Jindal said.

The official added that the AAI doesn't directly recruit such staff as their induction is monitored at the corporate level. "The AAI is creating conducive employment ecology by encouraging third party human resource providers to supply a certain portion of required manpower from the transgender community."

The director of the MBB Airport, V.K. Seth, said they have set a target to recruit at least one transgender executive to serve the facility by next month.

Jindal also said they plan to introduce people with Down Syndrome as they are extremely good in repetitive type of jobs.

"I am sure they will work very well. There is no airport in India where such people work yet," he added.

10/01/20 Tanmoy Chakraborty/Telegraph

**Chennai: Customs Air Intelligence Unit seized foreign currency equivalent to Rs 20 lakh from three women passengers at Chennai Airport.** A release said sleuths, after being tipped off, intercepted Mahalakshmi, 33, of Coimbatore, Sharmila, 33, of Chennai and Saravanaselvi, 45, of Tirupur who were bound for Kuala Lumpur by SriLankan Airlines flight, at the departure terminal when they were proceeding towards security hold after clearing immigration, on suspicion of carrying foreign currency.

On questioning, they gave evasive replies. On examination of their hand bags, 29,220 US Dollars, equivalent to Rs 20.6 lakh, were found concealed inside. Further, Rs 31,000 was recovered from their handbags. The currencies were seized, the release said.

10/01/20 New Indian Express

**The insolvency proceedings of grounded Jet Airways have hit yet another snag after two of its lenders, IDBI Bank and Indian Overseas Bank, on Wednesday sought an exemption from releasing funds as they are under the central bank's prompt corrective action (PCA) framework.**

The two banks' plea coincided with NCLT's warning to Jet CoC of contempt proceedings if they do not release interim funds to the resolution professional by January 20 for completion of insolvency proceedings.

"We again reiterate and instruct the constituents of CoC to forthwith release the amounts as required by the RP so that the process of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) can be completed and the asset value (of Jet Airways) is protected," said Justice Bhaskar Pantula Mohan, one of the member judges of the Mumbai-bench of NCLT. He also said pilots should be considered

assets of the company and their interests should be protected.

IDBI Bank has filed an application with the NCLT seeking exemption from paying for Jet's insolvency process. The bench directed both IDBI Bank and IOB to approach the RBI on the matter. "It is also directed that the CoC members who filed applications before this bench seeking exemption from further contribution of funds shall have to approach the relevant authorities to seek exemptions, so that they be able to contribute the necessary funds by the next date approved by this bench," said Justice Mohan. **The matter will be heard again on February 19.**

**Under the Reserve Bank of India's guidelines, banks that have poor asset quality and capital base would come under the PCA framework. Banks under PCA are required to restrict their risk-weighted assets. Without adequate funding, all attempts to revive the cash-strapped airline could meet an abrupt end.**

09/01/20 Anwasha Ganguly/Financial Express

**Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation has suspended the licenses of GoAir pilots who landed the Nagpur-Bengaluru flight on November 11, 2019, even after they lost visual reference when the aircraft was 50ft above the runway.**

The crew considered a wrong visual reference as the centre line of the runway and consequently, manoeuvred the aircraft to the left of the runway at Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport. The aircraft then veered off the runway.

"The crew lost visual reference at about 50 feet, however, they continued to land which is in violation of requirements laid down..." the DGCA statement says. "The crew considered wrong visual reference as runway centerline and maneuvered the aircraft to the left of Runway 09. The first officer did not monitor flight path deviation in the cockpit instruments thus failed to give a call out for deviation."

The statement added a show-cause notice was sent to the captain as well as the co-pilot, and that the two pilots had accepted their mistake in writing. **The DGCA then suspended the FATA (foreign aircrew temporary authorisation) held by the first pilot for a period of six months and the license held by the co-pilot for a period of three months from the date of the incident.**

09/01/20 News Minute

**New Delhi: Amidst tensions within the Iranian airspace flights of Air India and Air India Express overflying Iran will be temporarily rerouted,** an official said on Wednesday.

Air India spokesperson Dhananjay Kumar asserted that the safety of passengers and crew members comes first.

"In light of tensions within the Iranian airspace a decision to temporarily reroute flights of Air India and Air India Express overflying Iran has been taken. This may lead to an increase in flying time by approximately 20 minutes for flights from Delhi and 30 to 40 minutes for flights from Mumbai. The situation is being closely monitored," Kumar said.

The development came after Iran targeted the Al Assad airbase and another one in Erbil in Iraq that house American troops.

The missile attacks also came hours after the funeral of Iranian commander Qassem Soleimani, whose killing in a US drone strike has intensified tensions in the region.

08/01/20 ANI/Times of India



New Delhi: **CISF personnel deployed at the Delhi airport have apprehended a woman passenger for allegedly using a fake passport to travel to Canada**, officials said on Wednesday.

The incident took place on Tuesday night and the lady was intercepted by the security personnel on the basis of suspicion.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel who nabbed her found that the photo on her passport did not match and she had different vitals in it as compared to an Aadhaar card found in her bag.

The woman had a passport in the name of 33-year-old Ananya Sachin Dhiman, a resident of Mumbai, while the Aadhaar was in the name of 30-year-old Laxmi P Magar with an address in Ahmedabad, Gujarat.

08/01/20 Outlook

**A woman from Guinea has been arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle narcotics worth Rs 86 lakh into the country at Delhi airport**, a statement issued by the customs department on Wednesday said. The passenger was intercepted by the customs preventive officers after her arrival from Conakry (Guinea) via Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) late last month.

On the basis of credible suspicion and intelligence of her being a swallower, the passenger was admitted to Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) hospital here for recovery of narcotic substance concealed inside her body, it said.

**"Total 50 capsules were recovered from the passenger containing 860 grams of white coloured powder.**

08/01/20 PTI/India TV

IATA forecasts that air trips per capita in India will grow 10% annually in the years through 2038. That should provide plenty of work for Air Works, India's largest independent MRO.

The company is refocusing its efforts on its home market, restructuring its balance sheet and stabilizing its finances. A major credit agency has recognized the progress.

Over the past 18 months, Air Works has steadily increased capacity utilization and signed several long-term maintenance contracts with leading airlines and global OEMs such as Boeing and Embraer, all of which has improved operating margins.

The MRO has also sold non-core businesses, including paint shop Air Livery, part of paint shop ATE in France and its Argus unit. The proceeds helped reduce Air Works debt by more than 60% and open a new maintenance base in Kochi, an Indian port city with nearly 700,000 people.

"With Kochi operational, Air Works will have an enviable and the widest pan-India presence among Indian MRO operators in 27 Indian cities," says spokesperson Gaurav Sahni.

**The MRO now has base maintenance facilities at Hosur, Mumbai and Kochi, serving commercial, business and defense aviation. The Company's Hosur facility is certified by both India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation and EASA.**

**The financial transformation and focus on India's growing market has prompted Crisil, a credit rating subsidiary of Standard & Poor's and McGraw Hill Financial, to upgrade Air Works long-term and short-term ratings to BBB/Stable and Crisil A3+, respectively.**

09/01/20 Henry Canaday/Aviation Week

**New Delhi: Travelport, a leading technology company serving the global travel industry, today confirmed that the company is now the sole global distribution system (GDS) provider of Air India's domestic flight content in India.**

The contract, which was awarded to Travelport following a competitive bidding process, came into effect in November 2018 and was fully implemented as of **1 January 2020**. It means, Travelport is now the only GDS provider through which travel agents in India can receive both Air India's domestic and international flight content. The company also continues to provide all domestic and international flight content from the carrier to its wide network of travel agents across the world. As Air India is signed up to Travelport's leading merchandising solution, Travelport Rich Content and Branding, travel agents booking through its platform benefit from a graphically rich experience when searching for and booking the airline's branded fares, as well as greater access to its ancillary offers. The milestone comes just one month after Meenakshi Malik, Executive Director of Commercial Operations at Air India, revealed that the carrier had already seen "growth of 22 per cent" in operational profit and "cut down cost by around Rs. 300 crore" since it began changing its distribution strategy. Malik also projected a saving of "Rs. 3200 crore in five years".

**Travelport has seen a rapid expansion in India in recent years and now has an extensive agency partner network in the country. This includes major online travel agencies such as MakeMyTrip, Ibibo, Yatra, EaseMyTrip and ClearTrip, as well as major corporate travel agencies and newer entrants to the travel sector such as PayTM. In addition to industry-leading airline content, Travelport has a significant footprint with leading hotel groups and aggregators in India such as Oberoi, Taj, Treebo and Trident.**

09/01/20 APN News

**Pune: The International Air Transport Association (IATA) released data for global air freight markets showing that demand, measured in freight tonne kilometers (FTKs), decreased by 1.1% in November 2019, compared to the same period in 2018. This marks the thirteenth consecutive month of year-on-year declines in freight volumes.**

Despite the decline in demand, November's performance was the best in eight months, with the slowest year-on-year rate of contraction recorded since March 2019. In part, November's outcome reflects the growing importance of large e-commerce events such as Singles Day and Black Friday. While international e-commerce continues to grow, overall air cargo demand continued to face headwinds from the effects of the trade war between the US and China, the deterioration in world trade, and a broad-based slowing in global economic growth.

Freight capacity, measured in available freight tonne kilometers (AFTKs), rose by 2.9% year-on-year in November 2019. Capacity growth has now outstripped demand growth for the 19th consecutive month.

08/01/20 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

**Mangaluru: In three separate incidents, customs officials of Mangaluru International Airport confiscated a whopping 1.5 kg gold from passengers.**

The total value of the 1.575 kg of gold that is seized by the custom officials is Rs 63 lac and 73 thousand.

In the first incident 336.7 gram gold was confiscated from a passenger who arrived on Air India flight from Dubai on January 6. The value of this is estimated to be Rs 13.43 lac. He had hidden this inside the socks of his shoes.

On January 7 illegal gold was seized from two passengers who arrived from Dubai via the Air India

flight. 523 gram gold worth Rs 21.24 lac in paste form was found with one passenger while the other was carrying 716 gram of gold valued at Rs 29.06 lac.

09/01/20 daijiworld

**New Delhi: Air India and AI Express flights will not be routed over Iranian airspace in view of the tensions in the region. The re-routed flights of AI between India and the west will accordingly see their flying times increase by up to 40 minutes.**

India had on Wednesday morning "advised" its airlines to avoid overflying the airspace of Iran, Iraq and the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman, after the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) barred its carriers from doing so following Iran's missile attacks on bases housing American troops in Iraq.

AI spokesman Dhananjay Kumar said: "The safety of our passengers and crew members comes first. In light of the tensions within the Iranian airspace a decision to temporarily reroute flights of Air India (AI) and Air India Express (AIX) overflying Iran has been taken. This may lead to increase in flying time by approximately 20 minutes for flights from Delhi and 30 to 40 minutes for flights from Mumbai. The situation is being closely monitored."

AI has the maximum flights between India and the west -- right up to the US.

An IndiGo spokesperson said: "**IndiGo does not operate any flights over Iranian and Iraqi airspace, hence we do not expect our flights to the Middle-East or Turkey to be impacted.** The routes to Gulf operate through Oman, Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf, while the routes to Turkey fly over the northern routes over the Caspian sea and head directly from there to Istanbul. Currently, our flights are operating as per normal schedule. We are monitoring the situation closely and in case of a contingency, there might be slight time changes in our operations, which will be proactively communicated to our passengers."

International airlines have also started avoiding Iranian airspace.

A senior official of India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said, "held meetings with concerned airlines to sensitise them for remaining vigilant and taking all precautions, including avoiding" those areas. However, the official added "**no formal instruction (have been issued) as yet.**"

This will mean longer travel time for flights that overly these regions. Some flights were enroute when FAA the notice to airmen (NOTAM) to avoid Iran, Iraq and the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman was issued.

08/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**New Delhi/Mumbai: A group of ministers (GoM) on Tuesday finalised the sale of the entire government stake in state-owned Air India (AI). The alternative mechanism for AI, led by Home Minister Amit Shah, approved the Expression of Interest (Eoi) for prospective suitors in the airline. The public announcement through newspaper advertisements will be done within two weeks, officials involved in the sale process said.**

**The GoM also gave in-principle approval to hive off around Rs 20,000 crore of additional debt and liabilities to a special purpose vehicle, to make it more attractive to prospective buyers.**

"The committee has approved the Expression of Interest, share purchase agreement, and restructuring of further debt today. The Eoi will be open to bidders and public shortly," a senior government official said.

