

Revue de presse mars 2020

Mumbai: Russian government-backed Far East Development Fund, in partnership with Enso Group, has submitted its expression of interest to acquire a stake in Jet Airways. Prudent ARC and Synergy Group are also in the fray, according to sources.

This is the **third round for submitting the EoI**. Last week, Synergy and Prudent ARC were supposed to submit their resolution plan. However, neither of them submitted the resolution plan and the latter asked for an extension. The last date for submitting the EoI was February 23. The lenders will now decide on whether to allow the extension on February 25.

It was earlier reported that Synergy was out of the race to acquire a stake in Jet Airways. However, the sources added, "Synergy is still sticking around at the moment in the hope that there can be some clarity on the slots and debt."

Enso Group had met the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of Jet Airways, expressing its interest to invest in a stake in Jet. During the said meeting the CoC had in-principle agreed to an extension and float a new round of EoI to accommodate Enso's request.

The 270-day timeframe prescribed under the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) will end mid-March. The last date for the companies to submit a resolution plan is March 9. After the plan is received the lenders will approach NCLT with the bid by March 15.

Jet Airways had temporarily shut operations in April.

25/02/20 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

New Delhi: The Adani group, which has already won the bid to manage 6 airports, is now all set to join the race of acquiring the state-run airline - Air India. And for this, the conglomerate is planning to submit an expression of interest (EoI) by next month, disclosed a source close to the development.

However, the final decision depends on the outcome of the due diligence post submission of the EoI. Since, after the EoI process only prospective bidders will get access to airline data.

The Adani group is not the only one interested in this complex deal. **The Tata group, the Hinduja group, Indigo and a New York-based fund, Interups, are also expected to submit their EoIs. The deadline of submitting the EoI is 17th March.**

This is the second attempt made by the Centre to sell the airline after it failed to receive interest in the first round last year.

As a matter of fact, sale of Air India to a private player is important for the central government as it has had to pump in Rs 30,000 crore of tax payer's money into the airline since 2012. The airline, however, has not made money since the merger of Air India and Indian Airlines in 2007.

Apart from Air India, the government has also offered to sell Air India Express and its 50 per cent stake in Air India SATS Airport Services.

25/02/20 Kanishka Gupta/Business Standard

Bengaluru: Technology has changed the way the aviation industry operates — be it drones, AI, or ML — and that creates huge opportunities, said Satyaki Raghunath, Chief Strategy and Development

Officer, BIAL.

Addressing the 'Future of Aerospace and Aviation Conference' hosted by IIM Bangalore and Bangalore International Airport Ltd with Toulouse Business School France, **Raghunath** said:

“Challenges like regulatory policies among other things, should also prevent airlines from folding up. The dearth of talent is another challenge – the sector is struggling to find the right talent. It is going to be incumbent on all of us to find and deploy the right talent. Third, from an urban growth perspective, in an emerging market especially, where workers migrate when opportunities arise, our primary cities need to gear up in terms of urban planning – providing facilities and transport for the people who migrate for work.”

He said that with India set to become the third busiest aviation market in the next 5-7 years, it is certainly a huge opportunity for MROs (maintenance, repair and overhaul), cargo, logistics, tourism and travel.”

S Raghunath, Director, General Management Programme for Aerospace & Aviation Executives at IIM Bangalore, said the aerospace industry is under pressure both from a slowdown in the sector as well as the threat of the coronavirus pandemic.

The silver lining, he observed, was domestic travel in India.

“These are interesting times for regional connectivity. The government is trying hard to restart the engines of the economy. Connectivity through aviation will take knowledge workers to regional hubs and improve rural logistics, even for healthcare service providers, apart from giving a boost to tourism,” he explained.

24/02/20 Business Line

Looking to the future of travel in the Gulf, SpiceJet, a budget carrier in India, and Amadeus recently organised a series of empowerment sessions for the region’s travel community held in Dubai, UAE.

More than 100 travel consultants participated in the sessions, which focused on how the Gulf’s travel industry can collaborate to better define and deliver offers to travel agents, corporates, and individual travellers.

A number of success cases were also presented during the sessions, including SpiceJet’s memorandum of understanding with Gulf Air and codeshare agreement with Emirates.

The sessions follow an **agreement signed between SpiceJet and Amadeus earlier this year for a new distribution agreement that gives Amadeus’ global network of travel sellers access to unique content from the airline, including a range of fares and prices, through the Amadeus Travel Platform. The agreement marks the first time that SpiceJet is working with a distribution partner.**

25/02/20 Travel Trade Weekly

New Delhi: With India asking its citizens to avoid non-essential travel to Singapore and screening passengers coming from there due to the coronavirus outbreak, flights connectivity between the two countries is now being slashed.

Air India has a daily on Delhi-Singapore-Delhi and Mumbai-Chennai-Singapore-Chennai-Mumbai sectors. “From Monday, the Delhi flight will operate five days a week and Mumbai four times. So the 14 times weekly is now nine times weekly with five flights being suspended,” said an AI official.

A Vistara spokesperson said: “We are continually reviewing the situation and due to low demand on Singapore route we are making some cancellations which will come into effect next month.

Affected customers are being contacted and offered alternatives.”

GoAir is suspending Singapore flights due to slot issue. “GoAir was offered unviable time slots which we operated with an understanding that these slots will be reviewed no sooner we commence our

operations into Singapore. However, despite repeated appeals GoAir was not offered any alternate slot. GoAir had no choice but to temporarily suspend its flight operations from Singapore to Kolkata from February 7, 2020, and between Singapore and Bengaluru from 08 February 8. Based on better slot offerings at commercially viable timings, GoAir remains committed to re-launch services to Singapore,” said a GoAir spokesman. IndiGo will announce on Tuesday.

24/02/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: The Ministry of Civil Aviation has reached out to several industries asking their views on airlifting consignments from China, as the coronavirus outbreak continues to disrupt business. However, the move may not be practical or feasible, given the challenges involved.

The direction from the Ministry of Civil Aviation came following a finance ministry-led meeting to address supply chain issues of the Indian industry. Following that, a note was sent to associations of various industries, asking for their requirements.

However, ministry officials confirmed that no final call has been taken regarding the flight. “We haven’t planned any flight till now. The idea is to check what the industry wants and decide if such a flight is feasible or not,” said a ministry official.

The India Manufacturers’ Association of Information Technology (MAIT) has welcomed the move. Almost two weeks after the official reopening date, many factories across China remain shut, which will cascade down to manufacturing in India as its supply of raw material and equipment is disrupted, MAIT added.

As MAIT and others speak to their member companies, there is no clarity on whether such a move will fructify.

25/02/20 Arindam Majumder & Neha Alawadhi/Business Standard

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has temporarily suspended Iranian carriers from operating flights to India in view of the novel coronavirus outbreak in that country. Currently, two Iranian carriers — IranAir and Mahan Air — operate flights to Mumbai and Delhi, respectively. No Indian airline flies to Iran.

Aviation sources said around 350 Iranians are currently in India and booked to travel on IranAir flight from Mumbai till March-end. Similarly, there are 250 Indians stranded in Iran. They were supposed to return home via IranAir.

A formal request has been made by IranAir to the Indian government to allow operation of two flights to provide relief to stranded citizens. The Indian government is considering the request, it is learnt. The airline is offering refunds to passengers whose flights have been cancelled.

Several airlines in West Asia have already curtailed or cancelled flights to Iran to stem the outbreak. On Wednesday, the Indian government issued an advisory asking Indians to avoid non-essential travel to Iran, Italy, and Korea.

Around 200,000 passengers flew between Iran and India in 2019

Business Standards 27/02/2020

Saudi Arabia’s decision to halt religious tours to the kingdom to contain the spread of coronavirus will hit Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet.

The three Indian airlines, along with Saudi Arabian Airlines (Saudia), operate 98 weekly flights to Jeddah. Pilgrims account for over 50 per cent of the traffic between India and Jeddah.

The Saudi government on Thursday announced temporary suspension of Umrah (pilgrimage to Mecca that can be undertaken at any time of the year). **Additionally, tourist visa holders from over 20 countries, including India, will not be allowed entry.** The Saudi order does not prohibit labour and business travel to the country, but airlines and travel agents are seeking further clarifications, it is learnt.

Saudi Arabia is the second-largest air travel market for Indians in West Asia after the United Arab Emirates, and around 5.9 million passengers flew between the nations in 2019. Jeddah is the largest destination in the country for Indians, followed by Riyadh and Dammam. Typically, pilgrims to Mecca and Medina travel in 14-day group tours and are issued special Umrah visas.

“We may have to reduce the frequency on the Jeddah route, following the Saudi government’s decision. However, the decision cannot be taken immediately, as pilgrims, who have already travelled to Saudi Arabia, need to return home,” said an Air India executive.

Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet did not respond to emails from Business Standard. “The largest demand for Umrah tours is from south India, especially Kerala, and we are seeing cancellations in our forward bookings for the next few weeks,” said Amey Amladi, chief operating officer of Akbar Group. “All airlines are giving refunds, but there is no clarity on refunds from hotels. Currently, 500-600 passengers are traveling daily from Mumbai for Umrah. The figure will rise to over 1,000 daily during April and May,” said Rizwan Patel, director of Atlas Tours & Travels.

India suspends Iran flights

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation also temporarily suspended Iranian carriers from operating flights to India. IranAir and Mahan Air operate flights to Mumbai and Delhi, respectively. No Indian airline flies to Iran. Sources said 350 Iranians are in India and booked to travel on IranAir till March-end. Similarly, there are 250 Indians stranded in Iran. They were supposed to return home via IranAir.

IranAir is offering refunds but has requested India to allow operation of two flights. The government is considering the request, it is learnt. **Around 200,000 passengers flew between Iran and India in 2019.**

Business Standards 28/02/2020

Vistara took the delivery of its first wide-body Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner plane on Friday, making it the first Indian airline to fly this aircraft.

The plane, which has the registration number VT-TSD, will depart from the Boeing facility here at 2 pm (local time) on Friday and land in Delhi at 2 pm (local time) on Saturday, Vistara officials said here.

The new aircraft is the first of the six that Vistara has purchased from Boeing.

The second Dreamliner aircraft is currently on the production line and will be delivered soon.

Vistara's Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft comes with 299 seats in a three-class cabin configuration, giving customers a choice of business, premium economy and economy cabins.

The aircraft features lie-flat business class seats in a 1-2-1 configuration that gives a direct aisle access to each business class passenger and a separate premium economy cabin that offers seats in a 2-3-2 configuration.

The aircraft has in-seat televisions in all three cabins with a high-definition (HD) display, powered by Panasonic as well as in-flight WiFi internet connectivity onboard long-haul international flights, officials stated.

It would make Vistara the first airline to offer WiFi service in India.

Business Standards 28/02/2020

Through dedicated and collaborative efforts, we have evacuated 124 persons from Japan and 112 persons from Wuhan: Dr Harsh Vardhan

“As many as 124 persons have been evacuated from Japan including 119 Indian citizens and five nationals from Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa & Peru by an Air India flight. These were quarantined onboard the Diamond Princess Cruise ship at Yokohama due to COVID-19. In addition, **112 persons have been evacuated from Wuhan, China, the epicentre of the COVID-19 outbreak by an IAF flight. These include 76 Indian citizens and 36 nationals from countries such as Bangladesh, Myanmar, Maldives, China, South Africa, USA and Madagascar”.** This was stated by Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, early morning here today. The evacuees have reached India today, he stated.

Dr Harsh Vardhan added that while the evacuees from Japan will be quarantined at the Army camp at Manesar, those from Wuhan shall be housed at the ITBP facility at Chhawla. He said that of the 138 Indian nationals on board of Cruise Ship Diamond Princess, 119 out of 122 who were tested and found negative as per latest PCR test have been brought back as 3 Indian nationals opted not to come back. All other 16 are in hospitals in Japan getting treatment and quarantined. **“Government of India, as an expression of solidarity with Chinese people at this difficult time, has also sent a consignment of 15 tonnes of Indian Medical Relief for COVID-19 to Wuhan, China”.** Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that “Apart from expressing gratitude, I am extremely proud of the way multiple Ministries, our Armed forces, our doctors, Air India, our Embassies, both at China and Japan, and the many unseen who worked behind the scenes, made this happen. All have put India and Indians first. Salutations to the collaborative and dedicated efforts of all these agencies.” In the spirit of India’s cultural mores of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, he highlighted that India volunteered and evacuated nationals from other countries also while undertaking the evacuation from both Japan and Wuhan.

The Union Ministers said that in view of the evolving global situation regarding spread of COVID-19, in addition to the previous travel advisories, additional instructions have been issued, whereby Indians have been advised to avoid all non-essential travel to Singapore, Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy. Also, people coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10th February 2020 may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India.

Dr Harsh Vardhan also stated that senior officers of the Health Ministry of the rank of Jt. Secretary and above are visiting States to assess their preparedness for surveillance and management of COVID-19. “These visits shall ensure strengthening of the State surveillance machinery and to address their concerns, if any. A checklist is provided to them for compliance; they will submit the report by 2nd March 2020”, he stated.

He stated that as many as 4,82,927 passengers have been screened from 4787 flights as on date. Screening at 21 Airports, 12 major seaports and 65 minor seaports and land crossings particularly bordering Nepal is continually undergoing. Passengers are further monitored under community surveillance through IDSP network on a daily basis. A total of 23,531 passengers are presently under community surveillance through IDSP.

Besides, of the 2836 samples sent for testing, 2830 are found negative, 3 samples were earlier found positive in Kerala (these have recovered and have been discharged) and 3 are under testing. All 645 evacuees at the earlier camps at Manesar and Chhawla were discharged on 18th February 2020.

PIB 28/02/2020

Top officials of the finance ministry are set to meet government departments responsible for a range of industries on Saturday to discuss **further steps amid mounting fears over the impact of the coronavirus epidemic on the Indian economy.** A senior finance ministry official told reporters on Friday that the government was weighing the impact on different sectors and may step in to deal with any disruption in trade.

Top brass of the ministry will meet on Saturday to assess the feedback from different arms of the government handling aviation, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, textiles and heavy industries on ways to deal with the coronavirus threat, another official told Mint.

The panic about the spread of Covid-19 derailing economic growth was visible in the markets on Friday with investors rushing for safe haven assets, such as gold, in place of equities, forcing the rupee to shed 60 paise from previous close to settle at 72.21 against the US dollar at the end of day's trade.

According to Care Ratings Ltd, in the worst-case scenario based on certain extreme assumptions, India's exports could fall by \$13.4 billion in case of a shutdown by China. The analysis said trade disruption could impact real gross value added (GVA) or gross domestic product (GDP) by 0.29-0.43% in a simulated scenario on an annual basis.

N.R. Bhanumurthy, a professor at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, a think tank, said the risk to the Indian economy from coronavirus is going to be broad-based with impact to be felt on trade and finance.

CII director general Chandrajit Banerjee said India's dependence on Chinese imports continues to be high in electronics, machinery and organic chemicals. "In pharmaceuticals, India sources about 65-70% of active pharmaceutical ingredients from China," he said, adding that the government could expedite approvals for ramping up domestic production.

Live Mint Aviation 29/02/2020

The coronavirus epidemic is leading to cancelled conferences and international holidays and, as a result, lower passenger load on international flights. According to an initial impact assessment from International Air Transport Association, the coronavirus outbreak could cause demand for air travel to fall for the first time since the global financial crisis, with operators in Asia-Pacific the worst hit.

Not surprisingly, shares of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, which runs India's biggest airline IndiGo, have been turbulent. On Friday, InterGlobe shares fell almost 11% in early trade, as fears of the virus gripped global financial markets.

For IndiGo, the international portfolio is growing fast, and there is an increasing risk to this business with the virus continuing to spread. In a report on 27 February, analysts at JM Financial Institutional

Securities Ltd wrote: "International air route mix remains 19% in IndiGo making it susceptible to the coronavirus outbreak."

Note, about 50% of IndiGo's incremental capacity has been deployed on international routes in recent quarters. In its December quarter earnings conference call, the InterGlobe management had said: "International is a bright spot in our system as both capacity and margins continue to expand simultaneously." Of course, things have changed dramatically in the past month, and things may clearly not be as bright anymore.

For InterGlobe investors, there are other worries as well. After all, the stock has dropped by over 31% from its 52-week high on 30 September on NSE. "At its highs, IndiGo's valuations were highly stretched," said an analyst, requesting anonymity, adding that the benefits from the Jet Airways debacle fell short of expectations.

Operationally, there hasn't been much to cheer about. The airline's engine troubles and maintenance costs have been higher than anticipated in the last two quarters, taking a toll on profit. "The impact of a rising cost structure (which is expected to remain elevated in the near term) on earnings will cloud stock performance until it starts normalizing," wrote analysts at SBICAP Securities Ltd in a report on 27 January.

What's more, **concerns related to corporate governance haven't gone away, despite multiple clarifications by the company.**

Unfortunately, the outlook isn't bright. According to the JM Financial report, average fares for IndiGo and SpiceJet have fallen by 20% year-on-year in January-February 2020. "This will lead to moderation in yields going forward, adversely impacting the earnings in 4QFY20," it added. The broker maintains airfare trends for four key routes, using average daily fares for bookings two week forward.

Simply put, these unpleasant mix of events may mean it will be a while before investors hop on to the InterGlobe stock's flight for rewards.

[Live Mint Aviation 02/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI : Jet fuel (ATF) prices were on Monday slashed by a steep 10%, the second straight reduction in rates in as many months, as international oil prices slumped on fears of the spread of coronavirus.

Simultaneously, the rates of non-subsidised cooking gas (LPG) were cut by ₹53, wiping away a third of the record ₹144.50 per cylinder price hike effected last month, according to a price notification issued by state-owned oil firms.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by ₹6,590.62 per kilolitre (kl), or 10.3 per cent, to ₹56,859.01 per kl in Delhi.

This is the second straight cut in ATF rates. Prices were cut by ₹874.13 per kl with effect from February 1.

The rate of non-subsidised cooking gas (LPG) was also reduced to ₹805.50 per 14.2-kg cylinder from ₹858.50 previously.

Domestic LPG users are entitled to buy 12 bottles of 14.2 kg each at subsidised rates in a year. Since international oil prices have fallen, the government's subsidy payout will fall by almost ₹50 per cylinder to ₹240.

Cooking gas is available only at market prices across the country. Eligible users, however, get subsidy in their bank account for buying LPG cylinders at subsidised rates.

Price of 19-kg LPG cylinders, used by commercial establishment, came down to ₹1,381.50 from ₹1,466, the notification said.

[LiveMint Aviation 02/03/2020](#)

The Covid-19 is now spreading fast to countries other than China. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), as on 1 March, of the 87,137 cases confirmed globally, 7,169 were reported from outside China in countries such as Italy and Iran. On 1 March alone, 1,160 new cases were confirmed outside China.

While the stock markets are feeling the pain, the aviation industry seems to have taken a hit as well. Airfares for many international destinations have been slashed compared to the same time last year. According to data from Ixigo.com, an online travel portal, airfares have dropped as much as 32-35% on most international routes. "It's mainly due to travel advisories being issued by various countries post the Covid-19 outbreak. Drop in airfares can also be due to the recent international travel sales being rolled out by various airlines, including Air India and Indigo," said Alope Bajpai, co-founder, Ixigo.com.

The attractive fares may tempt you to plan an international holiday in the upcoming months, but should you travel amid the threat?

Drop in fares

A one-way flight from Delhi to Rome which cost ₹32,371 in March 2019 is now available for as low as ₹26,345, a drop of almost 19%. Flight fares on the Mumbai-Singapore route have seen a significant fall as well. What was priced at ₹26,000 in March last year will cost just about ₹8,727 if you were to book a one-way flight this month. Fares on this route are down by a huge 66%. "Fares are dynamic and based on demand. Usually, fares drop when demand goes down and vice-versa. Thus, the pricing movements are a reflection of how customer demand has reduced due to the travel restrictions imposed by many countries, low demand for corporate travel due to travel bans advised by many organizations and subdued customer sentiment for leisure," said Balu Ramachandran, senior vice-president, Cleartrip, an online travel platform.

Demand for international travel, especially to countries around China, has gone down considerably. Ramachandran said there has been a 30-60% drop in bookings to China and some other countries in South-East Asia ever since Covid-19 cast its shadow. Even fares between Delhi and Dubai have come down by almost 53% compared to the same time last year, shows data from Ixigo.com.

A closer look at individual airline fares shows that an Air India one-way flight from Delhi to Dubai, which was priced at ₹22,364 in March last year, cost only about ₹14,329 in February this year. Similarly, a flight on Italian airline Alitalia between Delhi and Rome which cost ₹36,424 last year in March now costs only ₹26,422, one-way. "Search results for Europe have gone down too after Italy reported a number of Covid-19 cases. South-east Asian carriers are facing a big challenge because people are becoming wary now. It's a fluctuating and unstable situation. We didn't expect Europe to get affected but that's taken us by surprise," said Sabina Chopra, co-founder and chief operating officer, corporate travel and head industry relations, Yatra.com, an online travel platform.

Should you travel abroad?

According to a Reuters report, a growing number of patients in China and other regions who'd recovered are starting to test positive for Covid-19 once again. Ramachandran said it is difficult to predict when the situation will improve. "South-east Asia tends to be a large part of the travel plans for a whole bunch of Indians in general. If the spread of the virus is not contained, we may see a change in sentiment where Indian travellers will alter their plans and look for other options," he said.

Many airlines have already reduced the number of flights to certain regions. Chopra said airlines have reduced their flight frequency to Thailand, Hong Kong and Singapore. "There aren't many cases of Covid-19 in Singapore and Thailand, the focus has now moved to Europe. But airlines are being cautious," she added.

If you do want to travel in the next few months, domestic destinations may be a better option. If you really want to travel abroad, you could consider destinations such as Sri Lanka, Mauritius, the Middle East, Maldives, South Africa and South America (which remain largely unaffected as of now), said Chopra. However, try and avoid taking flights that require you to transit through any of the Covid-19-affected regions. "Research will be useful. In fact, there are live online counters that are updating prospective travellers on the Covid-19 situation from various parts of the world. However, preventive measures should be taken when travelling to unaffected areas as well," said Ramachandran.

Shweta Jain, certified financial planner and founder, Investography, said the situation is unlikely to stabilize anytime soon. "In a situation as delicate as this, I'd suggest you do not get tempted by the low airfares and avoid international travel."

Monitor the situation closely for the next few weeks before planning a vacation abroad.

[Live Mint Aviation 02/03/2020](#)

The civil aviation ministry is likely to accept International Air Transport Association's (IATA) demand for suspension of the rules on allocation and use of airport slots. IATA, which represents over 250 airlines, has requested global regulators for suspension of the rules in view of the coronavirus outbreak resulting in widespread cancellation and suspension of international flights. "Around 43 per cent of all passengers depart from over 200 slot-coordinated airports worldwide. At present, the rules for slot allocation mean that airlines must operate at least 80 per cent of their allocated slots under normal circumstances. Failure to comply with this means the airline loses its right to the slot the next equivalent season. In exceptional circumstances, regulators can relax this requirement," IATA said in a statement today.

It further said: "Suspending the requirement for the entire season (to October 2020) will mean that airlines can respond to market conditions with appropriate capacity levels, avoiding any need to run empty services in order to maintain slots. Aircraft can be reallocated to other routes or parked; crew can have certainty on their schedules," it added. "It is a force majeure kind of situation. The situation is not in airline's control," an official said, indicating that the government may accept IATA's demand. Indian carriers have suspended flights to China and Hong Kong, while international airlines have cut frequencies to India.

Business Standards 03/03/2020

NEW DELHI: Vistara is evaluating Air India, as the government has announced 100% stake sale in the national carrier.

"Which company would not be interested in evaluating a sovereign airline of the country?" said Vistara chairman Bhaskar Bhat.

On asked whether Tata Sons or Vistara is evaluating, Bhat said "we are a joint venture."

The government, which could not sell the airline last time, is in the process of selling stake in the airline and has announced a massive debt reduction to find takers this time.

Bhat was speaking at an event to induct Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner that will be used to fly long-haul international flights.

Bhat also said that the airline is looking at destinations like London, France, Tokyo and Moscow and is awaiting approvals for the flight.

The Economic Times of India 02/03/2020

NEW DELHI: Wi-Fi on domestic flights will now be allowed upon permission from the pilot-in-command and the gadget is to be used in flight mode, with the government finally notifying rules for this.

The amended aircraft rules have been published by the government in the official gazette on Saturday and they skip the mention of allowing mobile communication, which was mentioned in the draft rules published by the government on August 14 last year.

"The pilot-in-command may permit the access of internet services by passengers on board an aircraft through Wi-Fi on board when laptop, smartphone, tablet, smartwatch, e-reader or a point of sale device is used in flight mode or airplane mode. **Provided that the director general shall certify the aircraft for usage of internet in flight through Wi-Fi on board subject to procedures as specified in this behalf,**" the latest notification now says. ET has a copy of the notification.

The final rules notified on Saturday say the pilot-in command may permit the use of cellular telephones by passengers of a flight "after the aircraft has landed and cleared active runway, except when the landing takes place in low visibility conditions as may be determined by the director general."

An additional explanation has been added in the new rules saying an aircraft shall be deemed to be in flight when all its external doors are closed following embarkation until the moment when any such door is opened for disembarkation. The government in its latest notification has also said that it received no objections or suggestions from the public in respect of the draft rules.

The Economic Times of India 02/03/2020

Ahmedabad: **Two pigeons found their way inside a GoAir aircraft, which was preparing for departure for Jaipur from the Sardar Vallabhbhai International airport here on Friday, prompting the airline to urge the AAI to deal with the issue of bird menace on Saturday.** Ahmedabad airport is currently managed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

A video of the incident was twitted on Saturday by a passenger which has gone viral on social media. "Two pigeons found their way inside the GoAir's Ahmedabad Jaipur flight G8-702 while passengers were boarding (the aircraft)," the airline said in a statement.

"The crew immediately got the birds shooed away. The flight took off as per its scheduled departure of 5 pm (Friday)," the airline added.

GoAir expressed regrets for any inconvenience caused to its passengers, the airline said, adding it has requested the Airports Authority of India (AAI) get rid of this menace, it further said.

A twitter user Prashant Ramwani has posted the video of the incident with a tweet "Ek kabootar plane ke andar".

The video clip shows a pigeon flying inside the plane with passengers sitting in it.

[The Economic times of India 29/02/2020](#)

Tourism Minister Prahlaad Patel on Monday said the government is aware that the whole world is worried about the coronavirus outbreak, but assured that India remains safe and secure.

Speaking at an event, Patel said the government is taking all necessary steps and maintaining vigil at all international airports.

"We know the whole world is worried about coronavirus but India is still secure and safe and we are maintaining vigil on all international airports," he said.

The deadly virus has killed 2,912 people in China and has, according to a WHO situation report, spread to at least 58 countries as on Monday.

Two fresh cases of the novel coronavirus -- one in Delhi and another in Telangana -- were reported in India on Monday, taking the number of people who have tested positive for the respiratory virus in the country to five so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

Three people who were detected positive earlier have now been discharged.

Passengers from Italy, Iran too will be screened for coronavirus: DGCA

New Delhi, Mar 2 (PTI) **Aviation regulator DGCA said on Monday that all passengers coming from Italy and Iran would undergo thermal screening for novel coronavirus, hours after the government announced two fresh positive cases with one having a recent travel history of the European country.**

Passengers from 10 countries -- China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia -- are already being screened at Indian airports.

The DGCA stated in a circular on Monday, "In order to prevent the spread of COVID-19 (novel coronavirus 2019) disease in India, it has been decided to expand the universal screening of all passengers arriving in flights from Italy and Iran."

Two fresh cases of the novel coronavirus -- one in Delhi and another in Telangana -- were reported in India, taking the number of people who have tested positive for the respiratory virus in the country to five so far, the Union Health Ministry said on Monday.

The infected person from Delhi had recently travelled to Italy, while the other patient from Telangana had travelled to Dubai, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said, adding that the government has stepped up vigil and efforts to detect and prevent the spread of the deadly virus that has killed 2,912 people in China.

It has spread to at least 58 countries, according to a WHO situation report.

Iran has reported 978 confirmed cases of the new virus with 54 deaths from the illness it causes, called COVID-19.

New Delhi, Mar 2 (PTI)

Iranian urges India to ensure well-being of all Indians

Iranian Foreign Minister Javad Zarif on Monday urged Indian authorities to ensure the well-being of all Indians and not let "senseless" violence prevail.

India's Ministry of External Affairs Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said on Thursday that law enforcement agencies were working on the ground to prevent violence and ensure restoration of confidence and normalcy.

Kumar has urged international bodies not to make irresponsible statements at this sensitive time.

"Iran condemns the wave of organised violence against Indian Muslims. For centuries, Iran has been a friend of India. We urge Indian authorities to ensure the wellbeing of ALL Indians & not let senseless thuggery prevail. Path forward lies in peaceful dialogue and rule of law," Zarif tweeted. The communal violence over the amended citizenship law in Delhi has claimed at least 42 lives. Frenzied mobs have torched houses, shops, vehicles, a petrol pump and pelted stones at police personnel.

Tehran, Mar 2 (PTI)

First confirmed Covid-19 case detected in Hyderabad; condition of man stable: Telangana minister

The first confirmed case of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Telangana was reported from Hyderabad on Monday where a man, who recently returned from Dubai, tested positive for the virus.

The union health ministry announced that two fresh novel coronavirus cases, one in Delhi and another in Telangana, have been reported in India.

Telangana Health Minister E Rajender said on Monday that the condition of the man was stable and he is being treated in an isolated ward at the state-run Gandhi hospital in the city.

Meanwhile, a woman social activist, who returned from abroad, has also been admitted to the hospital and the test results were awaited, hospital sources said.

The 24-year-old man, a software engineer who works in Bengaluru, had worked with people from Hong Kong in Dubai last month where he is suspected to have contracted the virus, Rajender told reporters.

The man reached Bengaluru on February 19/20 and later came to Hyderabad in a bus.

He took treatment for fever after coming to Hyderabad and was admitted to a private super speciality hospital in the city. As it did not subside, he came to the state-run Gandhi hospital on Sunday evening, Rajender said.

According to the minister, the government is tracking all those who came in contact with him, including family members besides those who travelled with him in the bus and the medical staff in the private hospital where he was treated.

Replying to a question, Rajender said about 80 people, including members of the patient's family and hospital staff, have been identified.

"Identifying them does not mean that they are infected," he said.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was informed about the coronavirus case and he has directed that a meeting of medical and health department officials be organised and all steps to prevent the spread of the virus taken, Rajender said.

Official sources said a meeting of Panchayati Raj, municipal administration, police, tourism, revenue

and other departments would be held on Tuesday as part of the efforts to deal with the situation. The state government would function as per the guidelines of the Centre, the minister said. The state government has informed its counterparts in Karnataka about the present case, he said, adding, arrangements were being made to ensure that the virus does not spread. The Union Health Ministry said two fresh cases of the novel coronavirus -- one in Delhi and another in Telangana -- have been reported in India, taking the number of people who have tested positive for the respiratory virus in the country to five so far. The infected person from Delhi recently travelled to Italy. The deadly virus, COVID-19, has killed 2,912 people in China and has spread to at least 58 countries. **The three people, which include two medical students of a university at Wuhan, who had earlier tested positive for the virus in Thrissur, Alappuzha and Kasaragod districts in Kerala were discharged following recovery.**

Hyderabad, Mar 2 (PTI)

Medical team monitoring people who came in contact with coronavirus-hit techie: Karnataka Health Minister

Karnataka Health Minister B Sriramulu has said that a medical team is monitoring the health condition of all those people who had stayed with the coronavirus-hit techie who is admitted to a hospital in Hyderabad.

The first confirmed case of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) in Telangana was reported from Hyderabad on Monday where a man from Bengaluru, who recently returned from Dubai, tested positive for the virus.

"It has come to our knowledge that the coronavirus-hit person in Hyderabad had gone from Bengaluru. Therefore, all the members in the house where he had stayed here have been identified and are under watch," Sriramulu tweeted on late Monday night.

The minister said he has convened a meeting with the additional chief secretary, commissioner and other senior officials of the health department on Tuesday morning.

"Our government has initiated all the measures to prevent the spread of this virus," the minister said. It is learnt that the 24-year-old techie had not contracted it when he was in Bengaluru but all precautionary measures have been taken.

The software engineer, who works in Bengaluru, had worked with people from Hong Kong in Dubai last month where he is suspected to have contracted the virus, Telangana health minister E Rajender told reporters in Hyderabad.

The man reached Bengaluru on February 19/20 and later went to Hyderabad in a bus.

He took treatment for fever after coming to Hyderabad and was admitted to a private super speciality hospital in the city. As it did not subside, he came to the state-run Gandhi hospital on Sunday evening, Rajender said.

Bengaluru, Mar 3 (PTI)

COVID-19: 132 test negative so far; 64,098 screened at airport

The Maharashtra health department on Monday said of the 137 travellers quarantined in the state for possible coronavirus infection, 132 have tested negative so far, while more than 64,000 passengers have been screened at the airport here for the deadly pathogen.

Acting on the Centre's guidelines, state officials have screened 64,098 passengers at the Mumbai

international airport since January 18, days after the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was reported from the Chinese city of Wuhan in December-end, the health department said in a statement.

The state government has kept track of all 382 travellers who arrived here from the coronavirus-hit countries and territories till date, it said.

Of these, 318 travellers have already completed their mandatory 14-day follow-up period, the statement said.

According to the department, of the 137 people quarantined until now, only seven are under observation at isolation facilities --- four in Pune, two in Mumbai and one at Nashik. Medical reports of five travellers are awaited.

Till today (Monday), of the samples of 137 people sent by the state for analysis, 132 have been found negative (for COVID-19) as per the reports of the National Institute of Virology, Pune, the statement said.

Mumbai, Mar 2 (PTI)

Passengers arriving from 12 coronavirus affected countries/regions -- China, Hong Kong, Thailand, Singapore, South Korea, Japan, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam, Italy, Iran and Malaysia -- are being screened at the Mumbai airport.

All travellers arriving from Wuhan city, which reported the first case of the viral infection, are being isolated and tested whether or not they show any symptoms of the disease, the department said.

All travellers coming from affected countries have been asked to observe home isolation for two weeks from their date of departure from the affected country. Their health status is being followed up during this period by local health authorities on a daily basis, it said.

Those who are suspected to have contracted the deadly infection are sent to isolation facilities for treatment, the statement said.

Field surveillance is also actively going on across the state in search of people coming from the coronavirus- affected areas, it said.

According to the department, apart from Mumbai, Pune and Thane, travellers are also being monitored in Gadchiroli, Nanded, Buldhana, Nagpur, Wardha, Sangli, Ahmednagar, Palghar, Amaravati, Jalgaon, Chandrapur, Nashik, Solapur and Satara districts.

Symptoms of COVID-19, which may take up to 14 days to appear after exposure to the virus, include fever, cough and difficulty in breathing

Mumbai, Mar 2 (PTI)

Adequate measures are being taken to combat COVID-19; people are advised to take precautions and to report immediately in case of any symptoms: Dr. Harsh Vardhan

On the directions of the Hon. Prime Minister, a high level Group of Ministers (GOM) was constituted to review, monitor and evaluate the preparedness and measures taken regarding management of Novel Coronavirus (renamed by World Health Organization as COVID-19), in the country. While the first meeting was held on 3rd Feb, 2020 at Nirman Bhawan, second meeting on 13th Feb., 2020, the third meeting was held here today under the chairpersonship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare. Sh. Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (I/c), Ministry of Shipping, Chemicals and Fertilisers and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare, members of the GOM, were present.

A presentation of the status of the COVID-19 was made to the GOM. The preventive steps and measures taken for management of COVID-19 disease in India were presented, which included information about the various travel advisories in view of the evolving global situation regarding COVID-19.

The meeting was attended by Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW), Sh. Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary (Civil Aviation), Sh. P.D. Vaghela, Secretary (Pharmaceuticals), Sh. Ravi Capoor, Secretary (Textiles), Dr Balram Bhargava, Secy (DHR) and DG (ICMR), Dr. P. K. Kataria, Spl. Secretary (Textiles), Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Shri Manoj Bharti, Addl. Secretary (MEA), Sh. Amit Yadav, DGFT, Sh. Sanjay Bandopadhyay, Addl. Secretary (Shipping), Sh. Anil Malik, Addl. Secy (MHA), Sh. Anand Swaroop, Inspector General (ITBP), and Sh.Lav Agarwal, JS (MoHFW) along with other officials from Army, ITBP, Pharma, and Textiles.

Dr Harsh Vardhan addressed the media persons later in the day, on the evolving scenario and the GOM meeting.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan informed that universal screening is being done for the travellers from 12 countries for all the flights from China, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam, Malaysia, Nepal, Indonesia, Iran and Italy at the earmarked aero-bridges. He added that the passengers are being screened at 21 airports, 12 major seaports and 65 minor seaports and land crossings particularly bordering Nepal. So far

5, 57,431 passengers have been screened at the airports, and 12,431 at the seaports. **Passengers are further monitored under community surveillance through IDSP network on a daily basis.** Also, 25,738 passengers are under community surveillance of the IDSP network. 15 labs are functional and 19 more will be made operational soon, he mentioned. Reagents to test up to 25000 samples have been made available. Total of 3245 samples were sent out for testing, of which 3217 were found negative, 5 samples positive and 23 are under testing. Out of five positive cases, three earlier patients (in Kerala) are already discharged from the hospital and two new positive cases are found, one in New Delhi and one from Telangana with the travel history from Italy and Dubai, respectively.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan advised that Indian citizens need to avoid non-essential travel to Singapore, Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy. People coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10th February 2020 may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India. "We are monitoring the evolving global scenario. Restrictions may be further extended to other countries, as per the situation", he added.

He further informed that 112 people inclusive of nationals from Myanmar (2), Bangladesh (22), Maldives (2), Chinese (6), South African (1), USA (1) and Madagascar (1) from Wuhan were evacuated and are kept at ITBP camp at Chhawla. The first test of all of them is found to be negative. He added that 124 people are brought back from Japan through Air India flight on 27th February morning including 5 foreign nationals. They have also tested negative and are kept in the Army Facility at Manesar.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also informed that all Joint Secretaries in Ministry of Health are assigned to assess the preparedness of States for COVID-19. In addition, more than 3695 Gram Sabha meetings have been conducted in 21 Bordering Districts in 5 States (Uttarakhand, Bihar, UP, West Bengal and Sikkim). **As of now 10, 24,922 persons have been screened at the Nepal border.** He further stated that the Personal Protection Equipment (PPE), N95 masks etc., are available in adequate quantity.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan advised that people need to take precautions and in case of any symptoms report to nearest public health facility or call **at the Health Ministry 24x7 Control Room 011-23978046 or email at ncov2019@gmail.com.**

02 MAR 2020 PIB Delhi

Industry body Ficci on Monday called for measures to prevent the spread of deadly coronavirus in India, even as two more cases — one in Delhi and another in Telangana — were reported in the country. It suggested the adoption of infection control practices and strengthening of screening at airports, among others.

“Till date, India has been relatively untouched. The most important part of our strategy must be screening and ensuring that the virus does not enter and parallelly a hospital preparedness strategy is in place,” Ficci president Sangita Reddy said. She said this needs to be further backed by mapping of available health-care resources in both the public and private sector, for sample testing, quarantine and treatment to prepare for likely spread.

The Health Ministry on Monday said two more positive cases of the novel coronavirus — one in Delhi and another in Telangana — have been reported. “Screening at all ports of entry for travellers from all countries should be immediately strengthened. As private hospitals in India cater to many international patients under Medical Value Travel, active involvement of the private healthcare providers becomes even more critical to develop protocols for screening, isolation and treatment of COVID-19 infected persons,” Reddy said.

Financial Express 02/03/2020

"The crew members of February 25 Vienna-Delhi flight will remain in isolation for 14 days at their respective homes. If, during this period, they show any symptoms related to novel coronavirus infection, they have to immediately contact doctors," the officials said.

After the Union Health Ministry announced on Monday that a Delhi resident has tested positive for novel coronavirus, the Air India crew who had flown the Vienna-Delhi flight on February 25 on which he was the passenger have been asked to stay in isolation at their homes for 14 days, officials said.

“The crew members of February 25 Vienna-Delhi flight will remain in isolation for 14 days at their respective homes. If, during this period, they show any symptoms related to novel coronavirus infection, they have to immediately contact doctors,” the officials told PTI.

Giving details of the fresh cases, Health minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday said the person from Delhi had travelled to Italy, while the other patient who has tested positive for the COVID-19 infection is from Telangana and has a recent travel history to Dubai. Air India officials said, “The male passenger had travelled to Italy by road. He took the February 25 Vienna-Delhi flight.”

Financial Express 03/02/2020

VIJAYAWADA: The 35-year-old man from Taiwan, who was kept under observation in the isolation ward of SVR Ruia government general hospital in Vijayawada, was tested negative for coronavirus by the hospital officials.

The Taiwan national, Chen Shih Shun, was staying in Chittoor district for the past 10 days. He had come to repair machines at a private company in Palamaneru. Shun visited the hospital on Saturday evening complaining of cough and sore throat.

After observing the symptoms, the doctors kept him under observation at the special isolation ward in Ruia Hospital.

Samples were collected from him and have been sent for tests to determine whether he has been infected with the coronavirus.

'We have received the reports from the Gandhi hospital in neighbouring Telangana. The reports were negative and the Taiwanese would be discharged from the hospital today,' Ruia hospital superintendent Dr NV Ramanaiah said.

Meanwhile, a 24-year-old from Anakapalle in Visakhapatnam district, who returned from South Korea on Friday was admitted to the isolation ward in Chest Hospital on suspicion of coronavirus. He too was discharged from the hospital on Monday after testing negative for coronavirus.

So far, two Indians - one in Delhi and another in Hyderabad - and an Italian tourist visiting Rajasthan have tested positive for the virus on Monday.

New Financial Express 03/03/2020

IndiGo, GoAir to replace 180 PW engines by May-end: DGCA

Aviation regulator DGCA on Tuesday stated that IndiGo and GoAir will be replacing a total of 180 unmodified Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines on their A320neo planes with modified ones by the end of May this year.

IndiGo and GoAir have 106 and 43 such A320neo aircraft - fitted with PW engines - in their fleet, respectively. Post the induction of the aircraft into service, there have been a number of incidents of snag in their PW engines.

As there were more LPT (low pressure turbine) failure incidents in the aircraft in IndiGo's fleet, the airline was directed by the DGCA on November 1 last year to replace all unmodified engines in its fleet with modified ones by January 31.

Later, the regulator extended the deadline to May 30. GoAir was also told by the regulator to replace all unmodified engines by May 30.

The regulator stated on Tuesday that PW is in the process of setting up a maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facility in India in collaboration with Air India for replacement of 3rd stage LPT (low pressure turbine) at their Mumbai facility.

"This will significantly reduce the time taken for the upgrade. The facility is expected to be operational by the end of February," said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

"It involves procurement/replacement of approximately 180 engines, out of which about 90 engines are expected to be replaced by February-end and the rest by the end of May," it added.

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI)

Civil aviation ministry, AAI hold meeting to review coronavirus situation

A day after two fresh cases of coronavirus were reported in India, the Civil Aviation Ministry on Tuesday conducted a meeting with all airports to review and guide the preparations to prevent the spread of the infection in the country.

"Shri Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary, MoCA & Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI conducted a video conference with all the airports to review & guide the preparations to take effective steps for preventing the spread of COVID-19," the ministry stated in its tweet.

Airports and airlines have been advised to comply with the travel advisory issued for passengers by the Bureau of Immigration (BOI), it added.

The Union health ministry on Monday reported two new cases of the novel coronavirus, one from Delhi and another from Hyderabad. The government has stepped up its efforts to detect and check the infection which has killed 2,912 people in China.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had said on Monday that all passengers coming from Italy and Iran would undergo thermal screening for novel coronavirus, hours after the government announced the two fresh cases.

Passengers from 10 countries -- China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia -- are already being screened at Indian airports.

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI)

Don't waste time playing clown with social media accounts, deal with coronavirus: Rahul to PM

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI) Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the detection of fresh coronavirus cases in India, saying he should quit wasting India's time "playing the clown" with his social media accounts when India is facing an emergency.

Gandhi's attack came after India on Monday reported two new cases of the novel coronavirus, including one from the national capital.

"Dear @PMOIndia, Quit wasting India's time playing the clown with your social media accounts, when India is facing an emergency. Focus the attention of every Indian on taking on the Corona virus challenge," Gandhi tweeted.

With the message of "Here's how it's done", Gandhi also tweeted a video of Singaporean PM Lee Hsien Loong addressing Singaporeans on how to deal with coronavirus.

Gandhi's tweet also took a dig on PM Modi's tweet that he was thinking of giving up his social media accounts on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube this Sunday.

On Tuesday, Modi said on Women's Day he will be handing over his social media accounts to women who inspire and urged people to share stories of such women with him.

Earlier, Gandhi said a "true leader" would be completely focused on averting the massive crisis about to be unleashed by the potentially deadly virus on the country and its economy.

"There are moments in the life of every nation when its leaders are tested. A true leader would be completely focused on averting the massive crisis about to be unleashed by the virus on India and its economy," Gandhi tweeted.

He also tagged his February 12 tweet in which he said the coronavirus is an extremely serious threat to "our people and our economy".

"My sense is the government is not taking this threat seriously. Timely action is critical," he said.

India had reported three cases from Kerala, including two medical students from Wuhan in China, the epicentre of the deadly novel coronavirus. They had self-reported on their return to the country and tested positive for the infection. They were discharged from hospitals last month following recovery.

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI)

Two Noida schools shut after coronavirus scare

Two private schools here cancelled classes on Tuesday for the next few days as a precautionary measure over the father of a student testing positive for coronavirus, officials said.

The two schools announced their closure in messages sent to the parents, a day after the Union Health Ministry reported two fresh cases of coronavirus one of them in Delhi.

One of the schools, where the Delhi man's son is a primary class student, said it will remain shut from March 4 to March 6.

The parent had thrown a birthday party last week for the child, triggering fears that the students who attended it might be at risk.

Medical samples from five students from the school have been taken to check if anyone has been infected, an official said.

Earlier in the day, the school said it was postponing internal examinations scheduled for Tuesday due to some "unavoidable circumstances".

The board exams are not affected, the messages sent to the parents made clear.

The second school said it is suspending classes from now to March 9 and sanitising its campus.

Fumigation was underway at both schools.

A Health Department team led by Noida's chief medical officer visited one of the schools in the morning, an official said.

Meanwhile, some family members of the coronavirus-infected Delhi-based man were shifted to Safdarjung Hospital for tests after they showed symptoms of the virus, Health Ministry sources said.

Some other relatives were asked to remain quarantined at their homes, the sources added.

An accountant working for the man, who lives in Mayur Vihar, was also taken to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital for tests, they said.

The Mayur Vihar resident had thrown a birthday party for his child last week and several people came in contact with him, Noida's Chief Medical Officer Anurag Bhargava said.

"Sample of five such students have been taken from the school and sent to NCDC (National Centre for Disease Control) for tests. The report is expected by this evening and then the next course of action would be decided on the basis of that," Bhargava told reporters.

He added that the school has been vacated and its premises are being sanitised. Its students and their parents were asked to exercise caution.

The senior doctor also urged people not to panic, saying that the virus is "fragile in nature".

Noida (UP), Mar 3 (PTI)

COVID19: Regular visas issued by Mar 3 to citizens of 4 nations who haven't entered India suspended

A day after two fresh cases of the novel coronavirus were reported in India, the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday issued a travel advisory suspending all regular visas/e-visas granted on or before March 3 to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan who have not yet entered India.

In view of the emerging global scenarios regarding COVID19 disease, in supersession of all earlier advisories, the government issued the new travel advisory.

The advisory also suspends visa on arrival (VoA) issued on or before March 3 to Japanese and South Korean nationals who have not yet entered India.

Those requiring to travel to India due to compelling reasons, may seek fresh visa from nearest Indian embassy/consulate, said the advisory.

Regular (sticker) visas/e-visas granted to nationals of China, issued on or before February 5, were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force, it said.

The advisory said regular (sticker) visas/e-visas granted to all foreign nationals who have travelled to China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan on or after February 1 and who have not yet entered India

stand suspended with immediate effect.

It also said diplomats, officials of UN and other International bodies, OCI cardholders and aircrew from above countries are exempted from such restriction on entry. However, their medical screening is compulsory.

"Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) and travel history, to health officials and immigration officials at all ports.

"Passengers (foreign and Indian) other than those restricted, arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry," it said.

It said all Indian citizens are advised to refrain from travel to China, Iran, South Korea, Italy and asked them to avoid non-essential travel to other COVID-19 affected countries.

The Health Ministry on Tuesday said six cases with "high-viral load" were detected during sample testing in Agra and these people have been kept in isolation.

The six had come in contact with a 45-year-old patient from Delhi, whose case came to light on Monday, and they include his family members.

According to government sources, the man, who is a resident of Mayur Vihar, had visited them in Agra.

The six have been kept in isolation at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi and their samples are being sent to NIV-Pune for confirmation.

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI)

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has reviewed the preparedness on the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus.

"Had an extensive review regarding preparedness on the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. Different ministries & states are working together, from screening people arriving in India to providing prompt medical attention.

There is no need to panic. We need to work together, take small yet important measures to ensure self-protection", Prime Minister said.





Posted On: 03 MAR 2020 3:22 PM by PIB Delhi

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
Update on COVID-19

Six cases with high viral load have been detected during sample testing in Agra. These are the ones who have come in contact with the COVID-19 patient from New Delhi, reported yesterday. They have been kept in isolation. Their samples are being sent to NIV, Pune for confirmation.

Contact tracing of the persons who have come in contact with these six persons is also simultaneously being done through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) network.

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Posted On: 03 MAR 2020 1:02PM by PIB Delhi

In view of the emerging global scenarios regarding COVID19, in supersession of all earlier advisories, the following advisories are issued for immediate implementation:

- 1- All regular (sticker) Visas/e-Visa (including VoA for Japan and South Korea) granted to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan and issued on or before 03.03.2020 and who have not yet entered India, stand suspended with immediate effect. Those requiring to travel to India due to compelling reasons, may seek fresh visa from nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate.**

2. **Regular (sticker) visa / e-Visa granted to nationals of Peoples Republic of China, issued on or before 05.02.2020 were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force. Those needing to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate.**
3. **Regular (sticker) visas/e-Visas granted to all foreign nationals who have travelled to Peoples Republic of China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan on or after 01.02.2020, and who have not yet entered India stand suspended with immediate effect. Those requiring to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate.**
4. **Diplomats, officials of UN and other International bodies, OCI cardholders and Aircrew from above countries are exempted from such restriction on entry. However, their medical screening is compulsory.**
5. **Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) and travel history, to Health Officials and Immigration officials at all ports.**
6. **Passengers (foreign and Indian) other than those restricted, arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry.**
7. **Indian citizens are advised to refrain from travel to China, Iran, Republic of Korea, Italy and advised to avoid non-essential travel to other COVID-19 affected countries.**

Posted On: 03 MAR 2020 1:31PM by PIB Delhi

India does have an innate shield against the coronavirus after all, if one goes by the latest theory that some experts have just expounded.

At a time when fear is at a peak after the dreaded virus has claimed nearly 3,000 lives, India's relative safety lies in its weather which acts as a defence against the virus, says K K Aggarwal, president, Heart Care Foundation of India.

That could be exactly the reason why Ebola, yellow fever, SARS and MERS — which took a high global toll over the past one decade — had negligible impact on India, Aggarwal told ToI.

After ravaging countries that have more agreeable climatic conditions, viruses — no matter however deadly — lose their killer edge once they encounter India's high temperature and humidity that make life difficult for them, he added.

Aggarwal, also a former president of the Indian Medical Association, traces the origin and spread of the epidemic thus: Viruses prefer lower temperatures, which is why they have spread speedily in cooler and less humid southeast Asian areas like Japan and South Korea. But in India's case, even though the first patient (a Kerala student) was diagnosed quite a long while ago, there has still been no sign of an outbreak.

It may be noted that two fresh cases were detected yesterday, taking India's tally of the infected to 5.

Souren Panja, Head, Critical Care, RTIICS concurs with Aggarwal. The typical Indian weather is certainly a deterrent, he believes. According to him, "The geographical spread of nCoV suggests that it has so far been restricted to cooler climates."

According to Arindam Biswas, an internal medicine consultant, three factors determine a virus' spread — the "agent or the virus itself, the host and the environment". While the agent and the host are present everywhere, India didn't give the virus an ideal weather condition, he thinks.

The experts, however, also have a grim warning — they are not ruling out the possibility of a 'silent transmission' of coronavirus in India. Which means, the transmission of the disease could be occurring in undetected ways, and may lead to a disaster at some point.

While they all agree that Modi govt has done a fine job of containing the threat so far, they also fear that the typically high incidence of pneumonia in the country may be potentially masking the transmission of coronavirus, which could be dangerous when cases eventually break out.

