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After an Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 737 MAX crashed on March 10 killing all 157 on board, the Boeing 737 MAX has been grounded by all the nations it was in operation, including India.

The Ethiopian Airlines crash was the second crash involving Boeing 737 MAX aircraft in five months.

On October 30, 2018, an Indonesian Lion Air three-month-old Boeing 737 MAX 8 crashed, killing 189 crew and passengers including its Indian pilot Bhavye Suneja.

The grounding of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft -- affecting SpiceJet and the beleaguered Jet Airways in India -- has led to a raft of flight cancellations, airfares heading north and major inconvenience posed to fliers.

Can the crisis be resolved? With the 737 MAX fly again? What should the Indian government do to alleviate the pain for fliers?

"The grounding of these Boeing aircraft will affect global aviation more than the Indian aviation industry," Sankalp Sinha, director of aviation consultant and Indian advisory, research, at Martin Consulting LLC, tells Rediff.com's Syed Firdaus Ashraf.

How severe is the crisis facing Indian aviation after the DGCA decided to ground Boeing 737 MAX aircraft?

In the long term, whenever a manufacturer releases a new aircraft in the market, these teething troubles are bound to happen. This has happened to other aircraft earlier too.

This (crisis) is something the manufacturer will have to work with (the airlines).

In the long term, it is not going to affect the industry that much.

When an aircraft is grounded for longer duration, the airline will be compensated (by Boeing), and that is the industry norm.

Now, considering the ground reality, SpiceJet has just come out of the red and Jet Airways is going through one of its worst crises right now, but I don't think it will impact Indian aviation as such.

On a global level, you have 330 or so planes flying and a sizeable number of orders are booked by various airlines as a replacement for (old planes). This will impact the delivery schedule and the impact would be global.

How many of these aircraft are in operation in India?

Five are flying with Jet Airways and because of non-payment they are grounded.

As far as flying is concerned, they are only with SpiceJet. **Some 8 to 10 were flying till Wednesday (March 13) and are now grounded.**

So I think this will be a short term impact and not impact Indian aviation in the long term.

I feel the grounding of these Boeing aircraft will affect global aviation more than the Indian aviation industry.

This grounding is bound to affect flight schedules, and given that Jet is not flying its full fleet, it can lead to an increase in air ticket prices. Should consumers worry?

Aviation is a seasonal business. Out of four quarters in a year, you have two quarters which are busy.

October-December and April-June have the maximum number of flyers in India because it coincides with the holiday season.

And if you see the pricing trend, then ticket prices are always higher in these six months.

The other six months of January-March and July-August you have less volume of traffic and airlines discount ticket prices in this period.

Right now we are in March so ticket prices should be low, but Indian aviation is having a lesser number of aircraft.

Besides the Boeing 737 MAX, you have the A320Neos which Indigo is currently grappling with because of a lack of pilots.

This has led to cancellation (of flights) and therefore the prices of air tickets are on the higher side this season although generally in March ticket prices are on the lower side.

So will air ticket prices rise further because of this crisis?

This would have an impact over the next three months from the April quarter if this (grounding of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft) continues.

We do not know how soon Boeing would have a fix for this. This may impact the April to June quarter.

Airline ticket prices remain high anyways for the April quarter as it is the holiday season.

And this grounding of Boeing aircraft would have a delta effect (external link), but it would not impact completely.

Can one or two accidents decide the fate of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft across the world? Has this ever happened in the history of aviation?

It (Boeing 737) is a very robust and very sturdy aircraft. It has a history of flying right from the 1960s since the base model 737-100.

This 737 fleet was used by ModiLuft, Damania Airways and East-West Airlines.

It was the best-selling aircraft and the only aircraft which comes close to it is the Airbus 320.

This accident won't impact 737 fleets globally, but I think we should wait and watch how quickly Boeing solves this problem after two crashes.

Yes, but the delivery of new aircraft would be impacted as airlines would demand that Boeing rectify this issue before delivery happens.

The delivery of new aircraft would be impacted, but existing aircraft will see growth.

Can you explain in layman's terms what went wrong with the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft?

The issue is primarily during takeoff of the aircraft.

The flight control, if you switch onto auto pilot, the new software was over-riding the controls which are with the pilots especially during takeoff.

Obviously, when new aircraft types are introduced, the pilots need to be adequately trained. They should have to be familiarised with any changes in the aircraft.

That particular exercise Boeing needs to do to get this glitch rectified as soon as possible.

How could this aircraft come in to use before pilots were well-trained? Are they not doing the testing process well?

This particular design is in operation for the last 60 years.

The aircraft type is not in question. What is actually happening is that recent aircraft modifications have happened more in terms of technology intervention. You have better designed engines which give you better performance.

Technology has played a larger role than the airframe design itself. The airframe design has remained the same as in the 1970s. This is more of a technological fix than a fix on the airframe.

Will the grounded aircraft fly again?

The grounded aircraft will fly once Boeing fixes (the problem) and pilots are certified to fly these planes.

It is not a maintenance issue as such, but it is more in terms of technology and software. So it will be a change in software and once that is fixed, the aircraft will fly again.

[Rediff.com 15/03/2019](#)

New Delhi: **Some lessors of India's Jet Airways have begun terminating lease deals over unpaid dues and are preparing to move the leased planes abroad, escalating a crisis for the carrier,** five sources with knowledge of the matter told Reuters.

Two lessors have applied to the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India's aviation regulator, to deregister at least five planes leased to cash-strapped Jet, three of the sources said. **Termination of lease agreements normally precedes applications made to the DGCA.**

Jet has delayed payments to its pilots, suppliers and lessors for months and defaulted on loans after racking up over \$1 billion in debt.

While it is now meeting some of its payments, its survival hinges on emergency funding from the country's main state-backed banks.

Frustrated by the unpaid dues, **Jet's lessors,** including many of the world's biggest players such as GE Capital Aviation Services (GECAS), **Aercap Holdings and BOC Aviation, have already taken control of some their planes,** sources said.

That has led to the grounding of nearly a third of Jet's 119-aircraft fleet. Once the planes are deregistered, they can be taken out of the country and leased to other airlines.

One of the sources with direct knowledge of the matter said that of the planes being deregistered, two are potentially being flown to China and one to Ireland.

[17/03/19 Reuters/Telegraph](#)

Two international flights ventured hazardously close to each other in the skies of greater Mumbai, India on Friday, according to the India Times.

Since the closure of Pakistan's airspace on 27 February, many flights have had to be re-routed through the Mumbai area, leading to a large increase in air traffic.

The incident happened at 1:40 PM local time, when an Air France Boeing 777, en route From Ho Chi Minh to Paris, had a near-miss with an Airbus A320 on its way from Abu Dhabi to Kathmandu.

"At 1.40 pm, Mumbai air traffic control (ATC) asked **the Etihad flight** to climb to 33,000 feet. During climb, this aircraft **came almost face-to-face with an AF 253 coming from the opposite direction.**

The two aircraft were just three nautical miles away, and seconds apart, from each other," said sources, as quoted by the India Times.

"This happened and the matter is under investigation. **The air traffic controller has been off-rostered**

[taken off duty]. Traffic density was very high (in the Mumbai flight information region) due to the closure of Pakistan's airspace," a senior ATC official said.

17/03/19 Sputnik

Even as Boeing-737 MAX 8 aircraft were grounded following a DGCA directive asking the airlines not to operate these planes in the wake of a crash in Ethiopia, SpiceJet requests its passengers to check their flight status regularly. The airline has offered customers to choose an alternate flight or opt for a full refund for cancelled flights or preponed flights by 60 minutes or more or postponed flights by 120 minutes or more, SpiceJet posted on its website.

"#Update: Due to the grounding of our Boeing-737 MAX 8 aircrafts, passengers are requested to keep a check on their updated flight status via "http://changes.spicejet.com," SpiceJet tweeted. "We truly regret the inconvenience caused due to changes to your flight. You can change the time and/or date of the flight that has been cancelled/rescheduled, at no additional cost," the airline said.

The airline tweeted it was experiencing high traffic at various customer touching points due to cancellation and rescheduling of flights. The passengers may visit the SpiceJet website - changes.spicejet.com - for flight updates. They have to give PNR, email address and other details for detailed information on the website. The passengers have the option to either take an alternative flight or get the full refund for the cancellation of a flight.

17/03/19 ZeeBiz

New Delhi: More investments with strict riders have been planned to make Air India financially attractive before starting any new round of divestment, Union Minister Suresh Prabhu has said. As per the plan, Air India would be allowed to induct more aircraft to grow its market share, while a search-cum-selection committee will scout for the best management talent for the company. The airline group with a consolidated debt level of around Rs 55,000 crore will also be required to sell non-core assets, and adhere to a Rs 2,000 crore cost saving plan.

According to the minister, the financially challenged airline will induct three aircraft on a dry-lease within the next two months.

"Air India placed order for induction of 27 A320 NEO on dry lease basis. Out of 27, 24 have already been inducted and remaining 3 will be inducted within next two months," the minister told IANS. In 2018, the company failed to find any suitors during the last and the only attempt by the government to divest its stake in the airline business.

"Government has prepared a 'Revival Plan' of Air India... which includes a comprehensive financial package, transferring non-core debt and assets to an SPV (special purpose vehicle)," Prabhu told IANS.

"We have also proposed to induct eminent persons on the board of Air India through 'Search-cum-Selection Committee' process."

Last month, the Union Cabinet approved creation of an SPV -- Air India Assets Holding Ltd -- for transferring the accumulated working capital loans of the national carrier.

17/03/19 IANS/Economic Times

A day after India launched IAF airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camp in Balakot, Pakistan had announced the closure of its airspace on 27 February.

It's now been 17 days since the announcement.

Flights from all over the world from different airlines have been either cancelled or rerouted with 400 flights being affected daily, reports The Print. Many international airlines earlier cancelled their flights, but have now rerouted them to not pass over Pakistan's airspace.

Pakistan announced last week that it would be partially opening up its airspace, but for now the only flights allowed are ones coming into its own cities. Air India is one of the airlines worst-hit by this

closure.

Air India flies 33 weekly services to the US and 66 to Europe, reports The Print. Most of these had to be either diverted or cancelled since the routes mainly fly over Pakistan.

Speaking to The Print, Air India's spokesperson Praveen Bhatnagar said, "flight timings have been increased by over three hours" due to these reasons.

Long flights like those from Delhi to the US are adversely affected and have had to be re-rerouted through Mumbai and then to the Arabian Sea via UAE airspace. Non-stop flights operated by Air India have been rerouted till 30 April.

These changes have resulted in revenue losses. Air India spokesperson Bhatnagar told The Print, We are definitely undergoing a loss in this situation, but we haven't calculated how much we have lost financially since 27 February.

Private carriers like SpiceJet have also been affected, since they have had to cancel their daily Delhi-Kabul-Delhi flight.

According to international flight tracker, Flightradar24.com's data, a majority of flights originating in South-East Asia which are bound for Europe have been hit as they have to fly over southern India and not Kolkata.

17/03/19 Quint

In the mid-2000s when oil prices began to rise, airlines started demanding for more fuel-efficient aircraft. In 2006, the two largest players in the sector – Boeing and Airbus – announced re-engined versions of their narrowbody workhorses that had been at the core of short-haul operations for carriers across the world. Both the Boeing 737 and the Airbus A320 had been immensely successful and the planemakers had opportunities in form of new engines in the market. Toulouse-based Airbus won the race and was able to launch the A320neo, or new engine option, equipped with either CFM LEAP 1A or Pratt & Whitney PW1100G powerplants.

Following its launch in December 2010, Airbus was able to sign deals for over 2,000 orders in the first two years. In July 2011, Airbus received a significant order of 130 A320neos and 130 A320ceos (current engine option) from the world's largest airline American, which for the first time opted to purchase aircraft that was not Boeing-made. As per a New York Times report, American's \$38 billion aircraft purchase in 2011 also included order for 200 Boeing narrowbodies, half of which were to be equipped with a new and more fuel efficient engine, effectively indicating a commitment from Boeing to rehaul its 737 family instead of a completely new aircraft line. In August 2011, based on order commitments for 496 airplanes from five airlines, Boeing's board of directors approved launch of a new engine variant of the 737.

In development, comparatively, both the A320neo and the 737 MAX were re-engineered versions of their predecessors, but it is pertinent to note that the A320 family that began in 1980s was a more modernised platform than the 737 family that was introduced back in 1960s. One of the main differences between the two was presence of a fly-by-wire control – an automated system of aircraft controls that allowed pilots to fly the aircraft using electronic signals transmitted via a wire, as opposed to manual controls using cables. The A320 was equipped with fly-by-wire controls, the 737 wasn't.

During the development of the 737 MAX, Boeing, which had already introduced fly-by-wire on its 777 widebody model in 1995, decided to keep the electronic control system to a minimum on the newest narrowbody plane. Introduction of fly-by-wire on the 737 MAX would have meant a significantly higher development cost in financial as well as regulatory terms for Boeing.

Boeing did, for the first time, introduce fly-by-wire on the 737 in the MAX variant, but it was limited to spoilers of the aircraft and most other control systems were still devoid of the more

modernised arrangement.

Even though fly-by-wire did not make the final cut in many of the 737 MAXs flight controls, a new and innovative system called MCAS was introduced in the airplane. MCAS, or maneuvering characteristics augmentation system, according to some reports, was put into the 737 MAX as a corrective measure for a problem discovered during one of the test flights of the jet. The new engine on the 737 – an optimised version of the CFM LEAP – was placed in a higher and more forward position on the aircraft wings. The placement of the larger engines caused the plane’s nose to pitch up in some conditions, and to prevent this, Boeing installed the MCAS, which automatically pushed the plane’s nose down when it was pointed up beyond a safe angle.

According to reports, following the Lion Air crash in October last year, certain pilot unions complained about the absence of MCAS in their flight crew operations manual and having never been trained about the new automated system. **In India, too, it was only in December that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) introduced a fresh training course that took into account the MCAS. Further, given that the flight deck of the 737 MAX was similar to the 737 NG, India did not have simulators for the newer version of the airplane. Instead, DGCA mandated simulator operators to modify older 737 simulators to bring them “as close as possible” to 737 MAX systems.**

17/03/19 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express

The crash of an Ethiopian Airlines plane, five months after the Lion Air crash in Indonesia, has forced Boeing to ground all its 737 MAX aircraft.

On October 29 last year, a two-month-old Boeing 737 MAX 8, operated by low-cost airline Lion Air of Indonesia, crashed approximately 12 minutes after being airborne, killing its 189 passengers and crew. The pilot, with more than 6,000 flight hours and the co-pilot, with more than 5,000 hours, formed an experienced team. Last Sunday, on March 10, another flight by a four-month-old 737 MAX 8, operated by Ethiopian Airlines, crashed approximately six minutes after takeoff. All 157 passengers and crew were killed.

The disparity in the flight hours of the crew, about 8,000 for the pilot, and just 200 hours for the co-pilot, has led to some scrutiny. Similarities between the two events, of the flight crew reporting certain technical difficulties, requesting a return to base, the scientific tracking of an unstable flight trajectory and airspeeds and also the ‘gathering of some technical evidence’ (in Ethiopia), have led analysts to conclude that **there could be an issue with one of the aircraft’s key control systems.** It may take time for data from the black boxes to be analysed and acted upon.

How did India react?

It was in two quick stages, which impacted the operations of the country’s two 737 MAX operators, private airlines Jet Airways and SpiceJet, with a fleet of 5 and 12 aircraft respectively (according to data from the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation, the country’s nodal aviation agency). Another aircraft data site puts the fleet composition at 9 and 14 respectively. The DGCA initially permitted operations to continue, with key directives that kicked in from March 12.

In a notice, dated March 11 (now withdrawn), taking into account “compliance of all manufacturer Standard Operating Procedures/operations circulars and Federal Aviation Administration [FAA] emergency Airworthiness Directives,” **it advised additional actions for airline engineers and maintenance crew such as “no minimum equipment list (MEL) release” — a list which allows aircraft operation, under specified conditions — if there were control system red flags.** It also mandated key checks during aircraft transit. Finally, **flight operations departments were to ensure, among other things, that the minimum experience levels of the two pilots were “1,000 and 500 hours” respectively.**

The DGCA said these were “interim safety measures” and there was communication with the

manufacturer and the FAA. On March 13, it issued a follow-up notice, deciding that “the operation of B-737 MAX aircraft would not take place from/to Indian airports and transit or enter into Indian airspace effective from March 13 till further notice.” All operations ceased by 4 p.m. local time.

How was it overseas?

The ban was rolled out in phases. In the Asia-Pacific region, the grounding, on March 11, by the Civil Aviation Administration of China, which took the global lead, has hit the largest 737 MAX fleet in operation. Figures (compiled in early March 2018) from a leading fleet data site show that of the estimated 371 MAX aircraft in operation, a quarter, or close to 97 planes, are used by a raft of China-based airlines. With over 50 operators based in 34 countries, the Asia-Pacific region is the base for close to 37% of the worldwide fleet. The U.S. follows next with 30.2%. The situation was a bit different in the U.S., with the FAA playing outlier and then announcing a grounding.

Is the aircraft flawed?

We don't know as yet. Some media reports cite the huge financial impact of the global grounding per day and potential damage to an order book estimated to be several billions — there is even a figure of “half-a-trillion dollars” floating around.

But the main attention is now on a control system in the plane. Preliminary analysis of both crashes has focussed on the “anti-stalling system” called the Manoeuvring Characteristics Augmentation System (MCAS). It was introduced after the newer and more fuel efficient engines for this aircraft type, which have a much larger diameter and heavier weight than earlier ones, have had to be fixed higher and more forward on the wings than done previously for the earlier 737 models, consequently making changes to the aircraft's flight profile. As a result, there has been a possibility of the aircraft, while in flight, pitching a bit more higher than intended. In certain stages of flight, this could lead to what is called a stall which can have dangerous consequences.

The automated MCAS comes in here. With the Angle of Attack (AoA) sensors, it detects when the aircraft is at risk and initiates corrective manoeuvres using the stabilisers. A senior Boeing 737 pilot told The Hindu that the MCAS is supposed “to work quietly in the background.” The MCAS could force the aircraft into a dive if there are erroneous inputs from the AoA sensors (An FAA emergency airworthiness directive highlighted this). After the Indonesia crash, some pilot unions, especially in the U.S., flagged it as being a nasty surprise and there having been inadequate exposure to, information about and training for this feature. There is some commentary on this putting it down to the manufacturer not thinking of creating awareness of this feature to be a necessity.

16/03/19 Murali N. Krishnaswamy/The Hindu

The airlines of 50 nations that are incurring a heavy loss from the grounding of their Boeing 737 MAX family aircraft could hit the US maker of the plane with a hefty bill, aviation sources indicate. Airlines across the world have grounded B737 MAX aircraft on the orders of respective national civil aviation authorities following the accident of an Ethiopian Airlines plane, the second similar accident involving a new B737 MAX in five months after Indonesian Lion Air crash on October 29. While national civil aviation authorities were taking their time to decide on the course of action individual airlines started grounding the MAX planes on their fleet announcing their decisions. On March 13, US President Donald Trump in an unconventional move beat the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to announce a ban on the flying of B737 MAX planes. "It's a terrible, terrible thing," Trump said on Wednesday, announcing that the planes would be grounded in the US, lamenting that modern aircraft are becoming too complicated to fly. The grounding of a large number of aircraft popular with airlines worldwide has resulted in chaos at airports across the world. **While the compensation that the Boeing company might be liable to pay would depend on the contracts that the company has signed with individual airlines, aviation experts say the company might have to foot a heavy bill. The severe shortage of aircraft of the**

same capacity as MAX planes will complicate the issue for most airlines as there are not enough free aircraft available anywhere.

Some industry observers draw a parallel to the current fiasco with the temporary grounding of Boeing 787 Dreamliner in 2013. Boeing then paid an undisclosed amount to airlines after the grounding of the aircraft following complaints of onboard batteries catching fire. The crisis lasted only two weeks and only 50 aircraft were involved, according to a report in Newsweek. A CNN report then quoted Boeing company as claiming that the financial cost of the crisis to the company then was minimal. Japan's All Nippon Air said after the 2013 incident that it lost about \$15 million from grounding its 17 Dreamliners, though it did not reveal the amount of compensation. However, there were nearly 350 B737 MAX in operation and there is no end in sight for the crisis. Boeing has not given a timeframe for releasing the fix for the technical issue that the aircraft might be facing.

According to George Ferguson, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence, Southwest Airlines Co, **the airline with the largest fleet of 34 MAX planes, the airline would incur an extra cost of around \$8.5 million for replacing all the grounded aircraft. Ferguson estimates a cost to Boeing of at least \$100 million a month just from reimbursing carriers. And that doesn't include the cost of a software update in the works or any other modifications that may be required.** "The longer it drags on, that number goes up," Ferguson told Bloomberg. Finding used aircraft to replace the grounded planes would cost about \$250,000 a plane each month, Ferguson said.

17/03/19 Prathapan Bhaskaran/IBTimes

Of the 638 aircraft in Indian skies, all the 18 Boeing 737 Max's are grounded. Even if this crisis isn't grave enough and may blow over in a few months, India's aviation sector still has too many air pockets ahead to revive any time soon. **High aviation fuel prices, rupee depreciation, excessive parking and landing charges, loads of debt and fare wars, even some inefficient operations, have been the millstones around the airline industry.** Just last quarter there were indications that the industry was on the verge of mild recovery, even though the distress in the industry is far from over. Airlines such as Jet Airways, IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir and Air India continue to struggle when it comes to financial and operational performances.

Take the case of Jet Airways. The Mumbai-based full-service carrier has been battling its biggest financial crisis in history. Recently, the **Naresh Goyal-controlled carrier has defaulted to its foreign loan repayment due to liquidity crunch, and is staring at a fault of \$109 million which it has to pay by March 28 to the HSBC Bank Middle East. Its lenders have prepared a resolution plan which includes Goyal's shareholding coming down to about 20 per cent from 51 per cent now. Under the plan, the banks will take control of the airline and appoint a new board. The plan is still stuck in the approval stage.**

The problems with IndiGo are not as complex as Jet. **Besides facing the pilot crunch, the airline has been struggling with rising costs, particularly aircraft rentals, fuel and finance costs.** The marginal improvement in the fares have moved up the yields in the last quarter but they are still lower than 2014/15 levels. In the quarter ended December 2018, IndiGo, which has 42.5 per cent market share, registered a 75 per cent drop in net profits.

Its rival carrier **SpiceJet**, which has been **affected by the recent groundings of Boeing 737 MAX 8**, reported 77 per cent drop in net profits to Rs 55.1 crore for the same quarter. SpiceJet, which was flying 13 737 MAX 8 till recently, is likely to face issues with capacity additions. It has placed an order of 205 such planes order, including 50 aircraft that the airline has the option to convert into a firm order later.

"Jet's operating fleet have nearly halved; Air India's fleet is down by almost 20 per cent, and the 737 MAX grounding is the most unfortunate thing to have happened to the aviation sector. Six airlines that had bid under UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naargik) scheme have shut down operations. With all these developments, the passengers will be affected because of lesser number of flights and higher fares. Ticket prices are already costing an arm and a leg on some sectors," says Mark Martin, founder of Martin Consulting.

Experts believe that external factors - fuel prices and rupee-dollar exchange rates -- are difficult to control, and the current situation can be salvaged by the government by lowering import duties. "The government can lower the excise duty on jet fuel further (from 11 per cent now) to bring down the operational costs of the airlines. With the grounding of aircraft, the DGCA could make the wet leasing process easier which is not the case right now," says an aviation consultant.

17/09/19 Manu Kaushik/Business Today

Calicut International Airport in Kerala is currently in the process of seeking a no objection certificate (NOC) from India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for Emirates to operate direct flights to the airport.

The NOC from DGCA will pave the way for Emirates to begin direct flight operations to Kozhikode (Calicut) in northern Kerala.

Calicut airport authorities' move to secure an NOC for Emirates' operations follows the UAE flagship carrier's submission of its final report to them on Tuesday, after conducting a compatibility study along an AAI (Airport Authority of India) team at the airport earlier this month.

A high level team from Emirates also held negotiations with the top AAI officials at the airport on its requirements to commence operations to the Calicut airport.

"The final study report is being completed by including Emirates requirement and will be submitted to the DGCA through our (AAI's) corporate headquarter in New Delhi shortly," K Srinivasa Rao, Airport Director at Calicut, told Arabian Business.

17/03/19 James Mathew/Arabian Business

Hyderabad: In the wake of the massacre at Christchurch in New Zealand on Friday, stringent security measures have been put in place at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad. Security agencies in India have directed all airports authorities across the country to tighten their passenger screening procedures.

