

Revue de presse du 1^{er} au 29 aout 2019

The maintenance of Jet Airways aircraft, which had stopped on June 1, has restarted primarily at Mumbai, Delhi airports, rekindling hopes of the revival of the full service airline, Mumbai Mirror has learnt.

“Yes, the maintenance to preserve the existing aircraft has restarted from July 22. **There are 11 Aircraft comprising Boeing 777, Boeing 737 and Airbus 330s, presently with the company, which are not deregistered, and the engineering team is at present carrying out maintenance for keeping the aircraft in good condition.** A few ground staff members have also been deployed for the process,” said an airline source.

On June 1, the regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had revoked the approvals required to carry out maintenance after two Jet Airways personnel looking after the aircraft quit and joined IndiGo and Air Asia. As a result, from June 1 to July 21, the aircraft could not be maintained. From last Monday, the maintenance restarted after due approvals from DGCA.

“The 11 aircraft which include 5 Boeing 777s, 4 Boeing 737 NG, and 2 Airbus 330s are valued at nearly Rs 4,000 crore. If they are not maintained properly, their condition will deteriorate rapidly, and it will erode the value of the airline’s tangible assets when a final decision is taken at the end of NCLT process,” the senior official said.

In mid-2018, Jet Airways had a total of 124 aircraft in its fleet. After the airline reported losses in three consecutive quarters in 2018, it started defaulting on its payment commitments. From December 2018 till March 2019, the airline grounded over 100 of its aircraft after defaulting on lease rental payments.

30/07/19 Satish Nandgaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

Aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday suspended the licences of two SpiceJet pilots for one year for overshooting the main runway at Mumbai’s Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport which shut down runway 09/27 for 90 hours earlier this month.

A senior DGCA official said the two pilots – Capt Ajinkya Hanchate and Capt Tushar Dasgupta – have also been asked to undergo corrective training after a preliminary probe by a DGCA team indicated that their final landing approach was unstabilised and the Boeing 737 aircraft touched down at high speed, approximately 1600 metres from the runway threshold, consuming half of runway 27.

The official said after one year suspension, Dasgupta would fly as first officer for six months or for 300 hours, whichever is earlier.

The incident took place on July 1 when a SpiceJet aircraft, SG-6237, operating from Jaipur to Mumbai tried to land amid heavy rain and veered off the runway.

30/07/19 Mumbai Mirror

New Delhi: **Air India Express has reported its fourth profitable fiscal in a row with a profit of Rs 169 crore in FY 2018-19, down 35.5% from profit of Rs 262 crore in the previous financial year.** The low cost and primarily international arm of AI saw its revenues grow to Rs 4,202 crore in the last fiscal, up 16.1 from Rs 3,620 crore in FY 2017-18.

AI Express CEO K Shyam Sundar said: “The net profit earned last fiscal is particularly significant as the aviation sector has had to face many challenges, including high input costs. The unit cost incurred on fuel alone, increased by around 35% during this period. The impact of this on profitability was huge,

as more than 40 % of the airline's operating cost were incurred on fuel."

"Despite this we were able to drive-in profit by greater utilization of our assets and resources, like aircraft, manpower and materials. Through concerted cost measures, the airline was able to contain the unit cost incurred on expenses other than fuel to be at the same level as in FY 18," he added. AI Express profit in FY 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18 was Rs 362 crore, Rs 297 crore and 262 crore, respectively. The four years of profit, though declining due to increasing costs, came after a loss of Rs 61 crore in 2014-15.

The number of passengers flown by AI Express was 43.6 lakh last fiscal, up 12% from 38.9 lakh in FY 2017-18 and its international carriage grew by 10.5% during this period. "This success would not have been possible, without the trust our valued customers placed in us by choosing us over other options," Sundar said.

30/07/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

AirAsia India could soon be flying into international skies with the Delhi High Court refusing a plea to stop the award of overseas permit to the budget carrier. According to senior government officials, the airline may get the nod to carry international passengers by October 2019.

"There is no restriction (on award of licence) from the high court. The decision on AirAsia's request will be taken on merits. It even fulfills the criteria laid under the old civil aviation policy," a senior official told FE.

AirAsia, a joint venture between Tata group and Malaysia-based AirAsia Berhad, applied for an international licence to the aviation ministry in January 2019 after it completed the regulatory requirement of at least 20 aircraft in the fleet. It currently has 22 Airbus 320s aircraft and plans to take its fleet strength to 30 by 2019 end.

In June, the airline completed five years of operations in the domestic market.

AirAsia's permission to fly abroad has been held up due to ongoing CBI investigations into allegations of lobbying for relaxing international flying norms for airlines. Even the Enforcement Directorate had lodged a money laundering case against some of the AirAsia executives.

The high court has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to file the status of investigations by September 26.

Under the new civil aviation policy in 2016, the conditions for obtaining international flying rights was relaxed to minimum 20 aircraft in the fleet, dropping the 5/20 rule which stipulated at least five years experience in the domestic market along with 20 planes.

30/07/19 Arun Nayal/Financial Express

Bhopal: More than 150 passengers of a Mumbai-bound IndiGo flight from the city survived a scare on Monday evening when the pilot aborted take-off at the last minute at the Raja Bhoj airport here due to a technical glitch in the aircraft's wheels, an official said.

An IndiGo airline executive confirmed the incident and said all the passengers were safe.

"There were 155 passengers in the plane and all of them were safe," IndiGo's Bhopal station manager Ekta Shrivastava told PTI.

Shrivastava said the Mumbai-bound flight's take-off was aborted at the last minute by the alert pilot after detecting a technical snag in the aircraft's wheels.

However, after necessary repairs, the same aircraft later took-off for Mumbai, she added.

The flight, 6E983, was about to take-off when suddenly the pilot stopped it using emergency brakes, a passenger said, requesting anonymity.

30/07/19 PTI/News18

With increased competition on short international routes and a long weekend around the corner next month, flights to top holiday destinations for Indians like Bangkok, Singapore and Dubai among others have seen a drastic fall in the last week.

Since Eid is on August 12 (Monday) and Independence Day three days later, search queries for international travel for a 4 to 5 day trip for that period have shown a 41 per cent increase, according to data collated by Ixigo. As per the travel website, average international fares have dropped by almost 40 to 45 per cent on these routes for August compared to the peak travel season in May. The sharp decline is mainly being attributed to tough competition home-grown carriers are giving each other. The average fare for a Mumbai-Bangkok flight which stood at Rs 20,163 in May, fell to Rs 10,363 in June, settling at a mere Rs 8,397 in July – a 58 per cent drop.

The average Delhi-Bangkok fares have also reported a 54 per cent drop from Rs 16,740 in May to Rs 7,712 in July. Budget carrier SpiceJet also took on the money-making route on Mumbai-Bangkok flights in May, while market leader Indigo is launching flights on the route from August 22 with fares as low as Rs 9,299.

30/07/19 Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

Bengaluru: Unisys Corporation today announced that Air India, India's flag carrier, will use the Unisys Digistics™ integrated logistics software suite to create a connected and automated cargo ecosystem for consistent and accurate data across the organisation, from booking to accounting, to help improve cash flow for the airline while creating greater transparency around shipment status for the airline's cargo clients.

Air India is the largest international carrier out of India and also provides ground handling services for many foreign airlines at Indian airports through its subsidiary. Air India's cargo operations cover a network of 82 domestic and 41 international destinations.

Air India has used Unisys technology for approximately 30 years, including the core Digistics cloud-based logistics management solution, according to a release here on Monday. Air India, Executive Director (Cargo) Nirbhik Narang said that "Air India's cargo business is growing fast, so we needed an integrated solution with the speed and flexibility to grow with our business and provide our customers with faster deliveries and greater visibility into their shipments. Unisys is helping us implement a next-generation cargo platform that uses automated real-time data collection and processing to streamline processes. As it is integrated with our accounting system it will enable prompt and accurate invoicing for carriage of cargo for better credit control, less bad debts and ultimately more cash flow".

29/07/19 UNI

Mumbai: In a relief to a pilot, the Bombay high court has quashed a criminal case of sexual assault registered against him last September by a woman pilot.

Police had filed a chargesheet against Bimal Kumar Roy, a pilot with Air India Express, but a HC bench of Justices Ranjit More and Bharati Dangre ruled that he had neither the intention to molest the woman nor knowledge that his actions were likely to lead to it, both crucial ingredients that mark a crime under Section 354 of the Indian Penal Code.

The complainant alleged that she had decided to resign and had visited the AI office to return her identification card where she was asked to attend Roy's chamber. When she did, he allegedly questioned why had she entered his room. As she began recording his reaction, he pushed her, twisted her hand and touched her chest.

Roy contended that the complainant's FIR was an "outburst of her frustration and totally imaginary".

When she entered his chamber, she "threatened him and started videographing the happenings, warning that she will place the video recording on social media".

30/07/19 Swati Deshpande/Times of India

Mumbai: While India's attempts to strengthen the regulatory mechanism for safer civil aviation has won it plaudits from the Montreal-based International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), the aviation body of the United Nations has also red-flagged the areas of aerodrome certification, foundation of state safety, performance-based navigation and high safety indexes.

The ICAO state safety briefing assessment of June 8 is based on periodic data submitted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The ICAO has found aerodrome standards to be unsatisfactory. India score 76.92% in the state safety programme, an integrated set of regulations and activities aimed at improving air safety.

On the scale of performance-based navigation, meant to ensure global standardisation of rules for landing of aircraft, India scored 7.69%. On high safety indexes, ICAO gave India 0 out of 3 for the areas of operations, air navigation and support.

As per the ICAO, safety indexes provide a risk-based prioritisation of operational, air navigation and support-related universal safety oversight audit programme (USOAP) areas. In each of the functional areas, a State is given a target effective implementation score, which is calculated based on a global linear regression of traffic versus effective implementation of all ICAO member states.

ICAO mandates that a state with a high safety index of over 1 would be considered to have sufficient regulatory controls in place to cover its existing traffic volume. A state with a low safety index below 1 would be considered to have an insufficient oversight system taking into consideration its traffic volume.

30/07/19 Aditya Anand/The Hindu

Bengaluru: The heli-taxi shuttle service between Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) and Electronics City, which was temporarily grounded in May, may take longer to be up and running again, said officials of Thumby Aviation, which ran the service.

The heli-taxi service operator identified a two-acre land near the upcoming New South Parallel Runway (NSPR) recently to set up a new helipad and signed deals with the property owner, but the proposal was turned down by Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL) last week, forcing it to scout for land again.

BIAL said the proposed site was too "close to NSPR" and wrote to Thumby Aviation in April, asking them to vacate the helipad — located between the old runway and NSPR — by May 15.

The heli-taxi service became operational in March 2018, using helipads the company had built on the airport campus and in Electronics City Phase I. The service is currently being operated from Jakkur Aerodrome to Electronics City. Passengers are being ferried in a car between Jakkur Aerodrome and KIA, which adds about 25 minutes to their journey.

30/07/19 Swathy R Iyer/Times of India

The Competition Commission has approved acquisition of ACSA Global's 10 per cent stake in Mumbai International Airport by GVK Airport Holdings in a deal worth Rs 924 crore.

In March, GVK Power & Infrastructure had said its step-down subsidiary GVK Airport Holdings will acquire 12 crore shares or 10 per cent stake in Mumbai International Airport (MIAL) for Rs 924 crore from ACSA Global.

Earlier, GVK Airport Holdings had purchased 13.5 per cent stake in MIAL from Bidvest.

With the completion of 10 per cent stake buy from ACSA, **GVK Group's shareholding in MIAL will increase to 74 per cent from the existing 50.5 per cent**, GVK Power & Infrastructure had said in a statement.

[29/07/19 Moneycontrol.com](https://www.moneycontrol.com/news/business/competition-commission-approves-acquisition-of-acsa-global-10-per-cent-stake-in-mumbai-international-airport-by-gvk-airport-holdings-in-a-deal-worth-rs-924-crore-1087447.html)

Lufthansa to raise capacity in business class flights from Chennai Summer 2020 with a different seat configuration.

[The Economic Times of India 31/07/2019](https://economictimes.india.com/news/aviation/lufthansa-to-raise-capacity-in-business-class-flights-from-chennai-summer-2020-with-a-different-seat-configuration/64711717.cms)

A special Delhi-Lhasa chartered flight to facilitate pilgrimage to Kailash Mansarovar, Yoga Day 2020 in the Forbidden City and recognition of each other's education degrees were some the key issues discussed at the second Sino-Indian High-Level Mechanism on Cultural and People-to-People Exchanges on July 12. Both sides also deliberated on ways to mark 70 years of diplomatic relations.

In the meeting held in New Delhi, Delhi-Lhasa chartered flight for Kailash Mansarovar yatris was the key proposal on the table, ET has learnt. Chinese officials participated through videoconference. People privy to information said the civil aviation ministry was actively involved with the whole process. Meanwhile, China is working on a plan to upgrade one of its domestic airports in the Tibetan region to the international level.

In 2015, the Chinese government had opened the Nathu La route for the Mansarovar pilgrims at PM Modi's request. Currently, Mansarovar pilgrimage is facilitated through two routes — the Lipu Lekh pass in Uttarakhand, which requires some trekking, and Sikkim's Nathu La pass, which is more motorable. For Yoga Day 2020, the AYUSH ministry has proposed an elaborate celebration in the Forbidden City, a famous palace complex in Beijing.



The two countries are also discussing a plan to recognise each other's education degrees. While there are concerns around medical degrees, it is being felt **that India and China can begin with recognising each other's non-medical degrees.**

Moreover, China is keen on a school student exchange programme and it is expected to start with a batch of 100 children. The Indian government will also be looking at ways to promote Hindi in China. The first India-China Working Group on Education will try to address the issue.

The Economic times of India 01/08/2019

Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra, an Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Officer of 1986 batch, today assumed charge of the office of Secretary, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) in New Delhi.

Prior to taking over as Secretary, DPIIT, he served as Chairman of Airports Authority of India (AAI). Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra brought about many changes in AAI's strategic operations. He gave new direction to AAI and steered it to achieve greater excellence in the sector of airport infrastructure development not only at the metro airports but also in tier II and tier III cities.

He had earlier served as Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce, Government of India where he worked for the promotion of Special Economic Zones (SEZs), Public Procurement and Project Exports (Financing & Insurance).

Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra held the portfolio of Municipal Commissioner in Surat, Gujrat and was involved in the process of converting Surat into one of the models of urban governance with its thrust on solid waste management, quality infrastructure and sound financial management.

As Municipal Commissioner of Ahmedabad, Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra was instrumental in developing several urban projects like the Sabarmati riverfront, BRTS, Kankaria lakefront and heritage promotion. He also served as the Transport Commissioner and Commissioner, Commercial Taxes in Gujarat.

Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra also held the position of Managing Director in several listed Public Sector Units in India.

Press Information Bureau 01/08/2019

A report recommending measures to counter rogue drone attacks on airports is being finalised and it will be submitted to the civil aviation ministry soon, aviation security chief Rakesh Asthana said on Thursday.

There is a need for technology which is such that it can prevent rogue usage of drones in the country, the director general of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) said at a FICCI programme on 'Countering Rogue Drones'.

"Drones can be used for the betterment of society or for killing people and destroying assets. Both the government and civilians are using drones for commercial purposes, but this is an area we don't know which drone is good and which is rogue," Asthana said.

The measures to counter rogue drones, he said, would include neutralising drones through a "soft kill" approach which will include entrapping or jamming drones instead of destroying them.

"The civil aviation ministry had constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the DG BCAS with members from DG CAM, IB, DRDO, the Airports Authority of India, CISF, NSG to find the best available counter drone solutions and standards to safeguard civil aviation against possible drone attacks in India," he said.

"We have taken the line trials, second pilot has just been over. We are in the process of finalising our recommendations and it will be submitted to the government of India soon," Asthana said.

The Economic Times of India 01/08/2019

Aviation regulator DGCA has taken action against six former pilots of Jet Airways after they were found cheating during a qualifying examination conducted by IndiGo for flying A320 planes, according to a source.

The source said **the six pilots have been barred from re-appearing for the examination for six months.**

Another source said the incident happened around two weeks ago.

IndiGo, which has been recruited staff from the now shuttered Jet Airways, has conducted an examination to hire pilots for flying its A320 aircraft.

The 6 pilots had experience in operating Boeing 737 planes and had to take the examination in order to be eligible to fly A320 fleet.

As per source, these pilots were caught cheating during the examination.

There was no comment from IndiGo.

Debt laden Jet Airways shut down operations in mid-April after running out of cash and is currently undergoing insolvency proceedings.

In recent weeks, the DGCA has been taking strict actions against violations.

The Economic times of India 01/08/2019

Kolkata – Hanoi



Data

Carrier

IndiGo

Aircraft	Airbus A320
Frequency	Daily
Start date	3 October 2019
Distance	1,788 km
O&D traffic demand (2018)	4,264
Growth % YOY	20.4%
Average one-way fare \$ (2018)	\$235.70

Insight

Indian low-cost carrier IndiGo is to begin service to Vietnam in October, becoming its fifth south-east Asian country in its network alongside Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia and more recently Myanmar. The airline will operate non-stop daily flights between Kolkata and Hanoi from 3 October 2019, using Airbus A320 aircraft. Hanoi will be IndiGo's 19th international and 75th overall destination.

According to figures from Sabre Market Intelligence, two-way O&D traffic between India and Vietnam has increased strongly in recent years, despite the absence of any regular direct flights between the two countries. The data shows 186,228 passengers travelled indirectly in 2018, a rise of 7.5 percent compared with 2017. Last year's figure was also 150 percent higher than in 2013. The main connecting points for India - Vietnam traffic are Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Singapore.

Although the market between the two countries is relatively small, they are among the ten most populated countries in Asia and are only four to six hours apart by air. India is also one of the fastest-growing outbound markets in the world, while Vietnam is increasing in popularity as a tourist destination.

Bilateral trade between India and Vietnam has also experienced continuous growth. Data from the Indian government suggests total bilateral trade reached \$13.7bn in 2018-19, an increase of 6.8 percent year-on-year. Total trade value between the two countries accounts for 1.62 percent of India's total foreign trade, while Vietnam is the 19th largest trading partner and 11th largest destination of India's exports globally.

IndiGo's new Kolkata - Hanoi route is therefore likely to appeal to both leisure and business passengers. The airline can also expect high demand for the Buddhist circuit as Vietnam has a large Buddhist community.

The planned launch of the service comes just weeks after the Civil Aviation Administration of Vietnam granted Vietjet approval to begin direct flights between Hanoi and Delhi. **The LCC first announced plans to serve the route in March 2018.**

Routes Online 02/08/2019

A second attempt at disinvestment of Air India is likely to see strong interest from private players, including participation from leading global airlines such as those from the Gulf, according to aviation consulting firm CAPA.

There is a likelihood of international entities seeking to form joint ventures with Indian companies to bid for Air India to comply with norms that cap foreign direct investment into the national carrier at 49%.

The Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) has recommended that the government allow FDI for a higher number of bidders and increased valuation for Air India.

This will be necessary as major Indian corporations from outside aviation may not have the appetite to invest in a complex project without an experienced strategic partner, it noted.

The exit of Jet Airways, Air India's biggest full-service competitor, from the market has further enhanced the chances of a successful disinvestment this time. "CAPA has long maintained that the Indian market can only sustain two full-service carriers, and that the operation of three such airlines – Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara – was not sustainable."

However, the remote chances of a revival of Jet Airways, along with the "current global and national economic environment and geopolitical instability" may dampen investor sentiment, CAPA warned. The aviation consultancy reiterated what it considered were **key factors to ensure a successful attempt at privatisation of the national carrier.** These include: the **government exiting completely** from the airline, allowing the new owner flexibility in dealing with Air India's employees and easing the requirement of the 'Air India' brand being kept intact by its buyer.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri told Parliament that the government may launch its second attempt to privatise the national carrier before the end of August.

An earlier attempt last year failed to yield any interest, with no entity coming forward to bid for Air India.

The Hindu 01/08/2019

New Delhi, Aug 1 (PTI) IPS officer Rakesh Asthana Thursday took charge as the chief of the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), officials said.

The 1984-batch Gujarat cadre officer has been appointed as the Director General (DG) of the NCB in an "additional" capacity. He is already serving as the DG of the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS).

The Appointments Committee of Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as per an order issued by the Union home ministry Wednesday, had approved for "entrustment of the additional charge of the post of Director General Narcotics Control Bureau" to Asthana **for next six months or till a new incumbent is appointed.**

The post of NCB chief was lying vacant since July 4 after incumbent Abhay was appointed as Director of Hyderabad-based Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy.

Asthana, who was second in command in the CBI, was transferred as DG BCAS after a bitter tug of war with the then chief of the investigation agency Alok Verma.

Both officers had levelled allegations of corruption on each other after which they were sent on leave by the Centre.

The CBI had registered an FIR against Asthana alleging corruption. He had strongly denied all the allegations and had claimed that he was booked because of a complaint he made against Verma.

At the NCB, the officer is expected to review and initiate quality operations to crack on the narcotics smuggling, nexus of drugs mafia and couriers and money laundering crimes in the wake of the Union government's stress to act against such instances.

Press Trust of India 01/08/2019

Chennai: A parcel manager has been detained and is being questioned for sending a parcel with a gun by an Indigo airlines flight from Chennai to New Delhi on Tuesday.

Tension prevailed at the airport around 1am after an alarm was triggered by a sensor at the final baggage checking area. A search by officials found a gun in one of the pieces of cargo baggage bound for New Delhi. Airport baggage claim officials conduct a final scan of the parcels before loading them on to the flight.

The officials tried contacting Patel Air Cargo, which was mentioned on the package. Since it was midnight and no one could be contacted for the package, security officials opened it and found a gun. The package was detained at the airport. In the morning, when officials contacted the cargo office, the manager of the firm visited the airport and said the package belonged to a customer, Venkat Raj Choudhary, from New Delhi. He told officials that Choudhary had sent a package to Chandigarh by train, but it was misplaced and had reached Chennai.

Venkat, who was their regular customer, contacted the cargo office and asked them to collect the package and send it to Delhi. The manager denied having knowledge of the contents of the package.

The officials were not convinced and filed a complaint with the airport police station.

01/08/19 Times of India

IndiGo has a new challenger. SpiceJet, which was struggling to keep afloat till four years ago—has been cementing its position as India's second-largest airline by market share. Between April and June, IndiGo's market share slipped from 49.9 percent to 48.1 percent while SpiceJet's went up from 13.1 percent to 15.6 percent.

According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation SpiceJet's market share grew by 250 basis points in June while IndiGo lost 180 basis points. The number of passengers carried by airlines in the month stood at 12 million, indicating a 6 percent growth over May. Indigo is expected to increase capacity by 30 percent in FY20 while SpiceJet will add 80 percent year-over-year in FY20. Already, SpiceJet added 30 aircraft to its fleet from Jet Airways after the airline shut shop in March.

"SpiceJet will get aggressive to gain market share," said Mayur Milak, an analyst at India Nivesh Securities. "This could lead to a price war and add pressure in the 0-15 days booking period. This makes us sceptical towards the industry. The Indigo management admitted to feeling the pressure in the 0-15-day period."

01/08/19 Manu Balachandran/Forbes India

The Centre is not, for now, taking forward the plan to privatise the Calicut International Airport. According to M.K. Raghavan, Kozhikode MP, an assurance to this effect has been given by Union Minister of Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri.

Mr. Raghavan said in a press note that he had, at a meeting with the Minister on Tuesday, urged the latter to drop the privatisation move. **Mr. Raghavan pointed out to Mr. Puri that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) Chairman had, at a recent press conference, floated the idea of privatising more airports.**

Mr. Raghavan told the Minister that Calicut airport, run by the AAI, was a profit-making one and that last year, it had generated a profit of ₹120 crore in spite of the two-year-long partial shutdown for repairs that heavily affected traffic.

The press release said that the Minister had called a meeting of Kerala's Members of Parliament on Thursday to discuss the privatisation of the Thiruvananthapuram airport.

At a news conference in Delhi on Friday last, AAI Chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra had hinted that the Calicut airport would be included in the next phase of privatisation.

He said that the government planned to privatise "20-25 major airports with an annual passenger traffic between one million and 1.5 million".

01/08/19 The Hindu

Days before the end of his term as Chairman of the Airports Authority of India, senior bureaucrat Guruprasad Mohapatra laid bare the government's plans to privatise 20-25 airports in the second phase of disinvestment, after having sold off six major ones to the private sector. The government had last year decided to privatise airports in Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati for operation, management and development through public-private partnership (PPP) model. In February this year, the Adani Group bagged the contracts for five of these six airports.

All of these airports, so far run by the government-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI), are among the profitable ones. (As per official figures, 109 out of 123 airports in India are suffering losses.) Mohapatra told a press briefing at the AAI headquarters here last week that "we have privatised six airports; we are now planning to privatise 20-25 airports in next phase". These are "major airports with the annual passenger traffic (ranging) between 1 and 1.5 million."

The statement of Mohapatra, a Gujarat cadre officer who has been appointed as Secretary, Department of Industry and Internal Trade in the Ministry of Commerce from August 1, reflects the government's rush for seeking to develop aviation infrastructure through PPPs, on the alibi of a rapid rise in air traffic. The rise in passenger traffic so far has actually been witnessed on major trunk routes and not across India.

Mohapatra's statement also reflected the path laid out by government think-tank NITI Aayog's 'Strategy for New India @75', which says that the "Way Forward" in the civil aviation sector, among other things, is to "complete the planned airports under the UDAN initiative in a time-bound manner" and to complete the "revival of 50 un-served and under-served airports/airstrips" by 2022.

It also recommends completion of two new airports for Delhi and Mumbai (ie. Jhevar and Navi Mumbai) by then.

In a related development about a fortnight ago, the government amended the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Act of 2008, wherein all such airports which the (private) operators got on long lease, based on predetermined fees, will be out of the purview of the public sector Mini-Ratna AAI. The Opposition parties and trade unions opposed the move, with the Congress saying this would mean that "all 5 airports handed over to the Adani Group, will have virtually no government control for the next 50 years."

The question that arises is whether the construction/development of an airport can be done under the same principles as those meant for the real estate sector. It cannot. While there can be a lot of

scope for private parties to benefit from the non-aeronautical side of an airport, the critical infrastructural issues are on the aeronautical side -- ranging from the length, strength and direction of a runway to the height of an ATC tower to parking bays and taxiways, provision for fuel supply, storage and minimum (if not full-fledged) engineering/technical facilities etc. Under the present circumstances, these aeronautical facilities are to be built by the state-owned AAI, which will invest its own resources to build or refurbish these airports.

One of the most crucial factors in airport development is financial, especially from an airline's point of view. The airline companies have to consider whether the route(s) out of a certain new airport will make sense in terms of economic viability, recovering costs with some profit margin, the price of fuel to be delivered there (fuel is taxed by both the Centre and the states), the demand for flights from and to that place and hence, how should the ticket be priced etc. These are issues only the airlines have to factor in while deciding on whether or not to launch flights from there.

Were the concerns of the airlines taken into account? Apparently not. **The decisions seemed to be presented to the airlines as a fait accompli.** Clearly, it is only when an airline starts flying into and out of a new airport can commercial activities (shopping malls, hotels) begin and flourish. Aviation consultancy firm CAPA India recently said that "the success of UDAN (regional connectivity scheme) depends on the participation by established airlines." It is not that the government was unaware of this. In reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on July 11, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said **"it is up to the airline operators to provide air services to a specific place depending on the traffic demand and commercial viability"**. He also said that "no bid has been received from any airline operator for operation of flights from these airports", all in West Bengal. This is not merely a scenario for West Bengal, but destinations in several other states have been the same. In fact, an airport modernised by AAI and inaugurated by the Prime Minister saw an airline operator for only a few days and shutting shop thereafter.

While these factors do not seem to have been taken into account, the focus has been only on developing such infrastructure through expeditious sale of land and assets to private entities, many of which do not have any experience in the field of aviation at all. Such moves, experts and officials who wish to remain anonymous feel, would not only **lead to AAI losing its critical financial resources, but also turn it into a mere landowner doling out land on long lease to private business houses.**

The AAI Employees Joint Forum, which has been protesting the privatisation of six profit-making airports, last month shot off a letter to the Civil Aviation Minister. It referred to the previously privatised airports of Delhi and Mumbai, saying their privatisation has not brought about any good to the country or the people at large, insofar as infrastructural facilities or generating employment are concerned. **Moreover, privatisation has encouraged monopolistic operation, exploitation of employees and putting additional burden on the general public,** the AAI letter said.

A leaf has to be taken out of the global experiences on airport development. **To take the example of the United States, which is the single largest aviation market in the world, the airports are in public hands. They are owned either by the state, local governments, municipalities or even universities.** According to global statistics portal, Statista, in 2016, there were about 5,136 public-use airports in the US. All airports for public use are owned by the state or its agencies or utilities, though some may have contracted with private firms to manage airport operations or provide specific services. But the ownership has remained in the hands of the state or its agencies. The US Congress had enacted an Airport Privatisation Pilot Program way back in 1996 which had miserably failed to take off. The Trump Administration's 2018 bid to privatise airports and air traffic control has also lacked support from a large majority.

All major airports in India's neighbourhood, which attract a substantial number of Indian travellers, are owned by the respective governments or government-controlled entities or civil aviation

authorities. These include the lavish airports at Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Bangkok, Dubai, Doha, Sharjah, Muscat or Istanbul. Major stakes in one of the largest airport operators, Fraport (which runs Frankfurt Airport and several others across the world), are held by the German State of Hesse. It is imperative that the government keeps these facts in mind before going in for outright sale of such critical and valuable assets for short-term cash gains or injection into its treasury. Otherwise, its ambitious plans to make the commoner fly may just crash-land.

Newsclick 01/08/2019

Mumbai: An Ahmedabad-bound IndiGo Airlines flight had to return to Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport shortly after take-off following a technical snag in the aircraft's engine, officials said.

A statement from the airlines said, "The aircraft, **6E 5324, had a fault message on engine 1 after taking-off from Mumbai.** The pilot followed the necessary procedures and landed back at Mumbai. The aircraft is currently withdrawn for inspections. The passengers are being accommodated on other flight."

18/08/19 Indian Express

Domestic airline **SpiceJet is expanding its operations** to various parts of the country. The airline has announced **new flights to Aurangabad in Maharashtra from Delhi starting October 8, 2019. It is also enhancing its connectivity between Delhi-Kolkata with two additional flights starting October 1. Further, SpiceJet is connecting Kolkata to Ahmedabad and Delhi to Thiruvananthapuram through daily non-stop flights starting October 1 and October 8, respectively.**

People who want to travel to Aurangabad can go straight to the city by air. This will save time for travellers. Aurangabad will be its 53rd domestic destination in the airline's route.

"Maharashtra's tourism hub is now a hop away! SpiceJet is delighted to launch flight operations to Aurangabad. The daily direct flight starting 8th October conveniently connects the city with Delhi through morning- evening return flights," the airline tweeted today.

"SpiceJet is also enhancing its connectivity between Delhi-Kolkata with 2 additional flights starting 1st October and between Delhi-Bengaluru with another additional flight starting 8th October."

18/08/19 ZeeBiz

Singapore Airlines has announced its intention to expand its operation in India. The prestigious carrier will be operating newer and larger aircraft as a result of the expansion, serving the vast Indian population of over 1.3 billion people.

As emerging economies such as India continue to develop, more consumers are traveling overseas, ensuring that these markets are increasingly attractive to airlines. And Singapore Airlines is now ready to extend its relationship with India, having begun flying to the nation nearly 50 years ago.

India is ranked as the second most significant market in Asia, after the world's most populous nation China. Singapore Airlines, its regional subsidiary Silk Air, and the budget airline run by the company, Scoot, already service 13 cities across the country.

And David Lim, the general manager of Singapore Airlines, told The Week that Singapore Airlines has achieved "double-digit growth" in India over the last three years. This level of growth has emboldened the popular carrier to further expand its services to India.

This latest decision is indicative of a new approach of Singapore Airlines in India, with the flag-carrying airline of Singapore having introduced a variety of different aircraft and services to the country in recent years.

For example, in July, 2017, the airline debuted the Airbus A350 long haul aircraft in Mumbai, while the Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft begun flying out of Delhi last year. **And Singapore Airlines further expanded its Indian operation earlier this year, flying the A350 into Bengaluru and Kolkata, with plans to use its largest aircraft, the Airbus A380, out of Mumbai in the near future.**

18/08/19 Chris Morris/Simple Flying

New Delhi: **The aviation ministry has formed a committee to rationalise additional taxes that airlines have to pay while uplifting Air Turbine Fuel (ATF) at airports across India**, according to senior government officials.

Currently, airlines have to pay charges such as 'throughput charges', 'into plane charges' and 'fuel infrastructure charges' when they take ATF at any airport for their planes.

"These charges are taxed multiple times as they are billed in a circuitous manner," said a senior government official.

A second government official said that **to develop a direct billing mechanism between airline companies and airport operators - so that these multiple taxes can be removed - the ministry of civil aviation has formed a committee comprising representatives from airlines, airport operators, oil companies, among others.**

This committee is expected to submit its report soon, the second official added.

As per government estimates, if a direct billing mechanism is implemented, airlines would be able to save around Rs 400 crore per year.

In India, ATF accounts for almost 40 per cent of any airline's total expenditure. Therefore, any taxation on ATF always has a huge impact on airline companies.

Explaining the matter, the first official quoted above stated, "Take the example of billing for throughput charges, which is done by the airport operator to the oil company. In turn, oil company passes on the charges by billing airlines. However, due to such convoluted billing process, **taxes such as GST and excise duty and VAT is added on to throughput charges.**"

18/08/19 PTI/Times of India

Mumbai: **The Bombay High Court has recently refused to return the passport to a Malaysian national accused of smuggling of human embryos from Malaysia to India.** The court observed that if the passport is returned, the accused will leave India and may not return for adjudication, making it difficult to secure his presence for the trial. Justice S S Shinde said, "The offence in which the petitioner is alleged to have been involved is a serious one, that is smuggling/illegal import of human embryos into India from Malaysia by mis-declaring the same to the Malaysian Customs authorities as stem cells. The presence of the petitioner for adjudication and trial is necessary."

A petition in the case was filed by Partheban Durai, a Malaysian national, seeking directions to the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) to hand over the passport and refund the amount Rs 30,000 taken from him at the time of releasing him on bail in March 2019. On March 15, Durai had arrived in Mumbai from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. After completing formalities at the airport, some officers of DRI reportedly had approached him and made some inquiries. According to the petitioner, the DRI officers had forcefully confiscated all his personal belongings, including Malaysian passport and illegally detained him at the airport for six hours.

The petitioner alleged that he was then taken to DRI office, where he was illegally detained and tortured to "confess" to have smuggled some goods into India. He further alleged that he was neither informed the grounds of his arrest/detention nor was he produced before a magistrate

during the period of his detention. The petitioner further told court that he was forced to sign several documents without reading their contents. He was then released allegedly on a bail of Rs 30,000. After bail, the petitioner requested the agency several times to return his passport, but his requests reportedly went unheeded.

The counsel for DRI told the court that the petitioner is involved in smuggling human embryos into India by mis-declaring the same to the Malaysian customs authorities as stem cells. The counsel added that when the petitioner was intercepted at the airport, a canister was found containing human embryos. DRI counsel also told the court that evidence collected during the course of investigation, including the petitioner's mobile, clearly revealed his involvement in smuggling of human embryos from Malaysia to India.

