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The two promoters of India's most successful airline--IndiGo--are believed to be having differences with each other and have engaged law firms to iron out their issues, ET Now learns exclusively from sources. Rakesh Gangwal and Rahul Bhatia, **both holding** almost the same equity stake of **37-38%** each, are learnt to be sparring over "executive control". US-based Gangwal has reportedly engaged Khaitan & Co to sort out differences with his partner, and Bhatia is believed to have roped in JSA Law for the same.

All three stakeholders i.e., Gangwal, Bhatia and IndiGo responded to detailed queries sent by ET Now.

"The two promoters have hired lawyers to sort out the differences, and that is the ideal situation. That is the intended result, and not for them to litigate or press for one of the promoters to exit," said a source.

Sources add the **differences started when Bhatia felt Gangwal was gaining greater control of the airline with a slew of recent top level appointments**. "The new CEO Ronjoy Dutta for example is Gangwal's former colleague at United Airlines. Their differences are over the perception of one promoter having more control," said a source.

ET Now has not been able to access the shareholder agreement between the two founders.

Last year, a media reticent Rahul Bhatia publicly clarified that Aditya Ghosh did not end his 10-year long highly successful stint at the airline due to the appointment of expats at high level positions.

Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal came together in 2004 to form InterGlobe Aviation, the owner of Indigo, with an investment of Rs 350 cr.

Bhatia is credited to have an **excellent sense of commercials and a great insight into India's regulatory environment**. **Gangwal** on the other hand ran US Airways during turbulent times in the 1990s and is seen as the **brainchild behind Indigo's highly efficient operation**.

[The Economic times of India 15/05/2019](#)

The growth strategy of IndiGo remains unchanged and the airline's management has full backing of the company's board of directors to implement it, said Ronjoy Dutta, CEO, InterGlobe Aviation, in an email to his employees on Thursday. The email was sent to employees by the CEO as there were various media reports on Thursday morning regarding alleged disagreements between the airline's two promoters - Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal.

InterGlobe Aviation owns and manages **IndiGo** airline, which has around **44 per cent share in domestic passenger market**.

"I want to assure you that the growth strategy of the airline remains unchanged and firmly in place, and the management is fully charged by the Board to implement it," Dutta said in the email. "I am sure you are all aware of the press reports regarding alleged disagreements between our two promoters Mr Rahul Bhatia and Mr Rakesh Gangwal," he added

[The Economic times of India 16/05/2019](#)

Pakistan on Wednesday decided not to lift its airspace ban for Indian flights till May 30, as Islamabad is awaiting the outcome of the Lok Sabha polls in India.

Pakistan fully closed its airspace after an Indian Air Force strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot on February 26. However, Pakistan opened its airspace for all flights except for New Delhi, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur on March 27.

"The top officials of defence and aviation ministries held a meeting on Wednesday to reconsider opening its airspace for Indian flights. They decided that Pakistan's airspace will remain banned for the Indian flights till May 30," a senior government official told after the meeting.

He said the Civil Aviation Authority has also notified the decision to the airmen. The authority issued a notification (Notam) after the meeting to pilots, advising them of circumstances relating to the state of flying.

The official said the government will now consider lifting of the ban on Pakistan's airspace for Indian flights on May 30.

Pakistan's Science and Technology Minister Fawad Chaudhry early this week said that the status quo will remain till the conclusion of elections in India.

"Status quo will remain till the elections are over in India. I don't see any improvement in relations between Pakistan and India till the elections are over and a new government is installed. The ban on airspace by each other I think will also continue till Indian polls," Chaudhry told.

Owing to the flight ban on its airspace by India, Pakistan has suspended its operation for Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur which is causing a loss of millions of rupees per day. Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) used to operate four flights to Kuala Lumpur, two to Bangkok and two to New Delhi.

A senior PIA official told that the national flag carrier's loss is running into billions of rupees because of suspension of the flights especially to Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur.

"We are not only facing the huge financial loss but also losing our passengers to other airlines," he said, adding that this matter should now be resolved. "If land and rail routes are operational between Pakistan and India, what's wrong with the air route," the official questioned.

The airlines and civil aviation authorities of both the countries are enduring massive losses. The flights between Europe to Far-East are not only facing huge financial losses, but the flight duration has also increased, while the airlines have also increased their ticket prices.

Pakistan in mid-April had opened one of its 11 air routes for west-bound flights from India and airlines such as Air India and Turkish Airlines have started using it. The operating cost for Air India, which flies to destinations in Europe and the US, reportedly has increased significantly as it had to take longer routes due to closure of Pakistan airspace.

The Economic times of India 15/05/2019

Sixteen Boeing 737s that were once in Jet Airways' fleet are now flying for SpiceJet. And Vistara is also going to induct some ex-Jet Boeings. Aviation secretary P S Kharola, who is trying to ensure airfares return to affordable levels, said Vistara has applied for operating Boeing aircraft in its fleet for this purpose. The Tata Group-Singapore Airlines JV currently has Airbus on its airline licence.

"We are monitoring fares very closely and the spurt (post Jet crisis) has been contained. **SpiceJet has**

applied to take up to 40 (ex-Jet) Boeing 737s. Vistara, which as of now has only Airbus on its licence, has applied to operate Boeing planes too. These applications are being processed,” said Kharola.

The aviation ministry has given domestic slots of Jet Airways temporarily to other airlines so that they can mount extra flights and fill the void to bring down domestic fares. The ministry held a meeting with Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, Vistara and GoAir to discuss how the foreign flying rights of Jet be given temporarily to them and help contain international airfares too. The airlines gave diametrically opposite views on how the same be distributed and the government is going to take a call now.

Jet was the single largest airline in terms of flying people in and out of India for the three-to-four years. Its partnership with Etihad, Air France, KLM, Delta and Virgin Atlantic meant Jet flying passengers between Indian cities and these airlines’ hubs at Abu Dhabi, Paris, Amsterdam and London from where they would fly to-and-from rest of the world.

“We had sought airlines’ views on how to temporarily give (Jet’s) international flying rights to them and will take a decision soon. The guiding principle for us is going to be passenger convenience as per existing air services agreements with different countries,” said Kharola.

The **suspension of operations by Jet left over 750 slots vacant at Indian airports.** Of these, almost 480 slots have been given to other airlines with SpiceJet getting 130, IndiGo 125, Vistara 110, GoAir and AirAsia India 40 to 45 slots each. IndiGo has got 40 of Jet’s 118 slots in Delhi and SpiceJet has got 70 of over 200 slots in Mumbai, say sources.

As of now, **Air India is the only Indian airline that operates wide body aircraft on international routes like those to US, Europe, Far East and Australia. Jet used to operate B777s and Airbus A330s. Vistara is the only Indian carrier with wide body on order, with the first of its first six ordered Boeing 787 Dreamliner supposed to join the fleet next January.** Sources said Vistara’s application for operating Boeing may see it inducting some of the five ex-Jet B777s.

Vistara did not offer comment on this. The aviation ministry is watching very closely how Jet’s currently underway bidding process unfolds.

The Economic times of India 15/05/2019

NEW DELHI: India will soon take the first step towards operating drones “beyond line of sight” — flying them over a distance where the operator can’t see this “remotely piloted aircraft (RPA)” while piloting it to its destination and back.

Once successful, this will eventually **pave the way for using drones for deliveries, e-commerce, and even as air taxis in areas of India** where there are no security concerns that would prohibit their use.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has invited expressions of interest (EOI) **from consortia of experts for “conducting experimental beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations of RPA in India, leading to submission of proof of concept (PoC) for safe BVLOS operations”.**

According to the note issued by **joint DG G Rajasekar**, the scope of this operation includes **beyond visual line of sight RPA operation, unmanned aircraft system (UAS) traffic management system deployment, supplementary services for 3D maps, weather data, surveillance and telemetry data of manned and unmanned aircraft.**

The DGCA note adds that **“experimental BVLOS operations followed by submission of PoC should be completed before DGCA issues any regulations for BVLOS operations”**. The proposed BVLOS experimental operations of remotely piloted aircraft will be conducted in controlled conditions within identified and segregated low-altitude Indian airspace for at least two months. Based on this, the consortia will submit the concept with evidence to the DGCA.

Drones have traditionally been used for military applications and now are being increasingly used for commercial applications at low altitudes for purposes like photography, monitoring, surveying, mapping, precision agriculture, delivery, search and rescue, disaster relief and public safety. However, **the true economic and social potential of UAS technology can be harnessed by enabling BVLOS operations**, the DGCA note says.

Uber Elevate, the US ride-sharing major’s aerial taxi arm, is already considering **India as one of the five countries where it wants to launch services**. Uber plans to start commercial operations of “on demand aviation” aerial taxis by 2023 in Dallas, Los Angeles and an international city.

Uber CEO Dara Khosrowshahi had last year held meeting with the aviation ministry. But to do so in India it will need enabling rules that the DGCA’s proposed trial run may eventually lead to if all goes well.

Passenger drones will be small vertical take-off and landing aircraft that can be used for urban mobility,” the Uber Elevate website said recently.

[The Economic times of India 16/05/2019](#)

Mumbai-Grounded Jet Airways lenders plan to get all bids legally verified before beginning negotiations with interested parties.

According to informed sources, **lenders have a limited number of options to recover their outstanding dues worth Rs 8,400 crore**. They might also **try to stitch a deal involving two bidding parties**. **"We will first get all (solicited and unsolicited) bids legally verified and after that we will invite the selected parties on to the negotiating table,"** a senior banker told IANS in Mumbai.

"We can also explore a way to bring two bidding parties together, whereby both will work with lenders." Another source involved in the matter said: **"If the process to find a suitable bidder fails, then the other options will be DRT (Debt Recovery Tribunal) and NCLT."**

When asked about the sudden exodus of the company's top management and lenders view on the same, the senior banker said: "It is for the owners of the airline to decide about appointments. We are not the part of any controlling entity."

On Tuesday, an exodus of senior management personnel took place, as the **airline's CEO, CFO and Company Secretary resigned.**

The resignations came after the airline's top executive Gaurang Shetty, considered close to founder Naresh Goyal, resigned from the board of directors.

Having run out of cash, Jet Airways suspended its operations on April 17. Besides employees exiting, its aircraft are also being gradually de-registered. These events have added to the growing uncertainty about airline's revival.

Lenders of Jet Airways led by state-run State Bank of India (SBI) are currently in the process of selling the airline to recover their dues of over Rs 8,400 crore.

Private equity firm TPG Capital, Indigo Partners, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and Etihad Airways had been shortlisted to place their bids after they submitted Expressions of Interest (Eols).

On May 10 -- the last date for submitting the binding bids -- only Etihad gave its offer. The other three bids for the airline were unsolicited.

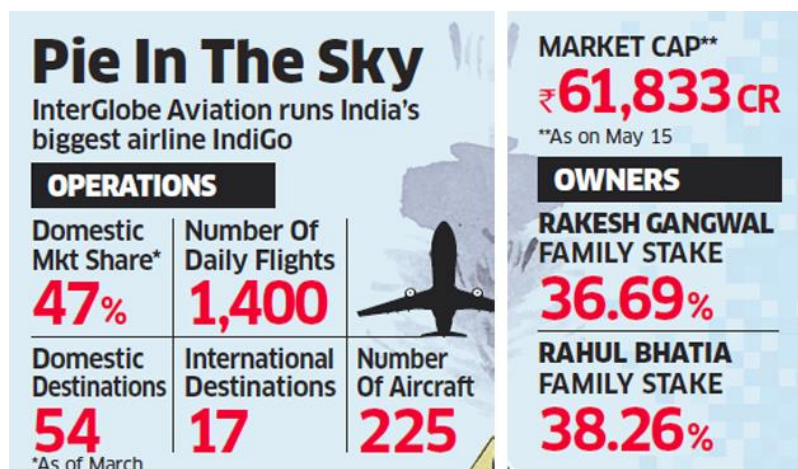
Faced with salary delays and uncertainty over revival of the airline, **thousands of Jet Airways employees, especially pilots and engineers, have left the company to join rival carriers.**

The Economic Times of India 16/05/2019

Serious differences have cropped up between the two founders of IndiGo that could end up affecting the airline's functioning if left unresolved, people close to the development have told ET. **Among the issues are clauses in the shareholders' agreement and differences between the two founders — Rahul Bhatia and Rakesh Gangwal — over strategies and ambitions for the airline.** ET couldn't immediately ascertain the specific clauses in the shareholders' agreement that are a bone of contention. The promoters refused to comment on the development.

ET Now, ET's business channel, was the first to break the story on Wednesday evening.

Both founders are, however, trying to iron out the differences so that the functioning of the airline isn't impacted. "The dispute may have escalated in the last few weeks, but things are at a very nascent stage with regard to any formal legal dispute and both parties are weighing other options as well," said one of the persons.



Legal firms Khaitan & Co and J Sagar Associates are helping the founders resolve the problems.

“The promoters, Gangwal and Bhatia, are old clients of Khaitan & Co and J Sagar Associates, respectively, and hence the leadership teams from both the firms are actively overseeing the entire situation,” the same person said. Neither of the promoters has yet broached the possibility of buying the other out or exiting the airline.

Gangwal, a United Airlines and US Airways veteran, has been the driving force behind IndiGo’s emergence as one of the fastest growing carriers in the world.

Speed Vs Caution

It was Gangwal who was behind IndiGo’s record breaking plane orders, its aggressive expansion in India and the ambition to make it a global carrier which resulted in vast changes in senior management.

Gangwal, a US citizen, worked from the shadows while Bhatia ran the show in India, supporting the airline’s growth and manoeuvring regulatory hurdles. Sources said Gangwal was also reluctant to take up a board seat in IndiGo, saying instead that he wanted to push its growth and expansion.

But differences cropped up on several occasions in the last two years, with **Gangwal supporting growth at breakneck speed to harness the potential of India’s aviation market and some of the airline’s management and on occasion, Bhatia, opting for a more cautious approach.**

In February last year, Gangwal declared that FY19 would see IndiGo increasing its capacity by 52%, more than it had ever done, and taking its fleet size to 250 from 155.

This was opposed by a majority of its management, including then President Aditya Ghosh, saying this would create problems of overcapacity and impact yields. Gangwal is said to have retorted that with India’s potential, nothing less than 500 aircraft was too many. Ghosh subsequently resigned. IndiGo currently has a fleet of 225 planes.

Both founders believe the group is at an inflection point as it chases its next phase of growth. With Jet Airways and Air India floundering, they believe IndiGo can occupy the vacant slots left behind by the two legacy carriers. How to grab this opportunity is where they differ.

Bhatia is open to **considering wide-bodied aircraft to pursue its international dream.** Gangwal is a believer in the budget carrier Southwest Airlines’ model of operating a single model aircraft: the **narrow-bodied Boeing 737.** This would mean the airline would **not be able to service longhaul destinations.** **Instead, Gangwal preferred code-share agreements with foreign carriers.** As of now IndiGo has stalled its plans to buy wide-bodies and has signed its first codeshare agreement with Turkish Airlines.

The Economic Times of India 16/05/2019

British Airways on Wednesday said that it will introduce its **new Airbus A350 aircraft on India routes from later this year.**

According to the airline, **Bengaluru will be the first city in India, and just the fourth destination on the airline’s worldwide network, to get the new A350 aircraft service.**

We are delighted to welcome our **new A350 aircraft in Bengaluru later this year, featuring our new 'Club Suite'**, which is one of the most exciting developments in our current 6.5 billion pound investment programme," said Moran Birger, Head of Sales, Asia Pacific and Middle East, at British Airways.

The Economic Times of India 16/05/2019

New Delhi: A month after distressed airline Jet Airways (India) Ltd halted operations on 17 April, there is little sign of a credible investment or emergency funding plan before the company. This has serious consequences for the company as well as the aviation industry. Here are the five ways Jet Airways' crash landing hit the industry.

Airfares

Jet Airways' halting of operations has crippled the air travel market and made ticket prices costlier, especially those booked closer to the travel date or on the date of travel. This makes flying less attractive for the price-conscious customer, though according to industry observers, this could be a short-term effect as other carriers will eventually meet the gap in capacity.