This is the third time the government is trying to privatise AI. The Centre had in 2017 tried and failed to sell the carrier as no bidders responded to the Eoi. According to the audited accounts of the

carrier, at the end of FY19, it had Rs 58,351 crore of debt. A successful sale will help the government save money for welfare schemes, from its already stretched revenue. Till FY19, it had infused Rs 30,000 crore in the airline but failed to revive its fortunes.

People in the know said a proposal to transfer additional debt and liabilities of around Rs 10,000 crore each would be absorbed by the government, to lighten the burden for prospective buyers. "An in-principle approval has been given to hive off a portion of additional debt and some liabilities like dues to oil companies and airport operators as well as pending salary dues and benefits to permanent and retired employees..." a second official said.

As of FY19, Air India had assets worth Rs 28,000 crore and liabilities estimated at Rs 22,000 crore, primarily dues to vendors such as airports and oil companies and short-term working capital loans. Out of a total debt of Rs 58,000 crore, the government has already transferred Rs 29,500 crore to the special purpose vehicle Air India Asset Holding. Now, another Rs 10,000 crore of debt hive off has been approved, **leaving the bidder with Rs 18,500 crore of debt.**

08/01/20 Arindam Majumder & Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard

**Jet Airways has received two Expressions of Interest (Eoi), Ashish Chhawchharia, the Resolution Professional appointed for the debt-strapped airline informed the Mumbai bench of NCLT during a hearing on Wednesday.**

**The RP also informed the insolvency tribunal that two more Eois are expected ahead of the January 15 deadline.**

BusinessLine had reported that South American conglomerate, **Synergy Group**, had submitted its Eoi on Sunday. The company had submitted an Eoi earlier, but lenders decided to go for a fresh round of Eoi after some other companies showed interest.

**While there is no confirmation so far on the other bidders, Hinduja Group, Turbo Aviation and a Dubai-based fund have emerged as interested parties.**

During the hearing, the RP told the court that the second Eoi had come from a high networth, non-aviation company.

**In November 2019, the insolvency court had directed the Committee of Creditors (CoC) to release their share of the interim funding for the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP).**

**The RP told the court that the CoC had not released its share so far. The court has directed the CoC to release funds immediately in order to avoid contempt.**

08/01/20 Business Line

**A GoAir A320neo aircraft en route to Varanasi on Tuesday had to return to Delhi as one of its Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines developed a mid-air snag, a government official said.**

"G8186 Delhi-Varanasi flight had to return to Delhi on Tuesday evening as one of the PW engines developed high vibration," said the official.

In response to a query from PTI regarding the incident, a GoAir spokesperson said the G8186 flight with 50 passengers on board did an air turn back "in the interest of safety due to a technical glitch".

After the turn back, the flight landed safely at Delhi airport, the spokesperson noted.

"The aircraft is being inspected and rectified by GoAir engineering team. Alternate flight arrangements are being explored to accommodate the passengers to their destination. GoAir regrets the inconvenience caused to its passengers," the spokesperson added.

**Aviation regulator DGCA had decided on December 24 to inspect all PW engines, which have been used for more than 3,000 hours, of GoAir's A320neo planes.**

As PW engines of IndiGo's A320neo family aircrafts have also been facing similar incidents, the

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on October 28 ordered it to replace 16 PW engines, which have been used for more than 3,000 hours, within 15 days.

Worried about the safety aspect, the DGCA issued further orders to IndiGo on November 1 last year, telling it that all 97 A320neo family aircraft in its fleet must have modified PW engines by January 31, 2020 "at all costs".

07/01/20 PTI/Business Standard

**Mumbai: German airport developer Fraport AG is making a fresh attempt to exit a GMR Infra-led consortium that runs the Delhi Airport, by selling its 10% stake in it, said two people aware of the talks.**

The latest round of talks has been on for the last four months. **GMR has placed an offer on the table, but Fraport is yet to accept it, said one of the people without elaborating. Fraport has also approached the state-run National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) to buy its stake. NIIF, along with Gulf sovereign wealth fund Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) and Canada's PSP Investments last year signed a pact with GMR's rival GVK Group to invest Rs 7,614 crore in the latter's airport business. GMR owns 64% in Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), while the Airports Authority of India (AAI) owns 26%. Fraport owns the remaining stake in the consortium.**

Spokespersons at GMR and Fraport said they wouldn't comment "on speculation". NIIF didn't respond to queries before the story went to press. This is the latest of Fraport's attempts in the last eight years to exit the consortium. Senior executives in the company had publicly announced its intentions of an exit in 2012.

There had also been advanced talks for a stake sale in 2016. The attempts to exit were unsuccessful, in some instances over differences in valuation and at others over GMR's own funding problems. Fraport picked up a stake in DIAL in 2006 as part of the consortium that won the award to develop a greenfield airport in Delhi. **GMR has the right of first refusal on any exit that Fraport would plan. This means it will need a go ahead for any stake sale.**

08/01/20 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

**Chennai: A Bangaldesh national, who was suffering from cancer, died at the Anna International airport here this morning, minutes before boarding a flight for his country.**

08/01/20 UNI

**The maintenance work of Mumbai international airport's main runway is up to 60 percent over, and is likely to reopen on March 28, ahead of its schedule.**

More than 800 people with over 100 equipment are working for over six hours a day to re-carpet what is one of the busiest runways in the world.

"Runway 9/27, which handles about 950 flights a day, was last upgraded in 2010-2011. Repair was needed to ensure safety of flights landing and taking off," said an executive from the industry.

The Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport is operated by GVK Mumbai International Airport Ltd. About 25 flights a day have been cancelled to enable the work.

The repair work was postponed due to the prolonged monsoon. Since November 4, the runway has been closed for eight hours everyday, except Sunday and a few public holidays. It will be open for flight operations on January 15, February 19 and 21, March 10 and 25 on account of public holidays. The primary runway will now reopen on March 28, when the airlines complete their winter schedule, and just ahead of the busy summer season.

Even as the repair work on the main runway goes on, the secondary runway - 14/32 - is available for take-offs and landings.

The main runway handles 97 percent of the Mumbai airport's traffic and thus the team repairing it needs to work in clockwork precision to hand it back for flight operations at 5.30 pm, everyday.

07/01/20 Moneycontrol.com

**To expand Rajiv Gandhi International airport (RGIA), the GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL) that manages the airport proposed to cut down 585 trees. In an application to the Union Ministry of the forest, the GMR group said that cutting down trees will be required to expand the airport. It further assured to develop green cover in the place of the trees cut.**

**The GMR has obtained an environmental clearance to cut the trees so as to expand the airport to cater to 50 million passengers per year from its current capacity of 25 million passengers. In its total 5,495 acres, the group urged to cut down the trees that were in the existing vacant land of the airport.**

08/01/20 Roja Mayabrahma/Hans India

**Guwahati: The UDAN scheme has failed to take off in northeast as merely seven out of the 32 awarded routes are currently operational under the (Regional Connectivity Scheme) RCS UDAN 3.**

The regional director of airport northeast region (NER), Sanjeev Jindal, said that the implementation of the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme in Guwahati and the Northeast has not been up to the mark.

UDAN is the centre's ambitious regional connectivity scheme which aims to make air travel affordable for the common people. It also emphasises on air transport infrastructure development as well as improving the connectivity to various places in the country.

However, a majority of flights under regional connectivity scheme UDAN 3 are not operational yet in the northeast, informed authorities.

Speaking about the reasons for poor implementation of UDAN here, Sanjeev Jindal said, **"Under UDAN, a few airlines like Air Deccan and a few others which took routes here were financially not viable themselves."**

**On the other hand, established airlines like Spicejet and Indigo, often discontinue their flights if they do not get satisfactory load factor, that is, the number of passengers travelling in the route,** said authorities.

**Jindal further added that RCS 4 will be allotted in February and under the scheme, a lot of emphasis has been provided on the northeast region.** "We are hopeful that new connections should come in this region and airlines will come forward to take the routes," said Jindal.

08/01/20 Guwahati Plus

**Chennai: Customs officials seized 2.65 kg gold, worth Rs 1.10 crore, from six passengers at Chennai airport** on Monday night and Tuesday.

On Monday night, Ashaff Ali Khan, 51, of Sri Lanka, who arrived here from Colombo in a SriLankan Airlines flight (UL123), and Mohamed Azarudeen, 21, and Kalandar Abbas, 36, of Ramanathapuram, who arrived here from Colombo in an IndiGo flight (6E 1204), were intercepted and questioned. They admitted to having concealed gold paste in their rectums. Ten bundles containing gold in paste form were recovered from them.

On Tuesday morning, Mohamed Ramzeen, 51, of Sri Lanka, and Thajilamin, 41, of Ramanathapuram,

who arrived here from Colombo in a SriLankan Airlines flight (UL125) were intercepted and questioned. They admitted to having concealed gold in paste form in their rectums. Seven bundles containing gold paste were recovered.

07/01/20 Siddharth Prabhakar/Times of India

**South America-based Synergy Group has again given a formal Expression of Interest (Eoi) for beleaguered Jet Airways, sources said.**

The latest deadline for Eoi applications is January 15, the Committee of Creditors (CoC) had decided at their latest meeting.

**There were reports that the Hinduja Group would also apply but the sources say this is yet to happen.**

Synergy had given an Eoi for Jet in the first round of bidding. However, it failed to give a debt resolution plan for the airline company, even after getting several extensions. The lenders subsequently decided to call afresh for Eois.

Synergy is led by Bolivian-born Germán Efromovich. It owns majority stake in Avianca Airlines, the continent's second largest.

The Resolution Professional appointed for Jet had earlier told the National Company Law Tribunal that two other entities had expressed early interest in investing. However, it is unclear if they will still do so. One of these is from West Asia and the other is an Indian entity, backed by a British investor. In the first round of bidding, Synergy had questions for the civil aviation ministry on availability of slots in the domestic and international routes. It wanted answers to these before giving a resolution plan. The ministry wanted a resolution plan on the table before giving any assurance on slot allocation.

Jet's share price has gained in the past five trading days. On Monday, it closed at Rs 35.90.

07/01/20 Subrata Panda/Business Standard

**New Delhi: In its biggest ever move to discourage airlines from over-working their pilots and making fatigued cockpit crew fly planes — thereby compromising air safety — the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is likely to issue “mass notices” to GoAir over alleged violations on this count. The regulator, say highly placed sources, is in the process of issuing show cause notices to over 100 pilots and management of this low cost carrier (LCC).**

**After probing the airline's rostering software, the DGCA has found two main types of violations — making pilots fly for more than the allowed 1,000 hours in a year and not following the mandatory no more than two consecutive night flights in a row.**

While a GoAir spokesman said the airline is yet to receive any showcause notice from the DGCA over flight and duty time limitations (FDTL) issue, he added the LCC follows all norms. "As part of the oversight process, DGCA conducts audits for all operators. GoAir has also been subject to such routine audits and will always abide by civil aviation regulations as stipulated by the DGCA, including FDTL," he said.

A senior DGCA official said, "GoAir is on our radar for FDTL norm adherence. We are issuing mass individual notices to 100-odd pilots and also to the management. The idea is to ensure safe flying by preventing fatigued pilots from being assigned flights. Since we are issuing notices to pilots individually, they will themselves caution the airline when being assigned more night duties in a row than allowed or when being asked to fly for more than the allowed 1,000 hours in a year," said an official.

The regulator also feels that other airlines will also take a cue from the action against GoAir and its

pilots and strictly adhere to FDTL norms. "Our concept is very simple, "We do not want over-worked or fatigued pilots being assigned flights as that could inadvertently lead to errors and compromised safety," said the official.

06/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**A ministerial panel led by home minister Amit Shah has approved the draft of expression of interest for selling the government's stake in Air India and will invite preliminary bids in January, sources close to the development told CNBC-TV18.**

"Everything related to Air India divestment, including the debt part and other details, has been approved at the ministerial panel. Now, EoI will come out," a source said.