18/08/19 Indian Express

New Delhi: Disgruntled husband Nasrudeen, who made a hoax call to IGI, has been booked under a lenient section so far. However, anyone making such hoax calls runs the risk of being prosecuted under the new, stringent anti-hijacking law. That is because the 2016 law, enacted a year later, doesn't make a distinction between actual act of hijacking an aircraft and an act that derails the scheduled flight of the aircraft.

Legal experts point to Section 3(1) of the new Act that gives teeth to investigators to treat a hoax call as almost an act of terror and urge the court to hand over life term to the culprit. As early as in July this year, a special anti-terror court had sentenced a person, who threatened to hijack a Delhi-bound Jet Airways flight in 2017, to life imprisonment. The convict was also slapped with a fine of Rs 5 crore for violations of various provisions of Anti-Hijacking Act, 2016. The new anti-hijacking law prescribes capital punishment in the event of death of any person on board a flight or a security personnel. In case of Nasrudeen, while there was no threat of hijack, the fake claim of a fidayeen bomber's presence led to change in plan of the aircraft, inviting the strict provisions of this law.

The 2016 Anti-Hijacking Act replaces a 1982-vintage law, according to which hijackers could be tried only in the event of death of hostages, such as flight crew, passengers and security personnel.

"Under the new law, definition has been expanded to include death of security personnel on board or ground support staff as well. In case of no deaths, the accused will be punished with imprisonment for life and fine, besides confiscation of movable and immovable property held by him or her. The 2016 Act also includes several acts within the definition of hijacking, including making a threat, hoax, attempts or abetment to commit the offence," says a Delhi-based prosecutor.

18/08/19 Abinav Garg/Times of India

The Resolution Professional (RP) of Jet Airways informed the stock exchanges on Friday that there could be a delay in declaring the stressed airline's Q1 results. Since there was no "access to data until mid-July", and due to the "complexities of issues being faced by the company", declaring results would take time, said Ashish Chhawchharia, the RP.

Under SEBI rules, it is mandatory for listed companies to declare their quarterly results to the shareholders. However, Jet Airways has been grounded since April 17 due to an acute cash crunch.

In May, CEO Vinay Dube, CFO Amit Agarwal, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer Kuldeep Sharma and Chief People Officer Rajhul Taneja had quit the company, citing personal reasons.

In addition to the top management quitting, "pending book closure process, financial results for the quarter ended 30th June 2019 have not been prepared/finalised till date," Chhawchharia said. "With the complexities of issues being faced by the company along with the paucity of funding, etc, the entire process is taking time," he added.

He assured the authorities that attempts are being made to resolve the problems.

Last month, the RP had rolled out a proposal to seek expressions of interest (EOIs) for the debt-strapped Jet Airways, which was extended till August 10.

16/08/19 Business Line

New Delhi: In a major feat, Air India operated its flight over the North Pole on Independence Day and has become the first Indian airline to operate commercial flights over the polar region. The Air India flight from Delhi to San Francisco usually flies over the Atlantic or the Pacific Ocean but on August 15, it flew over zero degree north, The Times of India reports.

Air India sources told TOI that the operations department had formulated two flight plans beforehand, ahead of its polar route debut. "We were asked to be prepared for a Pakistan airspace closure on August 15. Had they shut down their airspace to Indian flights, we still would have flown the polar route, though with a different routing that took the aircraft over Strait of Hormuz and then northbound for the pole," an Air India source was quoted as saying by TOI.

To reach San Francisco, flight AI-173 took off at 4am from New Delhi with around 243 passengers. It flew over Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Russia and the North Pole by 12.27 pm. The flight was operated by Capt Rajneesh Sharma and his team - Capt Digvijay Singh with first officers Capt Siddesh Dadarkar and Capt Karan Aggarwal on the flight deck.

Speaking of the experience, Capt Rajneesh Sharma told TOI, "When we crossed Russia, we left all the air traffic behind. For close to nine hours we saw no traffic, no aircraft, just endless expanse of snow and ice. As we crossed over the North Pole and went down the other side of the planet, the navigation display swung 180 degree to go from North to point South. It was quite a sight."

It was nothing short of a brilliant experience as the commander addressed the passengers ahead of flying over the North Pole and said that "it's a gift from Air India to all travelling public", TOI reports.

17/08/19 India Today

All hopes seems to have diminished for the revival of Jet Airways as creditors' claims have now shot up to Rs 30, 558 crore from Rs 24, 887 crore. This comes after Eithad Airways, which owns 24 per cent stake in Jet, did not submit Expression of Interest (EOIs) for the stake sale in the bankrupt airline. Jet Airways has received only two EOIs -- one from Panama-based Avantulo Group and the other from Russian fund Treasury RA Creator. Anil Agarwal-led Volcan Investments, which showed an intent to invest in the beleaguered airline, had withdrawn its support in less than 24 hours.

As per earlier claims, Jet Airways had liabilities of over Rs 26,000 crore. However, now its total liabilities have shot up to Rs 30, 558 crore, reported Business Standard. Of the total claims, Resolution Professional Ashish Chhawcharia has admitted Rs 12,555 crore worth of claims and rejected claims worth over Rs 11,996 crore, the report added. These include Rs 10,224 crore (with interest) worth of lenders' dues; Rs 17,922 crore of operational creditors (excluding employees); Rs 545 crore of employees and workmen; Rs 789 crore of representatives of workmen and employees; and Rs 1,108 crore of other creditors.

In his July estimates, the RP had said it received 16,643 claims worth Rs 24,887 crore, including Rs 8,462 crore by financial creditors, against the company. Jet workers and employees had submitted claims worth Rs 443 crore, of which over Rs 237 crore of worth claims had been accepted by the RP. The NCLT had told the RP to discuss the matter with the Committee of Creditors so the interim funding could be arranged to pay off salaries to the employees.

17/08/19 Business Today

Aviation safety experts have expressed their concerns over safety-related incidents across the country in recent past involving low- cost carriers, IndiGo, and SpiceJet.

While SpiceJet pilots were involved in multiple hard landings in Calicut, Surat, and Patna airports in the recent past triggering an “advisory” email from the airline’s Chief Pilot, IndiGo has been grappling with incidents of overheating and high vibrations in IndiGo’s A320/1 engines.

Over 12 different incidents have been reported since July 25. SpiceJet’s Chief Pilot (Line Operations) of Boeing 737 Sanjay Dabral shot emails last week to all airline pilots pointing out that they had followed a “wrong technique” and tried to land early on short runways, leading to hard landings. He asked them to strictly follow the landing

Flare and Touchdown technique specified in the Flight Crew Training Manual (FCTM) and not to deviate from it based on the runway lengths available at different airports. Aviation safety expert **Capt Mohan Ranganathan blamed poor training at SpiceJet.**

“The DGCA had conducted an audit at SpiceJet and if the hard landings are continuing, it means that the airline knows that DGCA will not act. If the pilots are not following training manuals, then the airline has failed in proficiency checks, and points to deficiency in training and safety standards,” he said.

A SpiceJet spokesperson strongly denied the accusation of poor training. “SpiceJet has a completely open and transparent system wherein pilots are encouraged to report incidents so that corrective training and follow-up measures can be taken by the organization. The said mail reinforces the fact that the standard landing technique is the correct technique and pilots should not over react by doing hard landings.”

17/08/19 Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

Air India has decided to waive off all the cancellation charges of all the flights to and from Srinagar till August 22, 2019. The national carrier will also waive off the applicable charges on refund and data change on travel to and from Srinagar. Earlier, the Civil Aviation Ministry had announced to all the carriers to waive off all the cancellation charges of passengers visiting to and from Srinagar.

Air India had earlier reduced the fare from Rs 9,500 to 6,715 for Srinagar-Delhi route. The fare was maintained up to August 15. The latest development comes up when the Kashmir is reeling under strict curfew and tourists who have booked their tickets for Kashmir are changing their destination to some other places o the country.

Earlier this month, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation had advised airlines to be ready to operate more flights from the Srinagar Airport if the need arises in the present situation.

On August 2, the Jammu and Kashmir government had ordered tourists and Amarnath yatris to curtail their visit to valley and leave the J&K at an earliest. The advisory was issued Indian Army claimed Pakistan-based terrorists were planning to target the Amarnath Yatra.

17/08/19 Shamshad Ali/NewsX

New Delhi: Low-cost carrier IndiGo has extended its fee waiver on cancellation or rescheduling of tickets to and from Srinagar till August 23, due to the prevailing conditions in Jammu and Kashmir.

IndiGo made the announcement on Twitter on August 15. In case of rescheduling, the airline will waive off the fare difference.

In a tweet, IndiGo said, "In view of the current security situation in Srinagar, we have extended a full fee waiver on cancellation/rescheduling (fare difference, if any is applicable) for all flights to/from

Srinagar till 23-08-19."

While night-time operations at the city's airport have restarted, flight services have been affected due to the lockdown in Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir Principal Secretary Rohit Kansal said, "As we speak, we are having the first night flight take off from Srinagar airport at 7.15 pm. Airport had already been cleared for night flights. Nearly 150 passengers... marks (start of) night operations from Srinagar airport."

16/08/19 Business Today

Much-needed initiative for protecting wildlife! **The Wildlife Institute of India (WII), under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is going to prepare an action plan in order to conserve wildlife in the marked area of Jewar International Airport.** According to a recent Dainik Jagran report, the Ministry of Environment has suggested WII for this task, to the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA). YEIDA is the implementing authority of the Jewar airport on behalf of the Uttar Pradesh government. **The officials of the Yamuna Authority will soon meet the officials of the WII in Dehradun to decide on the strategy for initiating wildlife conservation in the airport area.**

For the first phase of the Jewar airport's construction, around 1238.76 hectares will be acquired from six villages are being acquired for Jewar International Airport. Wild animals often occupy these areas and hence, their livelihood might be affected due to the construction of the Jewar airport. In this regard, before giving the official environmental clearance for the airport, the Union Ministry of Environment wants a detailed action plan for the protection and conservation of wildlife. The Ministry has sought this action plan from the Yamuna Authority.

The Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun works for the research and conservation of species of wildlife found across the country. The officials of the Yamuna Authority will go to Dehradun and hold a meeting with officials and experts of the institute in order to prepare an action plan for the conservation of wildlife at the airport area.

After receiving the approval from the WII, an action plan will be prepared and submitted to the Ministry of Environment soon.

16/08/19 Nikita Prasad/Financial Express

According to a report by Forum Gandhi in The Business Line, even as there are concerns around the overall slump in the aviation sector, premium economy saw its bookings surge up to 50 per cent, while that of business class rose by 15 per cent, according to industry players.

Travel companies such as Cleartrip have seen a rapid growth in this segment, though it is in its nascent stage in India.

"The premium economy segment is witnessing a growth in excess of 50 per cent for both domestic and international," said Balu Ramachandran, Senior Vice- President, Cleartrip. According to him, currently, this segment is seeing a rapid growth due to Vistara's expansion plans.

16/08/19 TravelBizMonitor.com

Airlines such as IndiGo and Vistara have announced flights on new routes and discounts on flight tickets. IndiGo, the country's largest airline by market share, has come up with a host of new overseas and domestic routes. Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, has also started its international operations. The airline said it expects to grow its fleet size by over a third by the end of this year. The announcements by airlines come amid high competition in the

country's civil aviation market.

Here are key things to know about the new routes and discounts announced by IndiGo and Vistara: IndiGo has announced the launch of a fourth direct flight on the Mumbai-Dubai route, starting from August 25, 2019. The airline also said it will start second direct flights on the Hyderabad-Doha route from September 16, 2019, at an introductory all-inclusive price of Rs. 9,246. The carrier also announced Silchar as its fifty seventh domestic and seventy sixth overall destination. The airline will operate two daily non-stop flights on Kolkata-Silchar route from September 20 at a starting all-inclusive price of Rs. 2,418.

Private carrier Vistara said it will start daily direct flights on the Mumbai-Dubai and Dubai-Mumbai routes from August 21. The carrier is offering an introductory all-inclusive return fares starting from Rs. 17,820 on the new routes. The airline also announced the addition of Bangkok as its third international and twenty seventh overall destination. The airline will operate daily direct flights on the Bangkok-Delhi-Bangkok routes, it said on its official website- airvistara.com. The new flights will start from August 27. The carrier is offering an introductory all-inclusive return fares starting from Rs. 16,936 on the new routes.

17/08/19 NDTV

Budget passenger carrier SpiceJet said it will launch 12 new domestic flights effective from the first week of October 2019.

According to the airline, all the new flights will be operational daily and the airline will deploy its Boeing 737-800 aircraft on all these routes.

The airline will introduce daily non-stop flight between Delhi and Aurangabad from October 8. It will also enhance its operations with additional frequencies on the Delhi-Kolkata and Delhi-Bengaluru routes.

The latest flight additions come after a massive domestic sector expansion by the airline.

Starting from April 1, SpiceJet has announced 142 new flights which include 78 connecting Mumbai, 30 connecting Delhi and 12 flights between Mumbai and Delhi.

17/08/19 IANS/CNBC TV18

New Delhi: A Bangkok-bound GoAir flight was forced to return to Delhi on Friday after the crew discovered that they had forgotten navigation charts. A navigation chart contains crucial details about a particular flight's route.

GoAir flight G8-037 (A320Neo aircraft) had taken off with 146 passengers to Bangkok, but it was forced to return to Delhi after they found out that the required approach and navigation charts for Bangkok were not there on the aircraft.

In a statement, GoAir said, "Passenger safety is paramount at GoAir. The return of Delhi Bangkok GoAir flight G8-037 to base station Delhi was the result of the crew realising that the required approach and navigation charts for Bangkok had not been put on to the aircraft before departure. All aircraft are equipped with these charts for navigational purposes at airports."

GoAir went on to say that the particular aircraft was recently delivered to it and it was swapped with the original plane that operates on the route due to maintenance.

However, the navigation charts were not moved to the new aircraft.

16/08/19 India Today

Chandigarh: The district consumer disputes redressal forum has directed Air India to pay Rs 22,000 as compensation for failing to refund the amount sent on booking tickets which they had cancelled without prior information. They were also directed to refund Rs 29,332 as cost of the tickets.

Complainant Sanjay Jain, a resident of Sector 18, Chandigarh, stated in his complaint that he had booked four tickets of Air India from Leh to Chandigarh on May 8, 2018. The complainant and his family reached the airport on time and got their boarding passes. They were waiting to board the plane and it was announced that the said Air India flight from Leh to Chandigarh was cancelled due to bad weather at Leh.

It was averred that the weather was clear at Leh and all other airlines, except Air India, were operating their flights. It was stated that when the complainant sought information about the said cancelled flight from Air India under the RTI Act, it was informed that the flight was cancelled due to "operational reasons".

The complainant and his family members had to stay back. They booked a fresh room for stay and travelled the next day on fresh air tickets of Vistara Airlines from Leh to New Delhi for Rs 16,856. They also had to hire a taxi from Delhi to Chandigarh for Rs 4,000. It was stated that the complainant and his family suffered harassment.

The airline stated in its reply that there were three flights that had got cancelled on May 8, 2018, and all these flights were cancelled due to bad weather in Leh. It was submitted that the cancellation had been conveyed by the station manager, Air India, Chandigarh, that the flight was cancelled due to bad weather which was also categorized as 'operational reasons' and that does not amount to wrong information.

It was submitted that the flight cancelled due to bad weather falls under the category of beyond the control of the airline and in such cases the airline was not liable to pay any compensation.

17/08/19 Times of India

Kolkata: Three flights were diverted and around 25 others had to hover above the airport for around half an hour as inclement weather hampered flight operations for an unusually long time on Friday.

The turmoil lasted around two and half an hours — from 3.30pm to 6pm — during which 30 departing and 25 arriving flights were delayed.

Airport officials said flights were caught in the disruptive thunderstorm that shook planes violently, and then blinding rain that brought down visibility. Pilots were forced to hover around till the weather improved. However, three flights — two of IndiGo and one of Air India — had to be diverted to Guwahati and Bhubaneswar airports as the delays exhausted their fuel reserves.

The torrential downpour led to accumulation of water in parking bays and hangars. However, there was no waterlogging on the runways or taxiways. Airport officials though are worried the heavy rain and flooding of grounds adjoining the tarmac will force jackals out of burrows and may cause further flight disruptions.

17/08/19 Times of India

Mumbai/Ahmedabad: Passenger jets taking off or landing in Ahmedabad airport are at a high risk of running into flock of birds and losing both engines in a kind of accident similar to the US Airways Hudson river landing or the recent Ural Airlines A321 emergency landing in a corn field near Moscow airport, warned pilots who regularly operate to the said Indian airport.

Between January to July, Ahmedabad reported more than 15 confirmed cases of bird strikes. The most recent incident was on July 20, when a Delhi-bound Air India flight was forced to return after take-off, due to bird strike. In 2018, the airport recorded a total of 85 bird hits, the highest since

2014; i.e. one bird strike per 922 flights.

While the Indian regulator keeps a track of annual bird strikes at Indian airports, what is critical is the rate of strikes. For instance, in 2014, Delhi topped the government list of most critical airports for wildlife strikes (largely bird strikes) with 142 incidents, followed by Kolkata with 62 strikes, Mumbai at 60 strikes and Ahmedabad at 54 strikes. But if the flight movements handled is taken into account (aircraft movement data for April 2014- March 2015) and the rate of strike is calculated for each airport then it emerges that Delhi had a rate of one in about 2000 flights, followed by Mumbai with one in 4,500 flights and Kolkata with one in 1500 flights. Ahmedabad was only the fourth most critical airport on the list, but the rate of bird strike was one in about every 700 flights. Ahmedabad handled 38797 flights in that time period, which would be about one bird strike or wildlife strike per week.

Ahmedabad airport becomes the most critical in India for wildlife strikes given the high rate of such incidents, almost three times that of Delhi. Said a senior A320 commander, requesting anonymity: "Bird menace is so severe in Ahmedabad that I have a record of spots where I'll put the aircraft down if it flies into a flock of birds and losses both the engines." **Finding flocks of migratory birds along the approach path, peacocks crossing the runway is a common sight in Ahmedabad airport,** he added. "When I read about Ural Airlines emergency landing, my first thought was, the next such accident will be in Ahmedabad," he said.

Among the factors that put Ahmedabad airport in the high risk category for birdstrikes is its location; it is barely 30 kms away from Thol bird sanctuary and has another sanctuary at about 60 kms distance. Then again, it has vast areas of open land covered with grass and shubbery making it an ideal hunting ground for avians.

17/08/19 Manu V/Niyati Parikh/Times of India

Guwahati: Air passengers from Guwahati, Agartala and few other cities in northeast were caught in uncertainty on Friday afternoon as flight operations were disrupted at Kolkata airport.

Heavy rainfall and lightning in northeast Kolkata, North 24 Parganas and South Parganas districts resulted in disruption of the flight operations.

According to the latest reports, the arrival of four flights and the departure of six flights were put on hold due to bad weather in Kolkata.

The Regional Meteorological Centre in Kolkata had predicted moderate thunderstorm with lightning and light to moderate rainfall for about two hours from 4 pm on Friday.

16/08/19 NorthEast Now

Kolkata: Report of a bird-hit forced a flight from Ahmedabad to abort landing and hover over Kolkata airport till the Air Traffic Control cleared it for landing on Friday morning.

According to airport sources, an AirAsia India flight that took off for Bengaluru around 9am reported a bird-hit to the ATC immediately after take-off. A runway inspection vehicle was sent to check if the bird's carcass was lying on the runway. With the IndiGo flight from Ahmedabad preparing to land, the controller asked it to discontinue approach and go around till runway inspection was completed. Once the vehicle returned, the flight was asked to make the approach again and it touched down thereafter.

17/08/19 Times of India

New Delhi: **Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), in collaboration with CISF on 16 August introduced Express security check-in facility at its Terminal 2 to provide hassle-free check-in to its domestic passengers.**

As per the official release the facility will enable domestic passengers travelling without check-in baggage to head straight towards the boarding area without getting into the check-in area. This facility will significantly reduce the load on the main security check-in area by diverting passengers carrying only hand baggage towards Express Lane. It will ensure fast and seamless flow of the domestic passengers travelling without any check-in baggage said DIAL spokesperson. Commenting on this new initiative at T2, Videh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO-DIAL, said, We are delighted to launch the Express Check-in facility at the Terminal 2 of Delhi Airport. This is a step forward towards our commitment to provide comfort and ensure convenience to our passengers for a hassle-free travel experience. We would gradually extend the facility to T1 and T3. CISF has played a vital role in supporting the implementation of this facility.

As per the report Delhi Airport has earmarked a dedicated space at the terminal entry point of departure level for the new Express Check-in facility. The pre-embarkation security check would happen immediately after the terminal's entry gate.

16/08/19 Pankaj Upadhyay/India Today

Jammu: **Deputy Commissioner Sushma Chauhan here today told the executing agencies to provide a tree-free and structure-free land to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at the earliest so that the expansion work of the local airport could be done smoothly within the given timeframe.**

He had convened a meeting to review the progress on the expansion of the Jammu airport today, which was attended by Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Chander Parkash, besides senior officials of the JDA, JMC, PDD, PHE, PWD and AAI.

A detailed discussion was held regarding the progress on under-construction structures, felling of trees along the runway, handover of land to the AAI, land possession and other related issues.

17/08/19 Tribune

New Delhi: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) **has arrested a person with foreign currency worth Rs 4.32 lakh at Kannur airport**, an official statement said here on Friday.

According to the statement, a CISF personnel noticed suspicious image inside the hand baggage of a passenger on Thursday, at around 1715 hrs.

Physical checking found 20,835 UAE Dirhams and 355 US Dollars worth Rs 4,32,148 inside the bag. He was identified as Basheer Chalumadathi, who was travelling from Kannur to Dubai on a scheduled flight.

16/08/19 UNI

Batala: **A woman wanted for her alleged links with a pro-Khalistan group was arrested at Delhi airport**, police said on Saturday.

Kulbir Kaur was detained at the IGI airport by immigration officials on Thursday after her arrival from Malaysia. She was later handed over to the Punjab Police on Friday, they said.

Kaur was wanted in connection with her alleged links with the US-based pro-Khalistan group—the Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) -- which had been pushing for 'Referendum 2020' as part of its separatist agenda, police said.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Batala, O S Ghuman said a lookout notice had been issued against

Kaur for allegedly radicalising unemployed youths to foment trouble in Punjab.
17/08/19 Tribune

Mangaluru: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officials on security duty at the international airport here recovered foreign currency notes worth Rs 3.89 lac from a passenger bound for Dubai. The passenger in question, Razack Khaleel Qazi, was to fly to Dubai by a SpiceJet flight on Thursday August 15.

The officials found him illegally carrying 18,000 Dirhams and 2,000 Riyals. The currency notes were concealed inside his inner wear.

CISF sub-inspector, Rakesh Kumar and other personnel who found the passenger trying to illegally smuggle cash in the form of foreign currency, handed him over to customs officials. Further investigation is under way.

17/08/19 daijiworld

THT: Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Yogesh Bhattarai today said that time has come for the European Union (EU) to furnish clarification to Nepal behind not lifting the ban imposed on Nepali airline companies from flying across the EU five years ago. Addressing the Aviation Safety Report 2019 unveiling ceremony at the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) today, Minister Bhattarai mentioned that it is unjust for Nepali airlines not to be allowed to fly in the 28-nation bloc of EU though Nepal has addressed different concerns raised by the EU while announcing the ban on Nepali airlines. "We have already addressed all the concerns raised by the EU and we have also started the process of splitting CAAN into a regulatory body and air navigation service provider. Thus, the EU should now clarify to us on why Nepali airlines still remain blacklisted in European skies," said Bhattarai.

The Himalayan Times 21/08/2019

As Air India plans to start new routes to Nairobi and Toronto, the flag carrier is hopeful that all 20 of its grounded aircraft will rejoin the fleet by October.

Air India's performance has been severely affected for the past one year as seven of its wide body aircraft and 13 narrow body aircraft have been grounded for repairs and maintenance.

Air India has a fleet of 128, of which 49 are wide body and 79 are narrow body. At any time of the year, the airline normally has four aircraft on the ground for maintenance.

However, 20 aircraft have been in need of new engines and spare parts for over 12 months. It's now common knowledge that Air India has been cashstrapped and has therefore not been able to inject funds into repairs and maintenance.

According to sources, the government wants to fill the space left behind by the grounding of Jet Airways and wants all aircraft back in the fleet to service new international routes. Air India sources said most of these aircraft were on the ground due to paucity of funds, but now the airline's engineering department has started receiving funds of Rs 2 million per day.

"These aircraft required overhaul funds to the tune of over Rs 500 crore. With new scenario emerging, they should be in service within three months," said a senior officer close to the development.

The source said the 20 aircraft were currently at Air India Engineering Services facilities in Mumbai, Delhi, and Kolkata. Air India CMD Ashwani Lohani told Mumbai Mirror, "We are recovering all

aircraft. The wide body ones will get recovered by last week of August or first week of September, and the narrow body ones will be recovered by December. It took a long time to bring back the grounded aircraft as there was a problem with engines.”

He further said that the costs were out of normal revenue but refused to comment on whether the government is helping with some part.

16/08/19 Yogesh Naik and Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

The **Thiruvananthapuram airport was started as a flying club in 1932** by the Travancore royal family. The Tata Airlines' maiden flight to the airport in 1935 used a DH-83 Fox Moth aircraft, and it came carrying birthday wishes for Maharaja Chithira Thirunal from the Viceroy, Lord Willingdon. The airport, now spread over 700 acres of land, handled 4.4 million passengers in 2018-19.

But now, Kerala's first international airport is in the thick of a controversy. **In February, it became one of the six airports leased out to highest bidders Adani Group by the Airport Authority of India (AAI).** Protests started soon after in Kerala. "The city airport is our pride and we had requested the prime minister that the state be given preferential consideration while selecting the bid for the Thiruvananthapuram airport," Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan told india today. The Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) was one of the bidders for the 50-year lease of the airport.

Pinarayi has made it clear that Kerala will resist if the Centre bypasses the state government to hand over the airport to the Adanis. As a start, it may back out from handing over the eight acres of land acquired for a new domestic terminal announced earlier. The issue is also being fought in the public sphere where new revelations may bolster Kerala's case. **News reports suggest that the central panel for public private partnerships-the PPP Appraisal Committee (PPPAC)-had disregarded some six criteria set by the finance ministry's Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) and the NITI Aayog while approving the Adani Group's bids. These include the requirement of prior experience in operation and management (O&M) of airports, providing the total project cost for each airport up front (to determine financial capability), not awarding the same player more than two airports (to 'facilitate yardstick competition'), etc.**

The Adani Group, a new player in the airport management sector, knows very well that without state support it will not be able to operate the airport. The group has high stakes in Kerala as it is also building the international port at Vizhinjam.

16/08/19 Jeemon Jacob/India Today

Hyderabad: **GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd has signed a term sheet with a strategic investor for GVK Airport Holdings Ltd, its subsidiary, but is awaiting various mandatory clearances and lenders' approvals to conclude the deal.**

The diversified infrastructure company is in discussions has not yet reached a definitive stage about the terms and conditions that would entail the firm purchase contract.

The step-down airport subsidiary and holding company of Mumbai International Airport Ltd holds 50.5 per cent equity and the management has been looking for divestment options in the vertical. Before the conclusion of this deal, GVK may further hike its stake in the SPV, buying out the interest of other partners.

It recently secured approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to hike its stake, possibly to 74 per cent.

During the divestment process, the management obtained bids for diluting the shareholding in the airport vertical, started discussions with one of the bidders and inked a term sheet.

The subsidiary has bagged the prestigious Navi Mumbai Airport project mandate, expected to see total investment outlay in excess of 16,000 crore.

16/08/19 V Rishi Kumar/Business Line

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport is probably one of the busiest airports around the world, with the influx of passengers increasing by the day. As a frequent flier, you might get a bonus in terms of mile points but the endless queue at the airport is surely not something you particularly look forward to. Well, passengers can finally heave a sigh of relief as IGI airport is all set for phase 3A of expansion.

The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has proposed a major expansion **plan to increase the annual passenger capacity of IGI airport from current 75 million to 100 million passengers per annum by 2022. Phase 3A of the expansion plan includes construction of a fourth runway, making IGI the first airport in the country to have four runways. In addition to this, the plan also includes an expansion of T1 apron area and development of dual elevated Eastern Cross Taxiway. With a total capital expenditure of Rs 9,800 crores, the project is expected to get over by June 2022.**

Once this plan is carried out, arrival and departure will be merged under one roof and will offer various facilities like self baggage drop kiosks, facial recognition and automated tray retrieval system. These facilities will ensure easy flow of passengers. As part of this new plan the entire Terminal 1 will be demolished and a new structure will be constructed to accommodate 82 aircraft stands. Also in order to reduce the travel time between T1 and T3, construction of a flyover has been proposed at the Aerocity metro station.

16/08/19 Outlook

Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport will soon become India's most technologically advanced and will also sport the highest Air Traffic Control (ATC) tower, reported IANS. The ATC tower is expected to enhance the safety and efficiency of air transport management in the national capital, the report further stated.

According to IANS, at present AAI is running a parallel operation to test the automation and other systems in the new facility. Notably, AAI has been mandated to handle the air traffic management services at the IGI Airport.

The new tower is expected to increase the productivity of air traffic management.

The commissioning of the new tower is expected to better the air traffic management services at the IGIA which is the busiest airport in India. Delhi Air Traffic Control handles more than one flight operation every minute throughout the day.

Notably, the IANS report revealed that at least 1,200 landings and take-offs take place every day from the Delhi airport along with overflying traffic of 250 planes. There are more than 40,000 movements that are handled by the Delhi Air Traffic Control in a month.

The new facility will also boast physical and technologically advanced equipment which will offer a more robust safety system. Furthermore, standing at a staggering 334.6 feet approximately, it will allow air traffic controllers to have better visibility of all the three runways, apron area and taxiways. IANS revealed that **the tower also has additional control positions, sophisticated equipment and state-of-the-art control room set-up, which will reduce the number of flights being handled by a single controller, thus increasing overall efficiency. Furthermore, the new set-up has divided the air space into multiple sectors and 'Area Control Centre' has been divided into five sectors only, which restricts the number of flights that can be handled at any given time from a particular control**

position.

The new facility also allows for simultaneous landing from the same direction on parallel runways which increases the capacity of the airport.

16/08/19 News18

Tiruchi: The Tiruchi international airport was among the best profit-making airports in the country during the 2018-19 financial year, Airport Director, Tiruchi, K. Gunasekaran said on Thursday.

The airport contributed ₹41.34 crore net profit to Airports Authority of India (AAI), Mr.

Gunasekaran said while speaking at the Independence Day celebrations organised at the airport premises.

AAI had given a target to the airport to further increase its profit next year as well as for cargo handling, he said and exuded hope that the target for handling 8,000 metric tonnes of cargo would be achieved in the current fiscal.

He said necessary infrastructure facilities would be provided to Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel guarding the airport.

Earlier, he hoisted the national flag and took the salute. AAI officials and personnel of CISF were present.

15/08/19 The Hindu

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) has beefed up security at the airport in anticipation of an increase in cases of gold smuggling. The first six months of this year have seen an increase in the number of seizures made at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport.

It is estimated that about 100 tonnes of gold is smuggled in India every year, said a DRI official.

Following a hike in customs duty, smuggling has peaked, added the official.

The decision comes on the heels of DRI arresting seven men with 32.28-kg smuggled gold bars, worth Rs 10 crore, from the domestic airport in Santacruz on June 10. Cocaine seizures at the airport have also gone up in the recent past. On August 9, a 27-year-old Venezuelan woman was found hiding 80 capsules containing 796 grams of cocaine capsules worth Rs 4.77 crore inside her body.

Giving an insight into the increased security, a senior DRI official said, "Earlier if 10 suspicious passengers were frisked, the number of frisking incidents have doubled now. After the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), which is responsible for security in all Indian airports, had issued a detailed advisory revising and tightening security norms, we too have fallen in line."

16/08/19 DNA

From now the crime branch unit of Mumbai police will probe into fake passport and visa cases detected at Mumbai International Airport.

Earlier, they used to fall under the purview of the local police stations. City police commissioner Sanjay Barve has recently issued out an official order regarding the same.

The order states that investigation, arrest, questioning and other legal procedures in cases of possessing or making fake passports, visa, and other travel documents shall now be looked after by the crime branch so that such cases are probed without leaving any loopholes.

According to police sources, reports of passengers possessing forged passports and visas at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport have seen a substantial rise in the recent past.

"Most cases of forged passports and visa are connected with international agencies and other foreign

bodies with whom frequent coordination is required. The crime branch officers have better contacts than the local police, and they can synchronize with the agencies and can get details of the case easily. As a result, they can conduct an in-depth probe of such cases," said a senior police officer on the condition of anonymity.

16/08/19 DNA

Tamil Nadu police's Idol Wing busted a gang that had been illegally exporting stolen antiques, idols and artefacts worth crores for several years from Puducherry to France through the Colombo port. The police arrested Marie Therese Anandi Vanina for storing stolen antiques in her house. The Indian origin French lady was apprehended on her arrival at the Chennai airport on Wednesday.

The case pertains to 11 panchaloha bronze idols worth several crores discovered in a house in Colas Nagar, Puducherry.

As per reports, Marie along with her husband, Prabakaran procured the antiques from small-time thieves, who stole them from ancient temples in Tamil Nadu, special officer and former Inspector General of Police AG Ponn Manickavel said on Tuesday.

The Idol Wing conducted raids in her house based on Pushparajan's confession. Pushparajan was a close aide of Deenadayalan, an illegal antique dealer in October 2016.

The wife and husband duo was cited as the key accused in the stocking of antique idols. The police until now could neither arrest them nor proceed further in the case since the couple lived in France and chose not to return to India.

The woman and her husband left the key with their manager to show the idols to prospective buyers locally, confirmed Inspector General of Police Ponn Manickavel.

16/08/19 OpIndia

Mumbai Police Crime Branch has arrested a Nigerian national for entering the country allegedly on a fake passport.

The accused, Ndukwe Fidelis Ibe (35), was deported from India in 2015 for overstaying.

Subsequently, a Look Out Notice (LOC) was issued against him.

On August 2, Ibe arrived at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport here to take a flight to Turkey. His passport identified him as Kouame Aristide, an Ivory Coast resident. On examination, immigration officials found the passport fake and that his real name was Ibe.

It also came to light that he had an LOC against him after he was deported from India in 2015 for overstaying.

Police said he had visited India thrice using the fake passport he procured from Ivory Coast. "He is a cloth merchant with business interest in India," an officer said.

16/08/19 Indian Express

New Delhi: The CISF has seized foreign currency worth Rs 4.32 lakh from a Dubai-bound passenger at the Kannur airport in Kerala, a senior official said on Friday.

The seizure was made on Thursday evening from a traveller identified as Basheer Chalumadathil, 40, the official said.

Unexplained foreign currency of 20,825 UAE dirhams and USD 355, totalling Rs 4,32,148, was seized from the passenger by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officials.

The passenger and the seized currency have been handed over to the customs authorities at the

Kannur airport for further investigation, he said.

16/08/19 Outlook

Mumbai: The Tata-Singapore Airlines joint venture Vistara's losses nearly doubled to Rs 831 crore in 2018-19 (FY19) in a tough operating environment, which also saw its peers post weak results. The airline, however, is expected to improve its financial performance in the current financial year, as it expands its network and gets a boost in premium-class occupancy following the closure of Jet Airways.