Until recently, water bottles, and even shampoo bottles, of 500 ml were allowed to be carried into the aircraft; however, as per the latest orders, only bottles containing 100 ml of water shall be permitted. The rule applies to all liquids, gels and aerosols.

Though there is no specific input from the security agencies, the move comes as a preventive measure against emergencies, said a CISF official on the condition of anonymity.

"In addition to the existing measures that are foolproof, the additional ones would be a pro-active step towards making passenger movement safer," the official said. Earlier, in a bid to clear huge flow of passengers, they were screened randomly and based on their 'suspicion element'. Now, each passenger is put thorough screening despite the long queues.

17/03/19 New Indian Express

Eighteen days after the closure of its airspace following Indian airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot, Pakistan is yet to allow all flights to cross its borders.

Pakistan had shut down all of its airports and had completely closed its airspace following the airstrikes for five days and has now partially opened its airspace. It is, however, only allowing flights bound for its own cities and has not given permission to airlines to use its airspace to cross over to another country.

According to data from international flight tracker Flightradar24.com, around 400 flights are affected daily and Air India is the worst-hit of the airlines due to this, The Print reported.

The public carrier operates 33 flights a week to the US and 66 to Europe, most of which have had to be diverted or cancelled, the report said.

Air India spokesperson Praveen Bhatnagar confirmed that **"flight timings have been increased by over three hours"**.

Both the diversion in routes and cancellation of flights has hit Air India's revenue.

A Business Standard report last week estimated that Air India was losing Rs 3 crore every day. While Bhatnagar confirmed that the company is losing revenue due to this he said the loss has not been calculated.

"We are definitely undergoing a loss in this situation, but we haven't calculated how much we have lost financially since 27 February," he said.

17/03/19 DNA

New Delhi: Several of Jet Airways' grounded Boeing 737s (not Max but previous generation) could soon be flying for SpiceJet. Over 50 of the cash-strapped airline's aircraft, a mix of turboprops, narrow and wide body, have been grounded by unpaid lessors beginning last month.

Barring a handful, lessors have not deregistered these aircraft from Jet's name, repossessed and flown them out of India.

"On Saturday, three companies that leased Boeing 737 NG (new generation, not Max) to Jet and grounded them for non-payment met SpiceJet chairman Ajay Singh. The aircraft are in India and in terms of processes it is easier to deregister them from Jet's name and lease them to SpiceJet so that they can start flying the planes at the earliest," said sources.

Globally 371 B737 Max aircraft were grounded last week following fears over its safety after two crashes within 5 months, one in Indonesia and other in Africa, that claimed 346 lives. SpiceJet, which has up to 205 of the planes on order, had to ground 12 B737 Max.

Apart from these, the future delivery schedule of the rest of the planes is also uncertain now, affecting the low cost carrier's growth plans. This has led to a spurt in demand for B737 NGs

17/03/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

With several SpiceJet flights to and fro Bengaluru being cancelled after an order of the Ministry of Civil Aviation to ground the Boeing 737-8 from flying in Indian airspace, the airline has offered some respite to passengers whose flights have been cancelled.

The airline has said that its **customers can choose an alternate flight or opt for full refund for cancelled flights or advanced flights by 60 minutes or more and postponed flights by 120 minutes or more.** "We truly regret the inconvenience caused due to changes to your flight. You can change the time and/or date of the flight that has been cancelled/rescheduled, at no additional cost," the airline said.

SpiceJet has asked its passengers to check on their updated flight status via "changes.spicejet.com". The passengers have to give their PNR number, email, name, origin and destination city on the website to choose an alternate flight or opt for full refund. SpiceJet has said that is rationalising and optimising the use of its Boeing 737 NG and Bombardier Q400 aircraft to address the current situation and minimise inconvenience to its passengers.

"A majority of passengers affected as a result of these cancellations have been accommodated by SpiceJet on alternate flights. Additionally, the airline is also offering passengers the option of a full refund, changing the flight/date of travel, or even change of destination (to nearest alternate airport); all this without any cancellation charges or any fare difference," the airline said.

18/03/19 Bangalore Mirror

SpiceJet, which grounded 13 Boeing Max 737 planes, may have to shell out more for leasing aircraft as rentals have shot through the roof.

The grounding of over 300 of Boeing 737 Max 8 planes across the globe, following two crashes, has sent aircraft lease rentals soaring, according to airline insiders.

Two senior executives of different domestic airlines, who spoke to DNA Money anonymously, said post the decision by most carriers around the globe to not fly the Max 8 planes till the fault in its software was fixed has led to a scarcity of Boeing planes in the market.

One of them said this crunch in availability of Boeings has bloated aircraft rental costs. Following two air crashes, which involved Boeing 737 Max 8, in less than five months aviation authorities of many countries – India, China, Australia, UK, Germany, Indonesia and others – have ordered grounding of the Max 8.

One of the airline executives DNA Money spoke to, said all the carriers, which have grounded Max 8 aircraft would be looking to lease planes to continue their flight services.

Even SpiceJet is reportedly considering hiring planes to operate the flights for which it has already sold tickets.

"SpiceJet will reach out to airlines and lessors for available capacity," he said.

Airlines mostly do not own aircraft. They order them from an aerospace company and then sell and lease back the planes from lessors like B&B Air Acquisition, BOC Aviation and others.

According to reports, SpiceJet may wet lease planes to continue its services. Acquiring planes on wet lease means getting the aircraft along with crew (both pilots and cabin crew) and is usually from an airline. Dry lease involves only aircraft.

According to the an executive, the rentals for aircraft aged five years or more were currently "roughly" starting from "\$350,000-\$400,000 per month". This, he said, was higher than the rentals for similarly aged planes before the grounding of Max 8s.

A second executive said last year the average rentals for planes above five years was around \$200,000-\$250,000 per month.

"Depending on the age of the aircraft, it (lease rentals) should not be more than \$400,000 a month. Older aircraft of 5-6 years old would be \$200,000-\$250,000 per month. If it is starting from \$350,000-\$400,000 per month, it is on the higher side," he said.

"One thing is certain, aircraft leasing cost has increased due to the shortage of aircraft in the market after countries have stopped flying of Max 8s in their airspaces," said a senior official of local airline.

18/03/19 Praveena Sharma/DNA

Over the past few weeks, the struggle for survival at Jet Airways, shortage of pilots at IndiGo Airlines and the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes at SpiceJet have resulted in scores of flights being cancelled. Passengers are vexed by the inconvenience and rising airfares. Things could deteriorate if the proposed financial salvage of Jet Airways fails and IndiGo's operational troubles prolong.

Indeed, 2019 could prove worse than calendar 2018, when there was a sharp spike in the number of domestic air passengers affected by flight cancellations. From about 1.68 lakh in 2017, the number of passengers impacted shot up by more than 80 per cent to 3.08 lakh in 2018, according to data from aviation regulator DGCA.

From about 1 in every 1,000 in 2017, the number of domestic passengers affected by flight cancellations in 2018 rose to more than 2 in every 1,000. This number shot up to 3 in every 1,000 in January 2019 and is certain to have increased in February and March 2019 when the woes at Jet, IndiGo and SpiceJet manifested.

The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines has been increasing — from an average of 0.7 per cent in 2017 to 1.11 per cent in 2018 and to 1.81 per cent in January 2019. The sharp jump in impacted passengers in 2018 was primarily on account of IndiGo, the country's largest airline.

From about 52,000 in 2017, the number of passengers affected by IndiGo's cancellations jumped more than three-fold to 1.75 lakh in 2018. Nearly 6 out of every 10 impacted passengers in 2018 were IndiGo customers, up from 3 in 2017.

Among the reasons for this deterioration were the airline's ongoing troubles with its A320neo aircraft and the grounding of some of these planes last year. Also, Air India, AirAsia India and Vistara

saw a 50-75 per cent jump in the number of affected passengers. In contrast, Jet Airways, SpiceJet and GoAir improved their performance with the number of impacted passengers 5-30 per cent lower in 2018 compared with 2017.

17/03/19 Anand Kalyanaraman/Business Line

Thiruvananthapuram: Air India has appointed Madhu C Mathen, General Manager (Commercial), as its Executive Director (Inflight Services).

The appointment of Mathen would be for a period of **three years** from the date he assumes charge of the post, and it can be extended by one year or his retirement, whichever is earlier, a notification by Amrita Sharan, director (personnel), Air India, said. After a four-year stint in marketing and product management at the Bengaluru-based pharmaceutical firm Indian Herbs, Mathen joined Air India in 1992 and has held key positions, including Regional Sales Manager, Southern Region, based in Chennai, Regional Manager Australasia based in Sydney and most recently General Manager Marketing at Air India headquarters in Delhi. Madhu Mathen is widely acknowledged to be the architect of Air India's Australia operation turnaround. As General Manager Marketing, Mathen was in charge of distribution for Air India's global network.

18/03/19 New Indian Express

Kolkata: A Chinese national has been arrested in Kolkata for allegedly flying a camera-fitted drone over the Victoria Memorial and clicking aerial photographs of the iconic monument, the Kolkata Police said on Sunday.

The monument is situated close to the Fort William, the Eastern Command headquarters of the Indian Army.

The arrested person, identified as Li Zhiwei, was first spotted by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday and was later handed over to the Kolkata Police. He has been sent to police custody till March 25.

"Zhiwei, 34, a resident of Shenzhen City in China, was caught red-handed by the on duty CISF personnel while **he was flying a drone fitted with a camera inside the premises of the Victoria Memorial and clicking photographs of the monument from all directions with the help of a remote control and his mobile phone without any valid permission,**" the police said.

He was handed over to the Hastings police station on Saturday evening along with a brown coloured drone and a remote control.

18/03/19 Zee News

Greater Noida: The residents of Casa Grande Housing Society in Greater Noida's Kasna area sought police help after they claimed that remotely controlled drones were seen flying in front of their balconies on multiple occasions.

The residents claimed to have spotted a drone flying around the society around midnight on Sunday. Later, they sought police help on Twitter. The police said **two engineering students from Noida International University, who are residents of the same society, were flying the drones.**

According to the residents, they spotted a camera hovering on their balconies and thought it was a drill conducted by the police. "I spotted a drone at around 12 am on Sunday in front of my balcony. When I went to the balcony, the camera moved away. After taking a round of the towers, it moved towards the Yamuna Expressway which is hardly at 300 meter distance from our society. At first, I thought maybe the police is trying to locate some accused, therefore I discussed about it in our residents' chat group. Everybody seemed to be aware of the drone and claimed that it had been spotted around since last two days," said Vimlesh, a resident of the society.

According to police, after complaint a team was sent to nab the accused but they were found absent in their rented flat (1104) in the society. **"On contacting the two students, it was found that they had left for their homes in Lucknow on Sunday morning itself. They have confessed that they were flying drones on the previous night claiming it was part of their project. They have been warned for not repeating it in future. No other action was taken against them,"** said Ajay Kumar, the station

house officer of Kasna police station.
18/03/19 Times of India

An Indian Air Force aircraft at the Pune's Lohegaon airport suffered a tyre burst on Monday and was stranded for at least an hour before being cleared from the runway.

The aircraft suffered a tyre burst which forced the plane to remain stranded on the runway **which resulted in civil flight operations getting affected**. Airport director Ajay Kumar confirmed to news agency ANI that the IAF aircraft was stranded on the runway which had affected civil operations. The Pune airport is used for both defence as well as civil flight operations.

The IAF plane was eventually taken off the runway and flight operations resumed soon after.
18/03/19 Zee Media

Ranchi/Jamshedpur: **By July, Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi will have a new air traffic control (ATC) tower which will offer better visibility for flight operators who will also have at their disposal better equipment that include the latest in radar, weather forecasting technology and communication systems.**

Ranchi Airport director Pravat Ranjan Beuria said work on the new tower would be completed in June and it would become functional **after the director general civil aviation (DGCA) gave a final okay in July.**

“The new ATC tower will be nearly 35 meter tall, almost double the height of the existing ATC tower which stands at 17 meter. The new tower will provide better visibility and be equipped with latest machines, radar control and better facilities for pilot briefings and weather forecasting,” Beuria told The Telegraph, adding that the private agency working on the tower had assured them it would be ready in June.

Sources revealed that the need for a new and higher ATC was felt in view of the increase in volume of air traffic and that an additional apron area (tarmac) would be operational from May after the DGCA’s nod.

The new ATC, being built beside the fire station in the airport, is being constructed over an area of 9,000sqft.

“An ATC tower that is taller will provide a better view of aircraft moving on the ground, taking off or landing from/on the runway and other ground operations. As airports get bigger, ATCs also need to be higher so that operators are able to notice all detail,” said an airport official.

As of now, the airport apron area, where aircraft are parked, refuelled, loaded and unloaded, and passengers board and disembark, can accommodate three Airbus (A-320) and two 19-seater ATR planes. The new apron can accommodate four Airbus planes and one ATR.

18/03/19 Animesh Bisoe/Telegraph

Pune: **The airport authorities in Pune have orders from the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to keep watch over unscheduled flight movements. Pune airport witnesses an average of 10 unscheduled flight movements per day, most of them chartered.**

“The BCAS has sent instructions regarding unscheduled flight movements **in the wake of the general elections**. A system is being readied to ensure that the instructions are strictly adhered to. **We are on the alert since it is a defence airport,**” an airport official told TOI.

The BCAS guidelines come in the wake of the model code of conduct and focuses on steps to curb the movements of unauthorized items, especially cash, sources told TOI. There are instructions to check flight movements to and from unserved, remote and underserved airports and airstrips too.

Maharashtra has a good number of such airports and airstrips.

“The Airports Authority of India (AAI), directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) will **coordinate and inform the police and the income tax department if flights are taking off or landing in such airstrips**. Similar instructions have been laid out for unscheduled flights at airports with heavy passenger movements which includes Pune. **The Air Traffic Control will share unscheduled**

movements with the CEO and the district administration officials in advance,” another official said.
[18/03/19 Joy Sengupta/Times of India](#)

Part of its drive to continuously enhance customer experience, Abu Dhabi Airports announced extending City Check-In facilities to Indigo, India’s largest airline. This new service is in line with the airline’s commitment to provide courteous and hassle-free travel experience to its customers. The new service has been to all Indigo’ customers effective March 10, 2019. Adding more ease to the overall customer experience, this new feature will enable passengers flying out of Abu Dhabi airport to check-in 24 hours prior within the city i.e. before reaching the airport.

Mr Maarten De Groof, Chief Commercial Officer, Abu Dhabi Airports, said: **“We are delighted to welcome IndiGo passengers to stop by our easily accessible and conveniently located remote check-in facilities.** Ensuring a seamless and efficient customer is one of our top priorities at Abu Dhabi Airports, and we look forward to introducing travelers to our world-class services and unique brand of Arabian hospitality. India has always been one of our most important and largest areas of operations, and we are looking forward to continuing to work closely with IndiGo passengers to meet the market’s growing demand.”

Mr William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer, IndiGo said, “ We are delighted to introduce this new check-in feature for our passengers in Abu Dhabi which will both add convenience and ease to their travel experience with us. We thank the **Abu Dhabi International Airport** team for extending us all the support to make this feature live. We are providing this service to all IndiGo passengers starting March 10, 2019. IndiGo will continue to enhance its hassle-free experience which is one of the core values that the airline stands for besides providing on-time and affordable fares to customers.”

[17/03/19 Zawya.com](#)

Ismail Abdel Hamid, adviser to the chairperson at the Egyptian Tourism Authority (ETA), affiliated to tourism ministry, called on Air India to re-launch its regular and direct flights to Egypt with the aim of boosting tourists’ numbers between both countries, as well as to promote the joint business relations.

“Indian tourists to Egypt doubled last year reaching 126,000, in comparison with 60,000 in 2014. In 2018, we exceeded the tourists’ numbers of 2010,” Abdel Hamid added over his speech at the seminar entitled ‘Know India’ which was held on Sunday.

The ambassador of Egypt to India, Heba El Marassi, is set to meet with the Indian Tourism Minister, Alphons Kannanthanam, on Monday 18 March in order to discuss pushing forward the tourism relations between both countries, Abdel Hamid revealed.

On the other hand, Vinod Bahade, the first secretary for commerce affairs at the Indian embassy in Egypt, said, “India seeks to promote tourism relations with Egypt, and identify more tourism opportunities for enhancing the overall tourism cooperation.”

“India has something for everyone to enjoy, including the historical tourism, adventure tourism, and medical trips with low costs,” he noted, adding that the embassy has launched a campaign to support tourism in February 2019.

The embassy looks forward to expanding the people-to-people exchange with Egypt, Bahade stated, affirming the importance of boosting cultural cooperation, including the tourism sector cooperation.

[18/03/19 Hagar Omran/Daily News Egypt](#)

Hyderabad: The Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) sleuths of the Customs department have arrested a member of gold smuggling gang and recovered **2.3kg gold** from his possession at RGI Airport on Sunday. The accused was carrying a camshaft, a part of the car engine, in which gold was concealed. The arrested accused is from Haryana and he arrived at RGI Airport from Sharjah in Indigo’s flight 6E 1406 on Friday night. During the baggage scanning, the AIU sleuths noticed a metal object that looked like an automobile spare part in the checked in baggage of the suspect.

Customs officials then pulled the suspect aside and subjected him to questioning. The suspect told

Customs officials that the spare part was camshaft and he bought it in Sharjah for personal use. When AIU team asked him why a spare part like camshaft has to be brought from abroad when it is available for lesser price in India, the suspect tried to convince them by saying that quality of the spare part he got was better than what is available in India.

17/03/19 Mahesh Buddi/Times of India

Pune: In the second gold catch in four days, the Pune **customs authorities** on Sunday caught a man who had landed in Pune from Dubai on a SpiceJet flight (SG-52) and recovered **gold worth Rs14.66 lakh** in a semi-solid paste form from him.

The man from Karnataka has been identified as Mohammed Nakhil Shabber Hasan Bapu. "The man was wearing jeans and the waist area of the cloth has been slit open and the gold paste, which had been concealed in a polythene strip, had been inserted in the waistband and the cloth was then re-stitched," an official told TOI.

The official said the man was behaving in a suspicious manner which led the customs officials to conduct a through check.

18/03/19 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

An amount of Rs 234 crore received in two bank accounts of Deepak Talwar is among multiple hidden money trails the Enforcement Directorate (ED) wants to establish during questioning of the corporate lobbyist who is in Tihar Jail over his alleged involvement in liaising for the **purchase of 43 aircraft for Indian Airlines from French company Airbus in 2005.**

The agency has inputs that Talwar had received Rs 92 crore from Airbus in one account and Rs 142 crore in another.

An ED investigator, on condition of anonymity, told IANS that the **agency will begin quizzing Talwar from Monday and that a special focus would be on the money he received in the accounts of his various entities from Airbus to obtain benefits for the industry and some other foreign companies. The agency is also seeking links how the money received in Talwar's accounts were transferred to the accounts of other government employees, including those in Civil Aviation Ministry, who abused their position in 2004 and decided to purchase 111 aircraft for the national airlines costing about Rs 70,000 crore when Praful Patel was the Minister of Aviation in the UPA government.**

17/03/19 IANS/Business Standard

Hyderabad: Customs Airport Intelligence Unit (AIU) officials on Sunday seized **2.3 kg of smuggled gold** at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in **Shamshabad**. The officials caught a passenger who was travelling in Indigo flight from Sharjah to Hyderabad and during the checking found that he was smuggling in the gold. The accused tried to smuggle in the gold by concealing it in the car engine spare parts. By registering a case the officials are investigating.

18/03/19 Hans India

Amid grounding of operations at Abu Dhabi airport, an unhappy partner in Etihad Airways and increasing unease among its pilots, all eyes are on Jet Airways' founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal as his self-imposed deadline to announce an update on the resolution plan gets over on March 18. **Patience is running out among the distressed airline's senior pilots, many of whom have been approached by IndiGo and GoAir.** Some of them attended 'roadshows' conducted by IndiGo last week in Gurugram and Mumbai and may decide on their future course depending on what Goyal has to tell them.

"Tempers have gone up after an aircraft maintenance engineer lost his son for want of funds," said a senior executive.

Jet Airways' pilots and engineers have not been paid part of their December salary, and those of January and February.

On March 1, Goyal had written to the airline's pilots, appealing for 'continued support' and assured

them that the senior management will provide an update on the resolution plan by March 18.
18/03/19 Prince Mathews Thomas/Moneycontrol.com

Mumbai: The deal to rescue Jet Airways has hit an air pocket. Lenders have told Jet's strategic partner Etihad Airways that if it is unable to accept the terms to revive the troubled airline, it should exit so that a new investor can be brought in.

Meanwhile, Jet has cancelled all flights to Etihad's hub in Abu Dhabi, said two people in the know. The destination became Jet's hub after it sold stake to the Gulf carrier in 2013. One of them said it was due to shortage of aircraft but it also underlines souring of talks between the two parties.

Etihad, saddled with losses and unsure of the resolution plan and its probable outcome, is understood to have said that it could exit at a price of Rs 150 a share.

"This could well be pressure tactics but it has not gone down well with the government and the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), which was planning to invest. But the question is, where is the buyer even if Etihad offers to sell its stake?" said a person familiar with the developments.

Etihad owns 24% of Jet, which closed at Rs 234.95 on Friday on the BSE. **Bankers and the Etihad management have put forth their views just ahead of a March 18 deadline cited by Jet founder chairman Naresh Goyal to employees for a decisive update on the revival plan.** An Etihad team will be coming to Mumbai this week to discuss the matter, which is heading toward breaking point, according to the people cited above.

Etihad is yet to chip in with the required contribution of Rs 750 crore. Lenders, led by State Bank of India, are ready to infuse a like amount as 'priority debt' to keep the airline flying for the next six months. The Abu Dhabi-based carrier is said to have approached the UAE Federal National Council before taking a final decision, said a second person in the know. There was no response from Etihad to ET's emailed questionnaire till the time of going to press.

18/03/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

Ethiopia said on Sunday that the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines plane that killed 157 people had "clear similarities" with October's Lion Air crash, according to the initial analysis of the black boxes recovered from the wreckage of the March 10 disaster.

Both planes were Boeing 737 MAX 8s, and both crashed minutes after take-off after pilots reported flight control problems. Concern over the plane's safety caused aviation authorities worldwide to ground the model, wiping billions of dollars off Boeing's market value.

Investigators are trying to determine why the aircraft plunged into a field shortly after takeoff from Addis Ababa, searching for possible similarities to an October Lion Air crash that killed 189 people.

"It was the same case with the Indonesian (Lion Air) one. There were **clear similarities between the two crashes so far,**" Ethiopian transport ministry spokesman Muse Yiheyis said.

"The data was successfully recovered. Both the American team and our (Ethiopian) team validated it. The minister thanked the French government. We will let you know more after three or four days," he told Reuters.

In Washington, however, U.S. officials told Reuters that the US Federal Aviation Administration and US National Transportation Safety Board have not validated the data yet.

When investigators, after reviewing black box data, return to Addis Ababa and start conducting interpretive work, the NTSB and FAA will assist in verification and validation of the data, an official said.

A second source said little information had been circulated between parties about the contents of data and voice recordings.

It was not clear how many of the roughly 1,800 parameters of flight data and two hours of cockpit recordings, spanning the doomed 6-minute fight and earlier trips, had been taken into account as part of the preliminary Ethiopian analysis.

18/03/18 Reuters/DNA

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has called a meeting on Tuesday noon to discuss with airlines the upward spiral in airfares as Jet Airways (India) Ltd. continue to ground its aircraft and cancel a significant number of flights, a government official said. According to the official, after the aviation regulator grounded all 12 of SpiceJet Ltd.'s 737 Max aircraft on March 13 following the Ethiopian Airlines crash, that killed 157 people, the problem of rising airfares in Indian market has "aggravated".

Cash-strapped **Jet Airways** on Monday said it grounded four more planes, taking the **number of aircraft that are non-operational due to non-payment of lease rentals to 41.**

Etihad Airport services, in a notification to its passengers on Sunday, said, "Jet Airways has cancelled all their flights from Abu Dhabi with immediate effect from March 18 due to operational reasons."

The airline has a **fleet of 119 planes**, according to its website.

For last few weeks, passengers have been venting their ire on social media as Jet Airways' flight cancellations have increased gradually due to rising number of grounded aircraft. Grappling with financial woes, the carrier has been looking at ways to raise fresh funds.

The company had earlier said it is actively engaged with all its aircraft lessors and are regularly providing them with updates on the efforts taken to improve the liquidity.

On March 8, Jet Airways Chairman Naresh Goyal wrote to Etihad Airways Group CEO Tony Douglas seeking an urgent funding of Rs 750 crore and also warned that any delay in fund infusion might result in its grounding of the carrier. He had said more than 50 of the aircraft are grounded amid increasing arrears of vendors and salaries to a section of employees.