This has an ominous echo of the warning issued a few days ago by Harvard public health professor Kasisomayajula Viswanath: "Right now they are able to control it, and monitor it, and treat it effectively. But if it is spreading along with other contagious diseases that are already here, then it becomes a matter of considerable concern."

The other side of the story

According to a large section of experts, India's risks of catching the virus are disproportionately high because of its high population density, creaky healthcare mechanism and high internal migration.

India's case could be more worrisome than most other countries in the event of an outbreak. The first reason is population density: each square kilometre in India accounts for as many as 420 people, way higher than China's 148.

The second factor is the exceptionally high rate of internal migration: as per the last census, 45 crore people migrated inside India in such of jobs and other opportunities. This could turn out to be a nightmare in case an outbreak occurs, particularly because Hubei-like lockdowns in India are next to unthinkable.

The third reason is our overburdened, creaky, rickety public health regime — about which the less said, the better. If an outbreak occurs, India's public health system — in all likelihood — will be overwhelmed in no time. Add to this India's generally pathetic hygiene habits, and you have a perfect recipe for nightmare.

The paramount fear now is that the situation could degenerate very rapidly if 'super spreader' cases emerge. Super spreaders (human carriers) are infected people who transmit the disease to a large number of people in a community — like the one suspected in China's first wave of cases.

Il était beau l'optimisme de l'IATA en décembre dernier. L'association voyait arriver 2020 avec ses promesses de stabilité : pétrole bas, trêve en vue dans les guerres commerciales, atténuation de la menace de récession. La seule ombre au tableau était l'incertitude sur le retour en service du 737 MAX, ce qui n'empêchait pas l'IATA de prévoir une hausse de plus de 13% des bénéfices de ses compagnies aériennes membres.

Mais le Covid-19 s'est invité à la fête. En quelques semaines, il a fait mettre un genou à terre au transport aérien asiatique. Et il s'attaque désormais au reste de la planète, plus aucun continent n'étant aujourd'hui épargné par l'épidémie. Les annulations de vol se multiplient : l'Italie et l'Iran sont à leur tour en quarantaine, Lufthansa prévoit de supprimer jusqu'à 25% de son programme de vols moyen-courrier. Et la propagation s'accélère en France, en Allemagne, aux Etats-Unis...

« S'il ne faut pas céder à la panique, la situation va empirer », a reconnu hier Paolo Gentiloni, commissaire européen membre de la nouvelle « corona response team » de l'UE, en charge des questions économiques. Sur ce plan, il estime qu'il serait très optimiste de compter sur une crise en V, qui serait marquée par une reprise très rapide.

Qu'en sera-t-il pour le secteur du transport aérien ? Ses perspectives de croissance à long terme ne sont pas en danger : il s'est remis du 11 Septembre, du SRAS, de la crise de 2008, il se remettra du coronavirus et verra le nombre de ses passagers doubler d'ici quinze-vingt ans. Mais l'incertitude qu'apporte cette épidémie pourrait lui coûter cher à court terme. L'IATA imaginait déjà la première chute de la demande depuis la crise financière de 2008, alors même que l'épidémie ne touchait encore que l'Asie.

Le sujet, pour les compagnies aériennes, va être d'affronter les prochains mois. Les décisions prises par certains transporteurs asiatiques s'étendent désormais : toutes, de Lufthansa, à Air France ou Emirates, ont recours en ordre dispersé à des mesures extraordinaires de réduction des coûts (congé sans solde, gel des embauches, réductions de postes...) pour affronter la tempête. Willie Walsh, le président d'IAG, s'attend à ce que la situation se stabilise dès les prochaines semaines, si l'épidémie évolue de la même manière qu'en Chine.

Mais le trou d'air et le manque de visibilité sur sa durée pourraient rendre le virus fatal pour les compagnies les plus fragiles et provoquer une nouvelle vague de consolidation.

[Le Journal de l'aviation 03/03/2020](#)

New Delhi: A day after a man who had travelled from Vienna to Delhi in an Air India flight was confirmed to have contracted Covid-19 (the disease caused by novel coronavirus), Air India has asked all his fellow travellers to follow guidelines issued by the health ministry for suspected coronavirus cases.

In a tweet, Air India said: "**This is for the attention of passengers who flew on AI154 Vienna-Delhi on February 25. One of the passengers has tested positive for coronavirus. Please follow the protocol notified by the Ministry of Health regarding coronavirus.**"

As per the travel advisory issued by the Union health ministry, people arriving from South Korea, Iran and Italy have to be quarantined for 14 days on arrival. Besides this, the ministry has asked 21 airports across the country to screen passengers coming from countries where coronavirus outbreak has been reported.

The co-travellers of the Delhi coronavirus patients are thus advised to get themselves screened for coronavirus infection.

03/03/20 India Today

Kolkata: An Air Asia flight to Bagdogra from here with 171 passengers including West Bengal minister Arup Biswas was forced to return shortly after takeoff due to a thunderstorm on Tuesday evening, airport sources said.

Flight I5536 took off at 4 pm from the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport but returned around 20 minutes later, sources said.

The pilot contacted the ATC and was granted permission to land with standard emergency measures in place, they added.

"We were scared as the plane was suddenly caught in the storm... But everything went off well afterwards," Biswas said.

03/03/20 Outlook

The body of an Indian woman -- who died suddenly on January 24 on board a Melbourne-Beijing-Mumbai flight -- will finally reach Mumbai for her last rites, 40 days after her death following severe restrictions in place due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to information available here on Tuesday.

Bharatiya Janata Party state vice-president Kirit Somaiya, quoting Indian Embassy in Beijing, said that the Indian Ambassador Arvind Kumar had informed that the mortal remains of Rita Rajinder Mehra have been handed over by Babaoshan Funeral Home to a cargo agent at Beijing Airport early on Tuesday.

The coffin will be flown in by an Etihad flight EY-889 from Beijing to Abu Dhabi and then onto to Mumbai by Etihad flight EY-208 on Wednesday afternoon.

The family has said the funeral ceremony is expected to be performed on Wednesday night around 9 p.m. at the Santacruz Crematorium, said Somaiya.

Her son, a dentist based in Bandra, Dr Puneet Mehra said he and his mother were travelling by an Air China Melbourne-Beijing-Mumbai flight on January 24. However, nearly nine hours into the flight, his mother went to the toilet but failed to return, and the flight crew was alerted.

The toilet door was opened to find Rita Meha lying unconscious on the seat and all efforts to revive her failed. The aircraft made an emergency landing at Zhengzhou Airport but the passenger could not survive and had died by then.

While Puneet Mehra returned to Mumbai on February 7, his mother's body was kept at a morgue in a Zhengzhou hospital. In view of the severe restrictions on domestic travel in China after the outbreak of the deadly coronavirus then, the body continued to remain in the hospital morgue even

as Mehra made frantic efforts to get it to Mumbai for the funeral ceremonies.

03/03/20 IANS/India Today

New Delhi: The CISF has provided medical kits containing hand sanitisers, gloves and masks to all its personnel deployed to guard 62 civil airports in the country in view of the coronavirus scare, officials said on Tuesday.

They said as the personnel have close physical interaction with the outgoing and incoming passengers by way of frisking and talking to them, it has been ordered that the medical kit be stocked and used at all international and domestic airports under the force's security cover.

All the airports have been provided alcohol-based sanitiser bottles, hand gloves and face masks of the normal and N95 variety for use by our personnel, a senior CISF official said.

The Central Industrial Security Force is designated as the national civil aviation security force and at present it guards 62 airport terminals in the country, the latest being the Srinagar airport in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

With an Italian tourist in Jaipur being tested positive for coronavirus on Tuesday, the total number of confirmed cases in India has risen to six, as per Union health ministry sources.

03/03/20 PTI/Times of India

Mumbai: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday extended medical screening for coronavirus (Covid-19) to passengers on flights arriving from Italy and Iran besides those on flights from airports in East Asia. But for India, the proverbial elephant in the room are airports in West Asia, which are the most popular transit hubs for passengers flying into India. It's there that India-bound passengers from airports in Europe, the US, and Africa would possibly mingle with those who have flown in from Iran and Italy before they board their onward connection.

"For India, it's critical to look into the possibility of India-bound passengers getting infected in transit hubs. A passenger typically spends at least 2-3 hours milling around with hundreds of other passengers, including those who have flown in from Iran and Italy," said a senior airline official.

For instance, eight direct flights from Tehran fly into Dubai daily, apart from six flights in total from Rome, Milan and Venice, bringing in over 3,000 passengers daily from these destinations into Dubai. Again, 17 flights link Dubai to Mumbai daily, which is the busiest international route into India. Apart from these, 12 flights from Dubai fly to Delhi, seven to Kochi, and six to Hyderabad daily.

"Dubai airport gets the largest number of passengers from India. In 2019, 11.9 million passengers from India landed at Dubai and so, an equally large number would be flying out of Dubai to India," said an aviation consultant. There are other West Asian airports like Doha, Abu Dhabi, Bahrain, and Riyadh where similar intermingling of Indiabound passengers with those from Iran and Italy occur.

03/03/20 Manju V/Times of India

Kolkata: Mandatory thermal screening on arrival at Kolkata airport has been extended to flyers with recent travel history to Italy, Iran and South Korea — the latest novel coronavirus transmission hotspots — along with Germany, Japan and Malaysia. This increases the number of countries on the Covid-19 watchlist at the airport to 12.

Immigration officers have been instructed to check the passports of all arriving international flyers and send passengers with Schengen visa or travel history to any of the 12 countries on the nCoV watch list back for thermal screening before being allowed to formally enter the country. Schengen visa allows visitors entry to 26 European states, including Italy. In addition, all passengers arriving by

Singapore Airlines from Singapore, IndiGo Airlines flights from Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi in Vietnam and Malindo Air and AirAsia flights from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia will undergo thermal screening checks before they proceed to immigration.

"We have been screening passengers in flights arriving from China, Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. The travel documents of other international passengers were being checked by immigration authorities. Now, the list has been expanded to include Italy, Iran, South Korea, Germany, Japan and Malaysia," a senior airport official said. While flyers with symptoms of flu will be sent directly to the Infectious Diseases Hospital in Beliaghata for quarantine, those having such travel history but no symptoms will be advised home quarantine for two weeks.

IndiGo — that has cancelled its flights to China's Guangzhou from Kolkata indefinitely — has started rationalizing its daily direct flights to Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi. From Monday, they reduced the frequency to these cities in Vietnam. "Instead of daily flights, we shall operate flights to these cities on alternate days. In the next 10 days, there will be six flights to Hanoi and four to Ho Chi Minh City," an official said. Singapore Airlines, though, has no plans to immediately cut down flights.

03/03/20 Tamaghna Banerjee/Times of India

Amid a coronavirus scare, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday asked airlines and airports to take specific measures such as providing protective gears like surgical masks and gloves to crew members and passengers and having multiple hand sanitising points in terminals.

The aviation regulator stated that airports and airlines must ensure that each aircraft arriving from South Korea, Japan and Italy is subjected to disinfection process before the boarding begins for the next flight on the plane.

"All ground handling staff entering inbound and outbound international flights shall be provided with personnel protective equipments (PPEs) and such PPEs shall be disposed of in an appropriate manner after each flight," the DGCA circular said.

03/03/20 PTI/India Today

Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines are actively weighing the option to bid for Air India and a decision to submit an expression of interest (Eoi) could be taken soon.

Sources aware of the development said the board of Tata Sons, the holding company of the group, would meet later this week and possibly take up the Air India matter for approval.

Singapore government's sovereign fund Temasek is also likely to be a part of the consortium being planned for the Air India bid, one of the sources said.

When asked about Tata group's interest in Air India, Bhaskar Bhat, chairman of Vistara and a director in Tata Sons board, said the group was evaluating options.

"We are evaluating Air India. Which company would not be interested in evaluating a sovereign airline of the country?...Whether we bid or not comes later," he said. On whether Vistara or Tata Sons was evaluating Air India, Bhat said, "We (Vistara) are a joint venture".

The government has decided to sell 100 per cent stake in the airline and has invited bids for it. The

last date to submit bids is March 17 but the deadline could be extended if there are requests from potential bidders.

Officials involved in Air India's sale process said a big reason why the Tata group didn't submit a bid last time was the government's decision to hold on to 24 per cent stake. "They were interested last time too. But a big hurdle was that they wouldn't have been able to merge Air India with Vistara unless they owned 100 per cent," another source said.

03/03/20 Arindam Majumder/New Delhi

In a recent outbreak of Coronavirus cases in Delhi, the government has confirmed that an individual tested positive for COVID-19 had dined at La Piazza restaurant in Hyatt Regency, ANI said in a tweet. As a result, all the staff present at the hotel on February 28, 2020, has been asked to stay home and go for self-quarantine for 14 days. The restaurant is also checking the temperature of all the contractors and workers upon their entrance and exit from the building.

Air India, on the other hand, too asked all the passengers who travelled with the infected person on February 25 to follow all the protocols suggested by the Health Ministry. This has been issued for all passengers who flew on AI154 Vienna-Delhi that day. Air India's crew has also been asked for home-quarantine for 14 days. Meanwhile, the Health Ministry has also detected six cases in Agra via sample testing who have shown symptoms of the novel Coronavirus and had asked them to stay in isolation. These people have also come in contact with the infected person and include his family members as well. They are currently admitted in Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital, PTI reported. Their samples have been sent to Pune's National Institute of Virology.

03/03/20 Financial Express

With the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) virus spreading to more countries and two more confirmed cases reported in India, the seaport and airport in Mangaluru have been put under high alert, officials said on Tuesday. Dakshina Kannada district is particularly under surveillance as three confirmed cases of coronavirus were reported from neighbouring Kerala earlier.

All the three were discharged from hospitals last month following recovery. Besides DK, alert has been sounded in Udupi, Kodagu, Chamarajanagar and Mysuru.

As part of the nationwide alert sounded in 21 airports and 77 ports in the country, authorities in Mangaluru also have taken maximum precautionary measures and passengers to the city are undergoing scrutiny both at the airport and the New Mangalore port.

Those coming from 12 countries, including China and Singapore, are being closely examined. An isolation ward has been set up at the government Wenlock Hospital in Mangaluru for treating suspected cases of COVID-19 infection, Health department sources said.

03/03/20 PTI/IndiaTV

IndiGo, India's largest airline, quarantined its crew members who were on the flight that had a Hyderabad-based passenger carrying the deadly coronavirus.

"The affected passenger in Hyderabad travelled on IndiGo flight 6E 96 (Dubai-Bangalore) on February 20, 2020," the airline said on March 3.

All four cabin crew who operated this flight have been placed on home observation immediately, w.e.f. Mar 02, 2020, added the airline.

"We are following all the prescribed Airport Health Organization (APHO) guidelines and are taking preventive measures for our crew operating flights to regions affected by coronavirus," it said.

The Hyderabad passenger was among the three fresh cases of coronavirus that were confirmed on March 2, in India.

Earlier, an Italian tourist tested positive for coronavirus, taking the number of confirmed cases in India to six.

03/03/20 moneycontrol

With coronavirus fear on the verge of scaling up in India, the story could just get grim for India's airline industry, even as internationally, the aviation story, by all prospects, is set to get from bad to worse.

Air India had already cancelled flights to China and Hong Kong last month itself. The spate of cancellations, as well as number of destinations being cancelled, have only been on an upward spiral since then.

All Air India flights to mainland China and Hong Kong remain suspended till end of June, while Indigo has cancelled flights to Guang Zhou and Chengdu from Delhi till June 14. Schedules for this month show that Vistara has cancelled a total of 54 international flights from India—34 to Singapore and 20 to Bangkok. "Vistara will continue to monitor the situation and progressively evaluate the need for any further adjustments," according to a press note issued by the airline.

Now, the flight cancellation spree seems to be extending westward. Air India is now suspending many flights to Italy, as well as other affected countries like South Korea and Japan. "We are reducing frequency of these flights," said Air India chairman Rajiv Bansal.

With three positive cases of the Covid-19 virus infection confirmed in India presently (the three previous cases in Kerala have all been declared infection-free and discharged), the fear is whether there would be a spread among the local populace, and if so, how it would affect domestic travel. India's domestic aviation sector, after being one of the fastest growing in the world in the last few years, had gone in for a tumble in 2019 following a slowdown in the economy and bankruptcy of the leading private full-services carrier Jet Airways, back in April last. Domestic growth was just two per cent in January, the month coronavirus struck, and the figures for February and March is expected to be worse.

03/03/20 K. Sunil Thomas/The Week

New Delhi: The Indian Association of Tour Operators (IATO) has requested the government to screen everyone flying into India — passengers and airline crew — for coronavirus irrespective of the country they are coming from. As of now, passengers flying in from China, Hong Kong, Japan,

South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Italy and Iran are being screened on arrival in India. To be sure, this list is being expanded as the situation evolves, with Italy and Iran becoming the latest entrants on Monday.

“It was thought that India is relatively safe with no cases of Covid 19 virus being reported. But the scenario has changed during the last two days with cases being detected in different parts of the country. In view of this fast moving development, **IATO urges government to screen all travellers irrespective of the country from where they are traveling to India,**” IATO, an apex body for Indian tourism industry with over 1,600 members established in 1982, said in a statement Tuesday. While welcoming the steps already taken by India like suspending visas of Chinese, South Korean, Italian, Japanese and Iranian nationals and cancelling flights to affected countries, IATO said it “has learnt from its members and travellers” that screening at international airports needs to be spruced up. “At some of international airports in other countries, thermal screening is being done for everyone in the flight starting from cockpit crew, cabin crew and all the passengers. This is being done inside the aircraft before passengers’ de-board from the aircraft.... IATO suggests that all international travellers, including aircraft crew members, should be screened upon arrival from all the countries in a similar way to avoid spreading of coronavirus in our country,” it said, adding “no flight must be excluded (for screening) as we get airlines flying in from hubs that have passengers from all over the world.”

03/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Mumbai|New Delhi: Airlines and travel companies operating in India are seeing at least a third of their outbound travel business wiped out as Covid-19 spreads.

Forward bookings for the upcoming busy summer season are down at least 20% year on year, senior executives at airlines and travel companies said. The Indian government also cancelled all visas issued to Iranian nationals and all foreigners who visited Iran after February 1 this year.

“It is a catastrophe,” said a senior executive of a foreign carrier operating in India. Local and foreign carriers in the country have already seen 50-60% dip in loads on their flights to popular southeast Asian destinations such as Bangkok and Singapore.

“International bookings for summer season are muted,” said Manoj Samuel, executive director, Riya Travel and Tours, one of the largest offline travel companies that sells up to 20,000 international air tickets daily.

“This will get worse.” Riya Travel has seen a 25% drop in sales. “**Southeast Asia is completely gone,**” Samuel said. “We are seeing cancellation of flights to the **Middle East**, especially after Saudi Arabia’s temporary ban on Umrah pilgrims. **Europe is affected too.**” “**The summer vacation traffic for international travel is gone,**” said an executive at a low fare carrier.

“All airlines are monitoring the situation daily and taking calls on cutting operations.”

03/03/20 Anirban Chowdhury/Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

A day after two fresh cases of coronavirus were reported in India, the Civil Aviation Ministry on Tuesday conducted a meeting with all airports to review and guide the preparations to prevent the spread of the infection in the country.

"Shri Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary, MoCA & Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI conducted a video conference with all the airports to review & guide the preparations to take effective steps for preventing the spread of COVID-19," the ministry stated in its tweet.

Airports and airlines have been advised to comply with the travel advisory issued for passengers by the Bureau of Immigration (BOI), it added.

The Union health ministry on Monday reported two new cases of the novel coronavirus, **one from Delhi and another from Hyderabad**. The government has stepped up its efforts to detect and check the infection which has killed 2,912 people in China.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had said on Monday that **all passengers coming from Italy and Iran would undergo thermal screening for novel coronavirus**, hours after the government announced the two fresh cases.

03/03/20 PTI/India Today

Gujarat-based airports witnessed 12.1% increase in cargo traffic during 2018-19 compared to the previous fiscal due to improved air connectivity in domestic as well as international destinations coupled with the increase in exports of pharma products and commodities from Ahmedabad airport.

Air cargo traffic from Gujarat has gone up from 94.50 thousand tonne in 2017-18 to 105.93 thousand tonne in 2018-19, said a senior officer in the state industries department, adding that during the first six months of current fiscal, already 57.35 thousand tonne air cargo traffic has been registered, and it is likely to cross 110 thousand tonne by the end of the financial year.

Gujarat has 11 airports that include Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Bhuj, Kandla, Mundra, Bhavnagar, Jamnagar, Porbandar and Keshod. However, international air cargoes are being handled from the Ahmedabad International Airport only.

“As against domestic air cargo traffic of 53,214 tonne during fiscal 2017-18, these airports registered transportation of 60,345 tonne of goods in 2018-19. As far as international air cargoes are concerned, Ahmedabad airport witnessed cargo traffic of 45,483 tonne in 2018-19 compared to previous year’s 41,266 tonne,” said the official.

There has been considerable increase in exports of pharma products as well as perishable commodities from Ahmedabad airport to all across the globe, says Samir Shah, chairman of Ahmedabad Custom House Agents’ Association. **“Most of the international passenger flights are carrying air cargo. Besides, recently three fixed freighters (dedicated air cargo flights) have been started from Ahmedabad by two renowned airlines. As a result of it, local traders started exporting from Ahmedabad instead of Mumbai,”** he added.

03/03/20 Financial Express

The customs department at **Chennai airport** seized two kilograms of gold worth Rs 91 lakh in two separate cases.

According to a press release from the commissioner of customs at Chennai International Airport, a woman Jenitha (40), hailing from Chennai, was intercepted at the exit of the airport. Upon searching, the officials found four plastic pouches containing 525 grams of gold paste concealed in her pants and inner wears.

The officials also seized two crude gold bracelets, two crude bangles, and one semi-finished crude gold chain, weighing 279 grams from her.

A total of **803 grams of gold worth Rs 34.97 lakh** was recovered from her and the woman has been arrested.

[03/03/20 The Week](#)

New Delhi: About Rs 1.15 crore worth of "suspicious" US dollars have been seized and six people apprehended by CISF personnel in two instances at the Delhi airport, officials said on Tuesday.

In the first case that took place at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) on Monday, a Dubai-bound passenger was intercepted by the security personnel as he allegedly concealed \$90,000 in the false bottom of two bags he was carrying.

The approximate value of the currency is Rs 65.50 lakh and the passenger was handed over to the Customs authorities by the CISF, they said.

In the second incident that was also reported on Monday at the same airport, a group of five passengers travelling to Bangkok were apprehended with \$70,000 shared between them.

The passengers tried to self-offload from their scheduled flight, as they apprehended trouble, but they were intercepted by CISF personnel and the value of the currency recovered from them is estimated to be worth Rs 50 lakh.

The five were handed over to the air intelligence unit of the Income-Tax Department present at the IGI, they said.

[03/03/20 News18.com](#)

Mumbai: Russian government-backed Far East Development Fund, in partnership with Enso Group, has submitted its expression of interest to acquire a stake in Jet Airways. Prudent ARC and Synergy Group are also in the fray, according to sources.

This is the third round for submitting the EoI. Last week, Synergy and Prudent ARC were supposed to submit their resolution plan. However, neither of them submitted the resolution plan and the latter asked for an extension. The last date for submitting the EoI was February 23. The lenders will now decide on whether to allow the extension on February 25.

It was earlier reported that Synergy was out of the race to acquire a stake in Jet Airways. However, the sources added, "Synergy is still sticking around at the moment in the hope that there can be some clarity on the slots and debt."

Enso Group had met the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of Jet Airways, expressing its interest to invest in a stake in Jet. During the said meeting the CoC had in-principle agreed to an extension and float a new round of EoI to accommodate Enso's request.

The 270-day timeframe prescribed under the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) will end mid-March. The last date for the companies to submit a resolution plan is March 9. After the plan is received the lenders will approach NCLT with the bid by March 15.

Jet Airways had temporarily shut operations in April.

[25/02/20 Forum Gandhi/Business Line](#)

NEW DELHI : The outbreak of Covid-19 has led to a change in plans at Vistara for its first long-haul international flight, said a person with direct knowledge of the matter.

The airline, run by Tata SIA Airlines Ltd, was considering Tokyo among potential cities for its first long-haul destination. Instead, it is currently evaluating London, Paris and Frankfurt, the person said requesting anonymity.

"Vistara will consider flying to Japan once the situation improves," the person said. The airline, a joint venture between Tata Sons Ltd and Singapore Airlines, is hopeful that the fast-spreading Covid-19 epidemic would subside in the summer, the person added.

On London as one of the potential destinations for its inaugural long-haul flight, Vistara's chief executive Leslie Thng on Monday said the airline will definitely fly to London, "the jewel of European destinations" in future.

"The problem with London is getting a slot at the Heathrow airport. Vistara is trying to either buy a slot from an airline which already operates there, possibly a loss-making airline which is looking to give up its slot or lease a slot for a specific period of time," the person cited above said adding the airline is expected to take a decision soon.

Slots at busy airports like Heathrow are hard to come by. A single slot at Heathrow can cost up to \$70 million, according to British news reports.

Singapore Airlines, one of the joint venture partners of Tata SIA Airlines, currently has at least four slots at Heathrow. Mint couldn't immediately ascertain if Vistara has approached Singapore Airlines to lease a slot at the airport. The outbreak of Covid-19 has adversely affected tourism and air traffic in South-East Asia, including Singapore.

"If Heathrow doesn't work out for the airline, London's Gatwick airport, where there are slots available, is an option. A lot of other full-service carriers have operations from that airport," the person added.

Vistara hopes to start long-haul international flights in the June quarter and will take delivery of four Boeing 787s before December 2020. The airline took delivery of its first Boeing 787-9 aircraft in February and plans to add three more such aircraft in March, May and June-July.

Vistara's first long-haul international flight will be to countries where it has existing code share with airlines. Vistara has code-share agreements with Lufthansa, British Airways, Singapore Airlines, SilkAir, United Airlines and Japan Airlines.

Code sharing allows an airline to book its passengers on partner carriers and provide seamless travel to destinations where it has no presence.

However, the airline will not be able to fly to the US, at least until next year.

"Vistara's Boeing 787-9 aircraft is configured in such a way that it will not be able to fly non-stop to the US. All four Boeing 787-9 aircraft, which are to be delivered to the airline this year, have the same configuration and hence can't be utilized to fly directly to the US," the person said. "However, the Boeing 787-9 aircraft the airline takes next year will be able to fly to the US. So, the airline could start its US flights then," the person added.

LiveMint Aviation 04/03/2020

Airlines in India are bracing for turbulent weather as a fast-spreading Covid-19 epidemic leads many to shun air travel.

Vistara, run by Tata SIA Airlines Ltd, has skipped Tokyo for its first long-haul international flight in the June quarter and will instead tap either London, Paris or Frankfurt because of a sharp slump in air travel demand in Asia, a person aware of the matter said. Vistara has already cancelled about 54 flights to Thailand and Singapore for March.

National carrier Air India Ltd and InterGlobe Aviation Ltd-operated IndiGo have suspended flights to China and Hong Kong while SpiceJet has suspended flights to Hong Kong. Over 3,100 people have died from Covid-19 infections that surfaced in China, while the number of those infected stands at over 91,000.

Air India, which has suspended flights to China and Hong Kong till 30 June, is bracing for loss on some of its international routes. "There will be some revenue loss definitely, but we are utilizing these aircraft in other routes," said a senior Air India executive, who asked not to be named.

IndiGo too is bracing for a financial impact. "We will have to see how the outbreak of the coronavirus pans out. With summer approaching, we are hoping for this to be contained as stated by medical experts," said an IndiGo official requesting anonymity.

"If the current epidemic continues and spreads further, the aviation sector could see weak demand. However, low oil prices are a positive. The recent cut of jet fuel by about 10% could bring our fuel costs down by about 4% during the quarter," the official added.

On Monday, Vistara's chairman Bhaskar Bhat said the Indian aviation industry is bracing for a capacity reduction in international sectors due to the outbreak. The capacity is expected to be redeployed to domestic sectors, Bhat added.

Though domestic operations have largely remained unaffected by the spread of the virus, the Indian aviation industry could see its international traffic growth reduce by at least a fifth if flights to and from South-East Asian countries are completely suspended, said rating agency Ica.

Indian aviation industry could see a maximum impact of 19.5-23.8% on international passenger traffic growth if there is a complete suspension of flights to and from South-East Asian countries including China, which could affect about 4.5-5.5 million passengers, Kinjal Shah, vice president, Ica, said in the statement.

"This is negative for the Indian aviation industry, which is already reeling under significant passenger traffic slowdown, with the international traffic growth for the first nine months of fiscal 2020 having witnessed a decline of 8.4%," Shah added.

"We hope that the outbreak of the coronavirus is contained. At present, domestic operations of Indian carriers haven't been affected much. But, if the virus outbreak persists, it will be difficult for the domestic aviation industry to register a double digit growth in the near future," a senior government official said, requesting anonymity.

Care Ratings said India received 10.9 million foreign tourists in 2019, of which China accounted for about 3.1% and that in the absence of foreign arrivals from China, foreign exchange earnings could take a beating. The government has temporarily suspended e-visas to Chinese nationals and others residing in China.

LiveMint Aviation 03/03/2020

The Union government is exploring the possibility of airlifting automotive parts from China to ease a shortage caused by the closure of factories there due to the Covid-19 epidemic, said three people directly aware of the development.

In line with the plans, the ministry of heavy industries, the nodal ministry for the auto sector, has prepared a list of crucial parts for petrol and diesel as well as electric vehicles that can be airlifted from China in consultations with automakers and industry body Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, the people said, requesting anonymity.

"The heavy industries ministry has made a list of components which can be airlifted for both set of vehicles. Otherwise, there will be shutdown of assembly lines. Also, the orders from China come with a lag of three to four months and factories have been shut since February. So the next few months will be a washout," said an executive at a leading automaker and one of the three people cited above.

However, electric vehicle makers in India may be forced to halt production in April and May because of the ongoing shortage of parts from China, which tends to be the single source for several critical components for such vehicles, the executive said. And as Sohinder Gill, director general at the Society of Manufacturers of Electric Vehicles and also the chief executive at Hero Electric, explained, lithium-ion cells cannot be airfreighted as they come under the hazardous cargo category.

The heavy industries ministry and other nodal ministries have sent the list of proposal to the aviation ministry, which would carry out the plans, if approved, along with airlifting of parts for mobile phones and drugs, a senior government official said separately.

The list of parts submitted by automakers include for Bharat Stage-VI engines and electric vehicles whose localisation levels are currently low.

Vinodkumar Ramachandran, India head for industrial and automotive sectors at KPMG Advisory Services Pvt Ltd, said if Covid-19 does not spread to other provinces in China, production of auto parts would stabilize there by Q2 FY21. "However, in the context of India, once the adequate stocks are consumed, the shortage of parts supply from China could have a cascading impact on vehicle production. Meanwhile, for EVs, cell manufacturing has a consolidated presence in Asia across China, Japan and Korea. Spread of Covid-19 puts cell supplies on the line," he added.

Tata Motors Ltd and Mahindra Electric Mobility Ltd did not respond to queries from Mint.

Live Mint Aviation 04/03/2020

Amid a coronavirus scare, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday asked airlines and airports to take specific measures such as providing protective gears like surgical masks and gloves to crew members and passengers and having multiple hand sanitising points in terminals.

The aviation regulator stated that airports and airlines must ensure that each aircraft arriving from South Korea, Japan and Italy is subjected to disinfection process before the boarding begins for the next flight on the plane.

"All ground handling staff entering inbound and outbound international flights shall be provided with personnel protective equipments (PPEs) and such PPEs shall be disposed of in an appropriate manner after each flight," the DGCA circular said.

03/03/20 PTI/India Today

Cabinet Secretary held a review meeting through video conference, here today, with the Secretaries of concerned Ministries, Chief Secretaries and Health Secretaries of the States to review and assess action taken for containment of COVID-19.

The travel restrictions imposed from yesterday were reviewed and shared with the States. States were asked to monitor the airport management in States in coordination with the concerned Airport Public Health Officers (APHOs) and Airport Managers so that effective screening takes place.

Guidelines on cluster management of COVID-19 have been communicated to the States two days ago. The operationalisation of the guidelines was emphasised upon and the Chief Secretaries were requested to review the same. The States were requested to hold coordination meetings with the related Ministries and arrive at the following:

1. Possible quarantine facilities in the States
2. Augment isolation wards and include facilities of the Labour Dept, armed forces, paramilitary forces, medical colleges and PSUs within their jurisdiction.
3. It was also decided that District Collectors shall now be involved in cluster management in their district. They should hold coordination meetings and ensure that teams at the district, block and village levels are made for cluster management as per the SOPs communicated.
4. Hold meetings with hospital associations to identify isolation wards.
5. MoHFW is working with FICCI to work out detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for COVID-19 management in private hospitals.
6. **It was also informed that apart from the three COVID-19 positive cases from Kerala, who have recovered, three (3) more cases have been confirmed positive for COVID-19 and six (6) have heavy viral load and are awaiting confirmation. All are in isolation and are stable.**
7. Also, 24 persons, including 21 Italian tourists and three Indians (bus driver, conductor and tourist guide), who had contact with the Italian national found confirmed as COVID-19 positive in Jaipur, have been shifted to the ITBP facility for testing. Depending on the result, future course of action will be taken.

Update on COVID-19- case from Jaipur confirmed positive

One (1) case has been confirmed as positive for COVID-19 from Jaipur.

The patient is in isolation and is stable.

03/03/20 PTI/India Today

Department of Pharmaceuticals has constituted a committee under the chairmanship of Dr. Eshwara Reddy, Joint Drugs Controller, Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) to address the issues of drug security in the country in the context of Novel Coronavirus outbreak in China.

The committee, in its report, has mentioned that the **present stock-inhand of the APIs may be sufficient for 2 to 3 months to manufacture formulations and also given certain recommendations. The committee further mentioned that there is no need to panic so far as drug security is concerned.**

Based on the recommendations of the Committee, the department has issued necessary instructions to National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) and State Governments to ensure adequate supply of APIs and formulations at affordable prices in the market and to prevent black-marketing, illegal hoarding, creating artificial shortages in the country. NPPA has also written to Chief Secretaries of States with copies to Principal Secretaries Health and State Drug Controllers requesting them to closely monitor the production and availability of APIs and formulations to prevent the black marketing and hoarding in their States and UTs as well as to ensure that there is no violation of provisions of Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 2013 with regard to compliance of ceiling prices/ permissible increase in prices of scheduled/ non-scheduled formulations respectively. In this regard, Department of Pharmaceuticals has written to DGFT to restrict exports of 13 API and formulations made using these APIs. These APIs are primarily made in Hubei province of China.

As per the latest available information, most of the Chinese companies manufacturing pharmaceutical ingredients (excluding those in Hubei province) have now resumed operations partially and expected to resume fully by end of March. There are no restrictions on the export of APIs from China. The Chinese companies are willing to export to India, however logistics sector has not yet resumed operations fully. It is observed from Port offices of CDSCO that APIs are being imported from China. As per the information received from port offices of CDSCO, 56 consignments of APIs are imported during 26th and 27th Feb 2020. Out of 56, 40 consignments are from China and rest are from countries other than China.

The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has issued advisory to all private satellite news TV channels and all private FM radio channels regarding the advisory issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare on Coronavirus. The advisory seeks assistance and contribution of private TV channels and FM radio channels to reach out to people across the country. All such channels and their associations are requested to give adequate publicity to the Revised Travel Advisory issued by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The detailed advisory is available on the website of Ministry of I&B at the following URL

<https://mib.gov.in/sites/default/files/Advisory%20on%20COVID19.pdf>

Press Information Bureau 04/03/2020

The coronavirus infections showed signs of receding in China with 38 new fatalities, taking the total number of casualties to 2,981, Chinese health officials have said even as countries grappled to contain the fast-spreading deadly virus that has claimed over 3,100 lives globally.

By the end of Tuesday, 2,981 people died of the COVID-19 and a total of 80,270 confirmed cases of the virus were reported in China, National Health Commission (NHC) reported on Tuesday.

The death toll due to the deadly disease across the world mounted to 3,123 and confirmed cases surpassed 91,783, official media here reported.

NHC received reports of 119 new confirmed cases in China on Tuesday from 31 provincial-level regions and Xinjiang, including 115 from Hubei province and its capital Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus.

Outside Hubei, only four cases were reported on Tuesday, down from 890 on February 3, the NHC said, highlighting that the virus cases have been declining in the rest of the country.

Among the deaths, 37 were in Hubei and one in Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, the NHC said.

Meanwhile, 143 new suspected cases were reported on Tuesday, it said, adding that all over the country 520 people were still suspected of being infected with the virus.

Also on Tuesday, the number of severe cases decreased by 390 to 6,416, while 2,652 people were discharged from hospital after recovery.

The overall confirmed cases on the mainland had reached 80,270 by the end of Tuesday, of which 2,981 died, 27,433 patients are still being treated and 49,856 patients discharged after recovery, it said.

By the end of Tuesday, 100 confirmed cases including two deaths have been reported in Hong Kong, 10 confirmed cases in the Macao SAR and 42 in Taiwan, including one death.

Thirty-seven patients in Hong Kong, nine in Macao and 12 in Taiwan have been discharged from hospital after recovery, it said.

As the coronavirus outbreak has become a global menace causing massive disruptions in China and abroad, Chinese President Xi Jinping called for international cooperation in scientific research to develop a cure and vaccine to contain COVID-19.

Public health security is a common challenge faced by humanity, and all countries should join hands

to cope with it, Xi said during an inspection to research institutes here on Monday, calling on countries to share research data and jointly work out response strategies, official media reported.

Noting that the COVID-19 outbreaks have emerged in many countries, Xi said it is important to step up communication and exchange with the World Health Organisation and carry out scientific research cooperation on source tracing, drugs, vaccines, testing and other fields with other countries, especially those hit hard by the virus.

Across the globe, countries witnessed a surge in new infection.

South Korea reported 5,328 infections with 142 new cases on Wednesday. Thirty two people have died of the disease in the country.

In India, six people are confirmed to be infected by coronavirus, including an Italian couple in Rajasthan.

The coronavirus deaths jumped to 79 in Italy on Tuesday with over 2,502 confirmed cases reported in the country.

Atleast 77 people have died due to the coronavirus outbreak in Iran with 2,336 confirmed cases.

Japan has confirmed over 1,000 COVID-19 cases and 12 deaths.

The deadly virus has claimed seven people in the United States as the infections rose to over 100 in the country.

Positive cases rose to 39 in the UK.

France on Tuesday announced that 21 new cases of COVID-19 have been identified, taking the total number of infections to 212, of which 12 were cured and four have died.

Beijing, Mar 4 (PTI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday urged people not to panic as six people in India were confirmed to be infected by coronavirus, including an Italian couple in Rajasthan, while the government banned visitors from four countries hit by the potentially deadly virus.

Two private schools in Noida were shut for next few days after father of one of their students tested positive, while several people, including his family members, were quarantined or kept in isolation as authorities stepped up prevention efforts.

Officials said the sample of an Italian tourist in Jaipur which was sent to National Institute of Virology, Pune, was found to be positive after the first two tests gave contradictory results.

With this, six cases of COVID-19 have been reported in the country so far. Three of the patients have recovered.

The 69-year-old Italian's wife also tested positive for the virus on Tuesday but her samples are

being sent to Pune for another test. The couple has been kept in isolation at the Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh Hospital.

Twenty-one Italian tourists and three Indian tour operators, who were in the same group as the couple, have been sent to an ITBP quarantine facility in Delhi on Tuesday for suspected coronavirus exposure, official sources said.

As concerns over the spread of the virus mounted after two more persons tested positive on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held an extensive review on the preparedness. He urged the people not to panic and instead take basic protective measures.

Sources said the patient from Mayur Vihar in Delhi, who had travelled to Italy recently and tested positive on Monday, was shifted to a quarantine ward at Safdarjung Hospital on Sunday night.

One of the schools in Noida, on the outskirts of Delhi, where the Delhi man's son is a primary class student, said it will remain shut from March 4 to March 6, while the other said it will be closed till Saturday. The board exams are not affected, the messages sent by the schools to the parents made clear.

It came to light that the man had thrown a birthday party last week for the child, triggering fears that those who attended it including some students and his relatives might be at risk.

Samples from six people from Noida, including three children, have been taken to check if anyone has been infected, Noida's Chief Medical Officer Anurag Bhargava said.

Fumigation was underway in both the schools and a Health Department team led by Noida's chief medical officer visited the site, an official said.

While some family members of the man, an accountant and others who came in contact with him were asked to remain quarantined at their homes in Delhi and Agra, six others from Agra with "high-viral load" have been kept in isolation at Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi and their samples sent to NIV, Pune, officials said.

Contact tracing of the people who came in contact with the six is simultaneously being done through the Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP) network, the Health Ministry said in a statement.

In a statement, the Uttar Pradesh government said that two Agra residents, who had come in contact with the Delhi man, were found to be having symptoms of Coronavirus.

"As many as 23 contacts were identified, and report of 13 persons were obtained. Of these 6 persons are suspected to be infected by Corona, and the samples have been sent to National Institute of Virology, Pune. All the six suspected patients have been admitted to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. The result of 10 samples sent to NCDC, Delhi is awaited," it said.

Hotels and the authorities at tourist sites in Agra have been told to inform the office of the chief medical officer as soon as visitors from Italy, Iran or China arrive, so that they can be screened for coronavirus infection, Agra Chief Medical Officer Dr Mukesh Vats told PTI.

The other patient who tested positive for the COVID-19 infection on Monday, a 24-year-old techie, is admitted in Hyderabad and had recently travelled to Dubai and Bengaluru.

Karnataka Health Minister B Sriramulu said that a medical team is monitoring the health condition of all those people who had come in contact with the software engineer.

The software engineer had worked with people from Hong Kong in Dubai last month where he is suspected to have contracted the virus, Telangana health minister E Rajender told reporters in Hyderabad.

The Union Health Ministry on Tuesday said all regular visas/e-visas granted on or before March 3 to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan, who have not yet entered India, stand suspended in view of the emerging global scenarios regarding COVID19 disease.

On February 4, India had cancelled the existing visas for Chinese nationals and foreigners who had visited the neighbouring country in the preceding two-week period, following the outbreak of Coronavirus which has now spread to over 60 countries and claimed over 3,100 lives. Over 90,000 have been infected.

Visa on arrival (VoA) issued on or before March 3 to Japanese and South Korean nationals, who have not yet entered India, have also been suspended.

The Ministry also said diplomats, officials of UN and other International bodies, OCI cardholders and aircrew from above countries are exempted from such restriction on entry. However, their medical screening is compulsory.

"Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) and travel history, to health officials and immigration officials at all ports.

"Passengers (foreign and Indian) other than those restricted, arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan must undergo medical screening at port of entry," it said.

The ministry said that all previous advisories stand superseded in view of the fresh instructions.

It asked all Indian citizens to refrain from travel to China, Iran, South Korea, Italy and asked them to avoid non-essential travel to other COVID-19 affected countries.

The Civil Aviation Ministry too conducted a meeting with all airports to review and update guidelines.

The DGCA asked airlines and airports to take specific measures such as providing protective gears like surgical masks and gloves to crew members and passengers and having multiple hand sanitising points in terminals.

It also stated that airports and airlines must ensure that each aircraft arriving from South Korea, Japan and Italy is subjected to disinfection process before the boarding begins for the next flight on the plane.

The government has asked people to avoid non-essential travel to Iran, Italy, South Korea and Singapore and said India was in discussions with authorities in Iran and Italy, two countries badly affected by the infection, to evacuate Indians there.

India had earlier reported three cases from Kerala, including two medical students from Wuhan in China, the epicentre of the deadly novel coronavirus.

"Had an extensive review regarding preparedness on the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. Different ministries and states are working together, from screening people arriving in India to providing prompt medical attention," the prime minister said in a tweet.

"There is no need to panic. We need to work together, take small yet important measures to ensure self-protection," he said while sharing a health ministry post.

Meanwhile in Lucknow, samples of an Uttar Pradesh resident who had returned from Saudi Arabia on Tuesday morning have been sent for testing. He will be quarantined for 14 days in the hospital, according to Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Agarwal.

New Delhi/Lucknow, Mar 3 (PTI)

Eleven people including four foreigners were quarantined at a hospital here on Tuesday and their samples sent for testing possible exposure to coronavirus after they self-reported for screening, officials said.

"They have been quarantined at the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS) hospital. Their test report will come on Wednesday," SMS Hospital Superintendent Dr DS Meena said.

Of the 11 who have been quarantined, two are Italians, one Japanese, one from Hong Kong and seven are Indians.

The four foreigners have travel history to Japan and countries in southeast Asia that have reported coronavirus cases, the officials said.

They, however, did not give details about the travel history of the seven Indians who have been quarantined.

Principal of SMS medical college Dr Sudhir Bhandari said the 11 do not have coronavirus symptoms but they were screened and quarantined because of their travel history.

"They are asymptomatic and are fully stable but they have a travel history so they have come. They have been quarantined till their test reports come," Bhandari said.

Earlier, in Jaipur, **an Italian couple was tested positive for coronavirus and is admitted at SMS hospital.**

The NIV Pune has confirmed that the Italian man has coronavirus and the sample of his wife, who

was tested positive by SMS medical college on Tuesday, were sent to NIV and the report is expected on Wednesday.

The wife of an Italian tourist found to have been infected with coronavirus also tested positive for the virus here on Tuesday, officials said.

Her samples are being sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune for another test. The reports are expected to come on Wednesday, they said.

"The wife of the Italian tourist also developed symptoms and (her) samples were collected. Her test report indicates positive signs for the virus. For further confirmation, we are sending her sample to NIV, Pune," a Rajasthan Health Department official said.

The report from NIV is expected to come on Wednesday, the official said.

The Italian couple has been kept in isolation at Sawai Man Singh (SMS) Hospital here.

Chief Secretary D B Gupta said the state health department is on alert. Necessary directions have been given to the department's officials and rapid response teams have been formed, he said.

These teams will conduct surveys among people living within 3 km radius of the SMS Hospital, he said.

According to another official, hotels have been asked to inform the health department in case any tourist falls sick.

Jaipur, Mar 3 (PTI)

An Army officer was admitted to the isolation ward of a military hospital at Mhow in Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday for suspected exposure to the coronavirus after returning from Iran, a health official said here.

The 32-year-old officer returned on February 25 from Tehran, Iran's capital, and was admitted to hospital after he complained of sore throat, said Dr Santosh Sisodia, district in-charge of Integrated Disease Surveillance Program.

"His condition is fine. He has been kept under medical observation in an isolation ward. His blood and swab samples are being sent to the National Institute of Virology in Pune for testing," Sisodia added.

Iran announced on Tuesday that 11 more people had died from the new coronavirus on Monday, taking the death toll in that country to 77. In all, 2,336 people have been infected in Iran since the COVID-19 outbreak.

Meanwhile, a 27-year-old woman, who was studying in Italy and admitted to Indore's state-run Maharaja Yashwantrao Hospital for the past two days for suspected exposure to COVID-19 virus tested negative, an official said.

"She had attended a party in Italy a few days ago and a person who was present there later tested positive for the virus. It scared her and she returned to Indore on Saturday," the official said.

Italy, Europe's worst-affected country with around 1,700 coronavirus infections, said that deaths, as of Monday, stood at 52.

Indore, Mar 3 (PTI)

A day after a Delhi man tested positive for the new coronavirus, the AAP government said Tuesday it is taking all steps to contain the spread of the virus and earmarked 230 beds in isolation wards being set up at 25 hospitals, as several city schools sent advisories to parents listing precautionary measures.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal held an emergency meeting with Health Minister Satyendar Jain and other top officials and took stock of government preparations to contain the virus. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said the Delhi government was trying to get in touch with people who could be infected or were in contact with the man infected with the virus.

Before reporting himself to RML Hospital authorities and after returning to India from Italy, the man had dined at a restaurant at a five-star hotel on February 28. The hotel said it has asked staff, who were present that day, to go on self-quarantine for 14 days, the disease's estimated incubation period.

The hotel said it has enacted elevated precautionary operational protocols as advised by the government. "Government authorities recently confirmed that an individual who dined at La Piazza restaurant at Hyatt Regency Delhi on February 28, 2020, has been diagnosed with COVID-19," Hyatt Regency Delhi, Area VP and General Manager Julian Ayers said in a statement.

"All colleagues who were present at the restaurant on February 28, 2020, have been asked to self-quarantine for 14 days. Hyatt Regency Delhi has also started to conduct daily temperature checks for all colleagues and contractors when they enter and exit the building," Ayers said.

The Delhi health minister said 3.5 lakh N95 masks were being arranged and the government has 8,000 separation kits for staff treating coronavirus patients.

"COVID-19 is a new infection, but there is no need to panic," Jain told reporters after the meeting, flanked by Sisodia.

"We are taking all possible steps to keep Delhi safe. Isolation wards are being readied in 25 hospitals, including 19 government and six private hospitals. 230 beds have been earmarked for coronavirus patients," he said.

Alerted by coronavirus cases being reported in Delhi-NCR, schools in the region have sent out advisories to parents suggesting that they do not send their wards to classes even if they have mild cough or cold. The schools said they may declare holidays if the need arises.

Two private schools in Noida cancelled classes on Tuesday for the next few days as a precautionary measure after a student's father (the man from Delhi) tested positive for the virus.

The total number of people infected by coronavirus in India has gone up to twenty eight.

Among them, 13 are Italian nationals, who were part of a travel group to Jaipur. Earlier in the week, two more people had tested positive, one from the national capital, and the other a Bengaluru techie in Telangana.

Tech giant Intel has also said one of its employees in Bengaluru has "potentially been exposed" to coronavirus and is currently under quarantine.

People who flew on-board an Air India Vienna-Delhi flight on February 25 have been asked to follow government protocols after a Delhi resident, who was a passenger on the aircraft, tested positive. 4 IndiGo crew members, who flew with coronavirus positive Bengaluru techie were put under home observation.

The new coronavirus — or COVID-19 — has now spread to more than 70 countries, and killed more than 3,000 globally.

India's tryst with the virus had begun with three confirmed cases reported from Kerala. All of those three have now recovered.

New Delhi, Mar 3 (PTI)

Here are the latest updates of coronavirus cases in India.

First things first

The coronavirus is a large family of viruses that causes illnesses ranging from the common cold to acute respiratory syndromes, but the virus that has killed people in China and elsewhere is a novel strain and not seen before. Common symptoms of the novel coronavirus strain include respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath, according to the WHO. The WHO has declared the coronavirus epidemic as a global health emergency.

What's happening in India

Passengers from 12 countries are being screened, including those from Kathmandu, Indonesia, Vietnam and Malaysia.

India has imposed "some restrictions" on export of certain medical equipment to China in view of their shortage of supply in the country, and the precautions taken are in accordance with World Health Organisation's (WHO) advisory for the coronavirus outbreak.

India also restricted export of about 26 Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients and formulations including antibiotics, vitamins and hormones like Paracetamol, Tinidazole, Metronidazole, Vitamins B1, B6, B12, hormone progesterone, with immediate effect.

Telangana has allocated Rs 100 crore for preventing and containing a possible outbreak. Private hospitals have been given a directive not to delay reporting cases. Three designated hospitals for isolating patients have been set up.

Sixteen Indians have tested positive for coronavirus test aboard the cruise liner Diamond Princess. The last batch of healthy passengers disembarked and returned to India after the quarantine period ended. A total of 138 Indians, including 132 crew and 6 passengers, were among the 3,711 people on board the ship.

5 questions answered:

How many under surveillance?

Over 25,738 passengers have been brought under community surveillance. In addition, over five lakh passengers have been screened at airports and 12,431 people screened at major and minor seaports.

What is the Centre doing?

The govt has suspended all regular visas/e-visas granted on or before March 3 to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan who have not yet entered India.

Those requiring to travel to India due to compelling reasons, may seek fresh visa from nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate, according to a release.

The advisory also suspended visa on arrival (VoA) issued by March 3 to Japan and South Korea nationals who have not yet entered India.

India has also issued a fresh travel advisory to avoid non-essential travel to Korea, Iran and Italy, in addition to China.

People coming from Republic of Korea, Iran and Italy or having such travel history since 10 February may be quarantined for 14 days on arrival to India, along with anyone with a history of travel to China since January 15, 2020.

India has also advised citizens to avoid all non-essential travel to Singapore.

Any Indians left in Wuhan?

India has operated three flights to Wuhan, bringing back 723 Indians and 43 foreign nationals.

A total of 650 people were brought back from Wuhan in China on February 1 and 2 in two 747 Boeing Air India aircraft after the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus in China.

Since then there's been an evacuation on February 27, when Air India brought back 119 Indians and five foreign nationals who were on board the Diamond Princess cruise ship, docked off Yokohama, in Japan.

And another, when the Indian government flew an Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft to Wuhan (on

February 26) carrying 15 tonnes of medical assistance comprising masks, gloves and other medical equipment. On its return, this IAF aircraft also brought back 76 Indians and 36 foreign nationals.

Are airlines still flying to China?

Air India, other Indian airlines have suspended flights to China and Iran, while airlines have restricted flights to Hong Kong.