Vistara had reported a loss of Rs 431 crore in the previous financial year. The airline's latest loss figure is mentioned in Tata Sons' annual report for 2018-19. The report does not give the details of revenue and break-up of expenses.

While the airline's capacity and revenue rose as it added two planes and carried five million passengers in FY19, losses widened due to an increase in crude oil prices and a weak rupee. On average, aviation turbine fuel was 23 per cent costlier in FY19 compared to FY18, while the rupee depreciated over 8 per cent against the US dollar, increasing the costs for domestic carriers.

Other domestic airlines, too, posted dismal results in the last financial year. InterGlobe Aviation, which runs the country's largest airline by market share, **IndiGo, saw its net profit decline 93 per cent to Rs 156 crore, while SpiceJet posted a loss of Rs 316 crore after a profitable FY18.**

The situation has improved in the first quarter of FY20, where both IndiGo and SpiceJet have reported a huge jump in net profits. Vistara declined to comment on the issue. "As a matter of policy, we do not comment on the financial information of the company," a spokesperson said.

15/08/19 Aneesh Phadnis & Dev Chatterjee/Business Standard

New Delhi: Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said that India would be keen to offer solutions and support for aviation infrastructure, connectivity and capacity building to its immediate neighbourhood.

The Minister spoke at a roundtable conference on "Regional Cooperation: Neighbourhood First -- Aviation Infrastructure, Connectivity & Capacity Building" here on Tuesday evening.

According to a Ministry of Civil Aviation statement issued on Wednesday, "The event focussed on opportunities available and the solutions that are on offer for **enhancing cooperation in the critical areas like airport infrastructure development; increasing air connectivity; and collaborations for capacity building in the region.**"

"The Indian aviation industry has been instrumental in the overall economic development of the country. The aviation sector growth in the region has thrown up tremendous opportunity and challenges to India and other countries. India as a state has been working with zeal to create infrastructure in air transport and air navigation services," Puri was quoted in the statement as saying.

14/08/19 Outlook

Thiruvananthapuram: Authorities of the Cochin International Airport have decided to dismantle solar panels from one of its eight projects running on the premises, following objections from local residents.

The decision was taken at a meeting, also attended by local parliamentarians and legislators, after residents claimed that the "canal top project" at the airport was responsible for disrupting the flow of water during the recent floods.

The "canal top project", one of the eight solar panel projects of the airport, has a total installed capacity of 4 MW and produces about 16,000 units of power every day.

A total of 40 MW of electricity was being produced by the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) so far, but they will now have to continue with just seven of the original eight projects.

"We had done a systematic, well-researched design with the concrete structure and diversion canal. But if locals are objecting to it, there is no point in continuing. We have to live together," CIAL spokesperson PS Jayan told NDTV.

CIAL was awarded the "Champions of the Earth" award by the United Nations at a ceremony in New York last year for its initiatives in the field of sustainable energy. CIAL Founder and Managing Director VJ Kurien, who received the award, dedicated it to the people of Kerala for braving the devastating floods of 2018.

15/08/19 Sneha Mary Koshy/NDTV

Kathmandu: The government has granted permission to Shree Airlines to conduct international flights to India and Bangladesh.

The Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) has allowed **Shree to operate flights to Dhaka of Bangladesh and four sectors in India — Delhi, Kolkata, Bangalore and Ahmedabad.**

Earlier, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) had permitted Shree to operate chartered flights to Varanasi in India.

After that, the airline company had successfully conducted a demonstration chartered flight to Varanasi on February 5.

Thereafter, Shree had formally applied to fly and take forth other procedures for regular international services.

Ghanashyam Upadh-yaya, joint secretary at the MoCTCA, said the airline company had completed the necessary processes to operate scheduled flights to the said destination. **"We have granted permission to Shree Airlines to operate international flights using three of its CRJ-200 and CRJ-700 aircraft."**

14/08/19 Himalayan Times

Mumbai: A Venezuelan woman was arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle nearly 800 grams of cocaine worth Rs 4.77 crore into India, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) said on Wednesday.

Balzbaptista Karendralenny (27) was apprehended at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on the basis of specific intelligence inputs after she landed in Mumbai on August 9, they said. She had consumed capsules containing the banned substance, which had to be "purged" out, officials said.

An X-ray test revealed the presence of foreign objects in her body, following which the process of extraction was initiated, the officials added. "During her stay in the hospital, she purged 80 capsules on 17 occasions between August 9 and August 13," an official said.

An examination of the capsules revealed that drugs were stored inside those and cocaine weighing 796 grams was seized, he added.

15/08/19 News18.com

Jet Airways, one of the premium airlines in India which was grounded in April due to cash starvation, is now headed for liquidation in the bankruptcy court after it received no serious

expressions of interest (Eols) despite the banks extending the deadline to August 10.

Fresh capital of Rs 13,000 crore is required to keep Jet Airways up and running and no investor is willing to bet big on the airline's revival, two bankers told DNA on condition of anonymity. Banks are also not agreeable to providing additional debt to the sick airline, the sources said.

As reported first in DNA, the extension of the deadline to submit the Eols was done at the behest of Etihad Airways, which holds a 24% stake in the airline. But the national carrier of United Arab Emirates did not submit any bid. "Etihad remained engaged in the process, but despite the endeavours of everyone involved, there remained very significant issues relating to Jet's previous liabilities. Regrettably, in these circumstances, it was neither feasible for nor responsible of Etihad to reinvest in Jet at this time," the airline said.

The rescue of the beleaguered airline now looks impossible.

"We received no Eol for Jet Airways which could be taken forward. Liquidation in NCLT seems to be the only way out. Etihad wanted Securities and Exchange Board of India exemption for an open offer, but they failed to get it," said a banker who is privy to the company's financial situation.

Lenders of Jet Airways will, however, keep the option of possible takers open till the end of the resolution period. On June 20, the Mumbai bench of the NCLT admitted Jet Airways under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) after lenders referred it to the bankruptcy court. NCLT has asked the banks to find a revival plan for Jet Airways in 170 days as against the normal practice of 270 days, considering that the salaries of the employees needed to be paid. Failing this, the airline would have to go for liquidation.

14/08/19 Manjuu AB/DNA

After a year of distress that saw the grounding of Jet Airways and decommissioning of the entire Boeing 737 MAX fleet, dark clouds finally seem to be parting on the Indian aviation sector.

According to IATA's global aviation results, India's domestic air passenger volume—measured in revenue passenger kilometres (RPKs)—was the third-highest among the major aviation markets, rising 7.9 percent compared to the corresponding month of the previous fiscal.

The massive void left behind by the demise of the Naresh Goyal-led airline also seems to be filling up as other major players such as SpiceJet, IndiGo and Vistara introduced extra flights to take on the severe flight crunch.

The grounding of Jet has also bolstered the business of its competitors, who posted robust earnings in the quarter ended June 2019.

IndiGo, which took over 30 percent of Jet's domestic slots available in Delhi and Mumbai airports, posted its highest-ever quarterly profit at Rs 1,203 crore in Q1FY20. This was 43 times higher than the profit in the year-ago period.

SpiceJet, which acquired 63 domestic and international slots of Jet, also posted its highest-ever quarterly profit in Q1FY20, after reporting a loss in the corresponding quarter of the last fiscal.

"Since the grounding of Jet, players like Indigo, SpiceJet have taken a front seat and are filling in the slots of Jet. Market share gain along with lower crude price has led to the improvement in their financial performance. Further, it would help players in gaining further market share leading to higher operating leverage as occupancy increases coupled with better passenger tariffs at competitive rates," said Ajit Mishra, Vice President, Research, Religare Broking.

While the turbulence seems to have subsided, some analysts do not see a silver lining in the exit of Jet Airways.

According to them, the benefits from Jet's demise have already played out and will no longer play a

factor in the rise of Indian aviation.

14/08/19 Suyash Maheshwari/Moneycontrol.com

Panaji: **Air India flight flying from Mumbai to Goa on Tuesday was forced to abort landing at the last minute as stray dogs were seen trespassing into the runway**, a statement issued by the Navy said.

"Air India flight **AI 033 from Mumbai while landing in Dabolim (Goa)** around 3 am on August 13 reported to ATC about the presence of dogs on the runway. The aircraft was recovered safely in 2nd approach. Being night hours, no dogs were sighted by ATC (Air Traffic Controller) & runway controller," the statement read.

Navy said INS Hansa (near Dabolim) has taken proactive measures to reduce dog menace on the runway with the employment of manpower during daylight hours adjacent to the runway to chase away dogs and birds.

Additionally, an MoU (Memorandum of understanding) has been signed with the state government under which they are to sterilise and relocate up to 200 dogs from the vicinity of the runway, the Navy said.

14/08/19 India Today

Early last month, Minister of Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) Hardeep Singh Puri informed the Rajya Sabha about the status of **UDAN** (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme. **A total of 705 routes have been awarded thus far of which 174 routes are operational. A dismal 24.7 percent!**

The Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) was first mentioned in the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) in 2016. Subsequently it went through some iteration before being launched in October 2016. The scheme has the best intentions in mind with the thought of Hawaii Chappal in Hawaii Jahaj predominantly aiming at subsidised travel from Tier-II and Tier-III cities helping grow trade, boost air traffic and connect cities to towns.

The first round of RCS-UDAN saw bids from Air Odisha and Air Deccan – both of which were bidding without aircraft in fleet. While both of them couldn't sustain the operations for more than one reason, Zoom Air lost the plot mid-way. That left Alliance Air – the regional arm of Air India, Spicejet and to a small extent Trujet – the Hyderabad-based regional carrier to take the UDAN scheme to success. However, a large percentage of routes were won by Air Odisha and Air Deccan which led to the success percentage being on the lower side.

While the scheme couldn't come out of the first jolt, there was some hope when IndiGo placed an order for the ATR – turboprop aircraft and participated in the subsequent rounds of UDAN.

The original idea of the scheme was to connect the underserved and unserved airports. The government had declared a long list of airports which it intended to operationalise in due course of time and these airports were open for bidding. Airlines were free to ask for subsidy – which has a maximum cap depending on the number of seats the airline intended to deploy on a route and the airline asking the least subsidy (in some cases, nil) would win the rights to ply that rule. When an airline won the route, it had a monopoly on that route.

By the time the next rounds of UDAN were being bid, rules had changed. More than one airline could bid for a route and if both did not want subsidy, both could win the route! Spicejet and IndiGo battled it out on Chennai-Hubli route, after which Spicejet threw in the towel and withdrew from the route. Recently, Spicejet withdrew its operations from Hubli completely.

From underserved and unserved, the scheme also became route-centric! Instead of airports, now routes were available for bidding. For example, routes like Hubli-Ahmedabad or Hubli-Goa were bid and won by airlines. One wonders why the government subsidy be doled out to fly between Hubli

and Goa, a distance of 150 km by road and less than an hour by flight! Similarly for routes like Hubli-Chennai, which can be offered one-stop by airlines via Bengaluru!

Wouldn't it make more sense to offer these subsidies to hitherto unconnected airports like those in the northeast or in other parts of the country than to select an airport and connect it to multiple places by doling out subsidy, to an extent that bigger city have lesser connectivity than those under UDAN!

Is the intention good? It definitely is! Has the scheme lost its way? It has! Does it need a course correction? It does!

The government has stopped accepting bids for new routes after UDAN 3.1 bidding was done.

While it stopped allotting routes on domestic circuit, the scheme has now gone international! To ensure that airlines do not stop operations on routes like Spicejet did on Chennai-Hubli or a significant portion of money under UDAN is not spent in connecting two cities which are not remote, have sufficient connectivity on its own and the routes can be part of commercial planning for airlines – it is important to get back to basics and see how can there be a push to operationalise more and more airports and connect them to the nearest metro as was envisioned in the early days of UDAN. With Jet Airways out of action – there is some availability of slots at major metro airports which could be used to cater to UDAN flights. The civil enclave at Hindon will soon see flight operations and could cater to additional flights in the northern region.

UDAN has its success stories – Salem, Kishangarh, Bikaner and many more have seen flight connectivity for the first time or after many years due to RCS-UDAN. The scheme needs more of such airports to be a success rather than have one airport and multiple flights from there which probably is a case of subsidy going in wrong direction.

With a dismal performance of 24.7 percent routes being in operation, the government has little choice but to look at why the performance is so poor and how to get it back on track.

14/08/2019

Bengaluru: The biometric-based self-boarding system at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA), that enables passengers to breeze through security checks, has been put on hold till August 25. Stringent security checks have been cited as the reason for suspending this passenger amenity, late last week.

The Digi Yatra project, 'Early Go Live' by airport operator Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) was launched on June 22 for passengers of one Vistara flight, the UK864 from Bengaluru to Mumbai. Seamless and quick passage for a passenger from registration to boarding was its USP. A BIAL spokesperson told The New Indian Express, **"Due to enhanced security measures at the KIA there has been congestion at check-in during peak hours. To enable the security agencies to allocate adequate manpower and facilitate movement of passengers through the terminal, the Digi Yatra trial would be on hold until August 25, 2019. This is a temporary suspension of this trial and is not expected to have an impact on the overall roll-out."**

Sources at Vistara confirmed that the usage of the biometric technology-based security clearance was cancelled last week.

14/08/19 S Lalitha/New Indian Express

Kedarnath: Uttarakhand Tourism recently launched an online portal for booking chopper tickets for the Kedarnath Yatra. This facilitates pilgrims, who will now be able to access the online platform to book air tickets for Kedarnath through authorised heli companies.

The online facility was started from August and, reportedly, enabled more than 1000 pilgrims to book their tickets to Kedarnath in the first two days. Further, from September 1, the second phase of helicopter services will start. Passengers will have a window of 24 hours to cancel their tickets before

their journey commences.

Dilip Jawalkar, Chief Executive Officer of Uttarakhand Civil Aviation Development Authority (UCADA) and Tourism Secretary, said that the newly launched online ticketing system will help bring transparency to the ticketing process, and also reduce chances of corruption.

He added that **although 70 per cent of the ticket bookings will be processed online, the remaining percentage will be processed offline and on the spot.** To ensure that the offline booking process is done without any hassle, three offline counters will be set up in Guptkashi and two in Phata. However, because the internet services are always not proper at the Sirsi centre, the offline booking of Sirsi helipad will be done from the second counter in Phata.

13/08/19 Times of India

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has rescued nearly 125 people stranded on a road washed away by floods due to heavy rainfall in Kutch district of Gujarat, officials said on Monday. Several parts of Gujarat, including Saurashtra and Kutch regions, received heavy rainfall in the last few days. After the heavy downpour, a large number of people were stuck on a road washed away by floodwaters at Bhuj in Kutch district.

On Sunday evening, the Air Force received a request to rescue a large number of people stranded on a road that was washed away at a causeway near Hajipir dargah at Bhuj in Kutch district, a defence official said. "The South Western Air Command (SWAC) responded swiftly and sent a Mi17 helicopter from Jamnagar. **The helicopter took three shuttles and rescued 125 people.** They were shifted to a safer location, he said. The area is located near the India-Pakistan border. The region was flooded due to heavy rains following which around 300 people, mostly workers of a factory and their family members, were stranded. Initially, teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and local police rescued around 175 people, a district administration official said.

13/08/19 PTI/News18

In a first of its kind initiative, a startup based in Delhi plans to start subscriber-based airline services. Named Prince Air, the startup will let customers travel unlimited times on private jets across metros in the country.

Of course, it comes at a price. But, Sanket Raj Singh – the founder of Prince Air – promises to fly members at fraction the cost of hiring a chartered jet.

"We have seen disruptions in taxi service, retail and hospitality. But no one has ever tried to disrupt the aviation industry in India," says Singh, a fashion industry professional helping American and European brands with manufacturing and supply chain solutions.

During his stints overseas, Singh was struck by the disruptions technology was making across sectors. "Air transportation was one where there wasn't any disruption till now," says the entrepreneur.

While Singh is tight-lipped about the monthly subscription rate, he promises it will be a fraction of what it costs to charter jets. As of now, it costs at least Rs 1.5 lakh to charter jets, say from Mumbai to Delhi. Singh promises that Prince Air subscriptions will allow members to fly multiple times at a price a little more than that. **"We will bring down the cost of traveling in chartered jets by up to 90 percent,"** he says.

To start off, the subscription will be limited, and Singh claims he has already filled up a substantial number. "While most of our clientele is corporate, the luxury real estate segment has responded well," says Singh, who is in talks with a couple of high-end real estate players in Mumbai and Delhi. One of the real estate companies has offered to buy 250 subscriptions, which will be given to buyers of apartments that cost upwards of Rs 5 crore. While Singh shared the names of these real estate companies with this writer, he requested this to be kept confidential till a formal announcement is made.

The service will also include chauffeured luxury cars and stay in five star hotels. "We are close to signing the deal with a well-known hospitality brand based in Mumbai," said Singh.

14/08/19 Prince Mathews Thomas/Moneycontrol.com

Kolkata: Low-cost carrier GoAir on Tuesday said it did not allow a passenger to board an aircraft at the Bagdogra airport in West Bengal after he refused to undergo a mandatory second security check and commented that he had a bomb.

The passenger who was scheduled to travel to New Delhi in the flight G8-151 did not cooperate while being frisked before boarding the aircraft and demanded to know why he was being checked so many times.

"Yes I have a bomb, kya kar loge (what will you do)," the airlines quoted the passenger as saying when he was asked to cooperate for the second frisking on Saturday.

According to an August 5 directive of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the "Secondary Ladder Point Security" that require passengers to be checked again just before they board a plane has been made compulsory in all the airports, the airline said.

It claimed that the staff at the ladder point requested the passenger several times to cooperate, but he refused and said the security measures were intended to "harass passengers".

The passenger reportedly said he was already properly checked by the Central Industrial Security Force personnel and would not allow another check.

He allegedly repeated his statement, "If I carry a bomb, kya kar loge" when senior officials were called in. The airlines then refused to allow him to board the plane and his luggage offloaded, the GoAir said adding that a complaint against the passenger was lodged to the Out Post Police Station in Bagdogra.

14/08/19 NDTV

Hyderabad: Amid disruptions in daily services, officials of the Hyderabad-based, TrueJet, said that the budget airline will soon open two new bases in south India – Chennai and Bengaluru. In July, the operator had announced that it will double its fleet, from five to 10 ATRs, by end of 2019.

At present, TruJet is reporting up to three cancellations every day. The sectors affected include Indore, Aurangabad among others. While the airline claims that passengers are being given sufficient notice, irked fliers have flooded social media platforms with their grievances.

"@FlyTruJet: I had booked a flight from Hyderabad to Goa for 16th August in the month of May. Now today just 4 days before departure TruJet has cancelled the flight and they are just providing full refund. But now the fares of flight have doubled," posted Mitesh Agarwal, on Monday, while another passenger, Bhumi, wrote: "@FlyTruJet has cancelled my flight from Hyderabad to Indore on 15th Aug'19. Now they are not even replying to my queries. Please register my complaint against @FlyTruJet (sic)."

Attributing the disruptions to a technical issue with one of its aircraft, a senior official of the airline said: "The aircraft has been detected with a manufacturing defect and is currently parked at the Hyderabad airport hangar. The services will be streamlined in the next four days."

14/08/19 Sudipta Sengupta/Times of India

Shah Faesal was one of the few Kashmiri politicians not detained ahead of India's controversial decision to revoke the region's special status.

He was **detained at Delhi airport.**

Meanwhile, Pakistani PM Imran Khan said global powers would be responsible for any war over Kashmir, for failing to implement UN resolutions.

In an address in Pakistani-administered Kashmir on Wednesday, **Mr Khan described the move by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to revoke the special status as a "strategic blunder".**

"If war breaks out in the region, the world powers and international bodies will be responsible as they have failed to implement the UN resolutions on Kashmir," he said.

"The United Nations must listen to 1.5 billion Muslims who are looking up to the global body for action against India."

The PTI news agency quoted Indian officials as saying that Mr Faesal had been arrested on Wednesday at the international airport in Delhi as he was trying to board a flight to Turkey.

There is no clarity on where he has been taken in Indian-administered Kashmir but some local media have said he has been placed under house arrest. The BBC has not been able to independently verify this.

Speaking to the BBC's Hardtalk programme on Tuesday, Mr Faesal said he was apprehensive about being detained.

14/08/19 BBC

Mumbai: The Airport Authority of India (AAI) informed the Bombay High Court on Tuesday that it has updated an employee's records after the person underwent a sex change surgery and changed the gender from male to female.

The 33-year-old employee moved the high court last year seeking a direction to the AAI to update its records and issue her a No Objection Certificate (NOC) so that she could travel to Bangkok for a sex reassignment surgery.

The AAI had said it could not update its records until the petitioner underwent the surgery. As interim relief, another bench of the high court had directed the AAI to incorporate her new name and gender in its records.

On Tuesday, AAI counsel Kavita Anchan told a bench led by Justice Akil Kureshi that in July last year it issued the NOC to the petitioner, following which she underwent the surgery successfully. The AAI subsequently updated her records and all other relevant details, said advocate Anchan.

13/08/19 PTI/News18

Dum Dum: Calcutta airport will soon have a system where passengers need not carry physical identity cards.

The automated airport entry and check-ins without any paper-based documents will start as a pilot project by March next year, a Calcutta airport official said.

"One gate in the departure level of the terminal will be having the facility for paperless automated entry," said airport director Kaushik Bhattacharya.

"The passenger can optionally link his or her Aadhaar to the airline at the time of booking a flight ticket and the airline will share the passenger data and identity proof with the airport. Then a bar code will be sent to the passenger's mobile phone to help the person access the terminal building for check-in and security clearance without any paper document," he said.

He said the gate would open automatically for the passenger once the code was provided at the entrance.

According to airport officials, the facility has been introduced on trial basis at private airports such as Hyderabad and Bangalore. In Calcutta, it will be implemented as a pilot project under the government's Digi Yatra scheme to reduce inconvenience to passengers.

Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad, was the first to introduce face recognition (FR) system earlier this year on a trial basis to facilitate passenger entry into the terminal. Passengers are automatically processed based on facial recognition system at the entry gate and other check points, including the security counter.

Every day several passengers flying out of Calcutta airport are allegedly prevented from entering the terminal by security personnel as they don't carry physical identity cards such as Aadhaar, PAN or driving licence.

14/08/19 Sanjay Mandal/Telegraph

Greater Noida: The Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), which is acquiring land for the Jewar airport, has said 6,721 trees need to be felled for the project and the development agency would plant three times the number of saplings for it.

YEIDA mentioned this in its report on how it plans to conserve the environment that would be affected by the project. It said that the **Wildlife Institute of India (WII) will also conduct a survey and submit by October 30 its plans to protect 122 black bucks, 200 cranes and peacocks that live in the area.**

YEIDA also said it would build 14 ponds in addition to conserving the ones around the 5,000 hectares on which the airport would come up. The plans were discussed at a meeting between representatives of YEIDA and WII in Dehradun on Tuesday.

"We made a presentation of our environment conservation plan for a 10km radius around the upcoming Jewar airport. We also told experts of WII that we would build 14 ponds in the six villages where land is being acquired. We have already identified locations where the ponds would be built. We will also develop wetlands, wherever recommended by WII," said Arun Vir Singh, the YEIDA CEO. Singh, who spoke at length with WII director VB Mathur, said the number of trees to be felled was not as many as that feared earlier as 98% of YEIDA land in the area is agricultural.

14/08/19 Meenakshi Sinha/Times of India

Security agencies at Delhi international airport went into a tizzy after a hoax bomb call was received on Monday, three days ahead of Independence Day, affecting flight operations at Terminal 2 for around 70 minutes, officials said. "A bomb threat call for Terminal 2 was received by Delhi Police at 8.49 pm on Monday," they said.

The departure area of the Indira Gandhi International Airport's (IGIA) Terminal 2 was immediately evacuated and all passengers were moved at Gate no 4 at the departure level, while arriving passengers were on hold inside aircraft, the officials said. "After a detailed search operation for about an hour by the Bomb Disposal Squad (BDS) and the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), it was found to be a hoax," they said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Airport, Sanjay Bhatia said all the stakeholders were immediately informed and alerted. "Terminal 2 was checked thoroughly. A comprehensive search operation was done and nothing suspicious was found. The caller has been identified and he has denied making any such calls. The call has been declared as non-specific," he said. A case under relevant sections has been registered and investigation is underway, he said.

The airport officials said that operational normalcy was restored in departure as well as arrival area of Terminal 2 at 10 pm. **On August 8, aviation security regulator BCAS issued an alert asking 19 airports across the country, including Delhi's IGIA, to enhance the existing security measures so that no untoward incident takes place during Independence Day celebrations this year.**

The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) alert came three days after the Centre revoked provisions of Article 370 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Meanwhile, CISF officials also said a mock exercise of bomb threat was conducted at all the terminals of the Delhi airport between 9 pm and 10.10 pm.

13/08/19 PTI/Financial Express

Imphal: Six illegal migrants detained by police at Imphal airport on Saturday for possessing fake Aadhaar cards have turned out to be Muslims from Myanmar.

Deputy inspector general of police (Range I) Themthing Ngasangva told reporters on Sunday night that the foreigners' checkpost manned by the state police at Imphal airport was alerted after they received specific information that some illegal migrants would land at the airport on Saturday morning.

Subsequently, the six migrants were detained for verification around 9.20 am. During interrogation, it was found that only one of them could speak Hindi, while the rest five speak Urdu.

All of them possessed Aadhaar cards and three of them had their addresses in Manipur.

Suspecting foul play in their entry to the state, the inspector of the check post submitted a report to the officer in charge of Singjamei police station here for conducting a proper verification.

During investigation, all the six failed to give satisfactory answers pertaining to their origin, purpose of visit and their destination, the senior police officer said.

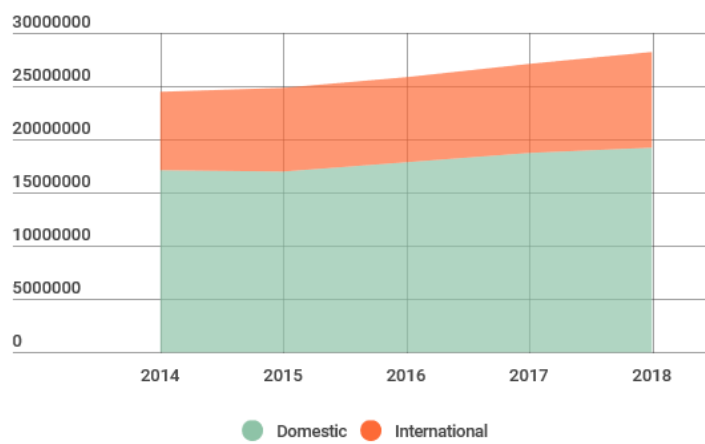
He added that an ATM card in the name of one Hoe Myint Naing of Yangon were seized from them.

13/08/19 Times of India

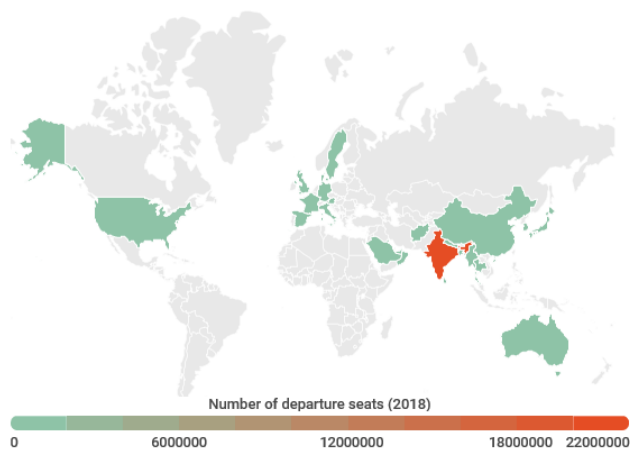
Airline in focus: Air India

Headquarters	Delhi, India
Total ASKs (2018)	61,303,075,000
Total seats (2018)	28,217,990
Total departure points (2018)	96
Total non-stop routes (2018)	214
Total countries (2018)	29

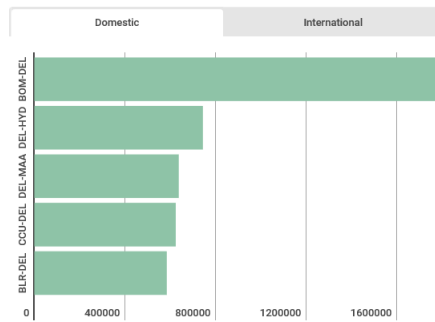
Total seats



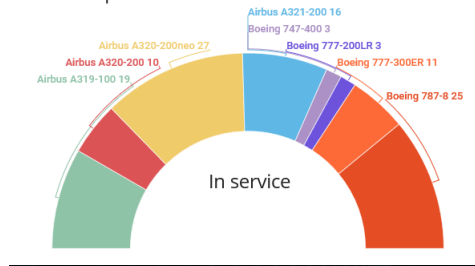
Operating countries



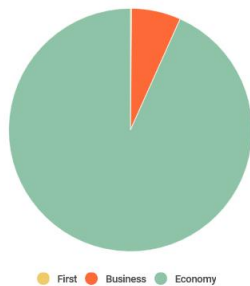
Biggest routes (by departure seats in 2018)



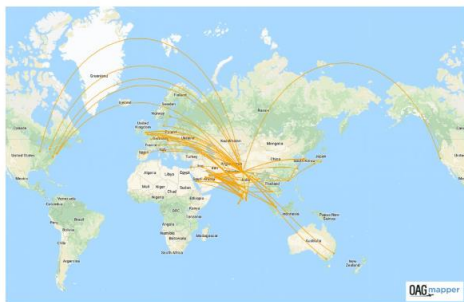
Fleet composition



Seat breakdown (2018)



International route network (summer 2019) - click to enlarge:



[Routes online 15/08/2019](#)

Mumbai: Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has seized approximately 75 kg sandalwood worth Rs 4.9 lakhs from the baggage of a Sudanese national at Mumbai airport.

Acting on a tip-off by an informer, on August 11, CISF personnel stopped Bakri Abbas Hussain Ahmed, a Sudanese national, at departure gate 3 of Terminal 2 for checking of his luggage on grounds of suspicion. Ahmed was supposed to fly to Addis Ababa by Ethiopian Airways.

During the screening of his bag through X-BIS machine, some suspicious items were noticed. On physical checking of the bag, 75 Kg sandalwood wrapped in a plastic sheet was found inside it.

On further enquiry, the passenger failed to produce any valid documents or any satisfactory reply about carrying of sandalwood in such a large quantity following which he was apprehended on profiling basis.

The matter was immediately informed to the concerned officials including the customs and Maharashtra Forest departments.

13/08/19 Yahoo!

Chennai: Customs officials foiled bids to smuggle gold worth Rs 33.7 lakh by two persons at Chennai airport.

On Sunday, two passengers, Khamarudheen (27) and Rahila (23) of Trivandrum, who had arrived from Trivandrum by Air India flight, were intercepted by Air Intelligence Unit officers on suspicion of carrying gold. On being questioned, they gave evasive replies, and subsequently, a personal search was carried out. On search of Khamarudheen, two gold chains and four rings weighing 363 grams, were recovered.

One gold chain weighing 509 grams valued at Rs 19.70 lakh was recovered from Rahila. Further investigation is in progress.

14/08/19 New Indian Express

A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight 6E 636 returned to the taxiway from the runway at Nagpur airport on Tuesday due to a serious technical snag detected by the pilot.

Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari was also onboard the flight.

Confirming the development, the senior director of the Nagpur airport, Vijay Mulekar, said that the flight to the national capital did not take off due to a "technical fault".

All the passengers on board the flight, including Nitin Gadkari, safely deboarded the plane after the pilot aborted take-off.

Currently, the passengers are waiting at the Nagpur airport, according to an airport official.

In another similar incident, a Mumbai-Bound Air India Express flight returned to the terminal from the runway at Dubai international airport after passengers on board complained of suffocation due to an air conditioning glitch in the plane.

13/08/19 Meghna Sen/IBTimes

The country's only public sector commercial airline, Air India, has been suffering from a heavy financial burden. The airliner saw its divestment programme, in which the government was expected to retain a part stake, fail last year. However, the company is all set to witness a second attempt at divestment.

The company's Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani explains to Furquan Moharkan of DH how the debt (Rs 58, 352 crore) has become a monster for the public sector aviation behemoth.

Edited excerpts:

Your specialisation has been turning around loss-making companies. When do you think, you can turn around AI?

Considering the severe financial constraints that we have been facing, I am satisfied. We are, however, looking at disinvestment. So **the focus at present is running the organisation well and enhancing its value by increasing the flying hours of the aircraft. We are introducing many new flights – both domestic and international – but with the same fleet. This would increase our revenue from the existing inventory.**

You talked about financial constraints. Is it debt?

Our problem is the huge debt. **Minus the debt, the airline can be turned around, provided the working is not hampered by the inherent constraints of the government way of working. Yes, the massive debt is a major problem. The only way to reduce debt is to earn more operating profits than the debt servicing amount.**

Your cash flow is critical. Does that bother you?

Yes, cash flow is an issue for us. It is so because of the huge gap between the total income and the total cost of the company.

Air India lost Rs 15 crore on an average each day. With thin margins, how long do you think it is sustainable?

Unless we get equity support, the business is just not sustainable. And in this scenario, disinvestment is the only option, provided it succeeds. We also need to appreciate that running a highly complex business like an airline efficiently within the confines of the complex government rules and limitations, is almost impossible.

And what about losses?

While the airline continues to perform well and is poised to make operating profits this year, the net losses are on account of the debt servicing charges. The depicted loss figure does not reflect the true state of the airline.

Air India has issues with on-time performance. Why and what is the road ahead?

It is a symptom and not the disease. If I don't have money to pay, how can I operate efficiently? Till recently, we had 20 grounded planes because of a shortage of funds. Everything is linked to the huge deficit of money.

Corruption is a major issue in PSUs...

Let me say that corruption is not a major issue in Air India. Moreover, we have a very proactive approach to this issue. Malafide is not tolerated and the subject of corruption is also brought on the table at every possible opportunity. Ultimately corruption is linked to the complexity of processes and process reforms need to be carried out.

Given what is happening, what about employee motivation?

I would not say that they are in a high state of motivation, but they aren't demotivated either. Our plans at expansion and growth also tend to infuse energy in the organisation. I also maintain a very open style of management wherein there is ground connect of the management with the field level staff.

And ownership model? Hasn't it been impacting your finances?

Last year, we added Airbus A321 aircraft on a lease basis. **So we are moving more and more towards the leasing model of business.**

Impact of Jet grounding?

We saw a marginal increase in our passenger loads. However, that withered away as private airlines added capacity, some of it by taking on lease the Jet's grounded planes. We, because of our complex way of working, could not add capacity.

The Deccan Herald 13/08/2019

Air India received eight sexual harassment complaints in the first half of 2019 itself, as compared to the 10 sexual harassment complaints in 2018. Ashwani Lohani, Air India's chief, told the employees through a text on May 16 this year that sexual harassment cases are often being witnessed in Air India and "the airline needs to come down very very heavily on such offenders." The chairman's message came after a woman pilot had alleged a commander of sexual harassment.

In May 2018, an Air India hostess had accused an AI senior of sexual harassment for the last six years. The woman had written to Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding the same and demanded justice.