18/03/19 PTI/Bloomberg Quint

An additional four aircraft have been grounded due to non-payment of amounts outstanding to lessors under their respective lease agreements. As mentioned earlier, the Company is actively engaged with all its aircraft lessors and regularly provides them with updates on the efforts undertaken by the Company to improve its liquidity. Aircraft lessors have been supportive of the Company's efforts in this regard.

The Company is also making all efforts to minimize disruption to its network due to the above and is proactively informing and re-accommodating its affected guests. The Company also continues to provide required and periodic updates to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation in this regard.

Shares of JET AIRWAYS (INDIA) LTD was last trading in BSE at Rs.234.95 as compared to the previous close of Rs. 236.9. The total number of shares traded during the day was 654344 in over 7017 trades.

The stock hit an intraday high of Rs. 240.4 and intraday low of 232. The net turnover during the day was Rs. 154231673.

18/03/19 Equity Bulls

Most complaints filed by air passengers in the Civil Aviation Ministry's grievance redressal system relates to behaviour of airline staff and harassment of flyers, according to an official document.

'**Loss of baggage**' category in Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring system (CPGRAM) has received **second highest number of complaints** from air passengers, showed a Ministry document accessed by PTI.

The document shows that while **3,524 complaints** were received in CPGRAM in the category of '**harassment of passengers/ staff crew behaviour**', the number of complaints that were received in the category of '**loss of baggage**' was **1,822**.

The category of '**ticketing/fare/refund**' received third highest number of complaints. It recorded **1,011 grievances** as yet.

The CPGRAM is an online system with an objective of "speedy redress and effective monitoring of grievances" by ministries or departments or organisations of central government.

17/03/19 PTI/Economic Times

Kathmandu: Airline companies operating in the country and business enterprises and government offices operating inside Tribhuvan International Airport are yet to clear dues of more than Rs 2 billion to TIA, according to the Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal — the aviation sector regulator of the country.

Presenting a report on dues at a meeting of Public Accounts Committee of the Legislature-Parliament today, **CAAN stated that a number of airline companies, along with government offices and business enterprises inside TIA, were yet to clear their dues under headings including rental fee, landing charge, parking fees and airport development fund.**

Airline companies that have not yet cleared dues to TIA include **Nepal Airlines Corporation, Himalaya Airlines, Air India, Air Arabia, Air Asia, Bhutan Airlines and China Eastern Airlines. Department of Customs, Hotel Radisson and a few government agencies operating inside TIA** are also yet to clear their dues.

According to officials at TIA, Nepal Airlines alone is yet to pay almost Rs 340 million to Nepal's only international airport, while Air Asia and Air India have not cleared Rs 560 million and Rs 150 million, respectively.

"Nepal Airlines has been clearing its dues in instalments, while other airline companies have been asked to clear their dues as soon as possible," said Raj Kumar Chhetri, general manager at TIA.

18/03/19 Himalayan Times

India's government has asked state-run banks to rescue privately held Jet Airways without pushing it into bankruptcy, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to avert thousands of job losses weeks before a general election, two people within the administration told Reuters.

The finance ministry has in the past year sought regular updates from the banks, led by State Bank of India (SBI) on Jet's financial health, the people said. In recent months, the banks have provided weekly updates about a revival plan and also sought government advice, the people added.

"Top officials at the finance ministry seek regular updates on the issue," said an official at one of Jet's lenders, who did not want to be identified as discussions are private.

Details of the discussion between the finance ministry and bankers on bailing out Jet have not been previously reported.

New Delhi has urged state-run banks to convert debt into equity and take a stake in Jet in a rare move in India to use taxpayer money to save a struggling private-sector company from bankruptcy. The two people plus one more source, however, said this would be "transitory" and lenders could sell the stakes once Jet revives.

The government has also nudged its 49 percent-owned National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) - created to invest in stalled and new infrastructure projects - **to buy a stake in Jet**, a separate government source said.

Saddled with more than 1 billion dollars of debt, Jet is struggling to stay aloft. It has delayed payments to banks, suppliers, employees and aircraft lessors - some of which have begun terminating lease deals.

The world's biggest democracy is gearing up for an election next month and its booming aviation sector, which employs close to a million people, has been one of the job-creation success stories that Modi can point to as he seeks a second term.

It is crucial for India that Jet revives as the fall of its second-largest airline could have "disastrous consequences for the investment climate" in the sector, a top government official told Reuters.

The official said that the govt is concerned that **if Jet collapses it could drive up airfare in a fast-growing market, wiping out efforts to bring low-cost air travel to India's hinterland.**

A chaotic end could also make it more difficult for the government to sell a stake in Air India, at least in the short run. Last year, it failed to sell part of its stake in the indebted carrier which currently relies on taxpayer money.

If the government's plan for Jet succeeds, then state-run banks including SBI and Punjab National Bank (PNB) as well as NIIF would together own at least a third of the airline until they find a new buyer.

Currently, Abu Dhabi's Etihad Airways is Jet's largest shareholder with a 24 percent stake. India's finance ministry, SBI, PNB and Jet Airways did not respond to requests for comment.

KINGFISHER'S COLLAPSE

Most companies in Jet's financial condition would be placed by creditors into India's new bankruptcy

process, two bankers said. However, memories of the chaos sparked by Kingfisher Airlines' demise in 2012 have prompted the government to seek a more sober road to rescue, they said.

Kingfisher's bankruptcy caused job losses, lessors lost millions of dollars and banks took massive writedowns.

Putting what is essentially a services provider like Jet through the bankruptcy process would diminish its value because it owns no major assets, unlike a manufacturing company, as most of its planes are leased, said another government official.

If it is pushed into bankruptcy and lessors start pulling even more planes out of service, there would be nothing left for an for any potential investors, the official said. Already 41 planes have been grounded by lessors in the past three months, leading to flight cancellations.

While on the surface Jet's future still hangs in the balance with its main shareholder Etihad at loggerheads over the final terms of any deal, behind-the-scenes support from the government means there is likely to be a bailout.

But there are no easy options, one of the sources said, adding that **the lenders do not have the expertise to run an airline so they have to decide what to do once they convert their debt into equity.**

New Delhi is also backing a proposal for Jet's founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal to step down if it means saving the airline, another official said.

"Saving Jet is not equivalent to saving Goyal," the official said.

Jet, with its fleet of 119 planes, once controlled a sixth of India's domestic aviation market. The 25-year-old airline is also one of only two full-service carriers that flies to international destinations. The other is Air India.

The government ideally wants four to six major airlines to ensure fares are competitive and passengers have greater choice, according to the top government source.

India plans to build 100 new airports costing about \$60 billion which would need a steady stream of flights to sustain them, and that is possible only if there are enough airlines, a separate official said.

"The investment in these airports will solely depend on operators willing to have regular flights at affordable prices and one operator going bankrupt does not help," he said.

[The Economic times of India 19/03/2019](#)

NEW DELHI: Low cost carrier **SpiceJet** on Tuesday said it **has become a member of** global airlines' grouping IATA.

SpiceJet is the **first Indian budget carrier to join** the International Air Transport Association (IATA), which has over 290 airlines as members.

"The IATA membership is also significant on account of SpiceJet's plans to rapidly expand its international footprint," the airline said in a statement.

The membership also allows SpiceJet to explore and grow its collaborations with international member airlines of IATA through interlining and code shares, enabling to seamlessly expand the network options for its passengers in future, it added

The Economic times of India 19/03/2019

For airline customers of Boeing's 737 Max, there is no quick way out of the crisis of confidence that threatens to engulf the aircraft in the wake of the Ethiopian Airlines crash nine days ago that killed all 157 people on board.

Most of those that have 737 Max 8 aircraft on order, including Norwegian Air and Icelandair, have so far said they will keep them pending the outcome of the investigation.

Canada's budget airline **WestJet Airlines** on Monday became the second carrier to warn that **its financial performance would be hit by the global grounding of the 737 Max fleet**. The warning comes after Canada's largest carrier, **Air Canada**, last Friday **issued a similar warning**. The airline normally operates 24 Boeing 737 Max aircraft out of its fleet of 392.

One of the biggest challenges for airlines is that the obvious replacement aircraft, the A320neo, is simply not available. Boeing's arch-rival Airbus, which could typically be a beneficiary of the Boeing crisis, is already working flat-out to produce enough of the fuel-efficient jets just to deliver on its existing backlog of orders. At the end of February the company had an order backlog of 5,962 for its single-aisle aircraft. Of that, 5,814 were for the A320neo and just 148 for the earlier variant, the A320ceo.

"They can in theory switch orders from Boeing to Airbus — but they will be waiting at the back of the Airbus queue," said Robert Stallard of Vertical Partners Research. There was "roughly **a three-year wait time**" for the new neo, he added, although favoured customers might be able to get a better position in the line.

Airbus had already announced plans to increase production of the single-aisle jets to 60 a month from the middle of this year. It wants to ramp up to 63 a month in 2021 and analysts believe they are unlikely to change that given the existing strains in the supply chain. Negotiating aircraft orders cost time and money and was not an overnight decision, stressed industry experts. Airbus would manage its order book and balance demands from those airlines which wanted earlier deliveries with those that did not require them until later, but it would struggle to take on any new requests, they said.

For those airlines that were already operating 737 Max aircraft, one of the few options available are to lease an older version of the 737. They could, said Mr Stallard, "possibly get Boeing to make more of the old 737 Next Generation — at a discount price of course" but that would cause even more disruption to Boeing's supply chain. Norwegian, which has 18 Max 8s out of its total fleet of about 160, and another 92 on order, said last week it would not "take the cost related to the new aircraft that we have to park temporarily". "We will send the bill to those who produce this aircraft," chief executive Bjorn Kjos said. Analysts at Morningstar said they expected customers to maintain their Max orders "unless there is a critical flaw found". Boeing has an order backlog of 4,659 aircraft for the Max.

"Customers may be tempted to cancel orders on the Max but they would most likely forfeit the cash advances they already made to Boeing," said Chris Higgins, aerospace analyst at Morningstar in a note to clients late last week.

Boeing has been working hard in the last year to get more 737s out of the door in competition with Airbus' A320neo. The US group said last week it still planned to maintain 737 output at its current 52 a month despite suspending deliveries. However, a prolonged grounding could eventually cause a back-up of aircraft at its facilities.

The overall impact on the aviation industry so far is contained by the relatively small size of the 737 Max fleet. US operators of the aircraft — American Airlines, Southwest Airlines and United Airlines — together operate just 72 jets out of their combined fleet of about 2,400.

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Mumbai: A group of Indian state-run banks want Jet Airways' embattled founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal to reduce his stake in the carrier to 10 percent, news channel CNBC-TV18 reported on Thursday, quoting sources.

"Banks want Goyal to bring his stake down to 10 percent, below the 17 percent envisaged in the bank-led provisional resolution plan (BLPRP)," sources told CNBC-TV18.

The state-run banks are also pushing Goyal to step down, CNBC-TV18 added.

Jet has more than \$1 billion in debt, and owes money to banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors - some of whom have started terminating leases with the carrier.

The government has asked state-run banks, led by State Bank of India (SBI), to rescue Jet without pushing it into bankruptcy, two people within the administration have told Reuters, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to avert thousands of job losses weeks before a general election.

Several people who have worked closely with Goyal, 69, have told Reuters that his penchant for control has emerged as a major obstacle in negotiating a rescue deal.

21/03/19 Reuters

Mumbai: The harried pilots of Jet Airways, which is on the brink of shutting down operations, have now approached SpiceJet seeking employment.

Jet Airways pilots had earlier been wooed by IndiGo with compensation for their pending salaries and other benefits, leading to murmurs of protest from its own pilots. Jet Airways, the largest airline in India, has been facing acute shortage of cockpit crew, leading to cancellation of hundreds of its flights last month.

Jet Airways pilots, along with engineers and senior management, have not been paid for more than three months now as the airline is facing its worst existential crisis since its inception a quarter of a century ago. **Gurugram-based SpiceJet, which had all its 12 Boeing 737 MAX planes grounded following the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines plane early this month, is looking to hire pilots for its expansion plans, and conducted walk-in interviews on Wednesday.**

"As many as 260 Jet pilots, including 150 captains, appeared for the interviews in Mumbai today [Wednesday]," a SpiceJet source said.

Unlike IndiGo, which owns a fleet predominantly consisting of Airbus A320s, SpiceJet has Boeing 737s in the fleet. **The majority of Jet Airways pilots are trained and type-rated for Boeing planes,** the source said.

IndiGo is offering jobs to Jet Airways pilots, along with compensation for overdue salaries from the full-service airline. It can be noted that pilots at full-service carriers get higher pay and other

benefits.

With no assurance on the payment of their pending salaries, Jet Airways pilots had on Tuesday warned that they would stop flying from April 1 if the management failed to provide clarity on the revival plan along with a deadline to clear their salary dues by March 31.

According to IndiGo, all job offers are in line with its current terms and conditions. But its own pilots have termed the move to hire Jet Airways pilots as an "injustice" and "unacceptable". "They are taking us lightly. Offer to Jet Airways pilots is sheer injustice to us as they're being offered a two-month bonus along with same-designation salary," argued an IndiGo source.

Moreover, they have also been allowed to choose their operational base, which is unacceptable to the IndiGo pilots, the source added. Questions sent to IndiGo chief operating officer Wolfgang Prock-Schauer and also to its spokesperson did not elicit any response.

21/03/19 PTI/The Week

Istanbul: At a time when Jet Airways is facing financial difficulties, **India's budget carrier IndiGo has said that it continues to engage in recruiting expat as well as "out of job" pilots in India.** William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer of IndiGo, said on Wednesday here, "**We continue to engage in recruitment efforts both for expats (pilots) and for the pilots who might be out of job in India to join us.**"

IndiGo on Wednesday launched its flight on the Delhi-Istanbul sector and announced to use its expanding fleet of A320neo and A321neo aircraft to connect more Indian cities to countries such as China, Vietnam, England, Myanmar and Saudi Arabia.

IndiGo is facing acute shortage of commanders amid aggressive expansion of its fleet. The carrier has more than 210 planes in its fleet. It is offering jobs to pilots of Jet Airways along with compensation for overdue salaries from the cash-strapped full-service airline, IndiGo said on March 12. Shortage of trained and experienced pilots has been an issue for domestic airlines amid capacity expansion to meet rising passenger traffic.

IndiGo, India's largest airline by market share, decided in mid-February that it will operate about 30 fewer flights each day till March-end as it has been battling a shortage of pilots. Boulter said that those 30 flights will not make a comeback post-March either. "The 30 flights have been taken out from the summer schedule that will go on till October," he said.

Talking about airfare hike, Boulter said, "**It is no secret that the prices have generally gone up in India over the last month or so because there have been flight cancellations and Mumbai runway issues and there has been Bengaluru NOTAM (notice to airmen) as well.**"

21/03/19 New Indian Express

Dubai: **Etihad Airways is in discussion with banks and various stakeholders of the debt-ridden Jet Airways to find a solution, the UAE national airline said on Wednesday amid reports about the possible sale of its entire stake in the Indian carrier.**

Responding to Khaleej Times' query on its widely reported talks with State Bank of India on selling the entire 24 per cent stakes in Jet Airways, an Etihad spokesperson stated: "As a minority shareholder, Etihad is working closely with Indian lenders, the company and key stakeholders to facilitate a solution for Jet Airways."

According to reports in Indian media, Etihad has formally asked SBI, India's largest lender, to purchase its stake in Jet at Rs150 per share, or for a total consideration of Rs4 billion, as the embattled airline continued to ward off multiple crises including an impending strike by pilots over delayed salary and a looming bankruptcy.

Rajnish Kumar, SBI chairman, said on Wednesday that lenders are making every effort to keep afloat Jet Airways, and putting the airline into bankruptcy is the last option for all stakeholders.

"We believe that it is in everybody's interest that Jet Airways continues to fly," Kumar said, adding that placing Jet into bankruptcy would mean grounding the airline.

The SBI chief said talks with Etihad, Jet's largest shareholder, to secure a rescue deal are in progress while there is the possibility of bringing in a new investor. He said that any decision taken to rescue Jet is a commercial one and is not at the direction of the Indian government.

The Indian government, keen to avert a King Fisher like disaster ahead of next month's Lok Sabha polls, has asked state-run banks and other lenders to come to the rescue of India's second full service airline.

21/03/19 Issac John/Khaleej Times

New Delhi: State Bank of India's (SBI) chairman said on Wednesday that putting Jet Airways into bankruptcy is the "last option" and that its lenders are making every effort to keep the airline flying.

"We believe that it is in everybody's interest that Jet Airways continues to fly," SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar told reporters after a meeting with government officials, adding that placing Jet into bankruptcy would mean grounding the airline.

Jet has racked up over \$1 billion in debt, and owes money to banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors — some of whom have started terminating their lease deals with the carrier.

The government has asked state-run banks to rescue Jet without pushing it into bankruptcy, two people within the administration have told Reuters as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to avert thousands of job losses weeks before a general election.

New Delhi has urged state-run banks, led by SBI, to convert debt into equity and take a stake in Jet, which would however be "transitory", in a rare move in India to use taxpayer money to save a struggling private sector company.

Kumar, however, said that any decision taken to rescue Jet is a commercial one and is not at the direction of the Indian government. He was speaking after a meeting with officials from the prime minister's office and finance and civil aviation ministries to discuss the rescue plan for Jet Airways.

Talks with Abu Dhabi-based carrier Etihad, Jet's largest shareholder, to secure a rescue deal are ongoing, the SBI chief said, adding that there is also the possibility of bringing in a new investor.

20/03/19 Reuters/Gulf News

The government's intervention to bail out Jet Airways will amount to rigging the competition in the aviation sector, say experts.

Jet Airways, India's second-largest airline, plunged into a deeper crisis after its pilots, on Tuesday, gave an ultimatum to go on strike if not paid their salaries by April 1.

Over 20,000 Jet employees haven't been paid for over three months as the company is cash-strapped due to various reasons, prominent among them is bad financial management.

At present, out of 119 of its aircraft, 47 have been grounded, which led to the cancellation of over 250 flights every day.

So what has brought the company to the brink of an existential crisis?

A section of experts blame the rising fuel prices, which increased the company's operational costs more than its earnings, whereas others point towards the company's bad financial planning.

Ramesh Dugar, a chartered accountant and a new entrant to the aviation sector, says that the cost of Jet Airways per seat/per km is about Rs 4.15, whereas it is charging about Rs 3.65 per seat/per km

from fliers. **“It’s a bad business model which has brought the airline to this mess,” Dugar who is not in favour of the government asking banks to bail out the company by infusing more money into it, told Outlook.**

Sources in Jet say that they had to offer cheaper tickets to stay in competition with their rivals such as IndiGo and SpiceJet.

“Why should the government ask the banks to give public money to a company which has itself caused the financial mess?”, says an aviation expert requesting not to be quoted.

He draws a parallel saying the government’s financial support to Air India was one of the reasons why Kingfisher Airlines failed.

“With the government’s support, Air India offered cheaper tickets to fliers on those routes on which Kingfisher was its rival. While Air India rode on government’s money, Kingfisher went bust,” he told Outlook.

21/03/19 Jeevan Prakash Sharma/Outlook

Mumbai: Domestic air passenger growth has lost the high double-digit momentum seen till recently, with a growth of 5.62% in February — a 53-month low — with airlines flying 11.34 million passengers compared to 10.74 million, according to DGCA data released on Wednesday.

The last time such a low growth was reported was in July 2014 when incremental traffic grew 7.19%, while in August 2014, the same was at 8%. Since September 2014, the market has been clipping at double-digits which lasted till December 2018. In January 2019, the growth rate slipped to 9.1%.

Significantly, almost all major carriers operated a truncated schedule, mostly led by the crippled Jet Airways and budget carrier Indigo which had to cancel hundreds of flights in the month due to a host of reasons. These include cash-crunch, pilot shortages, notices to airmen at various airports and a reduced capacity due to grounding of some planes, among others.

Indigo retained its top position with a market share of 43.4%, carrying 4.93 million passengers in February, while Jet, along with subsidiary Jetlite, slipped to a distant fourth position carrying 1.28 million passengers and had a combined market share of 11.4%.

Both Spicejet and national carrier Air India flew more passengers than Jet at 1.55 million and 1.45 million, and had market share of 13.7% and 12.8%, respectively.

Another budget carrier Goair, which garnered 9% market share with 1.02 million passengers, continued to outperform on punctuality from the four major airports of Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, recording an average 86.3% followed by Vistara at 81.6% in the month.

However, Indigo, slipped to fifth position in OTP (on-time performance) at 76.2% during the month, while Spicejet’s retained its leadership in average seat occupancy at 94%.

21/03/19 PTI/The Hindu

IndiGo opens Delhi-Istanbul sector and announces to use its expanding fleet of A320neo and A321neo aircraft to connect more Indian cities to countries such as China, Vietnam, England, Myanmar and Saudi Arabia. William Boulter, Chief Commercial Officer of IndiGo said Wednesday here, "We are looking very seriously into other points in South East Asia, notably the obvious ones of Vietnam and Myanmar. **We also want to operate shortly to Saudi Arabia on the west side**".

"We are seriously interested in getting in China as soon as we can. We are still selecting precise

destinations," he said.

"India operates only five flights from here to China per week, whereas China operates 42 flights to India per week. It's basically time that we start readdressing that balance. I am convinced that there is a huge amount of traffic in India-China axis. We have not yet tapped that," Boulter said. The airline plans to add 125 A321neo aircraft in its fleet over number of years. In 2019, it will receive 20-25 of these aircraft from Airbus, he said.

India's largest airline IndiGo has around 40 per cent domestic passenger market share. Boulter said, "Once we get more A321s, we will do more longer routes." A321neo aircraft has the capacity to carry around 230 passengers while A320 neo carries around 180 passengers. While Delhi-Istanbul flight is being operated in A321neo aircraft having 222 seats, Boulter clarified that the flights to China would be based on A320neos.

Talking about IndiGo's plan to connect Delhi to London, he said, **"We are still hoping to operating to London this year. We haven't chosen yet what the mid point is going to be whether Baku or Tblisi or Istanbul."**

"We had some slots in Gatwick airport last winter but they have lapsed. So, we are again looking at which airport we can operate to in the UK. It's not yet confirmed. We are very keen to get into the UK market this year.

"We also have a plan to put A321 aircraft domestically because in slot limited airports in Delhi and Mumbai and increasingly, other airports too, A321 gives you that additional capacity," Boulter said. **The Delhi-Istanbul flight plans to connect 20 forward destinations using the codeshare pact that was signed between India's largest airline and Turkish Airlines on December 21 last year.**

Codeshare pact allows passengers to travel on a single ticket on flights operated by the partner carrier.

21/03/19 ETNowNews.com

Istanbul: IndiGo plans to get 20-25 of the Airbus A321 planes, the stretched, longer version of the A320 family of planes, as India's biggest airline by market share gears up for further international expansion.

This is part of the 48 plane deliveries the airline is expecting this year. The rest would be Airbus A320neos, said Willy Boulter, chief commercial officer of IndiGo.

Boulter was talking late Wednesday on the sidelines of IndiGo's maiden flight to Istanbul. The airline has started a daily operation and will add a second one to it later this month. It also has a code share with Turkish Airlines which will connect it to 20 European destinations.

IndiGo plans to upgrade its product for medium haul routes, Boulter said without elaborating.

IndiGo CEO Rono Dutta recently said **the airline plans to deploy 60% of fresh capacity on international routes.**

Boulter Wednesday said the airline is looking at destinations in China, Vietnam and Saudi Arabia among others. IndiGo had obtained slots at the Gatwick airport in London but those have lapsed, said Boulter. But the airline still has plans to fly to London he said.

21/03/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

The pilots of financially-strapped Jet Airways have urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu to intervene and instruct the management to release their pending salaries.

"We fear that the airline is on the verge of collapse. This will leave thousands of people unemployed. It will change the dynamics of aviation as fares will increase due to a reduction in capacity, and

travelling public will face major inconvenience," said the National Aviators Guild (NAG), the registered trade union of Jet Airways' Indian pilots. Two days ago, they had threatened to stop flying from April 1 if their pending salaries are not cleared by March 31. While the airline is going through a tough financial phase, all employees except for pilots and engineers are getting paid on time, claimed the NAG in communication to Modi and Prabhu.

"The pilots and engineers are now almost three months behind salaries and facing a lot of financial hardships with no relief in sight. Our repeated pleas to the management have gone unheard. The pilots have maintained professionalism and not hampered operations of the airline as that would have had a catastrophic effect on passengers' travel plans," read the letter. Naresh Goyal-led Jet Airways is facing the worst financial crisis of its 25-year existence with more than one billion dollars of debt. As it struggles to stay aloft, the carrier has delayed payments to banks, suppliers, and aircraft lessors some of which have begun terminating lease deals.