**The government plans to sell its entire stake in the second attempt at the airline's disinvestment.**

In the first attempt, which concluded last year, the government had failed to receive a single bid for 74 percent stake in Air India.

Air India is the largest international carrier and the third largest domestic carrier after IndiGo and SpiceJet. As of November 2019, it had a 12.1 percent share in the domestic air passenger traffic. Saddled with a debt of around Rs 60,000 crore, the airline has been making losses to the tune of Rs 20-25 crore every day.

**While no party has officially come forward till now to show interest in Air India other than IndiGo, the government maintains that several entities have found the airline lucrative.**

IndiGo, India's largest airline, has maintained that it is interested in the international segment of the carrier.

The government does not want to leave any stone unturned to make the second attempt at the Air India divestment successful as it is planning to offload a substantial amount of debt from Air India's balance sheet.

07/01/20 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

**New Delhi: Debt-ridden Air India on Monday told travel agents and websites that rumours about its imminent shutdown are "baseless" and its financial condition is being appropriately dealt with.**

Meenakshi Malik, Director-Commercial, Air India told travel partners in a letter, "There have been rumours going around in travel markets that Air India may be closing down its operations. I wish to take this opportunity to clarify that these rumours are baseless and without an iota of truth."

"Air India's financially and operational condition is being appropriately dealt with without compromising on our service levels," she added.

06/01/20 PTI/Economic Times

**Air India Engineering Services (AIESL), the maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) arm of India's national carrier, is working on a strategy that will help it survive and sustain after the government divests stake in the state-owned airline. The cash-strapped MRO arm, officials said, is unlikely to be sold along with the airline and needs infusion of at least Rs 1,000 crore to compete with international players, sources told FE. The company is in talks with multiple airlines and aircraft component manufactures and original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) to explore joint ventures to sustain itself.**

**AIESL, which currently has 5000 employees, has approached OEMs, including Safran Aviation of France, for tie-up regarding MRO work on aircraft engines. "Unless we tie up with OEMs, we cannot do business. But, OEMs have their own set-ups and are not keen on partnering with AIESL. Safran is**



evaluating our offer," a senior official said. **As part of the negotiations, AIESL has offered to absorb 18% GST and other tax expenses**, the source said.

**The government plans to soon invite expressions of interest (EOIs) to sell 100% stake in Air India.**

An earlier attempt to sell it did not attract buyers, who were reportedly not keen on the arrangement where the government retains 24% stake. In 2018, the government had transferred around Rs 29,400 crore of Air India's Rs 59,000-crore debt to a special purpose vehicle, Air India Asset Holdings.

**Meanwhile, loss-making AIESL is also unable to upgrade its workshops due to lack of funding, raising concerns regarding the ability of the company to survive.** "We require funds to build and upgrade infrastructure. Air India is supposed to have given us Rs 1,000 crore. With that, we could have set up some component workshops in-house, which is currently being serviced outside the country. We need an additional Rs 100 crore for making our Nagpur facility fully functional," the official said.

Currently, AIESL does the MRO work for Air India's over 170 aircraft, which fetches revenues of around Rs 3,500 crore annually. The status quo may not remain after the airline's privatisation.

07/01/20 Anwesha Ganguly/Financial Express

**New Delhi: To attract greater foreign capital into the country's aviation sector, the Centre should consider to ease the ownership and control rules of the industry, a whitepaper on the steps required to prop-up the sector said.**

The paper said the move to ease regulatory norms and enhance FDI limit will give access to "much-needed cheaper funds to the sector".

**At present, the Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) clause bars any foreign investor from taking complete control of an airline, run by a board that has two-third members as Indians. Incidentally, in the last Budget speech in July 2019, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that the government proposed to hike the FDI limit in domestic air carriers from the current 49 per cent.**

**As of now, 100 per cent FDI is allowed under automatic route for MRO (maintenance, repair, overhaul), ground handling and aircraft purchase.**

"This would provide much-needed cheaper funds to the sector, a large part of which is in need of an infusion of funds. Even the national carrier Air India is surviving on bail-outs by the government," the paper said.

Currently, the sector is in a grip of heavy debt burden and accumulating losses, despite the fact that passenger traffic has grown phenomenally over the last decade.

"The way out of this would be to encourage greater foreign investment into the sector by easing the FDI inflow norms in the sector, and help build up a strong aviation financing centre, dedicated for financing only to the aviation sector.

"This will not only ease the debt-ridden sector, but with it would come the best management practices and improved technologies which are being deployed worldwide," the paper said.

In terms of sub-sectors, the paper pointed out "Air Cargo" as the hidden treasure of the industry.

**As per the whitepaper, prospects of air cargo business in India are promising due to the rise of trade in sensitive perishable items. A number of sectors such as pharmaceuticals and e-commerce depend on this sub-sector.**

07/01/20 IANS/Outlook

New Delhi, Jan 6 : **The Drone Federation of India (DFI) on Monday announced to make Amazon Web Services (AWS) as its preferred Cloud service to boost the development and innovation around creating a perfect drone ecosystem in the country.**

The non-profit industry body will work with retail giant Amazon's Cloud arm to help provide a scalable, agile and secure Cloud infrastructure for drone manufacturers, application developers and operators to develop drone applications and accelerate time-to-market in India.

"AWS was a natural choice for us which will help drone manufacturers and developers as its Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) capabilities, open data sets and technical prowess are simply unmatched," Rahat Kulshreshtha, President, DFI, told IANS.

**The industry body signed an MoU with AWS at the 'Drone Festival of India 2020' here.**

The collaboration will identify use cases for drones in India across various application areas such as land survey, precision agriculture, disaster management, and search and rescue missions, and build custom cloud-based solutions.

According to Rahul Sharma, President, India and South Asia Public Sector, Amazon Internet Services Pvt. Ltd (AISPL), verticals like agriculture, healthcare, smart cities, etc will see significant drone deployment in the near future.

"AWS Open Data sets with granularity will let drone developers innovate further and deeper. With industry-leading compute, storage, database, IoT, AI and L, drone developers and operators can now test new ideas quickly, and accelerate innovation," Sharma told IANS.

06/01/20 New Kerala

Mumbai: **A city-bound IndiGo plane from Bengaluru made a priority landing at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on Monday due to a cabin pressurisation issue, a source said.**

The plane landed safely at 8.29 pm, the source added.

Later, IndiGo in a statement said its Bengaluru-Mumbai plane was accorded priority landing due to an "air system indication caution" mid-air and that the aircraft was grounded for inspection.

The airline, however, did not share the number of passengers on board the aircraft.

07/01/20 NDTV

New Delhi: **The pilots of Air India will hold a secret ballot to decide whether to strike or take the cash-strapped airline to bankruptcy court to get their dues. The Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA, union of erstwhile Indian Airlines' pilots) on Tuesday conveyed this decision to its members.**

"In spite of several requests to clear our illegally withheld 25% dues there seems to be no intent to clear the dues immediately. We are being treated like bonded labour by not waiving off the notice period while not paying our salaries, flying allowances and International layover allowance in time. We cannot trust any verbal commitments as we had several experiences in the recent past where even written agreements have been interpreted wrongly, violated breached," the decision conveyed by ICPA says.

"In lieu of the above, **it has been decided by the (council) to conduct a secret ballot as per the constitution of ICPA to make a decision between STRIKE or NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) to safeguard our interests,**" it adds. **A strike can be declared only after giving 14 days' notice to the employer.**

07/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Monday saw the temperature in New Delhi reach a high of just 9.4 degrees centigrade, making it the coldest December day in the city since 1901. This has meant a thick blanket of fog has covered the city due to the unseasonably cold North-Westerly winds. **Combined with New Delhi's poor air quality this has led to what has become a common layer of fog, which has not only caused extensive travel disruption but additionally led to hundreds of deaths in 2019 alone from the poor air quality.**

**Monday saw over 20 flights diverted from Indira Gandhi International Airport, with a further 40 cancelations and over 300 delays due to the smog and poor visibility caused by Delhi's cold snap.**

When visibility drops, many flights have to rely on CAT III B Instrument landing System (ILS). The ILS allows aircraft to land with visibility as low as just 50 metres, and when visibility drops below 125 metres. Despite New Delhi's International airport being equipped with CAT III B ILS the issue in Delhi is that not all pilots are certified for this ILS.

As recently as November I reported that the Air Quality Index (AQI) crossed 999 in Delhi, which was literally off the charts to accurately measure. By comparison, a safe level of AQI is measured at 50. At the time Delhi's air quality was over 20 times a safe recording, which led to the government imposing emergency measures in an attempt to quell the issue that has been devastating peoples' health and the economy.

06/01/20 James Asquith/Forbes

Paris: **Vistara is India's finest full-service airline based in New Delhi, has appointed APG as its representation company in France.** Registered under the name TATA SIA Airlines Limited, Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Sons (Holding company of the Tata group) and Singapore Airlines Limited (SIA).

Since starting operations five years ago, Vistara has won over millions of passengers with a world-class product and hospitality, and has rapidly expanded its network and fleet. Today, Vistara connects 34 cities, operates more than 200 flights a day with a fleet of 31 Airbus A320 and 9 Boeing 737-800NG aircraft, and has flown over 20 million passengers. Aiming further expansion within and outside of India, Vistara aims to have a total of 42 aircraft in its fleet by March 2020, including India's first Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner and the Airbus A321neo. The airline is on course to induct more than 50 new aircraft, a mix of narrow-body and wide-body, within the next four years, moving forward in its vision of becoming a global airline of choice.

06/01/20 Tatiana Rokou/TravelDailyNews

Mumbai: **Madrid-based tech firm Amadeus on Monday announced a new ticket distribution deal with flag carrier Air India to provide the travel agents in the country access to the airline's full international ticket inventory.**

**Air India had in October 2018 given contract for its domestic ticket distribution services to Travelport of the UK, replacing Amadeus, from January this year.**

"We are glad to once again work with Air India and play a positive role in the airline's growth strategy," said Cyril Tetaz, Executive Vice President, for airlines business in Asia Pacific region, Amadeus.

Under the agreement, travel sellers in India will have access to the Air India's pure full international content only, while the agents in the rest of the world will have access to the full range of Air India's

content, both domestic and international, the company said in the release.

06/01/20 PTI/Outlook

**Bengaluru: Two weeks on, GoAir passengers continue to have their travel plans disrupted, thanks to the low-cost carrier's last-minute delays and cancellations.** On Monday, 13 GoAir flights

scheduled to depart from or arrive at Kempegowda International Airport were delayed.

While delays and cancellations have been reported across the airline's countrywide network, the most-affected ones have been in Bengaluru, Pune, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai.

The flights delayed on Monday include Bengaluru-bound G8 273 from Patna, G8 807 from Jaipur, G8 404 from Varanasi, G8 378 from Patna, G8 286 from Goa, G8 383 from Mumbai, G8 112 and G8 124 from Delhi. Flights departing from Bangalore that were delayed include G8 119 to Delhi, G8 320 to Mumbai, G8 274 to Ranchi, G8 294 and G8 374 to Hyderabad.

Passengers claimed the airline sent an intimation about the delay less than an hour before scheduled departure. Departure time of several flights was changed multiple times by the airline and some passengers said they were issued multiple boarding passes by the airline.

07/01/20 Times of India

**Guwahati: Airports Authority of India (AAI) will focus on improving inter-state air connectivity in the Northeast besides starting international flights from more airports in the region.**

Speaking to the media here on Monday, AAI regional executive director, Sanjeev Jindal, said the aviation sector in the Northeast had grown well in 2019 with the launch of more flights from Guwahati to other airports in the region.

**"The emphasis this year would be more on improving inter-state air connectivity in the region while also enhancing global connectivity with more airports in the Northeast. The year 2020 will also witness more aviation growth with world-class facilities. We plan to inaugurate at least two to three developed airports in the region this year," Jindal said.**

"Greenfield (new project) airports are being developed at Holongi (Arunachal) and Silchar (Assam). Almost all the airports in Northeast region are being upgraded for which about Rs 457 crore is being spent during the current financial year. This will mainly focus developing airport related infrastructure and enhancing passenger amenities," he said.