According to the Economic Times, "During 2018, 10 complaints of sexual harassment have been filed at Air India. Between January 1 and July 1 of 2019, eight complaints of sexual harassment have been received." It is also being said that the airline is dealing with such cases in the strictest way possible. After a woman pilot alleged a commander of sexual harassment, the spokesperson issued a statement saying, "Air India has set up an inquiry against its senior captain on sexual harassment case after receiving a complaint from a woman pilot." The woman pilot was being trained under the captain she has filed this report against.

As compared to the 10 sexual harassment complaints in 2018, Air India received eight sexual harassment complaints in the first half of 2019 itself.

According to Times of India, the woman in her complaint says, "The instructor reportedly suggested the two to have dinner at a city restaurant in Hyderabad on May 5 after the training session was over. I agreed as I had done a few flights with him and he seemed decent. We went to a restaurant at around 8 pm and this is where my ordeal started. He started with telling me how depressed and unhappy he was in his married life. He also asked me how I coped with my husband living away and whether I didn't need to have sex every day... At some point, I told him I did not want to talk about all this and called a cab."

12/08/19 She The People

Indore: Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport will soon become the base of operations for a private firm dealing in aircraft simulation, which will also launch its maiden flight from Indore.

Airport Authority of India (AAI) has given green signal to the firm. Airport officials said that the firm with its headquarters in Gurugram had earlier submitted a proposal seeking permission to make Indore airport its base to start flight operations to and from Indore. "The firm has been given permission to make Indore airport its base of operations and night parking space for two aircraft has been allotted to it," airport director Aryama Sanyal told TOI.

She said that this permission from AAI would allow the firm to import aircraft, and it has **plans to start flight operations from Indore airport to cities like Surat, Nagpur, Jabalpur, Ahmedabad, Nashik** etc.

"A final decision about routes is yet to be taken by the firm, but it is expected to launch flight operations by end of this year," she said.

Officials pointed that after Indigo, this would be the second airline to have night parking space at airport.

"Entry of a new airline would be addition for the airport with connectivity expected on new routes," they said.

13/08/19 Times of India

New Delhi: **Union civil aviation minister on Saturday said there would be no compromise on the safety of passengers and stressed that the narrative that airfares were shooting up was wrong.**

Speaking at the 12th International Conference-cum-Awards on civil aviation and cargo hosted by the Assocham, Puri also said an alternative mechanism was worked out to look into the disinvestment process of state-owned Air India.

He lauded the Union budget and said there was **already 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) in several areas of the civil aviation sector but the budget had pointed out two specific sectors for FDI — maintenance and repair and leasing.**

Puri said he was currently working on a 100-day programme and a five-year vision document for both the housing and urban affairs and the civil aviation ministries.

He said his instructions to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was not to compromise on security.

“The DGCA knows its job. I do not know what the DGCA had been doing earlier, but as far as I am concerned, my instructions are simple on safety that there should be no compromise.

12/08/19 Ronald Lewis/Stock News Brief

For Indian airlines, the current commercial fleet of 500+ aircraft is likely to double within the next 7-10 years. And this fleet requires adequate airport capacity – for developing networks, for parking the aircraft and for flying the aircraft. As of the latest count, there are 137 operational airports across the country and more are being developed. And within these, metro airports continue to be key to aviation traffic with about 61 percent of the domestic traffic and about 73 percent of international traffic still originating from the six metro cities. All of these airports operate as monopolies – which has consequential impacts on affordability and access.

Current model ensures monopolies

The current model of airport development is based on ensuring airport monopolies. The airports argue that since airport development requires substantial investment and involves long gestation periods, a monopoly is the only way for airports to ensure a return on capital. Thus the rules such as “right of first refusal” which are in direct contravention of the stated policy goal of driving affordability and access.

In cities where airports should have complimented existing airports, operators insisted on water-tight contracts that effectively shut down or ban use of the older airports. Case in point: Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Cochin. A similar fight will likely play out in Goa once the Mopa airport comes into existence.

In all cases the disadvantage flows to the end user: the passenger.

Airport funding mechanism has been such that the costs of capacity are borne by passengers via development fees. And airports spend significant time and effort to ensure that several areas are covered under the regulatory asset base – thereby enabling a levy of development fees. These fees are captive fees given that the airports are monopolies. The passenger simply has no other option if wishing to travel by air. The proposition is both unfair and unjust.

The numbers speak for themselves. For instance at Delhi airport, the final project cost was 3.8 times the initial estimate and in the case of Mumbai it was 1.7 times the initial estimate. The cost of these overruns was covered by the flying public. Both airports were allowed to levy development fees to the tune of nearly Rs 3,400 crore. The contribution via fees levied on passengers being 1.2X–1.4X the equity contribution in the case of Delhi and 3.0X–3.2X in the case of Mumbai.

13/08/19 Satyendra Pandey/CNBC TV18

Starting Friday, passengers will pay marginally less for air tickets as the User Development Fee (UDF), which saw a hike in April this year, will revert back to its former rates. The revised UDF rates had come into effect for a period of four months from April 16 to August 15 after the airport tariff regulator Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) allowed Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) to hike the user development fee.

The UDF, which was revised from Rs 139 to Rs 306 for domestic departures and from Rs 558 to Rs 1,226 for international departures, will go back to the former rates starting August 16, officials from KIA's operator Bengaluru International Airport Limited (BIAL) confirmed.

This, however, will not affect the ticket prices much.

A BIAL official told Indianexpress.com. "The dip in the UDF will not directly impact airfares as tickets are priced based on a dynamic pricing system followed by individual airlines, based on AERA guidelines. The UDF is a minor factor that affects the pricing and hence will not affect the ticket prices by and large," the official explained.

The revised UDF charges will be in effect till March 31, 2020. UDF is levied on passengers by airports to recover the investment made by airports on various development-related works.

13/08/19 Ralph Alex Arakal/Indian Express

Dhanbad: Excitement soared to new heights on Monday as civil aviation department director Captain Surendra Prasad Sinha launched a glider flying training facility under the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)-approved glider flight licence course at the Barwaddah-based airstrip here.

The short-term aviation training facility, which is the **third of its kind in Jharkhand after Ranchi and Dumka**, will be available for all selected aspirants who have cleared Plus Two with physics, chemistry and maths, and are at least 16 years of age.

The course fee has been kept at Rs 48,800 for general category trainees and Rs 24,000 for ST/SC ones. The training is free for youths from the Pahariya particularly vulnerable tribal group.

The module, designed for six months up to a year, depending upon individual proficiency, includes 20 hours of cockpit training and extensive ground training.

On Monday, the facility took off with a bhoomi puja at the airstrip in the presence of a large number of officials, including trainer Captain Balwant Narayan, trainees, mediapersons and visitors. Talking to the media at the Barawaddah airstrip, Captain Sinha said: "These training facilities (in Jharkhand) have been launched with the aim of using abandoned or unused airstrips. Here, all interested candidates can use the facility to get trained on glider flying. But in the future, we do plan to launch a commercial pilot license course."

Flight instructor Captain Balwant Narayan said they were starting with a batch of 10. "We will initially conduct the training with the available single-engine ultra-light motor glider Pipistrel Sinus 912 (a light sport aircraft)," he said. "We will gradually expand the training facility to include more students with the arrival of one more glider."

13/08/19 Praduman Choubey/Telegraph

Panaji: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has initiated the process to select a concessionaire to operate the Rs 50 crore multi-level car parking facility at Goa International Airport and to manage traffic in the arrival and departure lanes.

With the arrival and departure lanes at Goa International Airport best described as chaotic, AAI expects the move to streamline traffic at Goa's lone airport.

AAI plans to have a lane management agency in place and also notify the parking fees by the year end, sources said.

"The commercial bidding process has started and once we have a contractor, we will open the car parking facility," said Goa airport director Gagan Malik.

The parking facility has been lying idle for over four years after the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security refused to grant clearance citing security issues. Malik said that a blast protection wall has been built between the parking facility and the airport's terminal bays.

“Whatever security norms were required we have met and now it’s just a matter of getting formal approval. By September end we will be able to have a better picture,” Malik said.

13/08/19 Newton Sequeira/Times of India

Trichy: An air traveller from Mysore was arrested for possessing a passport with a fake seal at the Trichy international airport on Saturday. He was held when he arrived here from Kuala Lumpur. According to the police, the accused who has been identified as N Mohammed Usman, a native of Narasima Swamy Tittu at Hunsur, in Karnataka. He had obtained a passport and had gone to Malaysia and had overstayed there.

While returning to India, he had used bogus documents and seal to conceal his overstay to show that he travelled to New Delhi on May 5, 2018 and February 21, 2019.

However, he was caught red-handed after he arrived at the Trichy international airport on August 10 by the immigration authorities.

13/08/19 Times of India

New Delhi: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has chalked out a plan to invest about Rs 19,000 crore in upgrading airport infrastructure in the country, especially in smaller cities, in the next three years.

“We are not making investments in just smaller airports but also airports like those in Kolkata and Chennai. While work on upgrade at many airports has begun, work at some of the others will begin soon,” said a senior AAI official, who did not wish to be identified.

The official said the **investment is being made in improving runway capacity as well as building terminal capacity.**

“We are **also building a lot of parking bays at airports** like the one in Kolkata to provide enough parking for planes that airlines plan to induct,” said another official, who also spoke on condition of anonymity.

The state-owned AAI is set to add 273 parking bays at 24 airports to help resolve the impending parking woes of airlines. The slots are evenly distributed across the country, with about 82 in the south, 70 in the east and northeast, 61 in north and 60 in the western part of the country.

Over and above the upgrade plan, the AAI is also working on plans to build new airports in Gujarat’s Rajkot, Jharkhand’s Dhalbhumgarh and in Hollongi and Halwara in the Northeast. “We are seeking funds from market through debt and other modes to fund these projects. Some of the funding will also come from our profits,” said an AAI official.

12/08/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Chennai: GoAir has been awarded ‘India’s Most Trusted Brand 2019’ by International Brand Consulting (IBC) Corporation, USA.

The award was received by marketing and e-commerce vice-president Shabnam Syed and PR and corporate communications vice-president Bakul Gala at a ceremony in New Delhi.

An official press release said, **“IBC’s consumer survey has factored GoAir’s On Time Performance (OTP), where GoAir has topped the charts for 10 months in a row, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). Likewise, GoAir has clocked highest load factors during this time period.** Since inception, GoAir has carried 73.3 million passengers and the company is aiming for 100 million passengers in the next two years. **GoAir currently operates 300 daily flights and the company has chalked out an aggressive expansion plan, including international routes. In 2016, GoAir doubled its order of aircraft to 144, and the company will be adding one aircraft every month to its fleet, on average.”**

12/08/19 News Today

Thiruvananthapuram: The Thiruvananthapuram international airport handled 25,000-odd additional flyers and 128 flights during the two-day period from August 9 morning when the Cochin international airport remained closed for air traffic after the taxiway got flooded.

This is the second consecutive year that the premier airport of the State is handling international and domestic flights bound for Kochi following the closure of the runway at Cochin airport.

In the 15-day period from August 15, 2018, when Cochin international airport remained closed for air traffic, the Thiruvananthapuram international airport handled 1.15 lakh additional flyers and 1,235 movements of flights, helicopters, and military operations.

All the diverted flights were full. The flyers in the return additional flights diverted from Kochi to the city were less on Friday. But the passenger load in the return flight picked up on Saturday with the KSRTC providing connectivity and flyers coming via road to the capital.

The load on Saturday in the return flights was in the range of 70 to 80% and the two additional flights of Emirates on Sunday was full.

"The additional flights were handled with ease and without any complaints from the flyers. This was achieved without upsetting the scheduled 100 international and domestic flights handled daily by the airport. This has come as a feather in the cap for the airport," C.V. Ravindran, airport director, told The Hindu.

The operations wing managed the situation through efficient bay management, apron control, and traffic management, the airport director, who oversaw the additional flight operations, said.

12/08/19 S. Anil Radhakrishnan/The Hindu

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) has permitted Shree Airlines today to operate chartered flights to Varanasi in India. With this permission the airline company can now conduct a demonstration flight to Varanasi and take forth other procedures for regular operation.

According to Anil Manandhar, marketing manager of the airline company, the demonstration flight will be conducted on Monday with a 78-seat Bombardier CRJ 700 aircraft carrying representatives from CAAN and the airline company.

"After conducting the demonstration flight, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) will decide whether to provide air operator's certificate (AOC) to us," he said. Manandhar further added that the company expects to contribute to the Visit Nepal Year (VNY) 2020 campaign through this flight to Varanasi.

It has been almost one-and-a-half years since the airline company had sought permission from CAAN to operate short-distance international flights.

"We have finally received permission to operate flights to Varanasi after a long wait and it will definitely contribute to VNY 2020," Manandhar said, adding, "India is the largest market for the country's tourism sector. So, we are aiming to carry more Indian tourists to Nepal." He, however, said that the company had asked CAAN for permission for scheduled flights. "If we could operate scheduled flights then we will be able to bring more Indian tourists to the country," he said, "But for now CAAN has given permission for chartered flights only."

12/08/19 Himalayan Times

Kolkata: Japan is in discussions with India to solve the long drawn impasse over the procurement of US-2 amphibious aircraft by the Indian Navy and hopes that a solution will be found soon, Kenji Hiramatsu, Ambassador of Japan in India said here on Saturday.

ShinMaywa US-2 is a Japanese large STOL amphibious aircraft designed for air-sea rescue work. Indian government is reportedly in talks with Japan to procure about 12 of those aircraft.

"We would like to see more transfer of technology and equipment to India. There have been talks about the procurement of "US-2" for a long time. But due to certain budgetary constraints and other issues, the procurement by the Indian Navy has not happened," Hiramatsu said in an event organised by the Bengal Chambers here.

"We are still discussing. Indian Navy is ready to acquire the US-2. Hopefully we will soon find a solution. This is the best amphibian aircraft in the world," he said.

The envoy said no concrete discussions have taken place between the two countries on the procurement of Japanese submarines by the Indian Navy.

Hiramatsu said he is encouraging the defence companies in Japan to engage in more business opportunities with India and said more deals might take place in the near future.

10/08/19 IANS/Outlook

Chennai: Customs officials foiled bids to smuggle gold, beauty enhancement drugs, iPhones, Apple watches and Intel processors, worth Rs 33.7 lakh, through Chennai airport on Saturday. A department release said Murali Krishnaswamy, 59, of Chennai, who had arrived from Bangkok by Thai Air flight was intercepted on suspicion of carrying gold or cosmetic drugs.

On examination of his baggage, different types of beauty enhancement drugs were found. These include five boxes of Placenta Luchini fresh cell therapy injections, 50 boxes of Supreme Gluta white tablets, 28 boxes of Glutex 5GS micro-cellular ultra whitening kit and 24 boxes of mixing white platinum antioxidant DNA repair and 10 boxes of Chronol 500 mg Disulfiram tablets, all valued at Rs 5 lakh. They were seized as the passenger could not produce invoice and certificate issued by Assistant Drug Controller.

In another case, Imran Khan, 23, of Chennai, who arrived by Air India flight from Dubai, was intercepted and on examination of his checked-in baggage, eight Apple watches, 620 Intel i3 processors, three Samsung gear watches and four iPhone XS, all valued at Rs 13.15 lakh were found concealed.

In yet another case, Mohamed Ibrahim, 33, who arrived from Singapore by Fly Scoot flight was intercepted at exit on suspicion of carrying gold. On persistent questioning, he accepted to have concealed gold in the form of rubbery spread inside his rectum. On extraction through heating process, gold weighing 404 grams, valued Rs 15.61 lakh, was recovered.

11/08/19 New Indian Express

Ahmedabad: Security has been tightened at Ahmedabad International Airport after two separate incidents of possible threats in the past three days raised fears, even as an advisory has been sent by the Centre ahead of Independence Day.

The Sardar Vallabhbhai International Airport has been put on high alert and new security measures implemented to prevent any untoward incidents in the days leading up to August 15.

On Wednesday, police arrested 21-year-old labourer Mizannur Rehman from Assam for carrying a paper cutter inside one of his shoes. He was detained at the security checkpoint, when he was on his way to board an Indigo Flight from Ahmedabad to Guwahati in Assam. Police said Rehman claimed that he had left hurriedly from his rented accommodation in Surat when he came to know that his village in Assam had been flooded. In his hurry, he had allegedly forgotten that he was carrying a paper cutter in one of his shoes.

On Friday, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel manning the airport nabbed a 25-year-old man for breaching the premises of the airport by climbing one of its walls. The accused has been identified as Soka Singh from Pilibhit in Uttar Pradesh. Police are not revealing much about the profile of the accused even as sources suggest that he might be mentally unstable.

12/08/19 Indian Express

A 25-year-old mentally challenged man was apprehended by CISF jawans for jumping over the boundary wall of a restricted area at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport. He was later handed over to Ahmedabad local police for further probe.

A case of trespassing has been lodged against the man.

Recalling the incident CISF inspector Hanumanlal Kasodiya said, "On Friday morning at around 9.45 am, the control room got a message regarding a man in a red t-shirt entering the restricted area of the airport." Acting on the information, a team was sent to spot and the man was nabbed.

During primary interrogation, the accused revealed himself as Soka Poushalsind, 25, a resident of Uttar Pradesh. He got inside airport premises by jumping the TW-20 boundary wall. During investigation, the CISF realised that the accused was mentally ill since he could not talk properly, nor could he remember where his residence was.

'A complaint has been lodged with the airport police under IPC section 447 on Saturday and the accused was handover to them for further investigation," said an official.

Meanwhile, Nirajkumar Badgujjar, DCP Zone-4 said, "We have admitted him in a hospital for treatment."

12/08/19 DNA

Imphal: Six Rohingya Muslims have been arrested at Imphal in Manipur for entering India with fake documents.

Manipur Police arrested them on Saturday morning after they deboard an indigo flight from Delhi at Imphal airport.

A top official of the Manipur police said acting on an input that some illegal immigrants would be coming to Imphal by Indigo flight, the Foreigner Check Post (FCP) and a team of Imphal West district police were alerted which detained six suspected passengers.

The official said that the Aadhaar card presented by the six Myanmar nationals were fake.

Sources said the six Rohingyas had Manipur as their address on the Aadhaar card while the rest had Hyderabad.

According to police, one of the detained men could speak Hindi but the rest neither spoke Hindi nor Manipuri, they only understand Urdu.

Police also recovered an ATM card marked as CB Bank Visa in the name of Hoe Myint Naing of Yangon, Myanmar and a cash memo receipt of Myanmarese like script.

12/08/19 North East News

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has decided to conduct a quarterly safety audit of airside operations of all airports in order to check the rise in ground incidents and regulate the airside activities. The audit will commence after two months.

Pointing out the need for preventive measures because of a recent spike in ground incidents across airports, the regulator has told the operators that it has developed a detailed checklist to benchmark safety standards for the operations on the airside.

The regulator will audit an airport's ground facilities, its turnaround and general safety procedures, and the movement of vehicles.

Underground facilities, ground servicing equipment, passenger boarding bridges, condition of the apron, marking and lighting, and availability of foreign object dustbin bins will be checked.

In order to regulate the movement of vehicles in the airside, their fitness and drivers and their knowledge with regard to geography of aerodrome, signs, marking, lighting, radiotelephony operating procedure, terms and phrases used in airside operations, adequate training of driving or operating the relevant vehicles, and the training of employees working at airside will also be checked.

The checklist also includes aircraft turnaround and general safety procedures such as fuelling, pushback, towing, marshalling, mooring, handling of arrival and departure.

The move comes in the background of a rise in ground incidents across airports. Delhi, which has the country's busiest airport, has witnessed seven ground incidents since January.

10/08/19 Arindam Majumder/Business Standard

Four-and-a-half years ago, who would have thought SpiceJet, then struggling to remain operational, would emerge as one of India's most profitable airlines.

The Ajay Singh-promoted airline's return flight to profits in the first quarter comes at a time when the giants of Indian skies are either shutting down or burdened with huge debt.

The no-frills carrier, which posted a net loss of Rs 316 crore last financial year, has in the last one quarter done the unthinkable.

It has posted a record profit, expanded its fleet at an unprecedented pace, increased its market share and posed a challenge to the dominance of the country's largest carrier IndiGo.

Its share price too has zoomed - from Rs 80.30 on February 11 to Rs 137.95 as of close on Friday, a nearly 72 per cent rise in a little over six months.

With good reason. SpiceJet reported its highest-ever quarterly profit at Rs 261.7 crore for the June quarter of FY20 (Q1FY20), as against a loss of Rs 37.9 crore in the June quarter of FY19.

So, what did the trick? Simple. It flew more passengers and managed to earn better returns per seat in the wake of the collapse of Jet Airways. The airlines shared that passenger fares in the quarter were up 11 per cent year-on-year.

This meant operating revenues were at Rs 3002.10 crore against Rs 2220.40 crore for the corresponding quarter last year. On an EBITDA basis, profit is at Rs 747.50 crore as against Rs 100.50 crore for the corresponding quarter last year.

10/08/19 Arshad Khan/New Indian Express

Amaravati: With government approving basic night landing facility for Kurnool airport last week, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) approved Automatic Air Traffic Control (ATC) system was installed at the airport. This will enable all non-scheduled flights to operate without ATC and will help in saving Lakhs per month.

The new system is known as Advance Air Traffic Advisory System (AATAS) and it is fully approved by FAA, USA. This system has been widely used across the world to manage small airports without ATC. In our country, a nod by Airport Authority of India (AAI) is a must for any airport to function. The cost for one shift is about Rs 25 Lakh and for full day operations, it charges Rs 50 Lakhs per month.

With AATAS, the airport can now avoid AAI - ATC during non-watch hours and will help in saving Lakhs per month. AATAS can be used by the upcoming Amaravati aero sports academy and the aviation academy at Kurnool Airport.

10/08/19 Syed Ahmed/News18.com

Kochi: Flight operations from the international airport Kochi resumed on Sunday afternoon, two days after it was shut due to inundation of the runway area following heavy rains, an official said.

The Abu Dhabi-Kochi Indigo flight touched down at around 12.15 pm, marking the resumption of the operations, the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) official said.

Check-in commenced at 9 am in both the domestic and international terminals.

The airport had on Friday suspended all operations till 3 pm on Sunday as the runway area in the airport was waterlogged due to floods.

The operations were suspended as there was a rise in water level in Periyar river and a canal adjacent to the airport due to heavy rains lashing Kerala since last week.

11/08/19 India Today

Thiruvananthapuram: Thiruvananthapuram international airport rose to the occasion and handled 100 additional flights that were diverted following the closure of the Cochin international airport due to flooding of the taxiway.

The additional flights bound for Kochi were handled by the airport authorities in addition to the scheduled flight that reached the premier airport of the State.

The personnel of the airline, customs and immigration worked over time to cater to the needs of the flyers who arrived from various destinations and who came to board these flights.

The constraints in the conveyor belts on account of the ongoing work led to a minor delay and this was overcome by the airline ground staff. The flyers also cooperated with the airline staff and the

airport personnel to get quick service.

The airport personnel led by director C.V. Ravindran handled the wide-bodied aircraft of national carrier Air India, Emirates and Ethiad.

The additional international flights handled were those operated by Fly Dubai, Kuwait Airways, Oman Air, Qatar Airways, Indigo, Spicejet, Etihad, Air India, Air India Express and Air Air Arabia.

11/08/19 The Hindu

Hyderabad: In perhaps one of the biggest gold haul, the Air Intelligence Unit at Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport has arrested a man for allegedly trying to smuggle 9.21 kg yellow metal. The arrest was made on Friday night by the sleuths.

The man said to be gold courier was taken into custody by the customs department sleuths when the accused flew in from Dubai in the United Arab Emirates.

According to a report, the gold bars were hidden in iron boxes which were stuffed into checked-in baggage. A customs department official said the four V-shaped gold bars were concealed in four iron boxes which were intercepted by the officials present at the airport check-in area.

The iron boxes raised the suspicion of the officials and upon opening the boxes with a screwdriver found the gold bars hidden in the boxes.

Police suspect that the arrested man could be working as a courier, who was provided a flight ticket by the person who handed him gold to deliver it in Hyderabad. Smugglers from the gulf country have used various methods to smuggle gold into the country.

11/08/19 MirrorNowNews.com

Bhubaneswar: A Jharsuguda-bound flight had to return to Bhubaneswar due to poor visibility at Jharsuguda airport this morning.

As per reports the Alliance Air flight, a subsidiary of Air India departed from Biju Patnaik International Airport (BPIA) here at 9.05 am and was scheduled to arrive at Jharsuguda Airport is 10.10 am.

However poor visibility forced the flight to return to the state capital.

Earlier the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has decided to install Instrument Landing System (ILS) at Jharsuguda airport to ensure regular service of flights. The system will be installed at a cost of Rs 5 crore and will be ready for operation within the next five months.

11/08/19 KalingaTV

Chennai: 'My controls', announced the captain of an A320 plane that was approaching Chennai airport and took over control of the plane from the first officer. The reason: air traffic control had allotted a short, second runway for landing. Windshear, concave surface and inadequate length make it tough to land on the second runway.

Though this may not be happening all the time, similar scenes in which first officers are deprived of a chance to operate flights are increasingly playing out in cockpits these days.

As DGCA has started to take stringent action against pilots and airlines have started to penalise pilots for slightest of a rough touchdown, senior pilots have started to play safe. And the victims are first officers.

As per practice, captains allow first officers to control the plane during landing so that they will have sufficient experience in handling the aircraft by the time they get promoted after clocking around 1,000 hours.

Lack of clocking enough number of landings may delay promotion of a first officer to a captain unless it is compensated by working on simulators.

A pilot said, "A pilot is made answerable if there is a rough landing even if it is safe. So, many want to avoid filing reports and respond to mails from the safety department. Instead, they will take over the controls if there is a hint that the landing is going to be difficult." Pilots report a hard-landing if it crosses the fixed threshold because it can harm the plane.

"But, these days passengers too have become sensitive. They tweet or shoot a mail even if there was only a mild jolt which may be safe for the plane but must have inconvenienced the passengers. But,

pilots are pulled up for these complaints too," said the pilot.

10/08/19 V Ayyappa/Times of India

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) today suspended two SpiceJet pilots involved in a runway overrun at Mumbai airport for a period of one year.

On July 2, 2019, a SpiceJet flight between Coimbatore and Mumbai was involved in a runway overrun incident at Mumbai airport.

The aviation regulator inquired into the incident and found that the flight floated for a long time before touchdown and missed the touchdown point by 4462 feet leading to the excursion.

Post these findings and after not receiving satisfactory replies from the crew, the aviation regulator decided to suspend them for a year from the date of incident.

The DGCA, under its new DG Arun Kumar, has taken strict action against pilots involved in incidents involving the safety of the flight and passengers.

It has also formulated rules to ensure that even Air Traffic Control officers and ground handling staff at airports are made to go through breath analyser (BA) test to ensure that they do not come to work in an inebriated condition.

10/08/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

New Delhi: Airline passengers may face a much bumpier ride in the future, according to a study published in the journal Nature, which found that climate change is having a greater impact on the jet stream than previously thought.

Scientists at the University of Reading, UK, have discovered that the jet stream has become 15 percent more sheared in the upper atmosphere over the North Atlantic since satellites began observing it in 1979.

Vertical wind shear -- the increase in wind speed at higher altitudes -- causes invisible clear-air turbulence, which can be severe enough to throw airplane passengers out of their seats, researchers said.

It terrifies nervous fliers and injures hundreds of passengers and flight attendants every year, they said.

The study shows for the first time that, whilst the temperature difference between Earth's poles and the equator is narrowing at ground level because of climate change, the opposite is happening at around 34,000 feet -- a typical airplane cruising altitude.

The jet stream is driven by these temperature differences, and the strengthening trend at cruising altitudes is causing an increase in turbulence-driving wind shear, which had gone unnoticed until now.

"Over the last four decades, temperatures have risen most rapidly over the Arctic, whilst in the stratosphere -- around 12 kilometres above the surface -- they have cooled," said Simon Lee, PhD student in Meteorology at the University of Reading.

This has created a tug-of-war effect, where surface temperature changes act to slow the jet down, while temperature changes higher up act to speed it up.

"Our study shows these opposing effects currently balance out, meaning the speed of the jet stream has not changed. However, we looked for the first time at the wind shear, where significant change has previously gone unnoticed."

09/08/19 PTI/India Today

Mumbai: News television network NDTV's founders Prannoy Roy and his wife Radhika, facing an alleged corruption case, were prevented from flying abroad on Friday on the basis of a "preventive" lookout circular (LOC) issued by the CBI.

In a statement, the media company said Roy and his wife were stopped from travelling abroad on the basis of "a fake and wholly unsubstantiated corruption case initiated by the CBI" two years ago.

Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) officials in New Delhi said a "preventive" LOC was issued against the duo in June in connection with alleged fraud in relation to ICICI Bank.

They were stopped from leaving the country on the basis of the LOC, they added.

A preventive LOC is aimed at stopping a person from leaving the country but does not warrant detention by authorities.

Roy and his wife were on their way to an undisclosed destination and were scheduled to return on August 16, NDTV said.

"Today's action is, along with events like raids on media owners, a warning to the media to fall in line- or else," the company said, hinting at intimidation.

10/08/19 PTI/Deccan Herald

Chandigarh: The Chandigarh district court has put stay of four days on the termination notice issued by Chandigarh International Airport Limited (CHIAL) to Chandigarh Industrial and Tourism Development Corporation (Citco) to vacate the domestic lounge premises by August 10.

This decision of CHIAL was challenged by Citco in a district court whereby it was demanded that directions should be issued to set aside CHIAL notice. The matter would come up for hearing on August 14.

In September 2016, the high court had directed the Airport Authority of India (AAI) to approach Citco for setting up lounges at the Chandigarh airport. It was stated that Citco would operate executive lounges at international and domestic terminals and commercial rates were charged for allotted areas as licence fee. But later it was found that passengers don't have time to visit the lounges as there is no stopover of flights at the airport and hence it was prayed to allot the internal and domestic lounges on long-term lease on rental basis. The CHIAL in November 2017 extended the allotment of executive lounges to Citco for five years till 2021. No rebate was given but licence fees was increased by 10%.

Running into losses, Citco decided to shut its lounge for international travellers after giving a 30-day notice to the authorities. However, the other outlet for domestic travellers continued to operate.

On July 2, CHIAL issued a notice for termination of space allotted for domestic lounge to Citco on ground that latter had not fulfilled the conditions of the licence including the termination of licence qua international lounge and Citco was directed to vacate the domestic lounge by August 10.

10/08/19 Neha Sharma/Times of India

Srinagar: For those arriving at the Srinagar airport amidst a complete lockdown and disrupted communication links, only chaos and confusion is in the air, with many desperate to get tickets for return travel.

As a couple of youngsters travelling from New Delhi came out of the airport on Friday morning, they could only see desperate people waiting in long queues outside the ticket counters of the airport.

"Those in queues got PNR numbers, hand-written and stamped, on pieces of paper for air travel from Srinagar," said a youth, after picking up his relatives from the airport. Intending passengers can also be seen waiting in the lawns outside the airport.

The road leading from the airport to the city centre of Lal Chowk, about 12km away, is dotted with para-military personnel, including CRPF and BSF, who assist the J&K Police in enforcing restrictions under Section 144. The road intersections have been blocked by erecting plastic cubes, meant for regulating traffic, and concertina wires, to slow down the thinly moving private vehicles and security or official vehicles. Only one tube is kept open for traffic movement from different sides at such intersections. Even as the blockades are there, the police or CRPF men allow the drivers to move ahead only after brief questioning. The intersections on main roads and links leading to interior localities are seen dotted with security personnel to prevent any law and order situation. Manning a barricade, a security man "regretted the inconvenience" to the commuters and rued that he had not been able to contact his family for the past five days due to the snapped communication links.

09/08/19 Ehsan Fazili/Tribune

Thiruvananthapuram: The airfares between West Asian and Kerala cities are burning a hole in the pockets of expatriates who look to reach home for the coming festival season. There is already 100

to 200 per cent rise in airfares to Kerala at present and it is expected to cross 300 per cent this Onam with the shortage of flights between the state and the Gulf.

What is more shocking is the callousness of national carrier Air India and its Kochi-headquartered low-budget arm, Air India Express. Despite the Centre's permission to the national carrier and its subsidiary to use the slots vacated by the grounded Jet Airways to clear the extra rush on the routes between West Asia and Kerala, both airlines have been dragging their feet.

A senior Air India Express official told Express that most of the slots vacated by Jet Airways are money-spinning routes. For instance, the Thiruvananthapuram-Doha route vacated by Jet would have been taken up by any airline company without a second thought as the occupancy rate on the route is always beyond the market dynamics. Moreover, it is the responsibility of the national carrier to stabilise the route if there is any vacuum or over-exploitation by private airlines.

The vacuum created with the exit of Jet is being effectively used by private airlines by hiking their ticket prices two- to three-fold. The high demand and paucity of enough seats on critical routes allow the airline companies to plunder the passengers under the dynamic ticket pricing system.

10/08/19 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

Thiruvananthapuram: Floodwaters entering the taxiway of the Cochin international airport despite the ₹100-crore mitigation measures taken up following last year's flooding of the airport has baffled the authorities.

Seven aircraft — two each of Air India and Indigo, one each of Etihad, GoAir and Air India Express — and two helicopters are stranded in the airport.

This is the third time the airport is closed since it became operational in June 1999 following floods. Following the 15-day closure last year, flood-mitigation measures were launched with Dutch expertise.

However, the eastern side of the runway has flooded again. "What is baffling us is the surge of water from the Periyar despite the widening and deepening of the diversion canal Chengalthodu. It is a storm water system from Nedumbaserry to the Periyar. Its widening and deepening works have been completed. But the inflow of water is on the reverse direction," sources in CIAL told The Hindu.

Two bridges suggested as part of checking the entry of floodwater across the Chengalthodu at A.P. Varkey road and Chethitodu are nearing completion.

Work on the regulator-cum-bridge proposed at the mouth of the Chengalthodu could not be started due to opposition from residents.

09/08/19 S Anil Radhakrishnan/The Hindu

Mumbai: Central teams probing alleged irregularities at the grounded Jet Airways questioned a chartered accountant — a former auditor and financial adviser to the carrier's founder — about the 2007 buyout of Air Sahara and some other alleged deals that sought to evade taxes.

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) earlier this week questioned Rajesh Chaturvedi, a close aide of Jet founder Naresh Goyal, sources aware of the probes told ET. Chaturvedi has been an auditor to Jet since 2003, and a long-time advisor to Goyal.

Chaturvedi faced SFIO questions over Jet's books and various business deals, especially the 2007 buyout of Air Sahara, sources said. The investigation wing of the Income Tax department, which has allegedly found irregularities in transactions between Jet Airways & its Dubai-based group companies, also questioned Chaturvedi, sources said.

Taxmen believe the structuring of these deals was aimed at evading taxes worth Rs 650 crore.

"Chaturvedi is a close confidant of Goyal, and he counsels leading corporates on structuring deals such that the tax liabilities are minimized," said one of the officials cited above.

10/08/19 Rashmi Rajput/Economic Times

The legal counsel of the resolution professional (RP) for Jet Airways on Thursday informed the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) that paying salary dues of the employees remains a

concern since the airline has no income from operations at present.