According to Sharat Dhall, chief operating officer (B2C) of travel portal Yatra.com, demand for tickets is likely to be high across all sectors as Jet's halting of operations has coincided with the peak summer travel period. The impact on the aviation sector is huge considering that Jet had a fleet of 119 aircraft before the crisis hit the company. "We have confidence that the industry will be able to take on this increased demand with other carriers inducting more aircraft, which should help rationalise airfares that are on the higher side, particularly for last-minute travel," Dhall said. Low-cost carrier SpiceJet, for example, has announced 85 new flights from 1 April.

Jobs

Jet Airways' suspension of operations last month has left **employees high and dry**. With no sign of a turnaround scheme, employees are looking for opportunities elsewhere. Staff, including pilots, cabin crew and engineers, are looking for other opportunities, a senior company executive said. A month ago, senior employees had expressed willingness to continue with the company despite disruption in salary payment in the hope that a rescue plan would work out. **An industry executive said the loss of job of every employee on the rolls of Jet Airways also costs five others indirectly involved in the value chain of their work.** At the time of halting operations, Jet had about 15,000 workers. Jet lost its

two senior-most executives — Vinay Dube, chief executive officer (CEO) and Amit Agarwal, deputy CEO and chief financial officer — earlier this week.

Airline industry growth loses steam

The decrease in available seats for sale and the surge in price have brought the growth in the air travel market to a halt in March. Airlines carried close to 1.16 million passengers in March, a paltry 0.14% growth over the traffic reported in the same month a year ago. This rate is a sharp reduction from the 18.6% growth in air traffic reported in calendar year 2018 against a year ago. Analysts said traffic growth was likely to further moderate during the current year. "With Jet Airways' entire fleet grounded post 17 April, it would take considerable time for domestic airlines to make up for the extinguished seat inventory," Care Ratings Ltd said in a note on the aviation industry on Tuesday. However, the silver lining in the cloud is that with reduced competition and improved airfares, operating margins for airlines would improve during FY20. "We do expect all airlines to report operating profits during FY20," according to Care Ratings.

Loss to banks

With Jet's revival remaining uncertain, the company's lenders led by State Bank of India have little means of recovering their dues. At the end of 31 March 2018, Jet's total debt was ₹5,285 crore, with trade payables of another ₹6,400 crore. This is likely to have gone up by now. Being a services company having less physical assets, banks and operational creditors have little chance of recovering their dues.

Loss to allied industry

With Jet's collapse, airport operators and fuel suppliers have lost a big customer. Jet retreating from the market means airport operators are denied of landing and parking charges and other rental revenue from the airline. These charges account for roughly 10% of the ticket price, the bulk of which is on account of fuel.

[Live Mint Aviation 17/05/2019](#)

Jet Airways' decision to suspend operations in the face of a cash crunch in April is affecting the travel plans back home of Indians based in Qatar. With summer holidays around the corner, Qatar Airways

has requested Indian authorities to increase the number of seats between Doha and India to compensate for the fall in seating capacity.

The airline sought additional seats on high volume routes connecting Doha and Indian cities such as Mumbai, New Delhi and Bangalore on a temporary basis and without formal changes to the current weekly seat capacity entitlement established under the 2009 Qatar-India bilateral aviation framework.

“Due to the recent exceptional circumstances affecting the Qatar-India market, which has resulted in a drastic reduction in the number of seats offered by Indian airlines operating to/from Qatar, Qatar Airways has made a formal submission to the Indian authorities to allow for the implementation of a temporary solution to Indian families during the summer travel peak,” the airline said in a statement.

A civil aviation ministry official said on condition of anonymity that bilateral agreements between two countries would have to be amended to increase the number of flights and that a call cannot be taken at a short notice. As the peak summer season for air travel is about to begin, Indian expats based in Qatar are expected to visit their families and friends back home. More than 700,000 Indian expats live and work in Qatar, where they make up about 25% of the total population.

“Qatar Airways believes that the proposed contingency plan is a sound and practical way to address the financial and emotional stress that Indian travellers are set to experience in the coming weeks,” said Qatar Airways group chief executive Akbar Al Baker.

The Hindustan Times 16/05/2019

Captain Aarohi Pandit, a 23-year-old pilot from Mumbai became the world’s first woman to cross the Atlantic Ocean solo in a Light Sports Aircraft (LSA), thrilling her family, friends and aviation circles here on Tuesday.

She achieved the feat around midnight Monday-Tuesday (May 13-14) when she landed her tiny aircraft at Iqaluit Airport in Canada, after a gruelling 3,000 km long flight, under adverse and extreme weather conditions following take-off from Wick, Scotland (United Kingdom), with brief stopovers in Greenland and Iceland.

“This is part of her ongoing year-long global circumnavigation flight which was launched with her friend Keithair Misquitta on July 30. Aarohi continued solo from UK to Canada, and they will return to India by July 30, 2019,” said an excited Lynn de Souza, head of Social Access, a not-for-profit communications firm which organised and sponsored the expedition.

“En route, she set another world record as the first woman pilot to fly solo above the treacherous Greenland ice-cap in a LSA, and is due for at least half a dozen other records by the time she reaches India, Lynn told IANS.

A commercial pilot and LSA licence holder, Pandit and her best friend Keithair Misquitta left India on the Women Empower (WE) Expedition in the tiny aircraft christened ‘Mahi’.

‘Mahi’ is a tiny, single-engine Sinus 912 weighing a little of 400 kg or nearly equivalent to a Bullet motorcycle, manufactured by Pipistrel of Slovenia, and is also the first LSA registered by Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) India.

Pandit and Misquitta flew over Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, then to Pakistan, where they landed -- making it the first civilian LSA flight to land in the neighbouring country since 1947 -- and went onto to Iran, Turkey, Serbia, Slovenia, Germany, France and UK.

After landing in Iqaluit, Pandit proudly exhibited the Indian Tricolour presented to her by the Indian Ambassador to Canada Vikas Swarup, said Lynn.

“I am so honoured and grateful I could do this for my country and for women everywhere... Flying over the Atlantic Ocean is a humbling experience. It’s just you and your little plane, the light blue sky above and dark blue sea or shining white ice below,” said a tired but cheerful Pandit in her landing remarks to her cheering friends in Mumbai, who stayed awake till early on Tuesday to witness her making history.

Though she admitted certain sectors in the long flight were bumpy, the “beauty of the ocean and islands was breathtaking and I would do it all over again in a heartbeat”.

Pandit is an ardent fan of the legendary American aviator, Amelia Earheart -- who became the world’s first woman to make a solo transatlantic flight in a bigger aircraft, 87 years ago, on May 20, 1932.

A resident of Borivali, northwest Mumbai suburb, Pandit underwent an arduous **seven-month preparatory training schedule in India, Greenland, Siberia, Italy over oceans, high altitude, snow, extreme weather conditions, different terrains testing her physical and mental capabilities to undertake her circumnavigation feat.**

After a brief sojourn in Canada, the WE Expedition will continue with Pandit flying westwards to Russia, cross many a longitudes and hurdles, create or break more records, before she finally returns home by July 30, after clocking in around 37,000 km.

The Hindustan Times 15/05/2019

Chennai: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plans to install solar panels near the main runway to reduce the use of power from the grid at Chennai airport.

A tender, which was issued last year, has been given to a contractor and the process is on to install the panels on an 8.58-acre land, identified in the northern corner of the main runway, close to the Pallavaram side, said an official. Panels will generate around 6.5MWp (Mega Watt peak, a unit of measuring solar power) power which will be connected to the grid.

The project is estimated to cost Rs 44crore and is part of the AAI’s ‘Go Green’ initiative, which includes installation of LED lights at the terminals and airfield.

The power generated from the panels will be used for terminals and a balance of 11KV will be supplied to the grid through a sub-station, said an official. The airport already has a roof-top solar plant at the cargo complex which generates 5MW power.

The airport has a total connected load of 17,55KW and a total consumption of around 83.23 million units.

17/09/19 Times of India

Airlines on Tuesday resumed Dhaka-Delhi-Dhaka direct flights after nearly five years with three flights a week initially as India’s private Jet airways halted its flight operations between the two capitals recently.

The resumption flight landed at Indira Gandhi International Airport this afternoon while Bangladesh High Commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali received the arriving passengers through flowers at terminal-3 of the airport at 1720 hrs (local time).

A spectacular gate was decorated by using water cannon to welcome the 150 arriving and receiving the 87 departing passengers. A cake was cut on the gate premises to mark the occasion. The

passengers including some in wheel chairs expressed their satisfaction after travelling by Biman's Dhaka-Delhi direct flight saying that it would immensely reduce their sufferings which they had to face while travelling via Kolkata. Earlier in Dhaka, State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism M Mahbub Ali inaugurated the flight before it took off from Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport at 1500 hrs.

Ali hoped that Biman would be able to make profit from Dhaka-Delhi direct flight as the national flag carrier is now the lone airline on this route. He said the government is committed to turn the national flag carrier into a profitable venture through providing standard on time service to the passengers.

Civil Aviation and Tourism Secretary M Mohibul Haque, Biman's board of directors chairman Air Marshal (retd) Muhammad Enamul Bari and acting managing director and CEO Captain Farhat Hasan Jamil also spoke while Indian deputy high commissioner to Dhaka, Bishwajit De were present on the occasion.

14/05/19 UNI

Lucknow: The passengers and staff at Lucknow airport had a close shave after a portion of wall decor fell off today morning, news agency ANI reported. No injuries have been reported so far. One of the passengers, Narendra Dubey, who escaped unhurt, said, "I was just a few inches away when the decoration from the wall fell off. I got lucky or could have died today."

"My appeal to the authorities is, please do your work properly and don't play with our lives," he added.

Lucknow airport is an international airport in Uttar Pradesh. It was earlier called Amausi Airport but was renamed as Chaudhary Charan Singh Airport after the fifth Prime Minister of India in 2008. The airport has two terminals and a third one was announced last year by Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu. This new terminal will be able to have a capacity of 24.6 million passengers.

17/05/19 Richa Taneja/NDTV

Siliguri: The Bagdogra airport will get more check-in counters and luggage conveyer belts as part of a plan drawn up by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to boost infrastructure at the facility and keep pace with soaring passenger numbers.

The flier count has increased to around 2.5 million annually and over 30 flights operate from the airport near Siliguri every day. "We plan to introduce four more check-in counters along with conveyers to expedite the check-in process. The new counters will be opened shortly," said a source in the AAI.

At present, there are 16 check-in counters on the ground floor of the two-storied terminal where long queues of passengers in the departure lounge are a common sight.

This happens because the existing building is meant to handle around 400 passengers per hour but draws over 1,000. The rush is particularly intense during the afternoons when most of the flights arrive or depart from Bagdogra.

"Right from the entrance of the airport to the terminal building, it takes a lot of time these days. This is because with the increase in the number of flights, vehicular traffic has also increased at the airport. Even after reaching the entrance of the departure lounge, one has to stand in a queue to get to the check-in counters. We hope the queues would become shorter when the new counters are opened," said Prithvi Dasgupta, a frequent flier.

An AAI official, told about the overcrowding at the airport, said they were trying to make best of the available space. **"Unless we get land from the state and a new terminal is built, all we can do is to**

use every possible space in the existing building. Setting up new check-in counters is a part of the plan," he said.

17/05/19 Avijit Sinha/Telegraph

Of the Jet Airways' foreign flying rights, Civil Aviation Secretary P S Kharola said Friday the ministry will create a transparent standard operating procedure (SOP) to allocate these rights on a temporary basis.

"We had asked airlines to confirm their requirement of (domestic) slots and (international) traffic rights...Their requests have been officially logged in. Our people will do an analysis now and we will evolve a transparent SOP based on which the rights will be given," Kharola said.

He was speaking to reporters after holding a meeting -- which was focused on temporary allocation of foreign flying rights of Jet Airways -- Friday morning with senior executives of the Indian airlines. The airfares have risen dramatically on many international routes since **Jet Airways suspended its operations on April 17.**

The central government, therefore, is planning to allocate Jet Airways' international flying rights to other airlines such as IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet, GoAir and Vistara.

17/05/19 Economic Times

Pune: A group of city residents has decided to take on a website agent and airline for booking them on a Boeing 737 MAX 8 flight, a model that has been grounded since March.

The four customers had booked the tickets through www.makemytrip.com from Pune to Srinagar via Ahmedabad on April 22 for a trip scheduled on June 4.

However, on May 6, the airline SpiceJet sent an email informing them the flight from Ahmedabad to Srinagar was cancelled due to the grounding of the aircraft. "The Boeing 737 MAX 8 was grounded in March, then why did the airline and the website allow booking of the tickets on such an aircraft a month after the incident," said Nitin Bhujbal.

Bhujbal booked the journey along with three others as part of a recreational trip planned a couple of months ago. Bhujbal said the MakeMyTrip employees refused to cooperate when the issue was brought up.

"The staff in Pune said they could not help as the bookings were done online and that we would have to approach the head office," he said, adding that representatives of the company on phone only agreed to pay the compensation for Pune to Ahmedabad.

"How could a cancellation fee be deducted when it was not our fault? When we found out that Boeing 737 MAX 8 was already grounded, we felt that the move to cancel the flights at last moment was deliberate and aimed at earning more profit after the flights are rescheduled at higher rates," Bhujbal added. Someshwar Balgude, general secretary, Pune City Congress Committee, said he had faced a similar issue.

"The airline and website agent should have removed the listings and route when the aircraft were not functional. This is pure cheating and siphoning off money at the expense of customers," he said.

17/05/19 Himanshu Nitnaware/Pune Mirror

An air ticket to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Parliamentary constituency costs about Rs 3,099 if booked in advance during a normal season.

However, on Thursday no tickets were available for direct flights to Varanasi while tickets for hopping flight on Friday (today) morning shot up by more than 11 times to as high as Rs 35,000.

Voting in Varanasi will take place on May 19 in the last phase of LS polls.

Travel agents ascribe the jump in tariffs to election tourism and BJP leaders from Gujarat rushing to the holy city to campaign for PM Modi. Campaigning for the last phase of polls ends today with PM Modi's mega rally in Varanasi. When checked on Wednesday evening, a 6.30 am SpiceJet flight from Ahmedabad to Varanasi on Thursday was priced at Rs 19,788.

Flights of all the other airlines were already full. Airfare for Vistara flight departing at 10.55am on Thursday with 3.5-hour duration and one stop quoted at Rs 26,318. An Air India flight scheduled to depart at 7.10 am with single stop and 4.25-hour duration quoted fare of Rs 35,210. When checked on Thursday afternoon, Friday morning SpiceJet flight to Varanasi was selling at Rs 17,584 while the 5.55 pm Indigo flight was on offer at Rs 6,736.

[17/05/19 Alok Brahmbhatt/Ahmedabad Mirror](#)

In the wake of the sudden touchdown of Jet Airways, there has been another big development in India's aviation sector. Spice Jet, the low cost, no-frills carrier has become the second to add a business class service.

Called **Spice Biz**, the business class service is being offered on SpiceJet's newly acquired Boeing 737s. The budget carrier is offering the service on some routes between New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Varanasi, Bengaluru, Bagdadra and Srinagar, as per reports. The service includes gourmet meals, 2x2 cabin, access to the airport lounges, and extra baggage, among other facilities.

SpiceJet announced this move after acquiring nine of Jet Airways' now grounded Boeing 737s. These aircrafts were already fitted in with economy and business class seats.

Until now, GoAir was the only budget airline to offer business class on their A320 plane models.

With SpiceJet in the mix, there's more choice than ever for traveller. Especially those still mourning Jet's sudden touchdown.

[17/05/19 Outlook Traveller](#)

New Delhi: **The Union Ministry of Civil Aviation will reallocate Jet Airways' international slots to other airlines at a meeting Friday**, landing a fresh blow to the besieged private carrier amid dimming hopes of its revival.

Since the cash-strapped and debt-laden airline suspended operations last month, **over 85 aircraft of its fleet of 119 have been de-registered** — which means lessors with unpaid dues have been allowed to lease them to other airlines.

The order for 10 Boeing planes has been cancelled, the airline has lost its domestic slots, and several members of its brass — including the chief operating officer, company secretary and even the chief executive officer — **have resigned.**

Meanwhile, there's been no healthy bid from investors to get India's oldest private airline back in the sky.

The reallocation of Jet Airways' international routes will be discussed at a meeting Friday, with Air India, the country's flag carrier that is itself grappling with debt but still running, likely to get the bulk of the slots.