Listing out AAI's immediate plans, he said **world-class integrated terminal buildings were coming up in Guwahati and Agartala.**

07/01/20 Shillong Times

**New Delhi: A Sudanese man was apprehended by CISF personnel at the Delhi airport for allegedly smuggling white sandalwood weighing 40 kg,** officials said on Monday.

Passenger Mohammed Khinder Baballa was intercepted on Sunday evening at the Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport as his baggage looked suspicious, they said.

Baballa, bound for Sudan's capital city of Khartoum via Jeddah, and the white sandalwood logs recovered from him were handed over to Customs authorities at the airport for further investigation, they said.

06/01/20 PTI/Outlook

**State-owned Air India has warned Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL) and aircraft maintenance engineers that if they leave the organisation after completing their aircraft training but without “completing their stipulated bond period”, their salaries and benefits would be clawed back from them.**

“All such aircraft maintenance engineers would be required to refund the cost of training, hotel expenses, travel allowance/dearness allowance, salary for the training period, and the opportunity cost of training to the AIESL,” an order from the office of Executive Director, Engineering, said. If the employee fails to pay the said amounts, it will be recovered from his final settlement, the order said. In November, Minister of Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri had informed the Rajya Sabha that he had “not heard of any single case where anybody has resigned” from Air India.

The Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA), however, in a letter dated December 23, contradicted the minister’s claims and said that as Air India pilots were being “paid only half of what other air carriers are offering”, most of the CAT 3B qualified co-pilots were leaving to join other private carriers. “We are losing these experienced co-pilots to other carriers who value them and have understood their importance of their experience,” the IPCA had said in its letter.

The pilots association had, in its letter, also said that since the government had decided not to extend any further financial support to the debt-laden national carrier, they should be allowed to leave the organisation without serving any notice period. Air India, which has a debt of around Rs 54,000 crore, has been struggling to find buyers. Puri has earlier also said that if the airline did not find buyers, it would have to stop all operations and shut down.

06/01/20 Aashish Aryan/Indian Express

**In the light of the incident which took place on January 4, the unruly passengers may end up in the no-fly list for upto two years.**

**Passengers aboard Air India's Delhi-Mumbai flight created a ruckus after their flight was delayed because pilots encountered technical glitches just before take-off.**

The plane was later grounded and another aircraft was brought in, but eventually the flight was delayed by seven hours.

With the footage going viral on social media, aviation regulator DGCA has asked Air India to investigate the matter and take action against the passengers.

The no-fly list, which came into being after the infamous incident involving a Shiv Sena parliamentarian, is one that no flier would want to be in.

**The penalty for a passenger included on the list is severe. According to the norms listed by the DGCA, airlines can ban the flier for a duration starting from three months.**

06/01/20 Moneycontrol.com

**Thiruvananthapuram: The escalating tensions in West Asia in the wake of US – Iran strife have the airlines industry worried as it anticipates closure of the Iranian air space or the air carriers avoiding the route over Iran altogether.**

The industry believes that this could not only result in a spike in airfares especially for passengers bound for Europe and US and but also burn a hole in the airlines’ coffers.

Currently, on an average around thousand passengers embark daily from Kerala airports to various destinations in Europe and US.

Though so far, the conflict has not affected these travellers, it is bound to change if the conflict escalates.

The airlines would be forced to review their services especially to and via West Asian countries. Last time when US- Iran relations had soured in June following Iranian downing of an American drone near the Strait of Hormuz, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had directed the Indian carriers to avoid Iranian airspace for safety reasons.

**A senior Air India Express official told TNIE, that current tensions had started to affect just crude oil prices and the corresponding increase in the cost of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) would naturally be passed on to passengers.**

06/01/20 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

**National carrier Air India and Travel booking platform Amadeus have signed an agreement that makes available national carrier's international flights to agents in India as well as both international and domestic flights on Amadeus' platform globally.**

"Travel sellers in India will have access to the airline's pure full international content only, while travel sellers in the rest of the world will have access to the full range of Air India's content, both domestic and international. Working with Amadeus will help accelerate the airline's growth in 2020 and beyond, an important step in the airline's vision and renewed relationship with Amadeus," said a release from flight booking platform.

**Air India had recently moved from keeping two ticketing platforms to one and had selected Travelport for it.** The move was questioned by various industry insiders, who believed that this move of moving away from Amadeus will not be beneficial for the cash-strapped airline, as Amadeus offers a global network across the globe.

"We are pleased to renew our relationship with Amadeus to support our growth strategy globally and hope that this is the first step in our new journey together. We look forward to working closer with Amadeus to support agencies and travelers in the future," Meenakshi Mallik, Commercial Director, Air India, was quoted in the release.

06/01/20 Economic Times

**Sagar: A Directorate General of Civil Aviation special team – accompanied by air safety experts – conducted an investigation on Sunday at and around the farm where a trainer aircraft crashed late Friday in the vicinity of Dhana Airstrip.**

The group spent the entire day inspecting the scene, airstrip and the control tower. Officers concerned were understandably tight-lipped before media.

05/01/20 UNI

**New Delhi: Experiments to study the operations of commercial drones, which operate beyond the visual line of sight (BVLOS) range, would be carried out in January and aviation regulator DGCA will subsequently issue draft regulations for them, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday.**

The minister also said the Centre will start registering drones - BVLOS and others - within a few weeks time. Potential use of drone technology for commercial purposes is very high, Puri said, adding that the Centre "is moving ahead on the BVLOS front".

Currently, India does not permit BVLOS drones to fly in its sky. If the drone can fly within the line of sight, it is permitted by the DGCA after due process.

06/01/20 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi: **Indian drone manufacturers have all the ingredients to be at par with the world in developing top-of-the-line unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) but unfortunately, lack of friendly regulations have kept the industry away from a perfect take-off to date, Rahat Kulshreshtha, President of the Drone Federation of India (DFI), a non-profit industry body, said here on Monday.** Unlike other countries, India has a very stringent drone policy.

"We have seen in a bit of derailment with the timeline because regulations are not yet ready for the drone industry, which, frankly, is a complicated thing to work on," Kulshreshtha told IANS on the sidelines of the "Drone Festival of India 2020" here.

"Regulations have slowed down the industry as investors have been wary of infusing funds into the startups to date.

"We are running slightly slow on the timeline at the momentum but today, we have got good commitment from Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri that the government is working on the regulations and would solve it together with the relevant stakeholders," Kulshreshtha noted.

IANS reported last week that India will soon conduct "Beyond Visual Line of Sight" (BVLOS) test flights of drone systems for the creation of last-mile air delivery connectivity in the country.

On Monday, Puri confirmed this, saying that **the experiments to study the operations of commercial drones which operate beyond the BVLOS range would be carried out in January.**

[06/01/20 IANS/Outlook](#)

Ludhiana: **Taking a step further to decide the modus operandi of the proposed international airport at Halwara, representatives of Airport Authority of India (AAI) and Indian Air Force (IAF) are expected to hold a meeting on it in the second half of January.** Meanwhile, Greater Ludhiana Area Development Authority (Glada), which is acquiring land for the project at Aittiana in Raikot, is likely to organise a public hearing on January 10 and 11, wherein land owners — whose land lies within the project — will be heard.

A senior officer in the district administration said even as land acquisition for the project was likely to be completed by January end, construction of boundary wall of the acquired land was expected to be completed by March, after which portable cabins for check-ins and arrivals will begin. He added that to operationalise the airport, IAF and AAI authorities have to sit and decide the modus operandi for private flight operations, as the IAF runway will be used.

"The meeting between AIF and AAI might take place on January 16. They will sit together and decide about routes of landing for flights, part of boundary wall that needs to be broken from where private airplanes can enter the civil area after landing on the IAF runway," added the senior official, and said AAI had got many necessary clearances for the project.

A senior AAI officer said they had got directions from higher authorities in Delhi for speedy completion of the airport's infrastructure. "We are eager to shift operations from Sahnewal to Halwara as early as June this year," said the official.

Meanwhile, Ludhiana residents are also waiting eagerly for the start of the international airport. "The international airport at Halwara will be a great gift not only for the industry, but also for city residents who have to travel either to Chandigarh or Delhi for flights to various other cities," said Dinesh Kumar, a city resident.

[06/01/20 Shariq Majeed/Times of India](#)

**New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has asked Air India to act against unruly passengers who banged on the cockpit door and misbehaved with crew of a delayed Delhi-Mumbai flight on Thursday (Jan 2).**

While threatening to break open the door, some passengers had asked the Boeing 747's pilots to come out of the cockpit and explain the situation a few hours after the jumbo jet had returned to the bay at IGI Airport from the runway due to a technical snag. AI is yet to take a call on the issue of beginning proceedings under the strict no fly list against the unruly passengers of this flight.

DGCA chief Arun Kumar said: "We have asked the airline to act against the unruly behaviour."

AI spokesman Dhananjay Kumar said: "A video of few passengers of AI 865 of January 2 is being widely circulated in different forums. That flight was considerably delayed due to technical reasons.

AI management has asked the operating crew for a detailed report on the reported Crime Jan 2020 misbehaviour by some passengers. Further action would be considered after getting the report."

The 24-year-old B747 (VT-EVA) was to operate as AI 865 at 10.10 am on Thursday. "Passengers had boarded the flight by 9.15 am. The aircraft taxied out at 10 am and returned from the taxiway in about 10 minutes. Attempts were made to rectify the snag. Finally passengers were asked to alight from this one at about 2.20 pm and sent to Mumbai by another aircraft at 6 pm Thursday," said an AI official. So there was a delay of 8 hours in the passengers taking off for their destination.

Problems on board the B747 (VT-EVA) named Agra began when passengers got restive after waiting for more than a couple of hours for the snag to be rectified.

Videos have emerged showing some young passengers banging on the cockpit door, asking the pilots to come out. "Captain please one out... Loser come out... Come out or we will break the door..." they yell to the cockpit crew. Cockpit is on the upper deck of B747s where AI has its business class.

One passenger in the videos even knows that doing so is against the law and can be heard saying "I do not have a criminal record and don't want one." When AI finally asks passengers to alight from the aircraft, another video shows a passenger trying to open the door even as the crew are in the process of doing so. Her co-passengers asked this person to step aside and let the cabin crew open the door. "Don't do this they will open it," co-passengers are seen telling this person.

04/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**New Delhi : The success of the global aviation sector now hinges on Asia and India occupies a prime spot in it. As more and more Asian economies are creating affluent middle classes, the aviation sector is gearing to welcome millions of them on board. The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest growing industries in the country during the last three years. India is currently considered the third largest domestic civil aviation market in the world and is expected to overtake United Kingdom to become the third largest air passenger market by 2024.**

India's aviation industry is largely untapped with huge growth opportunities, considering that air transport is still expensive for majority of the country's population, of which nearly 40% is the upwardly mobile middle class. To cater to the rising air traffic, the Government of India has been working towards increasing the number of airports. **As of March 2019, India has 103 operational airports. India has envisaged increasing the number of operational airports to 190-200 in the near future. Further, the rising demand in the sector has pushed the number of airplanes operating in the sector. As of July 2018, there were nearly 620 aircraft being operated by scheduled airline operators in India. The number of airplanes is expected to grow to 1,100 planes by 2027.**

**Despite its woes, national carrier Air India is still the backbone of the industry.** The Maharaja now owns 120 aircraft, half of which are owned and the rest leased. It runs a large number of domestic routes and flies to 40-50 international destinations. India's national carrier is looking for a suitable



bidder to overhaul the entire system. Despite all its woes, it is still fueling growth and providing a tough race for the private sector to meet the demands in the market. The nine major Indian carriers are cobbling new strategies and procuring modern aircraft to face the challenges. They together took deliveries of over 120 planes comprising both twin and single aisle as well as regional jets in the just-concluded year as against 88 planes inducted in 2017. Domestic passenger traffic has been growing at about 20% for more than four years now and capacity addition along with other factors has played a key role in this robust growth. Majority of the planes inducted by the carriers last year, according to available figures, were Airbus A320 Neos, with four carriers—IndiGo, GoAir, Air India and Vistara—taking deliveries of more than 60 of these planes besides other types of aircraft. At present, these carriers together have over 660 planes. Budget carrier IndiGo has 206 planes including A320 Neos, while both Air India and Jet Airways have 125 and 124 aircraft, respectively, in their fleets.