At present only Iran Air and Mahan Air operates several weekly flights to Indian cities of Mumbai and New Delhi. IndiGo and Air India have suspended flights to China and Hong Kong. Meanwhile, SpiceJet have cancelled their flights to Hong Kong.

Vistara has canceled some flights to Bangkok and Singapore.

Where are the screening wards in India?

The virus can be tested in a laboratory through a Real Time-PCR, followed by gene fingerprinting. **In India, 15 labs are functional to test the novel coronavirus so far. "Nineteen will be made operational soon," said Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan.**

In Delhi: Manesar camp is already monitoring those who have come from China. Ram Manohar Lohia, AIIMS and Safdarjung hospitals in the capital have also readied isolation facilities.

In Mumbai: Two Mumbai hospitals namely, Kasturba hospital and Pune's Naidu hospital- have been dedicated for suspected patients in the state.

In Karnataka: The state government has placed border districts of Dakshina Kannada, Kodagu, Chamarajnar and Mysuru under novel coronavirus surveillance. At Mangaluru International Airport, a health unit comprising doctors and assistants have been formed to screen passengers. An isolation ward with ten beds has been set up at the Government Wenlock Hospital to treat patients with the symptoms.

In Manipur: Five centres have been opened in different border towns of the state and at the Imphal International Airport to screen people for coronavirus.

In Mizoram: Facility opened in Mizoram where people entering through India-Myanmar border are being tested at Zokhawthar.

The test being done in India is the same one that is used for testing HIV, H1N1, dengue, polio.

So far, specimens of suspected novel coronavirus patients are tested at the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) in Delhi, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)'s laboratories at Alappuzha, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Mumbai, besides the National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. All these labs are work under the guidance of NIV.

[The Economic Times of India 04/03/2020](#)

India curbs medicine exports, affecting supplies worldwide.

In response to the epidemic, the government of India on Tuesday curbed exports of 26 drugs and drug ingredients, including a wide range of antibiotics and certain vitamins, meaning that the new coronavirus could soon have ripple effects on people worldwide with other ailments.

The world relies heavily on India's huge pharmaceutical industry for generic drugs, but Indian officials are concerned about safeguarding the supply for their own country.

Indian drug makers depend on Chinese factories for key drug ingredients, particularly for antibiotics and vitamins. The Covid-19 outbreak in China and quarantine of Hubei province, where much of the production is centered, has severely hampered China's ability to produce those ingredients.

Although Indian companies had stockpiled extra ingredients ahead of the annual Lunar New Year holiday, those reserves are now running low.

It's unclear whether India's exports of the specified drugs will be completely stopped. The government's order said that exports of the drugs are restricted, which means a government permit is required before they can be shipped out of the country.

The antibiotics facing export limits are tinidazole, metronidazole, chloramphenicol, erythromycin salts, neomycin, clindamycin salts and ornidazole.

Other drugs on the restricted list include the painkiller acetaminophen, the hormone progesterone, the antiviral drug aciclovir, and the vitamins B1, B6 and B12.

[The New York Times 04/03/2020](#)

Himalayan Airlines adds A319 aircraft to fleet

REP: Himalaya Airlines, the private international airline of Nepal, has added an A319-115 aircraft to its fleet on Monday. The aircraft with the maiden flight from Tianjin Binhai International Airport in China, landed at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) on Monday. The new aircraft MSN 9020, with registration number 9N-AJK, landed at TIA at 10:20 pm local time. "This is a step forward in line with the company's strategy to expand Himalaya Airlines network and operate new routes which are expected to commence during 2020," the company issuing a statement on Tuesday quoted president of Himalaya Airlines, Zhou Enyong, as saying.

<https://myrepublica.nagariknetwork.com/news/himalaya-airlines-adds-a319-aircraft-to-fleet/>

[My Republica 04/03/2020](#)

Coronavirus: Nepal feeling the impact

TKP writes a front page story on the economic impact of the coronavirus in Nepal saying that the Nepali economy has started "feeling the pinch" as the virus spreads.

<https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/03/04/nepali-economy-starts-to-feel-the-pinch-as-coronavirus-spreads>

[Kathmandu Post 04/03/2020](#)

Seventeen Indians have been infected with coronavirus abroad, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Wednesday.

Responding to a question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said 16 cases were reported from Japan on the cruise ship and one from the UAE.

He further said that the government evacuated a total of 766 persons -- 723 Indian nationals and 43 foreigners -- from China.

Similarly, 119 Indians have been brought back to India from the cruise ship in Japan, Muraleedharan said.

"Air India has raised a bill of Rs 5.98 crore for operating two special flights to China and an Indian Air Force flight carrying relief material to China also carried Indian citizens from Wuhan, China on its return journey," he said.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

India intends to set up a laboratory in Iran so that Indians there can be tested for a possible exposure to novel coronavirus before being brought back, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Wednesday.

The Iranian government has not yet given permission for it.

An estimated 1,200 Indians, mostly students and pilgrims, are in Iran currently.

"If the Iranian government lends its support, a testing facility could be set up there as well, so that Indians there can be tested before they can be brought back," Vardhan said.

One scientist from the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune has been sent to Iran while three more from the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) will leave at 4 pm on Wednesday to check the feasibility of setting up a laboratory there for conducting coronavirus test.

As part of the country's preparedness in containing the spread of the disease, the minister said all foreign nationals henceforth will be screened for COVID-19 at the 21 designated airports and not just the 12 countries listed earlier.

A total of 28 COVID-19 cases were detected in India so far. Among them, one person was from Delhi, six of his relatives in Agra, 16 Italians and their Indian driver, one in Telangana and the three earlier cases in Kerala, Vardhan said.

On the other hand, Iran has so far reported over 2,000 coronavirus cases and 77 deaths.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Wednesday said 28 positive cases of coronavirus have been detected so far in India and announced that all international flights and passengers will now have to undergo screening, and not just the 12 countries listed earlier.

Addressing the media, Vardhan said if the Iranian government lent its support, a testing facility could be set up there as well. This will help bring back Indian citizens from Iran after a thorough screening, he said.

Vardhan also said that he met the Delhi health minister and civic body officials, and urged them to augment facilities of isolation wards in city hospitals.

Giving a breakup of those who tested positive for the virus, the minister said out of the total 28 COVID-19 cases in India, one person was from Delhi, six of his relatives in Agra, 16 Italians and their Indian driver, one in Telangana and the three earlier cases in Kerala.

He also said that so far, 5,89,000 people have been screened at airports, over 10 lakh screened at borders with Nepal and around 27,000 were currently under community surveillance.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

Rajasthan Health Minister Raghu Sharma informed the House on Wednesday that at least 215 people came in contact with the COVID-19 affected group of Italian tourists that had visited various places in the state.

Replying to an adjournment motion in the state Assembly, Sharma said swab samples of 93 people have been taken.

A total of 51 suspected patients have been tested negative whereas reports of 41 others are still pending, he said.

Fifty-three people in Jhunjhunu, 14 each in Jodhpur and Jaisalmer, 44 in Bikaner, six in Udaipur and 76 people in Jaipur came in contact with the group.

The minister informed the members of the House that the 15 Italian tourists who had reached Delhi, via Jaipur and Agra, have been tested positive for COVID-19.

He said that though there is no prescribed medication or vaccine to treat the disease, the suspected patients in the state are being given swine flu medication as a precautionary measure.

Purchase orders have been given for 50,000 personal protective equipment kits and 5 lakh each of N95 and triple layer masks to deal with the problem, the minister said.

He said that Italy has the third largest number of coronavirus cases in the world and tourists should have been screened earlier.

The tourists entered Rajasthan via road from Delhi, he said, adding that that the state did not receive information about screening and travel plans of the tourists.

Listing out the measures taken by the Health department, he said that teams have been alerted to thoroughly screen passengers at airports while rapid response teams have been formed in the medical colleges and associated hospitals.

Leader of Opposition Gulab Chand Kataria said the entire opposition stands with the government and whatever precautions are required should be taken. The state government should track the places where the tourists had visited in the state, he said adding that this is not the time to blame the government and administration.

Kataria said land should be earmarked if there was any need to build isolation wards. It is a problem and people of the state should fight against the virus together, he said.

Fear and panic prevailing among the people should also be mitigated, he added.

Opposition members Rajendra Rathore, Kalicharan Saraf and Ashok Lahoti also expressed their views on the coronavirus issue.

Rajendra Pareek, who was in the Speaker's chair, said homeopathy practitioners in the clinic inside the Assembly have informed him about preventive medicine in homeopathy and his views can be also be noted. He said that there was no harm in taking opinion of the practitioners.

To this, the health minister said they would follow guidelines issued by the Centre and the World Health Organisation (WHO) to decide the future course of action.

Jaipur, Mar 4 (PTI)

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said efforts are on to check and screen 88 people who came in contact with the Delhi man who tested positive for coronavirus.

A taskforce headed by him has been formed to tackle the situation emerging from the coronavirus infection and there is no need to panic, he said at a press conference.

The taskforce will comprise all concerned stakeholders.

"We are concerned about situation but no need to panic," he said.

A coronavirus testing lab will be set up at the Lady Hardinge Hospital and also at the LNJP Hospital if necessary, Kejriwal said.

There is no shortage of masks, the chief minister added.

Municipal corporations in Delhi are contacting and screening tourists from four countries where most cases of the infection have come to light. The screening is being done at hotels and guesthouses in the city, he said.

Isolation wards in 19 government and six private hospitals are being readied in case of need, Kejriwal stated.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

In view of the coronavirus outbreak, Delhi BJP spokesperson Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga has called for suspension of the use of breath analyser tests for alcohol consumption, by the police.

In a letter to Delhi Police Commissioner, Bagga said, "In the light of ongoing nCovid2019 (corona) infection, to protect (prevent) further spread of the disease, I request to please suspend the breath analyser tests for drunk drivers."

He claimed breath is one of the main reasons behind the spread of the virus, adding the test can be resumed after the situation becomes normal.

"Request to @DelhiPolice @cpdelhi & other state Police for suspension of breath analysis for some time #CoronaAlert," Bagga tweeted.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Wednesday said 28 positive cases of coronavirus have been detected so far in India and announced that all international flights and passengers will now have to undergo screening, and not just the 12 countries listed earlier.

Giving a breakup of those who have tested positive for the virus, the minister said out of the total 28 COVID-19 cases in India, one person is from Delhi, six of his relatives in Agra, 16 Italians and their Indian driver, one in Telangana and the three earlier cases in Kerala.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

Union Minister for Health Dr Harsh Vardhan said Wednesday that henceforth, all passengers whether Indian or foreign arriving on international flights will be required to go through medical screening while entering India.

This is a big departure from the screening process that was followed as of Tuesday when passengers arriving from 12 select countries were being screened at the airports across India.

Speaking to reporters after a high-level meeting in the concerned officials, Dr Harsh Vardhan further stated that 5.89 lakh people have been screened at several airports so far where around 20 lakh have been screened at borders with Nepal and over 27,000 under community surveillance presently.

Urging people not to panic, the health minister said that everyone must follow basic hygiene and those with flu-like symptoms should consult a doctor.

He added that there are 28 confirmed cases of coronavirus in India so far. These 28 confirmed cases comprise three patients from Kerala who were discharged after recovery last month. Meanwhile, the rest 25 cases were reported this week.

These cases comprise:

- **A 45-year-old Delhi resident who had returned from Europe recently.**
 - **A 24-year-old techie from Bengaluru who travelled to Hyderabad from the city after landing from Dubai.**
 - **Six people from Agra who caught the infection after coming in contact with the Delhi-based patient.**
 - **A group of 16 Italian tourists who visited Rajasthan and Agra.**
 - **One Indian driver who escorted the Italian tourists.**
-

All of these people who tested positive for coronavirus are currently placed in the isolation wards at several hospitals and quarantine facilities across the country.

The health minister enunciated that the government is in the process of tracking people who came in contact with those infected by coronavirus.

[Business Today 04/03/2020](#)

Prime Minister's Office

PMO reviews corona virus response and preparedness

- Today's meeting latest in a series of reviews by PMO; with the first meeting dating back to 25th January 2020
- Meeting re-affirmed a pro-active 'pan-government approach'; with specific areas of responsibility identified for various public authorities at the Centre, state and local levels
- Emphasis on greater participation of the private sector and the community at large, through a Jan Bhagidari approach (PPP)
- Decisions taken include expanding testing facilities and developing a GIS data-base for mapping disease hot-spots and available medical facilities.

Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Sh. P.K. Mishra today chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review preparedness and response on the corona virus issue. Today's meeting was the latest in a series

of stock-taking meetings at the PMO, with the first held on 25th January. Today's meeting was attended by Cabinet Secretary, Foreign Secretary, Secretaries of Ministries of Health, Civil Aviation, Information and Broadcasting, Shipping, Tourism, Chairman (Airport Authority of India), Secretary (Border Management), MHA and senior officials from Defence forces, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Niti Ayog and the Prime Minister's Office.

The pro-active measures taken so far which have contained spread of the virus in India, despite a big population and geographical proximity to the epicentre of the disease, were appreciated by all. At the same time, it was decided to further enhance the effectiveness of the steps taken by adopting a pan-government approach, in partnership with the states.

A broad spectrum of issues were reviewed. **Two important changes since yesterday to further enhance our level of preparedness, namely introduction of universal screening at all international airports and sea-ports through use of thermal imagery equipment as well as mandatory filling of declaration forms of places visited by tourists and travellers returning from abroad, were noted by all concerned for operationalization.** Ministry of Home Affairs was tasked to work closely with state governments, including relevant district administration officials, to ensure compliance with screening protocols at Integrated Check Posts (ICPs) on our land borders. National Informatics Centre would provide the requisite support to the Bureau of Immigration and MHA in this regard.

Decisions were also taken to rapidly implement opening of proper testing, isolation and quarantine facilities in various parts of the country, down to the district level, in partnership with the state governments. Ministries such as MHA, MoD, M/Railways and M/Labour would also seek to support and supplement the efforts of M/Health through use of their facilities and hospitals.

To disseminate information to the general public in a timely manner, including relevant advisories and 'Do's and Dont's', Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was tasked to work closely with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Human Resource Development and NDMA. For this purpose, Ministry of Health has started a system of regular daily briefings by their spokesperson, so as to ensure access to real time data for the public in a timely manner. Ministry of Health is also coordinating the activation of a GIS mapping of 'disease hotspots' and availability of medical facilities, with NDMA, relevant agencies and government departments. Ministry of Health briefed the meeting on the positive impact of a 24 hour medical help-line, operational across the country since 23rd January 2020, with ten dedicated telephone-lines, that has so far received over 6000 phone calls.

It was highlighted that participation of the communities and local bodies is essential to combat the public health challenge posed by the virus. It was decided to explore the greater involvement of private sector.

In light of the public health experts' recommendation to avoid big public gatherings, it was decided that all Government departments and ministries shall consult Ministry of Health before organising Conferences and international meetings in the country at present.

Earlier today, Hon'ble Prime Minister has tweeted that **'Experts across the world have advised to reduce mass gatherings to avoid the spread of COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. Hence, this year I have decided not to participate in any Holi Milan programme'**.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Dr. Harsh Vardhan chairs high level meeting on COVID-19; Dr. Satyendra Jain, Delhi Health Minister also present

A coordinated and collective effort in a mission mode is needed: Dr. Harsh Vardhan

“We have to work as a unit to combat the threat due to COVID-19 in the nation and a coordinated and collective effort in a mission mode is needed”, said Dr. Harsh Vardhan as he chaired the meeting with all the senior officials from Government of Delhi, and Directors/Medical Superintendents of government hospitals in Delhi, in the presence of Dr. Satyendra Jain, Minister of Health, Delhi Government.

Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) apprised both the Ministers about the current evolving scenario, globally as well as nationally. She informed that 78 countries are affected by COVID-19 as on date. She stated that high level of vigil and alertness is being maintained by the states and the Centre in the prevention and management of COVID-19. **She briefed about the revised travel advisory issued on 3rd March, 2020 regarding revised travel restrictions, self-declaration and advice for avoiding non-essential travel to China, Iran, republic of Korea, Italy and Japan and other COVID-19 affected countries.**

Dr. Harsh Vardhan observed that while inter-sectoral coordination with the Central ministries/departments are being done, it was heartening to see that States/UTs are also responsive and putting their best efforts by taking appropriate actions and preparedness for COVID-19. He further added that need of this hour is to put a more strategic approach like Cluster Containment Strategy, making the District Collectors more accountable, contact tracing & strengthening State and District surveillance teams to avoid widespread community transmission and also breaking the chain of transmission, if found.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan urged the States/UTs to strengthen core capacities for disease preparedness and response like Surveillance, Laboratory Diagnosis, Hospital Preparedness, Logistic Management, Capacity Building and Risk Communication.

Dr. Harsh Vardhan also advised that States need to identify isolation facilities, to accommodate confirmed/suspected cases if and when identified in each district, as well as logistics requirements and to enhance community awareness through print, electronic and social media in local languages including utilizing local cable TV channels, FM radio etc.

Dr. Balram Bhargava, Secretary, ICMR, Sh. Sanjeeva Kumar, Spl. Secretary (Health), Dr. Rajeev Garg, DGHS, Dr. Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS (Delhi), Sh. Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Commissioner of SDMC, EDMC, NDMC, Kendriya Vidyalaya and other senior officials from Delhi Government were also present during the meeting.

Update on COVID-19 - New Cases Confirmed

Another case in Jaipur, wife of the already confirmed Italian patient, has been confirmed for COVID-19.

14 Italians and one Indian, who were part of the team of the Jaipur COVID-19 confirmed case, are also initially confirmed positive for COVID-19.

Six (6) family members at Agra, who are family members of the COVID19 confirmed case from Delhi, are confirmed for COVID-19.

In addition, **two cases with high viral load have been detected in Telangana**

PIB 05/03/2020

Cabinet approves the Foreign Direct Investment policy on Civil Aviation

To permit foreign investment upto 100% by those NRIs, who are Indian Nationals, in case of M/s Air India Ltd., the Union Cabinet, chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi has approved to amend the extant FDI Policy to permit Foreign Investment (s) in M/s Air India Ltd by NRIs, who are Indian Nationals, upto to 100% under automatic route.

As per the present FDI Policy, 100% FDI is permitted in scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline (Automatic upto 49% and Government route beyond 49%). However, for NRIs 100% FDI is permitted under automatic route in Scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline. Further, FDI is subject to the condition that Substantial Ownership & Effective Control (SOEC) shall be vested in Indian Nationals as per aircraft rules, 1937. However, for M/s Air India Ltd., as per the present policy, foreign investment(s) in M/s Air India Ltd. Including that of foreign Airline(s) shall not exceed 49%, either directly or indirectly, subject to the condition that substantial ownership and effective control of M/s Air India Ltd. shall continue to be vested in Indian Nationals. Therefore, although 100% FDI is permitted under automatic route for NRIs in Scheduled Air Transport Service/Domestic Scheduled Passenger Airline, it is restricted to be only 49% in case of M/s Air India.

Benefits:

In light of the proposed strategic disinvestment of 100% of M/s Air India Ltd. by the Government of India, M/s Air India Ltd. will have no residual Government ownership and will be completely privately owned, it has been decided that foreign investment in M/s Air India Ltd be brought on a level playing field with other scheduled airline operators. The amendment in FDI policy will permit foreign investment in M/s Air India Ltd at par with other Scheduled Airline Operators i.e. upto 100% in M/s Air India Ltd by those NRIs, who are Indian Nationals. The proposed changes in FDI Policy will enable foreign investment by NRIs into M/s Air India Ltd. upto 100%, under automatic route.

Above amendment to the FDI Policy are meant to liberalise and simplify the FDI policy to provide ease of doing business in the country. Leading to largest FDI inflows and thereby contributing to growth of investment, income and employment.

Background:

FDI is a major driver of economic growth and a source of non-debt finance for the economic development of the country. The FDI policy is reviewed on an ongoing basis, with a view to attract larger volumes of foreign investment inflows into the country. Government has put in place an

investor friendly policy on FDI, under which FDI up to 100% is permitted on the automatic route in most sectors/activities.

FDI policy provisions have been progressively liberalized across various sectors in the recent past to make India an attractive investment destination. Some of the sectors include Defence, Construction Development, Trading, Pharmaceuticals, Power Exchanges, Insurance, Pension, Other Financial Services, Asset Reconstruction Companies, Broadcasting, Single Brand Retail Trading, Coal Mining, Digital Media etc.

These reforms have contributed to India attracting record FDI inflows in the recent past. FDI inflows in India stood at US \$ 45.15 billion in 2014-15 and have consistently increased since then. FDI inflows increased to US \$ 55.56 billion in 2015-16, US \$ 60.22 billion in 2016-17, US \$ 60.97 billion in 2017-18 and the country registered its highest ever FDI inflow of US \$ 62.00 billion (provisional figure) during the last Financial Year 2018-19. Total FDI inflows in the last 19 1/2 years (April 2000- September 2019) are US \$ 642 billion while the total FDI inflows received in the last 5 1/2 years (April 2014- September 2019) are US \$ 319 billion which amounts to nearly 50 % of total FDI inflow in last 19 1/2 years.

Global FDI inflows have been facing headwinds for the last few years. As per UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2019, Global Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows slid by 13% in 2018 to US \$1.3 trillion in the previous year, that is the third consecutive annual decline. Despite the dim global picture, India continues to remain a preferred and attractive destination for Global FDI flows. However, it is felt that the country has the potential to attract far more Foreign Investment which can be achieved, inter-alia, by further liberalizing and simplifying the FDI policy regime.

PIB and Gazette 05/03/2020

HIMALAYA AIRLINES a réceptionné son premier A319, un appareil issu de la ligne d'assemblage finale d'AIRBUS à Tianjin (Chine) et qui figurait parmi les derniers A319ceo restant au carnet de commandes de l'avionneur européen. Cet A319 (MSN 9020, CFM56) est configuré avec une cabine biclasse de 128 sièges (8 sièges en classe affaire). La compagnie prévoit d'ajouter deux autres A319 à sa flotte en 2021.

AlertAvia 03/03/2020

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday reported 23 new cases of Covid-19, including 15 Italian tourists and a man in Gurgaon, even as the government decided to screen all passengers entering the country from abroad for the deadly virus.

The government is working intensively to ensure meaningful intervention, if needed, to deal with the impact of unfolding Covid-19 crisis in the country, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

She said different ministries are working in tandem to deal with any impact of Covid-19, which has so far infected more than 94,000 people across the world and claimed some 3,222 lives.

Sitharaman said she has held meetings with industry representatives along with secretaries to assess the situation and shared the inputs with different ministries.

The total number of cases in the country has jumped to 29 with a new case confirmed in Gurgaon on Wednesday, when an employee of payments app Paytm was tested positive after returning from a vacation in Italy.

Paytm has shut its offices in Gurgaon and Noida for a couple of days to be sanitised. The patient “is receiving appropriate treatment and we are extending complete support to his family”, a company spokesperson said.

“As a precautionary measure, we have suggested his team members to get health tests done immediately,” the person said. “However, there will not be any impact on our daily operations and Paytm services will continue as usual.”

Sixteen of the new cases were reported from Jaipur, including wife of the 69-year old Italian tourist who was tested positive on Tuesday, 14 other tourists from Italy who had been travelling with them, and their Indian bus driver. They have been sent to Indo-Tibetan Border Police’s (ITBP) quarantine facility in Chhawla, Delhi, health minister Harsh Vardhan said.

Besides, six family members of the Delhi man who was found to be infected on Tuesday have tested positive for the virus, Vardhan said. All of them are in isolation in New Delhi’s Safdarjung Hospital. The health ministry had earlier identified these six people from Agra as having “high viral load”.

The government has also decided to start universal screening for all passengers flying into the country from abroad for the virus at the airports besides testing people coming in through open borders.

Earlier, only passengers coming in from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia were being checked.

Union minister Prakash Javadekar said more than 600,000 people have been screened for the disease across 21 airports. Additionally, one million people coming in through the country’s open borders with Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar have also been screened, he said.

Health minister Vardhan said the government is also setting up additional labs where the confirmation test can be performed. Phase one of that had 15 labs, some of which are already functional. Phase two will have 19 new labs, he said.

The government has also directed all public hospitals in Delhi to be prepared for more cases. “We will ensure that all facilities are of the highest order to handle patients that require any isolation,” Vardhan said.

[The Economic times of India 05/03/2020](#)

As the fear of coronavirus rises in India, aviation companies have put in place emergency measures to counter the threat of in-flight infection. We have collated the measures announced by different airlines. Here's how it will affect your travel plans:

International flights :

Air India and IndiGo have suspended flights to Shanghai, Hong Kong.

#FlyAI : Air India is suspending its operations to HongKong in view of the #coronavirus situation after flying AI31... <https://t.co/M4gYdxonz6>

— Air India (@airindiain) 1580805748000

The airline initially announced a ban for a couple of days in early February, and later extended it as far as **June**.

SpiceJet will be suspending Delhi Hong Kong flights from February 16 to 29. Vistara Airlines has temporarily reduced flights to and from Bangkok and Singapore.

Local flights :

There have been no restrictions on domestic travel, so far.

Government restrictions:

The Indian government has rescinded visas for travellers from China, Iran, Republic of Korea, Italy and Japan.

"Regular (sticker) visa/e-visa granted to nationals of People's Republic of China, issued on or before February 5, 2020 were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force. Those needing to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to the nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate," the advisory said.

The advisory also directed passengers arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan to undergo medical screening at the port of entry.

[The Economic Times of India 05/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought responses of the Centre, aviation regulator DGCA, Indigo and GoAir on a plea seeking grounding of A320neo aircraft with faulty engines.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar issued notice to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA), Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Indigo and GoAir on a petition that contended the entire fleet of A320neo aircraft should be grounded "in larger interest of public safety".

The plea, filed by a Chennai-based association of passengers, has alleged that despite being aware of "significant technical issues with Airbus A320 Neo", neither the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MCA) nor the DGCA have taken any concrete steps to ground these aircraft.

Instead, the MCA and the DGCA have only issued notices extending the timelines for carrying out the repairs or engine modifications by the airlines concerned, it has said.

"It is submitted that respondent 1 (MCA) and 2 (DGCA) have repeatedly extended the timelines for modified versions of the Pratt and Whitney engines to be installed, instead of grounding the entire fleet of A320 Neo aircraft," the petition has said.

It has also contended that despite repeated incidents of mid-air engine faults or problems in these aircraft, the aviation regulator has still not grounded the aircraft, which number more than 130 in India.

The petitioner has sought quashing of the notices which have extended the timeline for engine repair or modification to May 31.

It has also sought grounding of entire fleet of A320 Neo aircraft having faulty engines.

Apart from that, it has sought directions to the ministry and the aviation regulator to frame regulations to prevent situations of aircraft with faulty engines flying in the skies and for imposing sanctions on erring airlines.

The Economic times of India 04/03/2020

Additional counters, doctors, medical equipment and modified forms in pre-immigration area of airports will be arranged as part of coronavirus screening, an official said on Wednesday.

After the Centre's announcement that all international passengers arriving in India would henceforth be screened, Aviation Secretary P S Kharola held a four-hour long meeting with officials from various departments and airports.

He directed them to have additional counters, doctors, medical equipment and modified forms in pre-immigration area, the official said.

The modified forms will be filled with a duplicate copy -- one copy will remain with airport health authorities and other with the immigration department.

Kharola said sufficient manpower must be arranged with the help of respective state governments, immigration departments and the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

Through the 21 international airports in the country, a total of 25.15 lakh people arrived in India in March last year, according to the data by aviation regulator DGCA.

This means, around 83,000 passengers came to India daily on international flights.

While the number of international passengers landing in India has decreased significantly since the coronavirus outbreak, there are still thousands of passengers coming to India everyday from abroad.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan had earlier in the day said that there have been a total of 28 positive cases - which includes 16 Italian tourists -- of novel coronavirus in India yet.

New Delhi, Mar 4 (PTI)

The trade impact of the coronavirus epidemic for India is estimated to be about 348 million dollars and the country figures among the top 15 economies most affected as slowdown of manufacturing in China disrupts world trade, according to a UN report.

Estimates published by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) Wednesday said that the slowdown of manufacturing in China due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak is disrupting world trade and could result in a 50 billion dollar decrease in exports across global value chains.

The most affected sectors include precision instruments, machinery, automotive and communication equipment.

Among the most affected economies are the European Union (USD 15.6 billion), the United States (USD 5.8 billion), Japan (USD 5.2 billion), South Korea (USD 3.8 billion), Taiwan Province of China (USD 2.6 billion) and Vietnam USD 2.3 billion).

India is among the 15 most affected economies due to the coronavirus epidemic and slow down in production in China, with a trade impact of 348 million dollars.

The trade impact for India is less as compared to other economies such as EU, the US, Japan and South Korea.

Trade impact for Indonesia is 312 million dollars.

For India, the trade impact is estimated to be the most for the chemicals sector at 129 million dollars, textiles and apparel at 64 million dollars, automotive sector at 34 million dollars, electrical machinery at 12 million dollars, leather products at 13 million dollars, metals and metal products at 27 million dollars and wood products and furniture at 15 million dollars.

Besides its worrying effects on human life, the novel strain of coronavirus (COVID-19) has the potential to significantly slowdown not only the Chinese economy but also the global economy. China has become the central manufacturing hub of many global business operations. Any disruption of China's output is expected to have repercussions elsewhere through regional and global value chains, UNCTAD said.

Over the last month, China has seen a dramatic reduction in its manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) to 37.5, its lowest reading since 2004.

This drop implies a 2 per cent reduction in output on an annual basis.

This has come as a direct consequence of the spread of corona virus (COVID-19).

The 2 per cent contraction in China's output has ripple effects through the global economy and thus far has caused an estimated drop of about USD 50 billion across countries,"UNCTAD said.

"The most affected sectors include precision instruments, machinery, automotive and communication equipment, it added.

UNCTAD said because China has become the central manufacturing hub of many global business operations, a slowdown in Chinese production has repercussions for any given country depending on how reliant its industries are on Chinese suppliers.

In addition to grave threats to human life, the coronavirus outbreak carries serious risks for the global economy, UNCTAD Secretary-General Mukhisa Kituyi said.

Any slowdown in manufacturing in one part of the world will have a ripple effect in economic activity across the globe because of regional and global value chains, he said.

Pamela Coke-Hamilton, who heads UNCTAD's Division on International Trade and Commodities, said for developing economies that are reliant on selling raw materials, the effects could be felt very, very intensely.

Assuming that it is not mitigated in the short-term, it's likely that the overall impact on the global economy is going to be significant in terms of a negative downturn, she said.

The estimated global effects of COVID-19 are subject to change depending on the containment of the virus and or changes in the sources of supply.

Meanwhile, the extent of the damage to the global economy caused by novel coronavirus COVID-19 moved further into focus as UN economists announced a likely USD 50 billion drop in worldwide manufacturing exports in February alone.

Highlighting the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the economic impact of the epidemic, in which there have been more than 90,000 confirmed cases in more than 70 countries (the majority in China) and over 3,000 deaths, Coke-Hamilton said that US measures in terms of visitor arrivals, cancelling various meetings were having a knock-on effect in terms of demand.

So right now, we're not clear on where it will go a lot will depend on what happens with COVID-19; if they are able to come up with a vaccine then hallelujah, hopefully it will end very quickly, but if not, the impact can be severe, she said.

United Nations, Mar 5 (PTI)

In addition to Visa restrictions already in place, passengers traveling from /having visited Italy or Republic of Korea and desirous of entering India will need certificate of having tested negative for COVID-19 from the designated laboratories authorized by the health authorities of these countries. This will be enforced from 0000 Hrs of 10th March, 2020 and is a temporary measure till cases of COVID-19 subside.

Suo-Moto statement by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Health and F.W. ON 5th March, 2020 in Rajya Sabha in view of large number of reported cases across the world and reported cases in India of Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) and the steps taken by the Government of India

1. In continuation of the statement made by me in Rajya Sabha on 7th February and Lok Sabha on 10th February, I would further like to update the Hon'ble members on present situation related to the outbreak of novel Corona Virus Disease and the actions taken by the Government of India.
2. As mentioned earlier, Coronaviruses are large group of viruses that cause illness in humans and animals. Rarely, animal corona viruses can also evolve and infect people and then spread between people such as has been seen with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 and Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) in 2014.
3. Since reporting of an outbreak of Novel Coronavirus on 31st December, 2019 in China, a large number of cases have been reported across all provinces of China and other parts of the world including India. WHO has named the novel coronavirus disease as COVID-19.
4. As on 4th March, a total of 80,270 confirmed cases and 2981 deaths have been reported in China. Though the daily confirmed cases and deaths have shown a downward trend in China, still new cases are being reported from Hubei province and Wuhan city, the epicenter of the outbreak. A total of 12,857 confirmed cases and 220 deaths have been reported outside China from 78 countries (including Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan). Among these 30 countries have reported local transmission.
5. World Health Organization (WHO) has declared this outbreak as a "Public Health Emergency of International Concern" (PHEIC) on 30th January 2020 and raised the level of global risk to "very high" on 28th February, 2020. Though WHO has not declared COVID-19 to be Pandemic, it has asked the countries to remain prepared. It is worth highlighting that India initiated required preparedness and action at field level since 17th January itself, much before the advice from WHO.
6. Once a person is exposed to the infection, the disease may develop anytime between 1-14 days. The main symptoms of novel corona virus disease are fever, cough, and difficulty in breathing. All suspected or probable cases of COVID-19 must be treated in isolation with barrier nursing and universal precautions to prevent the further spread of disease.
7. **In our country, as on 4th March a total of 29 positive cases have been reported so far. Of these 3 cases were reported in Kerala earlier, who have since recovered and have been discharged already. Since last 3 days, new travel related cases have tested positive. These include one in Delhi (having travel history of Italy) and Telangana (having travel history from Dubai and contact history from person from Singapore). Both are clinically stable. Six more cases have tested positive in Agra, Uttar Pradesh having contact history with case in Delhi. Required action as per Cluster Management plan has been initiated. Further, an Italian Tourist & his wife have tested positive in Rajasthan. 14 other accompanying tourists in this group and their Indian bus driver tested positive on their return to Delhi. All of them are reported to be stable. A recent positive case has also been reported in Delhi yesterday (having travel history from Italy) and is stable.**
8. The ever increasing magnitude of this outbreak globally calls for a concerted effort by not only health but all sectors of Government. Honourable Prime Minister is personally monitoring the preparedness and response on a regular basis. Government of India has initiated a series of action to prevent entry of the disease and to contain it. **I am daily reviewing the situation. A Group of Ministers consisting of Minister of External Affairs, Minister of Civil Aviation and Minister of State for Home Affairs, Minister of State for Shipping and Minister of State for Health & Family Welfare chaired by me have been constituted to monitor the situation. The Group of Ministers has met four times since its inception on 3rd February, 2020. Cabinet Secretary is taking regular reviews with all related Ministries of Health, Defence, Ministry of**

External Affairs, Civil Aviation, Home, Textiles, Pharma, Commerce and other officials including with State Chief Secretaries. My own Ministry is constantly reviewing the evolving scenario. Video Conferences are being held with States every other day.

9. Government of India has also taken several measures to control the risk of novel Corona virus infection spreading to India. Our First **Travel Advisory** was issued on 17th January 2020 and as situation is evolving, the travel advisories are accordingly getting revised. Presently it prescribes,
 - **All regular (sticker) Visas/e-Visa (including Visa on Arrival for Japan and South Korea) granted to nationals of Italy, Iran, South Korea, Japan and issued on or before 03.03.2020 and who have not yet entered India, stand suspended with immediate effect.**
 - **Regular (sticker) visa / e-Visa granted to nationals of Peoples Republic of China, issued on or before 05.02.2020 were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force.**
 - **Regular (sticker) visas/e-Visas granted to all foreign nationals who have travelled to Peoples Republic of China, Iran, Italy, South Korea and Japan on or after 01.02.2020, and who have not yet entered India stand suspended with immediate effect.**
 - **Diplomats, officials of UN and other International bodies, OCI cardholders and Aircrew from above countries are exempted from such restriction on entry. However, their screening at point of entry is compulsory.**
 - **Passengers of all international flights entering into India from any port are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) and travel history, to Health Officials and Immigration officials at all ports.**
 - **Indian citizens are advised to refrain from travel to China, Iran, Republic of Korea, Italy & Japan and advised to avoid non-essential travel to other COVID-19 affected countries.**
10. Screening of passengers was initiated in the country since 18th January 2020. Initially airports at Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi were covered and subsequently expanded in a total of 21 airports. As per the evolving situation, initially Universal Screening was taken up for all passengers coming via direct flights from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand and Singapore. Since yesterday directions have also been issued for Universal Screening for all international passengers coming in the country. Signages have been displayed at prominent places in airports and ports, In-flight announcements are being made and self -declaration forms are being filled up by all passengers. **As on 4th March, a total of 6241 flights have been screened covering a total of 6,11,167 passengers. Teams of Specialist doctors were sent to all the airports to ensure effective screening and arrangement for isolation in the attached hospitals.**
11. Screening of passengers has also been initiated in 12 major seaports and 65 minor ports in the country to identify passengers & crew coming from China and to isolate them in case they are found symptomatic. As on 4th March, 16,076 persons have been screened at the ports.
12. Government has initiated screening in all integrated check posts with bordering countries in collaboration with states of UP, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar and Seema Shastra Bal (SSB) and Land Port Authorities. Gram Sabhas have been conducted in villages adjoining the borders to create awareness amongst people about the disease and precautions to be taken in collaboration with Panchayati Raj Ministry. Eight Central Teams visited the bordering villages in States of UP, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Sikkim and Bihar to review the activities at the border crossing, the conduct of Gram Sabhas and risk communication to the community. A total number of 3823 Gram Sabhas have been conducted and 11, 20,529 people have been screened at the border check post.
13. In view of the continuing lock down of the Hubei Province in China, the Government of India decided to evacuate the Indian students and other professionals working in Wuhan and neighbouring cities in the Hubei Province. **In a coordinated operation with Ministry of Civil**

Aviation, Air India, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, two Special Air India flights were operated between Delhi and Wuhan on 31 January and 1 February 2020 that brought back a total of 654 passengers that included 647 Indian citizens (including two Indian Embassy officials who were on the ground in Wuhan to coordinate the evacuation operation) and 7 Maldivian nationals. These evacuees were kept in Army Quarantine Centre at Manesar and ITBP Camp at Chhawla. All these evacuees were tested after 14 days and on being found negative, discharged on 18th February, 2020.

14. Further, Indian Air Force, on 26th February 2020 and evacuated a total of 112 people from Wuhan which included 76 Indians and national from Myanmar, Bangladesh, Maldives, China, South Africa, USA and Madagascar. The evacuees reached Delhi on 27th February morning and are kept at ITBP camp for quarantine for a period of 14 days as per protocol. I am happy to inform that they have all tested negative so far and are stable. This flight also had carried Personal Protective Equipments, disposables and medical equipments which was given as a good-will gesture to China from Indian government.
15. The Indian Embassy and Consulates are also in regular contact with the Indian Community in other parts of China and is keeping a constant track of their well-being.
16. Another evacuation was successfully carried out by Air India, by bringing back 124 people on 27th February morning including 5 foreign nationals who were on board the COVID-19 infected Cruise Ship Diamond Princess from Port of Yokohama, Japan. They are kept in Army Facility at Manesar for 14 days quarantine presently. I am happy to highlight that even these evacuees have tested negative and are stable.
17. Regular surveillance has been initiated across the country for all cases having travel history from all major COVID-19 affected countries and for people having contact with such persons and having fever, cough or breathlessness. **Through Integrated Disease Surveillance network all such persons are tracked and as on 4th March, a total of 28529 persons were brought under community surveillance and monitored.** The state surveillance officers, district surveillance officers and rapid response teams of health professionals under the leadership of state Health Secretaries are monitoring all such people on a daily basis. Sufficient isolation beds have been made available in the tertiary facilities across the country to manage any outbreak.
18. Ministry has issued guidelines to support states on Surveillance and contact tracing, Surveillance at Points of Entry, Laboratory samples collection, packaging and transport, Clinical management protocol and Infection prevention and control in healthcare facilities. **To ensure availability of critical items like Personal Protective Equipments (PPE) & N95 masks, the exports of the same was also restricted. A buffer stock of personal protective equipments & N95 masks is maintained by states as well as Union Government.**
19. National Institute of Virology, Pune is the nodal Laboratory. As part of ICMR's preparedness for emerging/ re-emerging infectious disease, NIV, Pune has established capacity for molecular diagnosis of COVID-19. Next generation sequencing is also established. Testing of clinical samples has also been initiated in 15 more laboratories. Another 19 laboratories are being prepared to test samples to ensure adequate geographical spread across the country. **The network is being further expanded.**
20. Risk communication material has been prepared and is widely disseminated even in regional languages through states. Required awareness in community is ensured through technical briefings by experts in radio and Television. Daily Press briefing is being held by Ministry of Health and information is being shared through social media. A 24x7 Control Room is operational with call centre number as 011-23978046. So far, more than 9200 calls have been attended including 667 international calls.
21. Government of India is in regular touch with WHO headquarters, regional office and country office to get updates on evolving scenario.
22. Our focus is on adherence to core capacities for disease preparedness and response which include surveillance, laboratory diagnosis, hospital preparedness, logistics management,

capacity building of health care staff and risk communication to the community. The scale and extent of our interventions have increased in alignment with the evolving situation of COVID-19 across the world and India in particular.

23. **With the increasing global spread of the diseases, we are confronted with new challenges. The contact tracing of positive cases requires tracing of hundreds of contacts in multiple locations and monitoring their health. Similarly, the cases in Agra being transmitted to family members by the confirmed case has necessitated putting up a containment plan to contain the cluster of cases in Agra.**
24. **Another major area of concern is Indian pilgrims and students stranded in Tehran and Quam, Iran, epicentres of the Iran Covid-19 outbreak. Government of India is following up with Iran authorities for their well-being and to tie up evacuation as per need.**
25. In addition to manage travel related cases, additional challenge is to contain clusters due to local transmission that requires highly resource intensive containment operations. We have provided the Containment Action Plan to all the States. **A national level training workshop has been planned for all the states and hospitals from other Ministries on COVID-19 management on 6th March 2020 which will then be taken up to district level.** Senior Officers of the Ministry have been deputed to States and UTs to review their preparedness and provide required guidance in the containment efforts.
26. **We have designated District Collector as the nodal officer at field level for containment operations.** States have been guided in terms of identifying containment zone, buffer zone and preparation of micro plan to ensure effective active and passive surveillance and contact tracing through inter-disciplinary teams in the areas where cases are located.
27. I want to inform this house that the Government is taking all necessary measures to prevent spread of the COVID-19 in India.

Update on COVID-19: cases and management

As of now, 29 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been detected in the country. Of these, three (from Kerala) have recovered and have been discharged. The Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan is making a statement in both houses of the Parliament today.

Universal screening has been mandated since 4th March 2020 (yesterday) and has started in most airports from yesterday evening. It should stabilize today with additional staff being provided by the States.

Since, in addition to COVID 19 cases related to travel, some cases of community transmission have also been observed, it has been decided to involve district collectors and States have been asked to form rapid response teams as the district, block and village levels.

Private sector shall also be engaged for COVID19 management. HFM is having a meeting with key partners in the evening today.

A total of 3542 samples have been sent for testing, of which 29 have been found to be positive for COVID-19 till now. Testing of 92 samples is in process and 23 samples are being reconfirmed.

PIB 05/03/2020

With a new case being reported in Ghaziabad on Thursday, India's COVID number is now at 30.

On Wednesday 23 new cases were reported, including 15 Italian tourists and a man in Gurgaon, even as the government decided to screen all passengers entering the country from abroad for the deadly virus.

The government is working intensively to ensure meaningful intervention, if needed, to deal with the impact of unfolding Covid-19 crisis in the country, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said.

She said different ministries are working in tandem to deal with any impact of Covid-19, which has so far infected more than 94,000 people across the world and claimed some 3,222 lives.

Sitharaman said she has held meetings with industry representatives along with secretaries to assess the situation and shared the inputs with different ministries.

The total number of cases in the country has jumped to 30 with a new case confirmed in Gurgaon on Wednesday, when an employee of payments app Paytm was tested positive after returning from a vacation in Italy.

Paytm has shut its offices in Gurgaon and Noida for a couple of days to be sanitised. The patient "is receiving appropriate treatment and we are extending complete support to his family", a company spokesperson said.

"As a precautionary measure, we have suggested his team members to get health tests done immediately," the person said. "However, there will not be any impact on our daily operations and Paytm services will continue as usual."

Sixteen of the new cases were reported from Jaipur, including wife of the 69-year old Italian tourist who was tested positive on Tuesday, 14 other tourists from Italy who had been travelling with them, and their Indian bus driver. They have been sent to Indo-Tibetan Border Police's (ITBP) quarantine facility in Chhawla, Delhi, health minister Harsh Vardhan said.

Besides, six family members of the Delhi man who was found to be infected on Tuesday have tested positive for the virus, Vardhan said. All of them are in isolation in New Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. The health ministry had earlier identified these six people from Agra as having "high viral load".

The government has also decided to start universal screening for all passengers flying into the country from abroad for the virus at the airports besides testing people coming in through open borders.

Earlier, only passengers coming in from China, Hong Kong, Japan, South Korea, Thailand, Singapore, Nepal, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Malaysia were being checked.

Union minister Prakash Javadekar said more than 600,000 people have been screened for the disease across 21 airports. Additionally, one million people coming in through the country's open borders with Nepal, Bhutan and Myanmar have also been screened, he said.

Health minister Vardhan said the government is also setting up additional labs where the

confirmation test can be performed. Phase one of that had 15 labs, some of which are already functional. Phase two will have 19 new labs, he said.

The government has also directed all public hospitals in Delhi to be prepared for more cases. “We will ensure that all facilities are of the highest order to handle patients that require any isolation,” Vardhan said.

The Economic Times of India 05/03/2020

Panic gripped Hyderabad’s IT corridor of Madhapur and Gachibowli on Wednesday after two more persons reportedly tested positive for coronavirus, of which one is a woman technology worker.

Meanwhile, tension eased in Bengaluru after Karnataka medical education minister K Sudhakar announced that all five persons, who had been hospitalised after showing symptoms, are safe with tests proving negative. They include the roommate of the techie who travelled to Hyderabad by bus and his colleague. “We will keep the suspected cases under four weeks of observation as against two weeks elsewhere,” the minister told ET. An Iranian student will continue under quarantine for the next 10 days.

In Hyderabad, several companies like DSM Shared Services located in Raheja Mindspace IT SEZ, where the woman was working, closed their offices temporarily. DSM announced that the office premises was currently being sanitised after one of the staffers was diagnosed with the infection. The company said the diagnosis was confirmed early on Wednesday and two of its offices in Hyderabad “will be closed till further notice” and the “employees will be operating from home.”

Telangana IT secretary Jayesh Ranjan appealed to the IT companies to stay in touch with the government and not close offices, as it would only trigger panic. At least two software firms should resume operations from Thursday after sanitising their premises, he said.

Of around 350 employees working at DSM, only 23 employees who came in contact with the woman have been advised home quarantine for two weeks. The 100-acre Raheja Mindspace is home to 21 buildings, employing thousands of technology workers.

Telangana health minister Etela Rajender said there are certain protocols to be followed before announcing Covidpositive cases as they require conclusive tests and approvals by central government agencies. The status of two more suspected or borderline cases will be declared only by Thursday evening.

Many schools have decided to temporarily suspend their morning assemblies and several gated residential communities have decided not to celebrate Holi, even as the Hyderabad High Court has received a petition seeking to ban Holi celebrations to avert the spread of Covid-19. Several schools and educational institutions were closed down temporarily in the Mahindra Hills area of Secunderabad, where the techie who tested positive stayed.

Karnataka health authorities on Wednesday issued an advisory to employees of technology companies asking them to avoid non-essential travel to virus-affected countries. The India Electronic and Semiconductor Association (IESA) has postponed its annual vision summit that was to begin in

Bengaluru on March 5.

The health department has issued an advisory to all IT/BT firms to allow employees with flu-like symptoms to work from home. The government has also asked IT and BT employees to avoid travelling to the countries affected that include China, Iran, Republic of Korea, Italy, Japan and Iran. **Union home minister Amit Shah called off his March 15 visit to Hyderabad to address a CAA rally.**

The Economic Times of India 05/03/2020

L'IATA a revu à la hausse ses prévisions concernant l'impact de l'épidémie de Covid-19. L'association estime désormais qu'elle pourrait empêcher les compagnies aériennes de réaliser entre 63 et 113 milliards de dollars de chiffre d'affaires en 2020 sur leur activité de transport de passagers, selon l'ampleur de la propagation du coronavirus.

Elle s'est basée pour cela sur la courbe décrivant l'évolution du transport aérien en Asie durant l'épidémie de SRAS en 2013, assumant que le pic de la crise est atteint au maximum trois mois après la découverte du premier cas et que le retour du trafic au niveau pré-épidémie se fait en six à sept mois. Sa prévision initiale, présentée le 20 février, s'appuyait sur un scénario dans lequel la Chine et les pays ayant un lien fort avec elle en termes de liaisons aériennes seraient les principaux touchés. L'IATA estimait alors le manque à gagner à 29,3 milliards de dollars, principalement supporté par les compagnies chinoises et asiatiques. A ce stade, la réaction des marchés a déjà été un choc pour les compagnies aériennes, dont la capitalisation boursière a perdu près de 25% de sa valeur.

Cependant, la situation a évolué et 80 pays ont désormais recensé des cas. L'IATA envisage désormais deux scénarios. Le premier se base sur une propagation limitée du virus, ne touchant que les pays ayant identifié plus d'une centaine de cas au 2 mars, avec une reprise économique rapide (en V). Selon cette hypothèse, les compagnies aériennes membres souffriraient d'un manque à gagner de 63 milliards de dollars sur l'année, une baisse de 11% par rapport à leurs prévisions initiales de chiffre d'affaires, dont 47 milliards pour la région Asie Pacifique.

Dans cette situation, l'Italie verrait une baisse de 24% de la demande des passagers, la France et l'Allemagne de 10%. Le manque à gagner serait respectivement de 2,5 milliards, 2,9 milliards et 5 milliards de dollars.

Le deuxième scénario table sur la poursuite de la propagation du virus et englobe les pays avec plus de dix cas identifiés dans l'analyse (avec toujours une reprise en V après le pic de la crise). Alors, le manque à gagner pourrait atteindre 113 milliards de dollars, soit une baisse de 19% par rapport aux prévisions du début de l'année. L'IATA précise que les conséquences de l'épidémie seraient d'une ampleur équivalente à celle de la crise financière de 2008.

Alors, les compagnies de la région Asie Pacifique verrait ses prévisions de chiffre d'affaires réduites de 57,3 milliards de dollars, celles d'Europe de 43,9 milliards de dollars, celles du Moyen-Orient de 7,2 milliards de dollars et celles d'Amérique du Nord de 21,1 milliards de dollars.

L'IATA souligne que l'impact économique de l'épidémie sera atténué par une baisse de la facture carburant. Le transport aérien n'est pas le seul secteur à avoir vu la confiance baisser et les prix du pétrole ont eux aussi chuté plus rapidement que prévu : le cours du baril se situe autour des 51 dollars alors qu'il était à 68 dollars au tout début de l'année. **Par ailleurs, la réduction des capacités voire l'immobilisation d'une partie de la flotte aura également un effet sur la consommation. Les politiques de hedging retarderont toutefois les effets.**

« En un peu plus de deux mois, les perspectives de l'industrie dans une grande partie du monde ont pris une tournure alarmante. On ne sait pas exactement comment le virus va se développer, mais que l'impact soit limité à quelques marchés et à une perte de revenus de 63 milliards de dollars, ou qu'un impact plus large entraîne une perte de revenus de 113 milliards de dollars, il s'agit d'une crise. [...] Nous vivons une situation extraordinaire », a commenté Alexandre de Juniac, son directeur général.

Alors que plusieurs compagnies européennes, réunies au sommet Airlines for Europe (A4E), avaient prédit une consolidation du secteur avec la faillite des compagnies les plus fragiles, Flybe vient de suspendre ses activités. Les autres ont pris des mesures de réduction des coûts pour faire face à la baisse de la demande, gelant les embauches, prévoyant des réductions d'effectifs et coupant dans leurs capacités (Lufthansa a notamment annoncé qu'elle allait immobiliser 150 appareils dans les prochaines semaines).

Le Journal de l'Aviation 05/03/2020

Les réservations aériennes à destination de l'Europe, en provenance des continents américains, asiatiques et africains, se sont effondrées de 79% lors de la dernière semaine de février en raison de l'épidémie de coronavirus, indique jeudi la société spécialisée Forwardkeys.

"L'accélération" de la propagation "du Covid-19 en Italie au cours de la dernière semaine de février a déclenché une vague d'annulations pour l'Italie et un effondrement au niveau des nouvelles réservations vers l'Europe en provenance" des Amériques, de l'Asie Pacifique et de la zone Afrique/Moyen-orient, résume dans un communiqué la société, qui analyse chaque jour plus de 17 millions de réservations dans le monde, ainsi que 7 millions de recherches pour des vols.