[17/05/19 Ifrah Mufti/Print](#)

Hyderabad: **In a desperate move to shut down the Visakhapatnam International Airport by 2022 and make the Bhogapuram airport project viable, the Andhra Pradesh government is ready to compensate Airports Authority of India (AAI). But AAI officials say they see no reason to shut shop**

given that the airport's passenger numbers have been rising for the past few years.

Although AAI had not responded to the compensation proposal, the Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation Limited (APADCL) is pegging the compensation to around Rs 40 crore. "AAI has to share details of the capital expenditure incurred on expanding facilities at all airport with the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA). The AERA website states that AAI spent just over Rs 30 crore on the Visakhapatnam Airport since 2014-15," says Virender Singh, managing director and CEO of APADCL.

APADCL officials are jittery as they have already spent Rs 800 crore of the Rs 24,020 crore meant for the Bhogapuram project. A better part of the funds have been invested on land acquisition.

"Rs 800 crore is no joke," said a senior APADCL official on condition of anonymity. "We made the investment after getting a written assurance from AAI about shutting down Visakhapatnam airport for 30 years from day one of Bhogapuram airport becoming functional. **We would wait for a while after the new government is formed. If the ministry of civil aviation or AAI don't change their mind, we would move the Supreme Court. At any cost, we want to meet the 2022 deadline for the project.**"

17/05/19 Times of India

Soon, Mumbai's iconic Air India building may possibly be the new address for workplaces of the Maharashtra secretariat. In what is maybe the first occurrence of the state purchasing back land it had rented, the government has presented the national carrier Rs 1,400 crore to take over the property.

However the state's offer is Rs 200 crore less than the reserve amount Air India had fixed, sources said the national carrier has decided to go forward with it as part of its strategy to monetise its real estate assets.

The Centre-run Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT) as well as the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) had estimated Rs 1,375 crore and Rs 1,200 crore, individually, for the property.

Air India, which has been into controversy in the recent months had run into debt of Rs 50,000 crore and the first step they had put up is the sale of leasehold rights of the land and the building last December. Maharashtra had rent out the sea-facing property to the carrier in the year 1970 for 99 year's occupancy.

For the period of the first round of bidding, only the LIC stand up to a quote, stimulating a second round. On the other hand the state government used its status as the land's owner to appeal the "first right to refusal" situation before edging former JNPT. Only government bodies were allowed to take part in both rounds.

17/05/19 Naman Dhyani/Dekh News

New Delhi: **Air India chief, Ashwani Lohani, has instructed the airline's leadership team to "come down heavily" on instances of sexual harassment in the company which were being reported "often."**

The order from the airline's Chairman and Managing Director follows a complaint from a woman pilot about a senior pilot and instructor about an incident on May 5 in Hyderabad.

"It is shameful that sexual harassment cases are being often witnessed in Air India. We need to come down very very heavily on such offenders. Pass this message down the line especially in departments related to operations," Mr. Lohani wrote in a WhatsApp message to the heads of various departments such as operations, finance and commercial.

The woman pilot had written in her complaint that the senior pilot had behaved inappropriately with

her at a restaurant where the two met after work. Following the complaint the airline has de-rostered the pilot as well as removed him from training duty. It has constituted a three-member Internal Committee to look into the complaint and prepare a report within a month.

17/05/19 The Hindu

Ahmedabad: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), Ahmedabad has busted, what it claims to be, an international racket involving smugglers from Pakistan, China, Myanmar and India teaming up to import high-end drones into Indian heartland through the northeastern border of India.

The DRI stated in a release on Thursday that its officials rounded up the alleged Ahmedabad-based mastermind of the racket and he has admitted the offences.

The agency said the racket had been going on since 2017 and thousands of drones valued at over Rs 10 crore and involving duty evasion of around Rs 3 crore have been smuggled into India.

The DRI has been able to intercept and seize 85 high-end drones of DJI Mavic, DJI Phantom and MI brands. Besides, 27 DJI Mavic Air Fly More Kit and 34 DJI Ronin S hand-held gimbal stabilizer for DSLR and mirrorless camera, smuggled from China, having a market value of more than Rs 1 crore, were also seized from the tempo van that was carrying the smuggled goods from Air Cargo Complex, Ahmedabad and from the shop of the allegedly involved person in Paldi area of Ahmedabad.

According to DRI, Pakistani-based firms placed an order for drones with Chinese firms. The drones were supplied by Chinese firms to a warehouse in Dehong, Yunnan located in South China and is close to the eastern border of Myanmar. From Dehong, the Myanmar smugglers were tasked to get them across China-Myanmar border into Myanmar.

17/05/19 IANS/Outlook

Bengaluru: A passenger carrying gold biscuits worth Rs 75 lakh landed in the custody of the directorate of revenue intelligence (DRI), Bengaluru unit, at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Thursday.

Arif Hussain, 55, a resident of Adugodi, is a known offender involved in smuggling the yellow metal into Bengaluru from overseas. With strong links to smuggling rackets in the city and other states, he was on the radar of enforcement agencies for a while.

Officials received information on large quantities of gold being smuggled into Bengaluru via KIA from Bangkok on Thursday. "Our team was waiting at the arrival area. Arif Hussain landed at Bengaluru airport on Thursday on a Thai AirAsia flight and we detained him as he was exiting after immigration procedures," said a DRI official.

The officials grilled Hussain, but he did not divulge any details. They then inspected his hand luggage and found three gold biscuits, including two weighing one kilogram each and another 250 grams. A total of 2.25kg of the foreign-made gold worth Rs 75 lakh in the Indian market was seized from the suspect, who was arrested by the DRI team and booked for smuggling.

17/05/19 Petlee Peter/Times of India

New Delhi: GVK Airport Holdings on Thursday told the Delhi High Court how it plans to buy South African company Bidvest Group's stake in Mumbai International Airport Limited (MIAL). Details of where the money will come from and how it will be given to Bidvest were submitted in a sealed cover to the court. Further proceedings in the case will be done in-chamber at GVK's request, the court said.

Bidvest had sought that the High Court direct GVK Airport Holdings to prove that it had Rs 1,300 crore to buy out its stake. The court is hearing a plea by GVK Airport Holdings seeking injunction against Bidvest selling its stake to a third party.

In February this year, the GVK arm had exercised its **right of first refusal (ROFR)** to buy out 13.5 per cent of the total paid-up share capital of MIAL.

GVK Airport Holdings' stake would rise to 74 per cent--from the present 50.5 per cent--after it completes the acquisition of Bidvest's stake.

GVK will require Rs 2,171.4 crore to pay for 23.5 per cent stake as it was earlier agreed to it would acquire the shares from Bidvest as well as ACSA Global at Rs 77 apiece.

16/05/19 Aashish Aryan/Business Standard

The body of the Indian man who died on Alitalia's New Delhi-Milan flight was flown out from Abu Dhabi International Airport due to timely intervention of Indian Embassy and local authorities.

Kailash Chandra Saini, 52, from the Jhunjhunun district of Rajasthan, had died on the flight after suffering a heart attack on Monday. The flight made an emergency landing in Abu Dhabi airport. The body was taken to Mafraq Hospital and death certificate issued on Tuesday.

Saini's 26-year-old son Heera Lal was supposed to fly out with the mortal remains of his father to New Delhi on Wednesday morning but things didn't go as per plan due to procedural delays.

Embassy counsellor M Rajamurugan said the 'necessary approvals' were attained from New Delhi airport by Wednesday afternoon.

"The embassy was reopened on Tuesday night to continue the local documentation procedures. Still there were some procedural issues. The embassy took up the matter with authorities in New Delhi.

The body was flown out on by 9.45 pm Etihad Airways EY 218 flight. All local and Indian authorities and Etihad Airways have jointly worked together so the body can be repatriated back. We all have to unite in such cases and that's what has happened," Rajamurugan added.

According to social worker MM Nasar Kanhangad, Delhi airport doesn't accept death certificates which certify the cause of death as heart attack.

16/05/19 Ashwani Kumar/Khaleej Times

The US has ordered the suspension of self-handling rights of Indian carriers at American airports, cprimoi, sources told FE.

Analysts say, for the time being, the US move is unlikely to hurt Air India, the only Indian carrier operating direct flights to key cities like Washington, New York and Chicago, as it has already outsourced its ground handling work to different agencies at American airports. However, if the problem persists, the US may choose to retaliate in some other way or raise red tape for the Indian carrier, they fear. As for the American airlines, while United is the only carrier to operate flights to India currently, Delta Air Lines has also announced plans to launch a flight from December.

For its part, India has asked the US to refrain from implementing the order. To diffuse the situation, New Delhi has proposed to allow self-handling by the US carriers but with a security oversight by Indian agencies and said costs of such oversight will be borne by the US side, according to the sources.

The US Department of Transportation has also ordered that Indian carriers report their ground handling arrangements at American airports, while a separate directive mandated Indian airlines to submit their operating schedules, according to the sources. The US is learnt to have conveyed to the Indian side that these orders will remain effective until a solution is found.

In his talks with US commerce secretary Wilbur Ross earlier this month, commerce, industry and civil aviation minister Suresh Prabhu is understood to have flagged the issue.

17/05/19 Banikinkar Pattanayak and Arun Nayal/Financial Express

New Delhi: Singer Shreya Ghoshal took to social media to slam an airline for not allowing her to carry a musical instrument with her on the flight.

In a scathing message she wrote, "I guess @SingaporeAir does not want musicians or any body who has a precious instrument to fly with on this airline. Well. Thank you. Lesson learnt."

The airline apologised and wrote back, "Hi Shreya, we are sorry to hear this. May we seek more details of your concerns and what was last advised by our colleagues? Thank you."

As Shreya calls herself a 'recluse', this rather mild outburst on social media surprised her fans. In fact, one user pointed out that Shreya doesn't point out things on Twitter unless it's a matter of grave concern.

"Well, I didn't expect this from Singapore Airlines though. It is one of the best airlines. But yes Shreya doesn't tweet up things unless they are bad/worse," the user wrote.

16/05/19 India Today

After Etihad Airways decided they want to be a minority shareholder in the beleaguered Jet Airways and promised to invest only Rs 1,700 crore, banks are forced to look at other suitors to save the airline. They have started approaching unsolicited bidders that include a former air passenger service agent, a US-based professor, former head of a Bengaluru software company and member of an influential Indian political family.

These bidders, who submitted their offers after the deadline of May 10, will be assessed by the lenders for viability and seriousness to revive the airline, which shut its operations on April 17, Mint reported.

Jason Unsworth, a former British airline check-in and self-service kiosk agent, is one of the bidders. He later took the entrepreneurial lane and founded Atmosphere Intercontinental, a premium airline that is yet to start operations and which will connect parts of Asia.

Unsworth has faith that he can infuse life into Jet Airways. "I have a network of the best and most experienced aviation consultants in the industry, as well as over 10 years experience working for numerous airlines. (During) the last four years, I have been leading a startup team of airline professionals, (and) our airline is expected to launch later this winter," the article quoted him as saying.

Another unsolicited bidder is the Mumbai-based Darwin Group. It functions primarily in the information technology, pharmaceuticals, power and shipping space. Representatives from the entity met with SBI Capital Markets, adviser to Jet Airways' lenders, and offered to invest nearly Rs 14,000 crore. This amount could help relieve the carrier of most of its liabilities.

The lenders, however, will undertake due diligence as not much information, general or financial is available about the group. The latest data from one of Darwin's group companies, Darwin Platform Holding, states that it earned a profit of Rs 34,751 on sales of Rs 17.08 lakh in FY18.

Ajay Harinath Singh is the group's Chairman and reportedly belongs to a 'very influential' political family from Sultanpur in Uttar Pradesh.

Adi Partners, a London-based investment firm, is the third suitor for Jet Airways. It had earlier submitted an expression of interest (EoI) to the lenders. The company was established by Sanjay Viswanathan in 2012, after he quit as Chief Executive of Bangalore-based IT firm Sonata Software.

"We have long-term investors who are renowned for world-class governance and impact. We would love to back and support Etihad (Airways) in turning around Jet Airways," Vishwanathan is quoted as saying in the report.

He said his firm has roped in investment bank Rothschild & Co for a potential transaction, adding: "We have a strong platform of world-class, long-term investors who view this as an infrastructure investment."

The fourth entity in the fray is a consortium of small investors led by a college professor based out of Florida. Sankaran Raghunathan claims to represent minority investors of Jet Airways and said the group aims to raise Rs 21,500 crore.

"A bridge fund of Rs 3,500 crore will be raised on the back of commitments from Etihad Airways and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) for up to Rs 2,000 crore. We have had talks with representatives of Etihad Airways, who want to retain 24 percent stake in the airline. We are also discussing the case with NIIF, who haven't got back to us yet. If NIIF partners us, it can invest up to 10 percent, though the maximum investment its corpus allows is about 20 percent," the report quoted him as saying.

Money control 16/05/2019

Mumbai: Carrier Vistara has stalled plans to fly to Colombo, after the spate of terrorist bombings that recently ravaged the Sri Lankan commercial capital and is instead looking at South Asian destinations for its maiden international flight.

“Colombo flights were to start this month. But the airline had to delay it in view of the attacks. It is now working on a plan B,” said a person close to the development. He did not disclose which specific destinations in the region are being looked at in place of the Lankan city.

Earlier this year, Vistara received government approval to start overseas flights. A five member committee had been looking at its proposal, a unique move as Vistara is part owned by Tata Sons, whose other airline venture AirAsia India, was being probed for alleged irregular lobbying for international flying rights.

India has an open skies— or unlimited flying rights —agreement with Sri Lanka, which made it easy for Vistara to chart plans as soon as it got the approval. However, on April 21, Easter Sunday, three churches and three luxury hotels in Colombo were targeted in a series of suicide bombings by terrorists. There were also smaller explosions in a housing complex and a guest house. More than 250 people were killed.

Vistara, a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines, had in a proposal to the aviation ministry last year, said it planned to connect Sri Lanka and Maldives to Delhi and Thailand to Delhi and Kolkata. It also had referred to plans to connect destinations in Bangladesh, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia to Delhi and Singapore to Pune.

Vistara, like all other airlines, has also applied for flying rights that have been withdrawn from grounded carrier Jet Airways. The destinations are Dubai, Hong Kong, Qatar, Singapore and UK. Officials at the ministry of civil aviation last week took stock of various requests from airlines that have applied for Jet's unused overseas flight slots. Cash-strapped Jet stopped flying since April 17.

The Economic Times of india 20/05/2019

Debt-laden national carrier, Air India (AI) has decided to discontinue direct flight between Mumbai and New York's John F Kennedy airport. The airline started operating direct flights between Mumbai and New York in December 2018.

Reports claim, flying between Mumbai and New York has been causing losses to the airline. AI operated three flights per week between Mumbai and New York.

The flight was suspended by the carrier in February owing to closure of Pakistan airspace and was expected to be resumed in June. However, AI spokesperson said that they "won't be resuming the services, owing to poor load factor or low seat occupancy."

Air India - which operates direct flights from New Delhi to New York as well - has not included the flight in the winter schedule, according to HT. Flight from the nation capital to the big apple have been witnessing up to 80% seat occupancy.

Since the closure of Pakistan Airspace, US-bound Indian flights have been witnessing a surge in flying time, with the route being diverted to avoid any breach of Pakistan Air Space. The closure has been pushing the cost of operating flights for airlines.

AI uses Boeing B777-ER aircraft to operate flights from New Delhi to Newark, Washington, Chicago, San Francisco.

[The Economic Times of India 20/05/2019](#)

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has issued an advisory to US commercial airliners flying over the waters of the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to exercise caution as tensions between Washington and Tehran continue to simmer.

The advisory, issued by the FAA on Thursday and circulated late on Friday, said the warning came amidst "heightened military activities and increased political tensions in the region which present an increasing inadvertent risk to US civil aviation operations due to the potential for miscalculation or mis-identification".

Tensions have risen in recent days, with concerns about a potential US-Iran conflict. Earlier this week, the United States pulled some diplomatic staff from its embassy in Baghdad following weekend attacks on four oil tankers in the Gulf.

Washington has increased economic sanctions and built up its military presence in the region, accusing Iran of threats to US troops and interests. Tehran has described those steps as "psychological warfare" and a "political game".

On Friday, a defiant Iran said it could "easily" hit US ships.