Some of the pending receivables of over Rs 50 crore could be used to settle part of the salary dues. The RP has also sought the permission of the committee of creditors (CoC) to liquidate some assets, its counsel told the bench. These assets would include receivables from ticket sales, which are due to the company. Last month, the tribunal directed the resolution professional of Jet Airways to discuss concerns over payment of salaries with the CoC, citing the need to ensure payment for the “survival of employees”. In the last meeting of the CoC, lenders expressed their inability to provide additional funding for settling salary dues. At present, Jet Airways has around 7,400 employees on its payroll. The RP’s legal counsel also informed the tribunal that about 200 employees have been asked to continue working with the airline for maintenance operations on a pro tem basis, of which 135 have so far agreed.

The RP also submitted its fortnightly progress report on the resolution of Jet Airways to the tribunal on Thursday.

In the matter of the office of Jet Airways at the Siroya Centre (in Andheri), the counsel informed the NCLT that Luckystar, the owner of the property, and the RP are trying to reach an-out-of-court settlement.

09/08/19 Financial Express

Nagpur: Two GoAir staffers, Akshay Patil and Nilay Janbandhu, have been booked for abetting suicide of 19-year-old ground crew Manthan Chavan. The teen committed suicide at his place at Chandramani Nagar in south Nagpur on May 30.

Patil worked as a manager in the Mumbai-based private airlines. His co-accused Janbandhu was senior ramp officer. They were held responsible for Chavan's drastic decision.

Chavan, only son of his parents, was ailing with jaundice. He was on leave but wanted to get it extended due to frail physical conditions.

The seniors were allegedly harassing Chavan to resume despite him not recovering yet from illness. It's learnt the phone call details and communications with the GoAir's senior staffers were one of the crucial grounds for the police to register the offence under 306 of Indian penal code for abetting the suicide.

Before hanging himself, Chavan left a suicide note addressing his mother who is serving in the Nagpur city police. He wished his mother a happy birthday and apologized for committing suicide.

09/08/19 Soumitra Bose/Times of India

New Delhi: The Modi government ran up a bill of Rs 35.67 crore in 2018-19 for the upkeep of 27 ‘ghost’ airports from where no flights take off, an RTI query has revealed. These 27 are among a total of 31 non-operational airports in the country. There are another 15 airports that are operational but no scheduled flights operate from there.

The AAI manages 136 airports/civil enclaves (CE) but technically only 90 of them are operational at present. A CE is an area at a military air base allotted for the use of commercial airlines.

This information was shared by the directorate of finance and accounts, AAI, in reply to an RTI query seeking information on airports, number of non-operational airstrips as well as expenditure and losses incurred by non-operational airports in 2018-19.

The RTI has given a list of 31 non-operational airports managed by the AAI and shared losses incurred by 27 of them in 2018-19, saying that the remaining four are new ones.

These 27 non-operational airports were built at a cost of Rs 40.69 crore.

Even though non-operational airports do not handle flights, they need to be maintained, their staff paid, and depreciation accounted for.

“We are trying to initiate air routes in some of the ghost airports. But airlines will only operate if there is a good demand from flyers. An airline cannot be instructed or forced to do so,” said a source at the RTI cell of the AAI.

Rajiv Jain, spokesperson of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, said the government has already planned

concessions on parking charges for aircraft at ghost airports to attract airlines.

“The AAI has been making efforts to start operations in all of these airports using market-based bidding under the regional connectivity scheme (RCS), slot coordination meetings, discussions with stakeholders and implementation of incentive schemes,” Jain added.

Under the RCS, also known as UDAN or Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik, airlines compete to win subsidies to operate flights linking small airports with bigger ones.

09/08/19 Ifrah Mufti/Print

Star Alliance has signed a partnership agreement with NEC Corporation to develop a biometric data-based identification platform for its member airlines’ frequent flyer programs.

In a joint statement, Star Alliance and NEC said the platform would advance their “strategic vision of delivering a seamless customer journey, while strengthening loyalty value proposition within the travel ecosystem”.

The service will be available to travellers who are both enrolled in one of the Star Alliance member airline’s frequent flyer programs and have authorised the use of their biometric data.

For travellers who opt in, the biometric identification system based on facial recognition technology would enable hands-free passage through check-in kiosks, bag-drop, lounges, and boarding gates, which currently require both a passport and boarding pass, Star Alliance and NEC Corporation said. The biometric system was expected to make its debut at a Star Alliance airport hub by the first quarter of calendar 2020.

While the platform would allow a seamless boarding experience, that was not guaranteed – passengers may still need to produce their passports as they negotiated security and immigration procedures.

In the statement, the partners said personal data including photo and other identification information would be encrypted and safely stored within the platform, which has been designed to comply with data protection laws.

“Personal data will only be processed with the consent of the passenger,” the pair said in the joint statement.

Star Alliance chief executive Jeffrey Goh said NEC was a strong partner with a shared vision for seamless air travel experience.

NEC Corporation chief executive Takashi Niino said the company was pleased to work with the alliance to improve the customer experience.

Star Alliance currently has no Australian carriers on its global roster of 28 airlines which service over 1,300 airports with more 19,000 flights daily.

However, 11 of its 28 members serve Australia with their own aircraft. The 11 were Air New Zealand, Air Canada, Air China, Air India, All Nippon Airways, Asiana Airlines, EVA Air, Singapore Airlines, South African Airways, Thai Airways and United.

08/08/19 Australianaviation.Com.Au

We all have heard of many stories of bitter fights between the Air India employees. Fight between pilot and crew, Commander and First Officer, crew and crew, etc. Many of these at times have reportedly turned ugly with the two parties nearly coming to blows with each other over small issues. But, in a first of sorts, the latest fight making the news in the Air India corridors is between two groups of women cabin crew. And the contention was who is after all fit to serve in the prestigious SESF (Special Extra Section Flights) category that caters to VVIPs on board.

The SESF or VVIP aircraft engages the President, the Vice President and the Prime Minister of the country.

India Today TV is in the possession of two letters written by two cabin crew members and addressed to the CMD of Air India Ashwani Lohani. These two letters have been written on 30 July 2019 and 1 August 2019, respectively. The letters reflect that there is clear dissatisfaction among a certain group of female employees with some of the crew members chosen for SESF training. While one letter states how some crew members aren't eligible for the crucial and prestigious job the other states the opposite. The letter dated 30 July 2019 is written by Ms AK (name changed) a manager based out of Bangalore. The letter reads, "Sir, we 11 crew members of the Airbus SESF fleet are blocked in CMS roster and have been intimidated about our Boeing SESF training from 5 August 2019. We got to know to our utter surprise that many Boeing cabin crew got together and visited you and put in writing against our training." The letter further reads, this opportunity (of serving the VVIPs) had always been restricted to a particular section of the crew, which is totally for discrimination. Today when justice is prevailing then a number of Boeing crew [members] have problems, when a fair number of Bom Boeing fleet crew got AGMs promotion at a time neglecting Airbus or multi fleet or pilferage case crew becomes Bom CCTS principal, then no one made a hue and cry about it. DGCA rule violating crew is handling management profile job. She further adds, my recommendation for being Boeing SESF crew came many times from PMO, from ministers, dignitaries and common esteemed passengers and so I guess I am worth it. Secretary MOCA has written an appreciation for my work. As a reply to this letter, presuming that the contents were heard by the other group, an open letter was written on 1 August by another female cabin crew member to CMD Air India wherein she has detailed how three chosen female crew were not fit for the job. One would think impeccable service record, excellent work ethics, and thorough job knowledge, as well as aircraft experience, would be prerequisites and these have been included in the SESF selection policy of the company: Air India limited. In fact, a crew member has to complete at least one year of flying on a type of aircraft to be able to be even considered for SESF on that aircraft, so that they are more thorough with safety aspects of the aircraft. But all the above-mentioned criteria have been completely ignored in the case of recent proposed training of chosen few cabin crew (Multi fleet 320+ 787 aircraft qualified) for SESF to be started from 5 August 2019, the letter states. It further says that at first there was a list of 44 crew members and then appeared a new list of 11 cabin crew members. Needless to say that the names included in the list are not only controversial but also reek of favouritism. The department has ignored all policies and prerequisites for SESF flights to include these names. And the haste in which their training is being planned and executed seems to have an ulterior motive behind it. The letter then provides details about two registered cases of misconduct against one female crew on the grounds of an alleged violation of assigned duty and alleged misuse of uniform ID card and airport entry pass among other unreported incidents.

The letter also gives details about another female crew stating that her name was not even on the initial list of 44 crew members chosen for training. For the third cabin crew, the letter states that the female crew chosen had herself applied for ground duties as she had just returned after maternity leave. The letter asks how can someone who had voluntarily chosen ground duties and was supposed to appear for the written exam for the same on 4 August 2019 be chosen for flight training from 5 August 2019. Furthermore, the letter asks the CMD Air India to reconsider the names given for the SESF training. Sir, these are just a few of the examples of how the airline is misusing its resources and decisions are being taken to favour a select few blue-eyed. Seems that the airline isn't running professionally but on someone's personal whims and fancies. Moreover, the timings of this training are such that when the airline is striving hard to stay afloat with mounting losses and unpaid salaries/allowances to its employees, I guess no due consideration is given to the financial

implication this training would have. **Air India spokesperson said that following the dispute the above training has been put on hold.**

India today 08/08/2019

Ahmedabad: **Adani Group's flagship firm, Adani Enterprises Limited (AEL) has committed capital expenditure (capex) worth roughly Rs 10,000 crore for its airport business to be incurred over the next 7 years. AEL has also committed an investment of Rs 7,000 crore for coal and mining business during the current fiscal 2019-20.**

Part of its "next set of businesses", as stated by Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani, airport management is being run by AEL's subsidiary Adani Airports Ltd which won bids for 6 airports recently. Of these, three airports including Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru of Airports Authority of India have been approved by cabinet to be leased to AEL in a public private partnership (PPP) mode. Two other airports - Guwahati and Jaipur - are awaiting state approvals, while the one in Trivandrum is in litigation with the Kerala state government.

The committed investment of Rs 10,000 crore will entail an up-front payment of roughly Rs 1,600 crore for the three airports with cabinet approval, followed by an additional up-front payment of Rs 2,000 crore for the remaining airports. In an earnings call on Thursday, Jugeshinder Singh, AEL's chief financial officer, said that the remaining Rs 6000 crore of committed capex will be incurred over a period of 7 years.

"We have committed roughly Rs 10,000 crore investment over a period of 7 years for the airports business. We will have an up-front payment of Rs 3,600 crore for these 6 projects and we will undertake capex of approximately Rs 6,000 crore over a period of 7 years," said Singh, adding that the three airport projects will start generating revenues from April 2020.

Singh stated that **the group would focus on both passenger and non-passenger revenues in its airports business going forward, with the latter to be tapped through its city-side business segment.** "Typically, at Ahmedabad airport, there is about 11.2 million airport passengers, but the non-passenger segment is three times more than that. Currently, it has EBITDA is just about Rs 95 crore. We expect it to be materially higher once we take it up. We expect to cater the other 30 million people, who are not catered to right now," he said.

08/08/19 Vinay Umarji/Business Standard

Agartala: **Taking up the demand for land from Bangladesh to expand the Maharaja Bir Bikram Kishore Manikya (MBB) International Airport here a step ahead, chief minister Biplab Deb on Wednesday said he has approached the external affairs ministry to facilitate the arrangement.**

The 509-acre airport lies right next to the barbed wire fence separating India and Bangladesh. There is no room for expansion on the Indian side of the border. The government wants a kilometre-long stretch on the other side of the fence. In March this year, a verbal proposal regarding this was made by the Indian foreign ministry to its counterparts in Bangladesh. Indian officials were then asked to send a written proposal, which is yet to materialize, sources said.

"The ministry of external affairs is requested to take up the matter with Bangladesh to allocate a piece of land in Brahmanbaria district of the neighbouring country to build an extended runway for the airport. This would allow the airport to operate large aircraft in accordance with international standards," Deb told the media.

The arrangement, if worked out, would be unusual, but not the first. "There are airports situated on the borders of two or even three countries. One such is Geneva International Airport, situated both in Switzerland and France. However, the context in South Asia cannot be compared to that of Europe because of immigration procedure, currency and politics. But it is possible," professor Satyadeo Poddar, senior professor of history at Tripura University, said. **"If Bangladesh agrees to provide land for the Agartala airport, issues of security, sovereignty and commercial viability would have to be**

settled mutually," he added.

08/08/19 Biswendu Bhattacharjee/Times of India

New Delhi: The Delhi high court on Thursday asked the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), which manages the IGI Airport here, to identify buildings around the aerodrome that may be obstacles to the flight path of aircraft and to take action against them.

The direction was issued by a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar while disposing of a PIL seeking directions to DGCA, DIAL, and other authorities to carry out a survey of obstacles around the Delhi airport and remove them.

"It appears that respondents (DGCA, DIAL and AAI) are working to identify the obstacles.

Identification is a continuous phenomena. When an obstacle is identified, it is expected of the respondents to remove the same in accordance with the law, rules, regulations, government policy, as may be applicable in the facts of a case, and after giving adequate opportunity of hearing," the bench said.

It also said the DGCA, DIAL and the Airport Authority of India (AAI) were "conscious of their duty to ensure security" at IGI here and thus, there was no need to issue directions on it.

"One or two lapses in security here or there cannot be reason enough for this court to give guidance to the respondents for more security at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport," the bench said and disposed of the plea by advocate Yeshwant Shenoy.

The court further said the petition "made general and vague allegations", was based on "assumptions and presumptions" and therefore, it saw no reason to issue any further directions in the matter.

08/08/19 PTI/Times of India

Chennai: A bomb threat in one of the aircraft heading to Saudi Arabia from Chennai in Tamil Nadu created panic in the airport. A red alert was sounded at the Chennai International Airport but nothing suspicious was found.

Airport officials received a phone call that was later traced to Tamil Nadu's Salem. The caller had tipped off the officials about a woman who was boarding a flight from Chennai to Saudi Arabia carrying an explosive.

The airport authorities quickly began searching the airport that was heading to Saudi Arabia only to find nothing suspicious.

The threat comes just days ahead of Independence Day celebrations. Security had already been beefed up at the airport ahead of Independence Day next week.

09/08/19 My Nation

New Delhi: A Riyadh-bound Indian has been arrested at Delhi airport for allegedly carrying over 100 bottles of banned cough syrup, Customs officials said on Thursday.

The passenger, whose identity was not revealed, was intercepted by the Customs officers at the Terminal-3 of IGI Airport on Wednesday, they said.

A personal and baggage search of the traveler resulted in the recovery of 110 bottles of 100 ml each of the banned drug, the officials said, without disclosing their market value.

The bottles were seized and the passenger was arrested under relevant provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, they added.

08/08/19 PTI/India Today

New Delhi: In a bid to check high borrowing costs for Air India Asset Holding (AIAHL), the government has exempted the special purpose vehicle from a clause that makes sovereign guarantee on government bonds non-transferable in case of change of ownership of the company.

AIAHL, which houses `29,464 crore of the national carrier's debt, is looking to raise around `22,000 crore through government-backed and government-serviced bonds.

A senior government official said the ministry of finance waived off the condition as it would have increased the cost of borrowing on government-guaranteed bonds. Under this condition, the sovereign guarantee ceases to exist if the ownership of the entity is changed.

Recently, Food Corporation of India (FCI) was extended a similar exemption after its `8,000-crore bond issue in February evoked a poor response. While the food procurement agency could only raise one-third of the proposed amount, the coupon rate was also higher than the benchmark rates.

“To avoid a similar situation, the same exemption will be granted to bonds floated by AIAHL,” the official said.

08/08/19 Arun Nayal/Fiancial Express

Even as the Boeing company struggles with the fallout of the Boeing 737 MAX Lion Air and Ethiopian Airline crashes of 2018 and 2019, a result of inaccurate data being given by the 'angle of attack' sensors to the anti-stall computer to push the nose down, there is a further development in aviation circles. In both the crashes, the drop could not be over-ridden by the pilots and that is why the aircraft crashed.

To address what is called a potential unsafe condition, the European Union Air Safety Agency (EASA) sent out a caution on 31 July warning of a similar if remote possibility of it going similarly wrong on the Airbus 320neos. With 387 737max aircraft grounded and a loss of \$3.4 billion and counting, this notification is not likely to disrupt the 320neos (new engine options) of which over 6500 have been ordered by 70 airlines and nearly 600 are in operation at present, with India's Indigo and American Airlines its biggest buyers with the former in a \$20 billion for 250 aircraft. In 2018 nine 320neos in India were grounded because of a shortage of Pratt and Whitney engine spares.

The reason why there is no dramatic flap over the EASA warning is predicated to new, more efficient engines, combined with airframe improvements and the addition of winglets, named Sharklets by Airbus. Airbus has engaged in due diligence by factoring in a scenario where the angle of attack sensors could fail and is swiftly moving to pre-empt such a possibility.

So, to negate any such event in the air in future the European air safety authorities quickly pushed out an Airworthiness Directive to change the flight manual to handle this scenario which never happened but they say could occur. While it hasn't occurred in the same fashion even once there have been some glitches on carriers according to EASA and the report establishes grounds for pre-emptive caution. **This Airworthiness Directive issued on the A320/321Neos may show that Boeing is not alone with this type of problem, in that the AOA (angle of attack) sensors and its associated computer has occasional malfunctioned or can potentially malfunction in a similar dangerous manner on Airbus A320/321neos.**

08/08/19 Bikram Vohra/Forbes India

Turkish Airlines and KidZania India, the global edutainment theme park, have come together to announce a partnership for the Kidzania Aviation Academy at their Indian theme parks in Mumbai and Delhi NCR.

This is the first time that any airline in India has built an establishment in KidZania to stimulate fun learning about the aviation industry among kids. This strategic partnership between Turkish Airlines and KidZania India is another effort by Turkish Airlines to curate a delightfully different experience for its younger passengers and increase their footprint in India.

Commenting on this association, Tuncay Eminoglu, Vice President, Asia and Far East, Turkish Airlines said “We have always taken care of our younger passengers’ needs through creative methods like introducing eco-friendly toys on flight and providing a vast range of in-flight entertainment options to make their flight experience enjoyable. With this partnership with Kidzania, we wish to incline the younger generation towards building a career in the aviation industry and get introduced to these professions in a better way.”

08/08/19 T3

The civil aviation industry in India has witnessed consistent double-digit growth over the last four years. The Government's focus on connectivity for all has been one of the key drivers propelling its growth and placing the civil aviation industry amongst the fastest growing industries in the country.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) forecasts India to become the third-largest aviation market in terms of passengers by 2024-2025, after China and the United States, surpassing countries such as the UK, Japan, Spain, and Germany.

However, despite the market's breakneck expansion over the past decade and a half, less than ten percent of Indians have ever flown in an aircraft. The industry also continues to face challenges and issues including an inverted tax structure, shortage of infrastructure, high Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) prices, slow growth in regional connectivity and shortage of trained manpower including pilots. An additional cause for concern is that every 3-4 years, a major airline goes defunct in the country.

The record mandate received by the PM Modi-led NDA in the recently concluded general elections provides a great opportunity for the government to address existing challenges and work towards realising the Aviation Vision 2040 put forward by FICCI and KPMG.

What needs to be done? At the outset, industry experts believe that a very comprehensive National Civil Aviation Policy, covering the most critical aspects of the aviation ecosystem, was created with strong industry consultation. With regional connectivity as the cornerstone, the policy provides direction for key elements like airlines, airports, cargo, ground handling and maintenance, repair & overhaul (MRO) besides aspects like aviation safety, financing and talent among others. **What's required now is the urgent implementation of the National Civil Aviation Policy to energise and boost the industry.**

07/07/18 Palash Roy Chowdhury/Financial Express

Bengaluru: Wipro has received a five-year strategic IT and business transformation contract from Aéroports de Montréal (ADM).

ADM operates YUL Montreal-Trudeau International Airport, the third largest airport in Canada, and YMX International Aéroport of Mirabel.

The Bengaluru-headquartered software services exporter said it would work on transforming the business processes using emerging technology solutions. The company would use its artificial intelligence platform Wipro HOLMES to digitise airport operations.

Wipro started its operations in Canada in 1996. The company currently has operations in Toronto, Ottawa, Edmonton, Calgary and Montreal across banking, airports, utilities, oil & gas sectors, and Crown corporations.

"Our digital capabilities and extensive experience in working with some of the biggest airports in the world positions us well for this engagement. This partnership is a testament to the value we bring to the airports industry and our growing footprint in Canada, a strategic market for us," N S Bala, President - Energy, Natural Resources, Utilities & Construction Strategic Business Unit, Wipro, was quoted saying in the release.

07/08/19 Economic Times

Chennai: With the management planning to introduce a new system of aircraft management and optimisation of tarmac space usage, delivery of check-in baggages is likely to become more efficient. Airports Authority of India sources say they are planning to launch a new Multiple Apron Ramp System (MARS), which is likely to upgrade the parking space.

The spurt in the number of flights operating to small towns from Chennai has made the new system necessary. Now, more aircraft of domestic operators can be parked in the main apron during day time. This will ensure that baggage delivery becomes faster, and, thereby, regulating passenger traffic.

The new system will be fully implemented after strengthening the connecting taxiway. It's likely to

take around two months. The airport officials have already obtained necessary approvals from the regulatory authorities for the change. Most major international airports already have implemented the MARS.

“MARS has been configured in remote parking stands of the international apron, with an intention of accommodating more aircraft of domestic operators, especially during peak hours of domestic traffic, when operation of wide-bodied aircraft is limited,” say sources.

“So, now, three of the wide-bodied parking stands at the remote apron (43-45) have been configured to accommodate five narrow-bodied planes, such as an A-320, which is highly used in the domestic sector.”

During the night time, however, when the movement of wide-bodied aircraft is higher, the above-mentioned parking stand will be utilised to park them. **The move comes amid measures by the Chennai Airport to boost its operational capacity, by constructing rapid taxiways and taxi tracks to cut down the waiting time for take-off clearance.**

08/08/19 C Shivakumar/New Indian Express

Coimbatore: Insects have little business in an airport. However, the Coimbatore International Airport is an exception where vivid hues and striking patterns of butterflies welcome passengers from Monday.

An initiative by the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and ‘Act for Butterflies’, the airport terminal sports stickers of 100 butterflies commonly seen in Coimbatore and nearby districts such as the Nilgiris.

“Besides beautifying the airport terminal with colourful stickers, this is an effort to increase awareness of butterflies and the need to conserve them. We chose stickers of 100 butterflies that are widely seen in the region, including Common banded peacock, Tamil yeoman, Tamil lacewing, Indian sunbeam and Crimson rose, to adorn the walls of the airport,” says Mohan Prasath of ‘Act for Butterflies’.

Tamil Yeoman or Tamil Maravan (*Cirrochroa thais*) was recently declared the State butterfly of Tamil Nadu. Common banded peacock (*Papilio crino*) was in the race for State butterfly.

07/08/19 Wilson Thomas/The Hindu

Hyderabad: With the Begumpet Airport recording more than 150 movements a day, authorities are now focusing on implementing better safety measures.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has asked owners of high-rise building, which are located in the funnel zone of Begumpet Airport, to compulsorily install obstruction lights (aircraft warning lights) on rooftops and also apply for NOCs for their properties. The obstruction lights warn pilots about high-rise structures, and help them land aircraft safely, said officials.

The Begumpet airport has been seeing heavy traffic in recent years. VIPs, including top politicians, and industrialists prefer this airport as it located in the heart of the city. Also, the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is located outside the city, requiring longer travel time.

Among the VVIPs that use this airport are Vice-President, M Venkaiah Naidu, who regularly visits Hyderabad for official and non-official purposes, the chief ministers of both Telugu states, and Union and state ministers. Secunderabad MP, G Kishan Reddy, has also been using this airport frequently after becoming Union minister of state for home affairs.

VVIPs, including President, Prime Minister, and Union ministers also prefer arriving at the Begumpet airport. The airport also sees heavy movement of top industrialists and businessmen, who take chartered flights from here.

08/08/19 Sunil Mungara/Times of India

Ahmedabad: A 21-year-old man was apprehended by the police for allegedly concealing a knife in his shoes at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport here, on Thursday.

The youth identified as Minazul Siddique Ali Rehman has been arrested while he was about to board a flight to Guwahati.

Police said that Manazul was associated with textile business in Surat and a native of Dhubri district in Assam.

08/08/19 UNI

Immigration officials separately caught three Indians who landed in Kempagowda International Airport (KIA) from Kuala Lumpur with fake visas.

Arashdeep Singh (20) and Lakshvir Singh from Punjab, flew to Malaysia on tourist visas but stayed illegally there for ten months to work.

The duo said they paid Rs 2.5 lakh in total to a Punjabi agent who secured them a tourist visa and they met a contact in Malaysia who employed them as security guards for ten months. As they worked without salary, they found themselves in a financial crunch and decided to return.

Officials said the two men paid 4700 Malaysian Ringgits to get their visas stamped to return to India. The visas had already expired.

During the clearance process, immigration officials found the fake visa stamps and booked the duo under various sections of the Passport Act. The men were remanded to judicial custody.

08/08/19 Deccan Herald

Chennai: Customs officials seized 1.4kg of gold of 24 carat purity, worth ₹55.25 lakh and cigarettes worth ₹67,000 in separate cases of smuggling at the city airport.

The gold was concealed in a rubbery form in the passengers' rectum.

In one of the cases reported on Wednesday morning, the air intelligence unit intercepted Barakath Ali, 27, and Abdul Khadir, 39, both from Ramanathapuram, who arrived from Dubai. Upon frisking, officials found gold cut bits concealed in their pant pockets. On persistent questioning, the passengers admitted to be concealing gold in a rubbery paste form in the rectum. A total of 771grams of 24 carat purity valued at ₹29 lakh was extracted. On examining their luggage, officials also seized 24 cartons of Dunhill, Benson and Hedges brand cigarettes worth ₹48,000. They were sized under Customs Act, 1962.

In a case reported on Tuesday, officials seized 494grams gold of 24 carat purity, worth ₹18.62 lakh, concealed in the rectum of two passengers from Dubai. Eight cartons of cigarettes worth ₹19,200 were also seized. In a third case, officials seized 202 grams gold worth ₹7.62 lakh.

08/08/19 Times of India

New Delhi: Pakistan has closed its airspace partially. Three out of 11 routes between India and Pakistan have been closed. Air India issued a statement saying it won't affect them. Aviation security agency Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) has also asked all airports to step up security in the wake of the recent developments related to Jammu and Kashmir, saying that "civil aviation has emerged as a soft target for terrorist attacks".

The closing of airspace decision came after Pakistan said it will be downgrading the diplomatic relations with India. The scrapping of Article 370 and bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union territories has finally had its impact on India-Pakistan relations.

Amid uproar over India's Kashmir provisions, Pakistan has also called for the review of bilateral arrangements.

Air India released a statement soon after Pakistan said that it will close three out of 11 routes between India and Pakistan.

Air India said, "One air corridor has been closed requiring a maximum of a 12-minutes diversion. It will not really affect us."

07/08/19 Hamza Ameer/India Today

New Delhi: Aviation watchdog Directorate General of Civil Aviation on Wednesday issued draft guidelines for breath-analyser examination of personnel engaged in aircraft maintenance, Air Traffic Control services, aerodrome operations and ground handling services to detect

consumption of alcohol while on duty. At present, only pilots and cabin crew were put through such tests.

"It will prove as a game-changer and will aid improved safety on the airside. It will significantly help prevent incidents and accidents," news agency PTI quoted a senior DGCA official as saying. According to the draft regulations, the breath analyser test would be applicable for air traffic controllers, aircraft maintenance personnel, ground staff and aerodrome operation personnel. Additionally, fire and rescue personnel, drivers of airport vehicles, ground equipment operators and ground handling staff would also have to undergo the test.

07/08/19 TimesNowNews.com

Singapore: Vistara aims to deploy 50% of its capacity to international routes in the next five years as it gears up for flights to Europe next year and the US and Australia in the next few years, said its CEO.

The airline started its maiden international flight to from Delhi to Singapore on Tuesday. It will start flying from Mumbai to Singapore on Wednesday, Mumbai to Dubai from August 21 and Delhi to Bangkok from August 27.

"We want to start flights to Europe as soon as possible," Leslie Thng told reporters Wednesday. He said the airline would look at London's constrained Heathrow airport and at a later stage or "phase two" of its growth plans, direct flights to Australia and the US.

Vistara currently has a fleet of 30 planes including 7 Boeing 737s that were earlier operated by grounded airline Jet Airways. It will press two more 737s into service this month. It has taken them on lease for periods between 1 and 4 years, said Thng. It operated its maiden international flight with a 737 plane. The arrival and departure slots it has received to operate Singapore, Dubai and Bangkok also belonged to Jet Airways. The Singapore flights will be operated by Airbus A320s from October, said Thng. It plans to shortly start flights to the Colombo and Kathmandu.

These and several overseas and domestic slots have been allocated to Vistara and its peers "on a temporary basis" as Jet undergoes bankruptcy proceedings directed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT). Thng said Vistara has requested the government to let it continue using the slots, irrespective of whether Jet is revived by a new investor.

07/08/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

Singapore: Indian airline Vistara expects to grow its fleet size by over a third by the end of this year as it charts an aggressive expansion plan encouraged by the potential of the fast-growing domestic market, its top executive said.

Vistara CEO Leslie Thng speaks at an aviation conference in Mumbai, January 16, 2019. **The company expects to end 2019 with 41 aircraft, up from 30 at present and 22 at March-end,** Chief Executive Leslie Thng said on Wednesday.

The carrier, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines Ltd, completed its first international flight to Singapore on Wednesday.

The full-service airline has announced plans to add routes from India to Bangkok and Dubai as it sought to fill the gap left after the collapse of rival Jet Airways Ltd in April.

"India is a market that is growing, the economy is growing. Demand for premium products will continue to grow - there is still a gap that we are trying to restore in the market," said Thng.

Vistara has hired 600 former Jet employees, including over 100 pilots, Thng told reporters in Singapore.

It has taken delivery of seven Boeing 737s from Jet's lessors and will have two more by August-end on short-term leases of 1 to 4 years.

07/08/19 Reuters

President Ram Nath Kovind has given his assent to The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India, AERA (Amendment) Bill- 2019. A Gazette Notification to this effect has been issued. The Parliament had passed the bill on 2nd of this month.

The bill increases the threshold of annual passenger traffic for major airports from 15 lakh to over 35 lakh passengers. Earlier, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008 defined a major airport as one with annual passenger traffic over 15 lakh, or any other airports as notified by the central government.

As per the provisions of the bill, the Authority will not determine the tariff, tariff structures, or the development fees, in cases where these amounts were a part of the bid document on the basis of which the airport operations were awarded.

07/08/19 All India Radio

Visakhapatnam: The consumer redressal forum, on Tuesday, directed AirAsia India Ltd to pay Rs 25,000 to a customer as compensation for causing harassment and agony. Moreover, the forum has also directed AirAsia to pay Rs 2,500 as litigation costs to the complainant— Aswathy Balakrishnan. The airline has also been directed to pay the air ticket price of Rs 17,944.

33-year-old Balakrishnan who works as an assistant professor at Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha in Ernakulam district in Kerala used to fly frequently to and from Visakhapatnam to visit her husband who works here. Balakrishnan had booked a flight on January 14 to go from Visakhapatnam to Bengaluru (departing at 11:05 am and arriving at 12:40 pm) and then from Bengaluru to Cochin (departing at 02:30 pm and arriving at 03:45 pm)

Balakrishnan was on her way to the airport when she received a message from AirAsia about her flight getting delayed by 45 minutes. On reaching the airport, she contacted the AirAsia staff asking them to reschedule her travel as she was apprehensive that she would miss her connecting flight to Cochin.

AirAsia staff did not adhere to her request and on the other hand promised that she would reach Bengaluru by 02:00 pm, and will be able to catch her connecting flight to Cochin.

They even issued her the second boarding pass for her connecting flight.

On reaching Bengaluru airport, Balakrishnan realised that her connecting flight had already departed. She went to the airline officials for an alternative flight, wherein they said that the next flight was available at 09:30 pm.

07/08/19 Times of India

With the Indian government jacking up import duty on gold, smuggling of the yellow metal from Persian Gulf countries, Singapore and Malaysia is in full swing.

Ever since customs duty on the precious metal was raised from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent on July 5 in a desperate attempt to narrow the fiscal deficit, not a day passes without the arrest of gold-runners by eagle-eyed officials at one airport or the other in the country.

While techno-savvy customs sleuths at Kochi (Kerala) on August 6 busted a gang of six who had sneaked in 25 kg of gold bars from Dubai in the past few days, Sri Lankan officials collared six Chennai-bound Indian tourists carrying contraband gold worth Rs 17 million, at an international airport on August 4.

On August 3, even as gold prices zoomed to almost Rs 37,000 per 10 gram, seven gold biscuits worth Rs 2.9 million were recovered from a passenger, who had arrived at New Delhi from Dammam (Saudi Arabia), and his accomplice, an employee of Air India SATS, a joint venture between Air India Limited and Singapore-based SATS Limited.

What's more, whip-smart contrabandists have hit upon novel tricks to bamboozle even alert law-keepers for pushing gold into India. If three women who had travelled from Colombo with gold paste concealed in plastic sheaths in their rectum were hauled up at Bengaluru airport, 2 kg of gold in paste form hidden in a waist band and floppy slippers was confiscated from a frequent flyer who had landed at Kochi from Dubai.

Indeed, among other ingenious modus operandi, smugglers have of late been hiding gold in toys, radios, bag handles, brass pipes, induction cookers, damaged chairs, emergency lights, vacuum

cleaners, and hidden cavities of cars to throw dust in the eyes of the airport officials.

07/08/19 Mahesh Trivedi/Connected to India

Singapore Airlines (SIA) and SilkAir have become Vistara's first codeshare partners after it announced its international flights to Singapore from New Delhi and Mumbai. Vistara commenced international operations from today with its Delhi-Singapore operations, using Boeing 737-800NG aircraft.

Under the expansion of an existing codeshare agreement which covers Indian domestic flights, SIA will add its 'SQ' designator code to Vistara's new international flights. In addition, SIA and SilkAir will add nine new codeshare destinations within India on Vistara-operated flights (Chandigarh, Dibrugarh, Jammu, Leh, Pune, Raipur, Ranchi, Siliguri and Srinagar). With this expansion, SIA will codeshare on Vistara flights to more than 20 Indian destinations.

Similarly, Vistara will add its 'UK' designator code to SIA- and SilkAir-operated flights between Singapore and eight destinations in India (Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Cochin, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi). As part of the arrangement, Vistara will codeshare on services to more than 40 destinations³ in the SIA and SilkAir network. These codeshares will be implemented in phases and are subject to regulatory approvals. This is the first time Vistara will be codesharing with partner airlines on international flights.

06/08/19 STAT Times

The Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) has announced the closure for its Rs13,352 crore infrastructure expansion that includes construction of the state-of-the-art Terminal 2 and associated projects to be funded in a debt-equity ratio of 80:20.

The operator of Kempegowda International Airport, Bengaluru (KIAB) raised Rs10,206 crore [State Bank of India sanctioned Rs5,100 crore and Axis Bank has advanced Rs5,106 crore] for the project that is scheduled for completion by mid-2021. The debt, with a door-to-door tenor of approximately 14.25 years, will be repaid over a period of 10 years with a one-year moratorium post completion of the project.