"La chute des réservations vers l'Italie est même pire que ce que nous avons pu observer dans le passé en cas d'événements déstabilisants comme les attaques terroristes", commente Olivier Ponti, vice-président de Forwardkeys.

Pour lui, "le comportement au niveau des réservations semble disproportionné, avec des pays d'Europe, autres que l'Italie, touchés par des baisses substantielles" de projets de déplacements.

Entre le 25 janvier - date de suspension par la Chine des voyages organisés à l'étranger - et le 22 février, les réservations aériennes vers l'Europe en provenance des autres continents avaient dans un premier temps baissé de 23,7%.

Mais au cours de la dernière semaine de février, "la situation a considérablement empiré" et l'impact sur les déplacements "n'a pas été réduit à l'Italie: **la totalité des nouvelles réservations pour des vols vers l'Europe a chuté de 79%**", indique Forwardkeys.

L'Italie a même vu le nombre d'annulations dépasser le nombre de nouvelles réservations au cours de la dernière semaine de février.

Concernant la France, les réservations aériennes sont en chute de 71%, précise Forwardkeys.

Journal de l'Aviation 05/03/2020

“It is time for public & private sectors to come together and work as an alliance for collective efforts towards COVID-19 management”: Dr. Harsh Vardhan

“It is time for public & private sectors to come together and work as an alliance in the spirit of collaboration and co-ordination for collective efforts towards COVID-19 management”, said Dr. Harsh Vardhan as he chaired the high level meeting with owners and heads of private hospitals of Delhi-NCR, here today. Dr. V K Paul, Member (Health), NITI Aayog, Ms. Preeti Sudan, Secretary (HFW) were also present at the meeting.

A presentation was made about the current situation and ongoing activities of the COVID-19 management in the country. After the presentation, Dr. Harsh Vardhan stated that with the collective efforts of the Central Ministries and States/UTs, ample timely precautionary measures have been taken. He also said that States continue to be on high alert regarding prevention, community surveillance and effective hospital management. The Union Health Minister stated that it is during times like these, when the public and private sector can form an alliance and work towards shared goals in public interest pooling in collective resources, and building on the strengths of each other.

Dr Harsh Vardhan led discussion of several issues which included preparedness in terms of bed capacity of hospitals for infected cases, isolation wards, protocols for sample collection and testing, protocols for outdoor patients etc. It was discussed to create a pool of beds in the private hospitals, and NITI Aayog would support MoHFW and private hospitals in doing so, such that the data for availability along with the requisite trained manpower is known. **Collaboration on sample collection and testing was also discussed, wherein Secretary (HFW) stated that 35 labs have been identified across the country, number of which will be increased to more than 100 in coming days.** The hospitals informed that they have taken up various outreach activities for enhancing awareness among their hospital staff. They also volunteered to enhance awareness among the communities through their own efforts as well. It was also discussed that common communication in terms of management of COVID-19 should be maintained.

Dr Harsh Vardhan stated that it was important for people to access authentic and credible sources of information. Towards this end, he has enlisted the twitter handles that are providing such information in his tweet today.

The private hospitals collectively applauded the efforts of the Government, especially the immediate systematic management response to the entire situation since January 17th, this year. They promised their support to the Government and looked forward to working together for the country.

Besides senior officials of MoHFW, owners and heads of various private hospitals i.e. Medanta, Apollo Hospitals, Max Hospitals, Fortis Hospitals, Cygnus Healthcare, Artemis Hospitals, Asian Hospital (Faridabad), Metro Hospital, Paras Hospital, Sarvodaya Hospital, VPS Healthcare, Nayati Hospital, FICCI and IMA, were present at the meeting.

Update on COVID-19 cases

The total number of positive cases of COVID-19 are now 30. These include the previous three (3) cases from Kerala, who have now been discharged. In addition, there are three (3) from Delhi and NCR, (two with travel history from Italy, and one with travel history of Iran); six (6) contacts of the first Delhi Case with travel history of Italy; one (1) from Telangana with history of Dubai travel and Singapore contact; 16 Italians and one driver (Indian) who was with the Italian tourist group.

In addition, the earlier two suspected cases of Telangana have tested negative at NIV, Pune. Also, the 14 Italian cases, and all the Indian patients are stable and being monitored.

Total of 6,49,452 passengers have been screened at the airports till date from 6550 flights. In addition, there are 29607 persons who are under the IDSP community surveillance and contact tracing.

Ministry of Home Affairs

Union Home Secretary reviews status of screening of people entering India in view of Corona Virus Threat

Union Home Secretary, Shri Ajay Bhalla reviewed the status of screening of people coming to India from neighboring countries, in view of the corona virus threat.

Home Secretary held a video conference with Chief Secretary/Additional Chief Secretary and DGP/Additional DGP of States viz., Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and Punjab, besides Secretary Border Management and DsG of BSF/SSB.

The States informed that regular screening is being done by doctors at various transit points and the community in border areas has been sensitized in respect of precautions to be taken to avoid getting infected by the virus, through gram sabhas.

The Home Secretary urged all the officials to ensure that round the clock deployment of doctors, with requisite testing kits and other medical supplies, be done so that hundred percent screening is done without fail.

PIB 06/03/2020

Primary schools in Delhi were ordered shut for the rest of the month as government authorities and businesses on Thursday scaled up measures to try and stop the Covid-19 outbreak from turning into an epidemic in the country.

The move came as the number of patients in India inched up to 30, with a man in Ghaziabad testing positive. He is said to have travelled to Italy, according to the Union health ministry.

A sombre assessment of the risks prompted the Delhi government to shut down all primary schools till 31 March.

The move was announced by Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, who told Parliament, **“Since, in addition to Covid-19 cases related to travel, some cases of community transmission have also been observed, it has been decided to involve district collectors and states have been asked to form rapid response teams at the district, block and village levels.”**

“We have designated district collector as the nodal officer at field level for containment operations. States have been guided in terms of identifying containment zone, buffer zone and preparation of micro plan to ensure effective active and passive surveillance and contact tracing through inter-disciplinary teams in the areas where cases are located.”

The government also issued guidelines to support states to survey, track and conduct laboratory tests and sample collection. It also restricted the export of critical items, including personal protection equipment like N95 masks, to ensure adequate domestic availability.

In another move, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), decided that in addition to visa restrictions already in place, passengers who have visited Italy or South Korea will need a certificate showing they have tested negative for Covid-19 from a designated laboratory authorized by the health authorities of those countries before entering India. This will be enforced from 10 March for a temporary period.

Earlier this week, the government suspended visas and e-visas granted on or before Tuesday to people travelling from Italy, Iran, South Korea and Japan.

However, there were concerns the measures will hurt aviation and tourism, with many people already shunning non-essential travel.

With several Indian airlines already in a precarious financial condition, the rapid spread of the disease and containment measures are set to stretch their finances, analysts said.

“Aviation is one of the sectors most hit by the likely demand slowdown based on the ramifications of nCoV (Covid-19),” said an ICICI Securities report on listed Indian airlines.

People have started shunning restaurants and online food deliveries, while concerns that meat could be a source of contamination have also affected the food business.

In tandem with government measures, several companies have asked employees to work from home for an indefinite period after a Paytm employee in Gurugram tested positive on Wednesday.

However, there could be a silver lining as the viral outbreak would probably set a new normal for work culture in the country, an industry leader said.

“The rules of the employment game are being re-written faster than ever in India with new labour law reforms shaping up. Corporates are facing market disruptions with traditional models turning business redundant,” Niranjan Hiranandani, president of the Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry said.

[Live Mint Aviation 06/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI : Cash-strapped airlines in India are worried about a likely fall in demand as more Covid-19 infections emerge in the country, potentially dampening appetite for air travel.

Considering that many cases were detected only in March, a decline in traffic in the coming months remains a possibility if the epidemic is not contained soon.

"Aviation is one of the sectors most hit by the likely demand slowdown based on the ramifications of nCoV (Covid-19)," said a 5 March ICICI Securities report on listed Indian airlines. "However, lower crude prices and possible adjusting of frequencies to maintain PLFs (passenger load factor) are two available offsets," it added.

Brent crude price stood at \$51.21 a barrel on Thursday, down 22% from a year ago.

"I don't think that the domestic demand during January and February was in any way affected due to the outbreak of Covid-19," a senior executive at a Gurugram-based low-fare airline said. "But with several cases being reported during March, we are cautious about future," the official added on condition of anonymity.

Most Indian airlines are likely to end the fiscal year with losses due to high costs and pricing pressures. Though cheaper fuel could provide some respite, the widening epidemic could slacken demand.

"Covid-19 cases in India surfaced just as we were getting optimistic about demand," an airline executive at a full-service carrier said, also on condition of anonymity.

Last December, aviation consultancy firm CAPA India had downgraded its earlier estimates for Indian airlines, which was a full-year profit of \$500 million to \$700 million (₹3,561 crore to ₹4,985 crore), to losses of over \$600 million (₹4,273 crore) in FY 2019-20. This was before the epidemic reached other countries.

In their quest to capture the capacity vacuum left by the grounding of Jet Airways last year, airlines had cut fares and added capacity.

But nearly every carrier is now under pressure. Airlines had also bet on the latest and most fuel-efficient aircraft to squeeze out profits wherever they could. But that strategy appears to have backfired with delay in deliveries of Boeing 737Max planes and snags with Pratt & Whitney engines.

Covid-19 infections worldwide have crossed 95,500, while the death toll has risen to 3,285.

Globally, aviation has been badly hit by the outbreak, with airlines grounding fleets and reducing capacity amid weak demand.

Germany's Lufthansa on Wednesday grounded 150 of its 750 global aircraft fleet due to declining demand.

Aviation industry lobby group The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has warned that the Covid-19 outbreak, if not further contained, could cost airlines as much as \$113 billion in lost revenue.

"IATA now sees 2020 global revenue losses for the passenger business of between \$63 billion (in a scenario where Covid-19 is contained in current markets) and \$113 billion (in a scenario with a broader spreading of Covid-19)," the industry body said in a statement.

News reports also state that French aircraft manufacturer Airbus SE is considering a cut in production of A330neo aircraft.

Meanwhile, listed Indian airlines like SpiceJet Ltd and Interglobe Aviation Ltd that runs IndiGo could be headed for tough times.

SpiceJet is stretched in terms of its balance sheet, but a combination of compensation from Boeing and lower crude prices should provide sustenance, the ICICI Securities report mentioned above said. "IndiGo is relatively better placed on account of balance sheet," it added.

Live Mint Aviation 06/03/2020

Amid a slight decline in temperature after rains lashed Delhi-NCR on Thursday, Indian Council of Medical Research director general Balram Bhargava said the change in weather will not have any impact on the spread of novel coronavirus.

Thirty people have tested positive for the virus so far with the latest being a man from Ghaziabad with a recent travel history to Iran.

Refuting claims that the virus spreads in low temperature, Bhargava told PTI that no such finding has been proven till now.

There is no relation between decline in temperature and the spread of the virus, he said, adding that the virus does not spread through air but human contact.

He advised people to take care of themselves against cough and cold with the change in weather.

The mercury in the national capital dropped slightly on Thursday due to overcast skies and rains in parts of the city. Delhi recorded a minimum of 14.4 degrees Celsius and a maximum of 27 degrees Celsius, around two notches less than that on Wednesday

Arrangements are being made to facilitate the return of stranded Indians from Iran in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak through normal civil aviation channels, the Ministry of External Affairs said on Thursday.

MEA Spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said as of now there are no Indians infected with the virus in Iran.

He also said Indian Embassies across the world are on the job wherever there has been an outbreak of coronavirus.

The Indian Embassy in Iran was putting out regular updates and the mission continues to be in touch with all the Indians in that country, including fishermen, he said.

Earlier, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said an Indian medical team was reaching Iran to set up its first clinic at Qom by the evening to start screening for coronavirus.

Asked about reports that 495 Iranian tourists in India are untraceable, Kumar said MEA has not received any information about it from the Iranian Embassy.

"The tourists we are talking about have been here before coronavirus outbreak and they can't return as no flights are operating between the two countries at present. They will leave once the flights resume, there should be no panic," he said.

Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan said that based on various requests, the Indian Embassy in Iran has reached out to Indian fishermen, including from Kerala, stuck in Kish Island and Assaluyeh.

"All are in good health. Their basic requirements are met. Embassy is in constant touch!" he said on twitter.

Kumar also said the Indians in Iran are being advised to follow the health protocol as given out by the WHO and local authorities.

"Our mission has opened a 24/7 helpline. Arrangements are being made to facilitate the return of stranded Indians from areas of concern through normal civil aviation channels," he said.

"We need good cooperation from Iranian authorities so that an appropriate screening process can be set up before the Indian nationals can be facilitated to take those flights back home," he said.

Asked if India will impose further travel restrictions, Kumar said it is an evolving situation.

On the overall preparedness to tackle the coronavirus issue, Kumar said Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself is personally taking a lot of interest in the preparedness of India to deal with the situation.

"There is a group of ministers, regular meetings are being held, both Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry of Health are deeply involved. Our Embassies across the world are on the job wherever you have a certain number of cases. They have opened 24/7 networks for people to connect to them," he said.

New Delhi, Mar 5 (PTI)

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Thursday urged the public and private sectors to work in alliance and build on the strengths of each other to tackle novel coronavirus.

"It is time for public and private sectors to come together and work as an alliance in the spirit of collaboration and co-ordination for collective efforts towards COVID-19 management," he said after holding a high-level meeting with owners and heads of private hospitals of Delhi-NCR.

The minister discussed the preparedness in terms of bed capacity of hospitals for infected cases, isolation wards, protocols for sample collection and testing, protocols for outdoor patients among

others.

According to an official statement, private hospitals of Delhi-NCR were asked to create a pool of beds. The NITI Aayog would support the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) and private hospitals in doing so, so that the data of availability of beds along with the requisite trained manpower is known, it said.

Collaboration on sample collection and testing was also discussed, wherein Secretary, MoHFW stated that 35 labs have been identified across the country, number of which will be increased to more than 100 in the coming days, the statement said.

A presentation was made about the current situation and ongoing activities of COVID-19 management in the country.

Vardhan said with the collective efforts of the central ministries and states/UTs, precautionary measures have been taken to prevent the spread of the disease.

He said states continue to be on high alert regarding prevention, community surveillance and effective hospital management.

The Union minister said it is during times like these, when the public and private sector can form an alliance and work towards shared goals in public interest, pooling in collective resources and building on the strengths of each other.

The hospitals informed the government that they have taken up various outreach activities for enhancing awareness among their hospital staff, the statement stated.

They also volunteered to enhance awareness among the communities through their own efforts as well.

Vardhan added that it was also important for people to access authentic and credible sources of information regarding the disease.

A man from Ghaziabad with a recent travel history to Iran has tested positive for novel coronavirus, taking the total number of such cases in the country to 30 as the government on Thursday asked states to form rapid response teams at district, block and village levels.

New Delhi, Mar 6 (PTI)

The test reports of 68 people who had come in contact with the Italian couple, who are among the 30 coronavirus cases in India, have come out negative, a senior health department official said here on Thursday.

Test results of eight more people are awaited, said Additional Chief Secretary, Medical and Health, Rohit Kumar Singh.

As many as 229 people were found to have come in contact with the Italian tourists who visited

Jaipur, Bikaner, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jhunjhunu and Jaipur.

Of them, samples were collected from 76 people suspected to have been infected by the virus. "Sixty-eight have tested negative and test reports of eight samples are yet to come," Singh said.

The Italian couple are admitted to an isolation ward at SMS Hospital in Jaipur.

After initial testing at SMS Hospital, samples of the husband-wife duo were sent to NIV-Pune for confirmation. The Pune institute confirmed them as coronavirus cases.

Singh said all samples collected from the hospital staff and the staff of the hotel they stayed in Jaipur have tested negative.

However, as per protocol, they will be under watch for 14 days. If they show symptoms of the virus infection, they will be tested again.

Singh said 247 samples have been collected in the state so far and 239 samples have been tested. Barring the Italian couple, the test reports of all others (except 8 which are under process) are negative.

He said 26,456 passengers of 180 flights have been screened for symptoms of coronavirus at Jaipur international airport so far.

Singh said the situation was reviewed with health department officials on Thursday. National Health Mission Director Naresh Thakral, CEO of state health insurance agency Suchi Tyagi and other officials were present in the meeting.

Jaipur, Mar 5 (PTI)

As the new coronavirus fear gripped Delhi, authorities on Thursday ordered immediate closure of primary schools until March 31 and launched efforts to trace people who came in contact with the Paytm employee tested positive for the virus.

A senior Delhi health department official said of the 91 people with whom the Paytm employee had come in contact with in Gurgaon, 17 are from Delhi.

"We are trying to contact the 17 people from Delhi. They will be tested for coronavirus. They have been asked to stay in isolation," the official said.

Efforts are also on to trace the people who came in contact with the Paytm employee in Noida and Connaught Place.

"The patient, a resident of Uttam Nagar, has tested positive and we have conducted tests on five persons he came in touch with. They have been quarantined at their residence," the official told PTI.

Health authorities said they have further strengthened the medical infrastructure to deal with the situation.

Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, who visited Lok Nayak Jaiprakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital to check preparedness to combat the virus, said the hospital has set up 11 separate rooms and isolation wards to treat COVID-19 patients.

The health minister said the Delhi government is also well prepared to increase the number of rooms and facilities as and when required.

He said only confirmed patients will stay in a separate room and in one room only a single patient will stay.

At the civic body level, besides setting up isolation wards in hospitals, they are also undertaking measures like conducting awareness activities in schools, sensitising resident welfare associations and forming rapid response teams.

North Delhi Mayor Avtar Singh said an isolation ward with 14 beds has been set up at NDMC-run Bara Hindurao Hospital for coronavirus patients.

He said nodal officers have been deputed at Hindurao and Kasturba hospitals to report on such cases.

The hotels under North Delhi Municipal Corporation area have been directed to report arrival of foreigners, he added.

The New Delhi Municipal Council is also conducting Information Education Communication activities in schools and sensitising office bearers of resident welfare associations about the disease.

"Considering that Lutyens' Delhi is a VVIP zone with several embassies and foreign tourists visiting Connaught Place in large numbers, we have put up posters to sensitise people and are issuing advisories detailing the dos and dont's," an NDMC official said.

"All our guest houses and hotels in the area have been asked to report about each guest coming from coronavirus-affected countries so that screening can be done to check if anybody needs to be quarantined as a precautionary measure," he said.

NDMC has also formed two rapid response teams for screening of residents who had visited coronavirus-affected countries after January 15. It has already screened 56 houses in this regard.

To prevent the possibility of spread of virus, Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia announced on Thursday that the primary classes of all schools in Delhi will remain closed till March 31.

According to Directorate of Education officials, while elaborate guidelines have been issued about preventive measures for the virus, students of nursery and primary classes are too young to understand the risk, making them more prone to infectious diseases.

Sisodia, who also holds the education portfolio, tweeted, **"As a precautionary measure to prevent the possibility of spread of COVID-19 amongst our children, Delhi government has directed immediate closure of all primary schools (govt/aided/ private/MCD/NDMC) till 31/3/20(sic)."**

Primary classes of Kendriya Vidyalayas in Delhi will remain closed till March 31 in view of the virus scare, officials of Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan said.

The fear of coronavirus also reached the Eidgah in Mustafabad in northeast Delhi where hundreds of riot-hit families are seeking shelter. They have been advised to regularly wash their hands and maintain cleanliness. Volunteers provide medicines and sanitisers and health experts counselling.

The volunteers and health professionals don't say the word "coronavirus" for fear of stoking panic among the people at the camp who include a large number of children.

A lot of people have been complaining about cough, cold, vomiting and fever, said Laik Ahmad, from Doctors' Unity Welfare Association, which has set up a free health camp at the Eidgah.

"Besides medicines, we have been asking them to use masks and wash their hands. But we don't take the name 'coronavirus'. It may create panic among people who have already been going through a lot," Ahmad, 43, said.

The popular Mughal Gardens will be closed for public from Saturday, a day before its scheduled closure, in view of the virus outbreak, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan has already announced it will not hold the traditional 'Holi' gatherings this year.

"Continuing the precautionary measures at Rashtrapati Bhavan in view of COVID-19 novel coronavirus, the Mughal Gardens will close for public from Saturday (March 7, 2020) to avoid any large gathering of people," it said in a statement.

New Delhi, Mar 5 (PTI)

Reserve Bank governor Shaktikanta Das on Friday assured that the central bank will take every measure needed to secure the economy against the challenges arising from the coronavirus epidemic.

The deadly virus that originated from China has spread to nearly 80 countries and has taken the lives of more than 3,300 people.

We will be able to respond to the challenges emerging out of the coronavirus epidemic, Das said at an industry event here.

While noting that there are enough resources to fight the crisis, given the robust forex reserves, he also called for the IMF to launch a non-stigmatised currency swap lines to ease the liquidity pressures globally.

RBI stands ready to intervene in whatever way required to respond to epidemic challenges, Das said, as he expects global growth to slow down due to coronavirus.

He also said that all central banks are resolved to work in close coordination.

On the domestic sector, he said certain sectors which depend on China will be impacted due to the epidemic, but mitigatory steps are being taken for it.

The impact on India will be limited as our economy is not much integrated with the global value chain; and to that extent we will be insulated, said Das.

Mumbai, Mar 6 (PTI)

Coronavirus:

1/ Food/essentials items scarce: **the govt has “urged the local authorities to limit the export of Nepali foodstuff and essential goods to other countries.** The provincial and local governments have been asked to ensure the smooth supply of foodstuff in their respective areas and to initiate public awareness measures against COVID-19”. The decision is made by a high-level coordination committee formed for preventing the spread of the new coronavirus and controlling its impact and is led by the Deputy PM and Defense Minister I. Pokharel. The govt says that the “supply of essentials is intact” (THT). However, the panic buying seems to have already started and there is already a **low supply of medical masks, and hand sanitizers in the market.** The Kathmandu District Administration Office on Thursday has **issued a notice calling on members of the general public to take precautionary measures and avoid gatherings,** given the global outbreak of Covid-19. It also asks public not to organize huge gatherings. DPM Pokharel has assured that “there would not be shortage of necessary medications as India has already ensured the supply of medicines in case of emergencies”. Editorial in Kantipur calls on the govt to now allow “mal practices in the market” and Nagarik reports on its front page how in Kaski, a pharmacy was found selling a mask for 450 where as its price earlier was 80.

2/ Critique: Few media report that the government is “facing criticism” for failing to make necessary preparations to prevent the spread of Covid-19. Similarly the OLI administration is accused of failing to issue necessary information and notices on time to eliminate confusion and prevent misinformation (TKP).

3/ Border security: The Govt has decided to put in place additional strong measures at all border points. The committee decided to establish quarantine facilities at all the border points, hold cross-border meetings and set up additional health desks.

4/ Flight: **The Supreme Court had issued an interim order telling the government to halt flights from and to countries that pose high risk of coronavirus infection, including China, South Korea, Japan, Iran and Bahrain, till the disease was brought under control.** However THT reports that the **Nepali Civil Aviation is “in no hurry” and will suspend the flights “only after getting the written court order”.** This could still take a few more days as it needs to pass through several stakeholders

before the CAAN receives the copy (Office of Attorney General, the Office of Prime Minister and Council of Ministers and the Ministry of Culture Tourism). After the outbreak of COVID 19, Tibet Airlines and Sichuan Airlines have, however, cancelled all their Nepal-bound direct flights from China, while Himalaya Airlines has temporarily suspended all its operations to Chinese cities, including Beijing, Guiyang, Changsha and Chongqing.

5/ Economic impact: Minister for Finance, Yubaraj Khatiwada, said that a high-level team will be formed to study the economic impact of the coronavirus. THT reports that Nepal's trade with China has been completely halted which could lead to a crisis of apparels, the tourism industry has already been hit hard, the Visit Nepal campaign has been suspended, various mega projects (Gautam Buddha Airport, Pokhara Intl Airport, Melamchi water project etc.) have suffered due to lack of timely supply of construction materials/equipment and also many Chinese workers have not yet returned after celebrating the Lunar New Year.

Presse népalaise 06/03/2020

A man from Delhi with a travel history to Thailand and Malaysia has tested positive for COVID19, taking the total number of confirmed coronavirus cases in India to 31, health ministry officials said on Friday.

The latest case is the third in Delhi.

"One suspected COVID19 case has been confirmed as positive. The patient is from Delhi. He has a travel history to Thailand and Malaysia. He is stable and being monitored. The total number of confirmed cases in India now stands at 31," a health ministry official said.

According to a latest advisory, all international passengers irrespective of their nationality are mandated to undergo a universal medical screening.

Adequate screening measures have been put in place and nine more airports have been added to the existing 21, bringing the total number to 30 airports where screening of passengers is being carried out.

A day-long national-level training programme on COVID-19 has also been organised by the Ministry of Health in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (WHO).

The training programme is being attended by 280 health officials from all states and hospitals of the railways, defence and paramilitary forces.

The 30 other positive cases include a 45-year-old man from Delhi's Mayur Vihar and six of his relatives from Agra whom he had recently visited. Another is a Paytm employee who works in Gurgaon and lives in west Delhi. They are all being treated at the Safdarjung hospital.

A middle-aged man from Ghaziabad, who tested positive for the virus, is being treated at the Ram

Manohar Lohia hospital in the national capital. A 24-year-old man from Hyderabad, who has also tested positive for coronavirus, has been isolated.

Besides, 16 members of a tourist group from Italy and their Indian guide have been found infected by the virus.

While one Italian man and his wife are being treated at Jaipur's SMS hospital, 14 members of the group and their Indian guide, who were quarantined at the ITBP camp in Chhawla, have been admitted to the Medanta hospital in Gurgaon.

The total figure of positive cases includes the first three reported from Kerala last month. All the three persons have been discharged following recovery.

Meanwhile, in a suspected coronavirus case, a man from Raipur, who returned to India from Kenya through Dubai, has been put under home quarantine.

New Delhi, Mar 6 (PTI)

After years of small divestments, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched India's biggest-ever asset sale, a \$29 billion privatisation drive that would help prop up the economy but could also spark worker protests as some of the nation's corporate icons go on the block.

Faced with the highest unemployment in 45 years and a shadow-banking crisis that's crippling lending, Modi needs the money to plug a budget hole and fund spending on infrastructure and reforms. But the plan has roused a storm of protest, even among some of his supporters, over how far he will pursue a policy that could jeopardise millions of livelihoods and dismantle entities that have been a source of pride for citizens in the decades since independence.

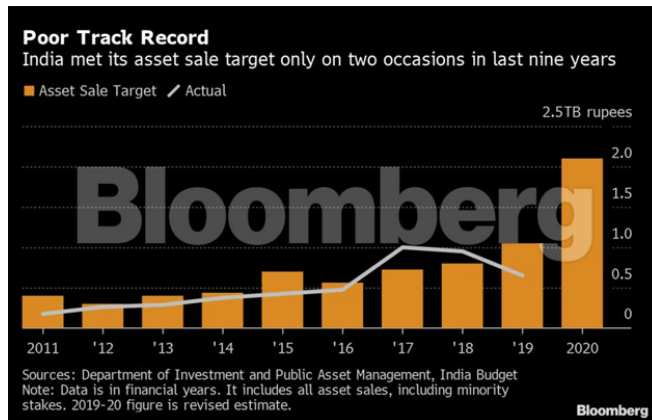
"The breadth of the sale programme is intended to signal that it is driven by the government's reformist tendencies rather than just fiscal needs," said Eswar Prasad, a professor at Cornell University. "A key question is whether Modi is willing to use some of his political capital to push through the privatisation and related reforms" to the financial system, labour markets and infrastructure, Prasad said.

Privatisation policies the world over have always drawn criticism of "selling the family silver," but since former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's historic divestment campaign in the 1980s, governments have defended the strategy as one which brings efficiency and longer-term growth.

Modi's programme likewise has elicited a chorus of disapproval. Affiliates of his own party have labeled it a handover of state assets to "multinational corporations at throwaway prices."

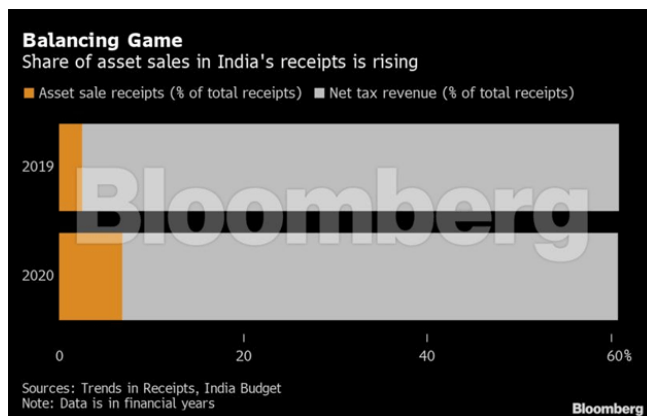
"The difference is that Thatcher had a comprehensive plan that she backed with income tax, sales tax and so many other things," said ruling party lawmaker Subramanian Swamy who has at times been critical of the government's economic policy. "It was a package to move the country from left to right. Here, there is no comprehensive plan. It's a horrendous mixture of state control and privatisation."

There are also concerns over whether the plan is even achievable. In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, the government has fallen short of its divestment target after failing to complete the sale of Air India Ltd. and Bharat Petroleum Corp., a state-owned oil refiner. Having missed its fiscal gap goals for a third straight year, those sales have been carried forward.



In all, the central government aims to sell stakes in more than two dozen of about 300 CPSEs in the next fiscal year starting April 1. So far, Modi's reforms to businesses include a steep cut in corporate taxes, the merger of some state-owned lenders and measures to encourage more foreign investment.

If the sales do go according to plan in the upcoming fiscal year, they would bring in almost half the amount India has raised from as many as 283 transactions over the past three decades, stock exchange data show. They would also raise the share of divestment receipts to 7% of government revenue, from a little over 2% five years ago.



The big ticket for the coming year is Life Insurance Corp. of India, or LIC, which is expected to rake in as much as Rs 90,000 crore for only a sliver of the state behemoth. Investors likened the proposal to the record initial share sale of Saudi Aramco, which in December raised more than \$25 billion.

The Mumbai-based insurer has more than a million agents and 300 million policies, together with stakes in hundreds of other companies, including its affiliate IDBI Bank Ltd. and the nation's largest listed company Reliance Industries Ltd. But LIC is much more than that to many Indians. It's a symbol of government support since it was formed in the decade after independence to provide universal coverage.

"Why should there be an IPO? This is public money," said Shiva Nimje, 52, who has worked for the insurer for 27 years and is part of a campaign by workers to derail the plan. "I'm confident we will be

able to stop the sale, however hard we need to struggle for this," he said by phone from Nagpur.

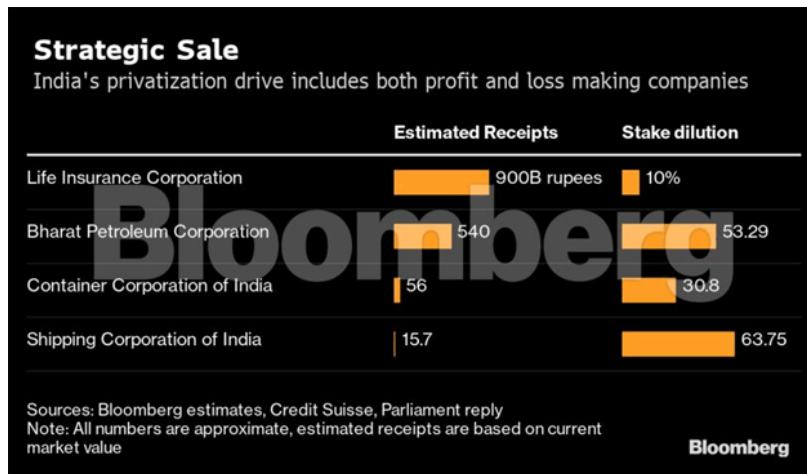
National Protest

Rajesh Nimbalkar, general secretary of the All India National Life Insurance Employees Federation, the union that represents many LIC workers, said 1,00,000 of the firm's employees are protesting. "LIC is a goose that lays golden eggs," he said. "The government shouldn't kill it."

Even without the staff opposition, LIC's history, size and operations mean the listing won't be easy, said Mahesh Patil, chief investment officer for equity at Aditya Birla Mutual Fund.

"LIC being the largest life insurance play will no doubt have interest from investors," he said. "However, they will have to get over a lot of issues like getting their accounts in order, more disclosures in line with listed players, and employee resistance before they can hit the market."

While LIC is the elephant in the room, its offering would be a minority stake, not a privatisation. The companies where the government is selling control — including Shipping Corp. of India Ltd., the nation's largest sea-cargo carrier, construction equipment maker BEML Ltd. and Container Corp. of India Ltd. — are a mixed bag from an investment point of view.



Strategic Sale

Bharat Petroleum, for example, earned a little over Rs 7,600 crore last fiscal year, while Air India lost almost as much in the same time and hasn't made money since 2007. The sale plan also comes against the backdrop of the coronavirus epidemic, which is hammering global confidence. India's benchmark index lost 7% last week.

Junior Finance Minister Anurag Thakur told lawmakers on Dec. 3 that the divestment strategy is guided by the principle that the state withdraw from sectors where competitive markets have matured, and that profitability is not a criteria.

Air India

India has injected \$4.2 billion into Air India since a 2012 bailout, yet the airline still has \$8.4 billion in debt and continues to lose money.

"The government has tried for many years to turn the company around, but it hasn't been able to do this," said Joshua Felman, a director at JH Consulting and a former International Monetary Fund official.

He said government subsidies that allowed Air India to offer lower fares were among the reasons rival Jet Airways India Ltd. was not able to compete. Jet went into bankruptcy last year leaving more than 20,000 people jobless.

The government expects to complete the \$7.4 billion sale of its stake in Bharat Petroleum by September, with some big Middle East oil producers and Russia's Rosneft PJSC, keen to acquire the asset, according to Indian officials.

Skeptics say the sales could have unintended consequences — that losing control of Shipping Corp. would affect the nation's oil supply and listing LIC could make its investments riskier.

Modi's political opposition has been more forceful.

"These companies were set up by founding fathers of the country to give employment to people who didn't have work," said Ashok Singh, national vice president of the Indian National Trade Union Congress, the union wing of the main opposition party. "Now unemployment is rising and the economy has gone into the intensive care unit. In winter you keep a blanket to keep yourself secure and warm. You don't give it away."

Government Perks

That idea of the state's duty to protect citizens goes to the heart of the opposition from employees. In India, working for the government isn't just a job. Often it carries prestige and benefits such as job security, better health care, a retirement package, even housing. Each year, millions of people apply for government jobs for which they are clearly overqualified.

"State companies provide a decent employment in terms of promotions, annual increments and wages," said Brijesh Upadhyay, general secretary of Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh, a trade union connected with the BJP. "After privatization conditions will change for employees and the company taking over may cut jobs."

The government argued in a Parliament reply on Feb. 11 that companies released from state control would generate higher economic activity, spur ancillary industries and create jobs. Its recent Economic Survey said research showed a "very strong positive effect" on labour productivity and overall efficiency.

Prime Minister Modi has four years to prove that's the case before the country will judge the success of the programme at the polls.

[The Economic times of India 06/03/2020](#)

An Iranian official claimed without evidence that the epidemic could be an American bioweapon, after some U.S. officials said the same about China. Saudi Arabia said its cases were Iran's fault. South Korea lashed out at Japan over travel restrictions and responded in kind.

At a time of global crisis, when the new coronavirus has infected more than 100,000 people, killed more than 3,400, and all but shut down whole industries, the world's scientists and public health officials are working together across ideological and national borders to try to stop the epidemic.

But as the virus continues its rapid spread, political leaders in many countries seem to have seized on a different question: Who can be blamed?

“Outbreaks take place within the context of the real world, so of course there’s always some level of politics going on,” said Dr. Keiji Fukuda, a former assistant director general of the World Health Organization. “But I think that what we’re seeing now is at a higher level of blame game than we’ve seen in the past.”

The accusations within countries and between them is often well-founded — there really have been failed quarantines, inadequate equipment and training, and attempts to deny the crisis.

But even when it is justified, experts say, the criticism can hinder efforts to pull together to face down the emergency. They said the urgent problems should be aired in a way that does not threaten cooperation while those that can wait should be set aside.

Public displeasure with global leaders has spread nearly as fast as the virus itself, which has reached more than 80 countries. And when those leaders look to point fingers elsewhere, they tend to point in the most predictable directions, piggybacking on old hostilities.

President Donald Trump tried to deflect criticism of his government’s response by pinning testing deficiencies on former President Barack Obama’s administration.

Trump — whose critics note that he has cut health programs and made unrealistically rosy pronouncements about the new disease — had a rare moment of accord with President Hassan Rouhani of Iran. Both men claimed their enemies were cynically ginning up fear of the virus.

Iran’s government at first insisted that all was well but now admits to thousands of infections, and outbreaks in several countries have been traced to people returning from Iran. But the sharpest reaction came from its regional adversary, Saudi Arabia, which forbids its people from traveling to Iran.

In a statement made through the official Saudi Press Agency, the government on Thursday accused Iran of recklessly allowing the disease to spread. It said that five Saudis had visited Iran, helped by Iranian officials who did not stamp their passports, and had returned to the kingdom infected by the virus.

In Japan, more than 1 million posts on Twitter recently demanded that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe resign over his handling of the outbreak. He was largely invisible in the early weeks of the outbreak, and the government’s lax treatment of the outbreak aboard a cruise ship allowed it to spread.

On Thursday, Abe imposed a 14-day quarantine on all visitors from South Korea and China. More than 90 countries have restricted travel from South Korea, which has the second-largest outbreak after China, but it was the move by Japan, historically Korea’s nemesis, that struck a nerve.

South Korea’s government on Friday called the measures “excessive and irrational,” suggested that Tokyo had “other motives than containing the outbreak,” and said it would restrict Japanese visitors in return.

“We cannot understand Japan’s decision to take this unfair step without consulting with us in advance,” South Korea’s presidential National Security Council said in a statement.

In Britain, opposition politicians are quick to note that a decade of austerity under Conservative governments has drained the health care system of resources, which they say leaves the country unprepared for an epidemic.

Fukuda, who now heads the University of Hong Kong’s school of public health, said that widespread anger in Hong Kong at the government’s refusal to bar arrivals from mainland China built on months of protests against that government for being too close to Beijing.

Facing a previously unknown, fast-moving virus, experts say, it is inevitable that even the best governments will be caught unprepared and make mistakes.

“We shouldn’t be associating, ‘oh, increase in numbers’ with failed government,” said Dr. Devi Sridhar, a professor of global public health at the University of Edinburgh. “We should see that governments can be trying their best but still find it hard to contain this virus.”

The head of the WHO, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, aired his frustration on Thursday with governments that he said have not taken the virus seriously enough, in his strongest public rebuke to date.

“This is not a time for excuses,” he said. “This is a time for pulling out all the stops.

“In some countries, the level of political commitment and the actions that demonstrate that commitment do not match the level of the threat we all face.”

The Economic Times of India 08/03/2020

ITANAGAR: The Arunachal Pradesh government has decided to temporarily suspend issuing Protected Area Permits (PAPs) to foreigners to check the spread of coronavirus, officials said on Sunday.

Foreigners require PAPs to enter the state that shares a border with China.

Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar directed all PAP issuing authorities to suspend the issue of permits till further orders, they said.

"It is learnt that Covid-19 positive cases have been detected in India and the numbers have been increasing. It is also learnt that the spread of the coronavirus in India is primarily from visitors who had history of travelling abroad recently or through tourists who have visited India," the government order said.

"In order to prevent the spread of coronavirus (Covid-19) in Arunachal Pradesh, it has been decided to temporarily suspend issuing Protected Area Permit (PAP)...," it added.

The move comes days after Sikkim announced similar curbs on visit of foreigners. The Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan has also shut its borders to foreign visitors for two weeks in an effort to limit the impact of the disease.

The virus that first emerged in China in December last year has spread to 97 countries and has infected 102,180 people, according to the Johns Hopkins Coronavirus tracker. More than 3,500 people have been killed due to the virus so far.

The Economic times of India 08/03/2020

NEW DELHI: The government has ordered all telecom firms to make a 30-second audio clip on coronavirus as a caller tune of mobile phone users to create awareness among masses about the epidemic -- an order that state-owned BSNL and Reliance Jio have fully complied with while other telcos are yet to follow. Top sources said on a request from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) ordered superseding of the phone ringing tone that one hears on dialling a number, with the 30-second information clip.

The only exception to not hearing the coronavirus message is when a user has subscribed to a particular tune, they said.

All telcos were asked to incorporate the coronavirus ringing tone but so far only state-owned BSNL and Reliance Jio are in full compliance.

The other telcos have cited technical issues for part implementation, they said.

The DoT had on Friday sent email instructions to all telcos to make the coronavirus audio clip as the 'ring back tone' to help disseminate information to masses.

The order asked telcos to "incorporate audio clips in ring back tone of each subscribers on urgent basis from today till further orders".

This followed a letter from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare to the Telecom Secretary Anshu Prakash on March 5 on disseminating pertinent information on coronavirus through all channels of communication and from all possible vantage points.

"You are requested to ask the telecom firms to make use of a 30-second audio we have developed as the pre-call notification for a period of three days," the letter said.

It also sought a direction to telcos "to send bulk SMS/PUSH notification on the simple dos and don'ts to all the clients".

It further sought the telecom secretary's personal monitoring to ensure mechanisms are in place for successful dissemination of messages.

The ministry's request to the DoT came as part of steps to create awareness to prevent spread of the disease and advocate simple public health measures that people can take to prevent infection.

The Economic Times of India 08/03/2020

The isolated Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan has reported its first case of the coronavirus after a US tourist tested positive, the prime minister said Friday.

The tiny, land-locked country, famous for measuring Gross National Happiness has emerged as a popular tourist destination in recent years.

But the government immediately shut borders to foreign visitors for two weeks in an effort to limit the impact of a disease that has wreaked havoc in more developed countries around the world.

The 76-year-old man arrived in Bhutan from India on March 2, and was admitted to hospital on March 5 with a fever, where he tested positive for COVID-19, the office of Prime Minister Lotay Tshering said in a Facebook post.

The post added that there would be "two weeks' restriction on all incoming tourists with immediate effect".

Schools in three areas -- including the capital Thimphu -- will be closed for two weeks from Friday.

The patient, who has not been named, left Washington on February 10, touring India from February 21 to March 1.

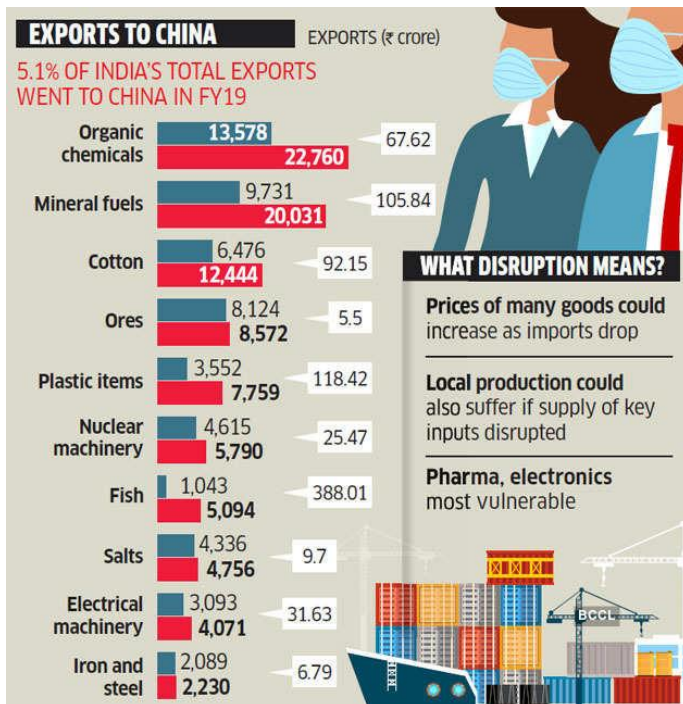
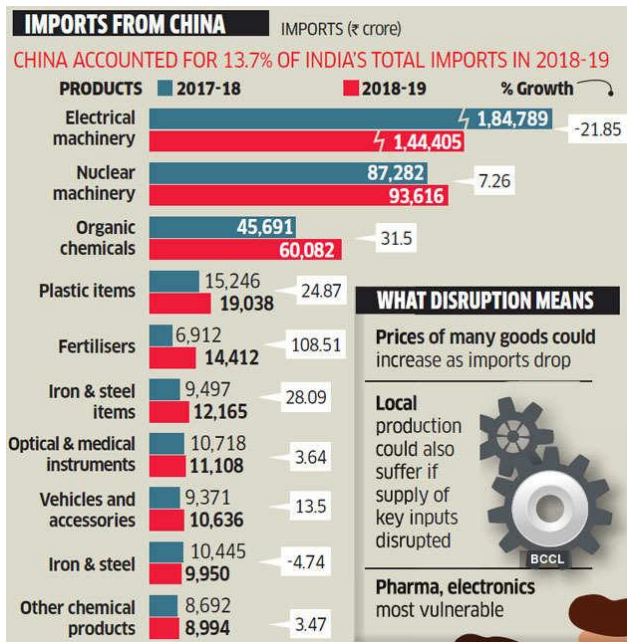
Health officials say they have traced roughly 90 people he came into contact with in Bhutan, with his 59-year-old partner, driver and guide all being placed in quarantine. None is currently showing symptoms.

Eight Indian nationals who were on the flight to Bhutan have also been quarantined.

More than 3,000 people have died from novel coronavirus, with nearly 100,000 confirmed infections globally.

[The Economic Times of India 06/03/2020](#)

China is India's second biggest trade partner behind the United States, supplying some critical inputs and absorbing some of the country's agricultural exports. There could be a shortage of critical inputs should coronavirus cause more disruption in China and its economy slows. ET looks at the trade between the two nations.



The Economic Times of India 11/02/2020

GUWAHATI: Assam is has sounded alert after neighbouring Bhutan informed that a tourist from United States was confirmed to have been infected with COVID-19 virus.

This person prior to going to Bhutan was in Assam for nearly 10 days. Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal reviewed the preparedness and monitoring mechanism of health department to deal with coronavirus disease in the State.

Sonowal appealed people of the State not to panic and urged them to maintain personal hygiene to keep themselves safe from this virus. He further urged people not to be apprehensive about seeing any foreigner and directed the police department to take needful steps for their security.

Chief Minister during review directed the health department to take steps for sensitizing all government officials from State Headquarter to panchayat level on the coronavirus disease and precautionary measures needed to be taken.

He also asked the department to carry out extensive awareness activities among people of the State involving field level functionaries of the department. He also directed to impart training to staff of government and private health institutions.

Health department officials informed the Chief Minister that 100 percent screening of passengers of all international flights at Guwahati are being carried out along with regular screening at other airports in the State. Already isolation ward has been set up at GMCH and places have been identified at all district hospitals for such wards.

Assam government has identified 127 persons who came in contact with this US national in Assam, all of them are being quarantined.

The Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya is fully cognizant of the public advisory released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India and the Department of Health and Family Welfare (DoHFW) of the Government of Meghalaya regarding the outbreak of the COVID-19 Virus in India.

Given this, the Tourism Department is taking steps, in coordination with the DoHFW, Government of Meghalaya to ensure that all protocols and precautionary measures are adhered to at the Meghalayan Age Festival being organized from the 7th – 15th of March 2020 at Wenfield, Thadlaskein, West Jaintia Hills.

The festival is now being scaled down to a Conference with participation of limited invitees only. As mass gatherings are to be avoided as per the DoHFW 's advisory, it is decided that the earlier planned events i.e., evening music concerts and tethered balloon flights will not be held for the first three days.

The first three days will only be a Media Conference and a familiarization trip for the 50-70 invitees who will be going through the existing screening process as per Government of India and State Government's protocols.

The situation is being monitored closely and the State Government is continuously reviewing the situation.

To prevent spread of Corona Virus in Arunachal, the protected area permit (PAP) being issued to foreigners has been suspended. The government stated, "This is in view of the reported cases of virus making entry into our country through people coming from abroad."

[The Economic Times of India 07/03/2020](#)

Stay home unless you must see a doctor. No work, school or shopping. If you must come out of your room, wear a mask. And don't share towels.

If you are among the thousands of Americans now self-quarantined because of possible infection with the coronavirus, these are a few of the new house rules, courtesy of your local health officials and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Among people told to self-quarantine, isolate themselves or stay home are people returning from parts of China and Iran, those who developed symptoms after spending time in other countries with sustained community transmission, and those with no known exposure who are sick.

But many individuals who don't fit neatly into any of these categories and weren't asked to stay home are choosing to seclude themselves anyway because they don't want to put others at risk. California has more than 5,500 people in self-quarantine. More than 2,700 are in seclusion in New York City alone.

It may sound like a vacation from reality, an ideal time to binge on Netflix and catch up on sleep. In fact, it's not easy to lock yourself away from family and friends. There are practical and logistical challenges and yawning gaps in the official advice that make it even harder.

The terms of home isolation can be onerous and may last for two weeks, which is the presumed incubation period for the virus. It is especially challenging if you have young children or elderly relatives to care for, or live in cramped quarters with a lot of roommates.

THE BASICS

Isolation

If you are infected or have been exposed to the coronavirus, you must seclude yourself from your partner, your housemates, your children, your elderly aunt. You shouldn't even pet your dog. And definitely no snuggling with your pet (no licking).

If you don't have your own room, one should be designated for your exclusive use. You should use a separate bathroom, if you have one.

No visitors and no staff, unless it's absolutely essential. Don't take the bus or subway, not even a taxi.

Masks

If you must be around other people — in your home, or in a car because you're on your way to see a doctor, and only after you called first — you should wear a mask, and everyone else should, too.

But first, you or one of your friends or family members have to find masks, which are sold out almost everywhere.

Hygiene

If you cough or sneeze, you should cover your mouth and nose with a tissue and discard the used tissue in a lined trash can. Then you must immediately wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

You can use sanitizer, if you can find it, but soap and water are preferred.

Even if you haven't coughed or sneezed, you should wash your hands frequently and avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth if you haven't just washed them.

Disinfect

Don't share dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with anyone (including your pets). Wash these items after you use them.

Countertops, tabletops, doorknobs, bathrooms fixtures, toilets, phones, keyboards, tablets and bedside tables are considered "high-touch surfaces"; wipe them often with a household cleanser.

Frequently wipe down surfaces that may be contaminated by bodily fluids, including blood and stool.

Monitoring

Keep an eye on your health and call a doctor if your symptoms are getting worse. Make sure to tell the medical staff you are being monitored for the coronavirus.

Household Members

Family members and other occupants should monitor the patient's symptoms and call a health provider if they see a turn for the worse.

Housemates can go to work or school, but it's going to be their job to stock up on groceries, pick up prescriptions, take care of the quarantined and keep the place clean. They'll be wiping down doorknobs and countertops, doing loads of laundry and washing their hands — a lot.

When around the patient, household members must wear a face mask, and both mask and gloves if they have contact with the patient's bodily fluids. These should be thrown away immediately, never reused.

Elderly members of the household and those with chronic medical conditions are at particular risk if they are infected. Contact with the secluded individual should be minimized.

Other occupants of the home should wash their hands frequently and avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands. They should stay in a room separate from that of the exposed or sick individual. If feasible, other members of the household should not share a bathroom with the secluded person.

They should monitor their own health, too, and call a doctor if they develop a cough, fever or shortness of breath.

Unanswered Questions

No one pays you for self-quarantine. There is no reimbursement for products you may need, no government-paid nurse to stop by the home and help out. Self-quarantine is a hardship for both those who have families and those who live alone.

Not everyone can work remotely. A two-week absence from work can take an enormous financial toll on hourly wage workers who have to clock in and show up to get paid or who are part of the gig

economy with no single employer.

Many Americans, maybe most, live paycheck to paycheck.

“We have to have social interventions to incentivize and support isolation, or we are doomed,” said Arthur Caplan, professor of bioethics at the New York University Langone Medical Center.

People with no health insurance, inadequate insurance or no regular doctor will be reluctant to seek care if they have symptoms, fearing steep medical bills, he noted. Individuals living in the country illegally, fearful of being discovered and deported, may avoid diagnosis and care.

“I don’t see the state or federal government preparing for this in any way,” Caplan added.

Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and Rep. Rosa DeLauro, D-Conn., have introduced legislation that would require all employers to let workers accrue seven days of sick leave, while providing another 14 days for immediate use during a public health emergency.

Washington state’s website says the health department can help with groceries for those unable to leave their homes and even intervene with employers on their behalf if necessary.

Providing for people who make sacrifices for the greater good is crucial, said Lawrence Gostin, a law professor at Georgetown University and director of the World Health Organization Collaborating Center on National and Global Health Law.

“We ought to have a social compact: If you’re sick, whether you’ve got COVID-19 or not, you should separate yourself from society,” Gostin said. “That’s your part of the bargain; you’re doing it for your neighbors, your family and your community.