[LiveMint 18/05/2019](#)

After a botched attempt for sale of Pawan Hans, the government is likely to issue a fresh bid document by the end of this month and provide indemnity to the potential buyers against contingent liability of about Rs 500 crore in the helicopter service company.

The government has decided to make the bid document more attractive after discussions with investors on their concerns as the sale process of Pawan Hans failed to attract any suitor when bidding ended on March 6.

"The fresh preliminary information memorandum (PIM) would be issued by end of May. It has been decided to indemnify the investors of the contingent liability of Rs 500 crore which relates to disputed tax demand," an official source told.

The government holds 51 per cent stake in helicopter service provider Pawan Hans, and the remaining 49 per cent is with Oil and Natural Gas Corporation. A total of 100 per cent stake in Pawan Hans, which has a fleet of 46 choppers, have been put on the block.

Another source said that as per estimates of advisers to the deal, a 100 per cent stake sale could fetch about Rs 1,000 crore to the government.

In April last year, the government had issued the information memorandum for the 51 per cent strategic stake sale in Pawan Hans and had sought expression of interest (EoI) from interested bidders by June 18. Thereafter, the ONGC board in July decided to combine its 49 per cent stake in the offer for sale by the Centre.

Following this, in August, the government invited fresh EoIs from entities saying that along with its 51 per cent stake, the bidders will also have the option to buy ONGC's stake of 49 per cent in the company. The last date for submission of EoIs was September 12. However, the total number of bidders have not made public to maintain confidentiality of the bidding process.

In February this year, the government shared the final share purchase agreement with the shortlisted bidders of Pawan Hans and asked them to submit their financial bids by March 6.

The government has budgeted to raise Rs 90,000 crore from disinvestment in the current financial year, up from about the Rs 84,972 crore mopped up in previous financial year.

[The Economic times of India 20/05/2019](#)

New Delhi : London-based AdiGro Group, which own AdiGro Aviation, has offered to restart the operations of grounded Jet Airways by July 1. In the offer it mentions that the company will restart functioning with eight to nine thousand employees and 70 aircraft.

Sanjay Viswanathan, Founder and Chairman of AdiGroup expressed his keenness to partner with Etihad Airways and turn around the 25 year old airline which had shut its operations on April 17.

In its agenda, the company has cleared that it will primarily focus on the balance sheet management and not operating it as a lifestyle company.

Viswanathan said that the company wants its top leadership will need to take a 25% pay cut while the other employees will have to give up 10%, and in return they will be offered ESOPs.

"We have asked for a relevant and practical haircut, but more importantly, we are actually giving equity upside. **Our binding bid has an equity component for the lender group, which means that not only will they recover their money, but also get a significant upside once our turnaround plan is executed,**" he told The Hindu Business Line.

Viswanathan also told the news daily that AdiGro Aviation has "put in a binding bid" to revive Jet for which the company has been in constant touch with Etihad. "We need approximately 5,000-6,000 crore (to resurrect the airline). It's [the assumption] based on our discussions with Etihad and SBICaps so far," he said.

19/05/19 News Heads

New Delhi: Lenders to grounded Jet Airways are confident over the future of the airline, with Rajnish Kumar, chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) expressing hope that clarity will emerge in a week's time.

"Various options are being evaluated. Legal opinion is being taken. There are many investors who are showing interest. We have to see whether they have the money and the wherewithal. I think the clarity should emerge in a week's time," the SBI chief told IANS on Saturday.

When asked if there were investors other than those who had submitted unsolicited offers, Kumar said that there were many who were showing interest. He, however, did not elaborate on the names of the bidders but added that their seriousness would have to be checked.

London-based AdiGro Group, the parent company of AdiGro Aviation, is one of the unsolicited bidders for Jet Airways, who has offered to restart the airline's operations by July 1. Sanjay Viswanathan, Founder and Chairman of AdiGroup has expressed his interest to partner with Etihad Airways and turn around the 25 year old airline which had shut its operations on April 17.

The SBI, which leads a consortium of domestic lenders to Jet Airways, had reportedly approached unsolicited bidders last week including UK-based entrepreneur Jason Unsworth, Mumbai-based Darwin Platform Group and AdiGro Aviation.

19/05/19 Business Today

Kolkata: Two apparent pilot errors within a span of 36 hours at Kolkata airport have triggered safety concerns. While the twin errors are being investigated, senior airport officials have called for more frequent interaction between pilots and air traffic control officers.

The first error occurred on Wednesday night when a SpiceJet Boeing B737-800 plane from Bengaluru that had just touched down exited the primary runway using taxiway R instead of taxiway C. According to sources, the pilot had been instructed to take taxiway C prior to landing as well as after touchdown but the plane still made the wrong turn.

Sources at the airport said there were grass-cutters working along the taxiway R at the time who were shocked to see the plane.

On Friday morning, yet another error occurred when a SpiceJet Bombardier Dash 8 Q400 aircraft that was to depart for Silchar went beyond the threshold point of taxiway B even an Air India Airbus A319 aircraft was waiting at the edge of the runway for takeoff. This plane, too, was heading for Silchar.

"The AI plane had to abort takeoff and exit the runway. The SpiceJet aircraft was then allowed to depart and only thereafter could the AI flight return to the runway and take off," an official said.

19/05/19 Times of India

The formula for distributing the foreign flying rights of the grounded Jet Airways has led to a schism in the airline industry, with IndiGo on one side and its rivals on the other, government officials told ET. State-owned Air India has first right of refusal — and will get about half of them on high-demand routes — and the remaining entitlements are given out in proportion to a carrier’s domestic flights, which would give IndiGo the most, since it’s market leader.

SpiceJet, Vistara and GoAir objected to this at a meeting convened by aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola on the grounds that this would create a “monopoly,” said one of the persons cited above.

The airline promoter who recorded his opposition didn’t name the carrier, the sources said. **The rights are to be apportioned in accordance with the Aeronautical Information Circular or AIC, which gives Air India first claim on the entitlements.**

After Air India, foreign flying rights will be allotted to airlines ranked in order of domestic flights measured in ASKs or available seat kilometres.

“While the decision on the award of foreign flying rights of Jet Airways temporarily to other carriers has been taken, the opposition by airlines to the AIC is being discussed,” said an aviation ministry official, who didn’t want to be identified.

Air India’s share has been decided. It will get about 5,700 weekly seats on the India-Dubai route, over 5,000 on the India-Qatar route besides about 4,600 additional seats to and from London. This is about half of Jet’s quota on routes with high demand, said an airline executive.

“This is a temporary allocation,” said a SpiceJet spokesperson. “The objective is to immediately provide flights for passengers who are paying high fares, mostly to foreign airlines. This objective will be fulfilled by those airlines that can provide immediate capacity and who have slots at both origin and destination. The rule referred to was made in 2005 with the objective of protecting the incumbent carriers at that time, primarily Air India. The rule is not relevant to the temporary allocation that is being done at this time. The ministry has already ignored this rule by allotting some of Jet’s traffic rights to Air India on a temporary basis.”

IndiGo, Vistara and GoAir didn’t respond to queries.

Airline sources said most of the remaining allocation would go to IndiGo as it’s the largest airline in the domestic sector.

One executive said this would be unfair. **“This is an unprecedented situation, as a large number quota has been made available on busy international routes and should be evenly awarded to airlines, including the new ones, which have just announced the launch of international services,”** said the senior airline executive.

Another suggested that since the allocations are supposed to be temporary and with an intent of minimising inconvenience to the travelling public, pending Jet’s possible revival, the government should allocate it to carriers that already operate on those routes.

However, this would mean that new airlines like Vistara and AirAsia India would be deprived of extra flying rights as they launch their international operations. It should be noted that, apart from Air India, Indian carriers mostly only fly to nearby overseas destinations, although IndiGo flies as far as

Istanbul.

Separately, AirAsia India has protested against the aviation ministry's decision not to invite the carrier for meetings on the award of Jet Airways' foreign flying rights. It also reiterated its demand for rights to operate flights to various destinations in Southeast Asia, among others. The airline has applied for permission to fly overseas and is expecting approvals soon as it completes five years of domestic operations in June next year.

The Economic Times of India 20/05/2019

Seeking long-term travel commitment, **Tata Group joint venture Air Asia India plans to tie up with about 200 companies in the next few months, offering them a slew of benefits, including flexibility in last-minute flight change and onboard meals.**

The aggressive business pitch is set to help the low-cost carrier widen its customer base before launching maiden international flights by year-end.

The airline is looking at Southeast Asian destinations, such as **Bangkok and Singapore**, for its overseas operations. The foreign flights would cover short-haul destinations with 3-4 hours of flying.

Speaking to IANS, Air Asia India Chief Operating Officer (COO) Sanjay Kumar said the airline had restructured some of its operations, launched a **loyalty programme as well as a new in-flight menu to enhance customer experience.**

"We have a new in-flight menu. We have also started a loyalty programme called Big Loyalty. We are the only low-cost airline in the country offering customers a structured loyalty programme, which allows them to earn reward points," said Kumar.

Talking about its corporate travel programme, the senior airline executive said most domestic airlines get 50 per cent of their customers from corporate travel programmes and Air Asia India's situation would not be different.

Air Asia India, which started operations in June 2014, is a joint venture between Tata Sons (holding 51 per cent stake) and AirAsia Berhad (holding the remaining 49 per cent shares).

The airline last week inducted 21st aircraft in its fleet, enhancing connectivity from its Delhi base.

"We have applied for permission to start international operations. With the induction of our 21st aircraft, all the necessary requirements are in place for an approval. We have completed five years of operations in the domestic market. Subject to regulatory approvals, we are planning to launch our international flights sometime in September-October," said the airline COO.

Air Asia India currently operates 164 flights a day, covering 19 destinations and carrying over 25,000 passengers.

The Economic times of India 20/05/2019

The Hinduja Group will start the process of bidding for Jet Airways this week, having obtained the assent of key stakeholders in the grounded airline including founder Naresh Goyal and Etihad

Airways, strategic investor in the carrier.

The Hinduja Group has engaged investment bankers led by SBI Capital Markets for due diligence, which will commence soon, said people with knowledge of the matter.

Sources close to Naresh Goyal and the Hindujas said they share cordial ties that go back more than two decades. They said the Hindujas expect the banks to take a sizeable haircut—initial calculations peg Jet’s dues at Rs 12,000 crore.

India’s leading conglomerates had declined approaches by Jet’s banks and Goyal for a possible rescue. The Tata Group had shown an inclination to consider a bid for the airline but subsequently lost interest, said the people cited above. The Hinduja Group had in the past eyed Air India when the state-run, heavily indebted airline came up for privatisation. It had also tied up with Lufthansa AirCargo for services between Sharjah and India in 1997-2000.



Another Suitor
Hinduja Group takes an interest in grounded Jet Airways

EARLY DAYS		PROMOTER NOD	
The group will start process of due diligence	Negotiations with Jet Airways lenders also set to start	The Hinduja Group has the go-ahead from Jet founder Naresh Goyal	Sought consent as the Group is against making hostile acquisitions
Jet dues estimated at ₹12,000 crore		Strategic investor Etihad Airways also sounded out	Also, it will need support of promoters & management

Apart from that, its much-coveted overseas routes are being eyed by rival airlines. The aviation regulator has handed over some of its domestic routes to rivals temporarily. ET reported on Monday that Air India has been given half of Jet’s busiest overseas routes with the rest to be shared out among domestic carriers, also on a temporary basis, pending Jet’s possible revival.

To be sure, it’s not at all certain that Jet has found a saviour yet, said a person close to the development. **“Any investor will have to wade through several levels of due diligence,”** he said. **“Without the audited financial results, no investor can be sure of the gaping hole that is Jet’s accounts at this point.”**

At least **30 Jet commanders flying long-haul, wide-bodied aircraft have applied to Turkish, Korean Air, Qatar Airways and Rwanda Air for jobs,** said people with knowledge of the matter. Closer home, **IndiGo has hired over 30 Jet pilots who flew Boeing 737s. The pilots will be inducted after training on IndiGo’s Airbus 320s,** sources said. **IndiGo had offered Rs 15-20 lakh as sign-on bonus for Jet Airways pilots for a limited period of time.**

Anyone looking to revive the carrier will have to start from scratch, since the top management at Jet has quit. The support of Goyal and Etihad is therefore crucial, said the people cited above. **The Hinduja Group will also gauge the level of support from the government and bankers for a revival plan before making a final move. Another aspect of the Hinduja Group is that their acquisitions are predicated on gaining majority control.**

The Economic times of India 21/05/2019

Lenders led by State Bank of India are contemplating a payment of more than Rs 200 crore (about \$30 million) to US Exim Bank and take charge of six aircraft of Jet Airways as they struggle to keep the airline afloat till they agree on a durable restructuring plan.

Bankers say payment of the \$30-million is worth it because it could release the six aircraft valued at more than — Rs 2,000 crore (\$300 million) from the bank. These assets can then be leased or used to start limited operations that will be crucial in saving the sinking airline.

“A small amount of loans from the US Exim are pending repayment. If we pay off these loans, the planes which are valued much more than the amount due, will become assets for the airline. Why not we take it over? There is a serious thought along those lines,” said a person familiar with the deliberations.

The delay in resolution for the airline can be damaging as rivals are eyeing Jet Airways’ slots, planes and flying rights which are lucrative in the clogged but growing Indian aviation market. On Monday, ET reported how private sector airlines Indigo, Spicejet, Vistara and GoAir are fighting for the foreign flying rights of Jet Airways which was grounded from mid-April.

Lenders, however, are mindful that all efforts to save the airline will come to nothing if there is no concrete restructuring plan. Etihad Airways, the only eligible bidder, has put preconditions to its bid and seems reluctant to pump in more cash.

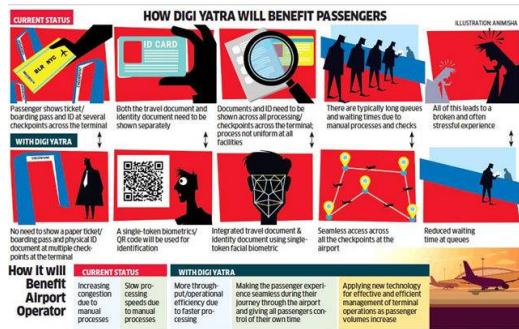
“Nobody knows what plan will work out. **There were some feelers to the Hinduja Group, but they have no experience in running an airline and will need somebody to manage the show. We still don’t know whether Etihad will partner with the Hindujas so it’s very complicated,**” said a second person involved with the resolution process. The banks involved in the turnaround of Jet Airways, have in the past, stated that altering the carrier’s negative net worth and getting it back to the skies will be a big challenge for interested investors.

The Economic Times of India 21/05/2019

KIA is in talks with various domestic airlines as it puts in place a facial recognition system that will replace boarding passes of passengers. The project, titled ‘Digi Yatra’, is to be implemented in a phased manner.

“We are currently finalising the integration with various airlines’ departure control systems (DCSs) to manage the check-in process using biometric ID. The first phase will be rolled out during Q3 (third quarter) of 2019,” a BIAL spokesperson told ET. The project, officials said, will enable registration at the airport using the ‘digi yatra’ kiosk at the kerbside, terminal entry using e-gates, pre-embarkation security check (PESC) using e-gates and also boarding through e-gates.

Several airports in India are also expected to roll out a similar facility, conceptualised by the ministry of civil aviation. **“The project facilitates paperless travel and avoids identity check at multiple points,”** the official website states.



At the KIA, the first phase will only cover domestic passengers. “Once the domestic passenger roll-out is stabilised, international passengers are also expected to be included subject to appropriate government and regulatory approvals,” the spokesperson said. **“We are starting with Vistara.** We are also in talks with other domestic airlines as well to bring them on board over Q3 and Q4, 2019.”

In 2018-19, the Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) served 33.33 million passengers, registering a 23% year-on-year growth. Domestic traffic was the main driver of the growth, accounting for 28.82 million passengers. Officials said **the management has not finalised the number of registration kiosks that will be set up for the ‘Digi Yatra’ programme.**

The Economic Times of India 21/05/2019

Employees of cash-strapped Jet Airways protested outside the Civil Aviation Ministry here on Tuesday, demanding revival of the airline and payment of their pending salaries.

The protests come amid the State Bank of India-led consortium of lenders struggling to find a buyer for the airline which ceased operations around mid-last month due to acute liquidity crisis.