04/01/20 Kamal Shah/Sunday Guardian Live

**More than 110 Airbus A320 Neos being operated by IndiGo, India's largest Low Cost Carrier (LCC), and GoAir are facing the heat over repetitive mid-air engine shut down problems.**

The recent such incident was on Wednesday when an IndiGo flight from Mumbai to Singapore had to be diverted to Nagpur just minutes after it took off due to Even in the last week of December 2019, two GoAir flights had to make emergency landing after one of its engine failed mid-air.

On 18 December 2019, another Airbus A320 Neo operated by IndiGo had to return to Bagdogra airport from where it took off for Kolkata as the flight developed a mid-air engine problem and could not fly further.

Following these repetitive incidents of mid-air engine problems by the Airbus A320 Neo, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has set a deadline of 31 January to modify their snag-proven engines as they jeopardise the lives of hundreds of passengers taking these flights.

The Airbus A320 Neos are fitted with American Manufactured Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines and it is this engine which is repetitively developing snags, forcing flights to make emergency landing.

04/01/20 Dibyendu Mondal/Sunday Guardian Live

**New Delhi: Undeterred by protests against privatization, state-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) has appointed global consultancy PwC as transaction advisor to bid out half a dozen airports including Varanasi on public private partnership (PPP) basis.**

The parent Civil Aviation Ministry (MoCA) has circulated draft cabinet note seeking comments from various ministries such as Finance and Road Transport before putting up the proposal for final government approval.

**"We have engaged PwC as transaction advisor. The bidding process for the six airports would start after Cabinet approval. We see significant progress on this by February-end," a senior AAI official said.**

The six airports up for privatization are **Varanasi, Amritsar, Bhubaneswar, Trichy, Indore and Raipur.**

Unionised employees of AAI have been opposing the government move to offer "profit-making" airports to private players and have got support from Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), an RSS affiliate. Over the last few months, they have escalated the agitation organising sit-in protests to mount pressure on the government to reconsider its decision.

"There is no reason for protests. Their apprehensions are baseless. For attracting the required investment in the airport sector, PPP is the way forward," an Aviation Ministry official said wishing not to be named.

05/01/20 Nirbhay Kumar/IANS/Outlook

**New Delhi: The dispute between IndiGo co-founder-promoters Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal is now coming to a head. An extraordinary general meeting (EGM) of InterGlobe Aviation (IGA), holding company of the airline, will be held on January 29 at Gangwal Group's request to amend provisions of article of association, like the one giving the two founders first right of refusal (RoFR) if one of them wants to sell his stake.**

The Gangwal Group has 36.6% stake in IndiGo while Bhatia Group, along with Bhatia family-controlled InterGlobe Enterprise (IGE) have about 38% stake in India's biggest airline by domestic market share. The Gangwal Group reportedly want clauses like RoFR to be removed, a move seen by the industry as a prelude to diluting or selling its stake in the airline. Another article is that the transferring shareholder would not be entitled to transfer shares without prior written consent of the non-transferring shareholder.

Qatar Airways has for long expressed a desire to buy stake in the airline. Recently Qatar Airways Group chief executive Akbar Al Baker had told TOI he would be "very keen (to pick up stake) in the future (once the promoter-founder issues are resolved)." The two founder-promoters have been at loggerheads since last July when Gangwal approached SEBI over corporate governance issues in IndiGo revolving around Bhatia Group's control over the airline. **They have taken each other to courts in the US and for arbitration in London on the issue.**

03/01/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

**Bhopal: An instructor and a trainee pilot died in a plane crash at Dhana airport of Sagar district on Friday night. The single engine Cessna airplane used for training pilots belonged to Chimes Aviation Academy (CAA).**

Ashok Makwana was the instructor while Piyush Chandel was undergoing training when they crash-landed in a farm field, airport sources said.

Following the crash, personnel of the academy rushed to the spot and took the duo to a private hospital in Sagar, where they were declared dead.

Airport sources said that the plane took off around 8.30 pm but could not land due to thick fog. The plane crashed in a farm field near the airport ;

Confirming the deaths, Additional SP Sagar Vikram Singh said, "Perhaps, the mishap took place because of thick fog"

Airport sources said that when the plane took off, there was no fog but it suddenly developed around 8.45 pm. The mishap took place when the pilot attempted landing on airstrip but it landed in a nearby farm field because of very poor visibility.

04/01/20 Deshdeep Saxena/Times of India

**Delhi Airport has been chosen as the cargo transshipment centre by China. With this development, Chinese cargo to the Central Asian countries is now being routed through Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) with new Transshipment Excellence Centre (TEC).**

According to Delhi airport officials, An Air Asia X (D7) freighter, carrying garment and accessories, brought the consignment from Beijing to Delhi for onward delivery to Ukraine in the last week of 2019. This was the first instance of international-to-international movement of China's cargo via Delhi Airport. With this, a new gateway has been created for the movement of international transshipment cargo connecting China to Ukraine through Delhi Airport.

According Videh Kumar Jaipurkar, CEO-DIAL said, "**Delhi has emerged as a cargo hub for businesses**

**in North India and neighbouring countries. This new movement of international transshipment cargo connecting China to Ukraine via Delhi Airport will give a significant impetus to the air cargo and regional logistics sectors."**

04/01/20 Pioneer

New Delhi: **Amid soaring tensions between the United States and Iran, Indian airlines have been asked to avoid the Iranian airspace**, sources said today. National carrier Air India and IndiGo, one of the biggest airlines of the country, will be exercising caution in flight operations over the Iranian airspace.

This comes hours after top Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani was killed in a US strike on Baghdad's international airport which led to a dramatic escalation between the two countries. India has also expressed concern over the escalation and said it should be "vital that the situation does not escalate further" and called for restraint between the two countries.

"We have noted that a senior Iranian leader has been killed by the US. The increase in tension has alarmed the world. Peace, stability and security in this region is of utmost importance to India. It is vital that the situation does not escalate further. India has consistently advocated restraint and continues to do so," India said in a statement.

Last year too, due to rising geopolitical tensions between the US and Iran after the latter shot down a US drone in its airspace, Indian airlines avoided the "affected part of the Iranian airspace" and rerouted flights.

04/01/20 NDTV

**The last year was tough for airlines in India. From the suspension of Jet Airways, disagreement between the promoters of IndiGo, the domestic market leader, troubles of the Pratt & Whitney powered A320neo family and grounding of B737 MAX8, Indian aviation had a forgettable year.**

With most of the year was pervaded by low growth numbers compared with the previous years of double-digit expansion, airline profitability and sustainability have become the priority.

**Here are the six things that will be worth keeping a watch for in Indian Aviation in 2020**

*Privatisation of Air India*

After a failed attempt before the general election, the government has been silently working and propping up Air India for its much delayed and long-awaited privatisation. The new year will be dominated by efforts from the government to sell the airline. From its earlier stance of keeping some equity with itself to current stand of selling the airline lock, stock and barrel, the government has made amends to ensure that the airline remains attractive. World over, many airlines are up for sale and Air India is one amongst many, operating in an environment which has seen a few instances of collapse in the last decade.

**The government has already worked out ways to hive off some debt off the books of Air India. Yet questions remain about how the entity will be sold — in parts or as a whole entity — and what happens if there is no buyer to buy the complete entity and it is sold off in parts with a few not sold at all.**

*Tata Airlines*

The airlines from the TATA stable made some news last year. **TATA Sons gained control of AirAsia India and Vistara doubled losses last year. The year 2020 is crucial for both and possibly one more, if the Tata group decides to bid for Air India.**

AirAsia India has not got permission to fly international while Vistara – which started later than AirAsia India — started flying abroad in 2019. Vistara will induct B787-9 Dreamliner aircraft, giving the airline the capability to fly non-stop to Australia and the US. The airline, which has been adding interlines and codeshares in the last couple of quarters, is all geared up for international growth, but widebody operations typically lead to increased burn in cash and takes more time to stabilise. While competition in India is cutthroat and intense, it is restricted to a few players. With international, though the competition remains cutthroat and intense, the game changes completely.

That is why if Tata decides to bid for Air India should be keenly watched. The group had expressed its intentions to bid for Jet Airways, but that never materialised. With Air India, an airline which was nationalized after being started by JRD Tata, the thoughts could be different.

#### *Exclusivity of RCS-UDAN*

**The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) –UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) completes three years of operations.** UDAN 1.0, which released in 2016 and was operationalised in 2017, had a three-year exclusivity clause. Airlines that bid and won the route will see this exclusivity clause end in 2020. The scheme has already been in the news for the wrong reason with less than 35 percent routes being operationalised over the last three years. While most of the routes were won by Air Deccan, which has limited operations currently, and Air Odisha, which is not in operation any more, Air India's Regional (Alliance Air) and Spicejet have also won and operate routes under UDAN-I. **Depending on how the competition reacts to the end of exclusivity, the future of RCS-UDAN could take a new turn.**

#### *Engines, planes and orders*

**IndiGo placed a mammoth order in 2019. It probably is time for others – Vistara and GoAir — to place an order for additional aircraft. The slots at Airbus are booked for a long period and for current fleet replacement and incremental orders, the time is now.**

The previous year saw engine issues with the A320neo family powered by Pratt & Whitney leading to the regulator issuing guidelines to IndiGo, not approving ETOPS (certification for twin-engine aircraft with an eye on emergency landing) and ordering engine replacements. Three years after its entry in service in India, the PW-powered A320neo family is yet to see stabilised operations.

The global grounding of the B737 MAX8 has led to Spicejet having to rely on older aircraft and halt its expansion plans with the MAX. When will the MAX be back in service is anybody's guess. Will another airline order widebody?

#### *Pricing war*

Airlines in India have been locked in a bitter fare war in recent years. While costs have risen, fares haven't. The fare war is not designed for market share. Instead, it is driven by ways to push passengers to fly.

**While airlines have focused on lowering CASK (cost per available seat kilometre), the RASK (revenue per available seat kilometer) hasn't seen the kind of upswing that would be needed to cover up the losses that have been incurring. IndiGo also reported losses in the previous year, though not yet at yearly levels.**

**The pricing war is likely to continue, despite the aviation minister's warning. The double-digit growth is driven by cheap fares.** When fares rise, growth suffers and for the kind of capacity that would be inducted if the Pratt & Whitney engine issue is resolved and the B737 MAX returns to service, pricing wars will continue as airlines try to fill up planes.

#### *Airport Privatisation*

After the first phase of airport privatization in the 2000s, the next phase started last year. However, like most schemes, this too was marred by controversy. **The Adani group, which won the tender to manage six Indian airports, is yet to take over management and more airports are up for privatisation in the coming year. Quite a few regulatory challenges would come up. From a Duopoly of GMR and GVK, Indian already has an oligopoly of GMR, GVK, Adani and Zurich Airports. But will the government restrict number of airports per player or keep it unshackled? This condition would dictate the broad direction for years to come.**

CNBCTV18 03/01/2020

**Just when there were expectations that airlines in the country would end up with decent profit figures for the current financial year, the US strike on a senior Iranian general might have jeopardized such hopes.** The attack has resulted in a sudden spike in the crude oil prices, which can push the aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices higher, reports Livemint. ATF forms a large component in the cost structure in the aviation business and even a slight variation can affect the profitability of the airlines.

**There has been an increase in the prices by around 4% internationally,** just soon after Iranian leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei issuing a statement that the killing of the general will be avenged.

According to a Business Standard report, state oil marketing companies have increased prices of ATF by 2.6% from January 1. "A kilolitre of jet fuel now costs Rs 64,423 and on a year-on-year (YoY) basis, it amounts to a 10 per cent price hike," the report states.

There was an earlier projection by CAPA South Asia, an aviation consultant, that the airline operators in India will end the year posting profits in their books to the extent of \$500 million (Rs 3,561 crore) to \$700 million (RS 4,985 crore). This was based on the crude prices being quoted at between \$60 and \$65 a barrel.