"Our aim is to ensure that we not only deliver an iconic asset of which the people can be truly proud, but also set benchmarks in the way such projects are delivered – at a cost that is affordable and to the highest standards of corporate governance," said Hari Marar, MD & CEO, BIAL.

"SBI, being the existing lender to BIAL, has already funded certain portion of the Phase 2 Project, including earthworks for the runway to the extent of around Rs500 crore and the balance debt amount is being funded currently by SBI as the Lead Bank along with Axis Bank," said PN Prasad, DMD-CCG, State Bank of India.

In FY2018-19, the BLR Airport welcomed 33.3 million passengers and the volumes are expected to grow in the coming years as India is touted to be the third largest aviation market in the world.

06/08/19 ITLN

New Delhi: After putting in place rules to punish unruly flyers, the government has now asked airlines and airport operators to ensure a good flying experience to passengers at airports — especially from the time they check-in to when they reach boarding gates.

Accordingly, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) chief Arun Kumar has directed that airports, Indian carriers and foreign airlines operating to India must facilitate all passengers, especially senior citizens, expectant mothers, passengers with disability and first time travellers.

In an order issued last week, the regulator has warned the service providers "shall be liable of penal action as per the provisions of the Aircraft Act... and other relevant provisions of Indian Penal Code." If they fail to do so. "As all passengers are very important, valued and esteemed customers, any incident of misdemeanour, discourteous behaviour and harassment shall be dealt by the airline/airport operator on top priority basis and shall be reported to DGCA," says the order dated August 2.

"Airline/airport operator shall ensure provision of automated buggies free of charge for all senior

citizens, expectant mothers and disabled passengers in the terminal building to facilitate their access to boarding gates located beyond reasonable walking distance at all airports having annual aircraft movements of 50,000 or more. This facility may be extended to other needy passengers on demand basis free of charge," the rule says.

06/08/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: The company that operates Delhi's airport would invest Rs 9,800 crore through June 2022 to upgrade the existing Terminal 1, build a fourth runway and for other development work, to increase the airport's capacity to 100 million passengers a year from 66 million now.

"We have arranged for funds. We have already gone into international bonds," said I Prabhakara Rao, deputy managing director of the GMR Group, which holds a majority stake in Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) that runs the airport.

"The airport expansion project cost is met through combination of three components –internal cash accruals, real estate monetisation and borrowings. This includes \$350 million FCB, equivalent to Rs 2,425 crore, raised as part of expansion funding and internal cash accruals of Rs 3,000 crore," said Rao.

It is not clear as to how the airport will recover the money which is being pumped in, as Rao declined to get into the details during a press conference here on Monday.

Earlier, the airport imposed an arrival and departure tax on passengers to recover its investments, primarily in building Terminal 3 at the cost of Rs 12,700 crore. The arrival charge was discontinued after the airport operator recovered its investment. It still levies a nominal departure fee.

DIAL is a consortium of the GMR Group, Airports Authority of India and Germany's Frapport. The consortium has a mandate to finance, design, build, operate and maintain Delhi airport for 30 years, with an option to extend it by another 30 years.

06/08/19 PTI/Economic Times

The first tranche of land for the upcoming international airport in Uttar Pradesh's Jewar, near Delhi, was on Tuesday acquired and transferred to the project's implementing agency, officials said.

The Gautam Buddha Nagar administration acquired the **80 hectare farm land** and handed it over to the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), they said.

As much as 1,235 hectare of land is to be acquired for the first phase of the greenfield airport, District Magistrate Brajesh Narain Singh said.

"The administration is expecting that 80 per cent of the land for the first phase will be acquired and handed over to YEIDA by September," Singh added.

The formalities of the acquisition were completed at Ranhera village in Jewar on Tuesday afternoon in presence of farmers, administration officials and airport project officials.

The first phase of the project is expected to be completed by 2023, according to officials.

06/08/19 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi, Aug 6 A Bangkok-bound passenger has been apprehended at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying four bullet rounds in his jacket, an official said Tuesday.

A Central Industrial Security Force officer, deputed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) to frisk commuters, detected four bullets while screening passenger, R K Singla, on Monday night, he said.

"The recovered bullet rounds are of 7.65mm," the official said.

The man was handed over to the police, which booked him under various sections of the Arms Act.

06/08/19 Outlook

Mumbai/New Delhi: Air India is likely to raise 7,000 crore in a bond sale, the first in a series to repay a portion of the national carrier's loans, said two people with direct knowledge of the matter. The bonds will be floated by Air India Asset Holdings Ltd, the special purpose vehicle that has taken

on 29,464 crore of Air India's debt.

Refinancing Air India's high cost debt could make the airline palatable for potential investors as the government plans to start the process for the sale of Air India by October. There were no bidders when the government attempted to sell the airline with all its debt in May last year.

Air India had total debt of 55,000 crore and the reduction by 29,464 crore cut the carrier's annual interest liabilities by about 2,700 crore. The plan is to raise over 22,000 crore, including the 7,000 crore, in two tranches.

According to the plan, Air India Asset Holdings will first issue three-year papers, which could yield anything between 7 per cent and 7.25 per cent, dealers said.

Rating company ICRA has graded the proposed bonds a triple-A with stable outlook. Air India Asset Holdings is obtaining another rating.

05/08/19 Saikat Das/Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

New Delhi: Aviation regulator DGCA on Monday suspended a SpiceJet pilot for one year for overshooting runway while landing at Shirdi airport on April 29, sources said.

The regulator observed that the B737 aircraft, which was being flown by **Captain Ashish Jayaswal**, touched down at approximately 5300 feet from runway threshold at Shirdi airport, the sources said.

A runway threshold is the point that denotes the beginning of the runway.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) also observed that the aircraft was "high" while approaching the runway for landing, according to the sources.

05/08/19 PTI/Business Standard

New Delhi: Air travel to and from India during January-March quarter of this calendar year grew at slowest pace of 3.8 per cent in the last four years pointing to slowdown in the economy.

The latest data compiled by aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) shows that both foreign and Indian carriers together flew 16.4 million passengers in this period compared to 15.8 million in the corresponding quarter last year.

Compared to this, the airlines had clocked 11.3 per cent growth in 2018 over the previous year when they had flown 14.2 million passengers. In 2016 and 2017, the traffic growth was 9.32 per cent and 7.5 per cent respectively.

Aviation industry experts said the slower growth this year is a result of multiple factors ranging from Jet Airways pulling out their operations, slowdown and lean season.

"There are multiple reasons for this. Jet Airways has, of course, dented because it reduced capacity on international routes in those months. But even other airlines are not going 100 per cent full. Economic slowdown, I think, is one of the important factors," said Rajan Mehra, CEO of Club One Air and former India head of Qatar Airways.

"It's not just travel. People are not buying cars, they are not buying consumer goods. So, I think slowdown in the economy is probably a much more important factor than Jet pulling out. People are travelling less. There is overall a sense of the economy softening up," he added.

05/08/19 Silicon India

Air India Express, the low cost, wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India, has put its ambitious expansion plans for the Middle East on hold following the government's decision to disinvest its stake in India's national carrier, a senior airline official has said.

"We have put our expansion plans in the Middle East sector on hold for now in view of the government decision to pursue disinvestment in Air India," a senior official of Air India Express, who requested not to be identified because of the sensitivity of the issue, told Arabian Business.

Barring Singapore, Air India Express operations are entirely focused on the Middle East sector, with a network of 12 destinations in the region. The airline has been performing well in the sector, catering to the price-sensitive customers on the Gulf routes.

Air India Express CEO K Shyam Sundar told Arabian Business that the proposed expansion plans of the airline in the Middle East entailed long-term capital commitment towards leasing of aircraft,

which requires long-term capital outlay of 8 to 10 years.

"Decisions on such commitments on long-term capital outlay may not be prudent at this juncture because of the current situation," Shyam Sundar said.

05/08/19 James Mathew/Arabian Business

Fiji Airways, Fiji's National Airline and Air India have announced a new codeshare agreement which will provide convenient connections between three Indian cities and Fiji.

From August 1, guests of both airlines can seamlessly connect from Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai to Fiji via Hong Kong or Singapore.

The agreement will allow Fiji Airways to place its "FJ" designator code on flights operated by Air India from the three Indian cities to Hong Kong and Singapore. It also allows Air India to place its "AI" designator code of Fiji Airways flights from Hong Kong and Singapore to Nadi, Fiji.

Mr. Andre Viljoen, Fiji Airways Managing Director and CEO said:

"We're delighted to add Air India to our growing list of international airline partners, and look forward to welcoming their guests onboard with our renowned hospitality and service onboard. With our direct services from Hong Kong and Singapore to Nadi, there really is no better way for Indian visitors to travel to Fiji from three of their largest cities. Equally, our guests from Fiji and the South Pacific will have many more options to connect to Delhi, Mumbai and Chennai for leisure, business and medical travel on Air India."

05/08/19 Aviation Tribune

New Delhi: **Two years after announcing that CISF personnel will no longer carry out the "humiliating" drill of asking people with disabilities (PwDs) to remove their prosthetics or make them get up from their wheelchairs for screening, the practice still seems to continue at IGI Airport.** Rohit Anotra, a wheelchair-bound cricket player flying to Jammu & Kashmir, claimed he faced this humiliation on Sunday.

Anotra was flying for a camp for wheelchair-bound cricketers from Terminal-2. He alleged that a CISF personnel asked him to remove his prosthetic limb on the right leg during a security check.

Describing the incident as a demeaning experience, Anotra said this was the first time he has had to remove his prosthetic. "My right leg is amputated just above the knee. I have travelled to several countries and other states in India, but this has never happened to me. After a physical check using a handheld device, the CISF personnel asked me to remove my prosthetic leg as a part of the security screening," he added.

Disabled rights activist Pradeep Raj, who was also travelling with Anotra, and another member of the team said they found out about the incident when they reached the waiting area. "Had I known this was happening, we would have protested much earlier. We will be writing to the authorities. It is sad to know that despite assurances in the past, PwDs are still being asked to remove their artificial limbs. Why is Bureau of Civil Aviation Security not implementing the special operating procedure for screening travellers with prosthetics? How long will we continue to face harassment?" asked Raj.

05/08/19 Jasjeev Gandhiok/Times of India

More than 180 passengers on board Air India's AI 645 Mumbai-Jodhpur flight were left stranded for nearly three-and-a-half hours inside the aircraft on Sunday after the pilots of the aircraft left the plane on completing duty, before the new crew could arrive.

"We must have boarded the aircraft around 9.30 am for a 10.15 am departure, but the flight was getting delayed. When we enquired with the crew, we were told that due to rains, it has been delayed. Then we learnt that the pilots had completed their duty, and had left and they were waiting for the new pilots to arrive and take over. For no fault of passengers, we have been delayed for more than three hours," said a senior railway official who was on board.

"AI 645 aircraft is full of passengers and without pilots. Pax are waiting inside aircraft at BOM airport from last 3 hours. Where is the accountability for public money? And don't give excuse of rains as

others are flying on time," tweeted another passenger Himanshu Pant.

It was only when passengers began protesting on social media tagging the Twitter handles of Air India and Ministry of Civil Aviation that things moved and new crew arrived around 1 pm. The flight took off at 1.30 pm, and reached Jodhpur around 2.45 pm - over 145 minutes after its schedule arrival time.

An Air India spokesperson said **"This has happened due to crew flight duty time limitation (FDTL) and heavy rain. The flight will soon take off with new crew."**

05/08/19 Satish Nadagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

Singapore: Reeking of alcohol, a man boarded a Singapore-bound Scoot flight in Cochin, India, with his fly unzipped.

The passenger, Vijayan Mathan Gopal, 39, later molested a stewardess by touching her buttock, placing his hand on her right thigh and cupping her face with his hands.

After a trial, District Judge Salina Ishak found the Indian national guilty of three molestation charges on Monday (Aug 5).

The Singapore permanent resident committed these offences between 4am and 8.14am on Nov 2, 2017.

The court heard that following the take-off, Vijayan had an argument with another crew member, as he had refused to pay after ordering food and red wine.

DPP Lim said it was the carrier's policy to collect payment before heating up its passengers' orders.

The stewardess, who cannot be named due to a gag order, stepped in to defuse the situation and agreed to serve Vijayan his order before he paid for it.

Despite this, he continued to demand her attention by repeatedly pressing the call light even though she had to attend to another passenger who was feeling faint at the time.

Her colleague tried to attend to Vijayan but he insisted on talking to "that female steward".

The DPP said: "According to the victim, the situation was 'very urgent' because there was a medical emergency that required her to page for medical assistance... and a drunk passenger that required her attention.

"After a nurse came forward to assist in the medical emergency, the victim attended to the accused. She knelt down to be at his eye level, placed her arm on the arm rest and told the accused firmly not to press the call light again."

The court heard that Vijayan suddenly asked the stewardess where she lived and told her: "You are so beautiful."

After that, he cupped her face with both hands, causing her to feel "angry, uncomfortable and very disgusted".

However, she could not push him away and she leaned back instead, as he was a passenger.

He then told her: "Do not throw your anger at me... I'm the boss of the flight."

When she tried to stand up, he placed his hand on her right thigh "with strong force" and touched her buttock before she walked away.

The stewardess told the plane captain about what happened and asked him to alert the airport police. She later submitted a report to **Scoot** about the incident.

05/08/19 Shaffiq Alkhatib/Straits Times

Agra: The city's tourism industry has welcomed Union civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri's announcement of seven new flights to the city in Lok Sabha.

Responding to a question by Agra MP S P Singh Baghel on Friday, the minister announced that Indigo Airlines will start flights connecting Agra with Varanasi, Bengaluru, Bhopal and Lucknow by December this year. He also assured Agra's tourism industry that its long-pending demand for better air connectivity between the Taj city and major destinations would be addressed soon.

Puri added flights to Delhi (Spicejet), Jaipur (Alliance Air) and Mumbai (Jet Airways) will be finalised after rebidding for the routes.

Welcoming the announcement, K C Jain, the secretary of the citizen's forum Agra Development Foundation, said this initiative would promote tourism and industrial prospects of Agra. "Long-distance air connectivity would be a great success," said Jain, adding that a **new concourse for civilians must be built at the earliest, to remove hiccups faced by airlines and passengers having to pass through what is essentially an Air Force station.**

04/08/19 Anuja Jaiswal/Times of India

Seven companies express interest to build Nijgadh International Airport (NIA) in Bara district

THT: Seven companies from six countries, including Nepal, have shown an interest to build the Nijgadh International Airport (NIA) in Bara district. The companies from Nepal, China, India, France, Qatar and Switzerland have submitted their proposals to the Investment Board Nepal (IBN). An official from the IBN said that the process to shortlist the candidate is underway. "We are going through the proposals submitted by the respective firms and will submit the names of the shortlisted companies in the next full meeting of the board," the official added, seeking anonymity. As per the official, Matrix Enterprises of Nepal, China Airport Construction Group and China State Construction Engineering Company from China, **GMR of India**, Qatar Airways, **Vinci Group** of France and Zurich Airport of Switzerland have submitted the construction proposals of the project. "The Nepali company has not fulfilled the basic criteria in its proposal to build NIA, whereas the other companies have presented proposals that are in line with the IBN's expectations," he added. The estimated cost of the project stands at Rs 340 billion (\$3 billion). The final decision regarding the construction of the airport will be made in the next board meeting chaired by Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli.

The Himalayan Times 23/08/2019

Air India flight AI-021 had to be diverted and land in Amritsar on the advice of Delhi Air Traffic Control (ATC) due to congestion over Delhi Airport and low fuel level in the plane. This Air India flight, plying between Kolkata and Delhi, had several passengers including five parliamentarians who were on their way to attend today's session of parliament, reports ANI.

The diverted flight had five Members of Parliament from Bengal onboard which consists of three Lok Sabha MPs and two Rajya Sabha MPs.

05/08/19 News18

New Delhi: Customs officials have arrested two persons including an Air India SATS employee at the Delhi airport for their alleged involvement in smuggling gold bars worth over Rs 26 lakh.

Air India SATS, which is a 50:50 joint venture between Air India Limited and Singapore-based SATS Limited, offers end-to-end ground handling services such as passenger and baggage handling, aircraft interior cleaning and cargo handling services among others.

On Saturday, a passenger arrived at the T-3 of IGI Airport by an Air India Flight. He was intercepted by the customs officials at the multilevel car parking and brought to the arrival hall along with his baggage, according to the Office of the Commissioner of Customs (Airport and General) IGI Airport, Terminal-3.

Upon search, four gold bars weighing 466 grams worth Rs. 15,03,277 was recovered. Besides, he had handed over three gold bars weighing 350 grams worth Rs. 11,29,071 to the Air India SATS' Passenger Service Assistant.

Those three gold bars were recovered from a washroom near the Arrival Gate number 11 and 13, the customs officials said.

05/08/19 PTI/NDTV

New Delhi: **The US Department of Transportation has barred Air India from handling its own ground operations at the US airports, as per a July 30 order. The order is being seen as a tit for tat move after India did the same to US carriers in 2017.**

US protested and Indian Ministry of Civil Aviation said it was looking into it, but since no decision was forthcoming, this was the call taken by the US.

The latest order from the US Department of Transportation reads, **"The department described the failure of the Indian government to permit US carriers to exercise their bilateral right to perform their own ground handling (to 'self-handle') at Indian airports. Based on this failure, the department has suspended their right to self-handle at US airports."**

However, sources at Air India have told India Today that this will not impact the airline because it has always outsourced ground handling operations in the United States.

04/08/19 Poulomi Saha/India Today

Chennai: **As Indian scientists launch space missions to explore the unexplored areas of the Moon, the Airports Authority of India's first line of attack to ward off pigeons from the Chennai airport seems to be narikuravas and slingshots. The country's statutory civil aviation infrastructure authority is working on drones and sonic speakers, but till they are deployed, don't be too surprised to see a tribal child running about gleefully shooting pellets at pigeons at the airport.**

Driven to the wall by a flurry of complaints and sarcastic tweets by passengers about pigeons, the AAI authorities say they have engaged members of the tribal community as they are "experts at catching birds". "They've done it for us earlier. So, we have hired them again. The birds will not die as they are only using clay pellets," says airport director S Sreekumar.

However, passengers are not amused with the strike force. A video shot by a passenger shows two children running around inside the terminal with slingshots in hand, targeting the birds with clay and rubber pellets.

A passenger tweeted: "I have no idea how shooting birds inside the airport with clay pellets is even allowed. I mean what are you guys even thinking? Passengers were having clay falling on them."

"They are using slingshots to disorient the birds. They are taken and released outside. We are not killing them," said an official of AAI.

The official also said that several attempts were made to chase the birds away.

04/08/19 V Ayyappan/Times of India

It's often a selling point you'll see on an airline's website: "one of the world's youngest fleets". It makes sense. A newer fleet implies a few things, including better inflight entertainment systems, more reliable aircraft and enhanced passenger comfort (not necessarily space!). **So here's the 2019 list of airlines with the youngest fleets according to Airfleets.**

1. Norwegian Air: 2.8 years

Firstly, taking the top spot is European budget airline Norwegian. Some of their Boeing 787s are less than a year old and the rest are mostly 1-3 years old. We used the average of Norwegian's six legal entities as the company is registered as separate airlines in Argentina, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, the United Kingdom and of course, Norway. Unfortunately, the numbers include 18 grounded 737 MAX aircraft.

2. Vistara: 2.8 years

Secondly, we have a considerably smaller airline: Vistara. The Indian full-service carrier is made up of an all-Airbus A320 fleet. The company is backed by Indian conglomerate Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines. Their oldest aircraft are five year old "CEO" variants and the newest being a one year old NEO.

3. FlyDubai: 4.2 years

Operating out of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, this budget airline has a fleet of 59 aircraft. An all-Boeing 737 airline, the fleet is a mix of NG and MAX variants. That might change...

4. Aeroflot: 4.4 years

Aeroflot operates a mix of aircraft – ranging from Airbus A320s and A330s to the Boeing 777 and Sukhoi Superjet. One of the larger airlines on our list, Aeroflot's list of active aircraft numbers 250.

5. Hong Kong Express: 4.4 years

A much, much smaller fleet than Aeroflot, Hong Kong Express operates 24 Airbus A320s (13) and A321s (11). The budget carrier uses Hong Kong International Airport as its main hub. The airline was recently acquired by Hong Kong giant Cathay Pacific.

6. Ethiopian: 5.7 years

Ethiopian's fleet of over 100 aircraft consists of mainly Boeing jets. However, this is changing as the airline takes delivery of its brand new Airbus A350s – which have an average age of only 1.6 years. The airline also operates a small fleet of 19 Dash 8s for their regional services.

7. China Eastern: 5.9 years

China Eastern has a massive fleet of 515 aircraft. It operates a mix of narrowbody and widebody Airbus and Boeing jets including their absolutely brand new Airbus A350s and 787 Dreamliners. In fact, the largest parts of their fleet are their narrowbodies, with 199 Airbus A320s and 126 Boeing 737 NGs/MAX aircraft. Again, their new but unused MAX aircraft skew the numbers.

8. IndiGo: 5.9 years

IndiGo is a discount Indian carrier that operates domestic services throughout the country with several international destinations as well. With a total fleet size of 221, IndiGo operates 205 Airbus A320 jets. It also has a small fleet of ATR 42/72 aircraft.

9. Qatar Airways: 6 years

Qatar has a fleet of 225 aircraft. Their highly mixed fleet ranges from their new Airbus A350s and new(ish) Boeing 787s to their older superjumbo A380s.

10. Emirates: 6.2 years

Emirates has a fleet of 267 aircraft including a single A319 for executive services. Other than that though, the airline has only two main types of planes: The Boeing 777 (157) and Airbus A380 (109). Although the airline has large orders of A330neos, A350s, and 787s coming in future years.

04/08/19 Chris Loh/Simple Flying

New Delhi: An Air India employee and a passenger were arrested at the IGI Airport on Saturday along with seven gold biscuits weighing around 820 gm worth Rs 29 lakh. The Central Industrial

Security Force surveillance and intelligence staff observed suspicious movements of AI staffer Dharamveer Dauchania and a passenger, Main Lal Meena, who had arrived from Dammam. They were kept under physical and electronic surveillance. It was observed that both of them were continuously in contact over mobile phone. Three gold biscuits were recovered from the AI staffer, which he had tried to conceal in a damaged chair, and four were recovered from the passenger.

04/08/19 Tribune

Bengaluru: After a long hiatus, the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Friday witnessed a gold smuggling case in which two passengers flew in from Dubai with about 1.1kg of gold in the form of paste, concealed in the rectum.

The duo was nabbed by Bangalore customs sleuths, who made the suspects retrieve the gold paste. After solidifying the substance, officials estimated the smuggled metal to be worth Rs 37.4 lakh. KIA, which has been a hotbed for gold smuggling for a while, witnessed a dip in the activity in the past few months, possibly due to intensive checks by authorities and mules opting for other southern airports. However, at 5.35am on Friday, the two smugglers landed at KIA on an Air India flight (AI 994) from Dubai via Goa.

04/08/19 Times of India

Colombo: Sri Lankan officials have arrested six Indian nationals at an international airport for attempting to smuggle gold worth over Rs 1.7 crores, police said.

They were arrested by Sri Lanka Criminal Investigation Department (CID) officials at the Bandaranaike International Airport in Katunayake, police was quoted as saying by the Colombo Gazette.

Four Indian nationals were arrested at the departure terminal of the Katunayake airport with 1.06 kilograms of gold. Later, in a separate investigation, two more Indians were arrested at the airport with 1.370 kilograms of gold, the report said.

They were arrested for attempting to smuggle gold worth over Rs 1.7 crore out of the country, it said.

04/08/19 PTI/News18

The Indian aviation sector is witnessing phenomenal growth and there could be 2,000 planes in a short time, Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Friday.

Hardeep Singh Puri told the Lok Sabha that the country's aviation sector is the third-largest in the world and there is an annual growth of 17 percent.

In 2008, the number of passengers stood at 117 million and now it is around 440 million. It is expected to touch 1 billion, Hardeep Singh Puri said.

With the kind of orders for aircraft, the number could be 2,000 in a short time, Hardeep Singh Puri noted. **The country currently has over 600 aircraft.**

Hardeep Singh Puri was responding to a debate on a bill to amend the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) Act.

03/08/19 PTI/India Today

The diversified Adani Group is adding another revenue stream by entering the airport space and has set up a new company called Adani Airports Ltd.

The group's flagship company Adani Enterprises has incorporated the new company for acquiring, promoting, operating, maintaining, developing, designing, constructing, upgrading, modernising, renovating, expanding and managing airports in India and abroad.

"Adani Airports Ltd is incorporated in India and registered with the Registrar of Companies at Ahmedabad in Gujarat on August 2 and is yet commence its business operations," Adani Enterprises said in regulatory filings at stock exchanges on Saturday.

In February, the Adani Group won the mandate to run all six government-owned airports that were put up for privatisation. It bagged a 50-year contract for the operation, management, and development of airports in Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram, and

Mangaluru to become the third-largest private airport operator after GMR Group and GVK Group.

The six airports together handled 30 million passengers -- 23.6 million domestic and 6.4 million international -- last fiscal year, marking a growth of 22 per cent over the previous year. Last November, the government had cleared the privatisation of these six airports under the Airports Authority of India on the public-private partnership model.

03/08/19 ANI/Economic Times

New Delhi: The Parliament on Friday passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2019 that increases the threshold of annual passenger traffic for major airports to over 35 lakh

with Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri stating that the government was committed to privatisation of Air India as its debt has become totally unsustainable.

The Bill, which seeks to amend the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India Act, 2008, had earlier been passed by Rajya Sabha.

Speaking during the debate on the Bill in the Parliament, Puri said that Delhi and Mumbai airports, whose privatisation was undertaken during the first UPA government, accounts for 34 per cent of traffic while six airports, whose privatisation has been undertaken under the Modi government, accounts for 6 per cent traffic.

Following demands of members, the Minister announced that Indigo will start operations by December connecting Agra to Varanasi, Bhopal, Lucknow, and Bengaluru.

He also talked about Agra's air connectivity with Delhi and Jaipur and said there will be new bidding for Agra -Mumbai route as it had been allocated to Jet Airways.

03/08/19 ANI/Economic Times

SpiceXpress, the cargo arm of SpiceJet, has launched a new narrowbody domestic freighter service. The daily service will operate between Chennai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Mumbai, and Bangalore.

SpiceJet's 737-700F freighter aircraft will operate 6 days every week, arriving from Chennai at 9.45 pm and departing for Delhi at 10.45 pm. This service will connect Chennai – Hyderabad – Delhi – Mumbai – Bangalore sectors and has a capacity to carry approximately 20 MT of cargo.

Manjiv Singh, chief project officer, SpiceJet, added "SpiceJet is committed to invest in the growth of Indian trade and commerce. India is consciously taking bold initiatives like 'Make in India', promoting and growing our 'Smart Cities' and becoming a 5 trillion dollar economy in the fastest possible time. SpiceJet will continue to contribute to the trade by continuously increasing our geographic reach. Today's consumers demand for the quickest deliveries possible. This has been shaping the e-commerce and logistics processes, and in turn the express logistics sector."

Apart from SpiceJet, the other scheduled freighter services that are operating from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) include Lufthansa, Turkish, Qatar, Cathay Pacific and Blue Dart.

03/08/19 ITLN

New Delhi: The Reserve Bank has slapped penalties on nine commercial banks, including State bank of India, Punjab National Bank and Bank of Baroda, for a host of violations, including delay on the reporting of fraud in the account of Kingfisher Airlines in case of two lenders.

The nine lenders in separate regulatory filings said that the penalties have been imposed on them for delay in reporting of frauds.

Public sector lender Punjab National Bank (PNB) said the RBI has imposed a penalty of Rs 50 lakh on it for delay in reporting of fraud in the account of Kingfisher Airlines.

Another state-run lender Oriental Bank of Commerce said that the RBI has imposed a fine of Rs 1.5 crore on it for delay in reporting fraud in the account of Kingfisher Airlines.

The aforesaid penalty is required to be paid within 14 days from the date of receipt of the RBI order, the bank added.

United Bank of India and Punjab & Sind Bank said they have been fined 1 crore each by the RBI. State Bank of India (SBI) said the RBI imposed a penalty of Rs 50 lakh on it for non-compliance relating to reporting of frauds.

The RBI in exercise of the powers conferred under various sections of the Banking Regulations Act, has imposed a penalty of Rs 50 lakh on the bank for non-compliance with its directions relating to reporting of frauds, it said in a filing.

03/08/19 PTI/News18.com

Kannur: The Customs sleuths on Saturday seized foreign currencies worth Rs 12.86 lakh from three passengers flying to Sharjah in an Air India Express Flight at Kannur International Airport.

According to Commissioner of Customs Sumit Kumar, Customs officials arrested the passengers Manpreet Singh, Karanjith Singh, the duo hails from Jammu and Kashmir, and Kamaljit Singh, a native of Punjab, and seized 6300 US Dollars, 6202 US Dollars and 6000 US Dollars respectively from them. The officials also seized 300 Euro from their possession.

All the three passengers reached Kannur from Delhi. They were carrying the foreign currencies beyond permitted limits and without any legitimate documents, the official said.

03/08/19 UNI

New Delhi: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday recovered seven gold biscuits from a ground handling staff and a passenger at Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi, an official statement said here on Friday.

Around 1100 hrs on Saturday, a CISF surveillance and intelligence staff at International arrival piers of Terminal 3 noticed a suspicious movements of a passenger and a ground handling staff of Air India's AI SATS Dharamveer Dauchania near washroom of de-boarding gate.

The passenger, later identified as Main Lal Meena, arrived from Dammam by Air India flight and they were kept under physical and electronic surveillance.

03/08/19 UNI

New Delhi: An Air India air hostess was detained late Thursday for carrying half kg gold. Her flight – AI 162 – had arrived from London around 10.30pm at the Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi. According to sources, when the air hostess was asked to put her luggage for X-Ray scanning, she dropped her handbag and disowned it. The CCTV footage, however, established that the bag belonged to her. Two white gold bangles were recovered from her bag. According to rules, while flight crew cannot carry any amount of gold, male passengers are allowed 20 grams and female passengers 40 grams of gold. Gold jewellery beyond this weight is subject to customs duty.

02/08/19 Indian Express

New Delhi: IndiGo announced on Friday that it had entered into a partnership with a global travel aggregator that will allow the latter's users to book tickets of the budget carrier's flights.

The **partnership with Skyscanner**, one of the world's leading travel search engine, will not only enhance access to Indian destinations but also place them more prominently on the world map, according to IndiGo chief commercial officer William Boulter.

"This integration will be a gateway for Skyscanner users to access a wide network of domestic and international IndiGo flights at affordable fares, while we deliver an on-time, courteous and hassle-free experience," Boulter said.

The chief commercial officer said the partnership would enable economic growth through "inbound tourist spends".

Skyscanner said the integration highlighted the aggregator's commitment to help its partners like IndiGo expand into new markets.

02/08/19 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi: **With situation appearing turbulent in Kashmir, aviation regulator DGCA advised airlines on Friday to remain ready to operate additional flights from the Srinagar airport if the need arises,** according to a source.

The advisory came hours after the Indian Army, citing intelligence inputs, said Pakistan-based terrorists were planning to target the ongoing Amarnath Yatra.

The Army's disclosure prompted the Jammu and Kashmir administration to ask the yatis and tourists to "curtail" their stay in the Valley and leave immediately.

"DGCA has advised airlines to remain ready. If there is a need, airlines should be ready to run extra flights," a source privy to the development told.

"Around 8.45pm, the situation at the Srinagar airport was checked by the DGCA and it was found to be normal. It was found that there is no need to run extra flights right now. But if the need arises later on, the airlines have been advised to remain ready to run extra flights," the source added.

02/08/19 PTI/Economic Times

Mumbai: **Mumbai girl Aaroohi Pandit, currently on a global flight in a small plane, on Wednesday created history by becoming the first woman pilot to cross both Atlantic Ocean and Pacific Ocean solo in a Light Sports Aircraft.**

Flying from Alaska's Unalakleet city across the Pacific Ocean's Bering Sea, she landed safely at the Anadyr Airport in Russia's Far East region of Chukotka at 01.54am after a stopover at Nome (Alaska). After landing, Aaroohi, appearing a bit weary but cheerful, posed for a photo before her LSA and waved the Indian tricolor.

In mid-May this year, Aaroohi, 23, became the first woman in the world to cross the Atlantic Ocean solo in a LSA, thrilling her family, friends and aviation circles.

In the past nearly 13 months of her circumnavigation flight, she has broken and created several records, including becoming the world's first woman to complete a solo flight over the treacherous Greenland ice-cap in an LSA, and the first woman to fly all across Canada from the North East to the North West via the South, said her team in Mumbai.

"Aaroohi truly represents all that young Indian women are capable of, given an opportunity. We are very proud and she has set such a great example for all other girls to emulate," an excited Lynn de Souza, founder of Social Access Communications, which organised the WE! Expedition, told IANS. On her part, Aaroohi considers the Pacific Ocean crossing as the most significant sector for the Women Empower Expedition (WE!) circumnavigation, marking its entry into a new country, a new continent and a new day.

In her 1,100km flight from Unalakleet to Anadyr, Aaroohi flew across the International Date Line, also known as the Line of Confusion, when the date changes and all instruments conk off for a few minutes.

21/08/19 IANS/Gulf News

New Delhi: **The DoNER Ministry has plans to partially fund a Rs 6,000-crore proposed greenfield airport in Kohima, which could be the first in the Nagaland capital.**

This was conveyed by Union Minister for **Development of North Eastern Region** (DoNER) Jitendra Singh to Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio, who called on him on Wednesday along with a delegation of senior officers of the state government, an official statement said.

Singh conveyed to the chief minister that the proposal to set up an airport in Kohima is being pursued seriously by the DoNER ministry and after an appropriate site was identified by the state government, a technical feasibility report was also prepared by the Airports Authority of India which was favourable for an all-weather airport.

The chief minister conveyed to the DoNER minister that the total estimated cost to set up an airport could be around Rs 6,000 crore and requested that a part of it could be funded by the DoNER ministry or the North Eastern Council (NEC).

The DoNER minister informed the chief minister that a proposal has been sent by his ministry for sanction of Rs 1,000 crore towards the project, the statement said.

According to the plans, the proposed airport will come up at Ciethu in Kohima.

21/08/19 Outlook

Dehradun: Three people were killed after a helicopter involved in relief efforts in flood-hit Uttarakhand crashed in the Uttarkashi district on Wednesday and erupted in flames after it got entangled in the overhead electricity wires.

The State Disaster Response Force said the dead have been identified as **Captain Lal, co-pilot Shailesh and a local person named Rajpal**. A team of 10 members has been sent to the site of the crash.

The chopper crashed near Moldi while returning after distributing relief material among the affected people. It belonged to a company called Heritage Aviation and was among the ones engaged in relief and rescue operations in the affected villages spread over 70 square km area of the district.

The crash occurred when the helicopter was returning after distributing the relief material among the affected people, Uttarkashi Disaster Management officer Devendra Patwal said.

Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, in a tweet, expressed grief at the deaths in the crash. He prayed for strength to the family members of the deceased to bear the loss.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has deputed a team of officials to conduct a preliminary enquiry in the crash.

21/08/19 News18.com

New Delhi: In June, when the US Federal Aviation Administration — deemed the apex airline regulator worldwide — called civil aviation authorities from across the world to review software modifications to the grounded Boeing 737 Max, it didn't extend the invite to India's watchdog — the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

This despite the fact that India is one of the 10 countries that flew the controversial new generation jet and is also one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets.