Around 200 employees of Jet Airways demonstrated with banners reading "Hear our cry, let 9W fly", "We fly you around, don't let us be on ground", "We have dependents to feed, please don't let 9W bleed" and "A family helps each other for cleaning house".

9W is the flight code for Jet Airways.

As the protesters moved towards the ministry, Delhi Police and CRPF personnel erected barriers to stop them.

Three employees of the full-service carrier met S K Mishra, joint secretary of Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Asish Kumar Mohanty, one of the employees who met Mishra, told PTI later, "We have given him an update about today's conditions within Jet Airways... We have not got salaries for the last five months. In between, our medical coverage has also been stopped as the management has told us that they have no revenue."

We told him about three important concerns for the airline -- **employees' pending salaries, no management is there now to look after Jet Airways and expedition of SBI's bidding process,**" added Mohanty, who belongs to the airline's engineering department.

Jet Airways' Chief Executive Officer Vinay Dube, Chief Financial Officer Amit Agarwal, Company Secretary and Compliance Officer Kuldeep Sharma and Chief People Officer Rahul Taneja had resigned from their respective posts on May 14.

"The joint secretary said the government is very much concerned about the revival of Jet Airways. He said that the higher officers know about it and dialogue and meeting are going on. We told him that the dialogue and meeting have been going on for the last 3-4 months, but nothing has been done on paper as yet," Mohanty said.

He said Mishra was told that aircraft of the airline are being de-registered and the primary concern is the pending salaries of employees.

According to Mohanty, the **joint secretary said he will tell his "top bosses" about the employees' concerns.**

He added that the central government would be given a petition on Tuesday itself.

The lenders, whom Jet Airways owes over Rs 8,000 crore in debt, are offering 31.2 per cent-75 per cent stake in the company on a fully diluted basis.

SBI Caps, the merchant banking arm of SBI, had on behalf of the consortium of 26 lenders invited expressions of interest April 8th-12th, and received four preliminary bids.

These 26 lenders own 51 per cent stake in the airline.

After the first round of bids, private equity firms IndiGo Partners and TPG, Etihad Airways and the sovereign fund NIF were shortlisted.

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways submitted its sealed bid to acquire a minority stake in Jet Airways with a lot of riders that involved finding more investors, leaving little hope for the airline's survival.

The Economic times of India 21/05/2019

Vistara Tuesday said Vinod Kannan will take over as its chief strategy officer from June as the full service carrier prepares to fly overseas.

Currently, Sanjiv Kapoor is both chief commercial officer as well as chief strategy officer at Vistara, a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines.

"As Vistara accelerates its growth and prepares to take the next leap in its journey of becoming a global brand, certain changes have been introduced in the leadership structure.

"Strategy and Commercial are cornerstones of any airline's business, and these two areas will be bolstered to ensure focus on key priorities," an airline spokesperson told PTI.

Kannan from within the Singapore Airlines group will be joining Vistara next month as chief strategy officer, while Kapoor will remain chief commercial officer, the spokesperson said.

The domestic carrier is preparing to start overseas flights and has also placed orders for a significant number of planes.

Vistara, which has 22 aircraft on its fleet, operates around 140 flights every day. The airline commenced commercial operations on January 9, 2015.

The Economic Times of India 21/05/2019

Diversified Hinduja Group is evaluating opportunity to invest in Jet Airways, which has been grounded for more than a month now.

Lenders to the full service carrier, which temporarily shuttered operations on April 17 as it ran out of cash, is looking for possible suitors.

While the SBI-led lenders' consortium is still working on ways to revive the once-storied Jet Airways, the civil aviation ministry has already awarded the carrier's slots at various airports to other airlines on a temporary basis.

"Hinduja Group is evaluating the Jet Airways opportunity," the group said in a statement on Tuesday.

The group has interests in automotive, information technology, infrastructure project, power, real estate, healthcare and other areas. It employs more than 1,50,000 people, as per its website.

The Economic times of India 21/05/2019

New Delhi: **Air India** Wednesday announced that various new flights would begin from next month on domestic as well as international routes in order to meet passengers' heavy demand during the summer vacation

The national carrier said it **will offer additional 3,500 seats per week on Mumbai-Dubai-Mumbai route from June 1.**

Moreover, it will offer additional 3,500 seats per week on Delhi-Dubai-Delhi route too from June 2 by operating two new flights using its B787 Dreamliner aircraft.

The airline will offer one way Economy class promotional fare of Rs 7777 (all inclusive) from both Delhi and Mumbai to Dubai for sale and travel up to July 31, 2019," Air India said in a statement.

On its domestic front, Air India said it will introduce new flights on Bhopal-Pune-Bhopal route and Varanasi-Chennai-Varanasi route from June 5.

"The number of flights on Delhi-Bhopal-Delhi will be increased from present 14 flights per week to 20 flights per week by introducing third frequency to the historical city of Tals," the statement added. The national carrier would be increasing its flights on Delhi-Raipur-Delhi route from existing seven flights per week to 14 flights per week.

According to Air India, the number of flights per week would be increased on routes such as Delhi-Bengaluru-Delhi, Delhi-Amritsar-Delhi, Chennai-Ahmedabad-Chennai and Chennai-Kolkata-Chennai.

The flights per week would also be increased on Delhi-Vadodara-Delhi route and Mumbai-Vizag-Mumbai route, the statement added.

Since April 17, when Jet Airways suspended its operations due to lack of funds, there has been an intense competition among other Indian carriers to get its domestic slots and international flying rights.

On May 17, Civil Aviation Secretary P S Kharola had said that while all Indian airlines have asked for Jet Airways' international flying rights, Air India has already been given some routes as it is always considered "on priority" on such matters.

As Jet Airways has been out of operation for more than one month, the airfares across various important domestic routes and international routes have increased significantly.

Consequently, the **Civil Aviation Ministry has already allocated more than 50 per cent of domestic slots of Jet Airways to other airlines on temporary basis.**

After allocating these domestic slots, the ministry has also allocated some of Jet Airways' international flying rights to other airlines, including Air India, on temporary basis.

The Economic times of India 22/05/2019

MUMBAI: Budget carrier SpiceJet Wednesday announced the launch of 20 new domestic flights, with 18 of them connecting the financial capital with a host of metro and non-metro cities.

The new services, which include flights to regional destinations such as Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayawada and Tirupati from Mumbai, will be launched between May 26 and May 30, SpiceJet said in a statement.

All new flights being introduced will be operated daily, except the one for Mumbai-Kolkata route which will be not be operational on Wednesday and Sunday, with Boeing 737 NG aircraft, the release said.

Starting April 1, SpiceJet has announced 106 new flights, which include 73 connecting Mumbai, 16 connecting Delhi and 8 flights between Mumbai and Delhi, in an effort to partially offset the capacity loss across domestic and international routes in the wake of Jet Airways grounding.

With the new flights, passengers from Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayawada, Goa, Hyderabad, Tirupati, Kochi, Kolkata, Kanpur and Patna will be able to travel to a host of other cities, both on SpiceJet's domestic as well as international network via Mumbai, the airline said.

Currently, SpiceJet on an average operates 569 daily flights to 62 destinations -- 53 domestic and 9 international -- with a fleet of 95 planes, consisting of 65 Boeing 737 and 30 Bombardier Q-400.

The Economic Times of India 22/05/2019

The new Indian government coming to power will need to do much more for the country's aviation sector than its predecessor did in the last five years, said industry experts and airline executives.

The **priority for the new government**—predicted by many Exit Polls to be formed by BJP in its second consecutive win after 2014—**should include a review of the aviation policy introduced in 2016. The government should address most aspects, especially the regional connectivity scheme, bilateral policies and airport infrastructure, industry experts said. Separately, there must also be fresh measures to deal with airline failures, given almost every new regional carrier failed to take off and India's oldest airline Jet airways grounded operations for want of funds.**

The government needs to “review the aviation policy and address all challenges especially bilateral policy, ground handling, the regional connectivity scheme called UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) schemes for maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) units etc,” said Kapil Kaul, south Asia CEO of Sydney-based consultant CAPA Centre for Aviation.

Under the regional connectivity scheme which focuses on air-connecting India’s smaller towns, the government has in the last three years awarded close to 700 routes to various airlines but according to reports, only a fourth seem to be getting regular flights operations while the rest have faced prolonged grounding or infrastructural issues.

“The current government seems to have got most things wrong”, said Mark Martin, founder of Martin Consulting.

“Under the promise of disinvestment, Pawan Hans (the state run helicopter operator) has its financial decision making process locked and is today a loss making company and and nearly a sick unit; when 18 months ago it had a top line profit of Rs 120 crore and a profit after tax of Rs 26 crore,” he said. Martin also said the government needs to right the previous wrong on national carrier Air India, which included failed efforts to privatise it.

“Air India is in the same situation; so clearly signs of failure,” he added.

He said nearly five regional airlines that wanted to start operations, encourage by UDAN failed over the past 18 months.

The government also needs to “introduce policy measures to deal with airline failures,” said Kaul.

“It’s critical for airlines to have significant cash reserves to deal with market related risks. It has be aligned it gradually to global best practices which is liquidity profile to be equivalent to 20% of annual expenses- within two years. We see this as a most critical policy measure,” he added.

Jet Airways stopped flying on April 17, running out of money and failing to raise funds to stay afloat. Its lenders frantic search for investors has brought them to the wealthy Hinduja Group that have shown an interest in bidding for the airline.

“The government failed in whatever role it played in the Jet saga,” said Martin.

“The onus was on State Bank of India and other public-sector lenders to find it a new investor. But in the interim, they did not give it any funding and let it ground all operations. Moreover, the government gave away its key slots and aircraft in double quick time,” he added.

The government also needs to restructure the aviation regulator the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) “as a self funded independent regulator and push for inclusion of the aviation turbine fuel in the ambit of GST,” said Kaul.

The **DGCA has been critiqued for its lax decision making** especially in the wake of the twin plane crashes involving the Boeing 737 Max planes which were subsequently grounded across the world. India was among the last nations to ground the planes.

MUMBAI: Budget carrier AirAsia India is looking to double its fleet in the next 12-15 months as well as launch international operations by October, a senior official said.

The Bengaluru-headquartered airline -- a joint venture between Tatas and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad -- is eligible to fly overseas. Currently, it has a fleet of 21 A 320 planes.

"We are planning to double our capacity (fleet size) in the next 12-15 months, beginning May this year. **We are planning to induct some fuel-efficient A320 neo planes as well in our fleet**" the official told PTI.

AirAsia India, which started operations on June 12 2014, had a **market share of 6.2 per cent of the domestic traffic in April.**

As part of expansion plans, **AirAsia India is likely to launch international services by September-October with flights to destinations in South East Asia, including Malaysia and Thailand.**

"After South East Asia, we plan to expand our operations to destinations such as Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh in the SAARC region and also to Japan, the Middle East and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region," the official said.

SAARC is South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.

"We are eligible to fly on overseas routes both by the earlier rules as well as the existing ones. We applied to the civil aviation ministry in January for approval, which we expect to receive after the new government is in place," the official said.

Under the existing norms, airlines should have at least 20 aircraft to start international routes against the earlier one of having 20 planes and minimum five years of domestic operations.

After receiving its 21st plane this week, the airline's chief operating officer Sanjay Kumar said AirAsia India was focusing on strengthening its presence in tier-I and tier-II cities.

The official ruled out plans to induct long range A321 neo planes in its fleet.

In **2016**, AirAsia India's parent company AirAsia Berhad had signed a **firm order for 100 A 321 neo planes worth USD 12.6 billion**

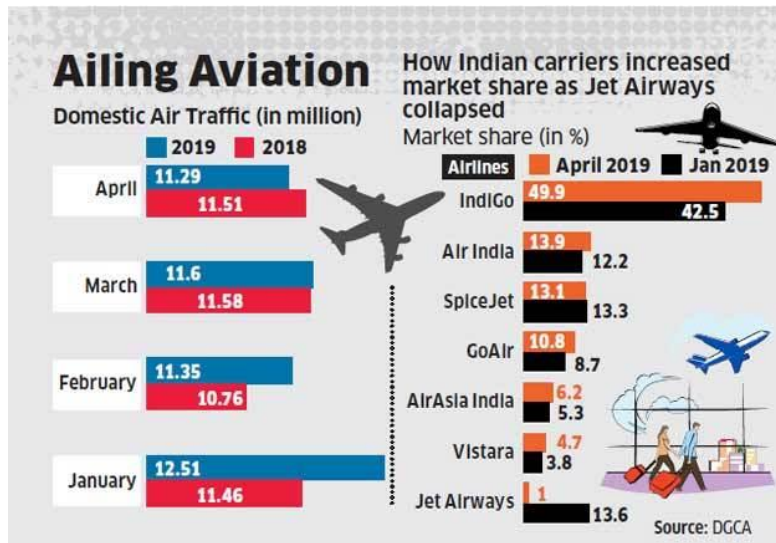
The Economic Times of India 23/05/2019

Domestic air traffic in India--which prides itself for being one of the world's fastest growing aviation markets--fell for the first time in 6 years in April, the month that India's oldest airline Jet Airways grounded operations.

Jet's grounding however helped bigger rival IndiGo to control 50% of the Indian domestic market, followed at a considerable distance by Air India and SpiceJet.

Indian carriers flew 11.3 million passengers locally in April, down about 2% from 11.5 million in the same month last year, according to data released by the country's aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA). The last time traffic declined was in June 2013—3% to 4.86 million

passengers, after Vijay Mallya's Kingfisher Airlines shut shop. Local traffic in March 2019 increased a tad to 11.60 million from 11.58 million in the same month the previous year. **Traffic growth rate, till last year at robust double digits, had fallen to low single digits since February.**



Jet grounded its operations on April 17, running out of money and failing to raise funds to stay afloat. It started grounded large swathes of its capacity in February. More than 800 daily flights were pulled out of the market, leading to a capacity cut, which ultimately shrank the market in April.

Jet's key slots and several planes, deregistered due to non payment of lease rentals, have been allocated on a temporary basis to rival carriers. This will likely lead to an interesting reshuffle in market share in the coming months.

Meanwhile, IndiGo controlled 49.9% of the local flyers market in April, growing its share from 42.5% in January, when Jet was still operating a significant chunk of its capacity. Air India, at number 2, controlled about 14% up from 12.2% in January, while SpiceJet accounted for 13.1%.

Jet received the highest passenger complaints in April, 52.9 for every 10,000 passengers, primarily related to refunds for cancelled flights. On that matrix, the number of its peers was negligible: 1.6 for Air India, and less than 1 for others.

Domestic air traffic comparison:

2019 vs 2018 (in millions)

April 11.29 11.51

March- 11.60 11.58

Feb- 11.35 10.76

Jan- 12.51 11.46

How Indian carriers increased market share as Jet collapsed

Market share (%) April 2019 Jan 2019

IndiGo 49.9 42.5

Air India 13.9 12.2

SpiceJet 13.1 13.3

GoAir 10.8 8.7

AirAsia India 6.2 5.3

Vistara 4.7 3.8

Jet Airways 1 13.6

Source: DGCA

The Economic Times of India 23/05/2019

With conventional solutions remaining elusive for the grounded Jet Airways, industry experts see a joint bid for the airline by strategic and financial investors as a viable option wherein risks can also be hedged.

"There are cases where management buy-outs are happening. The employees are coming together to bid for the revival of the company. There is no harm in being innovative. Like-minded people can come together and bid," said a Mumbai-based investment banker.

He cited the case of insolvent power transmission firm Jyoti Structures in which a couple of dozens of investors came together to buy the company.

Jet Airways remains grounded for over a month now and the attempt made by its lenders led by the State Bank of India (SBI) to bring an investor on board has failed.

"The idea (of two or three like-minded investors coming together) is good. Now that the Hinduja Group has shown interest in the airline, there seems to be light at the end of the tunnel. It will also pave way for the business conglomerate to enter into the aviation space in India," said Rajan Mehra, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) at Club One Air and former India head of Qatar Airways.

In response to the lenders' call for stake sale in the airline, only Etihad Airways submitted a bid. The other three investors -- private equity firm TPG Capital, Indigo Partners and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF), which had qualified in the expression of interest (Eoi), did not submit any financial proposal.

There were also two unsolicited bids from foreign investors. The Hinduja Group on Tuesday said that it was exploring options to buy a stake in the crisis-hit airline.