**As per last reports, \$70 a barrel was the price quoted in ICE Futures Europe. If the prices were to rule between \$65 and \$70 a barrel, for a period of time, it could then mean a loss of \$600 million (Rs 4,273 crore) for the airlines in the country instead of profits. This could mean a serious development for some of them, even as bad as it happened with Jet Airways - a total shutdown of operations.**

04/01/20 S. Mahadevan/New Minute

**Air disasters are of two types: avoidable or unavoidable. The avoidable revolve around human error, intentional or unintentional. The unavoidable are those owing to nature's fury or something extraordinary, like a terror attack, acted upon by people unconnected with professionals of the flight; and, for which the professional act of omission or commission cannot be categorically attributed as dereliction of duty or negligence on the part of the airline as vicarious liability. A few examples will suffice.**

When Air India-chartered aircraft VT-DEP, Kashmir Princess, American-made Lockheed Super Constellation **L-749A**, crashed into the South China Sea, on **April 11, 1955**, it was 'unavoidable' owing to the **mid-air bomb explosion**. The bomb planted at Hong Kong airport by forces politically inimical to the then Communist China which purportedly was friendly to India under Nehru.

Again, the **June 23, 1985**, mid-air (31,000-foot flight) **explosion of Air India 182, Boeing-747-237B**, registration number VT-EFO, Emperor Kanishka, killing all 329 aboard, can be categorised as 'unavoidable' because the professional flight crew, being totally unconnected, couldn't have been held responsible for this unprecedented air disaster. Nevertheless, in a way, as subsequent developments revealed, it could be put under avoidable category too, as the Canadian Government-appointed Commission of Inquiry, headed by former Canadian Supreme Court Justice John C Major concluded that a 'cascading series of errors' by the Government of Canada, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) had allowed the **terrorist attack** to take place. Right or wrong, it, therefore, can be said with conviction that whereas the mid-air explosion of Air India-182 could have been avoidable when its ground exercise was on, once airborne, it became unavoidable as there was no way the on-duty flight crew of the carrier could have had detected, or prevented the mishap from happening.

It was, however, the **Air India 855 Boeing-747-237B**, Emperor Ashoka, (the first Boeing jumbo delivered August 1971) which stands as a classic mixture of both an 'avoidable and unavoidable' crash into the Arabian Sea, 101 seconds after take-off from Mumbai, on **January 1, 1978**. Thus, when the critical attitude direction indicator (ADI) of the airborne craft failed, it led to cockpit crew's loss of 'situation awareness', leading to fatality of all 213 aboard. **Instrument malfunction fell under 'unavoidable' and crew failure made it an 'avoidable' air disaster.**

In this background, it's difficult to comprehend why the **December 27, 2019, Kazakhstan accident**, involving a **Dutch-made Fokker100 twin-turbofan short/medium-range transport aircraft**, max take-off weight between 43.09 and 44.45 tonnes, should not be categorised as an avoidable disaster, owing to a chain of **human errors, both on and off the ground**, resulting in the death of 12 aboard. Why should a smaller-sized and lesser-weight Fokker100 aircraft, in comparison to bigger Airbus 330/340/380, or Boeing-777/787/747, face difficulty in being airborne from Almaty (Kazakhstan capital) airport's 14,500-ft runway, the longest in Central Asia?

Indeed, it's distressing to note that whereas the runway was in an ideal condition, with good visibility and a calm air of three-knot, and the outside atmosphere condition slightly below 0°C and foggy, the overall ambience certainly was good for take-off. Unfortunately, despite this, the jet carrying 100 passengers crashed within minutes of take-off.

Prima facie, speculative though it may appear as the post-accident inquiry report will take a while, yet as a world aviation watcher, I would find it difficult to brand the tragedy as unavoidable. It's an avoidable disaster. All the more so if one delves into some unfolding situations which might not have been anticipated, but should have had been taken into consideration long before the occurrence of the tragedy.

My first point is about the aircraft: Fokker 100. Produced by Fokker (Dutch name NV Koninklijke Nederlandse Vliegtuigfabriek Fokker), the company closed more than 20 years ago, post Cold War, owing to financial hardship. However, according to annual Jane's all the world's aircraft, there was a time when Royal Netherlands Aircraft Factory, founded on July 21, 1919, had made a glorious contribution to world aviation. It's twin-jet 100-series civil aircraft operators included the UK, the USA, China (Eastern Airlines), Indonesia (Garuda), Brazil, South Korea, Switzerland (Swiss Air), KLM (of maker country), Germany, Ivory Coast, Gabon, Mexico, and Swaziland.

Aside, Fokker had production collaboration agreement with DASA of Germany (now extinct) and an impressive 12,000-strong work force to strengthen Dutch economics and engineering talent. There were 4,500 employees at the Schiphol plant in Amsterdam alone. “Fokker-100 assembly and test flying facilities, design offices, spare parts stores, research and development department, numerically controlled milling department, electronics department and division, space integration and test and computer facilities.” None of which exists anymore; like that of Israel and other individual European aircraft manufacturers of the 20th century — failure to manufacture aircraft solo, faltered on competition, quality and cash. They all vanished from the aviation industry radar.

Yet, passenger aircraft, or for that matter, combat fighters, produced by those iconic manufacturing plants and companies of yesteryear, still fly around the globe. And there lie the potential fault lines and failures.

Aviation is a high-tech, risky and expensive industry, requiring skill and a high degree of professionalism with zero margin of error. Flying is fun when the men behind, and below, the machine, are specialists and experts. However, it’s bound to turn failure and unforgiving if professionals make slightest of error.

The responsibility to fly safe enhances manifold, especially when the flying machine is no longer in production. When spare parts are unavailable, or are too expensive to acquire. When technicians and maintenance staff’s morale dips for lack of motivation, to look after an old machine which requires more ‘down-time’ in hangars than making money, flying in air with full load passenger, baggage and cargo. And finally, if a pilot fails to make the aircraft airborne from the long runway of Almaty, Kazakhstan, owing to its tail-touching tarmac twice, then one would have reason to question the professional competence of the pilot in question.

One, therefore, would like to believe, that either the quarter-century-old aircraft was not flight-worthy owing to logistics, spares and maintenance shortcomings; or, the pilot certainly needs to be taken to task for unpardonable professional failure; which amounts to fiddling with flight safety of the craft and potentially endangering the lives of passengers.

**Both man-machine interfacing suffered serious deficiencies, thereby resulting in an avoidable disaster and 12 fatalities.** The Kazakhstan accident should come as a warning to all those ‘low-cost’ airlines operating in the Indian skies too. Flight safety should be of paramount importance to all: operators, regulators, facilitators, passengers.

[TribuneIndia 04/01/2020](#)

**Chennai: Customs Air Intelligence Unit foiled a bid to smuggle gold worth `18 lakh at Chennai Airport on Thursday.** Ramesh K (27) arrived from Thiruvananthapuram by Air India Flight AI 968. He was intercepted at exit and on persistent questioning admitted to having concealed gold bundles in paste form in his rectum. On extraction, 512 gm gold valued at `18 lakh was recovered.

[04/01/20 New Indian Express](#)

**Kozhikode: Karipur airport on Thursday operationalised a sophisticated navigational aid, the Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Range (DVOR).**

The DVOR is a standard International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) ground-based radio navigational aid that helps the pilot to know the direction of travel of aircraft and its position from

the DVOR station.

Executive Director (CNS - Planning) Airports Authority of India, AK Banerjee will officially inaugurate the facility on Friday. S Dharmaraj, General Manager (Airport Systems – Corporate Headquarters) and Airport Director K Srinivasa Rao will attend the function.

DVOR along with the Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) has been installed at the airport at a cost of Rs 3 crore in addition to the Rs 1.5 crore spent for civil and electrical works.

Installation and maintenance of the navigational facility has been overseen by the Communication, Navigation, Surveillance (CNS) department of the Airports Authority of India.

CNS in-charge at the airport, Muneer Madampat said that the DVOR consists of a single carrier antenna surrounded by 48 side-band antennas in an antenna ring. Its transmitter is installed in ground station and the receiver is kept in the aircraft.

02/01/10 KR Rajeev/Times of India

**With heroic swiftness, two constables of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) posted at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi saved the life of a passenger at Terminal-3 of the airport on Thursday.**

The passenger, Ashok Mahajan, had passed out near the domestic security hold area on late Wednesday night. In such a scenario, two CISF personnel with quick-thinking acted on an emergency basis. Indeed, the two jawans, Constable Madhusudan and Constable Manoj Kumar, administered **Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) without any delay to the collapsed passenger and managed to successfully revive him.**

The passenger, Ashok Mahajan, was part of a group traveling to Udaipur when he collapsed at the airport. Among others travelling with him were Achal Malhotra, a former diplomat, who later praised the security personnel for their quick response. "CISF team was very quick to provide emergency medical procedure CPR. We are grateful to you Constable Madhusudan and Constable Manoj Kumar," he said.

Rajesh Ranjan, Director General of CISF, applauded the emergency action of the CISF jawans and assured that they will both be rewarded for their action.

CPR is a first-aid measure technically administered by trained professionals when a person has collapsed due to cardiac arrest or become unresponsive. It includes administering chest compressions in a specific manner to manually preserve intact brain function until further measures are taken to normalize blood circulation.

02/01/20 Joydeep Bose/DNA

**India's aviation could be compared to a rollercoaster ride in 2019. The shutting down of the former Indian full-service carrier, Jet Airways, the slipping down of air passenger traffic, the controversial usage of the faulty Pratt and Whitney engines by Indian low-cost carriers were some of the events that have surfaced.**

**Although, there are some silver linings, including a robust global expansion by home-grown airlines such as Indigo, Spicejet and Vistara; and the foraying of international airlines like KLM Royal Dutch**



### **Airlines, Azerbaijan Airlines, Scoot and Ethiopian Airlines into Indian sectors.**

Given the highs and lows of Indian aviation, here is a low-down of events that could take place in the close future.

Air India, which started as Tata Airlines in 1932 and later became state-owned, hasn't made a profit since its 2007 merger with state-owned domestic operator Indian Airlines. The international carrier is burdened with \$11 billion in debt.

**According to a recent news report in the Times of India, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government would wrap up the sale of Air India along with Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) by March 2020. The strategic disinvestment of the two state-run companies is critical for the government to meet its disinvestment target of Rs.1 trillion for the current fiscal year.**

03/01/20 Sanchita Nambiar/Business Traveller

Kolkata: India's domestic air passenger traffic growth, which had witnessed a slump on the back of the grounding of Jet Airways and the general slowdown in the economy, is expected to pick up this year.

**According to Balu Ramachandran, Senior Vice-President, Cleartrip, if the divestment of Air India goes through this year, then it would bring about higher capacity addition, thereby leading to "robust" growth in passenger traffic.**

"We had a fairly catastrophic event this year with Jet Airways going down, and subsequent to that the overall capacity addition in the Indian market by all domestic carriers came down to about 4-5 per cent during the April-October period. This is in stark contrast to the growth of 18-20 per cent in the same period last year," Ramachandran told BusinessLine.

The drop in capacity addition led to a decline in passenger growth numbers, which came down to 2-3 per cent in 2019, against a growth of 16-18 per cent in 2018. The drop in capacity addition also led to an increase in fares which went up by nearly 8 per cent on year-on-year basis. The higher fares also impacted consumer demand to some extent.

03/01/20 Shobha Roy/Business Line

**Air India has attracted the attention of a couple of high profile investors. Middle East airline Etihad and local behemoth IndiGo have both shown interest in investing in the struggling carrier, as the Indian government looks to privatize the airline with a 100% stake sale.**

Middle East airline Etihad is poised to make a play for struggling national carrier Air India. The Economic Times of India reports that the Abu Dhabi based airline has expressed an interest in a stake in the carrier, although no firm bid has been made yet.

However, Etihad is not without its rival, as apparently IndiGo, India's largest airline by fleet size, is also interested in a stake. A senior unnamed government official told the Economic Times.

**"Representatives from these companies have met government officials and, unofficially, shown interest in the national carrier. The Tata Group, however, has not shown any interest yet."**

100% of the airline is up for sale, as well as 100% of its regional arm and a 50% stake in its ground handling business. Expressions of Interest documents are expected to be released this month.

Both carriers have their pros and cons when it comes to an Air India takeover. For Etihad, its previous

forays into investing in struggling carriers have not gone all that well. Stakes in Alitalia, Air Berlin and indeed Jet Airways have all left the airline out of luck and out of pocket. It was thought Etihad was attempting to rein in its costs, so to see it eyeing another stake in a failing airline is something of a surprise.