The airline is reportedly down to operating 150 flights a day from 450 at full capacity with a third of its 12-plane fleet grounded. **The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has already instructed Jet Airways airline to comply with relevant provisions of the applicable civil aviation requirements for facilitation of passengers regarding timely communication, compensation, refunds and providing alternate flights wherever applicable.**

21/03/19 ANI/DNA

New Delhi: **The government on Wednesday said it was working with the airlines to increase capacity across sectors to keep a check on spiralling air fares.**

"To ensure passenger convenience, stable operations and affordable fares, MoCA is working with airlines to provide sufficient capacity across the entire network. We continue to monitor safety and compliance on a daily basis," the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) tweeted.

"All airlines are required to follow the Passenger Charter requirements fully and comprehensively. Any complaints may be registered with the AirSewa portal," it said.

The development has come after a meeting between the Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola and airlines' representatives. On Tuesday, a similar meeting was held between the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the airlines.

A senior DGCA official said on Tuesday the government did not issue a directive, but advised the airlines to increase capacity and keep fares under check.

The regulator is undertaking sector-specific reviews on price hike.

The government has advised the domestic airlines not to go for predatory fare pricing as several 737-MAX aircraft were grounded due to safety reasons in the wake of a plane crash in Ethiopia.

India suspended operations and overflight permission for all Boeing 737-MAX aircraft from 4 p.m. on March 13. **In India, SpiceJet (12) and Jet Airways (5) together operated 17 Boeing 737-800 MAX aircraft.**

21/03/19 IANS/daijiworld

New Delhi: **Domestic carriers will see planned induction of 20-25 aircraft between now and end April to bridge the shortage of flights on the back of groundings by airlines due to several reasons.**

"The aircraft will join either because airlines have ordered aircraft which will be delivered or some will lease them. Besides, the airlines will also try and utilise their aircraft more so that passengers are not inconvenienced," said Pradeep Singh Kharola, secretary, civil aviation after a meeting with major domestic airlines which had been called to discuss increasing capacity in the domestic market.

About 100 odd aircraft (84 of Jet Airways due to financial stress) and (12 of SpiceJet 737 MAX) are currently grounded. The airlines have been asked to submit their schedule of planned induction and

leasing to the ministry in the next few days.

The meeting had been called due to the crisis that the domestic market is facing due to a variety of factors including the grounding of Jet Airways aircraft, pilot problems with IndiGo and the grounding of the Boeing MAX aircraft that have led to grounding by Jet Airways.

Sources in the government also said that flights with these new planes will be added to destinations that have seen the largest number of cancellations due to the grounding. **“While the decision will come from the airlines, they will follow this principle while deciding on flights,”** said a senior DGCA official, who did not want to be identified.

21/03/19 Economic Times

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: **Ethiopian Airlines surpassed many carriers by becoming one of the first to install a simulator to teach pilots how to fly the new Boeing 737 Max 8, but the captain of the doomed Flight 302 never trained on the simulator,** according to people close to the airline’s operations.

The people, who spoke on condition of anonymity because Ethiopian Airlines had not authorized disclosure of the information, said the carrier had the Max 8 simulator up and running in January, two months before Flight 302 crashed.

Boeing has said that experienced 737 pilots needed little training for the new Max 8, an assertion that has now come under close scrutiny by regulatory officials and pilots at other airlines. Two of the planes have fatally crashed in the past five months, and regulators around the world grounded all Max 8s last week.

The pilot of Flight 302, Yared Getachew, who had 8,000 hours of flying experience including on the 737, took a refresher course on a different simulator in late September and early October, according to one person familiar with the airline, and was not due for another round of simulator training until after the crash on March 10.

It was unclear if the second pilot on Flight 302, the co-pilot, had trained on the Max 8 simulator. Nor was it clear if the airline had used the simulator for refresher courses it requires pilots to take every six months, or only to train new pilots.

Still, use of the simulator by Ethiopian Airlines means the carrier was among the few in the world that not only had a working simulator for Boeing Max jets but was using it a few months after the first Max 8 crash, Lion Air Flight 610.

The Ethiopian and Lion Air flights crashed minutes after takeoff and showed similar up-and-down oscillations before fatal nose-dives. A central focus of the Indonesian investigation is the possibility that the automated system pushed the nose down into a fatal dive because of inaccurate input from a sensor.

Even if both pilots on Flight 302 had trained on the simulator, it is unclear if such preparation would have included maneuvers to deal with the kinds of problems they may have faced.

After the Lion Air crash, Ethiopian Airlines also shared with its pilots Boeing’s instructions on how to deal with the kind of problems Lion Air pilots appeared to have encountered, the people close to Ethiopian Airlines operations said.

In a bulletin issued in November, Boeing said that emergency procedures that applied to earlier 737 models would have corrected the problems that may have contributed to the Max 8 crash in Indonesia.

Pilots for Ethiopian Airlines, who declined to speak on the record, said they paid close attention to bulletins issued by aircraft manufacturers, especially following an accident. One pilot said failing to read the bulletins would be tantamount to “walking out of your house naked.”

The Ethiopian crash has brought new scrutiny to the system Boeing put in its new Max planes to prevent stalls, called MCAS. The system was designed to compensate for changes to the aerodynamics that arose from alterations to the size and position of the engines on the wings.

The pilots on the doomed Lion Air flight did not appear to understand why the jet was tipping downward and how to correct that problem. One flipped through a technical manual, and the other

began to pray, according to the cockpit voice recording.
20/03/19 [Selam Gebrekidan/New York Times](#)

Jakarta/Singapore/Paris: The pilots of a doomed Lion Air Boeing 737 MAX scoured a handbook as they struggled to understand why the jet was lurching downwards, but ran out of time before it hit the water, three people with knowledge of the cockpit voice recorder contents said.

The investigation into the crash, which killed all 189 people on board in October, has taken on new relevance as the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and other regulators grounded the model last week after a second deadly accident in Ethiopia.

Investigators examining the Indonesian crash are considering how a computer ordered the plane to dive in response to data from a faulty sensor and whether the pilots had enough training to respond appropriately to the emergency, among other factors.

It is the first time the voice recorder contents from the Lion Air flight have been made public. The three sources discussed them on condition of anonymity.

Reuters did not have access to the recording or transcript.

A Lion Air spokesman said all data and information had been given to investigators and declined to comment further.

The captain was at the controls of Lion Air flight JT610 when the nearly new jet took off from Jakarta, and the first officer was handling the radio, according to a preliminary report issued in November.
20/03/19 [Reuters/India Today](#)

New Delhi: The ongoing investigation into the Mirage-2000 crash in Bengaluru last month, in which two IAF test pilots were killed, indicate that the accident in all likelihood was caused by a technical snag in the fighter that had been newly upgraded by defence PSU Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL).

“With the court of inquiry (CoI) yet to be finalised, a conclusive finding is not possible at this stage. But **there is enough evidence to show pilot error was not the reason for accident.** It is also reasonably clear that the arrester barriers at the end of the runway in the HAL airport failed to stop the fighter after its aborted take-off,” said a defence source on Wednesday.

Both HAL and IAF, on being contacted by TOI, refused to comment on the ground that the CoI was still in progress. Squadron Leaders Samir Abrol and Siddhartha Negi, who were with the IAF’s Aircraft and Systems Testing Establishment (ASTE), were undertaking “a user acceptance sortie” of the Mirage-2000 when the accident took place on February 1.

21/03/19 [Times of India](#)

The Union government is mulling options to save jobs at Jet Airways including asking low-cost carrier SpiceJet to consider taking over some of the debt-laden company’s aircraft, people with knowledge of the matter said.

The proposal involves SpiceJet, led by Chairman Ajay Singh, acquiring as many as 40 of Jet Airways’ grounded planes that are owned by lessors, one of the people said, asking not to be identified as discussions are preliminary. The government has also reached out to other carriers, the person said. **Prime Minister Narendra Modi is keen to avoid the collapse of an airline that employs about 23,000 people, weeks before elections. The need to save jobs at the beleaguered carrier became urgent this week after lenders led by State Bank of India failed to convince Etihad Airways PJSC, which owns 24 per cent of Jet Airways, to infuse funds into the Indian carrier.**

Jet Airways has amassed about \$1.1 billion of debt and has fallen behind on paying loans and salaries. Once India's second-biggest airline it has been forced to ground almost two-thirds of its fleet because of its inability to pay lessors. Earlier today an Indian government official said they were trying to revive Jet Airways by changing its management but any decision on the carrier's future will be a commercial decision by the lenders.

Both SpiceJet and Jet Airways operate Boeing Co.'s 737 planes making it feasible for the budget carrier to fly the aircraft. SpiceJet, which had cash of about \$15 million as of Sept. 30, will initially operate a two-class configuration of business and economy under the SpiceJet brand, one of the people said. Lessors have been in discussion with SpiceJet to take over the planes, the person said.
21/03/19 Bloomberg/New Indian Express

Barely six months after the BJP accused Congress of offering Vijay Mallya's Kingfisher Airlines a sweet heart deal to keep it afloat, the **Modi Government has asked public sector banks to bail out Jet Airways and save it from bankruptcy.**

With Jet Airways grounding two-thirds of its fleet, resulting in cancellation of hundreds of flights, and its pilots threatening to stop working from April 1, the central government's SOS to PSU banks is meant to prevent loss of jobs ahead of a crucial general election.

Congress on Wednesday took a swipe at the Government and asked why the Modi Government is bailing out a bankrupt, private airline. Fifty-one per cent of Jet Airways is owned by London based NRI Naresh Goyal and 24% is owned by Etihad Airways from Qatar.

Randeep Surjewala, in-charge of the Communications Department of All India Congress Committee, released documents to establish that serious complaints of financial irregularities against Jet Airways had been made to the PMO last year. The State Bank of India consequently started an inquiry in December, 2018 into charges of fraud and siphoning of funds.

According to its balance sheet, Jet Airways has reported a loss of ₹7,400 Crore and its liabilities to PSU banks like SBI and PNB are ₹8,500 Crore.

Following complaints made by a whistle blower, the PMO ordered an inquiry in August, 2018 and the SBI in December, 2018 wrote to the whistle blower and informed that he would be informed about the result of the inquiry.

The SBI also informed the whistle blower that a special forensic audit of Jet Airways had been entrusted to Ernst & Young.

Surjewala wondered aloud whether public money can be used to bail out a private, bankrupt enterprise. The Government's 'advice' to the banks to buy equity shares from Goyal and Etihad, he pointed out, would leave the PSU banks holding the liabilities of another bankrupt business.

21/03/19 National Herald

The civil aviation ministry Wednesday said it is working with all airlines to provide sufficient capacity and is monitoring safety as well as compliance levels on a daily basis, amid concerns over flight cancellations and rise in airfares.

The grounding of aircraft by crisis-hit Jet Airways, grounding of Boeing MAX 737 planes by SpiceJet and curtailed schedule of IndiGo, among other factors, have impacted flight schedules.

"To ensure passenger convenience, stable operations and affordable fares, MOCA (Ministry of Civil Aviation) is working with all airlines to provide sufficient capacity across the entire network. We continue to monitor safety and compliance on a daily basis," the ministry said in a tweet.

20/03/19 PTI/ZeeBiz

Ahmedabad: Just days after Ahmedabad-headquartered Adani group won bid to operate Ahmedabad airport, taxi and rickshaw drivers have started collecting extra Rs 50 from passengers claiming they have to pay parking charge to the new operator.

However, airport authorities have clarified that Airports Authority of India (AAI) continues to operate the airport and there is no role of the private company in parking fee collection. Incidentally, AAI introduced the new parking policy around the same time the winning bid to operate city airport was announced.

As per the new parking policy, taxi drivers have to pay Rs 50 to AAI while picking up passengers and not while dropping them. However, taxi drivers charge extra money even when they drop them.

Clarifying on the issue, airport Director Manoj Gangal said, "The new parking policy was introduced pan India keeping passenger comfort in mind. It is one of the best policies AAI has come up with for parking and it is implemented in all AAI run airports. Private vehicles are exempted from paying any fees for dropping their relatives. They need to pay only when they park in dedicated parking plot."

According to the new parking policy, commercial vehicles entering airport to pick up passenger need to pay Rs 50 to AAI, but there are no charges for dropping the passengers.

The taxi or rickshaw is given receipt for the fees they pay to AAI with their vehicle number. Apoorva Bhatt (25), a resident of Ghatlodia who returned from Jaipur recently, told Mirror, "I am a frequent flier. Last time, when I flew back and took a rickshaw to home, the driver asked Rs 200 instead of Rs 112 as per meter. When I asked for the reason, he said since the airport has been taken over by Adani, they need to pay parking charges. I paid only Rs 112 but was taken aback by the confrontation. It was for the first time that such an incident happened with me."

21/03/19 Ahmedabad Mirror

New Delhi: Delhi airport operator DIAL Wednesday said it has awarded the rights for a commercial development project to a consortium led by **Bharti Realty that will make an annual payment of Rs 363.5 crore towards lease rentals till 2036.**

Besides, Bharti Realty will make one-time payments of around Rs 1,837 crore, the Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) said in a release.

DIAL, majority-owned by GMR group, operates the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital.

Bharti Realty has been awarded the "right to design, develop, finance, construct, operate, manage and maintain a commercial development project at Gateway and Downtown Districts of Aerocity," the release said.

20/03/19 Outlook

New Delhi: **The CBI on Wednesday arrested an Executive Director of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) for accepting Rs 4 lakh as bribe from Bright Shine Services, a Chennai-based airport ground handling firm.**

Ravichandran, who was caught red-handed here, has been booked under the Prevention of Corruption Act for demanding bribe for awarding a contract floated by the AAI for ground handling at Group D airports.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took the action following a March 16 complaint from V. Venkatesh, the Chief Executive Officer of Bright Shine Services, a partnership firm which took part in the tendering process floated by the AAI.

It was alleged that Ravichandran visited Chennai on March 13 and contacted Venkatesh. Ravichandran was also accused of directing Venkatesh to visit Delhi and meet him personally.
[20/03/19 IANS/New Indian Express](#)

Chennai: Customs officials at Anna International Airport here detected four cases of gold smuggling on Tuesday and seized 2.8kg of gold, worth Rs 90.4 lakh.

In the first case, Pargavi Balasubramanian, 23, who had arrived from Thiruvananthapuram in an Air India flight, was intercepted at the exit of the arrival hall. Officials searched her and her baggage and recovered gold in rubbery form concealed in her underwear.

As much 871 grams of gold valued at Rs 28.7 lakh was recovered from the rubbery gold. She was arrested.

[20/03/19 Shruti Suresh/Times of India](#)

Mangaluru: Customs officials seized 24 carat foreign-origin gold weighing 142.70 grams worth Rs 4.65 lac from a passenger here at Mangaluru International Airport.

The gold seized from the passenger was concealed as 32 mercury coated pieces in 4 magnetic bracelets in check-in luggage.

[21/03/19 daijiworld.com](#)

New Delhi: A crisis at India's Jet Airways deepened on Tuesday as an increasingly worried Indian government called for an emergency meeting, angry passengers demanded refunds and pilots threatened to go on strike over unpaid salaries.

India's Civil Aviation Minister, Suresh Prabhu, asked his officials to call for a meeting to discuss grounding of flights, advance bookings, cancellations, refunds, and any potential safety issues, at the cash-strapped carrier.

Saddled with debt of more than \$1 billion, Jet is struggling to stay aloft. It has delayed payments to banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors - some of whom have started cancelling their lease deals with the airlines.

The groundings have forced Jet to cancel hundreds of flights, some at the last minute, leaving passengers stranded. Many have taken to social media to voice their angst.

Jet is currently operating only 41 aircraft, just a third of its original fleet, the aviation regulator, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), said in a statement, adding that the situation is fluid and the airline may be forced to reduce its fleet further in coming weeks.

Several angry passengers were seen demanding pending refunds for canceled flights at Jet's offices in Mumbai earlier on Tuesday, a source told Reuters.

[20/03/19 Aditi Shah/Reuters](#)

New Delhi: Cash-strapped airline Jet Airways crisis has gone from bad to worse. Till a few weeks ago Jet had a total of 119 operational aircraft but on Tuesday just a third of its original fleet, 41 flew.

On Tuesday, the Jet Airways pilots' union met in Mumbai and decided to refrain from flying aircraft from April 1 unless their last three months salary dues were cleared or at least by March 31, a letter of intent was signed for clearing of dues.

According to the Tol report, currently, Jet is scheduled to operate nearly 140 flights per day, which is

quite far from the number of 600 till a few months ago.

Etihad reportedly denied pumping in funds that Jet was counting on. Currently, Etihad Airways of Abu Dhabi is the largest shareholder in Jet Airways with a 24 per cent stake.

Meanwhile, **the government is likely to turn to the public sector (PSU) banks to rescue Jet in an apparent bid to avert thousands of job losses weeks before the general election.** Sources said the government wants National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), where it owns 49 per cent stake and whose mandate is to invest in stalled and new infrastructure projects, to buy a stake in Jet to save the cash-strapped airline.

On Tuesday, **Jet Aircraft Maintenance Engineers Welfare Association (JAMEWA) said in a statement that Jet Airways' aircraft are "safe to fly" and are being maintained at the "highest levels of safety".** "We assure you and the public that Jet Airways airplanes are safe to fly and are being maintained at the highest levels of safety standards since the last 25 years. We have an impressive TDR (Technical Dispatch Reliability) of 99.50 per cent, one of the highest in the industry,"
20/03/19 ETNowNews.com

Lessors of beleaguered Jet Airways have offered 50 of the airlines' new generation Boeing 737 aircraft to budget carrier SpiceJet even on short-term leases of up to three years, Moneycontrol has learnt.

Top sources in SpiceJet told Moneycontrol that the lessors have offered the aircraft on dry lease in order to avoid grounding of these planes in wake of ailing financial health of Jet Airways. A dry lease is a situation where the lessor provides aircraft to an airline without any crew or ground staff member.

SpiceJet is in need of 12 new aircraft after the aviation safety watchdog, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), decided to ground Boeing 737 Max planes owing to safety concerns. The aircraft model was involved in two fatal accidents within a span of six months killing 346 people in all. The budget carrier has, so far, received two replacements on lease from a Turkish Airline, sources said.

Lessors of Jet Airways, sources say, fear payment uncertainty owing to the financial crunch in the company.

Jet Airways is reeling under a debt of over Rs 8,000 crore has been defaulting on loan re-payment and interest thereof. It has grounded a total of 60 aircraft so far and is operating with half its fleet. This has led to numerous flight cancellations, consequently leading to soaring airfares.

India's second-largest carrier, which is facing its worst ever debt crisis in 25 years, has delayed payments to its pilots, suppliers and lessors for months and defaulted on loans subsequent to an intense competition, weak rupee and rising fuel costs.

19/03/19 Nikita Vashisht/Moneycontrol.com

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday said the government intended to bring a bailout package for the cash-strapped Jet Airways - partly owned by foreign investors - using Indian tax payers' money.

Congress spokesperson Randeep Surjewala told the media that the Modi government had asked public sector banks - State Bank of India (SBI) and Punjab National Bank (PNB) - to waive the debt on the airliner totalling Rs 8,500 crore by taking an equity of Rs 1.

"Naresh Goyal, who is a London-based NRI, owns 51 per cent stakes while Etihad Airways has 24 per cent stake. It means the 75 per cent ownership is with an NRI and a foreign company," said Surjewala.

"Why is the Modi government giving a 'bailout package' to a bankrupt corporate entity like Jet Airways owned by foreign investors, out of public money, but not to India's debt-ridden farmers?"

"The PMO (Prime Minister's office) has issued two orders. It has asked the SBI and other PSU banks to waive the loan by converting it into equity of Rs 1. Also, it is going to pay Rs 150 for every share to Etihad.

"Will the Modi government now save every defaulting crony capitalist out of public funds?"

20/03/19 IANS/Business Standard

Mumbai: **Boeing 737 Max family which was launched to become a success story of their maker and change the way a passenger travels through air, has now started to give sleepless nights to the aviation industry across the globe. Back in India, the impact of this Boeing 737 Max has emerged to be a serious business dampener, after two fatal plane crashes carrying 737's Max 8 jet.** The 737 Max 8 was the first to take off in the Boeing's 737 Max family, and this engine which spells out classic body, spacious seats, LED inside roof, silent engines and highly advanced system has now become least favorite. Reason pilots are finding it difficult to fly, and two crashes have cost many lives. This has led many customers ban the Boeing 737 Max jets, with that said, domestic airlines SpiceJet and Jet Airways are among them. **Now because SpiceJet and Jet Airways have quite a hefty number of 737 Max, the grounding will put an effect in their earnings. While these two airlines will be struggling, it is now clearly expected that another airline namely Indigo will be a winner with more passenger growth and hence good profit ahead.**

Two airlines, first Lion Air Flight 610 in October 29,2018, and second Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 on March 10,2019, crashed just few minutes after take off resulting in with no survivors. Similarities between these two crashes were that, both crashed within few minutes of take off, both pilots struggled to gain altitude, both planes ascended and descended several times before nosediving. While the investigations are still going on of both the airlines, Boeing 737 Max has been grounded from countries like like China, South Africa, Morocco, Poland, Ethiopia, Singapore, Indonesia, Netherlands, Mongolia, Argentina, Cayman Island, Iceland, Ireland, France, Malaysia, Germany, Oman, UK and India have grounded this jet.

In India, SpiceJet and Jet Airways alone have 116 and 125 of Boeing 737 Max 8.

Jal Irani and Vijayant Gupta analysts at Edelweiss Securities said, "We expect yields to remain strong as on the supply-side not only would Boeing 737 Max additions remain frozen in the foreseeable future, JetAirways has permanently sold 16 of its owned planes in addition to short-term grounding by lessors."

19/03/19 Pooja Jaiswar/ZeeBiz

New Delhi: **As part of its tour around the region, Embraer's E190-E2 commercial jet will be making a stop in New Delhi.** Sporting a shark livery to represent the aircraft's 'profit hunter' status, the aircraft will offer Embraer's guests a closer look at the world's quietest, cleanest and most efficient new-generation single-aisle aircraft.

"We are proud to bring this aircraft to the region for the second time to show the amazing capabilities of the E190-E2," said Cesar Pereira, Asia Pacific Vice President, Embraer Commercial Aviation. **"The E190-E2 offers airlines the benefit of lower operating costs and is capable of achieving similar costs per seat of larger re-engined narrowbody aircraft, with significantly lower costs per trip. We have also received a lot of positive feedback about the aircraft performance, low fuel consumption, sleek and modern interior and low cabin noise and we are excited to show it to a wider audience."**

Delivered to its launch customer in April last year, and now operated by two airlines Norway's Widerøe and Kazakhstan's Air Astana, the E190-E2 has gained a reputation in the industry for having

met all its milestones ahead of schedule, and with final specifications better than the originally expected.

The E-Jets E2's value proposition in the Asia Pacific region is its ability to enable airlines to sustainably develop more routes secondary or tertiary cities. These are routes that can potentially bypass the major metro airports such as Manila, Jakarta, Bangkok, New Delhi and Mumbai which are heavily congested. This enables airlines to achieve sustainable growth without being constrained by infrastructure bottlenecks, while offering passengers improved services with more non-stop flights. Embraer forecasts a demand for 10,550 new aircraft with up to 150 seats worldwide, worth USD 600 billion, over the next 20 years, more than 3,000 of which will originate from the Asia Pacific region, including China.

Embraer is the world's leading manufacturer of commercial jets with up to 150 seats. The Company has 100 customers from all over the world operating the ERJ and the E-Jet families of aircraft. For the E-Jets program alone, Embraer has logged more than 1,800 orders and 1,400 deliveries, redefining the traditional concept of regional aircraft by operating across a range of business applications. The first-generation E-Jets are operated by 70 airlines in 50 countries. This includes all the mainline US carriers, KLM, Air France, Lufthansa, British Airways, Tianjin Airlines, China Southern Airlines, Japan Airlines and Mandarin Airlines.

The E-Jets E2 is the most efficient family of aircraft in the single-aisle market burning up to 10% less fuel than its direct competitor. The E190-E2 brings also more flexibility with maximum range of up to 5,300 km or about 1,000 km longer than the first-generation E190.

In January 2018, as the aircraft neared the end of its flight test campaign, **final results showed that the aircraft is better than its original specification and even more efficient than other single aisle aircraft.** In fuel consumption, the E190-E2 proved to be 1.3% better than originally expected, which represents a 17.3% improvement when compared to the first-generation E190. **In terms of pilot transition, pilots of the first-generation E-Jets will need only 2.5 days of training and no full flight simulator to fly an E2.**

Flight test results also confirmed the E190-E2 to be better than its original specification in takeoff performance in hot-and-high conditions as well as short field takeoff.