“In exchange,” he said, “we as a nation owe you the right to a humane period of separation, where we meet your essential needs like medicine, health care, food and sick pay.”

[The Economic Times of India 07/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: With five new cases of the novel coronavirus being reported from Kerala on Sunday, the total number of COVID-19 cases in India stands at 39.

The new coronavirus cases from the Pathanamthitta district of Kerala were confirmed by Kerala state Health Minister K.K. Shailaja, who said the family acted irresponsibly by not reporting to the authorities after arriving from Italy.

Consequently, the three patients including a 54-year-old man, his 53-year-old wife and their 24-year-old son, also infected two of their relatives, 65-year-old man and his 61-year-old wife.

"At the moment, we are more concerned of giving full medical care to the three and two of their relatives," said Shailaja.

As on Saturday, there were at least 34 cases of COVID-19 reported from India. The latest were from

Ladakh and Tamil Nadu on Saturday, having travel history from Iran and Oman respectively.

On January 30, a medical student from Thrissur studying in Wuhan, China, became the first coronavirus positive patient in the country and soon two of her classmates also turned positive. All three of them have now recovered.

At present, there are at least 16 Italian nationals in India, who tested positive for the disease. Other cases in the country have been reported from Agra, New Delhi and Gurugram.

As many as 52 laboratories are now operational across the country for testing COVID-19 virus. An additional 57 laboratories have been provided with viral transport media and swabs for sample collection.

According to the Health Ministry, over seven lakh people from more than 7,000 flights have been screened at different airports.

In order to spread awareness, a special COVID-19 mobile phone caller tune has been launched by all telecom operators, playing basic infection prevention messages when a caller dials-out.

The Economic Times of India 08/03/2020

Mumbai: Grant Thornton's CEO, Vishesh C Chandiok, has tweeted that it is probably "near the end of the road" for the debt-strapped Jet Airways.

Jet Airways temporarily shut operations in April 2019 and was dragged to the insolvency court on June 20, 2019, by Jet's lenders over unpaid dues.

The advisory firm's Ashish Chhawchharia was appointed as the Resolution Professional (RP) by Jet's lenders.

On Saturday afternoon, Vishesh C Chandiok, Grant Thornton's CEO in a tweet apologised to the grounded airline's employees, "I'm sorry to report but I fear we are very near the end of the road for #JetAirways- the proverbial 'chicken or egg' is what killed the airline- my apologies to all the employees in particular that we @GrantThorntonIN couldn't do better for you."

A consortium of the Russian government-backed Far East Development Fund, in partnership with Enso Group, Prudent ARC and Synergy Group are in the fray to acquire a stake in Jet.

The RP and Chandiok remained unavailable to comment on the said tweet. A Grant Thornton employee close to the development said the process was still on and they were hopeful that a potential bidder would submit a resolution plan before the March 9 deadline.

A senior official on behalf of the lenders said: "We do not see a possible resolution plan from any bidders."

BusinessLine had reported that while Synergy wanted clarity on Jet's Heathrow slots from the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), the Indian authorities told the company to first place a

bid.

08/03/20 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

New Delhi: When the SARS virus epidemic broke out in China in 2002, it not only claimed 774 lives, but also took a toll on businesses — among the casualties was also the region's airline industry. Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong's main carrier, was within days of shutting down when the crisis began to abate. However, recovery of airlines and the economy post the containment of the outbreak was quick and strong.

But that was in 2003. Today, China, the airlines of the region, the industry and the linkages amongst countries and carriers are a very different animal. China is soon expected to displace the US as the world's largest aviation market. In the last few years China has seen a proliferation of airlines, including low cost carriers (LCCs) – up to almost 30 carriers.

In 2003, China was not the economic powerhouse it is now, so business travel from other countries to and from the country was far lower. Today, Chinese carriers take traffic from across the globe. Similarly, once China found its feet as a nation, its citizens set out to discover the world. By 2016, Chinese tourists accounted for 21 per cent of the world's international tourism spending.

As China began to discover the world and vice versa, Hong Kong and Mainland China were discovering each other. By 2016, a majority of the tourists coming into China were from Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. For Hong Kong, the numbers are even more dramatic. Of the 60 million visitors to Hong Kong in 2014, 47 million were from the Mainland. In 2019, 28 per cent of tourists into Thailand were from China. With China under lockdown, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan and Japan are also likely to see a significant drop in tourist inflows.

But analysts say that the impact of the outbreak may be felt further away as well. Even if flight disruptions and losses due to diminished traffic are not significant, both aircraft manufacturers – Airbus and Boeing - are likely to take a hit as the airlines of the region stop or delay new plane deliveries.

It is, therefore, safe to say that the coronavirus outbreak will have a severe impact on the tourism and aviation industry of both China and that of the wider region.

08/03/20 Anjali Bhargava/Business Standard

The coronavirus is causing a substantial slowdown in the aviation market, with India feeling the effects even more this week. With the government pulling out all the stops to make the airline as lucrative as possible, could this put a damper on the efforts? Let's examine what the airline has to offer and how the virus may affect its sale.

India has recorded 39 cases of the virus, with all but three coming in the last week. Air India is particularly exposed to the virus. The airline flies to **Tokyo, Seoul, Milan, Hong Kong, and Shanghai.** These are all cities that are at risk or have seen widespread outbreaks of the virus. In response, **Air India has reduced the frequency on all these routes and cancelled the last two until July. With the virus now spreading in India, Air India could see its domestic business hurt too.** Carriers like IndiGo have begun offering change fee waivers on all flights, an example that Air India might have to follow,

causing more loss in demand and revenue.

The virus has already heavily affected the demand of Air India's popular international routes, such as Seoul and Tokyo. Domestic cases might force Air India to trim down flights within India and possibly even ground some aircraft in its fleet.

One of Air India's tactical advantages was its place in a fast-growing aviation market. However, a sustained effect of the virus could cause a slowdown in the market, making Air India a lot less lucrative. While the airline will still retain its large fleet and prominent slots at airports like Heathrow, without demand all of these advantages fall flat. The lack of demand might force buyers to take a closer look at Air India's \$3.2bn debt, a bloated staff, and grounded aircraft.

08/03/20 Syd Sharma/Simple Flying

Mumbai: While aircraft passenger cabins are cleaned and disinfected according to laid-down procedures to combat the spread of coronavirus, there were no procedures in place to disinfect the flight deck used by pilots, till Saturday evening. Late in the evening, following concerns from pilots, director-general of civil aviation issued guidelines to airlines to clean and disinfect aircraft cockpits too.

Pilots could catch infection from passengers as they use the same lavatories when on board aircraft. An asymptomatic pilot or an engineer working on the aircraft could leave behind a load of pathogens on contact surfaces in a cockpit, infecting the next set of pilots who walk in.

"Airlines should have a procedure to disinfect the cockpit, the way they have to disinfect passenger cabins. There have to be safeguards. An airline can decide how often they do it and how they do it but there have to be guidelines," said Capt Amit Singh, a senior aviation professional.

Director-general of civil aviation Arun Kumar, when contacted by TOI for a comment, looked into the matter and issued instructions to airlines on Saturday night. **DGCA's instructions state: "There is a concern amongst pilots that the cleaning, disinfecting of cockpit is not of the same level as cabin. While it is understood that cockpit is much more sterile than cabin area, however all operators are to ensure that cockpit is properly cleaned/disinfected at every given opportunity and cockpit crew are provided with adequate hand sanitizer for their use and also to keep frequent contact area clean (thrust levers, control wheel, tiller, etc) and disinfected within the cockpit. when they feel the need. Also for personal use, post accessing common areas like toilet."** Till now, in the absence of guidelines, airlines had their own practices.

A commander with a low-cost carrier said, "Following the coronavirus outbreak, I've started carrying a sanitiser and disinfectant and wipe down contact surfaces on entering the cockpit." He added that his airline "doesn't even provide wet wipes, let alone an antiseptic wipe" when they ask for it, to clean and disinfect control surfaces in the cockpit.

08/03/20 Times of India

New Delhi: Upping precautionary measures to make air travel safer for passengers worried about contracting Covid-19, Air India has asked its housekeeping staff to clean all seats in the row where the passenger with respiratory symptoms was seated, along with three rows immediately in front and behind with a 70% alcohol-based cleanser or Lysol on landing. The crew has also been asked to inform the ground staff of any such passengers travelling on the flight before landing.

"This is season change time and we have scores of people coughing and sneezing, which are the visible signs to look out for. Reporting passengers who were doing so on a flight to housekeeping and then having the aircraft cleaned means getting all seats rigorously cleaned," said a senior crew

member. All airlines have enhanced aircraft cleaning and issued similar instructions, hence facing the same issue.

A narrow body aircraft, usually, completes several flights by the time a passenger tests Covid-19 positive, when the test result comes several hours later. Tracing who all he/she might have been in contact with during the flight and then who all sat on the seat occupied by the patient on subsequent flights is a nightmare, said another crew member.

“If a confirmed case is reported and the aircraft is on the ground for a few hours, then wiping clean interiors of the aircraft such as overhead bins, all seats, all toilets with alcohol-based cleanser (70% alcohol) / Lysol cleanser should be carried out. The cleaning/ housekeeping personnel should be given appropriate personal protection equipment like gloves, masks etc,” the AI order says.

08/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Nivedita Bhasin has many reasons to be proud of herself and her daughter Niharika. Since joining Indian Airlines as its third woman pilot in 1984, when she had just celebrated her 21st birthday and began flying the Fokker Friendship F27 as a co-pilot, Nivedita has gone higher and higher on the professional horizon — from flying Boeing B737, Airbus A300, Airbus A330 and now Dreamliner Boeing 787.

Nivedita, who became the world’s youngest woman Jet captain in 1989, is proud of her journey, especially since she had to overcome many roadblocks to make a place for herself in a male-dominated profession back in the eighties when she started. “In my early days, it was a life full of struggle, trying to carve a niche in the male dominated profession as well as striking a balance between home and work. But it has been a very satisfying journey and I’m grateful to my airline for giving me this wonderful opportunity,” she says.

And Nivedita grabbed every opportunity she got with both hands. “In my 35 years’ career, I have over 22,000 hours of flying. I was the co-pilot in the world’s first all-woman crew flight in 1985 and since then, have flown many all-woman crew flights. I have also been a training captain on the A300, A330 as well as a Type Rating Instructor on the B787.” Her daughter chose to tread the same path Nivedita had chosen, but away from the shadow of her mother. Niharika joined IndiGo in 2013. “At that time husband, son and I were all with Air India. Even before Niharika started her flying training, she had made a conscious decision to join a different airline. She did not want to be in the shadow of her flying family,” she says.

08/03/20 Kumar Vikram/New Indian Express

Hyderabad: In the backdrop of novel coronavirus outbreak, as many as 4,656 passengers were screened at the Rajiv Gandhi International (RGI) Airport here on Saturday out of which 19 were found suspected and have been kept in isolation, said Dr G Srinivasa Rao, Director, Public Health, Telangana government.

"Till now 31,763 passengers have been screened at RGI Airport, Hyderabad including 4,656 who were screened today (March 7), in which 19 were found suspected coronavirus symptomatic and they have been kept in isolation ward in a state-run hospital," said Rao.

"In 19 suspected coronavirus cases, five tested negative and another 14 suspected tests results are awaited," he added.

08/03/20 ANI/Economic Times

Ahmedabad: **Pigeons in a Jaipur-bound flight at Ahmedabad airport raised serious concerns about flight safety.**

Frequent bird-hits at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) airport have worried passengers and airline crews. For instance, a Mumbai-bound passenger at Ahmedabad airport on Saturday morning spotted a crow on the aircraft wing as she settled into her seat.

“There are a lot of birds around at the airport and on the campus. It is getting scary, especially after having learnt about the frequent bird-strike incidents at Ahmedabad airport,” said Gauri Wagenaar, a Bodakdev resident. “It is time that the authorities got their act together.”

This year, at least four bird-hits were reported at SVPI airport. In fact, **according to data provided by Airports Authority of India (AAI), 37 bird-hits were reported at the airport in 2019.**

SVPI airport director Manoj Gangal refused to respond to TOI’s query on whether any additional measures have been initiated to curb the bird menace at the city airport.

08/03/20 Times of India

The Department Related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology wants the 19-seater Saras aircraft to be taken in as a national mission to promote connectivity under the Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme.

The committee made this observation in its report on Demand for Grants (2020-2021) of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, which was presented before both the houses of the Parliament on Friday.

“CSIR-NAL’s 19-seater SARAS turboprop civilian aircraft needs to be taken up as a National Mission to promote connectivity to small airports and underserved regions, under the UDAN Scheme of the Ministry of Civil Aviation,” stated the committee in its report.

The government also recommended that the Government of India should place a development order to NAL and other manufacturers for about 50 to 60 SARAS aircrafts. “A firm commitment of procurement of the aircraft by the Government will encourage the manufacturing industry in the country to meet the demand for the 19-seater aircraft,” it stated in the report.

The Committee was on a study visit to Bengaluru in December 2019 and held a discussion with the representatives of CSIR-NA Land Department of Scientific and Industrial Research on its functioning.

“The Committee asked the Director, NAL to submit proposal to the Committee on the future course of action for commercial production and use of the 19-seater aircraft. The Director, NAL later submitted a proposal for development and viable production of SARAS MK2 to the Committee, which was forwarded to the concerned Ministries for necessary action at their end,” he report added. The project is progressing well and is expected to be complete by the year 2022-23, the committee was informed by the NAL Director.

07/03/20 Bangalore Mirror

New Delhi: **India was set to go forward with its 5G trials in January this year, but they stand indefinitely delayed because of the coronavirus outbreak.** Making use of the extra time, Indian techies are exploring advanced technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) that would be more compatible with high-speed 5G technology.

In order to help agencies secure air space over critical civilian and military installations, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has developed a drone which can easily detect rogue UAVs

visually by using algorithms powered by artificial intelligence and be of assistance to law enforcement agencies, security services, and the armed forces.

“It can track down rogue drones visually, hack into their Global Positioning System (GPS) navigation system, following which the target drone is forced to change its flight path or land safely”, the statement said.

The drone would have an advantage over others in terms of method of operation – it can be controlled over the Internet and it navigates autonomously, in contrast to existing ones which require the operator to keep it within their sight.

The system has been developed by an IIT Madras’ team of students under the mentorship of Dr Ranjith Mohan, assistant professor, Department of Aerospace Engineering, IIT Madras.

“Our current prototype is equipped to detect and track objects visually, precisely land and fly over Internet. Our next step will be to conduct exhaustive tests on the system and ensure its reliability to cater to a wide range of demanding missions that pose challenge to our law enforcement and defence agencies”, Mohan said.

05/03/20 Sputnik

Mumbai: "There were laws, systems, circumstances because of which we could not revive Jet Airways. We tried our best to see that," Kumar said in the backdrop of India's biggest bank's attempts to revive the crisis-ridden Yes Bank.

The SBI Chairman made it clear that it was necessary to distinguish between an individual and organisations. When asked whether the investors would come on board in the wake of Enforcement Directorate (ED) investigations on Rana Kapoor, he said: "Let's distinguish between person and enterprise. Yes Bank is an entity, Rana Kapoor is an individual. If an individual has done wrong, he would have to pay a price."

Meanwhile, the ED has taken Rana Kapoor for questioning. It has also registered a PMLA case against Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor, whose house was raided by the ED last night. The RBI has placed Yes Bank under moratorium and restricted withdrawals to Rs 50,000, as the central bank assumed control of the troubled private sector lender.

07/03/20 Mrityunjay Bose/Deccan Herald

A total of 170 passengers to Kuwait who arrived at the Kozhikode international airport on Saturday morning were sent back after flights from India were banned by Kuwait’s Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

The Air India Express to Kuwait and Etihad flight to Kuwait via Abu Dhabi have been cancelled. In the wake of Covid 19, Kuwait announced the suspension of all flights to and from Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Bangladesh, Philippines, India and Sri Lanka for a week starting Saturday. It also banned the entry of anyone who has been in those seven counties in the last two weeks.

The passengers were not informed of the ban and they came to know about it after reaching the airport. The airport authorities said that they received a circular from Kuwait’s Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

07/03/20 Smitha N/Deccan Chronicle

New Delhi: Air India will operate 52 flights, including eight on overseas routes, with all-woman crew to mark the International Women's Day.

The International Women's Day is on Sunday.

In a release on Saturday, the national carrier said it would operate several all-woman crew flights on its international and domestic routes, including the non-stop Delhi to San Francisco flight.

"Air India is operating 8 international and 44 domestic momentous flights with all women crew to mark #IWD2020...," it said in a tweet.

According to the release, women cockpit and cabin crew of Air India are operating both wide and narrow body aircraft to salute woman power in sync with socio-cultural ethos.

07/03/20 PTI/Outlook

Mumbai: Budget carrier IndiGo on Saturday announced waiving of rescheduling charges on flight bookings till March 31 due to the situation arising out of the coronavirus outbreak on existing and new domestic and international bookings made between March 12 and March 31, IndiGo said in a statement. The cancellation fee, however, remains.

"We understand that some passengers are concerned about committing to travel, given the current coronavirus issue. To take this anxiety away and make their travel hassel-free, we are waiving our normal change fee on all travel during the next two weeks and for all new bookings made in that period," IndiGo Chief Commercial Officer William Boulter said in the statement.

This will enable IndiGo fliers to book their flights at "affordable" fares with flexibility of rescheduling without change fee, if needed, he said.

07/03/20 PTI/Economic Times

Mumbai: The board of Tata Sons is veering around to back the proposal to acquire Air India (AI), which has been put on the block by the Centre. However, the board, which met on Friday, wants Tata Sons and its aviation partners—Singapore Airlines and AirAsia Malaysia—to resolve structural issues before putting out an expression of interest for the state carrier. This is to avoid litigation at a later date.

The deadline to submit an EoI (expression of interest) for Air India is March 17, but this will be extended, according to aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

Earlier this week, Tata SIA Airlines, operator of full-service carrier Vistara, had said, "Which company would not be interested in evaluating a sovereign airline of the country?" Though Vistara is leading the M&A efforts, AirAsia India, in which the Malaysian budget carrier holds 49%, will also be a part of the arrangement for the potential Air India acquisition.

07/03/20 Reeba Zachariah/Times of India

New Delhi: Flight operations at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport were impacted on Friday evening when a strong spell of thundershowers and squall hit the capital. Over 100 flights were delayed in the evening, with conditions only improving after 7pm.

Met officials said that windspeeds touched 50km/hr around 5pm, with the peak impact of thunderstorm occurring between 4.30pm and 5.30pm.

“No cancellations or diversions occurred during the spell of rain. Some flights, however, were delayed due to the adverse weather conditions,” said an airport official.

While light rain was recorded on Friday morning, the second spell of showers around 4pm was accompanied by gusty winds. A met official stated that the high wind speed made it difficult for flights to land at the airport. The thundershowers, however, subsided by around 6.30, the official added.

Both arrivals and departures at IGI were impacted for two hours. While for arriving flights, landing during strong cross-winds is dangerous and difficult, the departing flights got delayed due to the adverse weather conditions.

07/03/20 Times of India

Mumbai: When was the last time a Friday afternoon online search for a flight next morning to London and return showed a total fare of just Rs 46,000? On Friday, Turkish Airlines offered exactly that with a 75 minute layover in Istanbul. Generally in March, Mumbai-London return fares on direct flights would cost over Rs 80,000 just 24 hours in advance.

On Friday, you could have also booked a Delhi to New York flight, fly out with a cabin bag and land in the US before Saturday midnight (local time) and return after Holi for as little as Rs 58,000. In March any other year, such a last-minute trip would cost over Rs 80,000.

In the “extraordinary circumstances” that international airlines find themselves in, under the cloud of Covid-19, even dirt cheap fares are finding only few takers. So, when a Singapore flight took off from Mumbai this week, the 256-seater plane had just 25 passengers. Similarly, a London-Mumbai flight landed in the city with only 60 passengers in economy class. The coronavirus outbreak has hit airline bottomlines like nothing has in the past two decades since 9/11, say industry insiders.

Besides East Asian destinations, flights to West Asia, such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi, have also been hit severely. On Friday, a Mumbai or Delhi resident could have booked a return flight to Dubai or Abu Dhabi for travel this weekend at Rs 13,200.

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07/03/20 MAnju V/Times of India

New Delhi: The first day of universal screening saw 76,670 passengers flying in on 557 flights to India on Friday (March 6) being checked for coronavirus symptoms. Of these, 24 were referred for further checks, said an aviation official.

The Mahan Air flight flew to Delhi early Saturday morning with swab samples of 108 Indians and it returned to Tehran with about 200 Iranian passengers from here, said a senior aviation official. These swabs are being tested for corona and their results usually come in about 12 hours. Indians found corona-free will be allowed to fly on subsequent flights of Mahan Air and Iran Air that have been allowed by India to fly 2,000 Indians in Iran and as many Iranians in India.

While no Indian carrier flies to Iran, these two Iranian airlines fly to Delhi and Mumbai. Their flights were stopped by India on February 25 due to the spread of coronavirus epidemic in Iran. The Indians in Iran are mostly Shia pilgrims from Kargil.

“Among those referred for further checks were passengers who showed symptoms who flew in direct or indirect to India from Bangladesh, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Italy, UAE and Malaysia on Friday. Among asymptomatic passengers, a person coming from Italy via Abu Dhabi, one from Taiwan and three from Singapore were also referred,” said the official.

Meanwhile, airport operators are seeing which all among the 30 international airports can have separate immigration, custom counters and baggage belts from passengers from 12 hotspot corona nations — China, Iran, South Korea, Italy, Japan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, France, Spain, UK and USA — as per health ministry directives. Delhi, which has India’s busiest airport, is doing a trial run on a few flights to work out the modalities for this.

Health ministry joint secretary Sudhir Kumar wrote to his counterpart in the finance ministry (department of revenue) in charge of customs, V K Shrivastava, on Friday saying: “Minister of health and family welfare (Harsh Vardhan) and other senior officers visited (Delhi’s) IGI Airport in the late night on March 5 and reviewed the preparedness with respect to universal screening of international passengers for coronavirus. It was observed that there was mixing of international passengers from 12 more vulnerable countries and passengers from rest other countries at immigration counter, customs clearance counter, baggage belts, etc.”

07/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

With India putting in place stricter rules for screening all incoming passengers for coronavirus from across the world, international flights are likely to be delayed as the aircraft has to be disinfecting before allowing passengers to board. The process of disinfecting takes two to three hours. Only international aircraft are being subject to this procedure, said officials of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation on Friday.

The process of disinfecting the aircraft is carried out by a ground handling agency and involves spraying the aircraft — using sanitisation sprays with more than 60 per cent alcohol — and leaving it for some time.

On Tuesday, the DGCA said operators should ensure that all aircraft arriving from South Korea, Japan and Italy are subject to a disinfection process after arrival in India, before passengers board for the next flight.

Ground handling staff that BusinessLine spoke to said normal sanitisation of a widebody aircraft

takes about 45 minutes, but thorough sanitisation could take longer.

“If there has to be sanitisation wipes on every seat or in every area where a passenger’s hand might go like, say, the seat belt, the table in front of the seat or the recline button, the process can take more than the 45 minutes that is required to sanitise a widebody aircraft during normal times,” a ground handling service provider said.

According to the new procedure that has been put into place from Tuesday, cleaning crew cannot get into the aircraft unless they get an all-clear from the airport health authorities that all the passengers on the arriving aircraft have tested negative for the virus.

06/03/20 Ashwini Phadnis/Business Line

Tiruchy: A minor fire was immediately doused just opposite Tiruchy International Airport (TIA) on Friday afternoon. Firefighters who put out the fire has just taken part in a mock drill moments before the incident. No injury or damage was reported.

The airport fire service had organised a mock drill on Friday, regular feature to train airport personnel for a quick response in case of any untoward incident. After the drill, fire and rescue personnel at the airport found themselves sent out to tackle a real fire on barren land opposite the airport.

Officials said a quick response was required as the land is just opposite the runway. Given the location, the dense smoke could have hampered the vision of pilots during takeoff. A special airport fire and emergency response vehicle immediately rushed to the site and personnel put out the fire in 45 minutes.

07/03/20 Aadhithya MS/New Indian Express

New Delhi: Passengers from 12 countries will be segregated from other passengers till the conveyer belt areas at airports, an official said on Saturday, amid rising concerns over coronavirus infections.

This is part of a series of measures initiated by the Indian authorities to curb spreading of coronavirus, against the backdrop of more than 30 people testing positive for the infection in the country.

An Airport Authority of India (AAI) spokesperson said passengers from 12 countries would be segregated at international airports.

Passengers from arriving from China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia, Hongkong, Vietnam, Nepal and Indonesia would be segregated from other arriving passengers, he said.

According to the spokesperson, the passengers from the 12 countries would not be allowed to mix with other passengers during "health screening, immigration and conveyer belt areas".

07/03/20 New Indian Express

Thiruvananthapuram: **With the Kuwait health authorities suddenly imposing travel ban from seven countries, including India, on account of COVID-19, around 170 passengers were stranded at the Karipur airport in Kozhikode on Saturday.**

The ban will be in force for a week starting Saturday and applies to all airlines flying to Kuwait from Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Syria, and Lebanon, besides India.

The restrictions came a day after Union Minister of State for External Affairs V.Muraleedharan informed that the Kuwait government, which had insisted all passengers travelling to the Middle East to carry a coronavirus free certificate, was cancelled.

07/03/20 IANS/Outlook

Fairfax India is planning to list its subsidiary Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holdings (AIHL), which has been created in June 2019.

AIHL is Fairfax's flagship investment vehicle for airports and other infrastructure investments in India. The plan is to eventually transfer all of Fairfax's shares in Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) to AIHL.

In December 2019, Fairfax India signed definitive agreements with an investor, whereby it will **transfer 43.6 per cent of BIAL out of the 54 per cent that it owns to AIHL. The investor will pay about \$135 million to acquire from Fairfax India 11.5 per cent stake on a fully diluted basis in AIHL. This will result in the investor indirectly owning approximately 5 per cent in BIAL. The transaction values BIAL at \$2.7 billion.**

07/03/20 TE Narasimhan/Business Standard

Hyderabad: **Health Minister Eatala Rajender announced on Friday that domestic passengers will also be screened at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The step has been taken as a precaution to avoid the spread of the virus locally in the State.** However, the Health Department did not receive any support from the Union Ministry to start domestic screening of passengers at the RGIA.

During a video conference, Eatala requested Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, to start screening domestic passengers as well, along with international passengers at the airport.

However, the request was snubbed by the Union government, claiming that they do not have enough staff to deploy for domestic passengers and that screening of domestic passengers was not necessary. The Union Health Secretary told the State government that could take up a screening in the state if they have required manpower.

07/03/20 New Indian Express

Ahmedabad: **On the intervening night of March 4 and 5 of 2020 the immigration department team at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (SVPI) held one Gorakh Prasad, 35, of Gorakhpur**

in Uttar Pradesh for travel using another man's passport. He was later handed over to Airport police station. Inspector K C Rathwa of Airport police station said the accused was arrested under sections 406,419,467,468,471 and 114 of IPC.

During interrogation the accused said before airport authorities that he had been working in a private company in Dubai since September 2019. "He said that the director of the company, one Mr Sharma had handed him the passport while leaving Dubai. The accused said there was another man named Gorakh in the same company and Sharma may have handed him the other Gorakh's passport. That other man is from Siwan in Bihar," said an immigration officer.

07/03/20 Times of India

New Delhi: The CISF has apprehended two Kyrgyzstan nationals carrying USD 1.76 lakh at the Delhi airport, officials said on Saturday.

The incident took place on Friday at the Indira Gandhi International Airport and the two passengers -- Maatkerimov Mirlan and Orazbaev Ruslan -- were intercepted by security personnel as they exhibited "suspicious behaviour", they said.

A total of 1,76,450 US dollars were recovered from the two nationals who had Kyrgyzstan passports and were bound for Bishkek via Almaty, they said.

07/03/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: The government on Friday hinted at providing some more time for divesting its stake in Air India.

"We will provide people with a little extra time that we lost because of the other questions. Let me say on record that the process is going extremely well. There is a lot of expression of interest. Following the publication of the Preliminary Information Memorandum a lot of entities have come and asked questions," said Hardeep Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, on Friday.

The Minister did not give details of how much more time will be provided. There has been a delay of 14 days as interested parties were earlier supposed to submit their written queries about the bidding process by February 22 which was extended till Friday evening (March 6).

Speaking to newsmen, Pradeep Singh Kharola, Secretary Civil Aviation, said, "It stays," when asked whether the last date for submission of written queries from those interested in bidding for Air India is being extended.

06/03/20 Business Line

New Delhi: As Union Cabinet relaxes norms for NRIs (non-resident Indians) to buy 100 per cent stake in the national carrier, sources in the aviation ministry confirm that two potential buyers have bought access to virtual data room that provides additional information on Air India, Air India Express and AISATS - the three entities that are up for sale.

Virtual data room, which also has draft share purchase agreement (SPA), can be bought by potential buyers of Air India on the payment of (non-refundable) fees of Rs 1 crore. **So far, two bidders have bought access to this service highlighting their keen interest in acquiring Air India along with its subsidiaries. Virtual data room covers wider details about Air India and its subsidiaries which are not part of the EoI (expression of interest) document floated by the government in January.**

"Interested bidders also have the option to access the virtual data room containing additional information about companies as well as the draft share purchase agreement prior to submitting the EoI," the sale document says.

On January 27, the government had released the preliminary information memorandum (PIM) inviting the EoI from prospective buyers of Air India and its two subsidiaries. Under the sale process, the government intends to sell 100 per cent stake in Air India and Air India Express, and 50 per cent stake in the ground-handling arm AISATS (Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited).

05/03/20 Manu Kaushik/Business Today

Just as India reported a sharp rise in infections—from six to 29 in a matter of 48 hours—the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) immediately announced that all passengers arriving in India from other coronavirus-affected countries like Italy and Iran will undergo strict medical screening at the airports.

However, the ground reality with regard to passenger accounts on social media seems to be entirely different.

One Twitter user wrote, 'There was no screening till yesterday at IGI T3 and this whole drama is done only after travellers took it to social media about lack of screening.'

Another claimed, 'I returned last week from IGI international airport and I felt screening @DelhiAirport is not adequate. The medical team sitting there should be checking each passenger not based on the country of return as this is common sense virus. if one is infected probability is many wills.'

Founder and CEO of The Quint, Ritu Kapur, also slammed the officials at Delhi's IGI airport for not taking adequate steps to screen passengers.

Ritu Kapur tweeted, 'Just landed back from an international trip and was NOT screened at any point ... while reports say - All international passengers to be screened as 29 people test positive for coronavirus in India .. cont'd'

06/03/20 KC Archana/India Times

New Delhi: Forward booking is among the biggest revenue sources for airlines, one that keeps them flying high. But the scare of travel following the spread of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19) is such that many international airlines are now asking people to make advance bookings with no charges if they choose to change travel dates for whatever reason at a later date.

The peak outbound summer travel season sets in from March in west India and a month later from

other parts of the country.

Due to the evolving coronavirus situation. **British Airways has waived its change fee**, giving customers the flexibility to delay travel that is booked during the next two weeks. “The policy will be available for new bookings made up to March 16, 2020. As some customers are facing uncertainty when booking travel at the moment, the airline has introduced the policy to give its customers more confidence across any of its routes,” BA said.

BA chief commercial officer Andrew Brem said: “As some customers may choose to change or delay their travel plans at the moment, it’s important we offer them greater flexibility. By waiving our change fee our customers can have the added confidence to book a trip with British Airways that suits them.”

United Airlines tweeted: “Book with flexibility: we’re waiving change fees for any bookings — domestic and international — made between March 3 and March 31, 2020. This applies to all tickets, fare types, destinations, points-of-sale and travel dates available for sale.”

06/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: Airports in India face the mammoth task of screening thousands of people who fly into the country, irrespective of where they are coming from, daily, and identifying those who display symptoms of the novel coronavirus (Covid-19).

DGCA data shows 78.4 lakh people flew into India between January and March 2019, an average of more than 87,000 daily in that period. After factoring in flight cancellations and the scare, Indian airports could be looking at screening about 80,000 international arrivals daily with staff of the health ministry’s Airport Health Organisation (APHO).

This screening means international arrivals may need to spend 30-40 minutes more before ‘cleared’ passengers leave airports.

“Those with symptoms of the coronavirus will be sent to hospitals. Airlines have been asked to give self-declaration forms to passengers before landing. The thermal screeners being used can check four passengers in a minute. One counter can check about 200 passengers in an hour,” said a senior aviation official overseeing preparedness at airports.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) says 30 airports in the country get international flights. The major chunk of international flights is handled by the six metro airports. India’s busiest airport, Delhi’s IGI Airport, witnesses anywhere from 850 to 2,100 international passengers flying every hour during lean and peak hours.

“The maximum rush is from 11pm to 3am when IGI Airport sees about 6,000 international arrivals from 35 flights in these four hours,” said Delhi airport sources.

The second busiest airport, Mumbai, gets about 100 international flights daily.

06/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Private scheduled domestic airlines posted aggregate operating profits of Rs 467 crore in the first nine months of FY. However, they are still staring at a bleak financial performance as the above information was available only for five out of 12 private carriers. Though, if you add the operational losses of Rs 2,557 crore of the three national carriers, the total operating profits of scheduled Indian carriers turn red at Rs (-) 2,090 crore for the period between April- December 2019. These figures are as per the provisional data provided by the Indian carriers in a Rajya Sabha reply. The sample excludes private carriers such as Go Air, Air Deccan, Air Odisha, Air Heritage, Star Air, Vistara and Zoom Air which have not submitted the required information, as per the Rajya Sabha reply.

A quarterly snapshot reveals that these five private domestic airlines posted an operating profit of Rs 1,770 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal but slipped into negative territory by almost an equal amount, at Rs (-) 1,818 crore in Q2FY20 but saw a turnaround with Rs 515 crore operating profits in the December quarter. The combined operating profits of national airlines which includes Air India, AI Express and Alliance Air though remained in negative territory in all the three quarters of 2019/20- Rs (-)834 in Q1FY20, Rs (-) 380 in Q2FY20 and Rs (-) 1,342.7 crore in Q3FY20. The overall operating revenues of these scheduled carriers jumped from Rs 21,535 crore in the first quarter to Rs 23,183.7 crore in Q2FY20 and to Rs 24,375.1 crore in Q3FY20. The total operating expenses increased by Rs 4,606 crore, during the period.

The country's aviation sector hit a rough patch as the combined operating profits of scheduled Indian carriers in 2018/19 worsened for the first time since 2015/16. Around 12 private carriers (excluding Jet Airways) and three national carriers posted aggregate operating loss of Rs 7,088 in 2018/19. The carriers posted cumulative operating profits of Rs 7,696 crore between 2015/16 and 2017/18. Some prominent loss-making airlines included GoAir, SpiceJet, Vistara and IndiGo with operating losses of Rs 897 crore, Rs 266 crore, Rs 846 crore and Rs 149 crore, respectively, in 2018/19, as per the provisional data (as on June 2019).

05/03/20 Niti Kiran/Business Today

NEW DELHI: The rapid spread of COVID-19 across the globe has thrown movement of lakhs of travellers off gear. This has not only impacted pleasure trips of tourists but also business travel resulting in monetary losses worth millions.

In wake of numerous advisories against travel, the travel industry, particularly the aviation sector, has also been badly impacted. Not only traffic on their once-popular routes have plummeted but several have to cancel flights to destinations in China and few other South and East Asian countries to prevent becoming carrier of the contagious virus.

According to MakeMyTrip flight bookings for Southeast Asian countries have been significantly impacted but sectors in US and Europe are only seeing a marginal dip.

More than 95,000 people in 86 countries have been infected with the virus and more than 3,200 people have died. In India so far 31 persons have tested positive for the virus.

So the situation across the globe remains grim with only positives coming from China where fresh infections of COVID-19 has reduced. But does that make travel safer? And what if you still need to travel...are there enough flights available or whether the ticket you procured protects against any unforeseen cancellations?

Here is the situation as it exists :

International flights by domestic carriers:

- **Air India and Indigo that run long haul flights have cancelled their flights to Hong Kong and Shanghai and the restrictions may well run into June.**
- **SpiceJet has cancelled Delhi Hong Kong flights till March 28.**
- **Vistara Airlines has cancelled around 54 flights to and from Bangkok and Singapore.**
- **GoAir suspends flight operations to Dammam, Saudi Arabia after an advisory issued by the Saudi government to not allow non-Saudi residents to enter. It has also suspended flights to Thailand**

International flights by global airlines:

- **Almost all major airlines operating out of India have suspended flights to China, Korea, Iran, Italy and some to Japan.**
- **European and American connections provide by airlines such as Lufthansa, KLM, United Airlines from India continues.**
- **JAL is still operating its service to Japan from India.**
- **United, Air Canada, JetBlue, Alaska, American Airlines, Delta, Brutus Airways have suspended flights to China and reduced operations in countries with high Coronavirus infections such as Italy.**

Domestic airlines:

There have been no restrictions on domestic travel, so far.

What advisories have been issued by authorities that can affect your travel plan :

- **From March 9 midnight all air travellers having visited or arriving from Italy and South Korea will require to submit a certificate of having tested negative from health authorities -designated lab in their countries for Coronavirus at the departure.**
- **India has also suspended most visas issued to nationals of Japan, South Korea, Italy, Iran and China, as well as suspending visas of any travellers who had been to those five countries since February.**
- **It has now been decided that all incoming international passengers must declare their travel history to health and immigration officials at India's airports**
- **Arrivals from DGCA list of 12 countries undergo thermal screening, passengers with high temperature taken to quarantine.**
- **Screening to be carried out at 21 airports across the country**
- **Regular sticker visa/e-visa granted to nationals of People's Republic of China, issued on or before Feb 5, 2020 were suspended earlier. It shall remain in force.**
- **Those needing to travel to India under compelling circumstances may apply for fresh visa to the nearest Indian Embassy/Consulate', the advisory said.**
- **An advisory had also directed passengers arriving directly or indirectly from China, South Korea, Japan, Iran, Italy, Hong Kong, Macau, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Nepal, Thailand, Singapore and Taiwan to undergo medical screening at the port of entry.**

Travel insurance :

- **All Indian carriers are offering full refund or bookings to alternate destinations for flights that were booked earlier but are getting cancelled due to Covid-19**
- **GoAir stated that people have the option of availing a full refund or utilising the booking amount for any future travel with the airline.**
- **In a travel advisory, Emirates has stated that those wishing to travel to Saudi Arabia will have to contact the Emirates office or their travel agent for refunds.**

- OPther travellers having expensive insurance cover may get full refunds by the insurance companies if they have included everything under coverage
- But a larger number of insurers do not provide travel insurance against any pandemics outright. Moreover, any travel plan made now may not get covered for cancellations due to Covid-19

The New Indian Express 06/03/2020

- Paracetamol, antibiotics will be available for next 3 months: Report

Paracetamol, antibiotics, HIV and antiviral drugs, a combination of which is being used to treat COVID-19, are widely available in India, according to India's largest chemist lobby, the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD), The Print reported. "We have checked the availability of stock for paracetamol, antibiotics and antiviral medicines. We can assure an uninterrupted supply for the next 90 days, which is three months," Rajiv Singhal, general secretary of AIOCD.

The lobby includes distributors and traders selling medicines to hospitals, including drugs for HIV that are not sold at retail chemist outlets. "We have enough stock for paracetamol, oseltamivir, lopinavir and ritonavir along with other essential antibiotics," added Singhal

- Coronavirus in India Latest Updates

Stock indices slip, oil prices plunge amid outbreak

Indian shares followed a slide in global peers on Monday as fears intensified over the coronavirus outbreak and oil prices plunged. Energy and metals stocks bore the brunt of the losses, as the NSE Nifty 50 index fell 3.70 percent to 10,582.90 by 0422 GMT, while the S&P BSE Sensex was down 3.86 percent at 36,125.45.

The Nifty hit its lowest since February 2019 and was on course for its worst day since August 2015. Oil prices plunged around 25 percent on Monday, heading towards their biggest daily loss since 1991 after Saudi Arabia slashed prices and set plans for a big increase in crude production in April.

- Coronavirus in Jammu and Kashmir Latest Updates

First confirmed case reported in Jammu and Kashmir

A 63-year-old woman tested positive for coronavirus, making her the first confirmed case in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Monday. The woman, who had a travel history to Iran, was among two patients who were declared "high viral load cases" by the administration on the weekend.

She is undergoing treatment at the isolation ward of the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital and are in a stable condition, PTI reported

- Confirmed cases rise to 42

Total number of confirmed cases of coronavirus now stand at 42, with one case each reported from Delhi, Agra and Jammu and Kashmir, PTI reported.

In Maharashtra, 15 people are still under observation, while 258 people have been discharged. No confirmed cases have been reported from the state.

First Post 09/03/2020

Stepping up efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus, aviation watchdog DGCA on Friday said aviation personnel will be examined for cold, fever and other symptoms before they are subject to breath analyser tests.

Flight crew and people working on the airside are among the aviation personnel. Breath Analyser (BA) is applicable for air traffic controllers, flight despatchers, aircraft maintenance personnel and aerodrome operation personnel, among others.

In an order, the regulator said a doctor or a medical personnel would scan a "person for the symptoms of fever, cough, cold, running nose, congested eyes before carrying out a BA test". Persons having such symptoms would be "exempted from the BA test and removed from duty", it added.

"Such person shall undergo detailed examination and shall return to duty only after having been declared fit," the regulator said in the order.

A record of such cases would also be maintained.

"Such cases will not be treated as missed BA test," it added.

DGCA said the latest instructions would be in force till March 13.

According to a senior DGCA official, the complete process would be supervised by a doctor or paramedic and the same would be recorded on video.

BA test is done to check whether a person has consumed alcohol. In the case of pilots, the test is performed both prior to and after operating a flight.

Recently, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) ordered breath analyser tests for various sections of airside employees, including air traffic controllers (ATCs).

Mumbai, Mar 6 (PTI)

With India reporting 39 cases of coronavirus, the cabinet secretary on Sunday held a review meeting where it was decided that in view of rising cases in France, the US, Spain, dedicated aerobridges of flights from these countries should be put in place at airports.

Dedicated aerobridges are in place for flights from China, South Korea, Japan, Italy, Iran, Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Nepal and Indonesia.

The cabinet secretary held the 16th review meeting and elaborately discussed the preparations, which are at an advanced stage, to bring Indian citizens from Iran, an official statement said.

Since the disease has spread over more than 90 countries with over 1 lakh cases worldwide, states/UTs have been asked to enhance community surveillance as per the list of passengers provided to them, the Health Ministry said.

"In view of rising cases from France, US, Spain, it was decided to have dedicated aerobridges of these

countries, in addition to the 12 countries," it said.

As of Sunday, there are 39 confirmed cases of COVID-19. Five new cases were confirmed on Sunday in Kerala and three of them had a recent travel history to Italy, the ministry said.

During the review meeting, it was also stressed that people need to be made aware about the use of masks.

The ministry said that if a person is healthy, they only need to wear a mask they are taking care of a person with suspected infection. People should also wear masks if they are coughing or sneezing, it said.

Masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, the statement said.

If you wear a mask, then you must know how to use it and dispose of it properly. Before putting on a mask, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, the statement said.

The ministry asked people to cover their mouth and nose with masks and make sure there are no gaps between in between.

It also advised people to avoid touching the mask while using it, if they do, clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water.

Replace the mask with a new one as soon as it is damp and do not re-use single-use masks, it said.

Remove the mask from behind and do not touch the front of mask. Discard it immediately in a closed bin and clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water, the statement said.

Union Minister of Health Harsh Vardhan is continuously monitoring and reviewing the status, actions taken and future preparedness of states, it said.

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI)

The Delhi government will request the Centre to impose a ban on travel to countries that have recorded a large number of coronavirus cases, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference here, Kejriwal appealed to the people of Delhi to not panic and maintain calm amid a scare over the spread of the contagious viral infection.

He also said he will meet Union health minister Harsh Vardhan on Monday to request a ban on travel to countries where a significant number of COVID-19 cases have been reported.

"I want to appeal to the people of Delhi to inform us about those who have travelled abroad recently. Most of the coronavirus cases so far have been from those who have travelled back from other countries," the chief minister said.

Kejriwal said even though there is a ban on people travelling back from these countries, there is still no ban on people travelling to these countries.

"I will meet Harsh Vardhan ji tomorrow to request a ban on passengers travelling to and from these countries," he said. PTI AMP

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI)

The Delhi government has ordered DTC and cluster buses, metro and hospitals to be disinfected on a regular basis as a precautionary measure to deal with the novel coronavirus, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Sunday.

Addressing a press conference, Kejriwal said that three cases of coronavirus have been reported in Delhi so far and one case is still under investigation.

The chief minister said that 168 isolation beds have been set up at 25 hospitals for coronavirus patients.

He appealed to the people in Delhi that if anybody from their neighbourhood had returned from foreign countries in the past 14 days, they should inform the government.

The chief minister, who chaired a state task force on Sunday, said the government was fully prepared to deal with the novel coronavirus, adding that people do not need to panic.

"An order has been issued to disinfect DTC, cluster buses, Delhi Metro and hospitals every day," he said.

"Three cases of coronavirus have been reported in Delhi so far. One case is still under investigation. I want to tell this to everyone that the Delhi government is worried about it but we are fully prepared to tackle it.

There is no need to panic and we need everyone's cooperation," he said.

After examining the three cases, it was learnt that the first infected person came in contact with 105 people, second came in contact with 168 in the last 14 days while the third person came in contact with 64 people, he said.

"All those who came in contact with them are being isolated and their samples are being collected and checked for symptoms," he added.

Healthy people need not wear mask and there is no need to stock up masks at your homes either, he said.

He also urged people to wash their hands frequently with soap and water.

All passengers at the airport are being screened. Forty doctors of Delhi Government hospitals are deployed at the airports for the purpose.

All those passengers who undergo thermal screenings at the airport once they go home, especially those from Delhi, are being kept under watch for 14 days to check for symptoms.

"1,40,603 passengers have been screened at the airports so far and have been put on surveillance," he said.

Kejriwal also appealed to employers to give paid leave to those quarantined so that their livelihood is not affected.

The chief minister said that now 25 hospitals have the facilities where one can submit the samples.

Out of the 25 hospitals, six are private hospitals while others are those of the Delhi Government.

"We are making separate facilities for collection of samples and treatment in these hospitals so that if any patient arrives there, they don't come in contact with others," he said.

Conveying his greetings for Holi, Kejriwal urged people of Delhi to avoid going to crowded areas and save themselves from coronavirus.

New Delhi, Mar 8 (PTI)

Samples of the 32 persons screened for possible novel coronavirus infection have tested negative in Chhattisgarh, a health official said on Sunday.

So far no confirmed case of novel coronavirus has been reported in the state, they said.

"In Chhattisgarh, a total of 36 samples have been sent for COVID-19 test so far, of which, 32 are found to be negative while reports of the rest four are awaited," the official said.

The samples are being tested at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Raipur.

Till date, a total of 27 persons, have been kept in home isolation and under surveillance while nine others have completed 28 days of observation, he said.

All these people had either recently travelled to coronavirus-affected countries or had come into contact with persons suspected to have exposed to the infection, he said.

Explaining the awareness measures, the official said health advisories, alerts and signages have been displayed at the airport and railway stations.

Besides, an appeal has been made to people to report if they had visited China or other affected countries after February 1, he said.

"The government is conducting training for healthcare personnel which included areas like contact tracing, sample collection and transport, infection prevention and control protocol," he said. Besides, Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) at the levels of the state, division and district have been sensitised and activated, the official added.

Raipur, Mar 8 (PTI)

A 63-year-old woman tested positive for coronavirus here, making her the first confirmed case in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said on Monday.

The woman, who had a travel history to Iran, was among two patients who were declared "high viral load cases" by the administration on the weekend.

They are undergoing treatment at the isolation ward of the Government Medical College (GMC) hospital and are in a stable condition, the officials said.

"The test report of the woman patient is positive, while the report of the other patient is still awaited," a Health Department official said.

Jammu, Mar 9 (PTI)

A West Bengal resident returning home from Saudi Arabia was on Sunday admitted to an isolation ward in a state-run hospital here with fever and cough amid the coronavirus scare, a health department official said.

The man from Murshidabad district was taken to the hospital after he underwent thermal screening at the NSC Bose International Airport.

His blood samples and swabs were collected and sent to the National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED) in Beliaghata.

"After thermal screening, the youth suffering from fever and cough was taken to the Beliaghata ID Hospital in a specialised ambulance. He was admitted to the isolation ward and is currently under observation," the official said.

Special arrangements were made as per guidelines of the central and state health departments to take him from the airport to the hospital.

"A doctor, a nurse and another person, as well as the driver of the ambulance in which the youth was taken to the hospital wore special jackets meant to protect from coronavirus infection. All forms of precautionary measures were taken," the official said.

A Bangladeshi woman who had landed in Kolkata airport from Chittagong on Thursday is also in the isolation ward of the same hospital. She had also been suffering from fever and cough.

Kolkata, Mar 8 (PTI)

A diabetic man died in the isolation ward of a hospital in West Bengal's Murshidabad district on Sunday, a day after he was admitted there with suspected symptoms of coronavirus following his return from Saudi Arabia.

According to doctors, he was admitted to the hospital with fever, cough and cold.

Though test results of his blood and swab samples for novel coronavirus were awaited, it can be said that Janarul Haque died probably of diabetes, Director of Health Services Ajay Chakraborty told PTI.

"The man was highly diabetic and was on insulin. He returned home from Saudi Arabia and had no money to take insulin for the last three to four days.

"He was also suffering from fever, cough and cold. He was admitted to the isolation ward of the Murshidabad Medical College and Hospital yesterday and died today," the health services director said.

"We are waiting for the results of medical tests. The possibility of his death due to novel coronavirus infection is remote," he said.

However, precautions will be taken during the last rites of Haque according to the directives set by the central and state governments for patients who die of the virus, another senior official said.

"Family members will not be allowed to touch the body since the man had been suffering from cough and breathlessness. Those performing his last rites will be given protective gear, masks and gloves. Though test results are yet to be known, we do not want to take any chance," he said.

Meanwhile, the state health department has issued a directive to all private medical facilities to create a system for assessing all patients at admission allowing early recognition of possible Covid-19 infection and immediate isolation of patients with suspected nCoV infection in an area separate from other patients.

As per the directive, private hospitals should "ensure space for utilisation as isolation ward. Person testing positive for Covid-19 should remain hospitalised till two of their samples are tested negative as per the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's discharge policy".

It has also asked all private medical facilities to "apply standard precautions for all patients by medical masks and perform hand hygiene after contact with respiratory secretions".

The directive includes "implementing empiric additional precautions, airborne precautions, using environmental and engineering controls and maintain recommendation for outpatient care".

The state health department has directed the private medical establishments to conduct, in-house sessions of sensitisation workshops for doctors, nursing personnel, other middle-tier administrators and other staff association with patient care services in this connection.

Kolkata, Mar 8 (PTI)

The samples of 258 people admitted in hospitals for suspected exposure to novel coronavirus in Maharashtra have returned negative and they have been discharged, state Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Sunday.

He said 15 people are still under observation in Mumbai and Pune.

Maharashtra has not reported any positive case of coronavirus so far, Tope said.

Of the people still under observation, 13 are admitted in Mumbai and two in Pune, the minister informed.

A state government statement said 1,09,118 passengers from 904 flights have been screened at Mumbai and Pune airports since January 18.

Till now, 560 persons have returned to the state from the coronavirus-affected regions, the statement said.

Mumbai, Mar 8 (PTI)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday asked people to not be afraid of the new coronavirus as the government has made adequate arrangements to contain its spread and urged them to take precautions "because prevention is better than cure".

The virus has infected 39 people across the country, including 16 Italians visiting India. The government has stepped up efforts to screen people at entry points into the country and set up

facilities to quarantine suspected and confirmed cases.

Worldwide, the number of coronavirus cases stood at over 1,05,800, including 3,595 deaths.

"There is panic in the world over coronavirus but there is no need to be afraid of it. Just take precautions because prevention is better than cure," Adityanath said at a public meeting during the 'Mukhyamantri Arogya Mela' at primary health centre in Kushinagar district.

"Our government has set up an isolation ward in every district for suspected patients. There is complete arrangement for their treatment," he added.

The chief minister congratulated people on International Women's Day and felicitated 10 women for doing excellent work in different fields.

He said a society plagued by discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, religion or gender cannot progress. Adityanath said collective efforts can become the basis of empowerment.

The 'Mukhyamantri Arogya Mela' is being organised at all primary health centres of the state since February 2. Every Sunday, a team of doctors gives free consultation to patients at the health centres.

Kushinagar (UP), Mar 8 (PTI)

All the 47 samples of suspected coronavirus infection in Gujarat have tested negative, the state government said on Sunday.

The state government has set up a laboratory testing facility at Jamnagar medical college, a second such unit after the BJ Medical College in Ahmedabad.