Etihad, like all the Middle East airlines, is keen to get a foot in the door to the lucrative Indian marketplace, and this could be the investment to do it. **However, Etihad has a major hurdle to overcome, in that under current FDI rules, foreign airlines can only own 49% of Indian carriers. That means Etihad would need to find an Indian partner to take the other 51% of the stake.**

According to CH-Aviation, IndiGo outnumbers Air India on available seats each week by over a million seats. IndiGo currently offers some 1,856,652 seats per week, while Air India has 583,836. With an investment in Air India, IndiGo could massively strengthen its leading market position, and would bring important local market knowledge to the table.

**However, it's important to note the very different business models of the two airlines. Air India is full service, which will be difficult to integrate with IndiGo's low-cost strategy.** However, on the upside, IndiGo would get access to a number of valuable international slots, which could see it realizing its long haul expansion plans much sooner than anticipated.

02/01/20 Joanna Bailey/Simple Flying

**Hyderabad: With 55 non-stop domestic destinations under its wings, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has emerged as the best-connected facility in south and central India, latest records show. It beat Bengaluru, which reportedly has about 52 connections.**

The city's airport hit a new high in annual footfall during the last financial year, with the figure touching 21.36 million, as against 18.30 million recorded during the previous corresponding year. Sources say, the yearly passenger movement through RGIA might cross 22 million this year. "In fact, RGIA is currently expanding to handle 34 million passengers per annum," stated a release issued by the GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL).

Commissioned in 2008, the airport has eight domestic and 21 international carriers operating out of it. The facility operates 25 passenger airlines connecting 71 domestic and international destinations.

03/01/20 Times of India

**New Delhi: Budget airline IndiGo on Friday announced that over the next two months it will start daily flights on six new routes which come under the Centre's regional connectivity scheme UDAN.**

The flights will be to and from Prayagraj-Gorakhpur, Aizawl-Agartala and Varanasi-Bhubaneswar.

Under the UDAN scheme, financial incentives in terms of concessions from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and underserved airports, and keep airfares affordable.

03/01/20 PTI/Times of India

**Severe winter and dense fog conditions in north India have again resulted in the annual spectre of hundreds of flights being delayed, diverted or cancelled. Weather conditions are not controllable, but the flight disruptions can be reduced if the aviation ecosystem — especially airlines and the regulator DGCA — tackles the situation better. The crux of the problem is that airlines are not investing adequately in getting their pilots and aircraft ready to tackle poor visibility brought about by severe weather conditions — and that the DGCA is not taking airlines to task over this slip. CAT III A and CAT III B are the most severe weather conditions to fly in and are currently being faced at many airports in north India. Key airports such as Delhi have developed the necessary infrastructure**

**and are equipped to function in such conditions, but many aircraft and pilots are not.** As a recent report in this paper pointed out, airlines argue that with the cost of training a pilot to be CAT III B compliant running into crores of rupees, it does not make sense to train all their pilots to fly under such conditions as these poor visibility conditions occur for a maximum 10 days in a year. Equipping aircraft with compliant equipment is also costly. For operations under CAT III B conditions, all three — the pilot, the co-pilot and the aircraft — have to be certified. India has about 3,600 pilots trained to operate a flight under CAT III B conditions.

02/01/20 Business Line

**New Delhi: The government has set the ball rolling for the complete overhaul of aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), to bring it at par with other global regulators. The Civil Aviation Ministry has constituted a committee headed by former Skill Development Secretary and also Air India ex-chief Rohit Nandan for this purpose.**

**Members of the panel include former DGCA chief Satender Singh and a representative from global aviation consultancy, the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA). The terms of reference (ToR) for the committee include studying the best practices globally and suggest measures to put a technically strong body in place.**

"It was long due. **The organisation has been in dire need of a restructuring.** The committee would suggest how best the DGCA can be restructured. It will also suggest how more autonomy could be ensured. It will also look into the financial aspect," said a person familiar with the development.

Given that the domestic air traffic has grown multifold in the last one decade, experts are of the view that India needs a strong aviation safety authority on the lines of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the US.

**"The DGCA is currently woefully short of the required manpower given the size of Indian aviation. It currently does not have the power to hire professionals on their own and it has to go Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) for each appointment. The regulator currently lacks the teeth,"** said Rajan Mehra, CEO of Club One Air and former India head of Qatar Airways.

**The UPA government had earlier proposed to set up financially autonomous Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) but it never saw the light of the day. An autonomous authority with complete administrative and financial freedom had been envisaged to ensure safety oversight.**

03/01/20 IANS/Outlook

**In a bid to strengthen connectivity within North-East India, IndiGo, India's leading airline, today announced Aizawl as its 62nd domestic and 85th overall destination. Mizoram will be the sixth amongst the eight north-eastern sister states to be connected by IndiGo to its large domestic and international network. The airline already operates flights to and from five North-Eastern states including - Assam (Guwahati), Nagaland (Dimapur), Manipur (Imphal), Tripura (Agartala), Meghalaya (Shillong).**

The airline has launched 15 new flights including operations on 6 new RCS routes with 4 of them exclusive to IndiGo. The routes under the Regional Connectivity Scheme include Gorakhpur-Prayagraj (exclusive), Prayagraj-Gorakhpur (exclusive), Aizawl-Agartala (exclusive), Agartala-Aizawl (exclusive), Varanasi-Bhubaneswar and Bhubaneswar-Varanasi. The new routes will be serviced by ATR aircraft.

03/01/20 Equity Bulls

**A woman was apprehended by CISF personnel at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying a live bullet in her baggage,** officials said on Friday. Shyamasree Paul, bound for Kolkata, was intercepted during security checks at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport on Thursday, they said. Apart from the live bullet, an empty case and part of a cartridge were recovered from the bag of the woman, the officials said, adding that she was handed over to the Delhi Police.

03/01/20 PTI/IndiaTv

**Hyderabad: Around 20 million passengers travelled from the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Shamshabad between January and November 2019,** airport sources said.

The top five international destinations that were connected with the RGIA were the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Thailand while the top five domestic destinations connected from Hyderabad were Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata and Chennai.

Eight new domestic destinations — Jharsguda, Gorakhpur, Kishangarh, Gwalior, Belgaum, Mysuru, Nasik and Tiruchirapalli were also connected with the RGIA this year.

**According to officials, the RGIA is the best connected airport in the south and central India with 55 non-stop domestic destinations. It is 6th busiest airport in India in terms of air traffic movement.**

The GMR-led Hyderabad airport has come a long way since it became operational in 2008. As India's first modern greenfield airport developed in public-private partnership, the It has consistently raised its bar both in terms of service and operational excellence, the officials said.

The airport has experienced robust growth in passenger traffic over a period of time, with a four-year compound annual growth rate of around 20 per cent from financial years 2015 to 2019.

02/01/20 Srnivas M/Telangana Today

**A SpiceJet flight departed from Chennai and bound to Goa made an emergency landing at the Bengaluru International Airport as the flight cockpit's windshield developed a crack mid-air on Thursday.**

Flight no. SG-3105 was flying with 68 passengers on board and had departed from Chennai from Terminal 1, Gate 15, at 11.04 am and bound to reach Goa at 12.10 am.

The Bengaluru International Airport authorities received an information from the pilot crew around 11.56 am that they had to make an emergency landing as the cockpit windshield had developed a crack. The BIA authorities prepared for the landing and the flight landed safely around 12.17 pm with all 68 passengers safe on-board.

02/01/20 Bellie Thomas/Bangalore Mirror

**In what can potentially hurt the fiscal math for the ongoing fiscal, a senior government official said strategic divestments in Air India, BPCL and Container Corporation are "unlikely" to be completed in FY20.**

Work on all these companies is on and the process is facing delays due to "surprises" encountered once the wheels have begun moving, the official from the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) said.

The ministry has budgeted to garner Rs 1.05 lakh crore from divestments during the fiscal.

The government has already breached the budgeted fiscal deficit gap and the extent of the gap stands at 115 percent with four months to go.

The official declined to comment on the impact of such events on the fiscal math.

**When asked if the strategic divestment in the Bharat Petroleum Corporation (BPCL) -- which can**

**alone fetch the government over Rs 60,000 crore if it were to sell its entire 53 per cent stake -- will be completed this fiscal, the official said, "unlikely"**

"We are not saying that for ourselves and our timelines are such that it should happen. But we know that the process throws up surprises," the official said speaking on the sidelines of an event here.

**Similarly, on Container Corporation (Concor) and Air India as well, the official said that the sales will not go through in the current fiscal ending March 31.**

02/01/20 Quint

**An IndiGo A320Neo flying on the Mumbai-Singapore sector had to divert to Nagpur on the very first day of the New Year after a suspected fuel leakage problem in the early hours of Wednesday.**

Flight 6E-19 with registration VTIVS took off from Mumbai at 2.12 am, 37 minutes after its scheduled departure, when the pilots suspected a problem with fuel leak in the centre tank and decided to land at Nagpur airport, data from flightradar24.com, a global air traffic monitoring website indicated.

A senior DGCA official confirmed the incident and said, "A discrepancy of 800 kgs of fuel was noticed and overweight landing was carried out. On inspection, no fuel leak was found. However, the right centre tank transfer valve was found stuck in an open position due to which fuel discrepancy happened."

An overweight landing is defined as a landing made at a gross weight in excess of the maximum design (i.e., structural) landing weight for a particular model. An IndiGo spokesperson said after landing, the VT-IVS was grounded at Nagpur airport for technical inspection, and the airline had to arrange a new aircraft from Hyderabad due to which the flight to Singapore was delayed by over five hours. Details of number of passengers on board were not available.

02/01/20 Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

**Mumbai: The country's largest airline IndiGo now has more than 250 planes in its fleet after inducting at least four neo aircraft on December 31, according to an official.**

IndiGo, which has a domestic market share of more than 47 per cent, is also the first Indian carrier to have over 250 planes.

Recently, the budget carrier also became the first airline to operate 1,500 flights per day.

The official said the airline inducted four planes -- three A321 neos and one A320 neo -- on December 31.

**According to an aircraft deliveries tracking website, IndiGo has taken deliveries of 257 planes, including 222 Airbus 320 or A320 Neos, 10 A321 Neos and 25 regional jet ATRs.**

01/01/20 PTI/Business Standard

**Paris: According to a Reuters report, for the first time since 2011, Airbus has become the world's largest planemaker. By delivering 863 aircraft in 2019, more than what was targeted, it has ousted embattled U.S. rival Boeing from the top position, airport and tracking sources said.**

A reversal in the pecking order between the two giants had been expected as a crisis over Boeing's grounded 737 MAX drags into 2020. But the record European data further underscores the distance Boeing must travel to recoup its market position, it reported.

Airbus, which had been forced by its own industrial problems to cut its 2019 delivery goal by 2-3% in October, deployed extra resources until hours before midnight to reach 863 aircraft for the year, compared with its revised target of 860 jets, Reuters said in its report.

Deliveries rose 7.9 % from 800 aircraft in 2018. Airbus declined to comment on the figures, which must be audited before they can be finalised and published.

Planemakers receive most of their revenues when aircraft are delivered - minus accumulated progress payments - so the end-year delivery performance is closely monitored by investors.

Airbus's tally, which included around 640 single-aisle aircraft, broke industry records after it diverted thousands of workers and cancelled holidays to complete a buffer stock of semi-finished aircraft waiting to have their cabins adjusted.

Airbus has been hit by delays in fitting the complex new layouts on A321neo jets assembled in Hamburg, Germany, resulting in dozens of these and other models being stored in hangars to await last-minute configurations and the arrival of more labour.

Such out-of-sequence work drives up costs and could have a modest impact on Airbus profit margins, but the impact will be largely blunted by the high volume of planes and already solid profitability for such single-aisle aircraft, analysts say.