"Hinduja Group is evaluating the Jet Airways opportunity," a spokesperson had said.

While the idea of interested parties coming together and submitting a joint bid appears to be a solution, the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of a large private firm said that it would be a complicated exercise.


As per industry estimates, the debt-laden Jet Airways requires funds worth Rs 15,000 crore but none of the investors have so far showed commitment to infuse substantial funds. The sole bidder Etihad, which holds 24 per cent stake in the airline, has proposed to invest only Rs 1,700 crore.

The Economic Times of India 23/05/2019

Route 1: **Amsterdam - Bengaluru**



Data

Carrier	
Aircraft	Boeing 787-9
Frequency	Three weekly
Start date	28 October 2019
Distance	7,693 km
O&D traffic demand (2018)	64,403
Growth % YOY	44.2%
Average one-way fare \$ (2018)	\$496.03

Insight

KLM is expanding its Indian network with the launch of a new route from Amsterdam Airport Schiphol to Bangalore International Airport Limited following the suspension of Jet Airways' service. The Netherlands flag carrier will open the route on 28 October 2019, flying on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays using Boeing 787-9 equipment. The aircraft will be configured to offer 30 seats in business class, 45 seats in economy comfort class and 219 seats in economy.

KLM's former joint venture partner Jet Airways previously operated daily on the route after launching it in winter 2017. However, in April 2019 the airline suspended all service. In a statement, KLM said the new route would "raise capacity to India in order to offer our customers alternatives, while continuing to cater to market demand". It currently flies daily from Amsterdam to Delhi and three-weekly to Mumbai.

According to figures from Sabre Market Intelligence, 70.8 percent of traffic from Amsterdam to Bengaluru in 2018 was behind; 17.6 percent was local; 8.5 percent was bridge; and 3.1 percent was beyond.

Routes Online 24/05/2019

The grounding of Jet Airways has impacted industry's capacity by as much as 14 per cent, resulting in a 4.2 per cent fall in domestic air traffic to 10.99 million in April, according to Icra

The domestic passenger traffic remained on an upswing between July 2013 and March 2019, after witnessing year-on-year de-growth in June 2013, the ratings agency said in a note on Thursday.

The moderation in capacity, which started in February when the now-defunct Jet Airways began grounding its fleet in a staggered manner, has also resulted in 30-40 per cent increase in airfares in March compared to September last year, Icra said.

"This (de-growth in domestic passenger traffic) is primarily attributable to adverse impact on the industry capacity which has been hit hard due to grounding of Jet Airways aircraft starting February (due to liquidity constraints) and eventual discontinuation of its operations from April 18," Icra added.

Cash-starved Jet Airways temporarily suspended its operations on April 17.

Noting that the consequent increase in airfares due to the demand-supply imbalance has impacted the industry Passenger Load Factors (PLFs), Icra said during April all airlines except GoAir have reported a year-on-year decline in PLFs.

PLF is an indicator of seat occupancy.

Overall, the domestic passenger traffic growth for January-April period was muted at 2.5 per cent, significantly lower than the 24.6 per cent growth witnessed during the year-ago period, Icra stated.

"The discontinuation of operations by Jet Airways has impacted about 14 per cent of the total industry capacity. Overall, the moderation in capacity starting February has resulted in airfares surging by about 30-40 per cent in March over September last year," Kinjal Shah, vice president and co-head for corporate sector ratings at Icra said.

Since, India is a price sensitive market, rise in airfares has affected passenger traffic growth from October last year onwards.

There has been re-deployment of some of the aircraft of Jet Airways by other airlines, which has moderated airfares during April and May 2019 but overall fares continue to increase, she added.

While the increased airfares are likely to support the profitability of the airlines in an environment of high costs, the impact on the passenger growth does not bode well for the industry, Shah noted.

The Economic Times of India 24/05/2019

The government has put top consultancy firm EY to work for divesting its stake in flag carrier Air India and "quickly" issue expression of interest (EoI).

"EY continues to be the transaction advisor for the sale of Air India. We have been directed **to close the accounts for FY 2018-19 and provide updated data for EoI to take the disinvestment process forward**," said a senior Air India official.

"Until the transaction gets completed EY is our advisor. They will be paid their fees after disinvestment process is complete. **The instruction now is immediately start the process for EoI. Of course, approval of the Union Cabinet will be required for it**," he added.

The development comes close on the heels of Prime Minister's Office (PMO) directing the Aviation Ministry to speed up the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India and three of its subsidiaries.

In a letter to Air India Chairman Ashwani Lohani, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola had advised to **finalise the financials of Air India and its subsidiaries by end of June, 2019.**

"Also, the accounts for FY 2018-19 would form the basis of bidding. Therefore, it is necessary that they are prepared with utmost caution so as to reflect the correct financial status," Kharola had written in the letter which has been reviewed by IANS.

The Aviation Secretary directed the airline to **get contingent liabilities and account receivables verified thoroughly besides a physical verification of the inventories. A list of pending litigations is also required to be drawn up.**

The government had last year initiated the process to sell majority 74 per cent stake in the national carrier but the plan proved a damp squib with no private investor turning up for the offer.

In view of rising fuel price and weak investment environment, the government had put the process on hold maintaining that it would be taken up after Lok Sabha elections 2019

The Economic Times of India 24/05/2019

Low-cost carrier Air Asia India has dropped its plan to lease B737 aircraft of grounded Jet Airways as the Tata group venture carrier wants to continue with one type of aircraft.

"Air Asia India had informed the aviation regulator about their plan to lease some of the B737 airplanes that were operated by Jet Airways. But later it did not follow up. Now, the idea has finally been dropped," said an industry source.

He said the airline did not want to pursue the plan as induction of new type of fleet was seen adding complications given the different seat configuration, maintenance and skill requirement.

"In low-cost airline business, one-type of fleet is advisable," the executive quoted above said.

Facing severe liquidity crunch, Jet Airways had stopped operations on April 17. In order to fill the capacity gap due to grounding of Jet Airways, the rivals SpiceJet and Vistara swung into action to take the crisis-hit airline's narrow-body airplanes.

While SpiceJet is learnt to have inducted 20 of Jet's grounded B737 planes, Vistara took 4.

The Bengaluru-headquartered Air Asia India also showed initial interest and applied to Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) for regulatory approval.

The airline is set to continue its expansion plan adding A320 airplanes. In the next 18 months, it plans to double its fleet size from current 21 A320 aircraft.

The budget carrier that started operations in June 12, 2014 currently has a market share of 6.2 per cent in the domestic market.

The Economic Times of India 25/05/2019

In a scene right out of a Hollywood action movie, Emirates flight EK-507 carrying Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal and wife Anita was forced by Mumbai immigration to return to the bay, where they were offloaded, after it had already started taxiing.

Goyal's 'grounding' comes weeks after his airline, the largest in India for a long time, was grounded when it ran out of financial fuel. **Government sources said a lookout circular (LOC) had been issued by the Serious Frauds Investigation Office (SFIO), under the ministry of corporate affairs (MCA), as per a November 2018 home ministry notification giving powers to public sector banks to prevent wilful defaulters and fraudsters from fleeing the country.**

The Boeing 777 aircraft, with the Goyals among 371 people on board, was about to depart for Dubai at 4.14 pm, said an air traffic control official. "It began taxiing at 4.19 pm, but then, we received a call from immigration authorities asking us to call the aircraft back. They said there was an immigration issue." The aircraft docked into parking bay V12 at 4.35 pm.

WAS FLYING TO DUBAI BY EMIRATES 1ST CLASS



Naresh Goyal with wife Anita

Luggage was checked in, passports stamped, seats taken before journey was cut short

4.14pm | Boeing 777 aircraft, with Goyals among 371 people on board, pushes back for departure to Dubai

4.19pm | As plane begins taxiing, air traffic control officials get **call from immigration authorities** asking them to call aircraft back citing immigration issue

4.35pm | Aircraft docks into parking bay. Goyals, seated in the second row of the **Emirates first class cabin**, told to disembark. Had they not been grounded, the

Goyals would have landed in Dubai in 3 hours and **walked out to a limousine** (part of Emirates' first class service) booked to ferry them from the airport to their penthouse residence in Dubai Marina

5.04pm | Aircraft pushes back a second time for departure, this time without the Goyals who had disembarked and their check-in bags offloaded

► The Goyals **left the airport premises** a couple of hours after the incident

The passengers would have barely settled in, when the Goyals seated in the second row of the Emirates first class cabin were asked to disembark. Had the aircraft not been called back, the Goyals would have landed in Dubai in three hours where a limousine, which is part of the Emirates first class service, was booked to ferry them from the airport to their penthouse residence in Dubai Marina.

"Their bags were checked-in only up to Dubai," said an airport source. However, another official said that they were travelling to London. If so, they had probably planned to break their journey in Dubai.

On March 2, 2016, Vijay Mallya, whose Kingfisher Airlines reportedly owed banks Rs 9,000 crore, left the country for London on a Jet flight — triggering a political firestorm and setting in motion protracted extradition proceedings in the UK.

As for the 25-year old Jet, which "temporarily" suspended flight operations on April 17, it owes over Rs 7,000 crore to nine Indian banks led by State Bank of India which has a Rs 1,600-crore exposure. **Officials in the government said the SFIO and the Enforcement Directorate had launched a probe against Jet.**

Earlier in the day, no objection was raised when the Goyals reached the airport counter to clear immigration. **"Their passports were stamped and permission was granted to leave the the country,"** said an airport source.

The Emirates aircraft pushed back a second time for departure at 5.04 pm, this time with 368 people on board after the Goyals and another passenger, who had a medical problem, had disembarked and their check-in bags offloaded. However, the Goyals left the airport premises in a couple of hours.

An Emirates spokesperson said: **"Emirates is co-operating fully with the relevant authorities and we abide by the laws of the various countries we operate in."** Jet Airways declined to comment.

Jet's closure has left about 22,000 employees jobless, with a majority of them not paid salary for the month of March. Jet pilots, engineers and senior management haven't been paid since December 2018. Two weeks ago, it received a notice from the provident fund office for the non-payment of PF dues for March 2019.

In addition to the Rs 1,600 crore owed to SBI, Jet owes equivalent of Rs 2,100 crore to Mashreq Bank and HSBC in the of foreign currency borrowing. The other Indian lenders are Bank of India (BoI), Canara Bank, IDBI, Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), ICICI, Punjab National Bank (PNB), and Yes Bank.

The list of owners of bankrupt companies who fled India in the past four years, leaving crores in unpaid bank loans, is a rather long one. Apart from Mallya, diamond merchant Nirav Modi, an accused in a Rs 13,500-crore Punjab National Bank scam, fled India on January 1, 2018; followed five days later by Gitanjali Jewellery promoter Mehul Chowksi. In July 2013, Winsome Group promoter, Jatin Mehta, who allegedly defrauded banks for around Rs 7,000 crore, left India.

[The Economic Times of India 26/05/2019](#)

No-frills airline SpiceJet Sunday announced the induction of a Boeing 737, taking its fleet size to 100 aircraft.

SpiceJet is the fourth domestic airline to achieve the feat after national carrier Air India, now defunct Jet Airways and rival IndiGo .

Eight domestic carriers - Air India, IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir, Air India Express, Vistara, AirAsia and Alliance together have 595 planes in their fleet at the moment.

Spicejet in a release said it has added some 23 planes in the last one month alone.

"Who could have thought that from the brink of closure in December 2014, SpiceJet would have a 100-aircraft fleet in 2019," SpiceJet chairman and managing director Ajay Singh said on the induction of 100th plane in the fleet.

The Gurugram-based budget carrier now has **68 Boeing 737s, 30 Bombardier Q-400s and two B737 freighters.**

The airline at present operates 575 daily flights on an average to 62 destinations 53 domestic and nine international, it said.

SpiceJet is a key player in the Union government's regional connectivity scheme UDAN operating 42 flights per day to and from various regional destinations, it added.

"SpiceJet has added 23 planes and over a hundred new flights, most of them connecting the key metros of Mumbai and Delhi, in just over a month's time," the airline said.

Of the 595 planes, IndiGo has 230, Air India 128 and SpiceJet 100.

Jet Airways, which ceased operations around mid-last month, had 120 planes in its fleet before going bust.

Besides, GoAir has 49 planes, Air India Express 25, Vistara 22 and AirAsia India 21 planes in their fleet.

Alliance Air, which is the regional subsidiary of Air India, has 20 ATRs for operations.

SpiceJet had placed a USD 22 billion order for 205 aircraft with Boeing in 2015 and had followed it up with a USD 1.7 billion order for 50 Bombardier Q400 planes.

The Economic Times of India 26/05/2019

The Kolkata airport declared emergency for over an hour on Sunday after a threat call was received for a Kolkata-bound flight at the airline's office in Bengaluru airport, an official said.

Emergency was declared at the airport at around 6.05 p.m. after a **threat call was received at the Bengaluru Airport for Air Asia's I5-588 flight from Bagdogra to Kolkata,** said a statement issued by the Kolkata airport. The emergency was called off at 7.25 p.m. "There were 187 passengers on board, including the crew members. All security checks have been carried out as per the procedure. All the passengers disembarked safely," the statement added.

The Economic times of India 26/05/2019

An Air Asia flight was cordoned off on Sunday by Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel at the airport here after receiving a threat call.

The flight I5 588 took off from Bagdogra with 179 passengers on board. The airline said it received the call from an unknown person at Bengaluru airport.

"AirAsia India received a call stating that the caller would not be responsible in case anyone was hurt onboard flight i5-588. The flight had already departed from Bagdogra for Kolkata by the time the call was received. AirAsia India operations coordinated with Kolkata ATC to affect an immediate landing at Kolkata," Air Asia said in a statement.

The airline also expressed regret caused to passengers due to delay. "Delays caused due to this are regretted, but we would like to reiterate that we prioritise the safety and security of our guests and crew at all times," it added.

The forces and authorities swung into action and the flight was kept in isolation bay. All passengers were deboarded.

The identity of the caller is yet to be ascertained. "The airline is also facilitating security agencies to establish the whereabouts and investigation of the call," it said.

Fire tenders are also present at the spot.

The Economic times of India 26/05/2019

Indian airlines should become positively competitive to make the country's aviation market sustainable in the long term, a top Airbus executive has said while responding to the recent grounding of Jet Airways

"India market is a very competitive one and I think the business model is a difficult one," said Guillaume Faury, chief executive officer, Airbus. "Only recommendation is to always look at your competitors who manage their business better than the others. It is a competition and not everybody can be a winner, but things can change," he told reporters, replying to a question seeking advice for Indian carriers in the light of Jet's troubles.

Jet, once the country's biggest private airline, suspended all its operations last month due to financial mess, despite air passenger numbers in India registering the fastest growth in the world in the past four years.

The demise of Jet has raised questions on the sustainability of the country's aviation market.

Several experts have attributed Jet's fall to cut-throat competition in fares.

Low-cost carriers such as IndiGo and full-service carriers like Jet Airways — with much higher cost of operations — have been selling economy class seats at same fares to attract price-sensitive Indian flyers.

Travel industry insiders said that Indian carriers have been flying at fares that were about 15% lower than the fare required to meet the average cost of their operations.

Airbus dominates the single-aisle aircraft in the country with IndiGo, Go-Air, Air India, Vistara and AirAsia India operating its aircraft.

The European airplane manufacturer is trying to make its mark in the long-haul airplane market, which is dominated by Boeing.

The only Indian carrier that operated Airbus' medium and long-haul aircraft (Airbus 330) has ceased operations now.

Fauray said the company is always looking for opportunity to expand its presence.

"We are always looking for opportunities and always see a market for our aircraft," he said replying to a question on whether the company is pitching longhaul aircraft to its existing customers.

The Economic Times of India 27/05/2019

New Delhi: Islamabad made a rare exception for External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to fly directly through Pakistani airspace to attend the SCO meet in Bishkek last week, officials in Delhi and Islamabad confirmed to The Hindu.

The permission for Ms. Swaraj came even as thousands of travellers continue to suffer flight cancellations, delays and soaring ticket prices due to Pakistan's decision to close its airspace for flights to and from India after the Balakot strikes on February 26.

"The Indian government had requested us to allow Ms. Swaraj to fly over Pakistan to avoid the longer route, and we gave them permission," said Mohammad Faisal, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson.

Government sources in Delhi confirmed the development.