"All the 47 samples of suspected coronavirus cases have tested negative, which included five such samples which tested negative in Ahmedabad laboratory on Sunday," a state government release said.

Till date, a total 2107 passengers from the state having a history of visiting China and other affected countries have been placed under surveillance, of whom 1154 have completed the 28-day observation period and are asymptomatic and in a good state of health, it said.

As many as 19,856 passengers from 180 flights have been screened so far at the Ahmedabad international airport, while 2,035 crew members on 49 ships have been screened at various ports, it added.

The government said it was taking various measures to spread awareness about novel coronavirus through radio jingles and television advertisements including prime time programmes on Doordarshan.

More than 3,700 private doctors have been trained to deal with coronavirus cases, it added.

Ahmedabad, Mar 8 (PTI)

Twenty-seven people, who came into contact with a 45-year-old coronavirus patient in Tamil Nadu, have been placed under home surveillance, Health Secretary Beela Rajesh said here on Sunday.

The top official also said steps were afoot to set up more testing facilities in places including Theni, for the coronavirus.

The man who tested positive on Saturday was asymptomatic when he arrived here on February 28 from Muscat.

On March 4, he reported to a hospital with symptoms, including fever, she said after chairing a review meeting of stakeholders including state, central and civic authorities.

The infected person, who was admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, was stable

and under treatment, she said.

Contact tracing was important and it was being done, she said adding 27 people who came in contact with him have been placed under home surveillance. The man's family members were also being monitored as per the protocol, she said.

Also, "second-level contacts," (people who came in contact with those who were in touch directly with the infected) were being traced, the secretary said.

The government has data of all international passengers and they all were being screened, she said. "So far, of the 60 samples that were tested, 59 samples turned negative and one was positive," she noted.

Blood samples were being taken for the "person who arrived now," to test for the virus indicating the arrival of the 15-year-old boy at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital.

Earlier in the day, the 15-year-old boy who arrived here from the US via Doha was diagnosed with fever during screening at the airport and was sent to RGGGH for observation.

To a question she said: "Now, we are developing a testing facility at Theni," and indicated that it may be functional in a day or two. Also, the government is working on putting up the testing facility in other places that have suitable infrastructural support, she said.

Authorities have been asked to do sterilisation at railway and bus terminals and other important public places, she said.

Chennai, Mar 8 (PTI):

Five fresh coronavirus cases, including three who evaded screening on return from Italy, were reported in Kerala, prompting the government on Sunday to sound a renewed alert and warn action against those hiding travel history to affected nations.

All the five, who tested positive for the infection days after the country's first three coronavirus patients from the state recovered, are relatives and hail from Ranni in Pathnamthitta district, Health minister, K K Shailaja told reporters in Thiruvananthapuram.

The Left front government intensified efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by tracking persons with whom the three latest infected people came into contact since arrival and put the state on high alert, especially in Pathanamthitta district where all public programmes and religious gatherings have been called off.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan asked everyone to follow the guidelines issued by the health department in the wake of the fresh cases.

Those who have come from nations affected by the virus, should get in touch through telephone with district medical officers or government hospitals without fail.

People who come to know about such cases also should inform authorities, Vijayan said in a Facebook post.

The three overseas returnees -- a couple in their 50s and their 24-year-old son -- had taken two connecting flights from Venice in Italy and arrived in Kochi international airport on February 29, but did not report their foreign travel to officials authorities and evaded screening, Shailaja said.

Two others affected are their close relatives staying at their home in Pathnamthitta.

Ranni MLA Raju Abraham said the affected persons had attended a wedding, gone for shopping, went to the office of a police official and it is assumed visited at least 300 friends and relatives near their home.

They went to a taluk hospital where they were first examined by medical personnel without using any masks or gloves, Abraham told PTI.

The medical superintendent later examined them after taking precautions and they were directed to get admitted to the isolation ward, which they refused at first.

Later they were forced to get admitted to the general hospital's isolation ward on March 6 and tests confirmed late Saturday that they had contracted the virus.

As a matter of abundant caution, the infected couple's parents, in their 90s, have also been hospitalised at Pathnamthitta.

The five fresh cases has been reported days after the southern state had successfully treated India's first three corona patients-- medical students from Wuhan who have been discharged from hospitals. Their home quarantine period is also over.

The health department said failure to inform authorities about travelled history and symptoms would be considered a crime, while the state police separately said it was "illegal and punishable" if anyone hid such information.

"The Italy-returned family hid their travel details from the health authorities. Such practices have to seen as a crime. Those who come from countries like Iran, Italy, South Korea and China should report to the health department immediately," Shailaja said.

"What they have done is irresponsible. But our concern now is to save their lives. Those who have come from corona affected countries should inform the health department immediately," she said. Those who come from abroad should be in house surveillance for 28 days, a government release said.

The government released the flight details of the three people who traveled from Venice-Doha-Kochi. They had taken the Venice-Doha Qatar Airlines QR 126 flight on February 29.

For one-and half-hours they were at the Doha airport and took another flight QR514 of Qatar Airlines to Kochi from where they reached their home in Pathnamthitta by a car.

All the passengers who travelled in the two flights should get in touch with health authorities, Shailaja said.

With the hill shrine of Lord Ayyappa at Sabarimala in Pathanamthitta district is all set to open for monthly pujas on March 13, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB), which manages it, asked devotees not to visit the temple if they have any symptoms of the virus.

Shocked over the official report that the three infected people had evaded health screening, Ernakulam district administration on Sunday took stock of the arrangements at the Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL).

After a high-level meeting held at the airport, Ernakulam Collector S Suhas requested all co-passengers of the three people to get in touch with authorities as early as possible.

Airport sources said there were 182 passengers on the Doha-Kochi flight, which the trio had taken.

An operation has been launched for tracing all passengers on the flight and their secondary contacts and the employees who attended to them on February 29, a CIAL statement said.

Also, a massive disinfestation drive would be initiated from CIAL's side, it said.

The report of the five new cases came a day ahead of the all-women "Attukal Pongal" festival in Kerala on Monday when thousands of women from various parts of the state and outside, including foreigners, are expected to participate.

Those having cold, sore throat or showing any other symptoms of the virus should offer pongala in front of their homes instead of in crowded places, the Health Minister said.

An advisory from devaswom board said any person with travel history to COVID 19 affected countries or person with contact with such a traveller, whether they have symptoms or not, must remain in home isolation and offer pongala prayers at their respective places of stay.

"Their self isolation is the real prayer for the good of the community, their family and themselves", a statement said.

Thiruvananthapuram/Pathnamthitta, Mar 8 (PTI)

In view of a coronavirus scare, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday constituted a seven-member Group of Ministers (GoM) to monitor the state's preparedness to tackle the disease, an official statement said.

The chief minister will hold a meeting every Monday to review and deliberate on the recommendations of the GoM, which will be led by Local Government Minister Brahm Mohindra, it stated.

Amarinder Singh, who is personally monitoring the situation on a day-to-day basis, has constituted a seven-member GoM to oversee the preventive measures taken by the health department, an official spokesperson said in the statement.

Besides Mohindra, the GoM comprises Medical Education and Research Minister O P Soni; Rural Development and Panchayats Minister Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa; Transport Minister Razia Sultana; Health and Family Welfare Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu; School Education Minister Vijay Inder Singla; and Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu, the spokesperson said. The group has been mandated to submit a comprehensive report to the chief minister after monitoring the entire situation on a day-to-day basis.

In addition, the health department will release a media bulletin every day, based on the suggestions and decisions of the GoM.

The department has already issued a series of directions to prevent the outbreak of coronavirus and check its spread.

Hospitals are on high alert, with specialised arrangements to tackle any exigency arising out of the crisis, which has engulfed the entire world, the spokesperson said.

Calling for strict vigilance against coronavirus, Amarinder Singh also backed an appeal by the Akal Takht, the highest temporal seat of Sikhs, to people to avoid large gatherings.

Given the growing coronavirus threat, it is in the interest of the people to exercise caution and avoid large congregations, he said.

The chief minister suggested that the auspicious 'Hola Mohalla' festival, scheduled to be held next week, may also be celebrated by paying obeisance in gurdwaras and other places in small numbers. A total of 71,900 people have been screened for COVID-19 across Punjab so far. These include 48,867 people at Amritsar airport, 5,116 at Mohali international airport, 5,401 at Wagah-Attari Border and 12,516 at Dera Baba Nanak checkpost, Health Minister Sidhu had said on Friday.

Chandigarh, Mar 7 (PTI)

The 33rd Guwahati Bookfair, scheduled to be held later this month, has been put on hold indefinitely in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak, organisers said on Sunday.

The decision to postpone the event was taken in view of the Central government's advisory to avoid organising any event where a large number of people would be present, state-run Publication Board Assam said in a statement.

The bookfair was to take place between March 14 and 25 and preparations were almost complete, Publication Board Assam Pramod Kalita said.

"All the programmes and schedules prepared for the 33rd Guwahati Bookfair have been put on hold. We have already intimated the participant publishers about the decision," Kalita said.

The state government has put in place stringent screening measures to prevent the spread of novel coronavirus.

However, no person has tested positive for novel Coronavirus in the state, while PTI TR NN

Guwahati, Mar 8 (PTI)

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Sunday said he has been greeting people with the traditional 'namaste' instead of shaking hands as a precaution in the wake of the novel coronavirus outbreak.

There are 39 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in India, though none in Maharashtra as yet.

"I like cleanliness. I don't like dirt. You may have seen today that I greet with a namaste if someone comes to shake hands. One may think I am not shaking hands now that I have become deputy chief minister. But it is not so," Pawar said.

He said precaution needs to be taken in view of the coronavirus outbreak and asked all to avoid shaking hands till the crisis passes.

Since the virus spread between people who are in close contact and through respiratory droplets, doctors have advised that handshakes be avoided.

Notably, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked people to avoid handshakes and start greeting others with 'namaste' once again in view of coronavirus outbreak. PTI ENM BNM NSK

Mumbai, Mar 8 (PTI)

Authorities began culling of domesticated birds and hens near here on Sunday, as part of the Kerala governments precautionary measures following the outbreak of bird flu, officials said.

The health authorities culled birds within a one-km radius of two poultry farms at nearby Vengeri and Kodyathoor where the outbreak was reported last week.

Nearly 200 trained staff and support members in as many as 25 rapid response squads of five each are in the process of culling an estimated 12,000 birds mostly chicken besides turkey and love birds. The officials in protective gear are engaged in the culling operation. The carcasses are also being burnt.

"The process of culling and disinfection is likely to extend for two more days. As per our census, an estimated 12,000 birds will be culled in three days, said the District Animal Husbandry Officer Dr Sindhu Krishnan.

Meanwhile, the Corporation health officials seized pet birds from a street-side vendor in Thondayad near here as part of the district administration's initiative in checking the spread of the disease.

According to Corporation sources, the trader had some dead birds also. To prevent Avian Influenza from spreading, the district collector had on Saturday issued instructions to close all chicken farms, chicken and egg stalls and pet and ornamental bird shops within 10 km of the epicentre farms at Vengeri and West Kodyathoor.

The collector Sambasiva Rao had also cautioned of stringent action against defaulters under Kerala Municipality Act.

According to sources, the owners of the birds, which are culled, would be compensated for their loss.

The state health department, in association with the Animal Husbandry department and the civic authorities, was involved in the exercise, officials said.

Kozhikode, Mar 8 (PTI)

As of today, there are 43 total cases (3 positive cases from Kerala which are now discharged), out of which 40 are active cases of COVID-19 in the country. 4 (Four) new cases of COVID-19 have been reported since yesterday's update – 1 (one) from Ernakulum, Kerala, 1 (one) from Delhi, 1(one) from Uttar Pradesh and 1 (One) from Jammu.

The 5 cases from Kerala reported yesterday are 3 family members with travel history to Italy and 2 of their relatives who came in contact with them. The family is reported to have visited relatives and attended few functions and their contacts are being traced as we speak.

43 samples have tested positive out of the 3,003 samples tested for COVID-19 with 2,694 samples having returned negative results.

A total of 8,74,708 international passengers from 8,255 flights have been screened at airports till now with 1,921 passengers identified as symptomatic. 177 of them have been hospitalized. 33,599 passengers are under observation. 21,867 passengers have completed their observation period.

The people are further appealed that they should reveal clearly about their travel history and fill the details in self-declaration forms properly.

Spl. Secretary (Health) also clarified that the patient from Murshidabad, West Bengal was tested negative for COVID-19 and hence, so far no death has been reported due to COVID-19 in the country.

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare, Dr Harsh Vardhan is continuously monitoring and reviewing the status, actions taken and future preparedness of States. Also, Secretary (HFW) is reviewing the situation with States/UTs on a regular basis.

The Health Ministry appeals to the people to kindly observe the Do's and Don'ts, coughing etiquettes, hand-washing and avoid large gatherings

PIB 09/03/2020

CISF took over the security of Jammu Airport. The unit will be headed by a Sr. Commandant rank officer. Earlier, the security of Srinagar Airport was handed over to the CISF on 26th of last month.

Shri V. S. Mann, Inspector General, CISF Airport Sector, was the chief guest on the occasion. The ceremony was attended by other senior officials of CISF, Airports Authority of India, CRPF and representatives of Airlines operators (Air India, Air Asia, Indigo, Spice jet, Go Air etc.) and other stakeholders.

During the ceremony, Dr P. R. Beuria, Airport Director, Jammu, handed over a key replica to Shri Gurjit Singh, Commandant/CASO Jammu airport, as a symbolic handing over of security to CISF. In his address, Shri V. S. Mann, IG, CISF emphasized on coordinated efforts by all agencies and stakeholders to ensure security of the airport.

After the function, Shri V. S. Mann along with Commandant/CASO, Jammu airport and Airport Director, Jammu airport visited all the area of airport including terminal building & airside, and reviewed the security arrangement of airport. Shri V. S. Mann, Inspector General, CISF Airport Sector also addressed the CISF personnel.

With this induction, total airports under CISF security cover raised to 63 as on date.

PIB 06/03/2020

Prolonged duration of the coronavirus outbreak could result in a revenue loss of USD 3 billion for airports in the Asia Pacific region, a global airports' grouping said on Monday.

Airports Council International (ACI) Asia Pacific also urged regulators and governments to implement well-defined adjustments and relief measures tailored to suit local-level contexts.

Asia-Pacific is suffering the highest impact, with passenger traffic volumes down by 24 per cent for the first quarter of the current year, compared to projected traffic levels without COVID-19, as per ACI World estimates.

Citing the ACI World Airport Traffic Forecasts for 2019–2040 predicted that USD 12.4 billion revenue for the first quarter in the Asia-Pacific region in the "business as usual" scenario, the ACI-APAC said in a release.

"The impact of COVID-19 is projected to have a revenue loss of USD 3 billion," it said.

Within the Asia-Pacific region, mainland China, Hong Kong SAR and the Republic of Korea remain at the centre of the effects with sizeable losses in traffic volumes, it added.

Meanwhile, there is a sharp spike in the number of COVID-19 cases in several countries in the Middle East, expecting to significantly impact traffic downwards by a negative 4.2 per cent as travellers and airlines adjust their plans and seat offers in the coming days and weeks, it added.

Against this gloomy background of sharp declines in traffic and passenger throughput, airports' aeronautical revenues and non-aeronautical revenues are rendering similar declines, the ACI-APAC said in the release.

ACI is a grouping of airports. It serves 668 members, operating 1,979 airports in 176 countries.

The Economic Times of India 09/03/2020

L'Union européenne doit instaurer un moratoire sur les règles d'utilisation des créneaux aéroportuaires face au coronavirus pour éviter que les compagnies aériennes soient contraintes de voler à vide, a estimé lundi l'association européenne des gestionnaires de ces créneaux (EUACA).

L'enjeu est de taille : les compagnies aériennes doivent utiliser au moins 80% des créneaux horaires qui leur sont attribués dans les aéroports, faute de quoi elles perdent leurs droits la saison suivante.

Or certaines compagnies qui ne sont "pas certaines de ne pas perdre leurs droits historiques pour la prochaine saison équivalente" pourraient être amenées à "utiliser des avions dont le coefficient de remplissage est extrêmement faible, ce qui n'est pas une bonne solution sur le plan économique ou environnemental", argumente l'EUACA sur son site internet.

L'association rassemble les gestionnaires de créneaux de 230 aéroports européens.

Pour faire face à la demande de réservations sur certaines destinations, les compagnies aériennes peuvent être amenées à "regrouper" des vols, c'est-à-dire à supprimer un vol et déplacer les passagers sur un autre vol vers la même destination. Mais elles restent tenues de respecter cette règle les obligeant à utiliser 80% des créneaux horaires qui leur sont attribuées, sous peine de voir ces créneaux redistribués à d'autres compagnies.

L'EUACA demande donc à la Commission européenne la mise en place d'un moratoire, dans une lettre dévoilée par la Tribune.

Celui-ci devrait être mis en place pour une période comprise "entre mi-février, début mars et jusqu'à la fin juin 2020" avec une possibilité de l'étendre au-delà si l'épidémie se poursuit, explique l'EUACA sur son site.

L'UE avait déjà eu recours à de telles dérogations lors de l'épidémie de Sras en 2003 et après le 11-Septembre.

Cet appel de l'EUACA intervient après celui de l'Association internationale du transport aérien (IATA). L'association, qui regroupe 290 compagnies aériennes dans le monde, a demandé le 2 mars que "les règles d'utilisation des créneaux soient immédiatement suspendues pour toute la saison 2020 en raison de l'impact du Covid-19".

Cette suspension "signifiera que les compagnies pourront répondre aux conditions du marché avec des niveaux de capacités appropriées, évitant d'avoir à faire voler des avions à vide pour garder leurs créneaux", arguait l'Iata dans un communiqué.

Dans un courrier adressé jeudi au gestionnaire britannique des créneaux ACL, le secrétaire d'État britannique aux Transports Grant Shapps a lui aussi présenté une demande semblable.

[Journal de l'Aviation 09/03/2020](#)

La propagation du Covid-19 et les annulations de vols en cascade, d'abord vers l'Asie et maintenant vers l'Italie, font trembler le secteur du transport aérien qui craint des défaillances et appelle les gouvernements à l'aide.

"Le secteur du transport aérien est en crise, l'emballement, la psychose qui entourent cette épidémie provoquent déjà des effets désastreux. En clair le transport aérien dévise", s'est alarmé mardi le président de l'Union des aéroports français (UAF), Thomas Juin.

Après l'Asie, c'est l'Italie, où les déplacements dans tout le pays ont été limités depuis lundi, qui est touchée de plein fouet par le coronavirus.

L'épidémie qui a démarré en Chine fin janvier provoque la crise la plus grave pour le secteur du transport aérien depuis les attentats du 11-Septembre et la crise financière de 2008-2009. Cette dernière avait fait plonger le secteur dans le rouge avant un retour à la croissance en 2010.

Depuis plus d'un mois, les compagnies aériennes et les aéroports doivent encaisser à la fois les mesures de confinement -- comme en Chine ou en Italie --, la prudence de vacanciers qui reportent leur voyage et les annulations en cascade de salons et de déplacements professionnels.

Certaines comme Lufthansa ont dû clouer une partie de leurs avions au sol, d'autres, comme Air France, font de la maintenance anticipée de leurs appareils ou redéploient les capacités sur les zones les moins affectées.

Après l'annonce du confinement de l'Italie, Air France a annoncé mardi avoir réduit sa desserte de ce pays de 50% contre 30% auparavant et Ryanair a suspendu tous ses vols vers la Péninsule, tout comme la compagnie hongroise à bas coûts Wizz Air.

Et l'Espagne a été mardi le premier pays à annoncer la suspension de toutes les liaisons aériennes avec l'Italie jusqu'au 25 mars.

L'inquiétude est générale dans le secteur, d'autant que la saison d'été, habituellement faste pour le transport aérien, commencera début avril, déjà lestée par d'importantes pertes de trafic vers l'Asie, surtout la Chine, et maintenant l'Italie.

- Choc sans précédent -

En Europe, la baisse de la fréquentation des aéroports a été de 13,5% sur les trois premiers mois de l'année, selon ACI Europe, qui regroupe 500 aéroports dans 46 pays.

En France la baisse a été de l'ordre de 20% depuis début mars, selon l'UAF.

Selon M. Juin, les pertes déjà accumulées ne pourront pas être rattrapées. Et la situation ne fait qu'empirer.

Ainsi en mars, Air France prévoit l'annulation de 3.600 vols, soit une réduction par rapport au plan initial de 13% des capacités sur le réseau long courrier, 25% sur le réseau européen et 17% sur le réseau intérieur. KLM prévoit une réduction comparable sur le réseau long-courrier.

La compagnie aérienne à-bas coûts Norwegian Air Shuttle a annulé environ 3.000 vols de la mi-mars à la mi-juin.

Et outre-Atlantique, American Airlines et Delta vont supprimer des vols supplémentaires pour faire face à l'épidémie. Southwest, une des principales compagnies américaines, va réduire de 20% à 25% ses vols à l'international et de 10% à 15% les capacités aux Etats-Unis et au Canada.

Face à ce "choc sans précédent" pour l'industrie du transport aérien, l'ACI a demandé au gouvernement italien la mise en oeuvre rapide de mesures de soutien d'urgence, tandis qu'en France, le secteur espère, selon M. Juin, "un report de charges sociales et de fiscalité voire une exonération de la taxation qui s'applique depuis le 1er janvier sur le transport aérien français".

"Il y a une inquiétude sur la défaillance éventuelle de certaines compagnies aériennes si la situation devait durer", a expliqué M. Juin rappelant la faillite il y a dix jours de la compagnie britannique Flybe, déjà fragile et terrassée par l'effet du coronavirus.

Il a également évoqué "des aéroports régionaux en Angleterre qui sont en danger".

De nombreuses compagnies aériennes ont par ailleurs réclamé auprès de la Commission européenne un "moratoire" pour déroger à une règle exigeant des transporteurs l'utilisation de 80% des créneaux aériens qui leur sont attribués pour les conserver la saison suivante et ainsi éviter d'avoir à assurer des "vols fantômes", sans passagers, pour ne pas les perdre. La Commission a indiqué mardi qu'elle allait "présenter très rapidement" une législation en ce sens.

Journal de l'Aviation 10/03/2020

MUMBAI: Budget carrier IndiGo on Saturday said it will not charge any fee for rescheduling of domestic and international flights booked for March 12-31, amid coronavirus scare.

There would also be zero change fee for fresh bookings made between March 12 and 31, the airline said in a release.

The fee waiver would only apply to change of dates of flights but not in case of cancellation.

The waiver would be applicable for both domestic and international flights.

"We understand that some passengers are concerned about committing to travel, given the current coronavirus issue.

"To take this anxiety away and make their travel hassle-free, we are waiving our normal change fee on all travel during the next two weeks and for all new bookings made in that period," IndiGo Chief Commercial Officer William Boulter said.

He also said that whilst the coronavirus is a very serious challenge for us all, "we believe that measures such as this would help alleviate its effect on India's travel".

A passenger would have to pay the fare difference in case of rescheduling the journey to a later date. Also, the customer would have to intimate the airline three days in advance for rescheduling of the journey, the release said.

IndiGo, the country's largest domestic carrier, operates more than 1,500 daily flights.

The Economic Times of India 07/03/2020

The end of the road for Jet Airways could be nearer than ever, going by a latest tweet from the CEO of Grant Thornton India, Vishesh Chandiok.

The tweet capped the final tumultuous lap for the airline that had blazed many a trail in one of the world's fastest-growing air travel markets but has been struggling to get back on track for a long time now.

It was the "proverbial chicken or egg that killed the carrier", Chandiok tweeted. He also offered an apology to Jet's employees for whom "Grant Thornton could not do better".

I'm sorry to report but I fear we are very near the end of the road for #JetAirways- the proverbial 'chicken or egg...

Last year, lenders to Jet Airways named Ashish Chhawchharia of Grant Thornton India as the resolution professional (RP) for the airline's bankruptcy proceedings.

The Naresh Goyal-founded carrier had an almost unhindered flight till 2003-2004 until Air Deccan, with its rock-bottom fares, came to the scene. As Jet kept shifting between low-cost and full-service models, it underestimated competition from budget carriers, which eventually contributed to its fall.

The airline suspended operations on 17 April, 2019, and the focus shifted on the bank-led process of Expression of Interest (Eoi) and subsequent change of ownership along with equity infusion.

Many argue that Jet's financial problems started with Goyal buying out rival Air Sahara in 2007 for Rs 1,450 crore. This was a deal that gave Jet endless problems – financial, legal and human resource-related.

Goyal bought Sahara to take on Kingfisher Airlines and low-fare carriers Air Deccan, IndiGo and SpiceJet. But the deal reduced Jet's ability to spend extra money to take on the competition effectively. Jet wasted IPO funds that remained after placing plane orders.

Over the years, it has depended more and more on external positive factors such as fares going up and fuel prices coming down, another industry executive pointed out.

Another mistake was made when Goyal decided to buy a mixed fleet of 10 wide-bodied Airbus A330 and Boeing 777 planes. Mixing in such a small fleet was impractical as it increased cost of resources. Also, Goyal decided to configure them "like palaces", building in only 308 seats, much lower than the global standard of about 400.

Since 2008, Jet had to lease out up to 70% of its wide-bodies to the likes of Turkish Airlines, Oman Air, Thai Airways, Gulf Air and Etihad.

[The Economic Times of India 09/03/2020](#)

Air India Express on Monday said passengers can reschedule their tickets free of cost for all bookings made between March 12th-31st, in the wake of coronavirus outbreak.

The airline, the budget arm of national carrier Air India, flies to 13 international destinations, mostly in the Gulf region.

"In view of the uncertain travel situation due to COVID-19, free date change will be permitted up to three days prior to the flight departure, for all new bookings effected between March 12, 2020 to March 31, 2020, for travel up to April 30, 2020," the airline said in a statement.

Cancellations charge would be applicable.

Many countries have imposed travel restrictions, amid the outbreak of coronavirus, which has claimed thousands of lives.

The carrier operates over 660 flights every week to 12 destinations in Gulf countries, including Dubai and Bahrain, besides Singapore. It also has around eight domestic connections per week.

Following the coronavirus outbreak, the airline has reduced the number of its flights to Singapore and has suspended services to Kuwait, an airline official said.

The official also said flights to Doha are likely to be cancelled as the Gulf nation has banned entry of people from India and 13 other countries due to coronavirus scare.

Among other countries, Saudi Arabia has also put in place travel restrictions. Passengers holding Umrah visa and tourist visa have been barred from travelling to Saudi Arabia.

On Sunday, GoAir said it would not charge any fee on cancellation or rescheduling of tickets booked till April 30. This would be applicable for all bookings made between March 8 and April 30 and for the travel period between March 8 and September 30.

The zero cancellation and rebooking fee offer can be availed if done up to 14 days before departure, GoAir had said.

On Saturday, IndiGo announced waiving of rescheduling charges on tickets booked between March 12 and March 31 for its domestic and international flights

[The Economic Times of India 09/03/2020](#)

MUMBAI: Four AAI-run airports have been adjudged among the best aerodromes in the world, winning 10 awards in four different categories at the 2019 ASQ awards. ASQ is a globally established programme that measures passengers' satisfaction while travelling through an airport. Airports Council International (ACI), which is an independent agency of airport operators, carries out international benchmarking of aerodromes.

"Four AAI airports -- **Chandigarh, Mangaluru, Trivandrum and Lucknow** -- have been adjudged the best in the world in recently announced 2019 ASQ awards. These airports won 10 awards in four categories," Airports Authority of India (AAI) said in a release on Monday.

The survey measures passengers' satisfaction across 34 key performance indicators that includes eight major categories such as access, check-in, security, airport facilities, food and beverage, retail, airport environment and arrival services.

The four categories in which these airports bagged the best airport awards were size and region, environment and ambience, customer service and infrastructure and facilitation, as per the AAI.

It was carried out at around 356 airports across North America, Latin America and Caribbean, Europe, Africa, Middle East and Asia.

The survey results are monitored by airports tariff regulator AERA, NITI Aayog and civil aviation ministry, it added.

The Economic Times of India 09/03/2020

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has warned all airlines to ensure that proper declaration forms are provided to passengers entering India or their operations may be cancelled.

Sources in the aviation regulator said that they have been informed that some international airlines are not providing declaration forms to passengers arriving into India.

"Some international airlines are not following our directive and not providing declaration forms to passengers. We will go to the extent of cancelling their operations into India, if proper procedures, mandated by the health ministry, is not followed," said a DGCA official, who did not want to be identified.

The aviation regulator, in an order issued on Tuesday, has asked airlines to provide declaration forms to passengers that was announced last week.

The government last week had announced that all international passengers entering India are provided with declaration forms, where they have to declare the countries that have visited and country they are coming from during their trip.

This norm was mandated after a passenger, who went to Italy but was coming from Vienna, skipped the screening at Delhi airport and infected a large number of Corona Virus.

The Economic Times of India 10/03/2020

MUMBAI: An Air India pilots' grouping has urged civil aviation regulator DGCA to exempt pilots from the mandatory pre and post-flight alcohol tests, amid the coronavirus scare. In a letter to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation chief Arun Kumar, the Indian Pilots Guild (IPG) said the virus is "highly dangerous" for the airline's crew involved in international flight operations as it poses an "elevated risk" of exposure to the cockpit crew.

IPG, which has around 600 members, represents pilots of Air India's wide-body planes.

"The present outbreak of coronavirus is highly dangerous for our crew given the elevated risk of exposure involved in our global operations.

"While this epidemic lasts, mass use of any equipment without proper sterilisation compounds the possibility of propagation of this deadly virus through any individual during the early incubation stages of the virus," the IPG said in the letter dated March 10.

Under the Aircraft Rules, crew members are not allowed to consume alcohol 12 hours before the commencement of a flight.

All flight crew are subjected to mandatory Breath Analyser (BA) tests prior to operating a flight as well as post the flight in case pre-flight test is not possible, according to the rules.

"In fact, recently, due cognizance was taken of this risk by your good office and communicated to all operators on February 7, 2020, under which crew operating out of Kerala were exempted from

Breath Analysers," the letter said.

The IPG has requested that similar directions may kindly be issued to stop the BA test till the situation comes back to normal.

"This will be both in the interest of the airline crew as well as the general public," it added. IAS RAM ANU ANU

The Economic Times of India 11/03/2020

As more and more cases of the novel coronavirus get reported in India, the number of ticket cancellations are going up leading to a drop in fares even on routes that generally see high traffic.

According to a report in Times of India, last minute fares on Mumbai-Delhi for a return flight have dropped to as low as Rs 5,000 for a flight scheduled to depart in next 24 hours.

"Mumbai-Delhi flights are always in high demand and even off-season, last minute fares don't drop so low," the report quoted a travel agent as saying.

Ticket prices have dropped primarily on account of lesser people travelling even as experts advise to avoid non-essential travel.

Travel agents have said that people are increasingly opting for cancellations on account of the coronavirus outbreak.

The report states that fares from Mumbai to Kochi dropped to Rs 5,000 for a return booking. The same fare earlier used to be somewhere around Rs 6,000-7,000 for a one way booking, the report quoted an agent as saying.

Similarly, return fares from Delhi to Bengaluru have dropped to Rs 6,700 and to Hyderabad to Rs 5,800.

The biggest impact of the COVID-19 outbreak has been on the tourism industry as people prefer to avoid crowded places for the fear of coming in contact with someone who is infected.

The Economic Times of India 11/03/2020

58 Indians were evacuated from Iran on Tuesday amid coronavirus threat. The evacuated Indians were taken for medical tests after they landed at Hindon airbase in Ghaziabad on Tuesday. The Indian Air Force's C-17 Globemaster was used for evacuation. The flight took off earlier for Tehran. Iran is one of the worst-hit countries by coronavirus and reported 54 new deaths in past 24 hours on Tuesday. Over 290 people have died in Iran so far with over 8,000 positive cases.

The Hindustan Times of India 10/03/2020

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/bureau-of-immigrations-issues-advisory-to-international-passengers-on-travel-visa-restrictions/article31038507.ece?homepage=true>

Amid rising cases of novel coronavirus in the country, the Indian Medical Association (IMA) has said sharing data of infected people on a daily basis with the public has created panic across the country. It also appealed to the government to "classify the data" of the pandemic and take appropriate

action with "clinical precision".

"Doctors and hospitals remain a silver lining in otherwise clueless situation for the common man," the doctors' body said while appealing to every doctor to function as a source of credible information in their locality and instil confidence and trust in the public.

"It cannot be denied that the high handed top down response in China is part of the reason for this global panic. The nuanced and balanced approach of the Indian government is certainly better suited to handle the crisis in a country of 1.3 billion people," the IMA said.

The association said public health systems in various states have withstood the pressure caused by the spread of the contagious viral disease and have to remain alert, and that contact tracing is the key public health function that will make a difference in controlling the situation.

Listing out some measures like washing hands with soap and water as often as deemed necessary, not posting online unconfirmed negative messages and pseudoscientific dogmas, and self isolation if having symptoms such as fever and cough, the IMA said it works in consonance with the health authorities in all states.

The IMA has updated the doctors in all its branches across the country and is in advanced state of preparations for a 24X7 helpline for the public in Hindi and English. The details will be in public domain shortly, it said.

The IMA also urged the government to utilise the COVID-19 outbreak to track cases of tuberculosis and also to include hand hygiene in the Swachh Bharat programme.

The number of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus in the country has risen to 60, with two fresh positive cases -- one each from Delhi and Rajasthan -- being reported, the health ministry said on Wednesday.

The ministry said these include five positive cases reported in Delhi and nine people diagnosed with the infection in Uttar Pradesh till Wednesday morning. The total number of 60 confirmed cases includes 16 Italians, the ministry said.

Karnataka and Maharashtra have reported four and two confirmed cases of COVID-19 respectively. Ladakh has recorded two positive cases.

Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab have reported one case each, the ministry said.

Kerala has till now reported nine cases which includes the three patients who were discharged last month following recovery.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

High level Group of Ministers reviews current status, and actions for prevention and management of COVID-19

Revised Travel Advisory issued

The sixth meeting of the GoM was held at Nirman Bhawan today under the chairpersonship of Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Health & Family Welfare. Sh. Hardeep S. Puri, Minister of Civil Aviation, Dr. S. Jaishankar, Minister of External Affairs, Sh. Nityananda Rai, Minister of State for Home, Shri Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State (I/c), Ministry of Shipping, Chemicals and Fertilisers and Sh. Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Minister of State, Health & Family Welfare were present.

The recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries chaired by Cabinet Secretary were placed before GoM. After detailed deliberations on preventive measures, actions taken and preparedness for Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), the Group of Ministers took the following decisions:

- **All existing visas, except diplomatic, official, UN/International Organizations, employment, project visas, stand suspended till 15th April 2020. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.**
- **Visa free travel facility granted to OCI card holders is kept in abeyance till April 15th 2020.** This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- Any foreign national who intends to travel to India for compelling reason may contact the nearest Indian Mission.
- **All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after 15th February, 2020 shall be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.**
- Incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, are advised to avoid non-essential travel and are informed that they can be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days on their arrival in India.
- Indian nationals are strongly advised to avoid all non-essential travel abroad. On their return, they can be subjected to quarantine for a minimum of 14 days.
- International traffic through land borders will be restricted to Designated check posts with robust screening facilities. These will be notified separately by M/o Home Affairs.
- Provision for testing primarily for students/compassionate cases in Italy to be made and collection for samples to be organized accordingly. Those tested negative will be allowed to travel and will be quarantined on arrival in India for 14 days.

PIB 12/03/2020

<https://www.routesonline.com/news/tagged/8446/covid19-1h20-flight-changes/>

The Calcutta airport has segregated immigration counters and baggage belts for passengers arriving from coronavirus-affected countries.

Officials said the process of identifying passengers from such countries is taking time because Calcutta, unlike other metro cities, does not have direct air link with Europe and the US.

“Since last Sunday, we have designated four immigration counters only for passengers arriving from coronavirus-affected countries. Two of the six baggage carousals in the arrival area of the international section have been designated for those passengers,” airport director Kaushik Bhattacharya said on Tuesday.

“The passengers arriving from these countries are directed to these counters after health screening. Over the past couple of days, 1,000-1,200 passengers have been arriving from these countries. **If any such passenger is found suffering from symptoms related to the coronavirus infection, he or she is being sent to the government-run hospital for infectious diseases in Belegkata.**”

The passengers who are not showing such symptoms are being asked to keep themselves quarantined at home for 14 days.

The Calcutta Municipal Corporation is monitoring the health of those passengers who are staying in the city.

A civil aviation ministry guideline had asked the airport authorities to set up separate immigration counters and baggage belts for passengers arriving from the affected countries.

Officials said the directorate general of civil aviation had added the US, Spain and France to the list of the affected countries. The others on the list include China, South Korea, Italy and Iran.

Airport sources said the advisory to have separate immigration and baggage collection facilities for passengers from affected countries was sent last week.

“Initially, there were some doubts about how to set up the facilities because passengers from the US and Europe come via other countries,” an official at the Calcutta airport said.

All passengers from abroad are being made to fill in a form where they have to state their itinerary in detail. “We are identifying passengers from coronavirus-affected countries from these forms,” an official at the airport said.

Calcutta lost its direct air link with Europe a few years back when British Airways and Lufthansa withdrew operations from the city because of low passenger count.

Qatar clarification

Officials said on Tuesday they were getting calls from passengers who wanted to know whether they would be able to fly Qatar Airways following the country’s ban on entry of passengers from India and other coronavirus-affected countries. A Qatar Airways spokesperson said such passengers would not be allowed to enter Doha but there was no ban on transit passengers.

[The Telegraph 12/03/2020](#)

Airline travel bookings have reduced in India over fears around coronavirus, with 43 confirmed cases being reported in India as of 1 pm on Monday.

Prices of flight tickets are reducing, and in some cases, are even cheaper than AC train tickets or private bus tickets.

Sabina Chopra, co-founder & COO of Yatra.com, told Quartz that Indians are wary of making fresh bookings. “Indians are wary of making fresh bookings to (coronavirus) affected locations and airfares

to these destinations have dropped 20-30%," she said.

Prices have been on the lower end even for short-term bookings. TNM looked at comparative prices on Google flights for some of India's busiest domestic routes.

The cheapest Chennai-Bengaluru flights for March 10 were priced at Rs 1,091, with average prices between Rs 1,050 and Rs 1,750.

Prices on Hyderabad-Bengaluru flights continue to fluctuate, with prices dropping to as low as Rs 1,151 at a time when average ticket prices are Rs Rs 1,450 - Rs 2,050. For March 10, the lowest-priced flight is Rs 2,545, with average prices between Rs 2,500 and Rs 4,150.

Prices on India's busiest corridor and the world's third busiest domestic route – Delhi-Mumbai – have also reduced to the lower end.

Bengaluru-Delhi, the world's 19th busiest domestic route for March 10 was also on the lower end with the cheapest flight being Rs 3,179. Tickets usually cost between Rs 2,950 - Rs 4,850, but prices reduced in the last week.

GoAir has waived off rescheduling and cancellation charges on all bookings — domestic and international — on all bookings made between March 8 and April 30, and for the travel period between March 8 and September 30. However, a 14-day notice needs to be given to avail both. In case of rescheduling, customers will have to pay the fare difference.

IndiGo has announced waiver of rescheduling charges on tickets booked between March 12, 2020, and March 31, 2020, for its domestic and international flights on similar concerns. IndiGo, however, did not give its customer the option of cancellation. Bookings can be rescheduled with three days' notice, and payment of the fare difference.

Air India, too, has waived cancellation fees.

Spicejet on Monday announced that it would not be charging any fees for those who wish to reschedule their flights. This applies on existing bookings for travel between March 12 to March 31 and new bookings for travel between March, 12th to March 31st. The difference in fare will have to be paid.

Air Asia India has announced that from March 8 to March 31, flights on the domestic network can be rescheduled for free. However, it is important to note that the fee waiver only applies the first time one opts to reschedule. One has to reschedule three days prior to the journey.

09/03/20 News Minute

Delhi/Mumbai: Fresh bookings and occupancy in domestic flights have dropped by almost 15 per cent in the last few days as customers defer or cancel trips over fears of coronavirus.

With domestic travel, generating bulk of the revenue for carriers slowing down, the slump in crude oil price will provide limited relief for airlines.

International air travel to and from India has already been hit due to travel ban and warning issued by many countries, including those from West Asia. According to analysts at JM Financial Institutional Securities, the international air route mix is 19 and 25 per cent for IndiGo and SpiceJet respectively.

Executives of Indian airlines said that the drop is primarily for flights to major metro cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, which are the prime revenue generators on the domestic front. "Domestic travel was the only thing that had somewhat insulated Indian airlines from the impact of corona. But now it is being impacted and that is visible from the fares," said an airline executive.

A cursory glimpse of fares on the Chennai-Bengaluru route shows that tickets for the same day were being sold for Rs 1,100 lower or equal to fare of a Volvo bus.

"Airfares are falling in line with oil prices which continues to drop. Airlines are also refraining from increasing prices at the moment as they expect weakening of demand on the domestic side. Few domestic carriers are also waiving change and cancellation fees for immediate travel due to virus outbreak. While overall last minute fares on popular domestic routes have decreased 20-25 per cent, variable spot fares of certain routes have seen an increase due to holiday travel on occasion of Holi," said Alope Bajpai, co-founder of ixigo.

09/03/20 Aneesh Phadnis & Arindam Majumder/Business Standard

India's biggest airline IndiGo expects its Jan-March earnings to be materially impacted due to a sharp decline in daily bookings because of the outbreak of coronavirus, the company said in a statement on Wednesday.

The company said in the months of January and February the impact due to the coronavirus outbreak was modest, but in recent days it has seen daily bookings come down by 15%-20% on a week-on-week basis.

"We expect our quarterly earnings to be materially impacted," the statement said.

Indigo, owned by Interglobe Aviation Ltd, cancelled its flights to China and Hong Kong, and also reduced the frequency to some South East Asian countries, it said.

The coronavirus is hurting passenger airlines that are staring at a revenue loss of over \$100 billion this year, an industry body has warned.

IndiGo has a fleet of over 250 aircraft and international flights make up about 25% of its total capacity and revenue, the airline's CEO Ronojoy Dutta said in an analyst call in January.

It also warned a sharp fall seen in the Indian rupee will have an adverse impact on its dollar-denominated liabilities.

Live Mint Aviation 11/03/2020

NEW DELHI : Airlines in India's chaotic airports are failing to meet the aviation regulator's guidelines to prevent the spread of Covid-19, especially on domestic routes and probably fearing flight delays, industry experts said.

That is a far cry from rigorous measures being followed by many of their global rivals, who have implemented additional measures beyond what regulators have prescribed.

US-based airlines like Delta and United Airlines have doubled down on efforts to contain Covid-19. These include regular cleaning programmes after almost every flight in addition to a 60-90-minute fogging process to disinfect the interiors.

Fogging takes place after an initial cleaning with tray tables lowered, and overhead bins and lavatory doors opened after every flight. Seatback entertainment touch-screens are given an extra cleanse with disinfectant wipes.

Internationally, airport kiosks are being disinfected multiple times daily, while passengers are being advised to check-in from their devices. In addition, ticket counters and airport lobby areas are being cleaned regularly.

Singapore Airlines, Cathay Pacific and Emirates have begun enhanced cleaning processes with strong disinfectants for all their flights.

Indian airlines often use the same aircraft for domestic as well as international operations. With as little as 20-30-minute turnaround time between flights, there's often hardly any time left for the airlines to thoroughly disinfect a plane between flights.

"From my own experience over the last week flying around four Indian airports, no domestic airline was seen maintaining any sort of precaution to ensure their employees and cleaner crew were safe, apart from putting on a mask, and not a full personal protection suit," the founder and editor of travel website Livefromalounge.com Ajay Awtaney said in a post on his website.

"Unfortunately, if things blow up, we will find our airlines' response lacking," he added.

Airline crew in India do not always wear hand gloves, or face masks at all times inside the planes, said Mark Martin, chief executive and founder of aviation consultancy Martin Consulting LLC.

"We should give more stress on safety measures on domestic flights and not confine this practice to international flights, as India is a high-risk environment for the virus to spread due to its sheer population," he said, adding that all aircraft need to be cleaned thoroughly and disinfected after each domestic flight.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) last week directed airlines to equip ground handling staff, airline crew and other staff with disposable protective gear besides providing passengers too with such equipment.

IndiGo, Air India and GoAir didn't respond to queries by Mint.

"AirAsia continues to actively monitor the outbreak and incidents of coronavirus, adhering strictly and going beyond the guidelines laid out by global health organizations to ensure the safety and comfort of our guests," an airline spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for Vistara, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, said that it is following the DGCA guidelines on all routes.

Vistara has also set up a specialized task force to put in place various preventive, containment and de-contamination measures, the spokesperson added.

A SpiceJet spokesperson said that it is following the DGCA guidelines, while also putting in place a special advisory to all ground personnel.

"All international flights are treated with disinfectants post disembarkation of passengers. During night halt of aircraft, extensive deep cleaning of all flights is done," the spokesperson added.

The lax attitude provoked the DGCA to recently warn airlines over failing to carry enough self-declaration forms to distribute to international passengers before landing, leading to huge queues at arrival counters.

[Live Mint Aviation 11/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI : Airline stocks faced heavy headwinds on Thursday as concerns over enhanced travel restrictions amid spreading of coronavirus infections rattled investor sentiment. Shares of IndiGo, SpiceJet and the defunct Jet Airways were deep in the red in the morning trade, with SpiceJet slumping over 18%.

The broader market crashed as the benchmark 30-share Sensex plunged over 2,000 points. InterGlobe Aviation, the parent of the country's largest airline IndiGo, tumbled 10% to ₹1,039.35 apiece, a day after it said that quarterly earnings would be hit due to fall in daily bookings amid the coronavirus outbreak.

SpiceJet dropped over 18% to ₹49.40 while Jet Airways fell nearly 5% to ₹18.95.

Uncertainty over the outcome of the ongoing insolvency process and reports of bidders not being interested in Jet Airways added to the negative sentiments.

Equities and crude oil prices plummeted again on Thursday after US President Donald Trump banned all travel from Europe to the US for a month to fight the coronavirus, ramping up fears of a global economic recession.

The news came after the World Health Organization officially labelled the outbreak a pandemic and hit out at "alarming levels of inaction" for its spread.

[Live Mint Aviation 11/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: Domestic and international airline operations are expected to be seriously dented by the travel restrictions imposed by the government late on Wednesday. Airline sources, both domestic and international, said keeping operations afloat only with Indians flying back to India may not be sustainable.

Airline sources ET spoke with said capacity would be reduced. "While it's too early to assess damage, airlines will have to cancel flights. International ones will have to cancel too," said an executive who did not want to be identified.

Another executive said Air India is likely to be worst hit among Indian carriers. Foreign carriers see a large impact too. Air India has cancelled flights to Italy and South Korea till March.

The Economic Times of India 12/03/2020

After suspending all visas till April 15 following WHO's classification of the coronavirus outbreak as a pandemic, India's Civil Aviation Ministry asked airlines to waive off rescheduling charges, and all airlines have agreed.

Now all domestic airlines, including government-owned Air India, have announced a waiver on re-booking charges in case a flyer does not want to travel on the designated date.

Wadia group-owned private carrier GoAir, which was earlier offering free cancellation, has said it will now allow people to only reschedule their flights for no charge.

Yesterday, GoAir had announced that all bookings made between March 8 and April 30 and for the travel period between March 8 and September 30, can be cancelled if the passengers do not want to travel.

However, as per the latest announcements, GoAir is offering free rescheduling for bookings made between March 12 to 14, for travel between April, 15 to June 30, 2020. The new and existing flight bookings in March can be rescheduled 3 days prior to the travel date. For new bookings beyond March, flights can be rescheduled 14 days prior to the date of travel. GoAir also said that fare differential will be applicable on rescheduled tickets.

Prior to GoAir's announcement, IndiGo offered to waive off rescheduling charges on tickets booked between March 12 and March 31 for its domestic and international flights.

It, however, did not give the customer the option of cancellation. On March 9, Air India, Air India Express, SpiceJet and AirAsia India too said that they will not charge any fee for rebooking of their flights amid coronavirus concerns.

Air India and its international budget arm Air India Express said passengers can reschedule their tickets free of cost for new bookings made during a certain period of time.

One free change of travel date would be permitted for new bookings made till March 31, Air India tweeted on Monday.

"In view of coronavirus situation and travel advisory issued, one free change permitted for pax to postpone any international or domestic bookings on AI network to all existing bookings with travel date till 30th April 20," the national carrier said in the tweet stating the condition that the tickets must be re-issued on or before May 31.

In the case of re-routing, the applicable difference of fare would be charged, it added.

Air India Express, which flies to 13 international destinations with most of them in the Gulf, said free date change would be available to fresh bookings made between March, 12-31.

"In view of the uncertain travel situation due to COVID-19, free date change will be permitted up to

three days prior to the flight departure, for all new bookings effected between March 12 to March 31, for travel up to April 30, " Air India Express said in a statement. Cancellation charges would be levied by both the airlines if a customer decides to cancel the ticket.

Another budget carrier SpiceJet has also decided not to charge change fee on the tickets booked for travel between March, 12-31.

It would also be applicable on new bookings for travel between the same period, according to a tweet from the airline, adding a passenger re-booking the flight will have to pay the fare difference.

Bengaluru-headquartered no-frills carrier AirAsia India has extended free rescheduling of tickets for all travel till March 31 on existing and new bookings. The travel can be rescheduled to any date, as per a tweet by the airline.

Tata-SIA joint venture airline Vistara has also waived cancellation and rescheduling charges for bookings made on or before March 1.

[The Economic Times of India 12/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: As airlines prepare themselves to deal with falling passenger numbers due to coronavirus threat, SpiceJet today has informed passengers that it is safe to fly as SpiceJet is taking all precautions to ensure that flying is safe.

The airline has informed passengers that it is safe to fly as India is least affected by the coronavirus with 52 reported cases despite such a large population and zero deaths.

The airline has also said that its ground staff as well as cabin crew members are taking all precautions like regularly use hand sanitisers and masks to protect themselves from coronavirus.

SpiceJet today said that they have issued a special advisory on the issue. "All staff at check-in counters, handling of boarding cards and having direct contact with passengers have been advised on regular use of sanitizers. All staff entering the Aircraft are provided with PPE (masks and gloves) to ensure their own personal protective measure against COVID 19," said a statement from the airline.

The airline, as per the standard operating procedure, has said that all international flights are treated with disinfectants post disembarkation of passengers and extensive cleaning of all aircraft is done during the night halt.

[The Economic Times of India 11/03/2020](#)

Coronavirus update Nepal 12/03/2020:

1/ Govt's preparedness: As the coronavirus takes the form a global pandemic, the ruling and opposition leaders at the all – party meeting held by the Deputy PM and Defense Minister I. Pokharel called on the govt to "**act on a war footing**". Pokharel heads the high level committee on the coordination and control of covid-19. **As of the now, the govt's main focus is on preventing the disease from entering the country with the other three being: raising awareness, strengthening quarantine facilities and boosting treatment facilities for those infected (THT).**

During the meeting, leaders of the major political parties in the parliament called for **mandatory quarantine** of people coming from coronavirus-affected countries.

The same paper (THT) also carries another story saying the govt is “still not prepared to fight outbreak”. It points how the govt “doesn’t have a consolidated number of hospital beds for coronavirus, short supply of personal protective equipment, lack of ventilation and intensive care units etc”.

2/ Economy: **Due to the constant depreciation of Nepali currency vis-à-vis USD in recent weeks, it will hit the country’s economy and growth**, says the THT citing experts.

3/ Govt test lab: **REP repot sthat only 500 cases of Covid-19 can be tested at the Govt test lab and that it plans to operate 24-hours call center to respond to public inquiries regarding the COVID-19 coronavirus from Friday.**

Hyderabad: India requires 1,880 new passenger and cargo aircraft over the next 20 years in order to meet the strong demand, Airbus' latest Indian market forecast said on Thursday.

Of the aircraft, up to 20 per cent could be widebodies, a press release by the aircraft maker said.

"About 1,440 aircraft are for growth and 440 to replace aircraft that will be retired," it said.

Taking into account the 440 retirements, India's existing domiciled fleet of 510 aircraft would quadruple to 1,950, the release added.

In the next 20 years (2020 to 2038), air transportation in India was expected to be a key enabler and a beneficiary of the economic growth.

The Economic Times of India 12/03/2020

Hundreds of cancelled flights, decline in daily ticket bookings, fall in footfalls at airport shops and spike in expenses continue to rattle the country's aviation space as airlines, with weakened financials, and airport operators grapple with coronavirus headwinds.

With mounting travel restrictions across the world, including in India, the tailwind of sharp plunge in crude oil prices seems to fade in the background of excess seat and fleet capacity in the airline industry, according to experts.

More than 490 flights operated by foreign carriers to and from India have been cancelled for varying periods of time while the count of weekly flights cancelled by domestic airlines is more than 90, as per official data.