E190-E2 also becomes the aircraft with the longest maintenance intervals in the single aisle market with 10,000 flight hours for basic checks and no calendar limit in typical E-Jets utilization. This means additional 15 days of aircraft utilization in a period of ten years compared to the first-generation E-Jets.

20/03/19 Embraer/PRESS RELEASE

Surat: Passengers travelling to Sharjah were stranded at Surat airport for four hours after the aircraft of Air India Express developed a technical snag during take off in the early hours of Tuesday.

Official sources said Air India Express flight, which operates direct flight between Sharjah and Surat, arrived at Surat airport from Sharjah at about 1.10am.

In the return journey, the aircraft developed a technical snag at the tarmac and the pilot decided to return. The flight was grounded for almost four hours and it took off at about 5.30am.

A passenger, who was travelling to Sharjah, said, "All passengers had boarded the aircraft and it was ready for departure when the problem in the engine was detected. Attendants in the aircraft asked the passengers to keep seated, while the problem was sorted out."

20/03/19 Times of India

The closure of airspace by Pakistan for all international flights has hurt Air India the most. The national carrier is reportedly losing Rs 3 crore every day due to re-routing or cancellation of its flights to the UK and the US. The losses roughly sum up to more than Rs 60 crore for Air India ever since Pakistan closed its airspace post the IAF attack on February 26.

India and Pakistan had ordered for closure of their respective airspaces, shutting down various domestic airports after the hostilities between the neighbours over the Pulwama attack that led to the killing of 40 CRPF personnel. However, India opened its airspace within hours post the IAF strike while Pakistan is still hesitant and has only partially opened its airspace.

The decision by the Pakistani government, according to Flightradar24.com, has hit almost 400 flights that use its airspace on a daily basis.

Air India has cancelled or diverted a majority of flights that it operates to the US and the UK using Pakistan airspace over the last 20 days, DNA reported. The national carrier operates 66 such flights every week to Europe and 33 to North America, according to CNN Traveller.

Air India has also suspended its flights to Birmingham due to the Pakistani government's decision describing it as "extraordinary circumstances." There are six such flights from New Delhi and Amritsar in a week.

The flight duration, as a result of re-routing, has also gone up by at least three hours. This has put an additional revenue burden due to additional fuel usage and more work for the airline crew.

India's national carrier has consequently ordered its inactive staff to report to overcome the crisis.

A majority of the flights whose routes have been diverted due to Pakistan's airspace closure have been directed to Mumbai which has resulted in air traffic congestion. In fact, it was recently reported that the congestion almost led to a mid-air crash. A timely collision warning saved the airlines from crashing.

19/03/19 Bismah Malik/IBTimes

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has agreed to examine the validity of a complete ban on spray of disinfectants in aircraft while passengers are on board, terming the issue as important.

It has appointed senior advocate Meenakshi Arora as amicus curiae in the matter, while also requesting Attorney General KK Venugopal to depute a law officer on the next date of hearing for clarifying the Centre's stand.

"Since the issue which has been raised is of some importance, we request the learned Attorney General for India to nominate a Law Officer to assist the Court," said a bench headed by Justice DY Chandrachud in an order last week.

The Court was examining an appeal moved by IndiGo Airlines, which has challenged orders of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) and consequent directions to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). By its order in August 2015, the tribunal had directed the DGCA to ensure that no disinfectant fumigation is carried out inside a plane when any passenger is inside.

IndiGo repeated pleas seeing modification of this order were rejected by the NGT. Most recently, in October 2018, the green panel had dismissed yet another application by IndiGo, stating that none of the airlines were able to show that such a spray is not injurious to human health.

20/03/19 Utkarsh Anand/CNN-News18

Mumbai: With canvassing for the 2019 general elections in full swing, it's a "houseful" notice outside most companies hiring out small fixed wing aircraft and helicopters for campaign purposes, aviation industry players said.

Top politicians of various parties covet choppers as they afford ease of mobility and access to the

country's remotest corners, and small planes which can land on short airstrips.

Flying at average 100-140 nautical miles per hour at a height of between 2,000-3,000 feet, helicopters are the favourite as they help politicians reach out to the maximum constituents during the campaign.

Unlike many developed countries, there are not many choppers or small planes available for hire during poll season and the charter companies go in for the pre-election 'kill'.

According to the Western Chapter of Rotary Wing Society of India (RWSI) President Captain Uday Gelli, there are around **275 registered civilian helicopters** in the country.

These include choppers owned by the central or state governments, corporates, public or private sector undertakings, and those that are privately-owned -- leaving around barely 75, mostly with the charter companies, for election purposes.

19/03/19 IANS/Economic Times

A man has been arrested after he was allegedly caught attempting to smuggle a live human embryo into India.

Authorities in the country say they discovered the man, a Malaysian national, carrying the embryo in a special container hidden in his suitcase at Mumbai's airport last Friday.

The man reportedly admitted he had previously made several similar smuggling runs.

He then led officials to an IVF clinic in Mumbai which is now being investigated as part of a possible smuggling ring.

The clinic has denied any allegations it is involved in smuggling.

Rebecca Gonsalves, representing the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the agency investigating the alleged smuggling operation, told Mumbai's high court on Monday that several text messages were found on the man's phone suggesting the clinic was the intended place of delivery, according to The Times of India.

However, Dr Coral Gandhi, an embryologist who runs the clinic, denied the allegation.

Her lawyer, Sujoy Kantwalla, said she "does not import embryos as part of her business", the Indian Express reported, and he blamed "a conspiracy hatched by persons which may include competitors".

19/03/19 Samuel Osborne/Independent

Kolkata: Three individuals have been detained by the immigration bureau officials at the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport with fake passports.

The detained individuals were identified as Rafika Khatoon, Noor Kaida Khatoon and Kallol Mitra.

The detained women reportedly were from Rohingya community. They were ready to board in a Kuala Lumpur-bound flight at around 11.30 pm.

The bureau suspected that the detained persons entered India illegally from Bangladesh and made the passport in a fraudulent manner.

Their passports and boarding passes were seized and complain was lodged at the NSCBI police station.

19/03/19 UNI/India Blooms

Face à l'augmentation future du trafic de drone, l'Entreprise commune SESAR (SESAR JU) apporte sa contribution à l'initiative de la Commission Européenne « U-space » à travers des activités de recherche

et de développement de nouveaux services pour une intégration sûre, efficace et sécurisée des drones dans l'espace aérien. Le projet **Geosafe** fait partie des services de base du développement de l'usage des drones. Engagé dans la création de solutions qui rendront la mobilité de demain possible, Thales pilotera le projet, avec l'aide des compétences transversales d'Aeromapper, AirMap, Atechsys, Airmarine et SPH Engineering.

Les solutions de géorepérage (geofencing) sont des outils majeurs de sécurité qui permettent la sécurisation des trajectoires de vol des drones afin d'éviter certaines zones sensibles. Elles sont indispensables pour empêcher les drones de pénétrer dans le périmètre protégé des infrastructures sensibles comme les centrales électriques ou les aéroports. Dans le cadre de la réglementation du User space (U-space), Geosafe a pour objet de développer des solutions de géorepérage de pointe, de proposer des améliorations et des recommandations pour la définition des futurs systèmes de géorepérage.

Le projet Geosafe consiste à réaliser pendant un an une campagne de tests de vol destinés à évaluer plusieurs solutions de géorepérage du commerce, dans le but de proposer un système plus performant ainsi que des améliorations technologiques pour les drones autonomes.

Thales, acteur de premier rang dans le domaine des drones militaires, de l'avionique commerciale et de la gestion du trafic aérien, conçoit des systèmes qui offrent les plus hauts niveaux de sécurité et de sûreté pour la mobilité aérienne du futur. **En tant que responsable du projet, le Groupe organisera tous les tests et formulera des recommandations pour le système européen de géorepérage.**

«Thales joue un rôle de premier plan dans la création d'un monde autonome », déclare Christian Bardot, Directeur général de Thales, en charge des activités Avionique hélicoptères et drones. « Avec SESAR JU et les partenaires de Geosafe nous allons consolider les bases d'une utilisation sûre et sécurisée des drones, libérant ainsi le potentiel de ce marché singulier. »

Les **280 tests en vol** seront effectués tout au long de l'année en France, en Allemagne et en Lettonie. Le but est de tester toutes les situations auxquelles un drone autonome est susceptible d'être confronté en zone urbaine et en zone rurale.

Zone Bourse 19/03/2019

Lenders are laying the ground for a new owner in Jet Airways as they insist on an undertaking from the shareholders that will trim founder-chairman Naresh Goyal's stake to below 10% while Abu Dhabi-based Etihad will have to agree to exit from the ailing airline.

Led by State Bank of India (SBI), lenders are planning to call for open bids to sell Jet Airways after

obtaining written agreements from Goyal and Etihad. Goyal, who currently owns 51% of Jet Airways, will have to bring down his stake to 9% and have no voting rights. Etihad, whose holding is at 24%, will have to agree to sell its entire stake if it does not bring in new capital.

The Tata Group may be back in the fray for acquiring Jet Airways after such conditions are met.

Preliminary talks for a deal were held late last year but the Group had subsequently withdrawn as there was no firm indication that Goyal would step down.

"We have a two-stage plan and are insisting on an agreement from both the shareholders. Goyal has to cut his stake to 9% while Etihad, which has declined from making additional investments, will have to agree to exit. This will ease the path for us to rope in a new investor," a senior bank official said.

Lenders will be subscribing to a 15-year-old zero coupon non-convertible debenture (NCD), issued by Jet Airways, to provide funding of Rs 800-1,000 crore in the interim period to keep the floundering airline afloat. Banks expect to rope in a new investor within four weeks, the source added.

24/03/19 Manju AB/DNA

New Delhi: In the last few months, almost every airline in the country is facing some sort of crisis. After having a wonderful sail for two-three years, the aviation industry was hit severely last year when international crude prices went up and the value of domestic currency depreciated against the US dollar.

Excessive parking and landing charges, loads of debt and fare wars have also hit the performance of airlines.

The impact of the two macro factors was so big on the sector that every player witnessed their profits plummeting and losses mounting.

The first airline to fall on bad times was the Naresh Goyal-promoted Jet Airways.

While there was the talk of many players being interested in buying a stake in the airline as its debt continued to pile up with the airline having no money for day-to-day operations, the major blow came when in early January it announced that it was defaulting on loan repayment.

24/03/19 New Indian Express

A smug, entitled business class driven by greed and hubris, but sorely lacking in resources to legitimize their control. I could be describing the India Inc. of today – or 1959. Nothing much has changed.

Jet Airways Ltd., India's oldest surviving private-sector airline, is about to crash land. Founder Naresh Goyal neither brought in enough new equity of his own to rescue the debt-laden carrier, nor did he allow a timely sale to suitors who wanted the business, albeit without him. Jet may yet survive, but it's touch-and-go. Or take the country's second-largest hospital chain, put into the trauma room by its founders' Rs 4 billion (\$56 million) fraud. Fortis Healthcare Ltd. wants brothers Malvinder and Shivinder Singh arrested. Complicating matters, Malvinder has accused Shivinder of siphoning funds from the family holding company and diverting them to a spiritual guru. The whole thing is an unholy mess.

For at least six decades, scholars and policy makers have been aware of the strain placed by India's

feudal system of corporate governance on capital formation, job creation and growth. Yet the last major reform was in 1969, which ironically was also when India was nationalizing banks and lurching toward a more virulent socialism. Subsequently, globalization caught up with India, the economy opened up and attracted hundreds of billion dollars in foreign capital, but the foundations of corporate structure stayed weak. It's only now, when the edifice is showing cracks, that it's becoming clear a fresh coat of paint alone won't suffice..

24/03/19 Andy Mukherjee/Bloomberg/Business Standard

A fix to the anti-stall system suspected in the crash of a Boeing 737 MAX 8 jet that killed 189 people in Indonesia is ready, industry sources said on Saturday, as the company tries to avoid a lengthy grounding of its planes.

Boeing was due to present the patch to officials and pilots of US airlines -- American, Southwest and United -- in Renton, Washington state, where the plane is assembled, other sources said.

"Boeing has already finalised the necessary corrective measures for the MAX," an aviation sector source told AFP on condition of anonymity.

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) will receive the patch "early next week," a government source added.

Asked how long the certification process could take after the patch is in the hands of the authorities, this source said that nothing has been decided yet.

The FAA declined to comment.

The Lion Air crash in Indonesia last October and another accident this month involving an Ethiopian Airlines jet, which killed 346 people between them, have raised major concerns about the safety certification of the 737 MAX 8 model.

The Ethiopian Airlines crash on March 10 led to the global grounding of 737 MAX planes.

Although it will take months to determine the exact cause of both crashes, investigators in the Lion case have honed in on the MCAS automated anti-stalling system designed to point the nose of the plane downward if it is in danger of stalling, or losing lift.

American Airlines and Southwest pilots were set to test simulators with the updates on Saturday, according to the sources.

Boeing neither confirmed nor denied the information.

24/03/19 CNBC TV18

Mumbai: As problems in cash strapped Jet Airways deepens, investors are favouring stocks of its competitors -- SpiceJet and IndiGo -- betting that they will have a larger market share. Accordingly, stocks of SpiceJet rose over 14 per cent on Friday and have been rising for the last four sessions gaining 25.93 per cent. Similarly, IndiGo's scrip gained 10 per cent in the last four sessions.

"SpiceJet shares are favoured as they have proposed to operate 40 aircraft grounded by Jet Airways," said Deepak Jasani of HDFC Securities.

"IndiGo and SpiceJet shares are also gaining as a number of flights are being cancelled by Jet Airways."

Earlier in the week, around **260 of Jet Airways' pilots have applied to join SpiceJet even as investors like public sector banks struggle to stitch a rescue plan for the airline.**

Over 70 per cent of Jet Airways aircraft have been forced to ground over due to non-payment of amounts outstanding to lessors.

Besides, industry sources have said that lessors are offering 50 of its Boeing aircraft to SpiceJet.

23/03/19 IANS/Sify

Mumbai: The Government may have started giving out licences to operators for offering Wi-Fi services in domestic flights, but it may be a while before passengers get to access Internet at 30,000 ft. High cost of deploying the service, bleak financial conditions of the aviation sector, in general, and lack of clarity about the business model may come in the way of offering in-flight Wi-Fi services.

"Airlines are bullish, but it will take longer than expected due to the financial crunch they are facing at the moment," said Partho Banerjee, President and Managing Director, Hughes Communication India Ltd (HCIL), one of the companies to procure in-flight and maritime connectivity (IFMC) licence from the Department of Telecommunications.

Last December, the Centre had decided to provide the IFMC licence that allows service providers to partner with Indian and foreign airlines, along with shipping companies, to provide in-flight and maritime voice and data facility via on ground telecom network or using satellite.

"It will take 3-4 years for their entire fleets of the airlines to be connected," said Shivaji Chatterjee, Senior Vice-President and Head Enterprise Business, Hughes Communications India Ltd.

An aircraft needs to be grounded for at least two days to install the system. A flat antenna needs to be fused and retrofitted on an aircraft to connect to the satellite. This means commercial losses for the airline and they are currently not in a position to idle any aircraft.

The other option is to install the antenna when the aircraft is brought in for maintenance. It takes around ₹3 crore to install the system on an aircraft. "To get the airlines to take the plunge now is going to be a task. Full-service carriers such as Vistara could look at adopting the service, but airlines want to focus on the return on investment first," said Chatterjee.

Service providers also point out that the Indian mindset of wanting 'free Wi-Fi' might pose a problem for the airlines.

24/03/19 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

In a move that will help ease supply of goods to and from Kashmir, construction of a dedicated air cargo terminal at Srinagar Airport has kick-started recently.

The cargo terminal is being constructed in view of the great demand for supply of goods to and from Kashmir, Akash Deep Mathur, the director of Srinagar Airport told Greater Kashmir.

"The general cargo terminal under Common User Domestic Cargo Terminal (CUDCT) is a project to

be undertaken by Airports Authority of India. We have awarded the project to a contractor after proper tendering and the terminal building is expected to be ready in next 15 months,” Mathur said.

After land identification and demarking for the CUDCT was conducted last year at the Srinagar Airport, its construction has started now, he added. Construction of cargo terminal will also provide boost to exports of commodities and perishables from the valley.

“The general cargo terminal project is expected to be carried out at a **cost of more than Rs 5 crore**. We hope that the external factors are favourable for us to witness the completion of cargo terminal on time,” Mathur said.

24/03/19 Saqib Malik/Greater Kashmir

Thiruvananthapuram: In a move that could bring cheers to the business diaspora in Japan, the state government has written to the Air India Managing Director requesting to start direct flight service between Japan and Thiruvananthapuram with a stopover at either Bangkok or Singapore.

According to senior government officers, the state government has shot off a letter to the Air India MD seeking direct flight service in the backdrop of multinational companies from the Far East making investments in Kerala.

According to a senior bureaucrat, Nissan Motors of Japan, which has set up a digital innovation hub in Thiruvananthapuram, and global brands like Fujitsu and Hitachi are aiming to make investments in key sectors in Kerala. Hence, it is vital to ensure air connectivity between various destinations beyond the traditional routes like the Gulf, the officer said.

24/03/19 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

Seaplane operations will soon be a reality in four islands of Andamans with the opening of its bidding process, under an ambitious project to attract more tourists to the picturesque archipelago, officials said Sunday.

Seventeen islands in Andamans have also been identified for holistic development, that include building infrastructure, to promote tourism.

Bidding has been opened for seaplane operations at four locations in Andamans, Swaraj Dweep, Shaheed Dweep, Hut Bay and Long Island, under the UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme of the Centre, a Home Ministry official told PTI.

With the civil works completed at Diglipur airport on the northern tip of Andamans, **air operations by Andaman Airways are set to commence from June 2019.**

Additional airfields are being explored at Car Nicobar, Campbell Bay and in Port Blair, for a second airstrip, the official said.

Port Blair has already been declared as an authorised immigration check post for entry into or exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers.

24/03/19 PTI/Economic Times

Chennai: A New Delhi-bound SpiceJet flight carrying 182 passengers returned back to the airport here after flying for over an hour, following a technical problem, officials said Saturday.

According to the airline's website, flight **SG104** had taken off at 7.00 am and the pilot decided to return due to the **technical problems** and landed the plane at 8.10 am.

The aircraft later resumed its journey at 10.00 am after the issue was sorted out and safely landed at 1.10 pm in New Delhi, the airline added.

23/03/19 PTI/New Indian Express

Kolkata: Reports of two kilos of gold allegedly seized by the Customs Department from the wife of Trinamool leader Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday led to two separate press meets that painted completely contradictory pictures of what happened and hit a new low in politics.

Abhishek Banerjee claimed that his wife was not even carrying two grams of gold when she flew into Kolkata on the intervening night of March 15 and 16 from Thailand. "I will leave politics if anyone can prove she had any dutiable gold or goods on her," he said. "Also, see if you can prove if she had sought and was given any VIP treatment at the airport."

The Trinamool leader said his wife had gone to Thailand for medical treatment. "After 75 minutes of harassment by the customs, she spoke to my assistant who made some phone calls. A lady police officer came to help my wife in case she fell ill during the incident," he added.

Rujira Banerjee has claimed in an FIR that customs official harassed her, and demanded Rs. 50,000.

Abhishek Banerjee said that his wife was targeted because she was connected to a political family. "They are attacking my family because they cannot fight me politically," he added.

At a press conference held earlier, BJP parliamentarian Swapan Dasgupta and former Trinamool leader Mukul Roy raised questions about the Thai passport belonging to Mrs Banerjee and wondered if she held two such documents - which is illegal. However, Abhishek Banerjee said that as his wife is a Thai national born and brought up in that country and holds a Person of Indian Origin card, there is nothing illegal about it.

Initial reports aired by some news portals about 2 kg gold being seized from her were not mentioned at the BJP press meet. There was no mention of any such seizure in the complaint filed by the Customs Department either.

Why did it take customs officials a whole week to file its complaint? There was no clear answer to that. But the customs complaint was drafted by top brass and sent to the officer in Kolkata to file. Manish Chandra, the Customs Commissioner in Kolkata, says so in the cover letter he sent to his assistant commissioner at the Kolkata airport with the draft of the complaint to be filed.

The letter is also marked "secret".

"This is as per CBIC department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, New Delhi," Mr Chandra wrote. The CBIC is the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs. Why the Ministry of Finance should be interested in this case, where there has been no seizure of illegal gold or cash is not clear.

At the BJP press meet, party leaders tried to make a case for a confrontation between the West Bengal police and the customs department like the confrontation between the Kolkata police and the CBI in February - when the probe agency wanted to question then Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar.

24/03/19 Monideepa Banerjee/NDTV

Jaipur: **A passenger travelling from Dubai was allegedly robbed when his luggage was being scanned at the Jaipur Airport.** The airport authorities were unable to find his wallet in spite of the presence of many security personnel there.

The passenger had come by an Air Arabia flight and has filed a complaint with the city's Sanganer police station. The complainant, **Anurag Agarwal, a resident of Jaipur landed at the Jaipur International Airport at 4pm on Sunday and during scanning was robbed of his wallet.**

"The passenger was going through the immigration process on landing back in the country. Due to this he emptied out his pockets and placed the items in a tray for scanning. After going through body scanning, when he reached the other end, he found that although his mobile and passport were still in the tray, his wallet was missing. No one was able to find it at the airport," said an official of Sanganer police station.

The wallet, according to the complaint contained over Rs 10,000 in cash, identification cards as well as credit and debit cards of various banks. "We are investigating the alleged theft and ascertaining if someone picked up Agarwal's wallet by mistake or intentionally. Although there are CCTV cameras at the airport, we are yet to see any footage..," added the official.

24/03/19 Times of India

Bengaluru: **A 34-year-old Kyrgyzstani national, who was deported from India for violating her visa conditions last year, managed to come back to the country and obtain Indian passport and documentations of a Indian citizen.**

Narina Dokturbekova was arrested at the Kempegowda International Airport on Thursday when she attempted to take a flight to Nepal from the city. At the immigration counter, she presented an Indian passport, which raised officials' eyebrows.

Officials told the BIAL police in their complaint that Narina had come to the city on a business visa in 2017, and was illegally working in the marketing division at an adhesives manufacturing company. In November 2018, the Foreigners Regional Registration Office got wind of this, and deported her. While she was supposed to go from Delhi to her home country, Narina instead made her way to Nepal in December and managed to cross the border, and came back to Bengaluru. During this time, **she managed to illegally obtain an Indian passport, Aadhar card, and PAN, despite being a Kyrgyzstan citizen,** said the police. BIAL police have filed cases under Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport Act, 1967 against her and are investigating how she got the documents.

24/03/19 The Hindu

Bengaluru: A shocking case recently surfaced in Bengaluru when the police arrested two people for allegedly smuggling drugs. The accused were caught with contraband worth Rs 55 lakh. The incident took place at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The accused were boarding a flight to Doha when they were arrested. The police found **965 grams of amphetamine, 30 grams of cocaine and 4.525 kilograms of hashish** with the accused.

The accused were allegedly carrying the contraband in a quilt and in two tiffin boxes. According to the Times of India's report, the police acted on a tip-off they received regarding drugs being smuggled. The two accused were caught at the security check area. The officials grew suspicious with the answers that the accused gave, following this, their bags were inspected.

One of the accused has been identified as **Noushad Mannakkamvalli** and is **from Kerala** while the other has been identified as **Muhammed Nousheer from Karnataka**. The Narcotics Control Bureau, Bangalore Zonal Unit intercepted the accused.

It was also alleged that the Amphetamine and cocaine were kept inside a quilt while the hashish had been carefully packed in two tiffin boxes. The quilt and the tiffins were being carried in two backpacks. The accused were allegedly trying to carry the contraband to Doha. The accused were to take a flight by Oman Airways.

[24/03/19 MirrorNowNews.com](https://www.mirrornownews.com/24/03/19/MirrorNowNews.com)

In an industry as volatile as aviation, 12 years can be a long time. Long enough for Jet Airways's descent from being one of the most preferred airlines with offerings that matched those of top-rated international carriers to one that's fighting for survival.

According to a report of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), for **February 2019, Jet Airways**, along with JetLite, the company's wholly owned subsidiary, received the **highest passenger complaints at 3.1 per 10,000 passengers**. These complaints are over a number of issues such as **fares, refunds, flight delays and cancellations, baggage handling, etc. Next on the list was Air India (domestic) with 1.5 complaints per 10,000 passengers.**

While the airline has in its almost 26 years of existence ridden through – and survived – a number of rough patches, sector watchers see the carrier's current run as its most turbulent yet.

Today, the airline is facing a crisis of confidence among its various stakeholders – faced with frequent disruption and complaints, its passengers are looking at other airlines; its pilots are interviewing for jobs with rivals; aircraft lessors are in discussions to take back planes rented to Jet so that they can be leased to other domestic carriers; and its shareholders are looking to offload Jet's stock.