"The overflight permission was granted by Pakistan based on route permission filed by relevant [Indian] authorities. External Affairs Minister's flight to Bishkek was over Pakistani airspace both ways," a source said.

Ms. Swaraj had attended the SCO Foreign Minister's meet in Kyrgyzstan on May 21 and 22, along with Pakistan Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi. While the government denied that the two leaders held substantive talks on the sidelines of the conference, they had held a brief conversation in the special lounge where "pleasantries" were exchanged, the MEA had said.

Without the special permission from Pakistan, Ms. Swaraj's flight, which took four hours to the Kyrgyz capital, would have taken nearly eight hours each way.

26/05/19 Suhasini Haidar/The Hindu

A consumer court has asked Malaysia-based AirAsia to pay Rs 1.54 lakh to a passenger for serving him non-vegetarian food instead of vegetarian meal and allegedly harassing his family.

In a complaint to Panchkula consumer forum, Vijay Trehan (61) eldest member of the family said he booked onward and return tickets for the journey between Amritsar and Kuala Lumpur in Air Asia on October 7, 2018, and October 13, 2018, respectively.

In the complaint, Trehan said he had paid Rs 59,482 and Rs 15,016 for onward and return journeys, respectively. Trehan stated that there was no issue in the onward journey to Malaysia.

However, they faced problems during their return journey to India, according to a report in The Indian Express.

On October 13, 2018, the family reached Kuala Lumpur Airport and got their baggage clearance and boarding passes by 5.15 pm. The flight was scheduled to take off at 7:20 pm.

However, due to a huge rush at the immigration counter and also at the security check, it took around one and a quarter hour for clearance for the entire family comprising five adults and three children.

26/05/19 Business Today

Mumbai: It is going to be a crucial week for Jet Airways and its employees as the deadline set by the lenders to find a new owner looms large. State Bank of India had said it would find a new owner for the airline by May 31.

Representatives of Hinduja Group and Etihad Airways — the two bidders in the reckoning — are expected to hold meetings with lenders this week to try and cobble up a deal. Though there is no formal deadline to find a bidder, SBI had said in March that it expects to complete the process by May 31.

Meanwhile, hearings for different cases related to salary payments are being taken up by the Regional Labour Commissioner (RLC) for hearings on May 27 and 28.

The All India Jet Airways Officers & Staff Association (AIJAOSA), Jet Airways Maintenance Engineers Welfare Association, National Aviators Guild and Bhartiya Kamgar Sena had recently approached the RLC for recovery of salary, gratuity, provident fund and certificate of 'workmen'.

AIJAOSA had filed a dispute with the RLC on the grounds of refusal of salary for January, February and March, along with pending gratuity and provident fund remittance. In the dispute between AIJAOSA and the Jet management, ex-promoter Naresh Goyal and SBI were made parties.

Prior to the temporary shut down on April 17, Jet Airways 16,000 permanent employees.

The airline owes ₹150 crore to its employees as of March 31. The hearing for this case is scheduled on May 27.

In the complaint filed by NAG, the pilots body of the airline, the RLC has already submitted a Failure of Conciliation (FoC).

Bhartiya Kamgar Sena had filed a dispute on two grounds — pending salaries and cancellation of airport passes of employees.

A hearing for this complaint was scheduled earlier this month but could not be held because the representatives of Civil Aviation Ministry did not attend the hearing. The hearing was then postponed to May 28.

26/05/19 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, owner of low-cost IndiGo airlines, posted a net profit of Rs 589.6 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 31, 2019 as against Rs 117.6 crore in the same period FY18.

Analysts expected a strong quarter for IndiGo as a lot of business moved from the grounded Jet Airways to other airlines, including IndiGo.

Passengers paid nearly 14 percent more for flights on the airline resulting in better yields for the airline. IndiGo said its yield per kilometre for the fourth quarter rose 12 percent, at Rs 3.70 per km as against Rs 3.31 in the March quarter of FY18.

The airline said its revenues for the given quarter went up by 35.9 percent, at Rs 7,883.3 crore.

CEO Ronojoy Datta said, "**Fiscal 2019 was a tough year for the airline industry in India because of high fuel prices, weak rupee and intense competitive environment. However, it is a tale of two halves for IndiGo, with the first half of the year incurring losses and the second half of the year experiencing a sharp recovery. Looking ahead, it is difficult not to be bullish about the future. We see plenty of opportunities for profitable growth in our network and with a robust delivery stream of new aircraft, we are well positioned to capitalise on this growth.**"

28/05/19 CNBC-TV18

IndiGo's focus on capacity addition has enabled it to control about half of India's aviation market while underscoring the ability of the country's biggest airline to fill seats without sacrificing yields. That pace of capacity expansion will likely continue. According to the management, IndiGo will add 30 per cent incremental capacity in FY20, which is likely to take its aircraft count to 282 by the end of the fiscal.

For the past two years, the airline has been aggressively adding capacity. In the past five months, the airline has gained 7-8 per cent market share, now controlling about 50 per cent of India's aviation industry. The gains have come even when IndiGo's yields in the March quarter climbed 12 per cent, reflecting its ability to expand profitably.

Also, IndiGo plans to add incremental capacity of 30 per cent in FY20 must be seen in the context of crude oil price movements and the airline's international operations. **On incremental capacity addition and a stable market share of close to 50 per cent, IndiGo is on a strong earnings growth path. Bloomberg's estimates showed its EPS in FY20 is expected to be ₹73.2, about 18 times higher on year.**

28/05/19 Economic Times

Mumbai: In the past one month, over thirty flights operated by Air India, IndiGo and SpiceJet, most of them flying to Hyderabad, carried lower amount of fuel as compared to other flights operating similar aircraft on similar routes.

Currently, fuel calculation for a flight takes into account fuel needed to fly to the destination, taxiing, contingency, reserve and most importantly, the amount needed to fly from the scheduled destination to an alternate airport in case it's not possible to land at the destination due to some emergency.

But the flights mentioned above operated on a progressive, environment-friendly, fuel conservation initiative: **if the destination airport has at least two independent, usable runways; if the weather is good, then with certain new practices in place, experienced pilots can be allowed to operate flights that do not carry fuel to fly from the destination airport to an alternate airport. Instead the aircraft carries an additional fuel for fifteen minutes worth of low-flying.**

With the initiative, IndiGo said it could save 2,100 tonnes of fuel while reducing carbon emissions by 6615 tonnes per year. Air India would save 140kgs per B777 Delhi-Hyderabad flight.

But experts caution against certain ground realities. Capt M Ranganathan, an air safety expert, said India's airport infrastructure is too poor so airlines and the regulator shouldn't go full throttle on this initiative yet. A senior B777 examiner pointed out that since India has only a few airports that can handle wide-bodied aircraft, it's a tight-rope walk.

28/05/19 Manju V/Times of India

IndiGo has cited mixed market dynamics between the two halves of the year ended 30 March as it reported a Rs1.5 billion (\$21.6 million) loss before tax.

The result is a contrast to the pre-tax profit of Rs31 billion for the previous year.

Revenue for the full year rose 24% to Rs298 billion, despite a 2% fall in RASK to Rs3.57 as ASKs increased 28%.

Total expenses, meanwhile, increased 44% to Rs300 billion, pushing CASK including fuel up 14% to Rs3.59.

Net profit slumped from Rs22.4 billion to Rs1.56 billion. Total cash at the end of March amounted to Rs153 billion, up from Rs137 billion at the same time last year.

"Fiscal 2019 was a tough year for the airline industry in India because of high fuel prices, weak rupee and intense competitive environment," says chief executive Ronojoy Dutta. "However, it is a tale of two halves for IndiGo, with the first half of the year incurring losses and the second half of the year experiencing a sharp recovery."

That recovery was evident in its results for the three months to 31 March as its pre-tax profit almost quadrupled to Rs6.17 billion, as revenue surged 36% to Rs82.6 billion.

28/05/19 Flight Global

In a bid to avoid economic offenders from a potential flight risk, the ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) is understood to have suggested over 20 names against whom a look-out circular (LOC) has been issued.

Confirming the development to CNBC-TV18, a senior government official said: "MCA has suggested over 20 names to the central intelligence bureau (IB).

"The list is based on cases where investigations are pending and government feels that there is a high possibility of these people running away from the country," the official added.

The LOC issued so far has been clearly specified with "detain" provisions.

Meanwhile, the official also added that the ministry of corporate affairs had sent out these requisitions for issuing look-out circular to IB with an objective "to restrict travel and keep a watch on their movement".

When asked by CNBC-TV18, the government official did not reveal the names suggested by MCA.

"The names have been sent over a period of time. The list was drawn up as and when the investigative and regulatory agencies under MCA raised a red flag to Delhi headquarters, following which the MCA secretary had approved the requisitions," official said.

On Saturday, Jet Airways founder, Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal were stopped from leaving the country by the immigration officials at the Mumbai airport. Sources privy to the developments told CNBC-TV18 that ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) and Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) had issued an LOC against Goyal and his wife based on which they were detained by the immigration department in Mumbai.

[27/05/19 CNBC TV18](#)

Being a grandfather is true joys of life. Nothing is better than meeting grandchildren, playing with them, eating and relaxing. They're very happy, for they're finally returning home past six months stay with children in Houston in the US state of Texas. They felt lousy after travelling 10 hours last night.

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines finally made a stop in the early morning at midpoint Amsterdam. The stopover was merely for catching another flight and accommodates new passengers and rest and refreshment at a pleasant lounge in the Schiphol airport.

They boarded another KLM flight for New Delhi at 11:00 hours. The cockpit announcement was made for half an hour delay followed by extending an hour. Passengers were happy being offered water and chocolate. They felt glad keeping more chocolate to help to balance air pressure for another 11 hours home bound flight. Nevertheless the third announcement was fairly disappointment. The air route closed down for border incident and the flight was cancelled. The incident terrified 400+ boarders.

The airlines took all passengers to airport lounge and offered refreshment. It took an hour to issue new VISA for staying overnight. Things went on smoothly yet very surprising for them. Very quickly airport taxi from Schiphol Plaza picked them up to a hotel near Amsterdam City Center. While moving 15 km, KLM took passengers for sightseeing on the way. The travellers found it very convenient and easy way to travel.

It was 22:00 hours, Prof Brojen Talukdar and his wife Mrs Binita Talukdar were confused as to where it went wrong. After dinner, they viewed to TV screen saying restriction and closure of air space over Pakistan. Soon a call came from his son. In a pre dawn airstrike on 26 Feb, India avenges Pulwama attack by bombing terrors camps at Balakot through aerial route by IAF Fighter when enemy was unaware of rapid seek and destroy operation.

The things went clear. **Pakistan imposed airspace restrictions and closed the country's airspace to aircraft flying over it, to and from India. Hence, flights flying west, Europe and America are flying longer distances to circumvent Pakistani airspace, adding time, costs and inconvenience caused to the passengers.**

The closure of Pakistani airspace hampers India's normal flight operations as it's difficult to fly over the mountain range Himalayas. Also there is another factor that commercial airlines generally fly from east to west globally with several entry and exit points.

This was not the first incident that isolated aviation airspace. Russia closed its airspace during cold war for American flights. Pilots and airlines avoid conflict zones. Recall what happened to the Malaysian Airlines that disappeared from the radar over conflict-hit Ukraine in 2014 which was brought down by a missile, killing all 283 passengers. Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan also faced in the past.

[28/05/19 Kamal Baruah/E-Pao.net](#)

Mumbai: Sahar police have busted a three-member gang that included a taxi driver for robbing over Rs 2,000 from a 35-year-old bank executive who had hired the cab from outside the international airport on May 25 night to go to his home in Andheri.

The complainant said, one gang member standing outside the airport car parking bay stopped the car pretending to be a passenger. He robbed the bank executive as the cab reached Sahar village road. Senior inspector of Sahar police Shashikant Mane said, "Soon after the victim got into the cab, one of the accused, Mohammed Khan, too, boarded the cab. Midway, he threatened the victim and driver and fled with the money. The driver pretended to be innocent and took the cab to MIDC police station on the victim's instructions. They then took the cab driver and victim to Sahar police where the case was solved."

Mane said while one gang member lured fliers at the terminal arrival point with cheap fares, the second was the cab driver, while the third accused posed as a passenger and executed the robbery.

28/05/19 V Narayan/Times of India

Surat: The customs department has apprehended a man who used an innovative method to smuggle in gold in the Sharjah-Surat Air India Express flight on Monday.

Official sources said that the accused had melted 96.41 grams gold to thick paste and hidden it in its shirt's collar to get away from the electronic eyes of the scanning machines of the customs department at Surat airport. The gold was valued at Rs 3.16 lakh.

An officer on condition of anonymity said, "The operation was carried out successful by the Air Intelligence unit of the customs department at Surat airport. This is one of the unique method of hiding the gold adopted by any smuggler. The smuggler, who is hailing from Surat, had converted the gold in liquid paste form and had hiding behind the collar to escape from the intelligence officials standing guard at the airport"

This is the second incident of gold smuggling in the Sharjah-Surat flight operated by Air India Express. On May 20, the customs department had apprehended the gold smuggler from city's Salabatpura area with 200 grams gold hidden in the packet tucked below his private parts. The gold was valued at Rs 6.5 lakh.

28/05/19 Times of India

Chennai: Smuggled gold worth Rs 50 lakh was seized by air customs officials at the Anna International Airport in two separate cases reported during the weekend.

Based on a tip-off, officials from the air intelligence unit of the office of the commissioner of customs conducted a thorough search in an Air India flight that arrived from Sharjah via Thiruvananthapuram.

They found a white cloth pouch hidden under the cushion of one of the seats. On examination, the officials found eight gold bangles and four gold chains of 24 carat purity, weighing 1.25kg valued at Rs 41 lakh. The officials later apprehended Mullukan Abdul Rahman Basheer Ahamed, 56, of Thiruvavarur, who travelled from Sharjah to Chennai and had occupied the seat. He was arrested after he confessed to smuggling the gold.

28/05/19 Times of India

New Delhi: The government had asked the lenders of the debt-laden Jet Airways to share findings of its forensic audit report of the grounded airline in March this year, around the same time the company's founder, Naresh Goyal, left all executive roles.

State Bank of India-led lenders to Jet Airways had hired Ernst & Young as the new auditor of the troubled airline to carry out forensic audit for the period between April 2014 and March 2018 in December last year.

The forensic audit report, carried out by EY, has not been made public, but its findings created doubts about several transactions carried out by firms related to Goyal, the airline's then

chairman, Mint quoted a source as saying.

On Saturday, Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita Goyal were denied permission to fly abroad by the immigration authorities at Mumbai airport. They were supposed to take a Dubai-bound Emirates flight (EK 507). Though there's no clarity as to why the Goyals were stopped from flying, Naresh Goyal was apparently travelling for a meeting with executives of Gulf carrier Etihad and the Hinduja Group on the airline's revival plan, reported news agency PTI.

The ongoing stake sale talks are Jet Airways' last hope to regain its wings after the airline was grounded in April due to lack of funding. The consortium of lenders, who had hoped to recover dues of over Rs 8,400 crore through the stake sale, seek investors to buy stake in the company so it can restart flight operations.

Last week, Hinduja Group and Gulf carrier Etihad Airways reportedly failed to reach a deal on the crisis-hit airline. This was a big blow for the airline as the Hinduja Group had expressed interest to invest around Rs 1,500 crore as part of a plan to revive the airline.

27/05/19 Business Today

State-owned air carrier Air India, which has had little success in enthrusting strategic investors so far, might now begin to appear attractive. Why? The reason is simple: Jet Airways, one of Air India's key competitors among full service carriers (FSCs), in both domestic and international space, has closed operations. The planes of debt-strapped Jet are being taken away by lessors and its lenders are making last-ditch efforts to get a buyer — they are in talks with the Hinduja Group — before the airline's case is referred to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

Even if Jet Airways were to revive, it would have to start from the bottom, and building a fleet of the size it had when flying normally (119 planes) would take two to three years. Meanwhile for Air India, that would be enough time for a new investor to restore it to a sound shape.

Another reason working in Air India's favour now is the government's plan to clean up part of the airline's burgeoning debt from its books — a major deterrent for investors when it attempted divestment the previous time. A decision has been taken to transfer Rs 29,464 crore of Air India's working-capital debt not secured by an asset to a new company, Air India Asset Holdings. As a result, Air India will now have a debt burden of only Rs 25,000 crore, mostly long-term debt secured by aircraft purchases. Also, its interest outgo will come down to just around Rs 1,700 crore a year.