The number of cancelled flights on international routes is expected to rise as India has also suspended all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, till April 15 as part of efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.

Data shared by aviation consultancy CAPA showed that capacity or the number of seats available weekly on various international flight routes connecting India has significantly come down for the week that started on March 9 compared to the situation in December last year.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the number of international passengers arriving at the country's airports has come down to around 62,000 per day from 70,000 in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

According to him, the count might further come down to around 40,000 following the travel advisory issued on Wednesday. There are 30 international airports in the country.

From being "nimble in approach" to adverse impact on quarterly earnings, domestic carriers have already flagged their concerns about coronavirus impact on their businesses.

The Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) has flagged various problems in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak, including that of "less sales at the Food and Beverage, and retail outlets" at aerodromes.

In a letter to the civil aviation ministry on Wednesday, the grouping also said airport operators are now required to significantly beef up manpower deployment as well as make expenditure on items like masks, sanitisers and floor cleaners, in order to ensure compliance with various government advisories.

Further, APAO has sought approval for "levying of a nominal passenger facilitation charge as part of airline fares to cover increased operating expenses being incurred by the operators", as per the letter.

It has also sought provisioning of an "airport operator alleviation package by AERA to facilitate the growing operational expenses". Regulator AERA fixes tariffs for certain categories of airports.

Referring to the government's decision to suspend visas from March 13 till April 15, CAPA said the ban would cripple the aviation industry with very serious impact on airlines with weaker balance sheet.

Overall, it would be a "serious blow" to the aviation industry, CAPA CEO (South Asia) Kapil Kaul told PTI.

Peak travel period, which generally starts from April, would be impacted.

A senior airline industry official said domestic air traffic might start increasing as the people who had planned their vacations abroad could visit domestic destinations.

Full service carrier Vistara, on Thursday, said business on some of its international and domestic routes has been impacted by coronavirus outbreak. "At Vistara, we are reviewing the situation

everyday and remain nimble in our approach," an airline spokesperson said.

On Wednesday, the country's largest airline IndiGo said it was expecting quarterly earnings to be adversely impacted as daily bookings have declined 15-20 per cent in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

The airline has also suspended Staff Leisure Travel (SLT) to certain countries, including China, Singapore and Hong Kong.

SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said the aviation sector is under a lot of pressure but that was "temporary".

"SpiceJet is far better placed than many others to weather this turbulence. I firmly believe that this is an opportunity for SpiceJet, for the government and the aviation ecosystem to create more efficient and viable structures for the growth that lies ahead.

"... the Indian aviation market and especially our domestic market has immense potential and will remain amongst the fastest growing in the world," he said on Thursday.

On the positive, an airline official said excess international capacity can be redeployed on domestic routes and that fall in oil prices, which account for around 40 per cent of operational costs, is a silver lining.

New Delhi/ Mumbai, Mar 12 (PTI)

The health ministry on Thursday asked people not to panic in the wake of increasing number of coronavirus cases in the country saying the focus is on preventive approach and there are adequate facilities available for testing.

It said there is no instance of any community transmission, adding there has been only local transmission.

In the wake of coronavirus being declared a pandemic by the World Health Organisation, ministry officials said coronavirus is difficult to isolate and developing a vaccine will take at least one-and-a-half to two years.

India's efforts to deal with coronavirus are in consonance with WHO and the focus is on preventive approach. Over 1,500 people are under observation for coming in contact with 73 positive cases of coronavirus, ministry officials said at a press conference.

Till now, 10.5 lakh people have been screened at 30 designated airports in India, said officials.

When questioned whether high temperature kills coronavirus, the officials said there is no study or evidence to suggest that.

They also said that the ICMR will start surveillance to examine whether any infected person has been left undetected.

New Delhi, Mar 12 (PTI)

Qui aurait pu imaginer un tel scénario ?

Il y a tout juste un an, lors d'une conférence organisée par les anciens élèves de l'ENAC (Ecole Nationale de l'Aviation Civile), dans l'amphithéâtre de la Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile, lorsque l'on demandait aux acteurs de l'aérien leurs plus grandes craintes pour les années à venir on entendait : "terrorisme", "saturation de l'espace aérien", "cyberattaque"...

Un an plus tard, c'est finalement d'un petit marché vendant des animaux sauvages, quelque part en Chine, d'une simple morsure de chauve-souris peut-être qu'arrive ce qui pourrait bien être la crise la plus grave du transport aérien mondial...

En quelques jours, le coronavirus a balayé Greta au hit parade des pires cauchemars du transport aérien et s'apprête à faire de l'année 2020 l'Annus Horribilis du transport aérien.

Comment tenir ? Comment survivre ? Toutes les compagnies aériennes sont désormais en mode crise pour faire face à l'effondrement de la demande et enclencher les aérofreins, lancées qu'elles étaient, pour la plupart, dans une dynamique de croissance.

En terme aéro, c'est une manœuvre qu'on appelle "l'accélération arrêt" : l'avion se lance dans la course au décollage, un problème survient et on doit stopper en urgence l'avion. C'est le gros coup de chaud !

Pour Air France, le choc est sérieux avec un impact estimé dans un premier temps à 200 millions d'euros d'ici avril.

Le journal La Tribune, toujours bien renseigné quand il s'agit d'Air France, publiait ces derniers jours un courrier d'Anne Rigail, directrice générale d'Air France, à ses salariés évoquant que cet impact sera "plus significatif" et que : "(...) Les incertitudes quant à son évolution et ses conséquences nous conduisent à anticiper tous les scénarios".

L'emploi en CDI qui reprenait un peu de vigueur marque le pas. Les entretiens se poursuivent mais l'embauche devrait être décalée de plusieurs mois.

Le trafic s'effondre, obligeant la compagnie à réduire considérablement son trafic vers l'Asie mais aussi vers l'Europe (-20%) et la décision prise, mardi 10 mars 2020, d'annuler purement et simplement l'ensemble du trafic vers l'Italie et ce jusqu'au 3 avril 2020.

La décision prise par les Etats-Unis de suspendre les vols en provenance de l'Europe est un coup encore plus dur pour la compagnie française qui espérait se redéployer vers le continent américain et enregistrait ces derniers jours une progression du trafic de 13,6%.

Comble de malchance, l'effondrement du prix du baril du pétrole ces jours-ci ne profitera pas à Air France qui, comme toutes les autres compagnies européennes, préfère s'entendre avec les pétroliers

sur un prix pour plus de la moitié de ses besoins annuels, et ce, afin d'avoir de la visibilité sur le coût kérosène, un des postes de dépenses le plus important.

C'est ce qu'on appelle la couverture carburant, un exercice difficile, un pari sur la conjoncture qui peut être risqué en cas d'imprévu.

En 2019, pari gagné pour Air France-KLM avec une couverture positive à 50 millions d'euros, pari perdu pour 2020. Avec un prix du baril négocié à 65 dollars et aujourd'hui à 45 dollars, on atteint un manque à gagner de presque un milliard de dollars...

Les équipes d'Air France s'adaptent et pilotent l'entreprise au jour le jour pour tenter de réduire l'impact de la crise.

La compagnie a de la trésorerie, des lignes de crédit. Les "reins" sont plus solides que lorsqu'elle avait dû aborder le SRAS ou la crise boursière de 2008.

La pépite Transavia souffre également d'un programme largement réduit du fait de l'effondrement du marché italien et de l'annulation des vols vers Israël à partir de ce jour et jusqu'au 2 avril.

Victime collatérale : ASL France, dont le contrat d'affrètement par Transavia portant sur 3 B737 basés à Orly est reporté.

Autre compagnie française en grande difficulté après la décision de Donald Trump : La Compagnie Boutique Airline, volant exclusivement vers New York au départ d'Orly.

French Bee et Air Tahiti Nui, qui font respectivement escale à San Francisco et Los Angeles vers la Polynésie, sont également sévèrement impactées.

Les low cost Ryanair et easyJet sont contraintes elles aussi de faire une croix sur le trafic vers l'Italie.

Partout dans le monde le virus, ou plutôt ses conséquences, vont empoisonner le transport aérien. Les puissants vont trembler, les faibles peuvent mourir.

Alitalia, sous perfusion avec à un prêt de 400 millions, et désormais sans passagers à transporter, semble avoir un pied dans la tombe.

Norwegian, déjà dans le rouge, annonçait le 10 mars 2020 la suppression de 3 000 vols, et Jacob Schramm, le nouveau PDG en place depuis deux mois, de qualifier la situation de "critique".

Dans le Golfe, c'est la compagnie Etihad qui est la plus vulnérable. Avec une perte de 870 millions de dollars en 2019, la compagnie ajoute une cinquième année de pertes consécutives avec un chiffre d'affaire en diminution de 40%. Seule entre les deux mastodontes que sont Qatar et Emirates, la compagnie d'Abou Dhabi pourrait elle aussi connaître de très grosses difficultés.

En Asie, IATA (Association Internationale du Transport Aérien) estimait la perte des compagnies à 28 milliards de dollars. A elles seules, les compagnies chinoises enregistrent une perte de 5,3 milliards pour le mois de février.

Danger aussi pour les opérateurs avec une large clientèle asiatique comme South African ou Kenya Airways.

Aux Etats-Unis, les majors américaines étaient jusqu'ici en pleine forme.

United (première compagnie aérienne mondiale), American Airlines et Delta dégagent des bénéfices records depuis quelques années et sont donc robustes pour affronter le choc, car choc il y aura pour ces transporteurs qui comptaient augmenter leurs capacités vers l'Europe.

Mardi, le journal La Tribune, citant la société Forwardkeys, évoquait une chute des réservations à venir pour les vols long-courrier vers l'Europe de 79%.

Avec la décision d'interdire aux passagers européens leur entrée sur le territoire US, cette chute va dramatiquement s'amplifier. La contraction américaine est déjà là et les premières mesures sont prises : réductions des capacités, gel des embauches, baisse de la rémunération des dirigeants.

A l'annonce, mardi 10 mars 2020, que Washington préparait des mesures de soutien fiscal, le Dow Jones avait repris quelques couleurs.

En Europe aussi, et face à cette situation, les mesures d'économie en interne ne suffiront pas. Opérateurs et aéroports tirent la sonnette d'alarme et se tournent vers leurs autorités pour réclamer de l'aide.

Au sein du groupe Lufthansa, où 150 avions sont déjà immobilisés, la compagnie allemande envisage des mesures de chômage partiel dans le cadre d'un dispositif spécifique "Kurzarbeit", où les pertes de salaires sont compensées par le Gouvernement.

En France, le Secrétaire d'Etat aux transports et le Ministre de l'économie ont réuni l'ensemble des entreprises de transport pour voir quelles mesures de soutien pouvaient être envisagées.

Des voix se font bien sûr déjà entendre pour des décisions rapides.

La demande de Thomas Juin, Président de l'Union des Aéroports Français dans nos colonnes pour une suspension temporaire de la règle obligeant les compagnies aériennes à utiliser leur créneaux horaires sous peine de se les voir supprimer, "use-it-or-lose-it" vient d'être entendue par la Commission européenne.

C'est une bonne chose pour éviter le maintien de certains vols avec à bord 3 ou 4 passagers...

Thomas Juin se fait également le défenseur de ses clients : les compagnies aériennes françaises, en réclamant l'annulation de l'écotaxe, en place depuis le 1er janvier 2020 et qui, pour une compagnie comme Air France, devrait coûter 60 millions d'euros.

En cette mi-mars, la situation semble s'améliorer doucement en Chine. Le journal Air et Cosmos évoque cette semaine des taux d'occupation qui remontent chez les transporteurs avec une offre en

sièges désormais à 50% de la normale.

Chez nous, la crise est encore devant nous. Il faut espérer une courbe "en V" avec une demande encore en dégringolade jusqu'au plus fort de la maladie puis, le plus tôt possible dans la saison été, "Bas les masques", un virus vaincu partout dans le monde et un rebond plein d'envies de re-voyager.

Après cette Annus Horribilis, le transport aérien devrait survivre avec, pour les compagnies survivantes, une tentation, voire une nécessité d'unir ses forces.

Le COVID-19 sera peut-être le déclencheur d'un important mouvement de consolidation dans le transport aérien.

Tourmag 12/03/2020

Welcome to the latest edition of CAPA's new daily Coronavirus and Aviation global update. We offer this new product to our active CAPA Members, as well as visitors to our website to help our industry navigate through this crisis.

Top news headlines:

- US President Donald Trump announced (11-Mar-2020) the US will be "suspending all travel from Europe to the United States for the next 30 days", effective 13-Mar-2020;
- World Health Organization (WHO) formally characterised (11-Mar-2020) the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic;
- French govt rules out Groupe ADP privatisation in current market conditions.

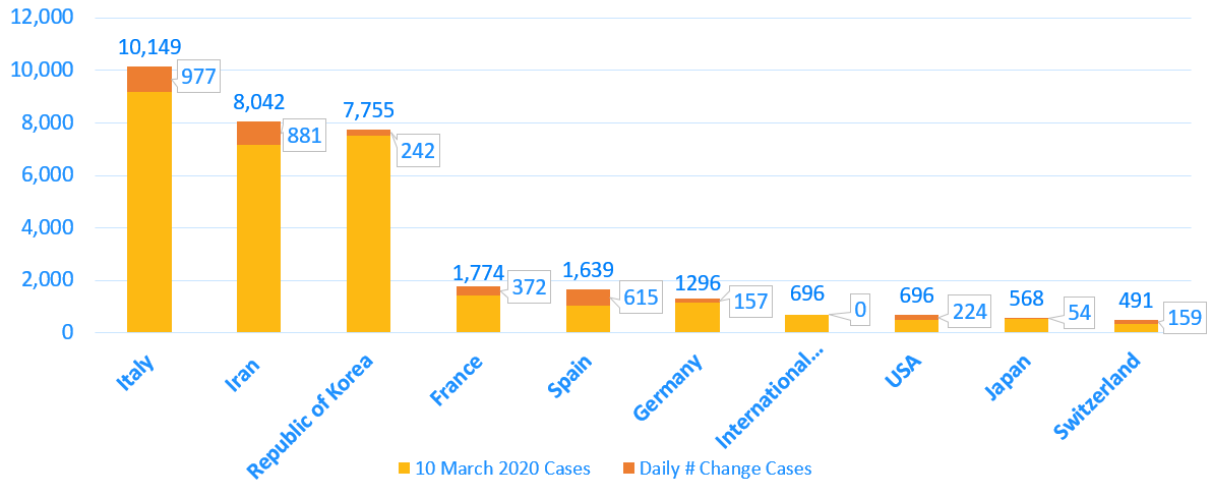
The latest Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Global Situation

Source: WHO, National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China & CAPA. Daily snapshot as at 22:00UTC each day.

114 countries now affected

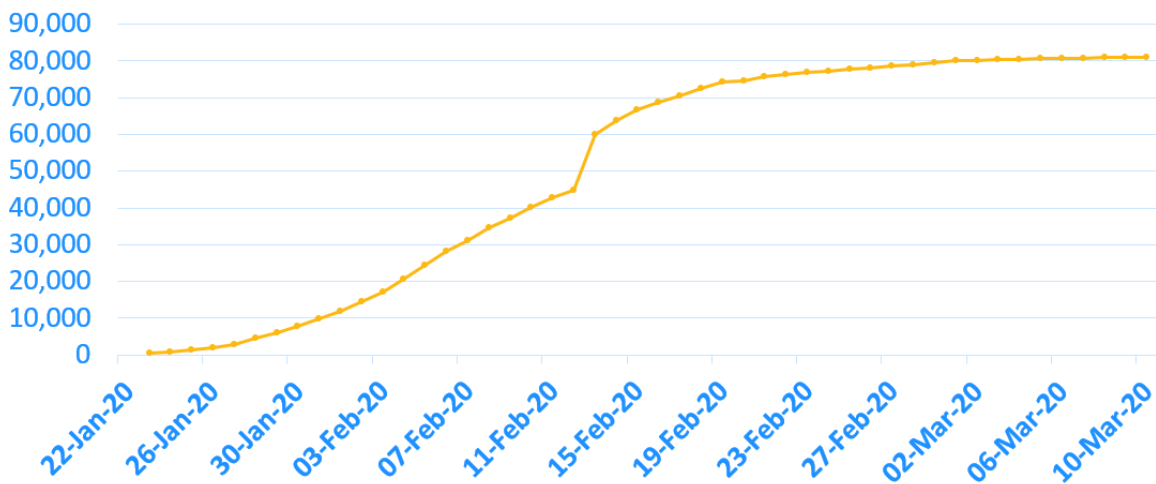
Bolivia, Burkina Faso, Jamaica and the Democratic Republic of the Congo were added to the list of countries reporting COVID-19 cases, taking the total to 114.

Top ten locations for COVID-19 excluding China (11-Mar-2020)



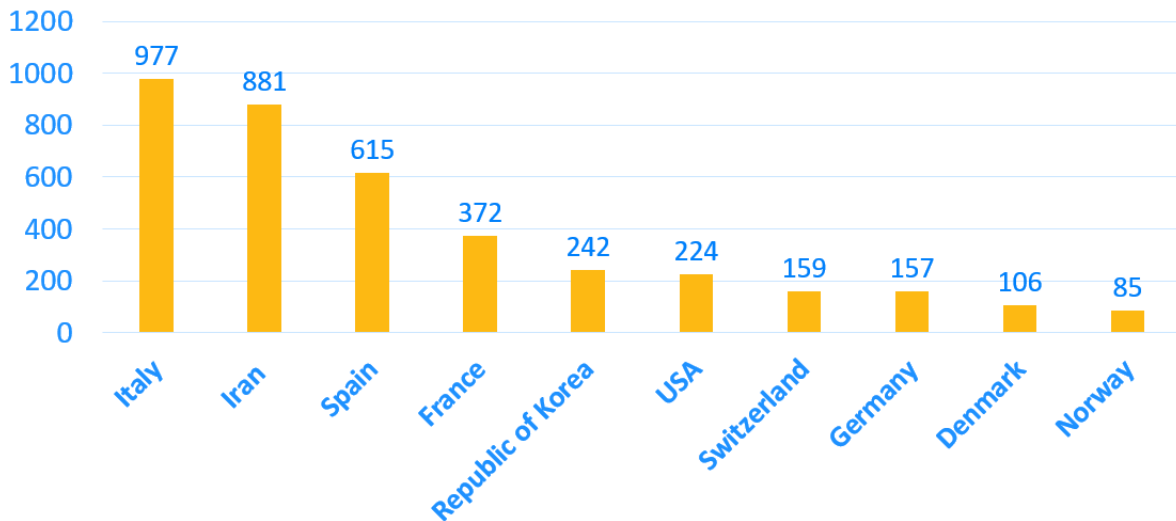
Source: WHO, National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China & CAPA. Daily snapshot as at 22:00UTC each day.

China cumulative cases (11-Mar-2020)



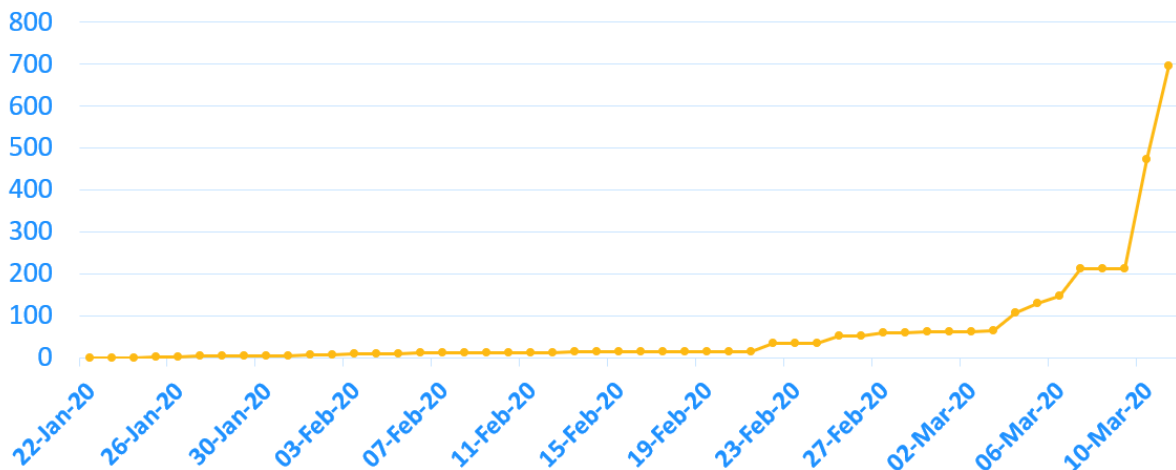
Source: WHO, National Health Commission of the People’s Republic of China & CAPA. Daily snapshot as at 22:00UTC each day.

Top ten locations by daily cases increase (11-Mar-2020)



Source: WHO, National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China & CAPA. Daily snapshot as at 22:00UTC each day.

United States cumulative cases (11-Mar-2020)

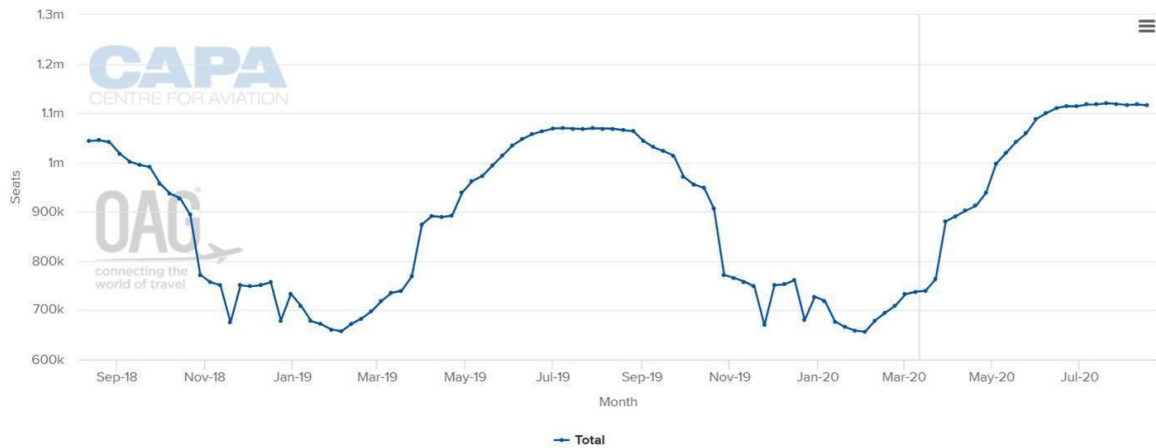


Air Capacity Update: The impact of the US suspending all Europe-US travel

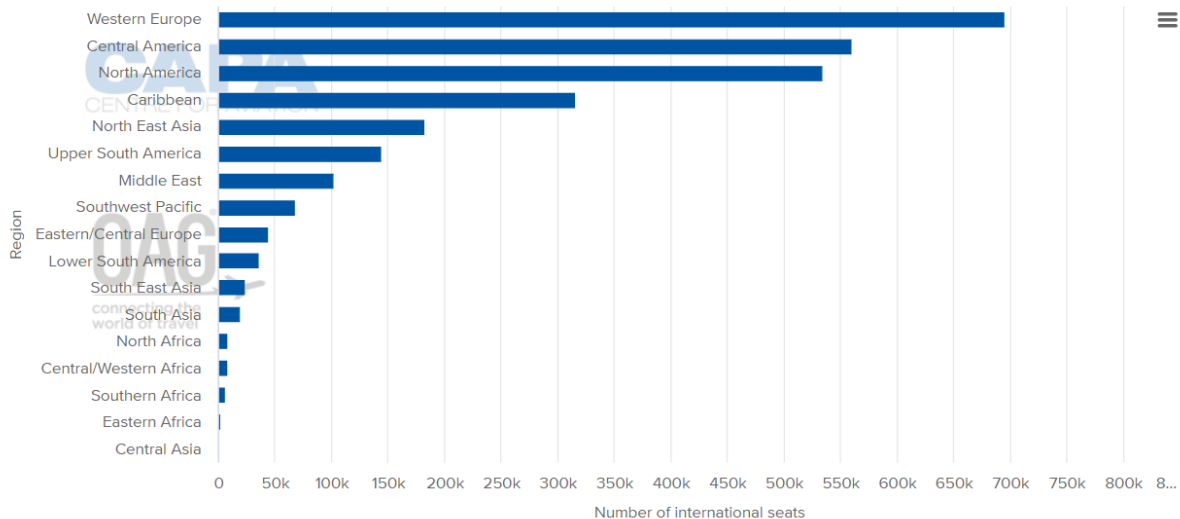
As a result in the spike of cases shown above, the United States Government has announced that, "effective at 11:59 p.m. (US) eastern daylight time on March 13, 2020", it will restrict and suspend the entry into the United States, as immigrants or nonimmigrants, of all those who were physically present within the Schengen Area during the 14-day period preceding their entry or attempted entry into the United States. This includes 26 European states: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and Switzerland.

The United States to Europe capacity represents approx. 700,000 to 1.1m seats per week, with volumes now being greatly impacted by the announcement.

United States of America-Europe weekly system seat capacity. Schedules effective w/c 09-Mar-2020. Following the Trump announcement, we expect airlines will rapidly adjust this capacity downwards



Source: CAPA - Centre for Aviation & OAG. The above is an example of future planned air capacity, available to CAPA Members from CAPA’s country profiles. For more information about CAPA Membership, please click here.



US international departing system seat capacity w/c 09-Mar-2020. Europe is the largest and most valuable US route group

Source: CAPA - Centre for Aviation & OAG. The above is an example of future planned air capacity, available to CAPA Members from CAPA’s country profiles. For more information about CAPA Membership, please click here.

Top 10 airlines impacted by the announcement (weekly seats flown on North Atlantic routes prior to the Trump ban)

Rank	Airline	IATA	ICAO	Total	Percentage Market Share
1	United Airlines	UA	UAL	189,626	12.9%
2	Delta Air Lines	DL	DAL	171,606	11.6%
3	British Airways	BA	BAW	170,530	11.6%
4	American Airlines	AA	AAL	139,869	9.5%
5	Lufthansa	LH	DLH	137,642	9.3%
6	Virgin Atlantic Airways	VS	VIR	88,052	6.0%
7	Air France	AF	AFR	78,912	5.3%
8	Aer Lingus	EI	EIN	51,404	3.5%
9	KLM Royal Dutch Airlines	KL	KLM	46,292	3.1%
10	Turkish Airlines	TK	THY	43,106	2.9%

Source: CAPA - Centre for Aviation & OAG. The above is an example of future planned air capacity, available to CAPA Members from CAPA's country profiles.

For more information about CAPA Membership, please [click here](#).

Aviation & Travel Industry updates

1. Global:

WHO characterises COVID-19 as a pandemic

World Health Organization (WHO) formally characterised (11-Mar-2020) the outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) as a pandemic. WHO director-general Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said: "WHO has been assessing this outbreak around the clock and we are deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction. We have therefore made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized as a pandemic."

Dr Ghebreyesus noted that describing the situation as a pandemic does not change WHO's assessment of the threat posed by the virus, nor does it change what WHO is doing or what countries should do. [more - original PR]

2. Asia:

Hong Kong: Cathay Pacific expects 'substantial loss' in 1H2020

Cathay Pacific chairman Patrick Healy stated (11-Mar-2020) the carrier will incur a "substantial loss" in 1H2020. Despite the "very uncertain" outlook, Mr Healy said the carrier remain confident in its future. [more - original PR]

Australia / New Zealand: Tom Hanks confirms positive virus result in Australia

Tom Hanks, via his official Twitter account, announced (12-Mar-2020) he was tested for coronavirus in Australia and was found to be positive. Mr Hanks added that he will be isolated, observed and tested "for as long as public health and safety requires".

South Korea: Air Busan implements paid leave scheme in response to coronavirus outbreak

Air Busan implemented a paid leave scheme due to low demand as a result of the outbreak of coronavirus (International Newspaper, 11-Mar-2020). Of the company's 1400 employees, 1000 will be taking paid leave from 16-Mar-2020 to 24-Apr-2020 on the condition they receive 70% of the average wage.

3. Middle East:

Lebanon suspends travel to Italy, South Korea, China and Iran due to coronavirus outbreak

Lebanon's Prime Minister Hassan Diab stated all travel to and from Italy, South Korea, China and Iran has been suspended as a precautionary measure against the outbreak of coronavirus (Asharq Al-Awsat/Middle East Eye/The Daily Star, 11-Mar-2020).

4. Europe:

French govt rules out Groupe ADP privatisation in current market conditions

France's government spokesperson Sibeth Ndiaye reported the government has decided that current market conditions "are not at all favourable" for carrying out the privatisation of Groupe ADP (Reuters, 11-Mar-2020). Groupe ADP's stock is currently trading at around EUR116 per share at the time of writing, down from a 52 week high of EUR183.10, according to Euronext.

5. North America:

US suspends travel from Schengen Europe from 13-Mar-2020. British Airways and Virgin Atlantic should be winners

US President Donald Trump announced (11-Mar-2020) the unprecedented suspension of "entry into the US of all foreign travellers who were physically present in the Schengen Area during the 14 days prior to their intended entry into the US, due to the potential for transmission of coronavirus". The proclamation will remain in effect from "11:59 p.m. (US) eastern daylight time on March 13, 2020", until terminated by Mr Trump. Mr Trump commented: "The free flow of commerce between the United States and the Schengen Area countries remains an economic priority for the United States, and I remain committed to facilitating trade between our nations", read the proclamation.

Mr Trump said restrictions will be "adjusted subject to conditions on the ground" and exemptions will be available for US citizens "who have undergone appropriate screenings" (New York Times/BBC, 12-Mar-2020). Mr Trump also stated the regulations will apply to "trade and cargo" and "various other things as we get approval". [more - original PR] [more - original PR - II]

For US and most European airlines, this means in broad terms that their available travel market is immediately halved, as only Americans will be allowed to enter the US.

The UK and British airlines should be best positioned

The ban specifically excludes UK-origin and destination passengers (who have not been in a Schengen country in the previous 14 days), so that much trans Atlantic travel activity will focus on the London and other major UK airports.

This has to be good news particularly for British Airways and Virgin Atlantic, for whom North American capacity accounts for around 20% and 80% respectively - in what is the highest yielding major market in the world.

However, the other European majors will struggle to operate service from their home countries at any level.

6. Latin America:

LATAM Airlines allows free rescheduling for services from/to Italy, Spain and Israel

LATAM Airlines Group announced (10/11-Mar-2020) new measures to assist customers due to measures taken by the Chilean, Italian and Israeli authorities during the coronavirus outbreak. Chile's Health Ministry announced that all inbound passengers from Italy or Spain must self isolate for 14 days. Customers with bookings to Italy and Israel or from Spain and Italy to Chile can reschedule or change the destination of their bookings without charge.

Passengers who travelled to Italy, Spain, France, Germany, US, Iran, Japan, China or South Korea are also being given the option to reschedule. Colombian authorities are also requesting passengers who have been to Italy, Spain, France or China to self isolate for 14 days. [more - original PR - Portuguese] [more - original PR - Portuguese - II]

7. Africa:

Air Seychelles 'forced to cancel' approx 40% of flying schedule due to coronavirus

Air Seychelles chief commercial officer Charles Johnson stated (11-Mar-2020) the airline has "been forced to cancel approximately 40% of our flying schedule" until the end of Apr-2020, "due to the negative effects of COVID-19 on demand". Cancelled frequencies include the following:

- Seychelles-Mauritius: 10 frequencies cancelled, effective 26-Mar-2020 to 30-Apr-2020;
- Seychelles-Johannesburg: 11, effective 26-Mar-2020 to 30-Apr-2020;
- Seychelles-Mumbai: 21, effective until 30-Jun-2020.

The carrier plans to consolidate some services on its Seychelles-Praslin route, and noted it is experiencing tremendous reductions in domestic bookings due to overseas cancellations. Staff are being encouraged to take annual leave during this period. [more - original PR]

The above is a selection of more than 150 news updates from today's CAPA Membership coverage specifically on COVID-19, which also covers traffic data, route and frequency announcements, government advisories and more. For more information about CAPA Membership, please click here.

Additional Analysis (please click on the headings to go to the full story)

Several Airlines Ground A380s To Cut Back Capacity

Around 25% of the worldwide Airbus A380 fleet is in the process of being grounded as airlines cut their largest widebodies from services dealing with the fall-out of the coronavirus crisis.

Korean Air has become the latest carrier to decide that it will take its 10 A380s out of service until Apr. 25, citing reduced travel demand. Other aircraft have also been grounded.

South Korea has been among the countries hardest hit by the coronavirus outbreak, causing many governments to impose restrictions on travelers from Korea. Korean Air has suspended over 130 flights according to its latest update, with frequency reduced on others.

COVID-19 coronavirus: US airlines take steps to preserve liquidity

As the US moves from attempting to contain the COVID-19 coronavirus to the mitigation stage, the country's airlines are following suit, attempting to fortify their respective war chests by cutting capacity, suspending share buy-backs, cutting capex and, in some cases, bolstering their liquidity.

COVID-19 has now become the black swan event that is testing the long-held belief that the US airline industry is much stronger than it was in previous crises, including the Sep-2001 terror attacks, SARs and the 2008 financial crisis.

Now is the time to lean on solid cash balances and be grateful for manageable leverage, and to that end, some US airlines are better positioned than others.

Qantas Sunrise's corona boost to Perth-London corporate non-stop

The threat of picking up coronavirus at stopovers en route to London has delivered Qantas a major endorsement of its Sunrise strategy.

As part of a large scale readjustment of its international flying, the airline will increase its Perth-London non-stop service from once daily to double daily, effective 20-Apr-2020.

For decades Qantas has had to compete with high quality intermediate ("Sixth Freedom") airlines like Singapore Airlines on all of its westbound and northbound services.

The introduction of its Sunrise flights meant that passengers between Perth and London could dispense with an intermediate stop, at the same time offering Qantas a competitive advantage.

The above is a selection of in-depth insights on the latest developments in the aviation and travel industry related to the COVID-19 outbreak. CAPA Membership includes a range of reports featuring accurate data and independent commentary from our global team of analysts, who offer a unique perspective and actionable insights to help improve decision making.

CAPA Analysis 12/03/2020

Le président Trump a interdit l'entrée sur le sol américain des passagers en provenance de 26 pays d'Europe pour les 30 prochains jours, à partir de vendredi minuit heure de Washington (04H00 UTC samedi). Cette mesure ne concerne pas le Royaume-Uni.

Le président américain Donald Trump a annoncé mercredi la suspension pour trente jours de l'entrée aux Etats-Unis des voyageurs ayant récemment séjourné en Europe, à l'exception des citoyens américains, une mesure draconienne censée endiguer la pandémie de coronavirus qui a déclenché une nouvelle tempête sur les marchés.

"J'ai décidé de prendre des actions fortes mais nécessaires pour protéger la santé et le bien-être de tous les Américains", a annoncé M. Trump lors d'une allocution solennelle - par moments confuse - depuis le Bureau ovale de la Maison Blanche.

"Pour empêcher de nouveaux cas de pénétrer dans notre pays, je vais suspendre tous les voyages en provenance d'Europe vers les Etats-Unis pour les 30 prochains jours", a-t-il ajouté, déplorant que

l'Union européenne n'ait pas pris "les mêmes précautions".

Cette mesure, qui entrera en vigueur vendredi à minuit heure de Washington (04H00 GMT samedi), ne concernera pas le Royaume-Uni, a précisé le milliardaire républicain. Elle s'appliquera à toute personne ayant séjourné dans l'espace Schengen au cours des 14 jours précédant leur arrivée prévue aux Etats-Unis, à l'exception des Américains et des résidents permanents.

Fait sans précédent, le département d'Etat a exhorté dans la foulée les Américains à éviter tout voyage à l'étranger.

Les prix du pétrole chutaient de plus de 6% jeudi matin en Asie après le discours du président américain, et les Bourses de Tokyo et de Hong Kong dégringolaient elles aussi lourdement. La Bourse australienne a connu sa pire journée (-7,4%) depuis la crise de 2008.

Au cours de son allocution de dix minutes, le président de la première puissance mondiale a par ailleurs qualifié le nouveau coronavirus de "virus étranger". Il y a quelques jours, le chef de la diplomatie américaine Mike Pompeo avait provoqué une polémique, et l'ire de Pékin, en parlant lui de "virus de Wuhan".

Donald Trump a été accusé par nombre d'élus et de scientifiques de vouloir minimiser la crise et d'envoyer des messages incohérents, parfois en contradiction avec ceux des autorités sanitaires.

Quelques heures avant l'allocution présidentielle, le directeur des Centres de détection et de prévention des maladies (CDC) Robert Redfield avait estimé que le principal risque de propagation de l'épidémie pour les Etats-Unis, où un millier de cas ont été recensés, venait du Vieux continent.

"La vraie menace pour nous, c'est désormais l'Europe", avait-il affirmé. "C'est de là qu'arrivent les cas. Pour dire les choses clairement, l'Europe est la nouvelle Chine".

Plus de 20.000 personnes (22.307) ont été contaminées en Europe, et 930 en sont mortes. Dans le monde, 124.101 cas d'infection ont été recensés dans 113 pays et territoires, causant la mort de 4.566 personnes, selon un bilan établi par l'AFP à partir de sources officielles mercredi à 17H00 GMT.

Désormais qualifié de pandémie par l'Organisation mondiale de la santé, le Covid-19 perturbe chaque jour davantage la vie quotidienne des populations affectées, de la limitation des déplacements aux fermetures en cascade de lieux publics ou aux restrictions du nombre de personnes pouvant se rassembler.

Journal de l'Aviation 12/03/2020

Prime Minister says Government fully vigilant on situation due to COVID - 19

Urges people not to panic and avoid non-essential travel

No Union Minister to travel abroad in the upcoming days

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi said the Government is fully vigilant about the situation due to the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus.

In a tweet today, the Prime Minister said the Ministries and States have taken various proactive steps to ensure safety of all.

He urged people to not panic and avoid non-essential travel and large gatherings.

Prime Minister further said that no Minister of the Central Government will travel abroad in the upcoming days.



Narendra Modi ✓
@narendramodi


The Government is fully vigilant about the situation due to COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus .

Across ministries & states, multiple steps have been proactively taken to ensure safety of all.

These steps are wide-ranging, from suspension of Visas to augmenting healthcare capacities.

♥ 39.8K 4:26 PM - Mar 12, 2020 ⓘ

💬 9,123 people are talking about this >



Narendra Modi ✓
@narendramodi

Say No to Panic, Say Yes to Precautions.

No Minister of the Central Government will travel abroad in the upcoming days. I urge our countrymen to also avoid non-essential travel.

We can break the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings.

♥ 93K 4:27 PM - Mar 12, 2020 ⓘ

💬 23K people are talking about this >

Ministry of Defence

Status Update – Management of Covid-19 Cases by MOD

Ministry of Defence has mobilised all necessary resources to support the national effort towards the management of COVID-19 cases.

At present, military is running two medical facilities at Hindon, Ghaziabad and Manesar, Haryana and a total of 265 civilians are under military supervision at these two facilities. As per DG AFMS, a batch of 124 cases have completed their 14 days of isolation at Manesar facility, have tested negative and are ready to leave the facility.

More facilities at Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Suratgarh, Gorakhpur, Jhansi & Kolkata are geared up to absorb any more citizens that are likely to arrive in India over the next few days.

Assistance to Indian Citizens for Quarantine at air Force Station Hindan

Due to the large scale prevalence of Corona Virus around the world, Indian citizens who were in countries like China (Wuhan) and Iran were evacuated by Indian Air Force C-17 aircraft on two occasions. On the second occasion, a total of 57 pilgrims from Ladakh region who had visited Quom, Iran for pilgrimage, were brought by C-17 aircraft on 10 March 2020 to Air Force Station Hindan. These consisted of 33 women, 02 children and 22 men.

A quarantine facility has been established at AF Stn Hindan for these pilgrims which has all required facilities for rest and recuperation. The administrative arrangements (identification of buildings, perimeter security, food and water supply, bed and linen, laundry, housekeeping, entertainment, sewage disposal, transportation etc) has been organized at the camp and the medical support (daily examination, lab testing, advise on disinfection and bio-medical waste management, public health measures, management of symptomatic patients, surveillance, creation and referral to isolation wards at nearest hospital) has been organized by Indian Air Force authorities in liaison with local civil administration. The detailed protocols for patient transportation and referral to nearest designated / identified isolation ward of service / civil hospitals has been kept ready.

Detailed guidelines as mandated by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for quarantine in suspected COVID-19 cases has been implemented. The total period for quarantine is 14 days. The Indian Air Force, as part of the defence services support to civil authorities, would continue unabated relief measures till the situation is normal.

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare

Update on COVID-19

Death of a 76 year old male from Karnataka is confirmed to be caused due to co-morbidity and has also tested positive for COVID-19. The details of the case are as follows:

He visited Saudi Arabia from 29th January 2020 to 29th February 2020.

He was a known case of Hypertension and Asthma. He reached back to Hyderabad on 29th February and went to Kalaburgi.

While he was asymptomatic on his return, he developed symptoms of fever and cough on 06th March 2020. One private doctor visited him at his home and treated him there.

On 9th March 2020, the symptoms got aggravated and he was shifted to a private hospital in Kalaburgi. In this private hospital he was provisionally diagnosed as “mid zone Viral Pneumonia” and “suspected COVID-19”.

The sample was collected on 09.03.2020 by Viral Research Diagnostic Laboratory, GIMS, Kalaburgi to rule out COVID-19 and sample was dispatched to VRDL, BMC&RI, Bengaluru. Without waiting for the test results, the attendees insisted and the patient was discharged against medical advice (DAMA) and the attendees took him to a private hospital in Hyderabad.

As per instructions of Deputy Commissioner, Kalaburgi District, the DHO met the attendees to convince them to admit the patient to the Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS), Kalaburgi in the isolation ward set up at the Institute. But the attendees refused to listen to him. They transferred him to Hyderabad without his knowledge.

The patient was admitted in a private hospital in Hyderabad and treated. Later he was discharged and while he was being brought back he died on the way to the GIMS, Kalaburgi on 10.03.2020.

All the precautionary measures as per protocol such as contact tracing, screening and home quarantine of the contacts have been initiated by the District Health and Family Welfare Department, Karnataka and being monitored continuously.

Update on COVID-19: Preparedness and Actions taken

Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is now officially a global pandemic. With over 118,000 coronavirus cases sweeping across 114 countries of the world, the World Health Organization declared it a pandemic yesterday.

Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji is constantly monitoring and reviewing the situation with the top officials of the concerned Ministries/Departments and States/UTs since the first case was declared on 31st December 2019 in the city of Wuhan in China.

India's response was initiated on 8th January, much before WHO declared COVID-19 as a public health emergency on 30th Jan, 2020. States were directed for health sector preparedness on 17th Jan, 2020. Same day, point of entry surveillance was also initiated.

Various measures have been taken by the Central Ministries along with States/UTs in terms of strengthened community surveillance, quarantine facilities, isolation wards, adequate PPEs, trained manpower, rapid response teams for management of COVID-19. Screening at airports was started on 17th January at 3 airports (Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata) which was extended to 4 more airports (Chennai, Cochin, Bengaluru, Hyderabad) on 21st Jan, 2020 and subsequently extended to 30 airports. All incoming passengers are being universally screened at the 30 airports. Similarly, screening was initiated for vessels arriving at 12 major ports and 65 non-major ports.

India has always prioritized the safety and welfare of its citizens abroad and mounted timely evacuation of its citizens starting 1st February, 2020 from COVID-19 affected countries. So far, the

Government of India has evacuated 900 Indian citizens along with 48 belonging to other nationalities like Maldives, Myanmar, Bangladesh, China, US, Madagascar, Sri Lanka, Nepal, South Africa and Peru.

In addition, 83 evacuees from Italy who arrived yesterday have been housed at Manesar facility for quarantine. All patients in the hospitals are being treated and reported to be stable.

On the directions of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, a high-level Group of Ministers was constituted to continuously monitor the situation and evaluate preparedness and formulate measures regarding management of COVID-19 in the country. The GoM has met 6 times so far, guiding, reviewing and monitoring the situation.

In view of the rapidly evolving situation, two meetings of the GoM were held yesterday. The GoM deliberated on various precautionary measures which may be considered in the interest of the citizens of India. Based on the recommendations of the Committee of Secretaries chaired by Cabinet Secretary, the GoM made some important decisions last evening which are as follows:

- All existing visas (except diplomatic, official, UN/International Organizations, employment, project visas) stand suspended till 15th April 2020. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- Visa free travel facility granted to OCI card holders is kept in abeyance till 15th April 2020. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- OCI card holders already in India can stay in India as long as they want.
- Visas of all foreigners already in India remain valid and they may contact the nearest FRRO/FRO through e-FRRO module for extension/conversion etc. of their visa or grant of any consular service, if they choose to do so.
- Any foreign national who intends to travel to India for compelling reason may contact the nearest Indian Mission.
- In addition to Visa restrictions already in place, passengers traveling from /having visited Italy or Republic of Korea and desirous of entering India will need certificate of having tested negative for COVID-19 from the designated laboratories authorized by the health authorities of these countries. This is in enforcement since 0000 hrs. of 10th March, 2020 and is a temporary measure till cases of COVID-19 subside.
- All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after 15th February, 2020 shall be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days. This will come into effect from 1200 GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure.
- Incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, are advised to avoid non-essential travel and are informed that they can be quarantined for a minimum of 14 days on their arrival in India.
- Indian nationals are further strongly advised to refrain from travelling to China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany.
- All incoming international passengers returning to India should self- monitor their health and follow required do's and don'ts as detailed by the Government.
- International traffic through land borders will be restricted to designated check posts with robust screening facilities. These will be notified separately by M/o Home Affairs.
- All international Passengers entering into India are required to furnish duly filled self-declaration form in duplicate (including personal particulars i.e. phone no. and address in India) to Health Officials and Immigration officials and undergo Universal Health Screening at the designated health counters at all Points of Entry.

As of now, 73 cases are confirmed for COVID-19. Three of these cases from Kerala have recovered and been discharged.

PIB 13/03/2020

Air India on Thursday decided to cancel all flights to Kuwait till April 30 and curtail services to various countries, including Spain, France and Sri Lanka.

The move comes a day after the national carrier announced temporary suspension of its services to Rome, Milan and Seoul, amid the coronavirus pandemic that has triggered imposition of travel restrictions by various countries.

An airline official said all flights operating to/ from Kuwait have been cancelled till April 30. Besides, the existing curtailment of services to Seoul (South Korea), Rome and Milan (Italy) has been extended till April 30.

As per the revised flight schedule, Air India would operate only two flights on the Delhi-Madrid route up to April 30, in place of three now.

The third flight would remain cancelled between March 17 and April 28, the official said.

On Wednesday, the government decided to suspend all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, from March 13 to April 15.

Mumbai, Mar 12 (PTI)

Air India on Thursday decided to cancel all its flights to Kuwait till April 30 and curtail services to various other countries, including Spain, France and Sri Lanka.

The move comes a day after the national carrier announced temporary suspension of its services to Rome, Milan and Seoul, amid the coronavirus pandemic which has triggered imposition of travel restrictions by various countries across the globe.

An airline official said all flights operating to and from Kuwait have been cancelled till April 30.

"The existing curtailment of services to Seoul (South Korea), Rome and Milan (Italy) too has been extended till April 30," he added.

"In view of the prevailing fettle due to pandemic / COVID-19, the market planning has taken feedback from respective stations and based on their recommendations, some of the flights to various international destination are being temporarily suspended while the frequency of other services are being reduced accordingly," the official said.

Air India at present operates to Kuwait from Chennai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Goa and Mumbai.

As per the revised flight schedule, Air India would operate only two flights on the Delhi-Madrid-Delhi route up to April 30, in place of the existing three.

The third flight would remain cancelled between March 17 and April 28, the official said.

On Wednesday, the government decided to suspend all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, from March 13 to April 15.

Similarly, of the seven flights per week between Delhi and Paris now, the carrier has cancelled four services between March 16 and March 30.

The other three flights will remain operational up to April 30, he said.

The air services to Frankfurt from New Delhi have also been scaled down to three per week from seven now between March 16 and April 30 while the Mumbai-Frankfurt services have been restricted to twice a week from March 18 to April 30 from four flights now, he added.

Starting March 15, Air India will operate only two flights per week on the Delhi-Tel Aviv-Delhi route as against four services at present, the official said, adding even these two services on the route will not operate on March 15 and 16.

AI 275 on the Mumbai-Colombo route and the return flight will operate only twice a week between March 17 and April 30, the official said.

India today 13/03/2020

New Delhi, Mar 13 (PTI) Several states across India went into battle mode to contain the spread of COVID-19, shutting down schools, theatres and colleges, and many public events, including the IPL, were postponed as the Union Health ministry on Friday put the number of cases at 75.

The tally of 75, one more since Thursday night, includes a 76-year-old man from Karnataka who became the country's first coronavirus fatality, Health Ministry officials said.

The count is likely to be higher with Army sources saying a man who had returned from Italy this week tested positive at the force's quarantine facilities in Manesar in Haryana.

Officials in Maharashtra also said two more people in Nagpur tested positive for coronavirus, a pandemic that has infected 1,31,500 people in 116 countries and territories and killed more than 4,900.

Union Health ministry officials did not immediately confirm the cases in Maharashtra and Manesar.

Giving a breakup, they said Delhi has reported six positive cases and Uttar Pradesh 10. Karnataka has five coronavirus patients, Maharashtra 11 and Ladakh three.

Besides, Rajasthan, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh and Punjab have reported one case each. Kerala has recorded 17 cases, including three patients discharged last month after they recovered from the contagious infection with flu-like symptoms.

The 75 confirmed cases include 17 foreigners -- 16 Italian tourists and a Canadian who was in Uttar Pradesh.

Taking stock of the situation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi proposed a video conference of SAARC leaders to chalk out a joint strategy and set an example for the world.

"Our planet is battling the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. At various levels, governments and people are trying their best to combat it," Modi said on Twitter.

South Asia, which is home to a significant number of the global population, should leave no stone unturned to ensure that the people are healthy, he said.

Amid speculation over the ongoing Budget Session being shortened, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi told PTI, "There is no question of curtailing the session."

While states such as Karnataka, Odisha, Delhi and Bihar went into virtual shutdown mode, the under-pressure BCCI suspended the start of this year's IPL cricket tournament from March 29 to April 15.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India has decided to suspend IPL 2020 till 15th April 2020, as a precautionary measure against the ongoing Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19) situation," BCCI secretary Jay Shah said in a statement.

The statement made it clear that it's a "suspension" and "not postponement", which means there is no clarity on whether the event will start on April 15.

Even if it starts on April 15, it is expected to happen behind closed doors without the fans.

The decision came hours after the Delhi government, which on Thursday announced that schools, colleges and cinema halls would be closed till March 31, said it was also stopping all sports gatherings, including IPL 2020.

Sisodia said district magistrates have been asked to ensure that all directives pertaining to coronavirus are implemented.

After the country's first coronavirus death was reported from Kalaburagi in the state, the Karnataka government announced a

lock-down of malls, cinema theatres, pubs and night clubs for a week.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa also issued instructions to stop all kinds of exhibitions, summer camps, conferences, marriage events and birthday parties.

"We will close all universities for a week in the entire state," he told reporters.

Tech giant Google confirmed that an employee of its Bengaluru office, who had returned from Greece, was diagnosed with COVID-19.

In Kalaburagi town, 46 people who were in direct contact with the 76-year old man who died on Tuesday night were placed under quarantine, district officials said.

Kalaburagi Deputy Commissioner Sharat B said 31 were categorised as "high risk" and the remaining 13 as "low risk".

Four family members of the man have displayed flu symptoms and their swab samples have been sent for testing.

In Odisha, the Naveen Patnaik government announced that educational institutions would be closed till March 31 but provided an exception for holding exams.

He said the government has earmarked Rs 200 crore to combat the coronavirus threat and declared COVID-19 a "disaster".

Non-essential official gatherings such as seminars, workshops and conferences are to be cancelled, Patnaik said. Social gatherings and assemblies like religious functions, marriage receptions and parties will be regulated by local authorities.

Cinema halls, swimming pools and gyms in the state will be closed as well.

Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia suspended classes in Delhi. Other universities such as Jindal University in Sonapat in Haryana announced that the university would be open but there would be no classes till March 29.

As concern mounted, people scrambled to change their travel plans. At an Air India office in Delhi, for instance, there were crowds of people waiting to change their tickets.

Aviation watchdog DGCA has asked international airlines to consider waiving ticket cancellation and reschedule charges or look at providing any other incentives.

States which had not reported any case were also on alert.

Schools, colleges, coaching institutes, zoos and parks in Bihar will be shut till March 31 over the coronavirus threat, an official said.

Vishwajit Rane, health minister in the tourism hub of Goa, said the government will issue a circular asking hotels and industries to take preventive measures in the wake of the coronavirus scare.

In all this, there was some good news.

All 112 people admitted to an ITBP quarantine facility in Delhi for over a fortnight tested negative for the coronavirus. All of them were evacuated last month from Wuhan in China.