With the future of Jet's 17,000 employees tied to the airline's survival, efforts are being made at the highest levels of the government to ensure there are no job losses ahead of what is being billed as a defining election.

"In a situation where market forces are left free, it is healthy if an airline or an airport goes bust. It weeds out inefficiencies. But Jet is a large player and there are 17,000 families associated with it," said a senior government official who is in the know of plans pertaining to Jet's future.

In 1993, a year after its launch, Jet got its permit to fly as an air-taxi operator, which meant that it could fly but without a schedule. (A flight schedule allows a carrier to estimate costs and revenues for six months, the period of a single schedule in India.) Among the first flyers on Jet's maiden flight from Bombay to Ahmedabad on May 5, 1993, was the pioneer of Indian aviation, J R D Tata.

Less than two years later, Jet Airways got the go-ahead to fly as a scheduled airline. This was made possible because the government had by then abolished the Air Corporation Act, 1953, which gave monopoly to State-owned carriers to operate as scheduled airlines.

Over the next few years, as Jet Airways started full-fledged operations, it grew to become the poster boy of private sector efficiency in India. Though the government's Open Skies policy of 1992 — which called for the liberalisation of the rules and regulations of commercial aviation to create a free-

market environment for the airline industry — coupled with the repeal of the Air Corporation Act, meant that the skies opened up to other private players such as ModiLuft, Air Sahara and East-West Airlines, Jet stood out from the pack. Until 2015-16, it paid among the highest salaries, spending Rs 67.04 lakh annually on each of its pilots. While ModiLuft and East-West ceased operations in 1996, Jet acquired Air Sahara in 2007.

While Jet continued to grow over the 1990s and early 2000s, in 2004, another change in government policy came as a boon for private carriers.

In December 2004, the Union Cabinet approved a proposal of the Ministry of Civil Aviation to allow “eligible” Indian scheduled carriers to operate on international routes. “Only Indian scheduled carriers with a minimum of five years continuous operations and having minimum of 20 aircraft in their fleet will be allowed to operate on international routes,” read the official statement dated December 29, 2004.

With about a decade of flying under its belt, Jet benefited immensely from the policy, which came to be known as the “5/20 rule” and which served to keep its relatively younger competitors such as the now defunct Kingfisher Airlines and Air Deccan out of international operations. **In March 2004, Jet Airways and Air Sahara both launched their first international flights on the same route — Chennai to Colombo.** In 2016, however, the government scrapped the 5/20 rule, which had been opposed by every new airline in India.

Over the years, as the founder-chairman of Jet, Goyal was able to foster relationships across the international aviation community and also managed to leverage some of these during times of trouble. One such relationship was with the Abu Dhabi-based carrier Etihad Airways, which, aided by relaxed FDI rules, picked up stakes in Jet. Goyal currently owns a majority 51 per cent stake in the airline, with Etihad holding another 24 per cent.

“You should never write off Naresh Goyal,” a senior official in the Civil Aviation Ministry had told The Indian Express last month, around the time that discussions at Tata Group on picking up stake in Jet Airways had gained serious momentum. “He has seen this airline through various seasons and he won’t let it go down without a fight,” the official had said.

[23/03/19 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express](#)

Those in government who are constantly looking for revival plans for loss-making PSUs—under various ‘turnaround’ specialists—would do well to look at how Air India has fared after large parts of the airline industry stopped functioning due to IndiGo grounding flights because of lack of pilots and Jet Airways coming close to shutting down. **In February 2018, according to a news report in The Times of India, IndiGo had a market share of 39.9%, followed by Jet at 16.8% and Air India at 13.2%; SpiceJet was fourth with a share of 12.4%. A year later, in February 2019, IndiGo’s market share had climbed to 43.4%, SpiceJet rose from 4th position to 2nd with a 13.7% market share while Air India remained at the 3rd slot, but with a reduced market share of 12.8%; nearly 90% of the fall in Jet’s market share, to 11.4%, was grabbed by IndiGo and SpiceJet.** A similar story, not surprising given the various factors constraining PSUs that no government has been able to fix, applies to telecom PSUs like MTNL and BSNL; despite so many telecom players being forced to shut down, even before the fresh RJio onslaught, both PSUs continued to lose market share.

And this is despite the thousands of crores of taxpayer bailouts these PSUs continue to get in order to protect their bloated/inefficient workforces. Worse, this access to free money has distorted the competitive environment and may even be responsible for the large losses made by private sector firms. Air India, as Bloomberg Opinion columnist David Fickling has pointed out, is a full-service carrier—like Jet Airways—but its ticket prices resemble those of a budget airline. **Over the past few years, data from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation show that Jet’s passenger yields are significantly higher than IndiGo’s—as they should since the latter is a low-cost airline—but Air India’s yields aren’t very different.** In 2017, for instance, Jet’s yields were Rs 4.4 per revenue passenger kilometre (RPK) versus Rs 3.7 for IndiGo (18.9% higher) and Rs 3.9 for Air India (just 5.4% higher than IndiGo); in 2014, in fact, while Jet’s yield was Rs 4.9 versus IndiGo’s Rs 4.5, that for Air India was even lower at Rs 4.3. Had Air India not got the Rs 32,809 crore it got since FY10, it would have shut down, and with overall fares rising as a result, other airlines would have done better.

[23/03/19 Financial Express](#)

Jet Airways Chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal have stepped down from the board of the cash-strapped airline on March 25. With this, Naresh Goyal ceases to be the Chairman.

Moneycontrol had on March 20 reported that Jet Airways' lenders had worked out an alternate rescue plan for the debt-ridden airline, which involves taking majority control and reconstituting the entire board of the country’s second-largest carrier.

With just six days left to the end of this financial year, lenders are in a rush to seal a resolution plan. They have asked Goyal to step down immediately and make way for new management. As per the plan, Goyal's stake will likely be capped at 10 percent by diluting the rest at a nominal value.

Meanwhile, Jet Airways may be headed for more trouble as over 200 pilots may resign depending on the outcome of today's board meeting.

The pilots have offers from SpiceJet or IndiGo, sources told Moneycontrol. The airlines have promised the pilots a base city of their choice, apart from a two-month base salary as a joining bonus, they said.

The pilots may be inclined to take up the SpiceJet offer as the airline's aircraft mix is similar to that of Jet Airways'. On the other hand, accepting an IndiGo package means the pilots will have to undergo retraining which may require them to sign a three-year bond to service the carrier, sources said.

There are also talks of **new investors including Tata Sons being approached**, but a source told Moneycontrol it will take at least a couple of months to bring them in, as regulatory norms require due diligence on the part of the lenders too.

[25/03/19 Moneycontrol.com](#)

Lenders are laying the ground for a new owner in Jet Airways as they insist on an undertaking from the shareholders that will trim founder-chairman Naresh Goyal's stake to below 10% while Abu Dhabi-based Etihad will have to agree to exit from the ailing airline.

Led by State Bank of India (SBI), lenders are planning to call for open bids to sell Jet Airways after obtaining written agreements from Goyal and Etihad. Goyal, who currently owns 51% of Jet Airways, will have to bring down his stake to 9% and have no voting rights. Etihad, whose holding is at 24%, will have to agree to sell its entire stake if it does not bring in new capital.

The Tata Group may be back in the fray for acquiring Jet Airways after such conditions are met. Preliminary talks for a deal were held late last year but the Group had subsequently withdrawn as there was no firm indication that Goyal would step down.

"We have a two-stage plan and are insisting on an agreement from both the shareholders. Goyal has to cut his stake to 9% while Etihad, which has declined from making additional investments, will have to agree to exit. This will ease the path for us to rope in a new investor," a senior bank official said.

Lenders will be subscribing to a 15-year-old zero coupon non-convertible debenture (NCD), issued by Jet Airways, to provide funding of Rs 800-1,000 crore in the interim period to keep the floundering airline afloat. Banks expect to rope in a new investor within four weeks, the source added.

24/03/19 Manju AB/DNA

Après sa flotte, Jet Airways perd une partie de son âme. Le conseil d'administration de la compagnie a approuvé la démission de son fondateur Naresh Goyal, qui quitte ses fonctions de président et directeur général. Dans le même temps, les grandes lignes du plan de redressement dirigé par la State Bank of India ont été entérinées.

Jet Airways va donc changer de mains. Le départ de Naresh Goyal s'accompagnera de celui de sa femme Anita Goyal et de Kevin Knight, le représentant d'Etihad, du conseil d'administration. Le fondateur de Jet Airways conservera toutefois une participation dans sa compagnie mais elle devrait être diluée.

En effet, le plan de restructuration proposé en février dernier et désormais adopté proposait la conversion des dettes des créanciers en actions. Ils vont ainsi en détenir 114 millions, ce qui leur permettra d'entrer au conseil d'administration avec deux représentants. En parallèle, ils ont approuvé une nouvelle injection immédiate de 217,5 millions de dollars, sous forme d'émission de titres de créances, « *pour rétablir le cours normal des opérations* », et la nomination d'une nouvelle direction. La possibilité d'émettre des actions pour attirer un nouvel investisseur a également été évoquée.

Jet Airways est en effet aux abois. Croulant sous une dette de plus d'un milliard de dollars, elle cloue régulièrement de nouveaux avions au sol, incapable de payer leurs loyers. La moitié des 117 appareils que compte sa flotte est immobilisée. Elle avait publié une perte de plus de 100 millions de dollars au troisième trimestre, après avoir souffert de l'augmentation des prix du carburant en 2018 (un poste de coûts très taxé en Inde) et de la faiblesse de la roupie par rapport au dollar. Après avoir longtemps été l'une des plus belles réussites du transport aérien indien, elle ne parvient plus à capter la croissance du secteur qui profite davantage aux compagnies low-cost, notamment IndiGo et Spicejet.

Le Journal de l'aviation 25/03/2019

Businessman Vijay Mallya on Tuesday urged Indian banks to "take his money" and save cash-strapped Jet Airways.

"I repeat once again that I have placed liquid assets before the Hon'ble Karnataka High Court to pay off the PSU Banks and all other creditors. Why do the Banks not take my money. It will help them to save Jet Airways if nothing else," the liquor baron tweeted.

Mallya, who is currently facing trial in a UK Court, went on to highlight the "double standards" of the NDA government, and questioned why public sector banks pitched in to save Jet Airways but let his company, Kingfisher Airlines, "fail ruthlessly."

"Happy to see that PSU Banks have bailed out Jet Airways saving jobs, connectivity and enterprise. Only wish the same was done for Kingfisher," he wrote on the micro-blogging site.

"I invested over 4000 crores into Kingfisher Airlines to save the Company and its employees. Not recognised and instead slammed in every possible way. The same PSU Banks let India's finest airline

with the best employees and connectivity fail ruthlessly. Double standards under NDA," read another tweet.

Mallya also claimed that the media "decimated" him for writing to Prime Minister Narendra Modi while a BJP spokesman "eloquently read out" letters he wrote to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and alleged that PSU banks under the UPA government "wrongly supported" Kingfisher Airlines.

Jet Airways has been suffering bruising competition from low-cost airlines, fluctuating crude prices and a weak rupee. The airline has over one billion dollars in debt and has to repay money to banks, lessors of planes and suppliers besides clearing pending salaries to its pilots.

Last week, State Bank of India (SBI) Chairman Rajnish Kumar had said that the resolution plan is almost ready and it will not involve a bailout for any individual

At the same time, talks with Abu Dhabi-based airline Etihad to secure a rescue deal are still on, he said adding there is also a possibility of bringing in another investor.

"We believe Jet Airways is a good aviation property and it is in every body's interest that it continues to fly," Kumar had said on March 20.

The chairman of the airline, Naresh Goyal, stepped down on Monday (March 25), following which lenders agreed to pump in Rs 1500 crore to bail out the financially troubled airline.

Meanwhile, a Delhi court had, last week, ordered attachment of Mallya's properties in Bengaluru under section 83 of the Code of Criminal Procedure in connection with a FERA (Foreign Exchange Regulation Act) violation case, and fixed the next date of hearing as July 10.

[The Economic times of India 26/03/2019](#)

Air India chairman Ashwani Lohani is one of the contenders to head the operations at Jet Airways in the interim period till the lenders find a suitable investor for the beleaguered carrier, said sources familiar with the matter.

"Initial discussions have taken place with Lohani. The civil aviation ministry is also in touch with him on the matter," one of the sources told CNBC-TV18, requesting anonymity.

Lenders are looking at an interim arrangement where Jet Airways is being run by a competent professional with experience in operating an airline and Lohani, who is serving his second tenure as the chairman of Air India is being looked at, another source said.

On Monday, the airline's founding Chairman Naresh Goyal, his wife Anita Goyal, their two nominees -- Nasim Zaidi and Gaurang Shetty -- and Etihad's nominee Kevin Knight stepped down from the board of Jet Airways and paved the way for an interim funding of Rs 1,500 crore by the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India.

The lenders will now float an expression of interest to invite bids for their stake in the airline on April 9 and expect to find a new investor by the end of June quarter.

The interim funding is expected to help in payment of some dues to employees and vendors and bring back some grounded fleet into active operations.

The new management of the airline on Tuesday will lay out their plan of action to the civil aviation ministry with regard to route and aircraft utilisation, aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said. [25/03/19 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18](#)

Cash-strapped Jet Airways on Monday took major steps towards closing a rescue deal with its lenders, with chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife stepping down from the airline's board. Laden with debt of more than \$1 billion and faced with an evaporating market value, Jet is banking on a bailout by its lenders as it became unable to pay banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors - several of whom have started terminating leases with the carrier. The banks, led by State Bank of India (SBI), will take a controlling stake in the airline, pump Rs. 1,500 crore (\$217.65 million) in immediate funding, and form an interim management committee to manage the airline.

Here are some major developments in Jet Airways' story this month:

March 8 - Jet Airways' planes to be redeployed elsewhere if the airline cannot gain approvals for a restructuring plan this month, says lessor

March 11 - Air safety regulator orders new checks on Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes after an Ethiopian Airlines flight crash kills 157 people on board. Jet operates five 737 MAX 8 planes.

March 13 - India bans Boeing 737 MAX planes from its airspace

March 15 - Jet Airways pilots seek government help to recover pending salaries and dues from the airline

-- Some lessors of Jet have begun terminating lease deals over unpaid dues and are preparing to move the leased planes abroad, five sources tell Reuters

March 18 - Naresh Goyal tells the airline's pilots he needs "a further short time" to finalise a rescue deal for the carrier as the process is complex

March 19 - The government asks state-run banks to rescue Jet without pushing it into bankruptcy, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeks to avert thousands of job losses weeks before a general election, two people within the administration tell Reuters

-- Regulator says Jet is now operating only 41 aircraft, and that could reduce further

March 20 - SpiceJet is in talks with lessors to lease some of Jet's grounded aircraft, a source tells Reuters

-- SBI says bankruptcy is the "last option" for Jet, and that it might still be possible to draft in a new investor to keep the airline flying

March 25 - Naresh Goyal steps down as chairman while his wife Anita Goyal resigns from the board

of directors. Lenders to pump in Rs. 1,500 crore in immediate funding.
25/03/19 Thomson Reuters/NDTV

New Delhi: Jet Airways founder and chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal's resignations is a wake-up call for policy makers as aviation sector requires to address structural challenges, the SpiceJet said on Monday.

"This is also a wake-up call for Indian policy makers. We urgently need to address structural challenges that make India's airlines uncompetitive to airlines around the world," SpiceJet chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said in a statement.

He said today is indeed a sad day for Indian aviation. By launching a truly world class airline, Naresh and Anita Goyal have made India proud.

25/03/19 UNI

Rajnish Kumar, chairman, State Bank of India, on Monday said that promoter Naresh Goyal has the option to buy back his stake in Jet Airways in the future.

Kumar also said they expect to get a new investor for debt-laden airways by May 31.

"June is too late. My expectation is 31st May. There will be an expression of interest which will be given by April 9 and binding bid by April 30," Kumar told CNBC-TV18.

The lenders of Jet Airways has agreed to put in Rs 1,500 crore immediate funding by acquiring 51 percent stake in the company through issue of Rs 11.4 crore fresh shares.

As a result, the stake of promoter Naresh Goyal will come down to 25 percent from 50 percent, while Etihad Airways, which had a 24 percent stake in the carrier, came down to 12 percent.

Jet Airways founder and chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal will step down from the board of the ailing airline following the reduction in their stake to 25 percent as per the resolution plan formulated by SBI-led domestic lenders.

According to Kumar, the new investor could be a financial investor or an existing airline. "Nobody is barred from bidding or taking over the airline as per the rule," he said.

25/03/19 Latha Venkatesh/Surabhi Upadhyay/Ritu Singh/CNBC TV18

Patna: With electioneering for the Lok Sabha polls gathering pace in the state, helicopters have started arriving at JPNI airport for use by political parties.

The first helicopter engaged for electioneering took off from state hangar at Patna airport on Monday carrying RJD leader Tejashwi Prasad Yadav and VIP chief Mukesh Sahni. On the first day of RJD's election campaign on Monday, Tejashwi addressed public meetings at Gaya, Banka and Bhagalpur. Tejashwi's political adviser Sanjay Yadav and RJD leader Shivanand Tiwari also accompanied him.

According to Patna airport officials, the helicopter hired by RJD arrived at the state hangar at JPNI airport from Delhi via Lucknow around 10.46am and departed for electioneering work at 11.10am. The twin-engine helicopter – Bell 407 – returned to the airport at 6pm, the official added.

Santosh Kumar, assistant general manager (air traffic management) at Patna airport, told this newspaper that **as per the instruction of the Election Commission of India (ECI), the air traffic control (ATC) has been keeping a tab on all private choppers and chartered flights.**

"We are keeping the records of helicopters and chartered flights used for electioneering. For instance, the chopper used by RJD on Monday is operated by Aryan Aviation Private Limited," he said, adding different political parties have already shared their travel plans with the ATC. As per the directive of ECI, the ATC has also shared the records of the scheduled helicopters with the chief electoral officers and district election officers.

Rate for hiring a five-seater Bell helicopter is Rs 75,000 per hour, plus additional charges, which can go up to Rs 20,000 per hour. Tejashwi's father and RJD supremo Lalu Prasad used to describe choppers as 'udan khatola' in the 90s. **Helicopters are the first preference of politicians as they help them to reach out to maximum constituents during the election campaign. Chartered aircraft, on the other hand, are less popular among politicians in the state due to lack of properly maintained airstrips in most districts.**

26/03/19 Faryal Rumi/Times of India

NEW DELHI: **GoAir** has withdrawn its boarding passes with photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, the airline said on Tuesday, a day after Air India's rolled back its passes with images of the two leaders

The airline had taken a "cue from the Election Code of Conduct", a GoAir spokesperson said, adding that its team in Srinagar inadvertently used unused stock of "Vibrant Gujarat" paper.

"GoAir's Srinagar Airport team inadvertently utilized unused stock of Vibrant Gujarat related paper which took place in January 18-20, 2019 for issuing boarding passes at the said airport. It was unintentional. Taking cue from the Election Code of Conduct we have instructed our airport teams to stop utilizing this type of paper with immediate effect," the spokesperson said in a statement.

On Monday, **Air India decided to do the same after the issue ignited controversy on social media.** Its boarding passes were also from the Vibrant Gujarat summit with photographs of the two leaders.

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Omar Abdullah tweeted on Monday evening that he was on a GoAir flight on Sunday and it "also had a similar boarding pass with the PM's photo on it".

An Air India spokesperson said on Monday that the boarding passes were printed during the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held in January this year and the photographs were part of the advertisement from 'third parties'.

The Economic times 26/03/2019

Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Pradeep Singh **Kharola**, on Tuesday has called for **a meeting with Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal to discuss issues pertaining to Jet Airways.** Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita had on Monday stepped down from the Jet Airways board of directors

Apart from Kharola, Director General of Civil Aviation BS **Bhullar** is also attending the meeting, which is being held at the **Ministry office.**

According to sources, the meeting is being held to discuss operations of Jet Airways and management functioning after the promoters stepped down.

Earlier, Jet's board had said there will be immediate funding support of up to Rs 1,500 crore by lenders by way of issue of appropriate debt instrument against the security of the assets of Jet Airways.

According to a statement issued by Kuldeep Sharma, vice president--Global Compliance and Company Secretary, "The bidding process will be initiated by lenders for sale/issue of shares to new investor (s)," and the "process is expected to be completed in June quarter" of the current financial year.

Jet has been suffering bruising competition from low-cost airlines, fluctuating crude prices and a weak rupee. The airline has over one billion dollars in debt and has to repay money to banks, lessors of planes and suppliers besides clearing pending salaries to its pilots.

The Economic Times of India 26/03/2019

Jet Airways' domestic pilots body, the **National Aviators Guild (NAG)**, Tuesday **sought a meeting with State Bank chairman Rajnish Kumar over pending salaries, a day after the lenders took over the carrier founded by Naresh Goyal a quarter of a century ago.**

The guild had last week announced that its over 1,100 -odd members would stop flying from April 1 of their salaries dues were not cleared and a clarity on the revival roadmap was not provided by March 31.

After lots of dilly-dallying, founder chairman Naresh Goyal and his board-member wife Anita, had Monday decided to step down and also pare their stake to 25.5 percent from 50.1 percent. The changes also saw its foreign partner Etihad halving its stake to 12 percent and ceding a board position.

Under the new deal, banks, mostly led by state-run lenders, have would infuse Rs 1,500 crore of emergency liquidity to the airline and convert total debt of over 9,700 crore (including the fresh capital infusion) into equity worth 50.1 percent at a price of Re 1.

With this, the public float in the airline has also come down 12.5 percent from 25 percent earlier.

"We humbly request to you to alleviate some of the hardships that we and engineers have been facing, by ensuring that the new Jet management does not further delay our pending salaries dues at the earliest," NAG general secretary Tej Sood said in an e-mail to Kumar

Thanking SBI for putting Jet on the road to recovery, Sood said, "we'd also be grateful if you could spare us some time and meet us to give us an idea of the recovery roadmap," as this would help us rebuild our confidence and reassure us that the uncertainty is behind us.

The guild represents about 1,100 of the around 1,600 pilots of the airline, and many of them have reportedly got offers from rival Indigo and Spicejet.

The guild members have come together and stood behind the airline when it was passing through its worst period, he claimed adding, "despite the severe financial difficulties and uncertainties over our future that we have been facing over the past few months, we have not wavered."

Sood also assured the new management of its continued support in reviving the once top airline.

The Economic times of India 26/03/2019

Cela pourrait donner lieu à une série bollywoodienne, tant l'actualité de Jet Airways est fournie et pleine de rebondissements.

Après avoir la validation de son plan de sauvetage, la ratification d'un nouveau codeshare avec Air France, c'est maintenant un message rassurant que la direction veut envoyer après les alertes sur sa situation économique.

Les médias indiens et internationaux ont tiré tout le week-end dernier, la sonnette d'alarme. Malgré le plan de sauvetage entériné par le conseil d'administration, les pilotes menaceraient d'une grève en raison de salaires impayés et ce sont pas moins de 12 vols internationaux qui ont été suspendus jusqu'au 30 avril.

Face à ces signaux négatifs, la compagnie indienne a décidé de réagir, tout d'abord à destination de ses passagers français.

Un porte-parole de Jet Airways de préciser : "les vols au départ de Paris et d'Amsterdam continuent d'être opérés. En partenariat avec Air France KLM, Jet Airways propose des vols quotidiens entre Paris et Mumbai, Chennai ainsi qu'au départ d'Amsterdam vers Mumbai, Delhi et Bangalore."

Si celui-ci rapporte des difficultés seulement sur son réseau domestique, il n'hésite pas à marteler que la compagnie cherche une solution notamment avec les entreprises de location d'avions.

"Les principales parties prenantes de la compagnie se sont réunies aujourd'hui pour adopter le plan de redressement qui permettra d'injecter immédiatement des fonds dans la compagnie" explique l'employé.

Et cette réunion s'est soldée par le départ du fondateur de la compagnie. Cette page qui se tourne a été saluée par la bourse indienne, où l'action gagnait à 15h45 en France plus de 15%.

Outre le départ de Naresh Goyal, Kevin Knight, le représentant d'Etihad quitte lui aussi le conseil d'administration, signifiant le désengagement de la compagnie émiratie, qui possédait alors 24% des parts.

Dans le même temps, la direction a validé le plan de sauvetage mené par la State Bank of India, dont l'émission immédiate de 192,18 millions d'euros de titres de créances.

Pendant ce temps, les employés pratiquent la méthode Coué "Jet Airways est confiante sur la résolution de la situation actuelle et regrette la gêne occasionnée à ses passagers."

TourMag 25/03/2019

A consortium of Tata Group, a unit of Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC and SSG Capital Management will invest Rs 8,000 crore (\$1.2 billion) to buy a stake in GMR Airports Ltd, which runs India's biggest airport.