Thirdly, Jet's demise has made Air India's international business look far more attractive to new investors than it did earlier. For instance, the 5-million-per-year passenger market in Europe, which Jet dominated earlier, is now open for Air India, with no other Indian player competing — IndiGo has only just started a flight to Turkey. Similarly, in the 0.95-million-per-year US and North American market, Air India now reigns supreme among Indian carriers, with Jet now out of action.

A 12 per cent share of the international passenger market to and from India is up from grabs. And Air India, by far the biggest Indian player with a 17 per cent share, clearly has the wherewithal to grab a large chunk of Jet's market. Most of the other Indian players are low-cost carriers and all of them except IndiGo have limited global operations, mostly only to West Asia and Southeast Asia. **While it is no secret that the focus for Vistara and IndiGo is coming years is going to be international market, Air India currently is far ahead of them.**

27/05/19 Surajeet Das Gupta/Business Standard

India's airlines have been making the most out of the vacuum created by the grounding of the country's oldest private carrier, Jet Airways, over a month ago.

Almost all of them have been vying for Jet's prime slots, expanding their fleets, and adding new routes. It is budget carrier SpiceJet, though, that is poised to score most, according to a recent report by the investment management firm JM Financial.

The sector watchdog, the directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA), has allocated 130 airport slots

from Jet's portfolio to the airline, including 68 prime slots at Mumbai. This is higher than the number of such slots wrested by any airline, including market leader Indigo's 120.

"Availability of additional slots will aid SpiceJet to optimally utilise its increased fleet size," read the JM Financial report.

Yesterday (May 26), the no-frills carrier added its 100th aircraft to its fleet, becoming the fourth domestic airline to do so after IndiGo, Jet Airways, and state-owned Air India. "SpiceJet has added 23 planes and over a 100 new flights, most of them connecting the key metros of Mumbai and Delhi, in just over a month's time," it said in a statement.

Aiding the expansion has been the fact that SpiceJet and Jet Airways both operate Boeing aircraft. Since Jet's grounding, 20 aircraft from its fleet has been handed over to SpiceJet by lessors.

"In the next two years, Indigo, SpiceJet, GoAir are expected to add 94, 42, and 25 aircraft (respectively), while Vistara and Air Asia may add 20 each," JM Financial said in its note. Despite lagging IndiGo in fleet expansion, the firm expects SpiceJet to clock "disproportionate growth (in profitability)" relative to its current size.

27/05/19 Niharika Sharma/Quartz

The government is making another attempt at a strategic sale of Air India, and is mulling divesting its entire 100 percent stake in the airline, Business Standard reports.

Businesses have been approached to convince them to bid for the debt-ridden airline and invitations seeking Expression of Interest (Eoi) could be made public next month, sources told the paper.

In 2018, the government had put up 74 percent of Air India's stake up for sale, a bid that failed to generate interest from a single buyer. The airline currently has an outstanding debt of Rs 29,000 crore.

Moneycontrol could not independently verify the story.

The newspaper said the process of selling Air India's subsidiaries is on course and that EoIs for the ground handling firm Air India Air Transport Services have been sought. "Due to the election process, it was kept on hold. Prospective bidders have raised a few queries," a source told the Business Standard.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM), part of the finance ministry, is working on the divestment process.

DIPAM Secretary Atanu Chakraborty is likely to brief the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) soon.

27/05/19 Moneycontrol.com

New Delhi: Come Tuesday, IGI will become the first airport in the country to have taxibots to tow aircraft whose engines are shut from the parking bay to the runway. The taxibots, which are semi-robotic vehicles, will not only curb pollution at airports but also save fuel. These vehicles will be remote-controlled by pilots till the runway point.

An official of the Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) said the taxibots were ready for commercial operations after lengthy trial runs. To begin with, these will be used by the aircraft of SpiceJet. An official explained that the semi-autonomous vehicle was developed by Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI), which enabled aircraft to taxi without their engines running. The technology aims to reserve the use of aircraft engines and serves as a tug to tow them safely and efficiently.

"Taxibots are a technological innovation in the aviation space. We are proud to be world's first recipients of this technology and to commence its commercial operations. We are excited about introducing this advanced taxiing solution that is operationally efficient and environmentally friendly. Delhi Airport has won numerous awards for its sustainable and green initiatives. The commissioning of taxibots further strengthens our position in this league," Videh Kumar Jaipurkar, DIAL CEO, said. Jaipurkar said the **taxibot system would save approximately 213 litres of fuel per flight.** "This converts into a potential saving of \$35 million annually for domestic carriers at IGI alone."

DIAL conducted intensive trials for eight months to assess the operational viability and safety of the machine. The trials included stakeholders like Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Air Traffic Control and various airlines. Almost 400 successful trials were conducted with three airlines — SpiceJet and two other domestic carriers.

[27/05/19 Times of India](#)

Continuing efforts to bolster the Indian aviation sector, the civil aviation ministry will focus on developing new airports, enhancing regional connectivity and training hub for people in the sector, according to an official.

India is one of the largest aviation markets in the world and annual air passenger traffic is estimated to touch 1.1 billion in the coming years.

As the new regime is to take charge, the ministry is working on various plans that seek to strengthen the aviation infrastructure, further improve air connectivity as well as create the necessary ecosystem for skill development, the official said.

Various initiatives, taken up during the tenure of outgoing Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu, including air cargo and green aviation policies, and the road map for drone ecosystem would also be taken forward, the official added.

The ministry would encourage development of airports by state governments, private player and through public private partnership.

[27/05/19 PTI/Economic Times](#)

New Delhi: The government may offload 100 per cent equity share of national carrier Air India in an attempt to woo potential bidders. Worth mentioning here is that in June last year, the civil aviation ministry had suffered a huge setback when not a single bidder submitted Expressions of Interest (Eoi) for the ailing state-run carrier.

The government has approached big businesses all over again to evaluate their interest in the national carrier and persuade them to bid once the divestment process takes off, Business Standard reported, citing people aware of the development. The civil aviation ministry and the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) have already started the process.

The report further mentioned that Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola has asked Air India to finalise the financial accounts of the carrier and its subsidiaries for 2018-19 by the end of June.

The Centre is reportedly eyeing around USD 1 billion (about Rs 7,000 crore) from the sale of Air India.

DIPAM secretary Atanu Chakraborty is likely to inform the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) soon regarding steps taken by the department and the transaction advisor about the strategic sale of Air India. **The government wants to sell the carrier's subsidiaries before the airline itself, in an earnest attempt to slash the outstanding debt of approximately Rs 27,000 crore,** the report mentioned.

[27/05/19 ETNowNews.com](#)

Bhubaneswar: To celebrate its five accolades won at the BIAL Pinnacle Awards 2019 held in Bengaluru, the country's largest airline, IndiGo would like to thank its customers who made this feat possible. BIAL (Bangalore International Airport Ltd) conferred five awards on IndiGo spread across prestigious categories including **Airline with Best Growing Network – Domestic, Customer choice Airline of the Year – Domestic, Cargo Airline of the Year – Domestic, Passenger Airline of the Year-Domestic Low Cost, Passenger Airline of the Year-International Low Cost.**

Mr. Wolfgang Prock-Schauer, Chief Operating Officer, IndiGo said, "It gives us immense pleasure to be recognised by Bangalore International Airport Authority across five prestigious categories across customer service, cargo and business growth. This is a recognition for all the IndiGo employees who strive to deliver an exceptional, efficient and reliable service to our customers on domestic as well as international routes every day, while working relentlessly to strengthen our network and cargo operations. It has been our constant endeavour to live up to and exceed our customer's expectations

and we will continue to work hard to accomplish higher standards of excellence. This achievement is testament to our commitment towards being on-time, courteous and hassle free, and providing low fares, always."

27/05/19 Orissadiary.com

Buddha Air, one of the leading airline companies of Nepal on Monday started its maiden flight from Kolkata to Kathmandu, an official said.

"The airline will operate three ATR-72 flights weekly between Kathmandu and Kolkata," it added.

"On its inaugural flight, 56 passengers arrived from Nepal's capital city Kathmandu by flight number U4 163," an official statement of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport said.

Also, 64 passengers departed from Kolkata on flight number U4 164.

27/05/19 IANS/Indiatv

Greater Noida: **With the Lok Sabha elections over, the nod from the state government on the Jewar concessionaire bid document is likely to come by next month.** Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) sources said the government is likely to give its approval following a recommendation from the project monitoring and implementation committee. **After the nod, the process of issuing global tenders for the construction of the airport will begin.**

The bid document received the final approval from the Union ministry of civil aviation in February this year. **Expected to be ready by 2023, the Jewar airport aims to take load off Delhi's Indira**

Gandhi International airport. "We will initiate global tendering for the airport project once the state government approves the bid document," said YEIDA chief Arun Vir Singh.

Singh maintained that the bid document was "finalised as per Government of India in February 2019". He added, "All media speculations regarding number of domestic/international terminals as well as number of footfall per year at the proposed airport is totally wrong as it can't be determined as of today."

YEIDA is waiting for the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation's (DMRC) revised plans for the Airport Express line as well as the commercial connectivity line to Jewar. "We had our second meeting with DMRC on May 10, in which we have asked for a new chapter on a separate dedicated airport line for Jewar, which should run parallel to the current proposed 35.64-km commercial line by DMRC. The DMRC had sought time to come back on the proposal," Singh said.

27/05/19 Meenakshi Sinha/Times of India

Mumbai: **Air India chairman and managing director Ashwani Lohani censured a senior pilot who repeatedly insulted a flight attendant who had recently undergone chemotherapy.**

The pilot had allegedly made demeaning remarks about her appearance, especially her lack of hair. He harassed the cabin crew member after she was medically cleared and had rejoined duty.

"Her hair was yet to grow back to its original shape and volume. She had chosen not to wear a wig," said an AI source.

The flight attendant filed a case against the training captain with the regional director on January 6. A top AI official said, "She gave 3-4 instances of flights when the pilot asked her to wear a wig. He was rude to her, used demeaning words. The matter was referred to an internal complaints committee."

Last week, the pilot and flight attendant were called by the AI chairman to his office. An AI spokesperson said the CMD counselled both parties and censured the pilot for making those remarks.

27/05/19 Times of India

Chennai: **Police said they have solved the theft of 50kg raw material used to prepare drugs from the city airport's cargo complex, reported in May 2017, with the arrest of four people on Saturday.**

The stolen chemicals are used to prepare party drug or ecstasy and was to be exported.

The arrested suspects — S Kumaran, 42, of Nanganallur; J Dhinesh, 29, D Ravi, 54, and J Ansan, 51, all residents of Alandur, were employed at the cargo terminal as contract employees and loadmen.

Investigation officers said the case was solved after the suspects approached a private chemical manufacturing firm in the city recently to procure more quantity of the chemical for export. The firm doubted their credibility and tipped police who nabbed them.

During questioning, they confessed to have stolen the chemical from the cargo terminal and exported it for hefty profits. A community service register was recorded by the airport police in 2017 soon after the theft, but the case remained unsolved.

27/05/19 Times of India

Narcotics Control Bureau on Monday arrested a Venezuelan national and seized cocaine here at Indira Gandhi International airport, according to a press release by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NBC).

The accused was apprehended by NCB officers **at Delhi airport** after receiving information from a reliable source. The accused was later brought to a government hospital in New Delhi for X-ray test. "Upon scrutinizing the test report, the doctors opined that there are foreign objects in the stomach of the accused. They further advised for the admission of the accused so that he could be treated for the expulsion of the foreign objects," NCB said in a statement.

After appropriate medication, a total of 65 capsules of cocaine were expelled from the body of the apprehended person, it added.

27/05/19 ANI/DNA

Pakistan has further extended the closure of its airspace along its eastern border with India until June 15, according to the country's civil aviation authority.

Pakistan fully closed its airspace in February after an Indian Air Force strike on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot. The country opened its airspace for all flights except for New Delhi, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur on March 27.

On May 15, Pakistan extended its airspace ban for flights to India till May 30.

According to a notice issued to airmen (NOTAM) by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), the country's airspace along the eastern border with India will remain closed until 5 am (local time) on June 15.

As per a separate NOTAM issued by the CAA, the Panjgoor airspace would remain open for overflying transit flights from the western side as Air India had already been using that airspace.

Pakistan had given a special permission to India for External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to fly directly through Pakistani airspace to attend the SCO meet in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, on May 21.

However, the airspace for other commercial airliners remained closed.

As a result of the ban, foreign carriers using Indian airspace have been forced to take costly detours because they cannot fly over Pakistan. **The closure mainly affects flights from Europe to Southeast Asia. The flights from US and Europe flying in and out of New Delhi were worst hit.**

Thousands of travellers suffer flight cancellations, delays and soaring ticket prices due to Pakistan's decision to close its airspace for flights to and from India.

Aviation Minister Ghulam Sarwar Khan had said that due to closure of eastern side airspace, Pakistan was suffering from less loss compared to India as Indian commercial flights had to take longer routes for Europe, the Dawn reported.

Islamabad, May 30 (PTI)

Hindon airport to begin commercial operations! Fliers from and to Delhi-NCR have reason to cheer as commercial flight operations from Hindon airport in Ghaziabad are set to start by the end of June. A senior official of the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has confirmed this to Financial Express Online. Adding to the cheer is the fact that flights from Hindon airport will operate under the affordable UDAN scheme, which means the airfares will be capped. The Ministry of Defence had given its approval for civil enclave which belongs to Indian Air Force (IAF). AAI has developed the facility to ease air traffic congestion from the Indira Gandhi Airport (IGI, DEL) in Delhi. Hindon airport is located around 40 kilometres from the Delhi IGI Airport. Here is everything you need to know about Hindon airport in Ghaziabad:

1. Hindon Airport in Ghaziabad is the second airport in Delhi-NCR. Earlier on March 8 ahead of Lok Sabha Elections 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had inaugurated the new civil enclave.
2. Current status: Ministry of Defence has approved the proposal put forward by Bengaluru-based Ghodawat Enterprises which runs airline brand Star Air. It will operate RCS (regional air connectivity scheme) flights which will commence by end of June this year.
3. Flight routes, schedule, airlines from Hindon Airport: Fliers will get flights for tourist destinations and key tier-3 cities across India. You can board flights for Nasik in Maharashtra, Pithoragarh in Uttarakhand, Kannur in Kerala, Hubli in Karnataka, Faizabad in Uttar Pradesh, Kalaburgi (Gulbarga) in Karnataka, Shimla in Himachal Pradesh and Jamnagar in Gujarat. Several airline operators have bagged routes connecting from Hindon. These airlines are Ghodawat Airlines, Heritage Aviation, TurboAirlines and IndiGo Airlines.
4. Flight ticket offers at Hindon Airport: Flight operations from Hindon Airport will start under the RCS-UDAN scheme, a flagship project undertaken by the Modi government. This scheme provides affordable flight tickets to tier-2 and tier-3 cities. Under the rules of the scheme, airlines need to cap flight ticket prices at Rs 2,500 per hour of flight.
5. The Hindon Airport was built at a cost of around Rs 40 crore. The terminal building has a peak hour handling capacity of 300 passengers. The terminal is built at a sprawling area of 5425 sqm. The terminal building has four frisking booths, eight check-in counters, two arrival carousel. For passengers' convenience, it has a parking area which can accommodate 90 cars.
6. Hindon Airport is equipped with modern facilities such as fire fighting and fire alarm system, public address system, flight information display system, CCTV and baggage scanners. The airport also has a double insulated roofing system, double skinned insulated wall panel, rainwater harvesting system, LED lighting and low heat gain glazing. While AAI developed the airport infrastructure, the Uttar Pradesh government constructed the approach road to the airport.
7. The start of flight operations will benefit as well as provide better convenience for fliers residing in East Delhi, Noida and Ghaziabad areas. There was long-standing demand for a second airport in Delhi-NCR. Earlier it was decided that the commercial flight operations were scheduled to begin from March 15, as per PTI report.
8. The present Hindon Airport was originally used as an airbase by Indian Air Force (IAF). The decision to build a New Civil Enclave for the operation of RCS flights was taken after the infrastructure constraints at Indira Gandhi International Airport arose.