It was no anomaly — just the latest in a series of international aviation safety seminars that no DGCA official has been invited to.

DGCA representatives have, off late, not been invited to seminars of the US-based International Society of Air Safety Investigations (ISASI). The Indian aviation body has also been left out of safety seminars held in Europe.

The repeated snubs, experts say, is due to a structural issue at the apex of the aviation regulatory sector in the country.

Unlike in even other developing nations such as Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Philippines, where the regulatory bodies are headed by technocrats with an aviation background, all the top posts in the DGCA, the Airport Authority of India (AAI) or for that matter even public carrier Air India are held by Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers.

Such is the situation, that in the past decade, the DGCA has always been headed by an IAS officer, not always with the relevant domain experience. The last technocrat to head the body was the late Kanu Gohain (2007-08), who had 35 years of experience in the industry.

The upsurge of IAS officers donning the role, however, only began after his tenure. Since 1980, for instance, of the 15 DGCA heads, eight have been from the IAS cadre (see box). But six of them have headed the DGCA in the last decade alone.

Captain Mohan Ranganathan, an aviation safety consultant and former flight instructor, said bureaucrats made their way into the DGCA after Gohain's tenure.

"Bureaucrats in the ministry wormed their way into DGCA via the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) route," Ranganathan said. A joint secretary would be sent to ICAO as India's representative and qualification requirements for DGCA were tweaked by the ministry to make sure that the IAS cadre swarmed into all the top posts in aviation. None of the bureaucrats knew the

subject.”

21/08/19 Ifrah Mufti/Print

Guwahati: The Union Civil Aviation Minister has set March 2022 as the deadline for completion of a greenfield airport that triggered the fall of the Congress and upsurge of the BJP in Arunachal Pradesh.

Hollongi airport near Itanagar was among a slew of projects for which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had laid the foundation stone in February. The airport is estimated to cost ₹1,200 crore.

Union Minister of State (Independent) for Civil Aviation Hardeep Singh Puri, during a videoconference with Arunachal Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar, said that **the Centre would assist the State to ensure that the Hollongi airport is completed by March 31, 2022.**

The focus of the discussion was also on developing helipads at five strategic locations in Arunachal Pradesh, apart from Tawang. The State government suggested air connectivity between India and Bhutan via the Tawang helipad.

The Hollongi airport project has been a touchy topic for successive governments in Arunachal Pradesh. It was one of the major reasons why the former Congress government headed by Nabam Tuki fell and the BJP came to power in the State.

The airport was initially scheduled to be built at Karsingsa, also near Itanagar, where former Union Minister Shivraj Patil had laid the foundation stone in 2008. The Tuki government rejected the site in 2012 due to “geographical complications” and opted for Hollongi.

21/08/19 The Hindu

As an increasing number of travelers take to the skies, tier 2 and tier 3 cities are being integrated into airline networks. However, operations to tier 2 and tier 3 cities come with a unique set of challenges. For example, limited runway lengths, limited demand, extreme seasonality, lack of navigational aids and operational restrictions – to name a few. Together these make for a complex choice and challenging economics. Regional airlines can indeed provide the missing connectivity link. Yet the Indian aviation market has seen several regional airlines fail. Why so?

The current narrative has been one of phenomenal double digit growth in passengers. Indeed from 51 million domestic passengers in 2005 to 126.7 million in 2018, Indian aviation has come a long way. Yet examined closely one sees that metro cities still figure disproportionately as the growth drivers. Currently, approximately 61 percent of the domestic traffic and 73 percent of international traffic still originates from the 6 metro cities of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Chennai and Cochin.

What this means for regional airlines is that demand between regional city pairs is inconsistent and tepid. Consequently, true regional demand is yet to emerge. Regional networks thus have to have metro cities at one end of the routes. Without this failure is all but certain.

The heart of any airline is its network. That is, the network development precedes fleet decisions. In the case of many carriers this has been turned upside down where fleet decisions often precede network decisions. Consequently, there is a force-fitting of the asset to the network and the operating characteristics of the aircraft are out of line with the network requirements. This flows through to profitability. A cursory look at regional airline networks and aircraft to fly these reveals that over the last 10 years India has seen seven airlines with as many different aircraft types.

Regional aircraft have unique characteristics in terms of lifecycles. That is, in several cases a regional aircraft is used because the market demand is not sufficient. As the demand matures and more flyers take to the skies, it necessitates the requirement for a larger aircraft. This has to be planned for. Failing to do so means the airline is then left with a regional aircraft route that has to be replaced with a different route having similar characteristics. The business model has to incorporate the same.

Regional airline structures also have differences to account for lifecycles. In the United States and Europe there is a structure of contract flying where an independent carrier flies the regional aircraft on a cost per departure basis. The tickets are marketed and sold by the larger “mainline carrier.”

Other models are ones that are wholly owned subsidiaries, a franchisee model, white label flying, etc. where the regional fleet is separate and operates as an independent entity. Such models are yet to evolve in India.

Due to the very few success stories in the area of regional airlines, financiers are extremely reluctant to lend. This coupled with the asset types makes for an extremely challenging liquidity situation. Regional routes also are shorter where alternate means of transport are always an option. And given the price elasticity as fares rise passengers simply choose not to fly as prices rise. The nature of demand also lends itself to a late booking curve. That is, flash-sales to generate cash are not quite an option. Similarly ancillary revenue streams cannot be leveraged in the same manner as with larger airlines due to operational constraints.

That said there are mitigation measures to stimulate demand but these have hardly been used in the Indian market. Both due to the nascent nature of the market and also the challenge in finding and keeping talent. This may change going forward.

But what about the governments push via the regional connectivity policy?

The government was cognizant of the fact that regional airlines in India never quite took off and consequently impacted connectivity. Thus the regional connectivity scheme labeled the “Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagarik (UDAN)” scheme was launched in June 2016 and was intended to be a game changer. The intent of the scheme is to connect un-served and under-served airports across the country in an affordable manner boosting connectivity. The delivery mechanism includes bidding and awards of routes to airlines including subsidies on seats, discounted input costs and monopoly status on routes.

The scheme has its successes and failures and to the credit of policymakers, they have taken inputs from the industry and tweaked the scheme with each successive bidding. One would expect several new or existing pure regional airlines rushing for these rounds, but a closer examination shows much of the success has come from SpiceJet and IndiGo.

Ironically both these airlines have not taken the Viability Gap Funding subsidy, instead have leveraged the scheme strategically towards gaining additional slots at congested Tier-1 airports, monopoly status on routes and lower operational costs. Air India, also flying some UDAN routes via its subsidiary Alliance Air, however, Air India’s decision making is historically driven by government prerogative rather than commercial logic, making difficult to ascertain if UDAN has had any impact on their route decisions.

If the intent of the scheme was to make for viable and sustainable regional operations, as of now it has not fructified. One has seen TruJet fly several UDAN routes but two years into operations the airline is yet to show an operational profit. Air Deccan started and then suspended all operations and re-started and break-even profits are a while away. Air Odisha and Zoom Air are having its share of challenges and again both are loss making.

In spite of the regional airline graveyard, the market growth continues. With a 300 million strong middle class, low air travel penetration and an increasing propensity to spend, India is targeting 500 million passenger trips in the next 20 years. Forecasts estimate that India will be the third largest aviation within the next 6–7 years. And the growth can indeed be leveraged.

In spite of the regional airline death knell, a successful regional airline in India is not an impossibility. But it has to be planned for thoroughly. Models such as the white-label flying model can indeed be incorporated. These can not only help opening up newer markets but also help airlines with dynamic capacity adjustments. Further they can aid in retaining and in some cases gaining precious airport assets. And in a market as complex and competitive as India, this could indeed be a competitive advantage.

As the market matures and as more aviation entrepreneurs emerge one hopes that the curse of the regional airlines is lifted.

The Wadia family-owned airline, GoAir, is looking to raise between Rs 2,500 crore to Rs 3,000 crore through an initial share sale programme, said three people directly familiar with the development. "The company has hired ICICI Securities, Morgan Stanley, Citibank and JM Financial as merchant bankers to the issue. The process started in May and they are now working on preparing the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP)," a source added.

The Wadias plan to raise the capital around first quarter of next calendar year, another source said. ICICI Securities, Morgan Stanley and Citibank declined to comment on the issue. Forbes India is awaiting response from other parties. In an emailed response, GoAir said, it does not comment on market speculation.

The Mumbai-based airline, launched in November 2005, had 11.1 percent market share in May, according to data from the aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). In July this year, it announced its expansion to **seven new international routes, including Kuwait, Dubai and Bangkok.** GoAir took delivery of its **51st aircraft last month,** and going forward, the company said that the **airline will be adding at least one aircraft every month.**

21/08/19 Pooja Sarkar/Forbes India

New Delhi: **An aviation start-up based in New Delhi plans to offer subscription-based airline services. Prince Air (www.princeair.in) will let customers travel unlimited times on private jets across metros in the country.**

In India, flying Private is expensive and accessible only to the super wealthy and Corporates. Prince Air was envisioned to solve this key problem area for the Indian Aviation Industry.

Sanket Raj Singh-Founder Prince Air-promises to fly members at a fraction of the cost on private jets in India and make the private jet experience accessible to all.

Sanket Raj Singh, is a fashion industry professional assisting American and European brands with their manufacturing and supply chain solutions. During his travels overseas, he was struck by the disruptions technology was making across various sectors.

We have seen disruptions in taxi, also retail and hospitality sectors in India amongst other industries. Technology is changing business landscapes across the world, says Singh.

Air Transportation has not seen any disruptions until now. The Indian Aviation industry is certainly ripe for Digital Disruptions, said the entrepreneur.

While Singh is tight-lipped about the monthly subscription cost, he promises it will be a fraction of what it costs to charter jets. **Currently, the cost to charter a private jet can range anywhere between Rs 1.5 lakh to Rs. 3 Lakh per hour, which is exorbitant. The Prince Air subscription model will allow members to fly multiple times and sectors at a price which private jet companies charge to charter their jets for only an hour.**

21/08/19 PTI/The Week

Bhopal/Rajasthan: **Security forces in Madhya Pradesh are on high alert over reports that four 'terrorists', along with an ISI agent, have entered India and may be trying to sneak in across the Rajasthan or Gujarat border.**

Up north, Rajasthan, too, tightened security at Jaipur International Airport and several districts following an intelligence alert that terrorists might infiltrate into the state from neighbouring Gujarat.

In MP, police are keeping a close vigil on eight western districts that share borders with Rajasthan and Gujarat – Jhabua, Alirajpur, Dhar, Barwani, Ratlam, Mandsaur, Neemuch and Agar-Malwa. However, MP's home minister Bala Bachchan rubbished reports of a high alert being sounded on the Gujarat-MP border after an alleged Intelligence Bureau warning as "rumours". "Police are on alert and the borders of Madhya Pradesh are being closely monitored as precautionary measures but there is no such situation as feared," he insisted. Bachchan could not be reached for comment on the statement.

21/08/19 Times of India

Hyderabad: **To smuggle the illegally collected foreign currency notes out of the country, two city-residents have wrapped the notes in false bottoms created in the sweet and biscuit boxes.** The duo was arrested by the sleuths of Directorate of Revenue Intelligence on Monday night when they attempted to flee to Dubai with the foreign currency worth about `1,48,75,000.

The passengers were intercepted by the DRI sleuths on specific information that two persons who were scheduled to fly to Dubai from Hyderabad in an Indigo airlines flight and an Air India flight were carrying huge amounts of foreign currency.

One passenger was scheduled to depart to Dubai in Indigo airlines flight (6E 26) and another passenger was scheduled to leave in an Air India flight (AI 951). The passengers were intercepted and their baggage was checked to only find the foreign currency concealed in the boxes of eatables.

On a thorough examination, sweet boxes and biscuit boxes were found in the baggage, which had eatables and also false bottoms used to conceal the foreign currency notes.

"The foreign currency notes were wrapped in specially created false bottoms in the boxes in which several bundles of Saudi Riyals were concealed. Each passenger was carrying 3.5 lakh Saudi Riyals valuing at `1,48,75,000," the officials of DRI said.

The officials said that during interrogation, the passengers have stated that the currency was obtained from unauthorised dealers and was aware that it was illegal to smuggle foreign currency.

21/08/19 Deccan Chronicle

The revival of grounded Jet Airways seems to be over with the debt-laden airline's strategic partner Etihad Airways reportedly moving out of the resolution plan, said a media report.

With all the efforts by State Bank of India-led lenders' consortium to take the airline into the sky again having failed, liquidation is reportedly the next step to recover the dues and committee of creditors (CoC) for Jet Airways may meet this week to decide the course of action, said a report in the Financial Express.

The decision of Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways to exit from the resolution plan of the crisis-hit airline has reportedly hastened Jet Airways' liquidation process as a section of the lenders finds this is the way out to recover up to 10 percent of the outstanding debt, the report said.

"Lenders will most likely go for liquidation. The CoC will have to agree on a final decision, but they are unlikely to invite expression of interests (EoIs) again," the report said quoting a banking official. Last week, it was reported that the financial results for the June quarter of Jet Airways were not finalised and the process was taking time due to the "complexities of issues" being faced by the airline.

The affairs of Jet Airways, which closed down its operations on 17 April this year, are now being managed by resolution professional Ashish Chhawchharia under the insolvency law.

On 13 August, Etihad Airways had said that it would not express interest in reinvesting in Jet Airways because of unresolved issues concerning the cash-strapped airline's liabilities.

Grounded Jet Airways had invited prospective bidders to express interest and last week, it had extended the deadline to 10 August.

20/08/19 First Post

The Indian government has agreed in principle to increase the stake in Air India available for privatisation to 95%, The Business Standard has reported.

A committee led by Cabinet Secretary P. K. Sinha will present its report paving the way for a **new privatisation attempt by the end of August 2019.** Subject to approval by the appropriate ministerial commissions, the government will seek to almost fully divest from Air India.

The report foresees a call for Expressions of Interest in early October 2019.

The government plans to retain a 5% stake to maintain Air India's state-funded pension plans.

In 2018, the Indian government unsuccessfully tried to sell a 76% stake in Air India. No bidders emerged at that time.

Air India's current debt stands at around INR583.5 billion rupees (USD8.2 billion). According to provisional results, it lost INR73.6 billion rupees (USD1 billion) in the fiscal year ended on March 31, 2019.

20/08/19 ch-aviation

Mumbai: Aviation minister **Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday said the government's regional connectivity scheme Udan is not only "crucial" for the growth of the North-eastern region but also provide "affordable" aviation to the people.**

The ministry had launched the Udan (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme in October 2016 to stimulate regional air connectivity and make air travel affordable to the masses. The scheme took wings with the flagging off the maiden flight to Delhi from Shimla by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 17 April 2017, operated by the national carrier Air India's regional arm Alliance Air.

"The effective implementation of Udan is not only crucial to the growth of North Eastern states but also provide affordable aviation to the citizens," said Puri in his address to the chief ministers, state chief secretaries/advisors at a meeting, which he chaired via video conference (VC), as per an official release.

This was first of the series of such VCs planned for a periodic review of the government's ambitious scheme, it said, adding the focus of the VC was to discuss and resolve issues concerning the effective roll-out of the scheme and take the stock of the progress being made. Besides Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Daman and Diu participated in the first review meeting through the video conferencing, the release stated.

20/08/19 PTI/First Post

Air passenger growth slowed in July amid a prolonged slowdown in the economy. The number of passengers flying Indian airlines grew at 3 percent year-on-year last month, the worst pace in July in at least six years, according to BloombergQuint's calculations based on the data from Directorate General of Civil Aviation. That compares with the 18 percent monthly average passenger growth in the last five years. Nearly 1.19 crore Indians took to the skies in July this year, the data showed. While the overall passenger growth is in single digit, yields—a measure of average fare per passenger per kilometer—too, have come down to last year levels, according to Santosh Hiredesai, research analyst at SBICAP Securities. "This means that there is some slowdown in the sector. Generally, lower yields should be complemented by higher passenger growth rate or vice versa to suggest that the sector is growing well."

SpiceJet Ltd. continued to report faster passenger growth than market leader InterGlobe Aviation Ltd. for the third straight month. Also, **smaller airlines grew faster than larger peers in July.**

The number of passengers flying IndiGo grew at the slowest pace in five months at 17 percent. - SpiceJet's passenger growth stood at 29 percent. -Passenger growth of Air India stood at 3.4 percent—the slowest in three months.

-GoAir's passenger growth stood at 29 percent. -AirAsia's air passenger growth stood at 38

-Passenger growth of Vistara stood at 29 percent—the highest in nearly two years.

23/08/19 Soumeet Sarkar/Bloomberg|Quint

New Delhi: **IndiGo's dominance of the Indian skies is now complete. While it has long been the largest domestic player, the low-cost carrier is now the biggest in terms of flying people in and out of India too.**

According to CAPA Centre for aviation, "IndiGo has now overtaken Air India to become the largest single international airline operating to/from India in terms of seats deployed, accounting for 11.7% of total capacity. IndiGo is now the leader in both the domestic & international markets in India."

For this calendar year, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data for international travel as of now is available only for the January-March period. In that quarter, DGCA data shows Air India flew 17.6 lakh in and out of India, making it the largest single Indian carrier (not a group) for international

travel. It was followed by Jet Airways at 16.8 lakh; IndiGo at 14.5 lakh. The AI Group, AI and AI Express (11.3 lakh) together, flew 28.9 lakh international travellers in that period. Things changed quickly after this quarter when Jet Airways stopped flying on April 17. Its international flying rights and domestic airport slots were given “temporarily” to other Indian carriers so that they add flights and help rein in fares that had begun defying gravity due to the crunch caused by Jet shutting down.

With a steady aircraft order — with over 330 Airbus A320s and A321s on order which are joining the fleet regularly — IndiGo was able to add a large number of international flights on Jet’s rights. This leap, according to CAPA, made it overtake AI which due to its weak financial health could not fill in Jet’s unutilized medium and long haul destinations.

24/08/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Mumbai: The Resolution Professional (RP) appointed to sell the airline’s assets has decided to seek the approval of the lenders to consider the new bid since it came in after the deadline to submit expressions of interest (Eol). The foreign entity, whose identity could not be ascertained, could be the last option left for the lenders.

The last date to submit the Eols was August 10. Jet had received Eol from three players — Anil Agarwal’s family trust Volcan Investments, Panama-based investment firm Avantulo Group, and Russian fund Treasury RA Creator.

However, a day later, Volcan withdrew its Eol. According to a person in the know, Avantulo Group did not make it to the short-list. RA Creator has not signed a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) so far. Ashish Chhawchharia, the RP, has also asked it for more documents, but hasn’t received any response.

“The foreign entity which sent in its Eol yesterday is interesting. The company is renowned and the outlook looks positive so far,” said a source close to the development. “The Committee of Creditors (CoC) needs to approve the Eol. Secondly, the company should sign an NDA. Then, if there is merit in the bid, it’s a win for the airline.”

The next CoC meeting is expected to be held on August 26.

23/08/19 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted multi-city searches at about 10 properties linked to Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal and his close associates, said sources aware of the development.

This is the first time the federal agency probing foreign investment in the defunct carrier’s loyalty programme has searched the embattled founder and his aides. The searches were made in New Delhi and Mumbai.

Besides Goyal, ED carried out raids at the premises of Hasmukh Gardi, who allegedly invested in Goyal’s Isle of Man-based Tail Winds Corporation that controls all financial activities of Jet Airways, the agency said.

“Gardi’s name was also revealed in Panama papers for holding fraudulent companies, (and) the source of the money invested in Tail Winds was from illegal activities. He now stays in Dubai,” added the agency.

As reported earlier by ET, **the ED is also probing the possibility of an offence under the stringent Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) over alleged suspicious transactions found on the books of the airline.**

Other than the Jet Privilege Pvt Ltd (JPPL) deal, the agency is also studying a tax evasion case of more than Rs 650 crore. “The searches follow the recent meeting ED officials had with the tax department,” said one of the above cited persons.

24/08/19 Rashmi Rajput/Economic Times

Bengaluru: The Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board has issued a preliminary notification regarding the acquisition of 93 properties for five Metro stations on the 36-km KR Puram-Kempegowda International Airport Metro line. The notice issued in the gazette on August 20 pertains to Kodigehalli, Jakkur Cross, Yelahanka, Bagalur/PRR Cross and Trumpet Junction Metro stations on this Rs10,584-crore Metro 2B Line.

According to officials in Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), "A total of 25,099 square metres of land is being acquired in order to construct stations between Kodigehalli and Trumpet Junction. The National Highways Authority of India has already assured us of a five-metre strip of land to be used for the construction of the line. So the properties are being acquired only for constructing the stations."

The 93 properties to be acquired comprise domestic as well as commercial properties. Small portions of Maharaja Furniture, Bharat Petrol Bunk as well as 647 square metres of Prestige Garden Resorts are among the properties that will be acquired, he added.

There have not been any objections so far from land owners as the compensation being paid by BMRCL is double the guidance value, said another official. "Moreover, we are not acquiring any property in its entirety, only portions of it," he said.

24/08/19 S Lalitha/New Indian Express

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and 11 leaders of other opposition parties who landed today at Srinagar airport were sent back to Delhi, news agency ANI reported. **Restrictions have been imposed in Jammu and Kashmir since the centre withdrew special status from the state and divided it into two union territories earlier this month.**

The Jammu And Kashmir Information and Public Relations Department on Friday tweeted political leaders should not "not visit Srinagar as they would be putting other people to inconvenience" at a "time when the government is trying to protect the people of Jammu and Kashmir from the threat of cross border terrorism and attacks..."

Among the parties that were part of the opposition's all-party delegation that landed at Srinagar were Congress, CPI(M), CPI, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Nationalist Congress Party, Trinamool Congress and the DMK.

Ghulam Nabi Azad and Anand Sharma were the senior Congress leaders other than Rahul Gandhi who flew to Jammu and Kashmir. Mr Azad was twice stopped at Jammu airport, most recently on Tuesday, and was "forcibly" sent back to Delhi both times.

"We are all responsible political parties and leaders. We are not going to break any law. The Jammu and Kashmir situation is very concerning. It's close to 20 days. No news for 20 days. The government says the situation is normal. But then they don't allow leaders to go? Haven't seen such contradiction... If it's normal, why aren't we allowed?" Mr Azad said before he left for the airport this morning in Delhi, news agency ANI reported.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) leader Sitaram Yechury, CPI's D Raja, DMK's Tiruchi Siva, Rashtriya Janata Dal's Manoj Jha and Dinesh Trivedi from the Trinamool Congress were part of the delegation, sources said.

They had planned to visit other parts of the state. **So far, the government has not allowed any political leader to enter the state.**

24/08/19 Debaish Achom/NDTV

Chennai: Air passengers will now have to show any one of government issued Aadhaar card, driving licence, passport, voter ID or PAN card with address proof document to enter the airport.

An Airports Authority of India (AAI) official said the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), in a bid to tighten security, revised its 2017 "list of photo identity proof for security control of departing passengers" and issued a circular to airports and airlines. The earlier circular comprised 10 photo identity documents, including cards issued by educational institutions for students, service ID cards issued by state and central governments and PSUs and others. The new list of approved cards will be included in the ticket, the official said.

A Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) official said people coming to the airport present different kinds of ID cards for entry. "The list will help standardize the documents that need to be presented for entry. It will help the personnel manning the gate to verify them better. We still allow people to enter, especially minors, if there is a certificate from a gazetted officer," he added. **The new circular is part of a move towards introducing DigiYatra scheme under which passengers will be able to travel paperless**, he said. "Once passengers register themselves on the website and attach their Aadhaar, they can just walk in by showing their boarding pass," he added.

24/08/19 Times of India

Kochi: The decision of oil marketing companies (OMCs) comprising IOC, BPCL and HPCL to suspend aviation fuel to Air India and Alliance Air flights at six airports in India from Thursday is unlikely to hit the flight services from Kochi. The OMCs have decided to suspend jet fuel to Air India and Alliance Air due to outstanding dues mounting from the airlines and their ramifications on their working capital requirements, said a statement by Subodh Dakwale, IOC executive director said on Friday.

Kochi is among the six airports along with Mohali, Ranchi, Pune, Patna and Visakhapatnam the OMCs chose to suspend fuel supply to Air India. A top Air India official in Kochi said the flights from Kochi airports will not be affected as the airlines have a mechanism to overcome the situation. Declining to comment further the official said services will operate as scheduled.

According to Mr. Dakwale Air India has overdue payments to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore which includes interest accrued on outstanding dues.

As per the commercial terms Air India enjoys a 90-day credit period. The credit, according to the OMCs, has since crossed the limit and was 230 days in the past two years.

24/08/19 Deccan Chronicle

New Delhi: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Wednesday detected 24500 Qatar Riyal worth Rs 4.82 lakh at Cochin airport, an official releases said here on Thursday.

On August 21 around 2250 hrs, during frisking at Security Hold Area of Cochin Airport, CISF personnel detected 24500-Qatar Riyal worth 4,82,126 from the possession of a passenger kept inside his trouser pocket.

The passenger was later identified as Usman Siraj who was supposed to travel to Doha by Air Indian Express.

22/08/19 UNI

Kochi: At a time when the state is witnessing a spurt in drug abuse cases, Keralites are also gaining notoriety for smuggling narcotics and psychotropic substances to Gulf countries. Considering the gravity of the issue, the Customs Preventive unit has decided to enhance surveillance and screening measures at airports in the state to prevent passengers from smuggling out contraband.

According to sources in the External Affairs Ministry, recently Qatar raised the issue with the Indian Ambassador about the increasing number of Indian citizens getting caught at Doha airport while attempting to smuggle in drugs, prohibited medicines and foreign currencies. A list of people caught for smuggling contraband was handed over to the Indian Government. Qatar is currently providing visa-on-arrival facility for Indian citizens.

"The list comprises details of 210 Indian citizens caught for contraband smuggling from January to July this year. Of this, 93 are from Kerala alone. If these smuggling cartels are not contained, Qatar may be forced to reconsider its visa-on-arrival facility for India," said a source. Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and the UAE also are concerned about rising drug smuggling incidents involving Indians, especially people from Kerala. The Customs Department has decided to follow up the matter seriously and engage its special units to crack down on drug smugglers.

"From now on, our dedicated units will be posted in the departure area of airports in Kerala. Officers will check baggage and quiz passengers about their purpose of travel and people who are sponsoring them. We have also written to CISF which operates baggage scanners and Immigration authority to

ensure that contraband is not smuggled out from airports here,” Customs Commissioner Sumit Kumar said.

24/08/19 New Indian Express

An infant's bleeding nose, reportedly due to cabin pressure issues, forced an Air Asia flight from Bengaluru to Bhubaneswar return to the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) 45 minutes after take-off on Friday afternoon.

The flight had taken off at 12 noon when the infant's parents alerted the crew about the bleeding issue. Once the message was relayed to the cockpit, the pilots took a call to return as there was no medical personnel on board.

None of the other passengers faced any problem due to the cabin pressure problem, it is learnt from travellers. As soon as the flight landed at KIA, the baby was given first aid and taken to the medical facility at the airport.

Later, in an official statement, AirAsia India's Chief of Safety informed that the flight I5-536 had made the priority landing after the infant developed a 'medical condition.' “We place the safety of our guests as our top priority, in all facets of our operations,” the Chief said.

23/08/19 Rasheed Kappan/Deccan Herald

New Delhi: Foreign airlines with flights to India have begun implementing American and European aviation regulators ban on carrying some models of Apple’s Mac-Book Pro onboard — either in check-in or cabin bag — due to risk of battery fires. The DGCA is also examining this latest fear in the skies and may ban affected models of MacBook Pro on board airlines.

Apple had recently announced a recall of a limited number of older generation 15-inch MacBook Pro models sold primarily between September 2015 and February 2017 due to fears that batteries may overheat and catch fire. After Apple’s warning, earlier this month the EU Aviation Safety Agency and USFAA asked airlines to take steps accordingly.

Now India is also seeing if it should ask its airlines to bar the affected MacBook Pro models. “The DGCA is examining the issue and if need be, will do the needful,” said a senior official.

DGCA MULLS ACTION

➤ Apple had recently announced a recall of a limited number of older generation 15-inch MacBook Pro models sold primarily between Sept 2015 and Feb 2017 due to fears that their batteries may overheat and catch fire

➤ DGCA is reviewing situation to see if it should ask desi airlines to bar suspect models

On Sunday, Singapore Airlines (SIA), a major operator to India, said on its website: “Customers are to refrain from bringing the affected (MacBook Pro) models either as hand-carry or in checked baggage until the battery has been verified as safe or replaced by the manufacturer. Please visit Apple’s MacBook Pro Battery Recall Program page to get more information on whether your product is affected, as well as on the available battery replacement options.” Thai is also not allowing 15-inch MacBook Pro notebooks sold between September 2015 and February 2017 on the aircraft either as carry-on or checked luggage.

Apple had on June 20, 2019, issued an “important notice for batteries in certain MacBook Pro units” which said: “Apple announced a voluntary recall of a limited number of older generation 15-inch Mac-Book Pro units which contain a battery that may overheat and pose a safety risk. The units were

sold primarily between September 2015 and February 2017 and can be identified by their product serial number. The recall does not affect any other 15-inch Mac-Book Pro units or other Mac notebooks. Because customer safety is a top priority, Apple is asking customers to stop using affected 15-inch MacBook Pro units. Customers should visit apple.com/support/15-inchmacbook-pro-battery-recall for details on product eligibility and how to have a battery replaced, free of charge.”

The Economic times of India 26/08/2019

The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal on Sunday said it was unfair that the European Commission had maintained a ban on Nepali airlines for five consecutive years without considering the progress made in addressing the deficiencies in the safety oversight system.

In July 2017, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) had removed the 'significant safety concerns' tag put on Nepal four years ago. In the audit, ICAO had given Nepal a score of 66 percent for effective implementation of safety standards—way above the global benchmark of 60 percent.

On December 5, 2013, the European Commission imposed a blanket ban on all airlines from Nepal from flying into the 28-nation bloc stating that Nepali carriers did not meet international safety standards.

“There is no reason why Nepal is still in the air safety list of the European Commission,” Rajan Pokhrel, director general of the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal, told a press meeting following the 56th Conference of Directors General of Civil Aviation, Asia and Pacific Regions.

The five-day conference held in Nepal after two decades ended last Friday bringing 411 aviation officials from around the world including from the European safety agency.

Pokhrel said he met Patrick Ky, executive director of the European Aviation Safety Agency, and his team on the sidelines of the conference and held talks related to the progress made by Nepal in aviation safety and other safety issues.

“We informed the delegation that organisational reforms—splitting the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal into a regulatory body and service provider to facilitate stringent enforcement of safety measures—were ongoing,” he said.

Pokhrel added that the European Commission, the executive branch of the European Union responsible for proposing legislation and implementing decisions, had expressed concern over helicopters crashing at an inordinate rate.

“Helicopter service is not the mainstream operation in Nepal. The operational requirements of choppers are different, and they are basically chartered for medical and emergency rescue operations where there is a risk,” he said, adding that putting commercial Nepali airlines in its bad book by comparing them with the chopper accident rate was unfair.

Helicopters in Nepal typically operate in challenging topography, and flights operated during inclement weather are particularly vulnerable.

Following the ban by the European Union on all Nepal-based airlines in 2013, the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal introduced stringent measures to improve safety standards in all commercial and private airlines.

However, the tough actions failed to improve helicopter operations, and there have been two chopper mishaps this year. In February, a private helicopter crashed shortly after takeoff in Taplejung, killing seven people on board, including Tourism and Civil Aviation Minister Rabindra Adhikari.

At least 20 fatal helicopter crashes have taken place across the country since the civil aviation watchdog started keeping records in 1966. “There are crashes which need to be stopped. But helicopters have also rescued and saved more than 300 people, and most of them are foreigners,” said Pokhrel.

He said they also held a side meeting with the deputy administrator of the Civil Aviation Administration of China regarding access for Nepali airlines to airports in China. “We informed them clearly that despite having only one international airport, we have given permission to six Chinese carriers to operate here, and requested them to provide slots to Nepali carriers.”

The Chinese side said that they had given permission to a Nepali private carrier to operate flights to the new airport in Beijing, and would be conducting an audit of Nepal Airlines before it begins services to Guangzhou. “The Chinese side said that all countries conducted an audit before approving flights, and Nepal Airlines need not be scared of the audit as we are not concerned whether the European Commission has put Nepal in its air safety list.”

The Nepali side also held a meeting with the director general of the South Korean Civil Aviation Authority on matters related to safety and mutual cooperation. “The South Korean authorities said that conducting an audit of Nepal Airlines before granting landing permission was a regular and normal audit procedure,” said Pokhrel.

India has formally proposed to Nepal to allow it to conduct a feasibility study for the implementation of its advanced navigational satellite programme—GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN)—which is expected to improve air traffic management on the Indian subcontinent.

The Airports Authority of India has provided a draft memorandum of understanding to Nepal seeking its consent to perform the feasibility study in order to take the GAGAN expansion programme forward for mutual benefit, said Pokhrel.

Nepal and Myanmar also agreed to hold talks to develop the Himalaya 2 airspace that has been pending for a long time due to lack of surveillance and communication system along parts of the route over Myanmar, officials said.

The Kathmandu-Bagdogra-Guwahati-Silchar-Imphal and Kunming air route is shorter, safer, more economical and efficient for flights between Europe-Middle East and East Asia. The proposed route will reduce congestion of westbound traffic flows across the Bay of Bengal.

“Overall, the conference was successful; and we hope to expedite and implement all the commitments made during the conference for the betterment of Nepal’s aviation industry,” said Pokhrel.

The Kathmandu Post 216/08/2019

Synergy Group Corp., a South American conglomerate that owns majority shares in airlines including Colombian carrier Avianca Holdings, has shown exploratory interest in investing in Jet Airways, said a person aware of the development. The conglomerate submitted an expression of interest for the bankrupt and grounded airline after the August 10 deadline set by the resolution professional running the bid process. The RP, Ashish Chhawchharia of Grant Thornton, will seek approval from the committee of Jet’s creditors to include Synergy in the race on Monday, he told ET. The RP was appointed by India’s bankruptcy court after it admitted an insolvency plea from Jet’s top lender, State Bank of India, on loan repayment defaults. The committee of creditors was also formed as part of the resolution process. The RP has collated claims from all creditors and is in charge of finding a new investor for the airline to clear its dues and give it a new life. Jet halted operations on April 17 after running out of cash and failing to raise money to keep afloat.

The RP had received three EoIs for Jet as of August 10 – from Volcan Investments, which is billionaire Anil Agarwal’s family trust; Panama-based investment firm Avantulo Group, and Russian Fund Treasury RA Creator. Volcan withdrew a day later and Avantulo wasn’t shortlisted for the next round of bidding, leaving the Russian fund as the only selected entity. “We do not have any information regarding the transaction you mentioned not can we make any statements on behalf of any of our shareholders,” an Avianca spokesperson told ET. While Jet’s creditors have put in claims for Rs 30,558 crore, the RP has admitted Rs 12,555 crore, rejected Rs 11,996 crore and is verifying the remaining amount.

The Synergy Group owns majority of Avianca Holdings formed in 2010 via the merger of Colombia’s Avianca and El Salvador’s TACA Airlines. It is Latin America’s second-largest airline, after Chilean carrier LATAM Airlines.