The deal will pump Rs 1,000 crore into GMR Airports, a unit of GMR Infrastructure Ltd. and purchase Rs 7,000 crore of the airport unit's equity shares from the parent, according to a statement. GMR operates Delhi International Airport Ltd., Asia's sixth biggest.

After the purchase, **Tata will hold 20 percent in the airport unit**, while GIC will get 15 percent and SSG will own 10 percent, the company said in a filing. **The deal values GMR Airports at 180 billion rupees.**

The deal marks Tata's entry into the airports business amid a Rs 1 lakh crore plan by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to develop airfields in India's remote towns and villages. **Tata, which owns two local airlines, follows billionaire Gautam Adani's bet on the sector after his firm won bids to operate six local airports last month.**

GMR Infrastructure, which has net debt of \$2.9 billion at the end of December 2018, has been selling assets to pay off liabilities. GMR competes with GVK Power & Infrastructure Ltd., which runs the airport in the financial capital of Mumbai.

GMR shares jumped as much as 9.8 percent to the highest intraday level since Sept. 3 in Mumbai, while the broader S&P BSE Sensex index rose 0.6 percent. GMR Also operates airports in Hyderabad and Cebu, while it is developing greenfield airports in Goa and Crete, Greece.

This will mark the second corporate behemoth's entry into India's airport sector this year. Recently, the Adani Group won bids to operate five airports owned by the state-run Airports Authority of India across the country. Private airports in India have largely been a duopoly between GMR and its rival GVK Power and Infra that runs that Mumbai airport and has the mandate for the second airport in the city, India's costliest airport project. Fairfax Holdings of Canada born Indian billionaire Prem Watsa runs the airport in Bengaluru having bought it from GVK. **The Tata group runs two airlines in India—Vistara and AirAsia India—in partnership with Singapore Airlines and AirAsia Berhad, a Malaysian low fare carrier.**

The Tata-GIC-SSG trio beat Japanese diversified conglomerate Mitsubishi—the other entity GMR had been in advanced talks with—to clinch the deal. The money raised will primarily be used to retire part of its Rs 20,000 crore of net debt.

ET had first reported GMR's talks with GIC and Mitsubishi on Feb 19. Queries to GMR and GIC remained unanswered. A Tata Sons spokesperson declined comment.

The Tatas have been trying to get into the airports sector. They have in the past tied up with Ferrovia to bid for projects such as the Navi Mumbai airport.

The Economic times of India 27/03/2019

The amount was due on Thursday, and was part of a two-tranche facility totaling \$140 million that Jet Airways took from HSBC in 2014

Troubled Jet Airways India Ltd. missed a \$109 million loan repayment due to HSBC Bank this week, people with knowledge of the matter said. The money was due on March 28, and was part of a two-tranche facility totaling \$140 million that the company took from HSBC in 2014, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the details are private. Jet had also missed payment on the other \$31 million tranche that was due on March 11, and hasn't repaid any of the loan, the people said.

That adds to a string of missed deadlines at the Indian carrier, which has grounded about two-thirds of its fleet. The company's credit rating was cut to default in January after it failed to honor obligations to India lenders.

The fate of the debt-laden airline, which has struggled to keep up with a slew of budget carriers, is crucial for India's government. Its collapse could put about 23,000 jobs at risk and dent Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image ahead of his re-election bid.

Lenders committed this month to infuse as much as 15 billion rupees (\$217 million) in emergency debt funding, conditional on the resignation of Jet Chairman Naresh Goyal. The former ticketing agent who went on to build one of India's biggest airlines stepped down under pressure this week. A spokesperson from Jet Airways wasn't able to immediately comment. HSBC didn't respond to an email.

The company had said in an exchange filing that repayment on an external commercial borrowing that was due on March 28 "has been delayed owing to temporary liquidity constraints and the company has engaged with the lender in relation to the same," though it didn't give details. Jet had said on March 11 that it had delayed payment on an external commercial borrowing due that day, without elaborating.

What comes next ?

- **Indian lenders who now hold more than 50 percent of Jet Air are seeking to overhaul the company and salvage the carrier** that needs an estimated 85 billion rupees to get back on its feet.

- As the airline misses more debt repayments, lenders are staring down more pain. **Rajnish Kumar**, chairman of State Bank of India, which is leading the lenders' plan, has said he **expects to get a new investor in Jet by May 31.**

LiveMint 29/03/2019

TKP: The Commission for Investigation of Abuse of Authority has summoned officials of five international firms that were involved in supplying two wide-body Airbus A330 jets to Nepal Airlines Corporation last year. After the jet purchase deal ran into controversy, a corruption case was filed at the anti-graft agency. In January, the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee had concluded that the procurement of the two wide-body aircraft by Nepal Airlines had caused a loss of Rs4.35 billion to the government.

The \$209.6-million Airbus deal was the largest ever in Nepal's aviation history. <http://bit.ly/2OyZ0lu>

29/03/2019

In a fresh bout of turbulence for Jet Airways, the engineers of the airline have now indicated that they will stop maintaining the inactive fleet of over 80 planes from April 1 as pending salary dues have still not been paid.

Sources close the development have told CNBC-TV18 that the engineering department held a meeting today and decided that they will no longer "work for free."

This would put a question mark on the lease agreements of 54 planes which are grounded on account of non-payment of lease rentals by the airline.

"The engineers have said that they will not maintain the inactive fleet from April 1 as they are not willing to work for free. While 30-odd planes are not airworthy and need heavy maintenance, the remaining inactive fleet also needs some light maintenance on a daily scale. This could potentially lead to grounding of the entire airline," one of the sources aware of the development said.

The airline currently has an active fleet of 35 planes with two-thirds of its total count of 119 planes on the ground. The beleaguered airline recently made an ambitious claim to the union civil aviation ministry of adding 40 more planes to its fleet by April end.

"With engineers not ready to maintain the grounded planes, the lessors are likely to get more anxious and the negotiations for activating those planes may face more hurdles," another source said on condition of anonymity.

30/03/19 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

It's one storm after another for ailing airline Jet Airways. **Just days after lenders agreed to infuse Rs 1,500 crore as part of an immediate relief measure, the pilot union of Jet Airways says there is no update on the status of salary payment yet.**

As stated earlier, pilots at the cash-strapped will go on a strike from April 1, announced the pilot union in a late night development.

Pilots at the airline had asked it to clear a substantial chunk of their salary before the end of the month, adding that they would stop flying if their demands are not met.

Arrears of 1,100 Jet pilots, which have accumulated over the past few months, have not been disbursed even after a rescue plan was initiated by lenders after Naresh Goyal resigned from the airline's board.

The National Aviators Guild (NAG) confirmed in a statement that a part of the expected interim funding from State Bank of India was supposed to be "actioned" on March 29 but the fund transfer has not yet taken place.

"Hence, there is no update on salary payment from the management. The collective decision of pilots taken at Mumbai and Delhi open house effective April 1, 2019, IST prevails."

This is another huge blow for the airline in a matter of just a few days. According to reports, **the airline has also let go of many expat pilots to cut down on extra operational costs.**

As of now, the airline is operating less than half of its operational fleet, much of which has been grounded due to non-payment of lease rentals.

30/03/19 Pankaj Upadhyay/India Today

Pune: The two international flights of Jet Airways from the city to Abu Dhabi and Singapore are expected to resume operations by April-end, leaving Puneites to make do with just two overseas connections — one each of SpiceJet and Air India Express to Dubai — till then.

"We expect the two international flights of Jet Airways to resume services by April-end. Following the recent developments in the airline, we hope most of their flights (including domestic destinations) to resume operations within two-three months," an airport official told TOI.

The spokespersons of the airline did not respond to queries on the revival of its cancelled international flights from Pune. But sources claimed that the airline was expected to revive its flights to international destinations first with things slowly getting back in line.

Of its 21 flights to different destinations from Pune, the airline is presently operating just four — two each to Delhi and Mumbai. The airline has cancelled its flights from Pune to Singapore and Abu Dhabi

till March 30.

Bhooshan Pandit, who was set to travel to Singapore on April 2 on the Jet Airways flight, said he got a call from the airline's customer care about its cancellation in mid-March. He wrote to Jet on March 24 that he had applied for a full refund but was yet to get it.

[30/03/19 Joy Sengupta/Times of India](#)

The last week of financial year 2018-19 saw lenders racing against time to finalise some major debt resolutions including that of the beleaguered Jet Airways. Banks battled hard against the promoters and won majority stake in the airline. However, the challenging journey of reviving the debt-ridden airline has just begun.

Meanwhile, the central bank conducted its first dollar-rupee swap auction worth \$5 billion to ease some pain for banks facing year-end liquidity crunch. It is expected to continue with more such auctions going forward.

Earlier this week, **Jet Airways founder and promoter Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita stepped down from the board** to make way for new owners, a consortium of lenders led by the State Bank of India (SBI). **The move would allow Jet Airways access to Rs 1,500 crore in emergency funding from banks and get some of its fleet off the ground.**

However, there doesn't seem to be an end to the airline's problems. **Its pilots have now threatened to go on strike from April 1, if their salaries are not paid.** Saddled with a debt of over \$1 billion of debt, Jet Airways has been struggling to stay afloat. It has delayed payments to banks, suppliers, pilots and lessors - some of which have forced the airline to ground most of its fleet. Of total 119, only about 35 are flying currently.

[30/03/19 Moneycontrol.com](#)

New Delhi: **Budget passenger carrier IndiGo on Friday said its Delhi-Istanbul flight had to be diverted to Kuwait due to an engine snag.** According to the airline, the snag hit its A320 NEO aircraft which was en-route from Delhi to Istanbul. "The root cause is yet to be determined. The Aircraft landed safely in Kuwait and IndiGo local representatives are currently taking care of the passengers and crew," the airline said in a statement. "Our endeavour is to use the next possible connecting flight out of Kuwait to Istanbul so that passengers reach their destination with minimum inconvenience. Customers in Istanbul who are booked on this flight back to Delhi will be accommodated with Turkish Airlines. **We expect normal operations on Istanbul flights tomorrow.**"

[30/03/19 IANS/Sify.com](#)

Washington: **Investigators looking into a Boeing 737 MAX crash in Ethiopia that killed 157 people have reached a preliminary conclusion that an anti-stall system was activated before the plane hit the ground,** the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday, citing people briefed on the matter.

US safety investigators have reviewed data from the "black boxes" that were aboard Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, four people briefed on the investigation told Reuters on Thursday. A preliminary report is expected as early as next week, the US officials said.

The plane crashed on March 10 shortly after taking off from Addis Ababa.

Investigators of a deadly 737 MAX crash in Indonesia in October have also focused on the new anti-stall system, called MCAS. Boeing on Wednesday said a planned software fix would prevent repeated operation of the system that is at the centre of safety concerns.

Boeing's fastest-selling 737 MAX jet, with orders worth more than \$500 billion at list prices, has been grounded globally by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and other regulators, although airlines are still allowed to fly them without passengers to move planes to other airports.

The manufacturer said it had developed a training package that 737 MAX pilots are required to take before the worldwide ban can be lifted, proposing as it did before two deadly crashes that those pilots do not need time on flight simulators to safely operate the aircraft.

On Thursday, a lawsuit against Boeing was filed in Chicago federal court by the family of Jackson Musoni, a citizen of Rwanda, who died in the Ethiopian Airlines crash.

The lawsuit alleges that Boeing had defectively designed the automated flight control system.

Boeing said it could not comment on the lawsuit.

The amount and quality of training that Boeing and airlines provided to 737 MAX pilots is one of the issues under scrutiny as investigators around the world try to determine the causes of two 737 MAX crashes within five months.

29/03/19 Reuters/Times of India

Dubai: An Air India Express flight to Mangaluru from Dubai was delayed by about six hours leaving passengers waiting for the flight to take off.

In a video sent to Vartha Bharati by an in-flight passenger, people can be seen taking the crew-members to task for the delay.

The passenger told Vartha Bharati that they were left waiting for the pilots who failed to turn up to the airport.

In the video, furious passengers took the staff of flight to task and threatened of protesting at the airport.

30/03/19 Vartha Bharathi/Bhatkallys.com

New Delhi: The Election Commission has issued separate notices to the Railways and Civil Aviation ministries for the second time after allegations of violation of the model code of conduct.

The ministries have been asked to file a reply by today.

On Friday evening, a passenger on an Air India flight from Madurai tweeted a picture of his boarding pass with photos of PM Modi and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani as part of an advertisement for the Vibrant Gujarat summit held in January. A portion of the back side of tickets is often used for advertising.

On March 20, tickets with photos of the Prime Minister were withdrawn by the railways after the Trinamool raised the issue with the poll body.

The Election Commission has also sent a notice to the Railways Ministry after a viral picture of tea being served on a Shatabdi train in paper cups with PM Modi's campaign line, "Main Bhi Chowkidar (I'm also watchman)", printed on them.

On Wednesday too, the election body had sent notices to the Railways and Civil Aviation ministries over the use of pictures of the Prime Minister on rail tickets and Air India boarding passes.

30/03/19 Swati Sharma/NDTV

Hyderabad: African nation Djibouti is looking at closer ties with India. To explore the opportunities between the nations, an India Djibouti Trade Forum has been organised in Hyderabad on Friday. As a part of this forum, Djibouti's representatives have begun talks with GMR Group to build an airport in that nation.

An eight-member delegation from Djibouti comprising government and industry representatives have visited. In addition to GMR, Djibouti is exploring other collaborations. The delegation has signed a MoU for co-operation in agriculture with Indo African Ventures, development of a boutique hotel with Holiday Inn and development of skill development courses in the defence sector with Don Bosco Tech Society. The delegation is led by Bourhan Aref, representative from Djibouti for India-Djibouti trade ties.

India's President Ramnath Kovind visited Djibouti last year and has pledged commitment of support between the two nations for a robust partnership.

Narender Bharti, president, India Djibouti Trade Forum, said, “My goal is to build bilateral relations between India and the Republic of Djibouti.”

The Forum’s VP Saba Fatima said, “Djibouti, being the only gateway to Africa with three ports, has a great potential and we would like to divert business interests from the Middle East to Djibouti and want Indian businesses to connect the two nations.”

30/03/19 Telangana Today

New Delhi: The Centre has denied in the Delhi High Court that there was any violation of FDI norms while granting approval to low-cost carrier AirAsia (India) Pvt Ltd — a joint venture of Tata Group and Malaysia-based AirAsia Berhad. The government also opposed BJP leader Subramanian Swamy’s plea seeking stay on AirAsia India’s application for an international flying licence, saying it will take a decision in this regard.

The submissions were made in an affidavit placed before a bench of Chief Justice Rajendra Menon and Justice A J Bhambhani in response to Swamy’s application in which he has alleged that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) norms were violated while granting approval to set up AirAsia India. The matter, however, was not taken up and listed for **hearing on May 13**.

In its affidavit, the central government said that FDI was permissible in an existing airline as well as a new venture. On the issue of grant of international flying licence to AirAsia, the government said it will take a decision after considering all aspects of the matter as well as the rules and laid down policy in this regard, and there was no need to pass an order putting on hold the low-cost airline’s application.

The government has contended that Swamy’s application was “devoid of any merit” and “it may be dismissed”. In his application, Swamy has claimed that since the legality and validity of the principal licence — the domestic flying licence — granted to AirAsia India has been challenged in the court, the airline ought not to be granted a licence to fly internationally.

He has sought directions to the Union of India not to process the application of AirAsia until the final disposal of the main petition in which the principal licence has been challenged.

30/03/19 Free Press Journal

Crises-ridden Jet Airways has lost valuable flight slots to Vistara at Delhi and Raipur airports.

The joint venture carrier of Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines is starting two new flights on Delhi-Raipur-Delhi sector from March 31. Vistara has been allotted the same slots in which Jet operated its flights before terminating the services last month due to financial crisis.

30/03/19 R Krishna Das/Business Standard

Mumbai: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has asked airlines not to charge exorbitant fares for flights to Jammu & Kashmir, Northeast states and Port Blair. This comes in the wake of Jet Airways grounding over half of its fleet leading to massive cancellations and a surge in airfares. The civil aviation regulator is also expected to take a call next week on the release of slots that are lying unused due to the grounding of Jet’s fleet.

Rival airlines have sought airport slots lying vacant and the DGCA would take a decision on giving them on a temporary basis after Jet submits its operational plan, it is learnt.

Last week, civil aviation minister Suresh Prabhu had asked department secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola to review the impact of Jet’s grounding on cancellations, refunds and safety. The DGCA was also instructed to monitor airfares. The regulator held one meeting with airlines last week and again

on Thursday.

The regulator has advised airlines not to charge high fares on routes like Srinagar, Port Blair or in Northeast regions. Jet has pulled out flights from Northeast states and also cancelled its Srinagar flight, leading to reduction in capacity.

The grounding of SpiceJet's Max planes has also lowered the overall capacity.

The airlines, however, said the demand was high due to Holi and subsequent long weekend and not due to grounding of planes.

30/03/19 Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard

Mohali: The frequency of flights connecting Chandigarh with Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad was increased in the new summer schedule issued by Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Friday to be effective from March 31 and remain in force till October 26.

According to the schedule, Chandigarh will host arrival and departure of 34 flights daily. At present, only 27 flights operate from the airport, including two international flights to Dubai and Sharjah. Flights arriving and departing from Delhi will be increased from eight to 11. Similarly, Mumbai flights will go up from four to six and three will arrive from Bengaluru. Flights from Hyderabad will be doubled to two from one on a daily basis.

Watch hours at the airport were also increased from 7am to 4.35 pm to 6.35 am to 8.15 pm.

According to new schedule, morning flight will arrive at 6.35 am at Chandigarh from Delhi and the last flight will depart for Delhi.

Alliance Air, a fully subsidiary company of Air India, announced the cancellation of Chandigarh to Kullu flight for April 2 and 3 due to operational reasons. M R Jindal Station Manager Air India Chandigarh said that the aircraft may be pressed into service for other sectors.

30/03/19 Times of India

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached property Hotel Holiday Inn located in Aerocity, New Delhi valued at close to Rs 120.20 crore. The agency is investigating a money laundering case against accused Deepak Talwar, his family members and related entities.

ED investigations revealed that Talwar illegally engaged in liaising and lobbying with politicians, ministers, other public servants and officials of Ministry of Civil Aviation for airlines such as Emirates, Air Arabia and Qatar Airways for securing undue benefits for them.

"Investigation under Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) was initiated by ED in August 2017 on the basis of FIR registered by Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against officials of Ministry of Civil Aviation, NACIL, Air India and unknown private persons. He illegally managed to secure favourable traffic rights for these airlines during 2008-09 at the cost of National carrier, Air India," an ED press note said.

In lieu of this, these Airlines made payments to the tune of Rs 272 crore to Deepak Talwar during 2008-09. The press note further said, "Talwar created a web of entities owned by him and his family members in India and international offshore havens, to launder Proceeds of Crime of Rs 272 crore received from foreign airlines."

30/03/19 Business Line

An Indian national has been arrested at the Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) in Katunayake for attempting to smuggle in crystal methamphetamine, also known as 'ice', estimated to be worth around Rs 2 million.

The suspect, a 45-year-old businessman from Tamil Nadu, had arrived in the country from Chennai at around 1.40 a.m. today on board a SpiceJet flight.

The passenger was detained in the Green Channel of the airport while around 200 grams of crystal meth was found cleverly concealed within a stock of wedding sarees in his luggage, by the customs officers at the airport.

30/03/19 Adaderana.lk

Vasco: Dabolim airport police on Thursday evening arrested a Vasco resident for attempting to smuggle a petroleum product from the cargo gate of the airport.

Bharat Nagesh N, 39, had arrived in a goods carrier vehicle with 11 barrels of a petroleum product. Nagesh was transporting 10 barrels, each containing 60 litres of petroleum product and one barrel that had 35 litres. A total of 635 litres of the petroleum product was seized along with the goods carrier. The product, which officials suspect is diesel, will be sent for testing.

The accused was arrested on Thursday and later released on bail. Sources said that the product must have been used for vehicles that are used inside at the runway. A case under Section 285, 336 of the IPC has been registered.

30/03/19 Times of India

New Delhi: Jet Airways' investors are cheering this week's government-led rescue deal, but the cash-strapped Indian airline's future looks mired in uncertainty as convincing a new investor to come on board may not be easy.

The airline, which was on the brink of bankruptcy, was bailed out on Monday by state-run banks, which have temporarily taken a majority stake in the company, given it a new loan of \$218 million and forced its chairman, Naresh Goyal, to step down from the board of the airline he founded 25 years ago.

Jet shares have rallied 20 percent since news of the rescue on hopes that the airline would now be able to clear salaries, redeploy grounded planes and claw back market share.

Its future is far from certain though, as a consortium of banks led by State Bank of India now rushes to find a new investor and sell its stake in the airline.

This may not be easy especially with Goyal still holding a 25.5 percent share in Jet, which gives him the legal right to block key decisions including raising capital, issuing new shares and diluting equity. If a deep-pocketed investor is not found soon, Jet may struggle for funds again as the interim loan given by the banks will not last for very long, say lessors and analysts.

"Right now Jet is in survival mode, there is no strategy," said an executive at one of Jet's lessors. Jet has been in talks with the lessor since securing the deal but it has given few details on settling pending lease payments and on its turnaround plans, he said.

29/03/19 Aditi Shah/Aftab Ahmed/Reuters

Lenders to Jet Airways (India) Ltd., led by State Bank of India, have reached out to two potential investors, just days after they became majority equity holders in the airline.

According to two people familiar with the matter, lenders have reached out to **U.S.-based private equity investor TPG Capital and the Tata Group for a potential investment in Jet Airways.** The two people spoke on condition of anonymity as the talks are confidential.

According to the two people quoted above, lenders reached out to the two bidders since they had previously showed interest in Jet Airways but talks had fallen through. Even now, the conversations are at preliminary stages and no formal bid has been prepared by either parties, the people quoted above said.

According to the first person quoted above, TPG Capital would likely come in with a strategic partner

if they choose to invest. The Tata Group already has a tie up with Singapore Airlines since 2013, through which it manages Vistara Airlines. As such, any investment in Jet Airways would have to be in keeping with the group's broader strategy for the aviation sector.

A spokesperson for the Tata Group said the group does not comment on market speculation. A TPG Capital spokesperson declined to comment. Jet Airways and SBI are yet to respond to queries mailed on Thursday.

28/03/19 Viswanath Nair/Bloomberg Quint

Troubled Jet Airways India Ltd. missed a \$109 million loan repayment due to HSBC Bank this week, people with knowledge of the matter said.

The money was due on March 28, and was part of a two-tranche facility totaling \$140 million that the company took from HSBC in 2014, according to the people, who asked not to be identified because the details are private. Jet had also missed payment on the other \$31 million tranche that was due on March 11, and hasn't repaid any of the loan, the people said.

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Lenders committed this month to infuse as much as 15 billion rupees (\$217 million) in emergency debt funding, conditional on the resignation of Jet Chairman Naresh Goyal. The former ticketing agent who went on to build one of India's biggest airlines stepped down under pressure this week.

29/03/19 Bloomberg/Gulf News

Abu-Dhabi based Etihad Airways has shown interest in bidding for Jet Airways, sources aware of the development told CNBC-TV18 on Thursday, adding that the UAE's second largest airline has already approached the SBI-led consortium regarding the same.

Etihad may look at acquiring an additional 37 percent stake in the airline to take its stake to 49 percent, said the sources, who did not want to be named.

Etihad currently owns 24 percent in Jet Airways, however, once lenders take up a majority stake in the airline, Etihad's stake will fall to around 12 percent.

Jet Airways chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal stepped down from the board of the airline on March 25, giving in to pressure from lenders amid the growing debt crisis and the airlines' inability to pay its staff and lessors.

Apart from Etihad, American investment firm TPG has also shown interest in the debt-laden airline, said the sources. The company may bid with a partner fund or strategic player. It had last year shown interest in acquiring a stake in Jet Privilege.

NIIIF or National Infrastructure Investment Fund, which was expected to pick up about 20 percent stake in the airline as per the initial resolution plan, may still be interested and could consider picking up a substantial stake in the airline along with a strategic player, the sources pointed.

The Tata Group, which had also expressed interest in the beleaguered airline earlier, has not yet approached lenders directly, the banking sources confirmed.

28/03/19 Ritu Singh/CNBC TV18

Ahead of a potential exit by Etihad Airways at the end of this month, Jet Airways' main creditor, the State Bank of India, and its founder Naresh Goyal, who recently resigned, have reportedly ramped up the search for a new investor.

In fact, the hunt has taken SBI and Goyal, who owns a minority stake, to the US, according to media reports. SBI is said to be in preliminary talks with TPG Capital, a private equity major, while **Goyal is**

pursuing an investment from Delta Airlines, which has an operational alliance with Jet in India.