02/01/20 FreePressJournal

**The future of India's flag carrier airline, Air India, is at risk.** The state-owned enterprise is currently fighting for its survival, bogged down by crippling debts, loss-making operations, decreasing passenger revenue and mismanagement. Naturally, the question arises out of these tumultuous times - What is the future of the national carrier airline of India? Will it, after all, get privatised? Here's a look at the current crisis that Air India is facing:

According to official sources, Air India currently has a staggering debt of about Rs 58,000 crore, which has been shovelling the airline towards making losses for a substantial period of time. Even on an estimate, Air India is presumed to be suffering losses amounting to Rs 20-25 crore per day. That puts Air India's total monthly loss to about Rs 750 crore and variably, the amount of loss incurred in some months reaches thousands of crores.

**In view of Air India's losses, the Government of India, which owns the enterprise, decided to sell the state-owned airline.** Announcing the decision, Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri had categorically stated in the Parliament that the government is gearing up for the privatisation of Air India. A high-level committee, headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has also been constituted for the same. But according to sources, no major group has shown any interest yet in buying Air India. The reason is clear - a debt of Rs 58,000 crore on Air India is a crippling burden that buyers tend to steer clear from.

Although efforts have been going on for the same for the last several years, Centre couldn't really find any buyers for the airline yet. To provide a history of how long attempts have been ongoing to sell Air India, history shows that the Centre has been looking for buyers for the flag carrier as far back as during the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government, right through the Manmohan Singh-led UPA 1 and 2 regimes, and now during the Narendra Modi-led NDA terms. Efforts were made to sell Air India to reduce the losses of the government, but it could not be possible.

Now you might be wondering, **what exactly is the reason for Air India's losses?** To answer this could prove complicated, as there can be no direct response. **A number of decisions were taken during the UPA government which worsened the health of Air India. In fact, the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines is considered to be one of the most primary reasons for the significant losses. Air India and Indian Airlines merged in 2006. In the meantime, many new aircrafts were purchased, some expensive aircrafts were even taken on lease, thereby gradually deteriorating Air India's condition.**

02/01/20 Vishal Pandey/DNA

**Qualified, experienced pilots looking to become expats should have an easier time finding jobs in 2020 due to India's rapidly growing fleet and two new Thai airlines.** Whilst Thailand's flagship carrier struggles to survive, the Southeast Asian country is welcoming two new budget airlines, Thai Eastar Jet and Thai Summer Airways, and India is now facing a shortage of pilots to cope with increasing demand over the next two decades.

The two new Thai carriers have now gained their operating licenses and are working on their Air Operator Certificates, but both are fully aware that, to comply with new rules, they must commence commercial services during the next 12 months. Both are the first new airlines to offer commercial flights since the International Civil Aviation Authority red-flagged Thailand citing significant safety concerns. The ban was lifted in late 2017, suggesting the ICAO is now happier with the industry's aviation safety standards.

Thai Summer Airways is a jointly-owned venture with Chinese investors and will serve routes between China and Thailand, with Thai Eastar Jet concentrating on charters between Bangkok and Taiwan but pinning its future on flights between Thailand and South Korea. Both budget carriers are hoping to milk the country's tourism sector, as Asian and Indian visitors are supposedly making up for the strong decline in Western tourists.

**Opportunities for qualified pilots in India seem more straightforward, due to the huge increase in pilot numbers needed between 2020 and 2040. Over the past two years, 2,300 pilots have been hired by means of a recruitment examination, with the government now automating the issuance of commercial pilot licenses to the immediate benefit of some 700 more flyers. Again, it's mostly the budget and local carriers which are hiring, as Air India is edging towards a sell-off due to excessive debt – much as is Thai Airways.**

[01/01/20 emigrate.co.uk](http://01/01/20 emigrate.co.uk)

**New Delhi: The grounding of Jet Airways helped national carrier Air India boost its revenue from international operations by 20% during the first eight months of this financial year, a huge gain considering the single-digit increase during the year-earlier period.**

"The increase in numbers is despite the closure of Pakistani airspace, which impacted not only our international operations but that of all carriers using that route," said a senior Air India official who did not want to be identified.

Pakistan closed its airspace on February 26 last year in the wake of IAF fighter jets striking a Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorist training camp in Balakot. The closure was lifted in mid-July and Indian carriers lost an estimated over Rs 700 crore, of which Rs 400 crore was by Air India alone.

Jet Airways, which was grounded in April last year, had the biggest international network among Indian carriers and its closure helped Air India fill its planes and add revenue.

The national carrier, however, could not cash in on Jet's absence in the domestic market due to competition from Vistara and IndiGo. Domestic revenue climbed 10%, in line with growth last year. Air India's total revenue from both international and domestic passengers rose 16.4% to Rs 15,056 crore during the April-November 2019 period from Rs 12,936 crore a year earlier. While revenue from international flights rose 19.9% to Rs 9,859 crore from Rs 8,220 crore, domestic revenue rose by 10% to Rs 5,197 crore.

On the back of the higher revenue, Air India also turned Ebitda positive with earnings of Rs. 177 crore compared with a loss of ₹535 crore a year earlier.

The improvement in Air India's key indicators comes as the government prepares to sell Air India after a failed attempt in 2018, when the airline did not receive any bids.

**The government is being cautious this time and has offered 100% stake in the airline, substantial restructuring of debt and liabilities and freedom to the new owner to allow voluntarily retirement**

for employees.

02/01/20 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

**Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and Wipro 3D, the metal additive manufacturing (AM) business of Wipro Infrastructure Engineering (WIN) have signed a pact to design, develop, prove out, manufacture and repair of aerospace components using metal 3D printing technology.**

The memorandum of understanding also accentuates development, prove out and application of new material for use in metal additive technology, said HAL in a press release.

“This initiative between HAL and Wipro 3D will create a unique synergy of capabilities that can accelerate the adoption of metal additive manufacturing in aerospace in India. Qualification of parts for aerospace is challenging as it would require prove out and extensive testing followed by certification by regulatory authorities which may also include flight testing. This cooperation would be a unique opportunity for both the parties. Metal 3D printing has the potential to play a significant role in the success of national aerospace and defense platforms including HAL's own needs,” Shekhar Shrivastava, CEO, Bangalore Complex, HAL, was quoted saying.

Wipro 3D has recently developed the country's first industry grade metal additive 3D printing machine jointly with the Indian Institution of Science (IISc).

02/01/20 Economic Times

**New Delhi: The government is committed to not only divest its stake in Air India and Pawan Hans Helicopters Limited but also see greater participation of the private sector in the management of airports around the country, two senior officials said on Tuesday.**

“For us it is not an option, it has to be privatised. There are no two ways about it. That is the correct picture. We have learnt from that experience (previous sale of AI) and it our endeavour now that we will be issuing an Expression of Interest in the coming few weeks. Hopefully, sooner than later and the process of privatisation will then set in,” Hardeep Singh Puri, Minister of State for Independent Charge, Civil Aviation said at a press conference here.

Refusing to draw a time line for the AI sale, the Minister said that the government is trying to do it as quickly as possible. “Whether it happens by March or June..... We do not become slave to or victims of certain deadlines. We are doing it seriously we had a meeting yesterday for several hours. We will have a meeting of the Administrative Mechanism (set up to take the AI divestment forward) in the coming week or weeks. Then we will take the process forward,” he added.

**The Minister added the government is in the final stages of completing the divestment of Pawan Hans and the Expression of Interests will be issued in a few days time. “The two are linked. The old process for which bids were received which were not valid and all. The conclusion of that and initiation of the new process are linked. Both decisions will happen together, P.S. Kharola, Secretary Civil Aviation said when asked whether the previous bids had been called off.**

31/12/19 Business Line

**From shuttering of a 27-year-old airline to repeated grounding of planes to ailing Air India, headwinds blew across the once-fastest growing domestic civil aviation space in 2019 while a spike in regional air connectivity served as a silver lining in relatively cloudy skies.**

**If Jet Airways going bankrupt left hundreds of people jobless and shattered decades-old supply chain network, frequent Pratt & Whitney (P&W) engine woes for Airbus 320 neo aircraft continued**



to pose safety concerns even as aviation watchdog DGCA came out with stringent directions. Global ban on Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in the wake of two fatal accidents came as a blow to many airlines worldwide, including SpiceJet, which has largely pinned hopes on these fuel-efficient planes for its ambitious expansion plans.

In 2020, the Centre expects sale of Air India and privatise more airports while AirAsia India is likely to get green nod for international flights. Besides, Vistara and IndiGo are anticipated to increase the number of overseas flights.

01/01/20 PTI/National Herald

In the backdrop of Indian airline companies reporting huge losses in the second quarter of 2019-20, Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday that “some predatory pricing is taking place” in airfares and the government is concerned that if this continues, more airlines will shut down. He, however, ruled out any government plan to regulate fares. “The interesting thing that we have observed is that on Delhi-Mumbai route 20 years ago the average fare was of Rs 5,100. Today, the average fare is Rs 4,600. Some predatory pricing is taking place. It means people are selling tickets below their cost,” Puri told reporters.

“One of our concerns is that if there is predatory pricing, then the airlines will stop functioning. This is not Air India’s problem only. Jet Airways got shut down. Before that, it was Kingfisher airline,” he said. IndiGo and SpiceJet, India’s two biggest airlines, reported Rs 1,062 crore and Rs 463 crore loss respectively in the second quarter of 2019-20. Other airlines have also reported losses in Q2 of this financial year.

When asked if the minister thinks that predatory pricing is the **reason for ill-health of the airlines**, the minister replied, “No, **there are many reasons...** predatory pricing is one of the factors. But a profitability of an airline is dependent on number of things.” Asked if the trend of predatory pricing has come down after regular discussion with the airlines, he replied, “Oh yes, absolutely.” “It is constant battle. An ideal situation from an airline’s point of view is that they grow and they are also able to charge more fares. What fares they charge is their business. Our advice to them is to charge realistic fares,” he added.

“It should not be too high. And it is not in your business interests if you are imposing predatory fares,” he said. When asked if the government is planning to regulate fares, the minister replied in the negative. “**No regulation. It has to be done within deregulation system....** If I put a cap on fare, the airline will start charging that cap only... that cap will become the normal fare,” the minister said.

01/01/20 PTI/Financial Express

New Delhi: **Jet fuel or ATF price was on Wednesday hiked by 2.6 per cent and that of non-subsidised cooking gas LPG by Rs 19 per cylinder on the back of a rise in international rates. Price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF), used to power aeroplanes, was raised by Rs 1,637.25 per kilolitre, or 2.6 per cent, to Rs 64,323.76 per kl in Delhi, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.**

**This is the second straight monthly increase in rates warranted due to firming up of prices in the international market.**

**In India, which is dependent on imports to meet 84 per cent of its oil needs, prices of domestic fuels are at par with benchmark international prices.**

ATF price was on December 1 increased by a marginal Rs 13.88 per kl.

The two back-to-back increases have push jet fuel prices to their highest since June 2019.

The hike will add to the burden of cash strapped airlines that are already reeling under pressure from

cut-throat competition in the sector.

Despite the increase, at Rs 64.32 per litre ATF costs less than petrol and diesel. A litre of petrol in the national capital comes for Rs 75.14 while diesel is priced at Rs 67.96 a litre.

01/01/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: **The year 2019, like any other year, was a year of air accidents around the world.** The worst of them took place on March 10 when a Boeing 737 Max 8 aircraft of the Ethiopian Airlines lost control soon after take-off and crashed near Ethiopia's capital Addis Ababa. The tragedy claimed 157 lives. Such was the impact of the crash that the plane's engines got buried 10m inside the earth, creating a crater measuring 28m in width and 40m in length.

A day earlier, a Douglas DC-3 aircraft operated by LASER crashed during while attempting an emergency landing in Colombia, killing 14 people. And, the last major fatal air accident of 2019 took place just four days ago, on December 27, when 12 people onboard a Bek Air flight were killed in a crash in Kazakhstan.

**In all, 283 people died in 20 fatal air accidents involving civilian passenger and cargo flights in 2019. But despite these tragedies, 2019 was one of the safest years in civil aviation history.**

Data available with the Aviation Safety Network, an independent organisation that records and maintains data on air accidents the world over, show that 2019 was the third safest year (between 1946 and 2019) in terms of number of deaths caused by air accidents. **When it comes to the number of fatal air accidents, 2019 was the seventh safest year in the past 74 years since the Second World War.**

01/01/20 Mukesh Rawat/India Today