One More Suitor

- ▶ Synergy Group has shown exploratory interest in Jet Airways
- ▶ Submitted EOI after August 10 deadline
- ▶ RP will seek approval from committee of Jet's creditors to include Synergy in the race

Synergy owns majority of Avianca Holdings, formed in 2010

Avianca is loss-making & is being restructured

₹30,558 cr	₹12,555 cr
Jet's creditors: claims	Claims admitted by RP

▶ RP received three EoIs as of August 10 – from Volcan Investments, Avantulo Group and RA Creator

▶ Volcan withdrew a day later and Avantulo wasn't shortlisted for the next round

Avianca Holdings is loss-making and itself being restructured, including a change in management team, a phaseout of aircraft and network optimisation.

Synergy chairman Germán Efromovich’s holding company, BRW Aviation, defaulted on a \$456 million loan from United Airlines earlier this year, according to media reports. United’s loan was backed by

Efromovich's 51.5% stake in Avianca, the reports said. United, which has proposed a three-way business agreement with Avianca and Panama's Copa Airlines, sought to remove Efromovich from his position of control at Avianca, the reports said.

The Economic Times of India 26/08/2019

NEW DELHI: InterGlobe Aviation promoter Rakesh Gangwal on Friday said the company's board has approved a new policy on related-party transactions, amid an ongoing feud with co-promoter Rahul Bhatia over governance issues. The company is the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo.

"While much work lies ahead, including mending some fences and the regulators completing their investigations on the governance issues raised with them, it is gratifying to see progress towards better governance," Gangwal said in a statement. Gangwal said the board has now approved a new related-party transaction policy and to also close an open issue if the Articles of Association are amended at the company's upcoming annual general meeting (AGM) to increase the board size to 10 directors.

"In light of this positive and important development, I will be supporting the proposed changes to the Articles," he said.

The AGM is scheduled to be held on August 27. Currently, InterGlobe Aviation has six board members.

The feud between Gangwal and Bhatia came into the public after the former, in July, wrote to markets regulator Sebi seeking its intervention to address alleged corporate governance lapses at the company. The allegations have been rejected by the Bhatia group.

Gangwal and his affiliates hold around 37 per cent stake in InterGlobe Aviation, while Bhatia's group owns nearly 38 per cent shareholding.

In a filing to the stock exchanges on Friday, InterGlobe Aviation said appointment of M Damodaran as an independent director for a five-year term starting from January 23, 2019, has been proposed by way of an ordinary resolution for the annual general meeting.

Damodaran, who is currently the firm's chairman, would attain the age of 75 years during his tenure as an independent director, the filing said. "... as a matter of abundant clarification of the legal position, the board has approved a resolution through circulation today i.e. August 23, 2019, that for continuance of directorship of Meleveetil Damodaran as an independent director of the company, beyond the age of 75 years, the company shall at an appropriate time before Damodaran attains the age of 75 years, seek the approval of shareholders by way of a special resolution," it added.

The Economic times of India 23/08/2019

New Delhi: the Enforcement Directorate, which carried out searches at the residence of Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal, has got details of 19 companies held by him of which are five are located abroad and how money was siphoned off to other countries through dubious transactions.

The ED has carried out searches at over 12 locations in Delhi and Mumbai including the office and residential premises of Jet officials. A senior ED official said the raids were also carried out at the residence of Goyal and his longtime associate Hasmukh Gardi.

The official said that during searches several incriminating documents related to the payments made to foreign companies and digital evidences have been seized. The official said the agency has taken up the investigation into **alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) against Jet Airways and Goyal** based on complaints from various sources.

He said that the business empire of Goyal, who stepped down from the post of chairman of the airline in March this year, includes 19 privately-held companies of which 14 are registered in India and five are registered abroad.

The official said, **Goyal "indirectly controls" various entities "abroad" some of which are in tax havens.**

"Preliminary investigations done so far indicate that Goyal has structured various tax evading schemes involving domestic companies and the companies in foreign tax jurisdictions thereby siphoning off huge amounts in foreign jurisdictions through dubious or fictitious transactions," he said.

The official said that the fictitious or inflated payments appear to have been made to some of these foreign entities under various airline lease agreements, aircraft maintenance agreements, etc.

24/08/19 IANS/daijiworld.com

New Delhi: Most of India's major airports including Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and others are either running on full flying capacity or are nearing saturation.

Seeing the steady growth in air traffic, the government has planned second airports across eight major cities.

A senior official of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) said that airports of metro cities are generally using their full capacity during peak demand periods.

Only during off-hours (mostly during late-night), are airports operating below capacity.

A case in point is the Mumbai airport, which is using its full capacity almost throughout the day with daily movement of nearly 950 which is near its full capacity.

Similarly, Bengaluru is also running with full capacity during peak demand periods with total daily movement of 640 flights.

The national capital Delhi's runway is near saturation.

Total runway capacity is about 1350 movements against the actual of 1287 movement per day.

Kolkata is using its main runway slightly below full capacity, with total movement being 437 movements per day.

Down South, Chennai is operating slightly below full capacity during peak demand with a total movement of 469 per day.

Hyderabad is also using its full capacity during peak demand hours with total 492 movements per day.

Due to the double-digit growth in passenger traffic and the existing airports in metro cities nearing saturation, **Ministry of Civil Aviation has granted in-principle approval for setting up second airports in cities of Delhi-Jewar, Mumbai-Navi Mumbai, Goa-Mopa, Vizag-Bhogapuram, Pune-Purandar, Ahmedabad-Dholera, Patna-Bihta and Rajkot-Hirasar.**

Moreover, Central Government has requested Government of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal to identify suitable land for second airports for Chennai and Kolkata which are likely to reach saturation within the next few years.

A total of 136 airports are owned and managed by the Airport Authority of India and out of these, 32 airports are non-operational.

26/08/19 New Indian Express

One of the most discussed questions in the aviation circles over the past year or so has been IndiGo's intention to London from India on a narrow-body aircraft. The airline is already holding slots at London Gatwick, and has made many a move to fly Delhi-London via Baku in Azerbaijan.

Slot filings at London airport show IndiGo has currently filed A321 equipment, the same as is being used on its Delhi-Istanbul flights. The problem with that move, from a passenger experience perspective, and perhaps why IndiGo has not already pulled this one off so far, is the airline's lack of experience to differentiate its long-haul international flights from the short-haul ones.

As reported earlier, the long-haul experiences for IndiGo, as shown by its flights to Istanbul, still have the airline serving you cold sandwiches for a meal. There is still no charging point or in-flight entertainment offered by the airline. Flying a narrow-body, which includes very long queues for the use of the small lavatories at the back of the plane.

While IndiGo is still pondering over how will it fly passengers to London, perhaps with a newer passenger experience, or perhaps on board a newer plane such as the A321XLR which will only be

delivered a few years from now, it seems a middle-eastern airline has already stolen its thunder. **Jazeera Airways of Kuwait recently announced new flights between Kuwait and London, to be operated by their A320 aircraft. These flights will start operating October 27, 2019 onwards, and coupled with Jazeera Airways' Indian network, seem to have some good connections for a low-cost experience to London.**

Jazeera Airways, however, has improvised to ensure that passengers get a low-cost experience, which is still valid on a 7-hour long flight rather than cut and paste their domestic experience on to international long-haul flights, which is what IndiGo did. The airline already had a business-class experience on its aircraft, but on the new aircraft it brought in for the flights to London, it has also introduced a Premium Economy cabin.

While Kuwait Airport is nothing to write home about, the airline has built in reasonable connection times (60-90 minutes from Delhi on various days, three hours from Mumbai) amongst others. A traveller also gets to walk a bit on the transit, allowing him to stretch muscles rather than being in the same seat, not moving for hours.

26/08/19 Ajay Awtaney/CNBC TV18

Bengaluru: The domestic air connectivity in Karnataka is all set to get a boost with the government fast-tracking projects to develop small airports.

Ten days after the cabinet approved the proposal to develop a greenfield airport in chief minister BS Yediyurappa's home district, Shivamogga, **the state on Saturday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Airports Authorities of India (AAI) to operationalise the Rs 181-crore Kalaburagi airport.**

Officials said plans are afoot to develop at least 15 small airports with the setting up of the special purpose vehicle (SPV).

"Talks are on for the past two days between the government and the AAI to expedite the process of developing small airports, which is in accordance with the civil aviation ministry's policy to support regional air connectivity. The projects are expected to take off in a couple of months," said AAI executive director Anand G Joshi.

The AAI and Karnataka State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSSIDC) are setting up SPV for each airport.

The dormant airport projects which will find a second wind are Raichur, Hassan, Karwar, Virajpet (Kodagu), Kolar, Yadgir, Ballari among others.

Kapil Mohan, principle secretary to the infrastructure department, said land acquisition is already done for most of the projects and the work will be completed in a year. Belagavi and Mysuru airports with 13 and 8 flights, respectively, are going strong underlining the need of more airports, he claimed.

However, many are questioning the need for so many airports in the state.

"When the existing assets are underutilised, we would only end up overdoing by developing more airports and wasting resources," said urban expert V Ravichandar.

26/08/19 Times of India

A Korean national has been detained at a New Delhi airport on suspicion of smuggling gold worth more than 19 million Indian rupees (\$265,000).

News 18, an Indian media outlet, reported Friday (local time) that customs officers detained the man who arrived at Indira Gandhi International Airport from Hong Kong Wednesday. His identity is being withheld.

Officials seized 105 gold rotor plates (5,565 grams) hidden inside a Toshiba motor.

Authorities are looking into whether the suspect has been involved in other crimes.

26/08/19 Jung Min-ho/Korea Times

Kalaburagi: The Kalaburagi airport was formally handed over to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Saturday for commercial operations. It will now connect Bengaluru with the backward

Hyderabad-Karnataka region.

The Kalaburagi airport has been selected for flight operations under the UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme.

Alliance Air and Ghodawat Air Private Limited have been qualified as 'Selected Airline Operator (SAO)' for Kalaburagi-Bengaluru-Kalaburagi, Kalaburagi-Hindon-Kalaburagi and Kalaburagi-Tirupati-Kalaburagi routes, according to a statement by the state government. A memorandum of understanding (MoU) has been signed between the state-run Karnataka Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (KSIIDC) and the AAI. As a result, the Kalaburagi airport will be developed, operated and maintained by the AAI as a functional airport, the government said. The government cleared the Kalaburagi greenfield airport project in March 2007.

24/08/19 Bharat Joshi/Deccan Herald

Mumbai: High-tension power supply wires and cable lines have been the bane of helicopter and small fixed-wing aircraft pilots world-wide, having caused hundreds of fatal accidents.

The Uttarkashi helicopter accident on Wednesday which killed three people is believed to have happened because of the power supply wires that went unnoticed by the pilots, till it was too late to recover the aircraft and fly over the obstacle. However unlike regulators in other countries, India is yet to formulate norms for state governments and power-supply companies, aimed at cutting down the number the wire-strike crashes, say industry experts.

"In other countries, like Australia, for instance, the rule is that any transmission company setting up cables, mostly in valleys, should put up markers. Our Directorate General of Civil Aviation doesn't talk about it," said a senior helicopter pilot.

India has about 2.6 lakh circuit km of power transmission lines, apart from other wires and cables that cut across the path of low-flying aircraft and many of these, including those that run through valleys which are frequently used by helicopters, remain unmarked.

Capt Uday Gelli, western region president of Rotary Wing Society of India said: "We believe that installing aerial marker balls on high tension wires crisscrossing valleys in northern parts of India should be made mandatory." An aerial marker ball is a bright orange colored fibre glass ball, weighing about 20 kgs and about 2-3 feet in diameter, which is installed along the power supply lines to alert pilots about the obstacle in their flight path.

The U.S. Helicopter Safety Team found that approximately 16% of all rotary-wing accidents involve wire or obstacle strikes. US civil aviation regulator, the Federal Aviation Administration studied 124 wire-strike accidents involving civil helicopters between 1994 and 2004 and found that 86% of the fatal accidents occurred in clear weather with good visibility. A study by South African civil aviation authority following 117 wire-strike accidents between 1990 and 2008 found that attempts to carry out emergency landing, failure to look out for wire due to distractions in the cockpit, poor visibility factors like low clouds, fog, sun contribute to such crashes.

25/08/19 Manju V/Times of India

New Delhi: Following accidents of two helicopters on relief sorties in landslide-affected Uttarakhand, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has suspended chopper operations in the hill state till the state comes out with procedures for safe flights. Till that happens, the regulator will allow chopper flights there in emergency situation under the direct supervision of its flight operating inspector for helicopters. Uttarakhand has been seeing heavy rains that led to landslides after which choppers were pressed into service for relief activities.

On Wednesday (August 21) a chopper of Heritage Aviation hit apple cart cables after taking off and chopper crashed, killing all three — including pilot and engineer — on board. Two days later, a chopper of Aryan Aviation during a flight also hit apple cart cables and crashed, Luckily in this accident, the two persons on board survived and received minor injuries.

Taking a serious view of these back-to-back accidents, DGCA chief Arun Kumar suspended chopper operations in Uttarakhand on Friday. The regulator held a meeting on Saturday with the state's civil aviation development authority (UCADA), representatives of the two firms whose helicopters had

crashed and other stakeholders.

24/08/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Imphal: Despite crackdowns against illicit drugs by government agencies in Manipur, trafficking of contraband goods goes undeterred and is on upward trend in Manipur.

In the latest crackdown against the illicit drugs, Manipur police seized 40 lakh tablets of suspected WY (World is Yours) on Friday night. The drugs are valued around Rs 400 crore in the international market.

Thoubal district police has seized the **40 lakh tablets of suspected WY which they put the value in the international market at Rs 400 crore.** The police were assisted by local youth clubs and women bodies in the seizure of the contraband item along with three persons.

Addressing a press conference on Saturday, Thoubal district SP, Dr S Ibomcha Singh said that the contraband item was seized by a combined team of the district police and two additional teams of police commandos with the assistance of members of Phoudel Keirambi Youth Club, Phoudel Keirambi and Panthoibi Women Welfare Association and Phoudel Keirambi.

The drugs were found carrying in a Tata 207 DI vehicle which was intercepted by the security forces along with the members of the local youth club and women organisations, the police officer said. He added that they detained the vehicle which was found in a very suspicious manner on the inter-village road (IVR) at Phoudel Keirambi Mathak Leikai.

The police officer then said that the vehicle along with the driver later identified as Mohammad Hussain (35), son of Zakir Hussain of Thoubal Wangkhem Muslim Leikai was brought to Thoubal police station for proper verification. Upon checking, the police detected 40 lakh of suspected WY drugs weighing around 400 kg. The contraband items were found carrying concealed inside the carpet rolls. Twenty packets each of the contraband items were found concealed in neatly prepared grooves inside the rolled carpet and each packet was found containing 2000 WY tablets.

24/08/19 Newmai News Network/The Morung Express

State-run airline Air India is unlikely to receive any immediate relief from the government as the cash-starved company is struggling to run daily operations, sources told CNBC-TV18.

Air India, which has been receiving continues funding from the government since September 2018, is yet to use guarantees worth Rs 5,000 crore out of the Rs 7,500 crore provided by the government, according to the sources.

Oil marketing companies had last week stopped the supply of aviation turbine fuel to Air India at six airports due to non-payment of pending dues, CNBC-TV18 reported on August 23, citing sources aware of the development. **The fuel supply has been stopped at the airports of Patna, Kochi, Vishakhapatnam, Pune, Ranchi and Mohali.**

Dharmendra Pradhan, minister of petroleum and natural gas, told CNBC-TV18 that the OMCs are independently talking to the airline on the ATF supply issue.

26/08/19 CNBC TV18

New Delhi: In an attempt to stave off criticism after the national carrier made news for having its oil supply cut-off, chairman and managing director of Air India Ashwani Lohani on Sunday said that the airline cannot be expected to repay its debt on its own.

"It is a fact that huge debt servicing affects every single aspect of the working of the airline...

Expecting it to service out of its revenues is indicative of a lack of appreciation of the working of the airlines," Mr. Lohani wrote on his Facebook page. He added that the airline's inability to pay oil companies did not in any way reflect its operational performance.

Air India has a total debt of ₹58,351 crore as on March 31 this year. The government had created a special purpose vehicle to which a sum ₹29,464 crore, or half of Air India's total debt, was transferred to enable it to save on interest payments of ₹4,500 crore annually.

26/08/19 Jagriti Chandra/The Hindu

NEW DELHI: India is studying an alternate method of training commercial pilots that requires less hour of flying a training aircraft — hence lowering costs for aspiring aviators – and more in simulators.

DG of DGCA Arun Kumar has set up an internal panel to study the pros and cons of this MPL system. About 60 countries, like EU nations, Singapore, Japan and UK have already adopted ICAO MPL standards.

Recently a number of international organisations met aviation authorities in India, requesting it to consider the MP which also allows quicker shifting between different types of planes, like from Boeing 737 to A320.

« We are examining the MPL system of training pilot with an open mind. Arin Kumar has set up a 5-member panel which will submit its report in a month. MPL has been validated by the US FAA IASA programme. On an average wannabe pilots from India spend Rs. 200 crore annually at flying schools abroad. MPL focuses more on flying in simulator than actual flying in a small training aircraft while a wannabe pilots earns his or her licence », said a senior official.

MPL theoretically could lead to investors in India setting up simulators to train student pilots and lessen the need for aspiring aviators to go abroad. However, the DGCA will tread with utmost caution while deciding on adopting this system. « As of now, a trainee pilots needs to do around 200 hours of flying in a small engine and then twin engine plane to earn his or her commercial pilot licence. Under MPL, the training will include 30 to 40 hours of flying a trainee aircraft and the the rest will be in simulator. This is a SIM-driven training. The conversion between different types of aircraft for pilots will also be faster », added the official.

The IATA document recommends conducting a “pilot aptitude testing’ before the start of MPL courses. “partnering operators (airlines) commit themselves to provide initial operator experience to contracted graduates. This means that the MPL graduates will immediately fly in the operator’s routes network in revenue service once they have been issued their MPL, without requiring any bridge training. Evidently, only pilot applicants who have performed well during a rigorous testing process should be admitted to an MPL programme” says the IATA document.

The Times of India 16/08/2019

Hyderabad: Passengers onboard a Hyderabad-Chennai TruJet flight had a narrow escape, on Monday morning, after the aircraft made an emergency landing at the city’s Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA), following an alleged fuel leak. The ATR flight, 2T 201, took-off from RGIA at 8am with 42 passengers. Within 10 minutes, it developed a technical snag and was forced to return to the base.

The incident led to panic among fliers who complained that the TruJet staff offered no help or clarity over the situation at hand. Worse, with the airline cancelling the service, many of them were left stranded at RGIA for hours on end.

TruJet officials, while confirming the incident, said that it was a “minor engineering defect”. “Soon after take-off, the pilot detected an issue with the engine and alerted the ATC. It returned to the base by 8.15am,” said a senior official from the airline. Though he hinted at a probable leakage, he maintained that it “wasn’t alarming”. “The aircraft was sent into repair immediately after it returned to RGIA. It took our engineers just about three hours to repair it. If it was as serious, it would have taken much longer,” he said. The official also said that the aircraft was later used on other routes

including Kadapa and Mysore. "Also, the inconvenienced passengers were either accommodated on another aircraft or offered refund," the official said.

27/08/19 Times of India

Tata Group company, TAL Manufacturing Solutions Ltd (TAL) said on Tuesday it has delivered to Boeing 25,000th floor beam, a key component in the manufacturing of a Boeing 787 plane, from its Nagpur facility for all variants of the wide-body plane. The US aircraft major had awarded TAL the first contract to manufacture Advanced Composite Floor Beam (ACFB for the Dreamliner (B787) family of planes in 2011.

TAL shipped the first set of floor beams in 2014. "The delivery of the 25,000th floor beam for the Dreamliner marks a special milestone for Boeing's partnership with TAL," said Salil Gupte, president, Boeing India.

TAL Manufacturing Solutions is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Tata Advanced Systems. From its facility in Mihan-SEZ, Nagpur, TAL delivers complex aerospace components to leading commercial aircraft programs.

MIHAN (Multi-Model International Passenger and Cargo Hub Airport at Nagpur), is a Maharashtra government project for the development of the existing domestic airport of Nagpur as an international passenger and cargo hub airport, and a multi-product special economic zone (SEZ), situated near the airport. Boeing's broader and continued investments in India are not only towards Make in India but span technology, hi-tech innovation, production capacity, as well as skilling centers for aerospace manufacturing," added Gupte.

27/08/19 PTI/Financial Express

Kochi: The stoppage of fuel supply by oil marketing companies to Air India due to non-payment of dues delayed the take-off of a Dubai-bound Air-India Dreamliner from the Cochin international airport here by nearly four hours on Monday.

The flight with about 300 passengers left for Dubai at around 1 pm instead of at 9.15 am after the intervention of Civil Aviation and Petroleum Ministers, a Congress MP from Kerala, who took up the matter with them, said.

An airport official said fuel supply issue was the reason for the delay.

Pathanamthitta Congress MP Anto Antony said he took up the matter with Minister of state for Civil Aviation (independent charge) Hardeep Singh Puri and Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan after some passengers complained about the delay.

"The issue was resolved after the Civil Aviation Minister spoke to Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. The flight took off at 1.09 pm," the MP told PTI.

Oil marketing companies (OMCs) have stopped the supply of fuel to Air India at six airports, including Cochin, from Thursday due to non-payment of dues by the carrier.

26/08/19 PTI/NDTV

Qatar Airways is also not interested in buying Air India in an upcoming government sales process, the airline's chief executive told Reuters on Tuesday.

Akbar Al Baker was speaking at a function to announce the launch of flights from Doha to the Malaysian island of Langkawi from October.

Al Baker's comments come as the Indian government is making a fresh attempt to sell stake or even completely exit Air India.

The government failed last year in its attempt to sell a 76 percent stake in Air India due to a lack of interest from bidders who said they found some of the stake sale terms too onerous, making it a non-starter. It is now redrawing the stake sale plans and as part of the effort it has hived off some of the loss-making airline's debt of \$8.5 billion.

Al Baker had previously told The Economic Times that his airline would be interested in Air India only if it comes without the 'baggage'. He was not referring to airline's debt but functions such as ground handling, engineering etc, he told the newspaper.

27/08/19 CNBC-TV18

Guwahati: "We see airplanes flying over our houses and wondered whether we will ever get a chance to sit inside. Now, it has come true for most of us at MKM primary school."

These are the first words from Prince, a kid from MKM primary school, Garal, Guwahati who was embarking to fly for first time in his life from the national Capital Delhi. That Airports Authority of India, Guwahati has added wings to their dreams and smile on the faces of 20 similar school children could be easily felt here on Monday.

Under the corporate social responsibility programme, AAI organized an educational tour for these school children who boarded Air Asia flight from Guwahati Airport to Delhi on Monday morning.

Interacting with children at the Airport, Sanjeev Jindal Regional Executive Director, AAI North-Eastern Region said that the day he joined here, he first visited these school children at Garal community centre and had assured them that if school management wishes to, he could take them for air travel. Since that day and today, their dream to fly is now a reality and it gives him immense pleasure to facilitate them for flying.

As a responsible organization, AAI is always concerned for the people affected by airport projects, he added. We are striving to connect privileged with unprivileged people in and around airports.

The Garal community centre, near Guwahati Airport is being constructed under the CSR scheme of AAI for Rs 2.37 Cr. AAI has taken up many other CSR initiatives in NER. With UNDP for development of villages around Rani block, with Akshaya Patra for mechanised kitchen for Mid Day Meals, Jindal informed.

27/08/19 Sentinel

At present, flights connect 11 destinations from city Ahmedabad airport has turned out to be among the top airports in the country in implementation of the UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Nagarik) under the regional connectivity scheme of government. As passengers flying under the scheme are good in number, new destinations are being added from the city airport.

According to domestic traffic figures from the city airport in the past one month, 11 % of total flight movements from the city are under UDAN. In other words, out of total 5,500 flight movements in June, 605 movements are under the UDAN scheme from the city airport.

As the aircraft are small in size, the number of domestic passengers under the scheme (33,942) constitute 4.5 % of total passengers (7,46,265). Number of flights under UDAN have increased to reach 666 in July.

To facilitate more such flights, city airport is going to add 12 more parking stands only for small aircraft under UDAN.

Talking about the success of the scheme, "Ahmedabad airport is one of the top airports when it comes to implementation of UDAN scheme. As the scheme connects many tier-2 and tier-3 cities to Ahmedabad, a business hub, the scheme is getting passengers in good number. The airports under it are near pilgrimage and tourist places like Jaisalmer, Ajmer, Pushkar, Shirdi and Diu among others."

A place like Kishangadh airport also caters to marble traders of Ahmedabad. As there is capping of fare of Rs 2,500 per 500 km under this scheme, it is also affordable. As per an estimate, for every Rs 100 spent on this scheme, economy benefits by Rs 350. We are looking forward to adding more destinations like Aurangabad and Jalgaon which will enable people to get access to more cities." At present, six airlines operate their flights from Ahmedabad to 11 destinations. They included Nashik, Belgaum, Kishangadh, Hubli, Jaisalmer, Porbandar, Kandla, Indore, Bhavnagar, Mundra and Diu. Two more airports, Jalgaon and Aurangabad, will be added to it from September 1, taking the number of destinations to 13.

As there is a problem of parking stands at the airport, some airlines are not able to start new flights under the scheme. Gangal said: "We have 33 parking stands at present to which we are adding 19 more. Of these, 12 will be for the small aircrafts. This will give a boost to the UDAN scheme from Ahmedabad. The new parking stands will be ready by the end of this month."

Looking at the figures of last two months, the number of flight movements under UDAN are increasing from the city. As per June 2019's data of domestic flight movements and passengers catered to, out of 5500 domestic flight movements from city, 605 were under the UDAN scheme. Number of flights under UDAN have increased by 10 % to reach 666 in July.

At present, airlines which operates under UDAN included Air Deccan, Alliance Air, Indigo, SpiceJet, Star Air, Tru Jet. Under the UDAN scheme, 400 airports will be built across the country out of which 100 airports have already been built and made operational. "The basic idea is to connect underserved and unserved airports to rest of the country," said an airport official.

27/08/19 Vishal Patadiya/Ahmedabad Mirror

Passengers traveling with Singapore Airlines (SIA), Silkair and Vistara will have more international flight options as the Singaporean flag carrier and its regional arm, Silkair, signed an agreement with Indian carrier Vistara to expand codesharing to international routes.

Under the expansion of an existing codeshare agreement which covers Indian domestic flights, SIA and Silkair will add nine new codeshare destinations within India on Vistara-operated flights. The following destinations will be added: Chandigarh, Dibrugarh, Jammu, Leh, Pune, Raipur, Ranchi, Siliguri and Srinagar. SIA will add its 'SQ' designator code to Vistara's new international flights. Vistara will add its 'UK' designator code to SIA and Silkair-operated flights between Singapore and eight destinations in India, including Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Cochin, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai and New Delhi. As part of the arrangement, Vistara will codeshare on services to more than 40 destinations from Singapore to Australia, New Zealand, Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan and the US.

"These codeshares will be implemented in phases and are subject to regulatory approvals," reads a press release from the airline.

27/08/19 GCR

Patna: Flight operations at Jayaprakash Narayan International (JPNI) Airport in Patna is set to be smoother and safer with the use of state-of-the-art automatic dependent surveillance-broadcast (ADS-B) technology.

The satellite-based navigational system has been working on trial basis for the last three months and will be fully commissioned following the nod from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). According to senior airport officials, the ADS-B equipment was installed at the airport in 2016, followed by a three-month training programme of air traffic control (ATC) staff. The ADS-B automatically gives exact position of the aircraft along with its other required navigational details.

Patna airport director Bhupesh CH Negi told this newspaper on Monday that the ATC staff have been using this equipment on trial basis since March. "It will be fully functional after the DGCA nod. A proposal in this regard has already been sent to the DGCA with the required documents," he said. The navigation of flights under Patna airport ATC jurisdiction is presently being done through age-old radio communication between the pilot and the ATC ground staff.

Under the ADS-B technology, the aircraft equipped with the technology transmits its details, including call-sign, height, location, speed and estimated time of arrival (ETA) through global positioning system (GPS) to the controlling ATC and other equipped aircraft in its vicinity. Most modern aircraft, including those manufactured by Airbus and Boeing are equipped with ADS-B. Santosh Kumar, assistant general manager (air traffic management) at Patna airport, said the ADS-B technology is being used presently for only those aircraft which are equipped with the equipment supporting ADS-B. "We are using this system on trial basis between 7:30am and 7.30pm," he said. Meanwhile, Patna airport has also initiated the proposal to replace several other outdated equipment, including Instrument Landing System (ILS) and Doppler Very High Frequency Omni Range (DVOR) being used to help the pilot in flight navigation. They are very old. **The ILS at Patna airport is of Category-1, which is termed as CAT-I ILS. It has been recommended to be updated to ILS Category-II.**

27/08/19 Faryal Rumi/Times of India

Ahmedabad: Lingering stench from a pile of garbage may induce nausea or raise hygiene concerns. But it can pose a flight risk, if that garbage pile is close to the airport and attracts birds that may collide with aircraft.

Worried over garbage piles outside airport boundary walls, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPI) authorities have made a representation to Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) earlier this week. Airport authorities have sought that the civic body take strong measures to clear waste from Sardarnagar and Kubernagar areas, in addition to several locations just outside the airport boundary wall.

"It is mandatory to maintain cleanliness and ensure removal of any waste or garbage or polluted items that are likely to attract vultures and other birds and animals outside the airport premises, according to norms of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)," said a source close to the development.

He added, "Kubernagar is a particular problem area, since it falls in the approach funnel i.e. landing route of aircraft for Runway 23 at SVPI airport. Garbage piles here are a matter of serious concern for Airports Authority of India (AAI)."

Sources also confirmed that during 2016-2018, some 10 representations regarding cleanliness in the areas around SVPI airport's vicinity were made by the AAI to the civic body.

Probably nowhere else in the city does garbage pose as concrete a threat to human lives as in the vicinity of the airport, where it can set off a chain of events leading to aircraft accidents.

26/08/19 Niyati Parikh/Times of India

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration has set up airline counters at the Tourist Reception Centre (TRC) to facilitate booking of tickets, which was difficult due to snapping of internet and phone communication in the Valley, for over 20 days now.

The counters will be open from 8 am to 8 pm and will be fully functional by Tuesday evening, according to senior officials.

GoAir, Indigo, SpiceJet, Vistara and Air Asia posters were seen at the TRC.

Since August 5 there was a clampdown on internet and telephonic communication in the Valley. Residents faced inconvenience and were forced to go to the airport and book tickets. Now, they will be able to track information and take print-outs at these counters.

"We are putting lease line [for internet]. To ease problems, residents can now book tickets from these counters. We hope to be fully functional by the evening," said Nisar Ahmad Wani, director, Department of Tourism, Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources in the administration confirmed that a meeting took place with airlines representatives on Monday evening.

27/08/19 Pooja Shali/India Today

New Delhi: A Malaysian woman was arrested with smuggled gold worth 25 million rupees (RM1.47mil) at Chennai's international airport on Sunday (Aug 25).

Indian customs officials, acting on a tip-off, arrested the passenger on Sunday after they found 12 gold bars, weighing 6.5kg in total, in her baggage.

The 41-year-old told Air Intelligence Unit officials that the gold was to be delivered to an unknown person outside the airport, according to a customs press release on Monday (Aug 26).

Malaysian consul-general in Chennai, K. Saravanan, told Bernama that local authorities are further investigating the case.

27/08/19 Bernama/The Star

New Delhi: A chartered plane from Delhi, carrying 6 people, caught fire while landing at Dhanipur airstrip in Aligarh on Tuesday. The VT-AVV aircraft crashed after one of its wheels got stuck in a wire during landing. There were no reports of injuries. Additional District Magistrate Ranjit Singh said six persons on board, including the pilot, were safe.

According to preliminary inquiry, the plane touched a high tension wire, fell on the ground and caught fire. Fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames, the ADM added. Plane captain Kishore, co-pilot Deepak, and engineers Ram Prakash Gupta, Prabhat Trivedi, Anand Kumar and Kartik were rescued by the district authorities. All the six were admitted to a private hospital for medical assistance.

28/08/19 Hans India

Pakistan will shut down its airspace for India, starting from August 28, for three days in protest against the latter's decision to abrogate Article 370 and Article 35A in Jammu and Kashmir.

On Tuesday, Pakistan cabinet minister Fawad Hussain told the media that Pakistani PM Imran Khan was considering the complete closure of the country's air space for India, while also placing a complete ban on the use of its land routes for trade with Afghanistan.

Hussain, the federal minister for science and technology, had argued that the move was suggested in the cabinet meeting and the legal formalities for these decisions are under consideration. This isn't the first time that Pakistan will be closing its air space. Pakistan had fully closed its airspace in February after an Indian Air Force strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot. For instance, flights to and from India that fly westwards towards the Gulf region, or Europe or America will have to fly longer distances to avoid Pakistani airspace. This, in effect, will increase the time taken by the flight and also exponentially increase the cost of operations.

An official of the DGCA explained, "When longer distances are flown, then more crew is required.

The increased time required for the flight that different sets of crew and multiple pilots will be

required. And on top of all this, the passengers are greatly inconvenienced.”

The geography of the Himalayas in the north of India is a further complication, experts said and added that the closing the Pakistani airspace impedes flight operations since the mountains are near impassable.

Generally, the airspace over a nation is controlled by that country’s aviation regulatory body (Civil Aviation Authority, in the case of Pakistan) and air traffic control organizations determine when, where and how aircraft are allowed to fly.

Flights typically like to fly a straight line to their destination in order to save fuel – but for this, the airspace has to be open and safe. But the impact of shutting down the air space is felt by both nations. After shutting down the airspace earlier in February, Pakistan had suffered a loss of USD 50 million, said Pakistani aviation minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan – but had underlined that Islamabad’s action had hit New Delhi “harder”, “It is a huge loss for our overall (aviation) industry”, he was quoted as saying by the Dawn newspaper.

But he had added “This restriction had hit India harder than Pakistan. The loss of India is almost double. But at this juncture, détente and harmony are required from both sides.”

28/08/19 News18.com

New Delhi: Air India has accepted the resignation of its Regional Director for East, Rohit Bhasin, who was allegedly caught shoplifting a wallet from a duty-free shop at the Sydney airport on June 22, airline officials said on Wednesday.

His last day at Air India would be August 31, one of the officials said.

“Bhasin’s suspension was revoked on Monday so that his resignation can be accepted on Tuesday.

The revoking of suspension was just a technicality,” said the official.

Bhasin has been under suspension and not permitted to enter the premises of the national carrier since the date of the incident.

Bhasin was rostered as one of the commanders (pilots) of AI301 flight, which was set to depart at 10.45 am (local time) on June 22 from the Sydney airport for Delhi.

On June 23, the airline spokesperson said, “There is an initial report of one of its captains Mr Rohit Bhasin, who is also working as a regional director, picking up a wallet from a duty-free shop in Sydney. Air India has instituted an enquiry into this incident and has placed the captain under suspension.”

According to another airline official, around a week back, Bhasin had come to meet the Air India Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) Ashwani Lohani in order to proffer resignation under Voluntary Resignation Scheme (VRS).

Lohani refused to accept the resignation under VRS scheme, the official said.

28/08/19 PTI/Business Line