Interestingly, private equity firm TPG Capital was said to be eyeing a stake in Jet's loyalty programme Jet Privilege in August last year, although a deal never materialised.

A new investor is "critical" to Jet's future, the airline's CFO, Amit Agarwal, told ET earlier this week.

Jet desperately needs a cash infusion. An official at the company told Moneycontrol that a buyer would have to pump ₹45 billion as part of the airline's turnaround plan.

In addition to TPG and Delta, Singapore's private equity fund Temasek and the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) are also said to be in talks to purchase a stake in the airline.

29/03/19 Dilsher Dhillon/Business Insider

Mumbai: Etihad Airways is in talks with a partner to jointly bid for Jet Airways which has been put up for sale by banks which have taken control of the financially-troubled airline.

Government sources said Etihad has not given up on Jet in which it held 24% stake. After banks acquired 50.1% stake in Jet, shareholding of all existing investors fell by half with Etihad left holding 12% stake.

"Etihad will not bid alone. They are in talks with an investor for jointly bidding for Jet Airways," said the sources. Aviation rules allow a foreign investor to pick up a maximum of 49% stake in an airline. People familiar with the development said that Etihad Airways, though now financially-constrained on account of its years of losses, is keen on increasing its holding in Jet to protect its investment as well as to ensure traffic flow into its network from India.

So far, Etihad had invested or arranged more than \$1 billion in/for Jet Airways and since 2014, Jet had been sending passengers from across India to the Abu Dhabi hub of Etihad.

With its two main demands namely the removal of promoter Naresh Goyal and his spouse Anita Goyal from the board and bringing down their stake to below 10% having been met through the new bank-led provisional resolution plan, Etihad Airways is believed to be considering increasing its stake to a maximum of 49% and rope in a partner to operate the airline.

As per foreign direct investment rules, the effective control of Indian carriers has to remain with Indians.

So, even if Etihad increases its holding to 49% it cannot control Jet Airways and would need a reliable Indian partner to do so, according to analysts.

The partner is believed to be National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) in which Abu Dhabi Investment Authority has a stake.

NIIF is majority owned by Indian government and some Indian financial institutions.

28/03/19 Lalatendu Mishra/The Hindu

IndiGo, the largest domestic carrier, is poised to reap the maximum benefit in terms of market share and better yields, as domestic airlines' capacity has contracted sharply due to grounding of aircraft by Jet Airways and Boeing 737 Max fleet of SpiceJet, analysts maintain. Domestic traffic growth at 5.6% year-on-year was at 53-month low during February as aircraft groundings and repair work at second-busiest Mumbai airport kept airfares high.

Fares on key metro city routes have been up by around 25% y-o-y due to curtailed capacity of the carriers in March. Due to rise in airfares following cost escalations in H1FY19, the domestic passenger growth has significantly lagged behind the capacity expansion by airlines so far this fiscal.

According to analysts, domestic aggregate passenger growth has been lower than the capacity growth in 9 out of the first 11 months of FY19. "It (the imbalance) intensified over the past 2-3 months as prices remained firm in the face of ex-IndiGo capacity contraction due to grounding of Jet and MAX fleet," analysts at ICICI Securities noted. While IndiGo has reduced its flying schedule by more than 30 flights per day, its low-cost rival SpiceJet was forced to ground 12 Boeing 737 Max

aircraft over safety concerns this month. Cash-strapped Jet Airways is flying just 35 aircraft from fleet of 119 planes due to groundings by lessors for non-payment of rentals.

29/03/19 Financial Express

Mumbai: Critical runway maintenance and repair work that has been under way at Mumbai airport since February 7 is set to end this Saturday, allowing for smoother landings and takeoffs, along with the restoration of 230 cancelled flights.

The nearly ₹100-crore project work involved recarpetting the critical 50,000 sq. mt. intersection of the two runways with bitumin. The last time such an elaborate exercise was carried out was in 2009-10. "A resurfaced runway depending on factors like jet blast, weathering action, rubber deposits etc will last 7 to 8 years," officials of Mumbai International Airport Ltd. (MIAL) said during a media tour of the runway intersection area. Similarly, MIAL had earlier carried out preservation of the runway surface by applying airport-grade sealguard technology from the US in 2016.

Officials of MIAL and Asphalt India Corporation, which is carrying out the resurfacing works explained that the integrity of runway surfaces is assured by regular inspections. A team of 600 workers work as per a well planned exercise to ensure that the work in hand is completed within the available 6 hour window period between 11 a.m. and 5 p.m.

29/03/19 Aditya Anand/The Hindu

As anatomically anomalous as it might sound, an army is said to march on its stomach. Stretching that alimentary analogy further, can an airline be made to fly on the aeronautical equivalent of that organ? **Facing increasingly turbulent headwinds in the form of a mounting debt overload, flight delays, technical snags, stowaway bedbugs on passenger seats and choked and overflowing loos, national carrier Air India has now come up with what sceptics might call a face-saving ploy, or, more aptly, a mouth-saving one. The airline plans to revamp its in-flight menu with a view to cutting down both on costs and calories, while imparting a more desi flavour to its fare.**

The airline, which reportedly annually spends some Rs 800 crore on catering, is tightening its seat belt, and also that of its passengers, by serving food and drinks that are healthier in terms physical as well as financial. For example, curd rice, which is light on the pocket as well as on the waistline, is slated to be an option to curries on long-distance flights. Instead of sugary soft drinks and preservative-laden packaged fruit juices, fresh aam panna and jal jeera will be on offer.

29/03/19 Economic Times

New Delhi: The closure of Pakistan airspace, which has been in place for more than a month, has cost Air India "₹5- 7 crore per day" as flights to the U.S. and Europe are forced to take a detour through the Middle East, said a senior official of the airline.

Air India serves five destinations in the U.S. and ten in Europe, which together account for nearly half of the airline's 37 international destinations. The losses on these routes are a major setback for an airline for which international operations bring a fifth of the total profit.

The increase in costs is due to additional fuel use because of an increase in flight duration by two hours, along with a technical halt for U.S.-bound flights at Sharjah or Vienna.

Since the ban on the use of its airspace on February 27, Pakistan has allowed connectivity to all destinations barring India, Malaysia and Thailand. Meanwhile, Air India has cancelled flights to Vienna and Birmingham.

IndiGo, which had announced the launch of twice daily flights to Istanbul, has only started a daily

flight as the long detour has impacted profitability and demand from passengers on the route.
29/03/19 The Hindu

Mumbai: India's national carrier Air India's insurance renewal cost has almost doubled to around \$28 million for the year 2018-19 as a host of adverse factors including the recent crash of an Ethiopian Airlines aircraft have put an end to the days of discounts in the segment.

The insurance renewal deal for the national carrier's fleet of 180 aircraft, with a sum assured of \$12 billion, the largest Indian aviation insurance account, is currently getting concluded in the London market and would be effective from April 1. Air India's insurance renewal also includes \$30 million passenger liability cover. Considering the hardening of the market, Air India which normally renews its insurance account in October of every year, had sought six month extension for its existing cover in October.

Air India is purely a reinsurance driven account and almost over 95 per cent of the cover is reinsured in the London market. Air India's renewal premium had constantly fallen for the last few years till 2017-18 when it had availed a discount of 20 per cent and had paid premium of \$ 14 million. The national carrier had shelled out a total premium of \$18.38 million in 2016-17, which was 30 per cent lower than the previous year's premium.

New India Assurance, India's largest general insurance player, is the lead insurer of the Air India deal while reinsurance deal is led by the US major AIG.

29/03/19 George Mathew/Indian Express

Kolkata: Full emergency was declared at the Kolkata airport on Friday after a Guwahati bound Alliance Air flight from Kolkata returned back eight minutes since its departure after the pilot complained of some technical problem at the aircraft.

Airport officials said the flight 9I733 took off for Guwahati at 10.28am with 16 passengers and while airborne, the pilot faced some technical problem and alerted the Kolkata ATC.

"Alliance Air flight 9I 733 from CCU-GAU, airborne from Kolkata at 10.28 am, but due to some technical problem, aircraft returned back to Kolkata at 10.36am safely," a statement sent by the airport authorities read.

Owing to the pilot's alert message, full emergency was declared. Once the flight touched down, the aircraft was inspected by officials and upon coming across the trouble, the passengers were deboarded off the flight in a hurry and the full emergency was terminated.

"Emergency terminated at 10.44am. All operations were normal at the Airport," the statement read.

29/03/19 Tamaghna Banerjee/Times of India

Bhopal: Continuing with their demand for better air connectivity, flyers have now launched an online campaign seeking Bhopal-Kolkata flight with around 10,000 tweets being sent for the cause on a single day on Thursday.

The 'Support Bhopal for Air Connectivity' (SBFAC) online campaign was launched in May 2018 with an objective of raising demand for better air connectivity to Bhopal.

Soon, the campaign gained momentum with active participation of over 65,000 members. Their efforts paid the dividends: In January 2019, two airlines — IndiGo and Spice Jet — started operating connecting Bhopal with Bengaluru, Shirdi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad and Hyderabad along with Delhi and Mumbai.

At present, Jet Airways, Air India, IndiGo and Spice Jet are operating flights from the city, connecting nine cities. Till December 2018, only three cities — Delhi, Raipur and Mumbai — were connected

with Bhopal.

Buoyed by the response, campaign head Prachi Baluapuri said, **“The good response has made us confident to raise similar demand for other cities also. Our next immediate target is Kolkata.”**

When asked about the reason behind picking Kolkata, she said, “As of now, Bhopal is not connected by air with the north-eastern states. A flight to Kolkata will make it easier for the passengers travelling to that part of India.”

29/03/19 Times of India

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Thursday said Air India pilot Arvind Kathpalia’s laxity in taking a breath analyser test would not lead to the assumption that he was under the influence of alcohol when he operated a flight between New Delhi and Bengaluru in January 2017.

Mr. Kathpalia has been accused of violating aircraft rules, including evading breath analyser test, and forgery in 2017. Subsequently, he was suspended last year by Air India for three years after he tested positive for blood alcohol during a routine pre-flight breath analyser test before flying an aircraft to the US.

The court on Thursday reserved its judgment on the pilot’s plea seeking anticipatory bail as he apprehends arrest in the case lodged against him on the direction of a lower court in which he has been accused of tampering with evidence, criminal conspiracy and intimidating a doctor working with the airline in January 2017.

During the day’s hearing, Justice Mukta Gupta, said, “Merely not taking the test would not lead to the assumption that he was under the influence of alcohol. It only shows dereliction of the rules.”

29/03/19 PTI/The Hindu

Lucknow: The Central Information Commission (CIC) has directed the Civil Aviation Ministry to provide Lucknow-based activist Nutan Takur information regarding the disinvestment of Air India (AI).

The Public Information Officer (PIO) of the Ministry had under Section 8(1)(i) of the RTI Act denied Thakur information related to the records of the deliberations of the Cabinet.

According to the PIO, the Cabinet had in principle approved the proposed disinvestment of the national carrier, though the process had not been completed.

Information Commissioner Divya Prakash Sinha said that the Ministry had grossly erred in invoking Section 8(1)(i) of the RTI Act to deny information to Thakur, despite the PIO himself admitting to the Cabinet decision in this regard.

29/03/19 IANS/Economic Times

Belagavi: After a long wait, the first flight under UDAN-3 scheme will take off from Belagavi on May 1. SpiceJet will launch the flight under the Centre’s ambitious regional connectivity scheme between Belagavi and Hyderabad. This flight will be operated every day between the two cities.

According to sources, flight SG-3734 will depart Belagavi’s Sambra airport at 5.55 pm and touch down at Hyderabad at 7.10 pm on all the days of the week. On the return journey, SG-3733 (SpiceJet) will depart Hyderabad at 4.10 pm and arrive at Belagavi at 5.35 pm. SpiceJet has offered minimum airfare for the one-way route at `2,714. Bookings for the first UDAN flight have begun.

29/03/19 New Indian Express

Air India Friday was again found to be using boarding passes carrying photographs of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, days after the national carrier decided to roll back such passes amid criticism over alleged poll code violation.

On Friday evening, a passenger who took an Air India flight from Madurai tweeted a picture of his

boarding pass having photos of Modi and Rupani in an advertisement for the Vibrant Gujarat summit held in January.

"Air India had issued notice on March 25 to all domestic stations to discontinue usage of boarding cards with Vibrant Gujarat Advertisement on reverse with immediate effect. Today's incident is apparently a human error. A show cause notice for this error has been issued to the airport manager of AI at Madurai," an airline spokesman said.

"Today AI management has reiterated its earlier instructions and asked for confirmation from all stations regarding discontinuation of these boarding cards," he said.

On Monday, a picture of Air India boarding pass - which had photos of Modi and Rupani on it - was tweeted by a passenger, triggering a major controversy. Consequently, the national carrier issued a statement that it "has decided to roll back" these boarding passes.

On Wednesday, the Election Commission issued a show cause notice to the Railways and Civil Aviation ministries over the use of pictures of PM on rail tickets and Air India boarding passes as prima facie it violated the model code of conduct.

[29/03/19 PTI/Moneycontrol.com](#)

Followers of a religious guru parked their vehicles in front of the terminal building of the city airport for more than half an hour on Thursday afternoon, officials said.

When challenged by marshals, the followers produced pieces of paper purportedly issued by police authorising them to park their vehicles in front of the terminal.

Earlier this week, devotees of another religious leader had been issued "special passes" to enter the terminal, though entry of visitors is banned because of heightened security following the Pulwama attack, the sources said.

Cars that remain parked in front of the terminal for more than 10 minutes are slapped a fine of Rs 400. However, government vehicles and cars belonging to "VIPs" are allowed free parking for hours in violation of rules.

Sources said three to four vehicles that were parked near gate number 3C for more than half an hour were about to leave around noon on Thursday when an airport marshal stopped them.

Marshals are employees of an agency hired by the Airports Authority of India to manage parking "The vehicles were parked there for more than half an hour. When they were about to leave, a marshal stopped them and told the drivers that free parking in front of the terminal was allowed only for 10 minutes," a source said.

The people in the car then produced some pieces of paper.

"Those are slips issued at the kiosks at the entry gate of the airport compound. The time of a car's entry is written on such slips. But the slips the occupants of the car produced had a signature and a stamp with WBP (West Bengal Police) written in it," the source said.

The marshal then took one of the occupants of the car to a senior airport official.

[29/03/19 Sanjay Mandal/Telegraph](#)

New Delhi: In a setback to the GMR group, the Supreme Court on Friday did not allow the construction of Goa's new greenfield international airport and ordered an expert committee to study allegations that trees were being felled illegally. Directing the committee to undertake the assessment in a month's time and submit its report to the court, a bench of Justices D.Y.

Chandrachud and Hemant Gupta scrapped the environment clearance given by the Ministry of Environment and Forests in October 2015. Justice Chandrachud also barred all courts in the country from entertaining any plea related to the Goa international airport.

[29/03/19 Hans India](#)

Delta Air Lines and Korean Air have apologized to the family of two unaccompanied Indian-American minors who were kicked off a flight on their way to visit family in the Philippines.

The 15 and 16 year old sons of Prajakta and Rakesh Patel were removed from the Korean Air flight after they told the airline about a peanut allergy and asked that peanuts not be served around

them on the Seoul – Manila leg of the flight. Korean Air is Delta's partner for that segment. According to news reports in Good Morning America and USA Today, both Delta and Korean Air apologized for deplaning the kids at Seoul. The unaccompanied minors had to wait many hours to catch a flight back to their parents in Atlanta, Georgia.

Korean Air spokesperson InSun Lee is quoted saying in a statement sent to USA Today and Good Morning America, "Korean Air sincerely apologizes to Mr. and Mrs. Patel and their sons. ... Customer service is a mainstay of the Delta and Korean Air partnership and we regret that the Patels' experience did not reflect our common values. We are examining this incident and will work out to create a better customer experience."

According to news reports, the kids repeatedly tried to explain the dangers of the peanut allergy but Korean Air officials did not accommodate them and told them peanuts would be served and it was up to them to board or get off. But InSun Lee told USA Today the airline was aware of peanut allergies, saying, "Korean Air is aware that peanut and food allergies are an industry issue and no airline can guarantee a food allergy-free environment. But we are reviewing ways to deal with this issue in a safe and feasible way. We totally understand the risks faced by passengers with nut and food allergies and will certainly try to accommodate them better in the future."

29/03/19 News India Times

New Delhi: Two persons have been arrested by customs officials at the Delhi airport for allegedly trying to smuggle gold valued at Rs 1.66 crore, officials said Friday.

The seizure was effected in separate incidents reported in the past three days.

A man was intercepted after his arrival from Ahmedabad Wednesday.

A detailed personal and baggage search of the passenger resulted in the recovery of **three large gold rings total weighing 4.3 kg**, a statement issued by the customs department said.

On enquiry, it was found that the gold was illegally smuggled into India from Dubai and was being further brought from Ahmedabad to Delhi by the passenger, it said.

The gold, valued at Rs 1.4 crore, has been seized and the passenger was arrested.

29/03/19 PTI/Outlook

Companies in the aviation space are unlikely to invest in cash-strapped Jet Airways, which will be put up for auction soon, Business Standard reports.

Tata group, SpiceJet and InterGlobe Aviation (Indigo) will most likely skip bidding for Jet Airways, sources told the publication.

Major Indian airlines will not be participating in the bid due to the high cost of acquisition, uncertainty over corporate governance and weak financial conditions, they stated.

Moneycontrol could not independently verify the news.

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Tata Sons, the holding company of Tata Group, has decided that there will be no negotiations for a deal with Jet Airways without a complete due diligence, the report said.

'Legacy issues' and the origin of the airlines funding have been said to be cited as issues by the Tata Group. The conglomerate already operates Vistara and AirAsia India along with foreign players.

28/03/19 Moneycontrol.com

What was once India's most popular full-service airline is now struggling to stay afloat. The reins of Jet Airways, which is facing a debt of over \$1 billion, now have been given to its lenders, led by State Bank of India. Its founder and chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita stepped down from the board on Monday, paving the way for debt resolution.

The last few months have been extremely tough not only for the airline but also for passengers who chose to fly it. Non-payment of dues resulted in over 40 aircraft being grounded, leading to flight cancellations and soaring airfare. But with banks now taking over the airline and infusing money, are things starting to look up for the beleaguered airline and for passengers as well?

Here's a lowdown on what led to the downfall of Jet Airways and what could be the way forward.

From being India's largest international carrier to near bankruptcy

Naresh Goyal founded Jet Airways in 1993 with a fleet of four leased Boeing 737 aircraft. At a time when private airlines had just started coming up in India, Jet Airways, a full-service airline, grew fast to become India's largest international carrier.

However, with budget airlines such as SpiceJet and Indigo entering the fray, the aviation industry became a highly competitive one. Calling themselves 'budget', SpiceJet and Indigo started offering low airfare, forcing Jet also to lower fares. But it continued to offer full services, increasing operational costs and forcing it to keep borrowing from banks to stay afloat. Macro-economic changes such as a weakening rupee and rising fuel costs only hurt it further.

In the first quarter of FY18, Jet posted its first quarterly loss of Rs 1,323 crore in at least 12 quarters. This was compared to a profit of Rs 53.50 crore in the same quarter a year ago. While it said that it was working on operational efficiency, the loss only widened with each passing quarter.

In August, it asked employees to take an up to 25 per cent cut in salaries as a part of cost-cutting measures. In September, it stopped offering free meals on economy class bookings. And in October, there were reports that the airline had laid off nearly 30 employees from departments such as engineering, security and sales and senior-level executives from the in-flight services department.

While Jet Airways enjoyed market leadership position with domestic passenger market share of 44% in 2003-04 and 27.7% around 2007, for February 2019, it dropped to the fourth place with 10% share behind IndiGo (43.4%), SpiceJet (13.7%) and Air India (domestic, 12.8%) as per DGCA data.

Unpaid dues and grounded flights

In December, it defaulted on loan repayment to banks, and soon began defaulting on payments to vendors and salaries were delayed too. As of March 2019, Jet owed banks Rs 8,414 crore. While banks were trying to work out a resolution plan with the airline, its lessors began repossessing aircraft due to unpaid dues.

Towards the end of February, Jet had cancelled over 300 flights for February and March as more flights started to get grounded.

Currently, over 50% aircraft of Jet's fleet has been grounded. In fact, with Jet's inability to pay back dues, the lessors even started offering these aircraft to SpiceJet.

Troubled by delayed salaries, pilots too decided to stop flying from April 1 if the airline did not come up with a rescue plan. Hundreds of them reportedly started looking for jobs in other airlines.

Etihad's role

This is not the first time Jet Airways has faced massive debt. Back in 2013, when Jet had a debt of over \$2 billion, it struck a deal with UAE-based airline Etihad, taking advantage of new policy changes that allowed foreign airlines to invest in domestic airlines.

Etihad picked up a 24% stake in Jet for around Rs 2,000 crore at the time, giving it two seats on Jet's board. Etihad also got a majority stake in the Jet Privilege loyalty programme. However, reports suggest that since 2013, Etihad never really had a say in the functioning of the airline.

Fast forward to now – with Naresh Goyal pulling all strings to save his airline, he reached out to Etihad again. Early March, Etihad offered to give Rs 4,200 crore but put forward several conditions.

The agreement, which almost went through, would have seen Etihad bringing in a new investor who would invest around Rs 1,900 crore for a 20% stake. This would mean that Goyal and promoter group stake would fall. There was also a condition to cap their stake at 22%. The lenders, then, would infuse another Rs 1,000 crore. Etihad too, would invest funds and increase its holding to 24.9%.

Goyal, however, didn't want promoter shareholder capping to be a part of the deal, following which the deal fell through. Goyal was back to having no backers. A desperate Goyal even reached out to the government seeking support to save the airline.

Banks step in, Goyal steps out

Till he stepped down, Goyal was trying all tricks of the trade to find his airline a strategic partner but to no avail.

On February 14, Jet Airways' board approved a Bank-Led Provisional Resolution Plan (BLPRP), according to which lenders would become the largest shareholders in the airline. However, this resolution plan would mean that Goyal would have to cede control of the airline, something he has been reluctant to do.

Several experts had been suggesting that Goyal's exit was the key to Jet's survival since any new investor, willing to come on board would want to take total control of the airline. In November 2018, when Tata's offered to invest in Jet, the deal didn't work out since they wanted full control, which would mean Goyal stepping down. Something Goyal didn't agree to.

However, given the immense financial pressure the company was under, Goyal agreed to step down from his position as banks took control of the airline.

What happens now

On March 25, the board of Jet approved a resolution plan put in place by the lenders under the guidelines of Reserve Bank of India's 'Revised Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets'.

As part of the resolution plan, Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal stepped down from the board of the company. Naresh Goyal will also cease to be the chairman of the airline.

Lenders will now infuse funding support of Rs 1,500 crore by acquiring 51% stake in the company through the issuance of Rs 11.4 crore fresh shares. Goyal's stake has now come down to 25%, while Etihad's came down to 12%.

However, **Etihad's next move is yet to be known. It has not disclosed whether it wants to exit by selling its entire stake or if it wants to stay on board.**

The lenders are also looking for a new investor – a process that they expect to complete in the June quarter. The bidding process is open and SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar told a TV channel that the new owner could be a financial investor or an airline – including Naresh Goyal himself or Etihad. Nobody is barred from bidding or taking over the airline as per the rule.

Are things finally looking up for Jet?

With Jet grounding over 40 aircraft due to non-payment of dues, SpiceJet grounding aircraft due to the Boeing 737 Max ban, travellers have been facing the brunt with airfares shooting up and flights frequently getting cancelled or delayed.

But the current management of Jet has reportedly assured the Civil Aviation Ministry that it would re-induct 40 flights into its fleet by the end of April and that it would not ground any more aircraft.

A total of 75 aircraft are envisaged by April-end, which is around 80% of the Jet's total aircraft previously.

This would mean that there will be more aircraft available, possibly ending the phase of sky-high airfares and unreliable flight schedules.

The News Minute 28/03/2019

New Delhi: The Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) and Star Sports, broadcaster of IPL 2019, failed to get the permission of using drones during the match between Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings at the Feroz Shah Kotla stadium here on Tuesday.

A senior DDCA official told Mail Today that only field cameras will be used as the drone was not allowed by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting BJP headquarters in New Delhi because of ticket (Lok Sabha polls) distribution. We asked MHA's permission but they didn't give us.

"The office (BJP) is near to Feroze Shah Kotla stadium and MHA said that the camera quality of drone (frequency of broadcasting) is really very good, so it will be risky to use it as PM visiting BJP office and other VIPs as well."

Star Sports has the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) permission.

2018 has seen the rise of drones at the IPL with BCCI engaging these instruments in almost every game.

27/03/19 Chetan Sharma/India Today