Second batch of 44 Indian pilgrims has arrived from Iran, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Friday said.

An Iran Air flight carrying Indian pilgrims stranded in coronavirus-hit Iran landed at the airport in Mumbai on Friday afternoon, an official said.

Iran is one of the worst-affected countries by the coronavirus outbreak and the government has been working on plans to bring back the Indians stranded there.

"Second batch of 44 Indian pilgrims has arrived today from #Iran. Our efforts to bring back the others continue. @India_in_Iran and our medical team - keep up the good work. Appreciate the support of Iranian authorities and their airlines," Jaishankar said in a tweet.

The first batch of 58 Indian pilgrims were brought back from Iran on Tuesday.

An official told PTI that the Iran Air flight landed at the Mumbai airport at around 12.08 pm.

The passengers would be taken to Jaisalmer on an Air India aircraft, another official said.

On Thursday, a Defence spokesperson said around 120 Indians would be brought to Jaisalmer in Rajasthan and quarantined at an Army facility there.

"They will be quarantined at an Indian Army facility created under the aegis of Southern Command. The patients will be transferred from the airport post their initial screening to the quarantine facility under escort of civil administration," Defence Spokesperson Col Sombit Ghosh had said.

Jaishankar, on Thursday, said there are over 6,000 Indians in various provinces of Iran.

Coronavirus outbreak is a matter of "great concern" and the government's initial focus is to bring back Indian pilgrims stranded in Iran, he had said.

DGCA asks int'l airlines to consider waiving ticket cancellation fees amid coronavirus outbreak
Mumbai/New Delhi, Mar 13 (PTI)

Aviation watchdog DGCA has asked international airlines to consider waiving ticket cancellation and reschedule charges or look at providing any other incentive, amid coronavirus outbreak.

"In light of hardship faced by passengers, airlines may like to consider and take an appropriate call, accordingly," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a circular.

The circular, dated March 12, has been addressed to all scheduled international airlines operating to/from India.

"In the current scenario, it would be appropriate if airlines support their passenger in this tough time by waiving off cancellation/reschedule charges or by providing any other incentive," it said.

New Delhi, Mar 13 (PTI)

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said it is closely monitoring the current global situation and assured that it will take all steps to keep markets adequately liquid and stable.

The statement comes at a day when trading on the Indian stock exchanges hit a "circuit breaker" -- first time since 2008 -- as soon as markets opened on Friday.

"The RBI is closely and continuously monitoring the rapidly evolving global situation and will take all necessary measures to ensure that money, debt and forex markets remain adequately liquid and stable, and continue to function normally," the RBI said in a statement.

Both Sensex and Nifty plunged over 10 per cent in the opening session, hitting their lower circuit levels, as new coronavirus-led recession fears triggered panic selling in the market.

Stock exchanges had halted trading for 45 minutes within 15 minutes of market opening. Normal trading resumed around 1030 hours.

In the currency markets, the Indian rupee recovered sharply to trade 46 paise higher at 73.82 against the US dollar. At open, the rupee fell to a record low of 74.5075 against the US dollar.

The RBI also announced to infuse an additional short-term liquidity of Rs 25,000 crore in to the system to counterbalance the domestic liquidity effects on account of dollar sell-buy swap on Friday.

It conducted Rs 25,000 crore of a variable rate repo auction with a 7-day tenor. On Thursday, the RBI had announced to undertake six-month US dollar sell/buy swaps to provide liquidity to the foreign exchange market amid evolving financial market conditions and taking into consideration the requirement of US dollars in the market.

To start with, an amount of USD 2 billion would be offered on March 16, 2020.

The swap will be in the nature of a simple sell/buy foreign exchange swap from the Reserve Bank side.

A bank will buy US Dollars from the RBI and simultaneously agree to sell the same amount of US Dollars at the end of the swap period.

The RBI also said the minimum bid size for the swap auction will be USD 10 million and in multiples of USD 1 million thereafter.

Mumbai, Mar 13 (PTI)

India briefed the representatives of more than 130 countries and international organisations, including over 100 envoys, on Friday about the proactive steps taken by it to combat coronavirus.

At the briefing by senior officials from the Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Health and Family

Welfare and the Ministry of Home Affairs, the envoys and representatives of international organisations were also provided clarifications related to government advisories.

"Together in this fight! Representatives of 130+ countries and international organisations, including 100 Heads of Mission, attended a briefing by senior officials from MEA, MOHFW and MHA on proactive steps taken by Government of India to combat COVID-19 pandemic and provide clarifications related to government advisory," MEA spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted.

India reported on Thursday its first death due to coronavirus as the number of positive cases soared to 75, with authorities taking emergency measures to contain its spread like shutting down schools, colleges and cinema halls in the national capital and some other places.

The Centre and the states have ramped up their efforts to tackle novel coronavirus, which has claimed at least 4,600 lives globally and affected over 1,25,000 people.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked the citizens not to panic and asserted that the government was fully vigilant.

Apart from directing the Union ministers not to travel abroad in the coming days, Modi also urged people to avoid non-essential travel, saying, "We can break the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings."

The government has also suspended all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, till April 15.

New Delhi, Mar 13 (PTI)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday proposed a video conference of SAARC leaders to chalk out a joint strategy to fight coronavirus and set an example for the world.

"I would like to propose that the leadership of SAARC nations chalk out a strong strategy to fight coronavirus. We could discuss, via video conferencing, ways to keep our citizens healthy," he said.

"Our planet is battling the COVID-19 Novel Coronavirus. At various levels, governments and people are trying their best to combat it," Modi said on Twitter.

South Asia, which is home to a significant number of the global population, should leave no stone unturned to ensure that the people are healthy, he said.

Together, the prime minister said, we can set an example to the world, and contribute to a healthier planet.

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is A regional intergovernmental organization that comprises Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

New Delhi, Mar 13 (PTI)

Two Indians who had gone to Iran for some business purposes are now stuck in the country that is among the worst-hit by coronavirus as all civil aviation routes have been closed in the wake of the deadly virus outbreak.

Arvind Jadhav and Vedant Kadam, residents of Mumbai, are stuck in Iranian capital of Tehran and have requested the Indian government to rescue them as soon as possible. They are concerned as all civil aviation routes have been closed in Tehran and they are trapped.

The hotel, in which they are living, is also planning to shut down soon, as only eight of its 250 rooms are occupied. They are in touch with their families on Whatsapp and are appealing to the Indian government to help them immediately.

"The number of people who have died from the novel coronavirus in Iran jumped to 354 after the country reported the highest single-day total of 63 fatalities on Wednesday," said Alireza Vahabzadeh, an adviser to the country's health minister.

The Iranian authorities have taken several steps to prevent the further spread of the disease, including suspension of classes in schools and universities and postponing cultural and sporting events.

As of Wednesday, there were almost 120,000 confirmed cases globally, with the total number of deaths exceeding 4,300.

Live Mint Aviation 12/03/2020

The rapid spread of coronavirus has wiped almost a third - or \$70 billion (53.6 billion pounds) - off the world's top 20 listed airlines and reshuffled global rankings, elevating Air China into third place behind U.S. rivals, an analysis by Reuters shows.

The airline sector has been hit hardest by the outbreak of coronavirus, with falling ticket demand and Italy in lockdown forcing carriers to cancel routes and slash costs to survive the mounting crisis.

With the investor sell-off accelerating, United Airlines has lost its number three position in the global line-up to Air China.

The U.S. carrier's market capitalisation has halved to \$11.6 billion, the lowest since 2003, since the start of the year, leaving it also lagging behind Europe's low-cost carrier Ryanair. Air China has been relatively unscathed - its market cap was \$15 billion on Tuesday, compared with \$19 billion on Jan. 2.

The scale of the rout has been breathtaking. Wizz Air, a budget carrier focused on central European routes, is now more highly valued than Air France-KLM, and the world's most valuable airline, Delta Air, has seen more than \$10 billion knocked off its value this year, taking its market cap to about \$28 billion, the lowest since September 2016.

12/03/20 Reuters/Business Today

Yesterday (11 March), the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak a pandemic, with more than 125,000 confirmed cases in 114 countries and in excess of 4,600 deaths (correct at the time of writing).

The AAPA has urged authorities to roll back or refrain from introducing such measures, reiterating the WHO's stance that advises against 'generally infective' travel or trade restrictions.

These can cause significant disruption to the global economy, supply chains, commerce, trade and most importantly to peoples' livelihoods, says the AAPA.

Where travel restrictions are introduced, they must be based on careful risk assessments, ensure proportionately to the risk of public health, are short term in nature, and subject to regular revision, adds the association.

Andrew Herdman, Director General, AAPA said: "The proliferation of travel restrictions worldwide, and insufficient adherence to the International Health Regulations are imposing enormous costs on society with little or no public health benefits.

"AAPA appreciates the leadership of WHO on this issue and calls on governments to fundamentally reconsider the rationale for such travel restrictions and measures.

"Governments must strengthen cooperation across borders and work together with WHO, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), and other stakeholders to develop a more globally co-ordinated set of policy measures, in addressing the current outbreak, avoiding unnecessary social and economic disruption. Additional resources could then be directed towards strengthening the public health response."

12/03/20 Luke Barras/TR Business

New Delhi: SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh on Thursday said that the passenger carrier is far better placed to weather the turbulence caused by the coronavirus outbreak.

According to Singh, the sector is under a lot of pressure which is temporary.

"We have been here before. SpiceJet is far better placed than many others to weather this turbulence," Singh was quoted as saying in a statement.

"I firmly believe that this is an opportunity for SpiceJet, for the government and the aviation ecosystem to create more efficient and viable structures for the growth that lies ahead."

He emphasised that the Indian aviation market and especially the domestic one has immense potential and will remain among the fastest growing in the world.

"The government is doing an excellent job in managing the crisis and India has managed to contain

COVID-19 cases to a large extent."

[12/03/20 IANS/daijiworld](#)

Saudi Arabia has placed a temporary ban on travel to and from a number of countries, including India, in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The government of Saudi Arabia on Thursday announced that the temporary travel ban will be extended to its citizens and expatriates.

According to Saudi Press Agency (SPA), the official news agency of Saudi Arabia, its government has suspended flights to and from India, the member-countries of European Union, Switzerland, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Philippines, Sudan, Ethiopia, South Sudan, Eritrea, Kenya, Djibouti and Somalia.

According to SPA, citizens, expatriates and foreigners who were in these above list of countries 14 days prior to their departure to Saudi Arabia will also not be allowed to enter.

However, Indian and Philippines nationals who are working as health practitioners in Saudi Arabia have been exempted from this temporary ban, although they must take all necessary precautions. Evacuation, shipping and trade trips, too, have been exempted from the decision.

Citing an official from the Interior Ministry, the state news agency reported that the citizens and those with valid residency have 72 hours to return to Saudi Arabia, "before the travel suspension decision becomes effective".

This comes after the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the coronavirus disease or COVID-19 as a pandemic — the global spread of a new disease. Saudi Arabia has reported 45 confirmed cases of coronavirus so far, with 21 new cases being reported early Wednesday.

[12/03/20 News Minute](#)

Mumbai: The committee of creditors (CoC) of Jet Airways on Thursday decided to file for an extension of the airline's corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP), given that a plan to revive the company is still not on the table. None of the players in the fray, however, has backed out of the process completely.

An extension of up to 90 days may be sought from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), sources said. It was also discussed in the meeting that perhaps this was not the right time to go for liquidation of the company given weak sentiments prevailing in the economy because of the coronavirus outbreak.

Under the insolvency and bankruptcy code (IBC), the maximum time limit for the completion of CIRP has been set at 330 days, which includes the litigation period. The 270-day CIRP period of the company ends on March 15.

Under the IBC provisions, Jet can get a 60-day extension from the bankruptcy tribunal. However, the NCLT will decide whether it will grant a 90-day extension to Jet, as no resolution plan has been submitted by any of the suitors. The grounded airline did not receive any proposal for revival until the last date of submission of resolution plan expired on March 9.

Sources said the three players — Russia-based Far East Development Fund, New Delhi-based Prudent ARC, and South America-based Synergy Group — are still in the fray, but issues related to slots are big hindrances that are preventing them from presenting a resolution plan.

12/03/20 Subrata Panda/Business Standard

Mumbai: National carrier Air India on Wednesday night announced the temporary suspension of its flight services to Rome, Milan and Seoul.

While services to Rome (Italy) are being discontinued from March 15 to March 25, flight operations to Milan (Italy) and Seoul in South Korea will remain suspended between March 14 and March 28, an airline official said.

The decision came following the government suspending all visas, except a few categories such as diplomatic and employment, till April 15 to prevent the spread of coronavirus on Wednesday.

"All existing visas, except diplomatic, official, UN/International organisations, employment and project visas, stand suspended till 15th April 2020.

This will come into effect from 1200GMT on 13th March 2020 at the port of departure," an official statement said.

Visa-free travel facility granted to Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card holders is also kept in abeyance till April 15, it said.

All incoming travellers, including Indian nationals, arriving from or having visited China, Italy, Iran, Republic of Korea, France, Spain and Germany after February 15 will be quarantined for a minimum period of 14 days, the statement said.

12/03/20 PTI/New Indian Express

The rapid spread of coronavirus has wiped almost a third - or \$70 billion (53.6 billion pounds) - off the world's top 20 listed airlines and reshuffled global rankings, elevating Air China into third place behind U.S. rivals, an analysis by Reuters shows.

The airline sector has been hit hardest by the outbreak of coronavirus, with falling ticket demand and Italy in lockdown forcing carriers to cancel routes and slash costs to survive the mounting crisis.

With the investor sell-off accelerating, United Airlines has lost its number three position in the global line-up to Air China.

The U.S. carrier's market capitalisation has halved to \$11.6 billion, the lowest since 2003, since the start of the year, leaving it also lagging behind Europe's low-cost carrier Ryanair. Air China has been relatively unscathed - its market cap was \$15 billion on Tuesday, compared with \$19 billion on Jan. 2.

The scale of the rout has been breathtaking. Wizz Air, a budget carrier focused on central European routes, is now more highly valued than Air France-KLM, and the world's most valuable airline, Delta Air, has seen more than \$10 billion knocked off its value this year, taking its market cap to about \$28

billion, the lowest since September 2016.

12/03/20 Reuters/Business Today

New Delhi: The government has extended the bidding deadline for Air India Ltd to 30 April, the department of investment and public asset management (DIPAM) said on Friday.

The earlier deadline to submit expression of interest (Eoi) was 17 March.

The Centre has also extended the last date for the response on queries related to Air India's preliminary information memorandum (PIM) from 16 March to 20 March, said DIPAM, which falls under the ministry of finance.

The extensions come against the backdrop of the Covid-19 outbreak, which has severely hurt the economy, particularly the aviation and tourism sectors, and investment sentiments across the world.

The spread of the virus to more than 100 countries has hit the travel and hospitality industry the hardest, with countries imposing both inward and outward travel bans.

Additionally, Brent crude was down to \$33 per barrel on Friday after Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates announced plans to boost production capacity.

The government, which aims to divest its entire stake in Air India, had begun the stake sale process in January by inviting offers from potential investors, after the failure of a costly turnaround plan and an earlier effort to sell a controlling stake in the national carrier.

To sweeten the deal, the Centre has also reduced Air India's debt from about ₹56,334 crore to about ₹23,287 crore.

The cabinet, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, had recently approved an amendment to the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy to permit FDIs of up to 100% in Air India by NRIs under the automatic route.

The viral outbreak gives the Indian government more time to prepare for the sale, said Lewis Burroughs, head of aviation, India, ICF, a global consultancy.

"In terms of market appetite, investors could be cautious during the next two quarters or so. However, with the government keen to privatize the airline, the divestment of Air India should happen in the future," Burroughs said.

Live Mint Aviation 14/03/2020

NEW DELHI: India's aviation and tourism industries, reeling from the impact of the global outbreak of coronavirus, are seeking help from the government to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic.

The Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) has written to the civil aviation ministry seeking an alleviation package to deal with higher expenses incurred to prevent the spread of the disease such as screening of passengers and disinfection.

The body has also asked for the levy of a "nominal passenger facilitation charge" as part of airline tickets to cover the extra charges.

"The trade impact of the coronavirus epidemic for India is estimated to be about \$348 million and the country figures among the top 5 economies most affected as slowdown of manufacturing in China disrupts world trade, according to a UN report," the APAO said in a letter to the ministry of civil aviation.

Effective today, the government has till 15 April banned entry of most foreigners into India unless they are on diplomatic or work visas.

With fear of COVID-19 epidemic spreading among frequent fliers and holidaymakers, airports in India have seen lower international traffic in the first two months of this year compared to 2019. Fearing an impact on their revenues, major airports have asked the government to be allowed to levy a fee on each flight ticket - "airport operator alleviation package"- to cover their fixed expenses as revenues fall.

Mint spoke to four major airports in India who said their foreign footfalls and related duty-free, retail and food and beverage sales have been hit as international passengers cancel their travel plans.

"While domestic traffic has remained largely steady, there has been negative variance in international passenger traffic of approximately 9% in January-February with an expected overall variance of 4% for FY20, compared with our revised forecast in October 2019. This is primarily due to a drop in international seat load factors (SLFs) by about 20% to / from the Asia-Pacific Region combined with other cancellations of some frequencies by foreign carriers in these regions," a spokesperson for Bengaluru International Airport Ltd (BIAL) said.

In the gloomy background of a drop in traffic and passenger revenues, airports revenues have declined due to reduced passenger flows, which has also impacted non-aero revenues such as less food and beverage sales, the APAO said.

"Ensuring compliance with government advisories on screening of passengers has required airports to significantly beef up its manpower deployment at airports as well as make expenditure on various items like masks, sanitizers and floor cleaners. Given our focus on passenger convenience especially at such a juncture, significant time and effort is being spent by senior management at all these airports," the association said.

Subhash Goyal, chairman of the tourism committee at ASSOCHAM, also urged the government to help work out a package of measures for the tourism industry "to save jobs and our economy from collapse without compromising on safety and preventive measures."

Pronab Sarkar, president of the Indian Tour Operators Association, also urged the government to review the visa ban in two weeks to see if any relaxation is possible to mitigate the impact.

So far, India has recorded 80 cases of coronavirus infections, including the death of a person from Karnataka. According to data available on John Hopkins University, there have been 128,343

confirmed cases of COVID-19 since the infection erupted in China in December. Of these, 4,720 have died and 68,324 recovered.

Meanwhile the International Air Transport Association has also urged governments to help airlines cope with the unprecedented situation.

"It is unclear how the virus will develop, but whether we see the impact contained to a few markets and a \$63 billion revenue loss, or a broader impact leading to a \$113 billion loss of revenue, this is a crisis," IATA said.

Live Mint Aviation 13/03/2020

New Delhi: Private airport operators have asked the government to allow levying a fee on each flight ticket to cover expenses made by them to screen arriving passengers for coronavirus symptoms.

The operators which include firms managing the country's main aviation gateways like Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru have pitched for provisioning of an "airport operator alleviation package" to meet its additional expenditure.

Private airports body Association of Private Operators (APAO) has argued that airports are facing immediate cash flow pressures in the wake of flights cancelled by airlines but it does not have flexibility to reduce operating expense given that they are fixed in nature.

The APAO has said that while airlines can choose to cancel flights or relocate their aircraft to other markets to reduce operating costs, airports face immediate cash flow pressures with limited ability to reduce fixed cost and few resources to fund capacity expansion efforts for longer term future growth.

"For privately held airports, the situation is even worse as they do not benefit from relief measures but are obliged to continue paying concession fee," said the airports grouping.

With coronavirus spreading to nearly 110 countries and India quarantining itself by suspending all visas except few categories, travel, aviation and tourism sectors have been worst hit.

Live Mint Aviation 13/03/2020

Hyderabad: Budget carrier SpiceJet on Friday announced signing of a pact with GMR Hyderabad Aviation SEZ Limited (GHASL) for setting up a warehousing, distribution and trading facility in the airport operator's aerospace and industrial park.

GHASL is a fully-owned subsidiary of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL).

The facility, to be initially spread over in 33,000 sq feet area, will come up within the Free Trade Warehousing Zone of multi-product special economic zone (SEZ), SpiceJet said in a release.

It may be further expanded to 1,00,000 sq ft based on demand, it said.

GMR Aerospace and Industrial Park is housed in Hyderabad Airport City.

The park offers 'ready-to-use' industrial infrastructure with the flexibility of choosing land within SEZ for businesses focusing on foreign markets and land in domestic tariff area for businesses catering to the Indian market.

"As we expand SpiceXpress, our cargo arm, SpiceJet is proud to partner with GHASL for this first-of-its-kind initiative by an airline in India which will enhance and facilitate cargo industry in the country," airline Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said.

The Free Trade Zone and the end-to-end service provided by SpiceXpress will boost businesses saving valuable time for the airline's partner companies, he said.

Many companies such as CFM Aircraft Engine Support South Asia, SAFRAN Electrical and Power India, United Technologies Corporation India, Turbo Aviation, GMR Aero Technic, among others, already have their facilities in the industrial park.

"We welcome SpiceJet at GMR Aerospace & Industrial Park. Its presence adds great value to the niche space of Free Trade Warehousing Zone," GHASL Chief Executive Officer Aman Kapoor said on the tie-up.

The pharma, aerospace and defence, electronics, automotive and FMCG client base at Telangana will benefit from the availability of warehousing catering to the export and import of goods from Hyderabad Airport, Kapoor noted.

Live Mint Aviation 13/03/2020

NEW DELHI : The coronavirus pandemic will bankrupt most airlines worldwide by the end of May unless governments and the industry take coordinated steps to avoid such a situation, an aviation consultant warned.

Many airlines have probably been driven into technical bankruptcy or substantially breached debt covenants already, Sydney-based consultancy CAPA Centre for Aviation warned in a statement Monday. Carriers are depleting cash reserves quickly because their planes are grounded and those that aren't are flying more than half empty, it said.

"Coordinated government and industry action is needed — now — if catastrophe is to be avoided," CAPA said. Otherwise, "emerging from the crisis will be like entering a brutal battlefield, littered with casualties," it said.

Most of the biggest carriers in the U.S., China and Middle East are likely to survive because of government help or support from their owners, CAPA said.

Airlines have been among the biggest corporate casualties of the virus outbreak as the coronavirus grinds air traffic to a halt. Carriers from American Airlines Group Inc. to Australia's Qantas Airways Ltd. have slashed capacity, while some like Sweden's SAS AB have temporarily laid off most staff. Flybe, Europe's biggest regional airline, has already collapsed. Carriers could face as much as \$113 billion in lost revenue this year, according to the International Air Transport Association.

Live Mint Aviation 16/03/2020

NEW DELHI : Facing low travel demand due to travel restrictions as a result of outspread of Covid-19, Wadia Group-controlled no-frill carrier GoAir Ltd. has asked a section of its employees to go on short-term leave without pay, a spokesperson of the airline said on Tuesday.

"GoAir has also initiated a short-term and temporary rotational leave without pay program that will not only help the company counter the short-term reduction in capacity, but will also ensure that a cross section of our employees stay away from the workplace to ensure business continuity," the spokesperson said in a statement.

The Mumbai-headquartered airline has temporarily suspended its international operations till 15 April, as a result of travel restrictions due to the outspread of Covid-19 pandemic.

The airline flew to a number of international destinations like Maldives, Abu Dhabi, Muscat, Dubai, Dammam, Kuwait, Phuket and Bangkok, before it began canceling flights amidst the Covid-19 pandemic.

A source with direct knowledge of the matter told Mint that some staff from every department at the airline have been asked to go for as long a month's leave.

"From departments which house customer facing staff, to cabin crew, some staff from all departments have been asked to go for leave as the airline has reduced operations due to the outspread of Covid-19," the person mentioned above said requesting anonymity.

Aviation industry lobby group The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has warned that the Covid-19 outbreak, if not further contained, could cost airlines as much as \$113 billion in lost revenue.

Indian airlines, which have been reeling with high costs, and a weak travel appetite before the outbreak of the virus, has been forced to cancel or curtail international operations. The low appetite for domestic travel have also impacted the industry adversely.

"The aviation industry has been one of the most affected (by Covid-19) as governments have issued far reaching travel advisories, special events have been postponed or called off, customers have curtailed their individual travel plans and businesses have restricted the movement of their employees," the airline spokesperson said in a statement adding that a sharp decline in air travel the airline is currently experiencing is unprecedented.

An industry official said that other Indian airlines, which have suspended capacity, could also follow suit soon and send some of its staff on leave.

"Other airlines will be forced to send staff on leave to contain costs but they may not announce it like GoAir," the said the official, who too requested anonymity.

Meanwhile, Singapore Airlines (SIA) on Tuesday suspended additional services across its network.

"Today's suspensions mean that SIA will operate only 50% of the capacity that had been originally scheduled up to end-April," the airline said in a statement.

"Given the growing scale of the border controls globally and its deepening impact on air travel, SIA expects to make further cuts to its capacity," it added.

Globally, more than 7,461 people have died due to Covid-19, while the number of those infected stands at over 186,409. Many governments globally, including the US, have implemented a temporary travel ban in their country.

Live Mint Aviation 17/03/2020

WASHINGTON : The White House is proposing a roughly \$850 billion economic rescue package Tuesday amid the coronavirus outbreak, a sweeping stimulus for businesses and taxpayers amid unseen since the Great Recession of 2008.

Treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin planned to outline the package to Senate Republicans at a private lunch, with officials aiming to have Congress approve it this week.

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, opening the Senate on Tuesday morning, promised swift action.

"The Senate will not adjourn until we have passed significant and bold new steps above and beyond what the House has passed to help our strong nation and our strong underlying economy weather this storm," McConnell said.

Bigger than the 2008 bank bailout or the 2009 recovery act, the White House proposal aims to provide relief for small businesses, \$50 billion for the airline industry and include a massive tax cut for wage-earners.

Two people familiar with the request described it to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

The White House hopes the measure will pass quickly, possibly this week, an enormous political undertaking as the administration scrambled to contain the economic fallout of the severe disruptions to American life from the outbreak.

White House officials offered senators a preliminary briefing late Monday at the Capitol, saying they want the plan approved by Congress as soon as possible, suggesting in a matter of days.

"ASAP," White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said late Monday. "There's an urgency."

The rush to inject cash and resources into the economy is an effort unlike any since the 2008 economic crisis, with political and economic interventions and eye-popping sums to try to protect Americans from the health and financial fallout.

"We've got a lot of work to do from here," Mnuchin told reporters late Monday.

The new proposal is beyond the House's estimated \$100 billion aid package of sick pay, emergency food aid and free virus testing that was approved over the weekend and is pending before the Senate.

Muscling the aid will test Congress and the White House at a pivotal moment in the crisis and in an election year when the two parties have vastly different outlooks on the best way to prop up the economy and help Americans.

[Live Mint viation 18/03/2020](#)

Tourism, hospitality, aviation, transportation and restaurant businesses have ground to a halt nationwide as India braces up for the third stage of the potentially intense coronavirus outbreak since case zero on January 30.

While hospitality is projected to report over Rs 30,000 crore of loss of revenue during 2020, India's aviation sector will report losses in excess of Rs 8,200 crore in the coming quarter as international and domestic flights stay grounded.

The brunt of these shutdowns will be borne by the unsuspecting employees across sectors impacting lives and livelihood. The National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI) has warned that even 10-20 per cent job losses among its 7.3 million employees in restaurants across the country would mean up to 15 lakh unemployed. Something that would have severe social consequences.

Just as economies around the world have notched up coronavirus war chest totalling nearly \$3.5 trillion-bigger than the size of the Indian economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a Task Force to decide on an economic package for India as well. Meanwhile, apex industry association CII has sought Rs 2 lakh crore to be pumped into the Indian economy as a stimulus to ride over the COVID-19 crisis.

Novel coronavirus has come at a particularly inconvenient time for the Indian economy as quarterly GDP growth rate is at a multi-year low of 4.7 per cent. In a recent press conference, RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das admitted that India is not immune to the pandemic and could face slowdown in domestic growth. This crisis has even raised concerns over the country's economic health in the next financial year.

Sectors across the board are feeling the pinch as anxiety over the pandemic increases. Panic buying has increased demand in fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG). OTT platforms have seen a sharp rise in subscriptions and usage as more employers are allowing employees to work from home. But that's about it. On the flipside, aviation, tourism, hospitality, automobile, gems and jewellery, apparel and even pharmaceutical companies are staring at drastic reduction in business.

Here is how coronavirus is ravaging through some of India's most prominent industries one after another:

Aviation

Airlines have got a raw deal with the coronavirus outbreak. With travel and visa restrictions in place, Indian aviation sector saw fares crash by as much as 40 per cent on certain air routes. Several air carriers, including Vistara, GoAir, SpiceJet, have suspended international flights amid dwindling demand and fares.

As per global aviation consultancy CAPA, private domestic carriers are expected to post consolidated losses of up to \$600 million (Rs 4,500 crore) in just one quarter. As for national flag carrier, estimates suggest that it could lose Rs 3,700 crore during the same period. This pegs the overall estimated losses to Rs 8,200 crore. The losses will be primarily due to curtailed flight schedules, slide in new bookings, large-scale cancellations, and rescheduling of flights.

Hospitality

Restrictions on travel have directly impacted the hospitality sector. According to estimates by hospitality consultancy Hotelivate, hotel chains in India are staring at a loss of \$4.2 billion to \$4.7 billion in revenues due to coronavirus outbreak. Loss to the organised market, which is about 5 per

cent of the total lodging sector in India, is estimated to range between \$1.3 billion and \$1.55 billion. This amounts to an erosion of 27-32 per cent of the overall revenues as compared to the previous financial year.

Disruption due to coronavirus could result in 18-20 per cent erosion of nationwide occupancy across the sector, and 12-14 per cent drop in average daily rates (ADRs) for the entire 2020. The hospitality sector is also likely to be impacted by large-scale cancellations and drop in room rates.

Tourism

Tourism sector which accounts for 10 per cent of India's GDP is bleeding with growing visa restrictions and new travel advisories coming into play. "...suspension of visas from all countries to India is expected to have a substantial impact on the foreign tourist arrival in the country which was already witnessing a drop due to the prevailing situation. We have received close to 35 per cent cancellation queries from travellers planning their trip to foreign destinations," Sabina Chopra of Yatra.com recently told Business Today.

Low numbers of foreign tourist arrivals has impacted business of luxury hotels in Udaipur, Goa and Kerala, as room rates in Indian hospitality sector in India have tanked by nearly 18 per cent. The situation is even worse in the aviation sector where fares have crashed as much as 40 per cent in the past week on a lot of routes.

Auto

With more focus on stocking essentials, buyers have stopped going to car dealerships. According to industry body Federation of Automobile Dealers Association, footfalls in dealerships have gone down 45 per cent by the mid of March. This has led to a 70 per cent decline in sales. The industry that is preparing for transition to BS-VI emission norms from April 1, 2020 has a new problem at its hand. There are no buyers for the BS-IV cars sitting in the inventory.

"In the past week there has been drastic drop in sales and customer walk-ins have reduced to a trickle as caution sets in due to fear of spreading of the virus. Counter sales has fallen by 60-70 percent across auto dealerships in these past few days," FADA President Ashish Harshraj Kale recently said. "The situation has worsened... with partial lockdown situation in many towns and cities and a few district magistrates have started issuing notices of closure of shops and establishments including auto dealerships to stop the spread of virus."

The Supreme Court has already refused to grant any relaxation for liquidating the BS-IV inventory. In other words, no BS-IV vehicles can be registered after March 31, 2020 and dealers will have to sell them before then. FADA has approached the apex court once again with its plea for an extension in deadline for BS-IV vehicle registrations. Some dealers even risk closure if their BS-IV stocks are not cleared.

Even the transition to BS-VI regime seems difficult as supply of parts and vehicles from China has been hit due to coronavirus. Overall, the industry is looking at a very bleak outlook for March.

Apparel

According to A Sakthivel, Chairman of Apparel Export Promotion Council, the deeply integrated global value chain of the apparel sector has been impacted by disruptions in both exports and imports.

India exported \$16.2 billion worth of garments in 2018-19. The apparel sector contributes to 43 per cent of India's textiles exports in value terms and enjoys 5 per cent share in the country's overall exports. Apparel sector is also the largest employment provider after agriculture and employs 129 lakh workers, 65-70 per cent of which are women.

But growing restrictions over coronavirus are likely to take a toll on orders and import of raw materials. Buyers staying away from shops due to fear of infection, at a time when apparel makers are trying to introduce new spring summer collection in the market, has put some pressure on the apparel industry.

Amid growing signs of trouble, India's apparel exporters have asked RBI to take steps to ease the working capital crunch faced by the industry in the wake of coronavirus outbreak. They want the apex bank to facilitate faster clearance of banking and packing credit.

Pharmaceuticals

Initially, Indian pharmaceuticals industry was facing troubles in importing raw materials and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from China. Although this snag has been resolved, uncertainties have grown on the exports front, especially to the markets in US and Europe. With travel restrictions between Europe and the US, Indian pharma companies are unsure of product offtake in these regions.

"Most pharma companies are export oriented with high exposure to US and Europe. Their economies are expected to slow down with precautionary measures on trade, which could have a cascading effect," said Geojit Financial Services.

And within India, although the inventory levels are marginally down, there are sufficient stocks across categories for more than a month. Industry bodies have ruled out any price rise for consumers as medicine prices are governed by price control order and cannot be passed on to customers.

Meanwhile, the recent decline in crude oil prices could bode well for pharmaceutical manufacturers in India. "At the same time prices of raw materials like APIs have increased due to cut in availability from China which is the largest source, impacting profitability of the sector. On a positive note, these raw materials are derivatives of crude oil and the current huge drop in oil prices will benefit them in the medium-term as businesses normalise," the agency added.

Gems and jewellery

Retail sales of gems and jewellery in India have tanked 80 per cent in last 10 days as buyers are not going to retail stores. On export front, business fear losses could go as high as 50 per cent amid movement restrictions.

"For the last ten days, people have not been coming to retail outlets to buy jewellery and many have shut shops. We estimate a loss of 80 per cent business and this may worsen in the coming days as more restrictions are announced. We don't know how long it will continue," said

Ananthapadmanabhan, chairman, All India Gems and Jewellery Domestic Council (AIGJC)

FMCG

Unlike most sectors, FMCG has been an unlikely gainer from the outbreak. Panic buying has increased consumption in FMCG sector across the country. Consumers have been hoarding basic food items such as milk, curd, rice, atta, oil and lentils, as well as personal care products such as soaps, handwash and sanitisers due to fear of a lockdown.

Moreover, online grocery platforms are witnessing a huge influx of buyers as they are avoiding brick-and-mortar stores amid the coronavirus contagion. E-commerce platforms have been complaining of running out of stocks of necessities especially products such as handwash and hand sanitisers.

This has led to FMCG companies stepping up production to keep up with the demand. Amul has increased its production by over 20 per cent in order to meet the increased demand. Godrej Consumer has shelved its plans to increase soap prices and is instead going all out to increase production and cater to increased demand. Similarly, ITC has doubled production across its food and personal care business to ensure availability. However, experts have predicted that ramping up production may not result in higher revenue growth for manufacturers.

20/03/2020

OTT platforms

With companies and government announcing work from home and governments shutting down cinema halls and multiplexes, OTT platforms have seen a rise in subscribers and usage. As restrictions remain in place, and people stay at home, this trend is expected to pick up. However, putting out content on schedule will be a problem as production process is being hampered.

What analysts say

Earlier this week, in view of the coronavirus outbreak, ratings agency Moody's Investor Service slashed India's economic growth projection for financial year 2019-20 to 5.3 per cent. Standard & Poor's Global Ratings went on to lower India's GDP growth estimate for FY20 to 5.2 per cent. Both had similar reasons - disruptions in global economy due to coronavirus.

"On the demand side, inoperability analysis for three sectors namely Transport, Tourism and Hotels show significant impact on demand and hence output. On an aggregate basis, we estimate that the impact of a 5 per cent inoperability shock could be 90 basis points on GDP from Trade, Hotel and Transport and Transport, Storage and Communication segment that could be spread over FY20 and FY21, with a larger impact in FY21," a recent SBI Ecowrap report said.

Meanwhile, government increased duties on petrol and diesel by Rs 3 per litre - the steepest hike in eight years - after global oil prices fell. The idea is to shore up money which can be used to bear the emergency expenses arising due to coronavirus, and rollout a fiscal package to help badly hit sectors tide over these tough times.

"The increased excise revenue from oil should not be used for bridging the fiscal gap and pleasing the markets; rather sound economics demands it must be used as a fiscal package for income support to the people working in the unorganised sector who are already facing the brunt of loss of jobs," SBI Ecowrap report on Thursday said.

Aviation sector to report over Rs 8,200 crore losses in just three months

The losses will be primarily attributed to the curtailed flight schedules, slide in new bookings, large-scale cancellations, and rescheduling of flights in the wake of coronavirus

As the coronavirus crisis affects the global aviation industry, the Indian carriers are equally feeling the heat of the global pandemic. As per global aviation consultancy CAPA, the private domestic carriers are expected to post consolidated losses of up to \$600 million (Rs 4,500 crore) in just one quarter. This doesn't include Air India's expected losses. Air India controls 11.6 per cent domestic market share, and 51.88 per cent in the international segment (among domestic carriers) along with its subsidiary Air India Express.

According to some estimates, Air India earns over Rs 1,230 crore a month from international operations. Since the coronavirus outbreak, the national carrier has nearly suspended all of its international flights which would lead to a loss of an estimated Rs 3,700 crore over three months. The losses will be primarily attributed to the curtailed flight schedules, slide in new bookings, large-scale cancellations, and rescheduling of flights in the wake of coronavirus. **So far, the biggest impact has been felt on the international side of the carriers like IndiGo, Air India, SpiceJet, GoAir and Vistara. But as the panic of community transmission of Covid-19 grows in India, there's a strong possibility of domestic airlines curtailing their domestic flight schedules as well. CAPA has predicted that nearly 150 planes will be grounded initially by Indian carriers, and the numbers are likely to swell as more domestic operations are curtailed over the coming weeks.**

"In the absence of serious and meaningful government intervention, such an outcome could lead to several Indian airlines shutting down operations by May or June due to a lack of cash," CAPA said in a report.

The situation is likely to be grim at the Air India which had, in January, floated the sale document for 100 per cent stake sale. Although the government has already extended the deadline to submit the final bids to April 30 (from March 17 earlier), it's unlikely that anybody would bid for the national carrier in the middle of a crisis situation. "The government will need to commit significant and immediate interim funding of \$300-400 million (Rs 2,250-3,000 crore) for the national carrier to ensure that it is able to operate at least in its current condition until such time as the sale transaction is concluded," says CAPA.

As on November 2019, Air India was flying to 98 destinations - 56 domestic and 42 international. Its domestic departures were 2,712 per week whereas international departures stood at 450 per week. The international segment contributes over 65 per cent of the Air India's passenger revenues. The coronavirus outbreak would also severely impact the employment scenario in the aviation sector, and the airlines would be forced to ask employees to take mandatory leave and leave-without-pay for one-two months till the crisis subsides. Low-cost carrier IndiGo and GoAir have reportedly asked employees to take pay cuts of 5-25 per cent. In a letter to employees, IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta has reportedly announced salary cuts across different grades while he is himself taking a cut of 25 per cent. Air India too has reportedly asked its crew to take 30-40 per cent cut in allowances.

Meanwhile some reports suggest that the ruling BJP government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is mulling over \$1.6 billion rescue package for the aviation industry. Though sector experts say that it's unlikely that an out-and-out bailout will be announced at the moment. "For aviation companies, the revenues are drying up but the costs are still there. I don't think the government will come out with any financial support given their fiscal position which leaves less room for an aid. They are already supporting Air India which is a huge financial burden. If at all, they would announce some concessions," says Dhiraj Mathur, aviation expert and former partner at PwC. In a letter to the aviation secretary dated March 13, the board of airline representatives in India had asked for relief measures in the form of 30 per cent reduction in aeronautical charges for six months. "Passenger uplifts have dipped considerably which has badly affected the cash flows of the airlines...The airlines are in the brunt of a recessionary situation with decreased travel demand and lower yields," the letter said.

Global aviation body IATA (International Air Transport Association), which represents some 290 airlines or 82 per cent of total air traffic globally, has estimated \$113 billion of losses for global airline industry in 2020 (as on March 9), which is significantly higher than its previous estimates (in February) of \$29.3 billion losses.

Business Today, 19/03/2020

New Delhi:

The Delhi government's order banning flights at the Delhi airport as part of its sweeping lockdown measures in the city to counter the spread of coronavirus, ran into trouble as the Director General of Civil Aviation - the country's aviation regulator -- said domestic flights will continue to operate from the airport.

"All domestic and international flights which are coming to Delhi are being suspended," Mr Kejriwal said while announcing the lockdown along with Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal this evening.

Within minutes, the DGCA issued its comment in a keen reminder that it is the Centre and not the Delhi government, which has jurisdiction over the aviation sector.

Airlines have played the key role in the spread of COVID-19 from a tiny corner in China to every continent and practically every nation in the world. In the process, airlines have been one of the hardest-hit sectors as social distancing started and travel became the first casualty.

Last week, Indigo had announced pay cuts for its staff. Some airlines - domestic and international -- have cut down their services.

Two days ago, the government temporarily stopped all incoming international flights. Only the domestic flights are operating at the moment.

As COVID-19 spread across the country and touched 260, Delhi was placed under lockdown till March 31 - part of the imposition of nationwide restrictions. Delhi has sealed its borders, stopped public transport and shut shops, allowing in only the essential items.

The Delhi Metro has already announced that it will stop services till March 31 and the Delhi Police have imposed prohibitory orders across the city, banning gatherings of more than four people.

Business Today 22/03/2020

New Delhi: The rapid and alarming onslaught of the Coronavirus pandemic which has already begun to show detrimental effects on the global economy is projected to have an adverse effect on the aviation sector. The India aviation industry is no longer alienated to the Covid-19 menace as India's largest carrier IndiGo has grounded about 16 planes out of its 260-aircraft fleet, said an IndiGo source on condition of anonymity.

IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta on Thursday announced that the airline was instituting **pay cuts for senior employees and he would himself take the highest cut of 25 per cent on account of the novel Coronavirus epidemic that has dealt a serious blow to the aviation industry.**

"With the precipitous drop in revenues, the very survival of the airline industry is now at stake," Dutta said in his email to employees. "We have to pay careful attention to our cash flow so that we do not run out of cash."

"With a great deal of reluctance and a deep sense of regret, we are therefore instituting pay cuts for all employees, excluding Bands A and B, starting April 1, 2020," the chief executive officer said.

"The load factors have gone down substantially on the domestic flights. The domestic flights are flying almost half empty, and the passengers on international flights are even lower," says an IndiGo official on condition of anonymity.

Owing to the travel restrictions imposed by the govt in wake of the Coronavirus outbreak, IndiGo cancelled its Delhi-Istanbul and Chennai-Kuala Lumpur from March 18, 2020 until March 31, 2020. The airline has already cancelled flights between Bangalore-Kuala Lumpur until March 31, 2020 and

Delhi-Kuala Lumpur until April 30, 2020.

Till March 6, IndiGo had cancelled 42 weekly flights to destinations such as Singapore, Bangkok, Guangzhou, Chengdu, and Hong Kong. Additionally, the LCC (low-cost carrier) has announced cancellation of flights between Mumbai-Jeddah and Bangalore-Jeddah from March 29, 2020 until April 14, 2020, and Chennai-Calicut and Calicut-Jeddah flights from March 29, 2020 until April 24, 2020.

On March 11, IndiGo informed stock exchanges that it has been impacted by Coronavirus. "In January and February 2020, IndiGo experienced modest impact from the Coronavirus. We cancelled our flights to China and Hong Kong and reduced frequency to certain other South-east Asia markets...over the past few days however, week-on-week, we have seen a 15-20 per cent decline in our daily bookings. Please note that the numbers could change from here based on how the situation evolves."

Till last week, major domestic airlines like IndiGo, Air India and SpiceJet had to bear the brunt to their operations on the international side but as the Coronavirus scare looms large over the domestic market, large-scale cancellation and rescheduling are beginning to happen even among Indian passengers.

The low passenger demand has forced airlines to now re-strategise their flight schedules in the domestic market as well. Though IndiGo has thus far not announced any changes in its domestic flight schedule.

According to aviation consultancy firm CAPA, Indian carrier may initially ground around 150 aircraft, and the number is expected to grow as more domestic operations are curtailed over the coming weeks. "If the decline in traffic continues to be severe, the majority of the fleet could be grounded by April. By extension, the reduced scale of operations could impact the requirement for around 30 per cent of airline staff and up to 50 per cent of ground handling staff... For the first couple of months this could potentially be handled through mandatory leave and leave-without-pay initiatives for 1-2 months... At an industry level, consolidated losses are estimated to be in the range of \$500-600 million for the quarter (excluding Air India)," a recent CAPA report said.

Some reports suggest the ruling BJP government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is mulling over \$1.6 billion rescue package for the aviation industry, which has been one of the worst affected sectors due to Coronavirus.

ABP News Bureau 19/03/2020

Federal indirect tax body, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, on Saturday decided to raise the tax rate on mobile handsets and specified components to fix a tax anomaly and lowered the tax rate on aircraft maintenance services, union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said here.

The Council decided to raise the GST rate on mobile handsets and specified components to 18% from 12% and lower the rate on aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services to 5% from 18%, Sitharaman said after the Council meeting. All decisions will come into effect from 1 April, she said.

“It was decided by the Council that GST rate on mobile phones and specified parts which presently attract 12% will now be at 18%. For all other items, where inversion of duty structure is there, if there is a need to calibrate the tax rate to remove the duty inversion, we will examine it at a future meeting,” the minister said. The other items on which the anomaly of inverted duty is present include footwear and fertilizers.

The minister also said the reduced GST rate on aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services of 5% comes with full input tax credit. “We expect this change will assist in setting up MROs in India,” said the minister.

The GST Council also decided to rationalize the tax rate on handmade and machine made matchsticks to 12%. At present, handmade match sticks are taxed at 5% and machine made ones are taxed at 18%, the minister said.

The Council also decided to give tax relief to taxpayers by amending the law. The interest payable for the delay in payment of GST will be charged on the net tax liability, not the gross tax liability with effect from 1 July, 2017. “The law will be amended with retrospective effect,” said the minister.

The Council also reviewed the performance of GSTN, the IT backbone of the new indirect tax system and asked Infosys chairman Nandan Nilekani to fix all glitches by July 2020. Nilekani made a presentation at the Council. He has also been requested to give updates about improvements achieved in the system at the next three GST Council meetings.

Infosys made a detailed presentation and pressed for additional capacity and manpower. “The Council decided to enhance capacity and man power. He (Nandan Nilekani) thought it would require time till January 2021 for achieving various milestones. We have asked that all these have to be achieved by July 2020,” the minister said.

[LiveMint 14/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: Global airlines are likely to cut capacity by 40-60% year-on-year for the second quarter of 2020 and more than 75% in some cases as the aviation sector takes a big hit due to the coronavirus outbreak, according to rating agency Moody's Investors Service.

"On a full-year basis, we expect global industry capacity to fall 25% to 35%, assuming the spread of the virus slows by the end of June and, subsequently, passenger demand returns," it added.

While large airlines have adequate liquidity "to manage through a fairly significant short-term disruption through June, and a continuing but more moderate disruption through the third quarter", the rating agency said smaller and less liquid airlines "will be more exposed, and there is potential for some airlines to collapse within a short period without additional support from shareholders and central governments."

Many of the stronger companies have sufficient capital to withstand a one-two month grounding, but few can withstand this for five-six months or more, Moody's said.

Aircraft values, which are an important store of value and source of potential liquidity, appear to be holding up at the moment, the clear downturn that has gripped the industry may lead many financial institutions and investors to consider limiting or shrinking their exposure to the sector, the rating agency said.

Lower oil prices will mitigate the hardship for those airlines which do not hedge prices of the fuel. That would benefit US carriers, while their European counterparts -- which hedge more extensively -- will be burdened by higher prices or levels at which they have hedged.

Brent crude futures are currently trading at around \$26 a barrel compared with \$60 at the start of the year.

"Many airlines will require financial support from federal and state governments, particularly if more aggressive measures to contain the spread of the virus are implemented," says Moody's.

Carriers with a purely domestic focus are likely to fare better if domestic travel restrictions remain for a shorter period than international flight restrictions, it added.

"While weaker airlines may be pushed to default, we do not expect even the strongest companies to emerge unscathed," Moody's said.

[Live Mint Aviation 23/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), for the second time in a row, has cut aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices by nearly 12%, effective Saturday, following the slump in global crude oil prices.

The company, in a statement, also said that ATF prices will now be revised every fortnight instead of at the beginning of every month.

Jet fuel prices in Delhi have been cut by 11.7% to ₹50,171.26 a litre, effective Saturday, according to information available on the company's website.

In Mumbai, ATF will now cost ₹49,726.86, down from ₹56,400.74 a litre. In Kolkata and Chennai, ATF prices have been set 10.2% and 11.6% lower at ₹55,555.98 and ₹52,445.46.

In January, prices were as high as ₹64,323 a litre.

Other oil retailers typically follow IOCL on price revisions. Fuel accounts for as much as 40% of the expenses of domestic airlines, with ATF prices in India being among the highest in the world.

The cut in prices could bring some relief to airlines who have been hit hard by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has led to travel curbs across the country and world. Domestic airlines have had to suspend international operations, cut domestic routes, and also send staff on forced leave to tackle falling revenue and pressure on margins.

A decline of \$1 in ATF prices translates into a positive impact of 0.5-0.7% on profit margins of carriers, according to industry estimates.

On Saturday, more than 60 new cases were registered in India, taking the total to 315 in the country. World over, the number of infected with the novel coronavirus stands at 307,104, while the death toll is at 13,044.

Indian Oil said, despite the threat of the outbreak, it continues to maintain normal operations at its refineries, pipelines and marketing locations across the country.

All of the company's refineries remain unaffected and are operating at 100% capacity for the last one week, the state-owned refiner and retailer said.

"Appropriate advisories have been issued for Indian Oil fuel station dealers, pump attendants, LPG distributors and delivery boys manning the customer touch-points to maintain approved safety protocols in response to the COVID-19 pandemic," a company statement said.

[Live Mint Aviation 23/02/2020](#)

NEW DELHI : Amid concerns of having been infected with the novel coronavirus infection, officials of the aviation ministry went on self-quarantine for 14 days after coming in contact with Bharatiya Janata Party's member of Parliament Dushyant Singh during a Parliamentary Standing Committee meeting.

Singh and his mother and former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raje themselves are on a two-week self-quarantine after meeting Bollywood singer Kanika Kapoor at a party in Lucknow. Kapoor on Friday confirmed that she had contracted the infection, officially called COVID-19.

"Officers of the Ministry of Civil Aviation who attended the Parliamentary Standing Committee meeting on 18/3/20 and came in close proximity with referred Hon'ble Member of Parliament have gone into self quarantine from Friday evening as a precautionary measure," the aviation ministry tweeted late Friday.

Earlier in the day, Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien had also tweeted that he would go on a two week self-quarantine after sitting next to Singh during the meeting of Parliamentary Standing Committee of Transport, Culture and Tourism on Wednesday.

"Am on self-isolation and following all protocol, as I was sitting right next to MP Dushyant for two hours at a Parliament meeting on March 18," O'Brien tweeted.

Apart from O'Brien, the T. G. Venkatesh-chaired committee consists of BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Congress' Raj Babbar and Anto Antony, as well as independent MP Sumalatha Ambareesh, according to PRS Legislative Research.

Since the Coronavirus outbreak started, 241 cases have been confirmed in the country, out of which 23 have recovered while four have recovered.

Live Mint Aviation 23/03/2020

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday reviewed the economic fallout of the Covid-19 outbreak with the ministers and officials of civil aviation, MSME, tourism and animal husbandry to announce a package for the distressed sectors.

However, Sitharaman clarified that this was not a meeting of the Covid-19 economic task response force announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his address to the nation on Thursday evening.

“The task force is yet to be constituted. But keeping in mind the urgency of the situation, we are holding the meetings. Of course, the task force when it is constituted, will also get the benefit of these discussions,” Sitharaman told reporters, refusing to commit a deadline for the response package to be announced by the government.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to the nation on Thursday evening said he has constituted the task force under Sitharaman to finalise a set of measures needed to reduce the economic difficulties.

“This global pandemic is also going to have a wide-ranging impact on the economy. This Task Force will take decisions in the near future, based on regular interactions and feedback from all stakeholders, and analysis of all situations and dimensions. This Task Force will also ensure that all steps taken to reduce the economic difficulties are effectively implemented,” Modi added.

After meeting Sitharaman, civil aviation minister Hardeep Puri **said the government will address the layoffs by private airlines at an appropriate time.**

On Thursday, **IndiGo announced a pay cut to a section of its staff to contain costs amid flight suspensions and curbs on operations while India banned all commercial international flights to and from the country for a week starting 22 March.** The government also advised its citizens to avoid all non-essential travel and banned passengers from certain Covid-19-affected nations.

Government is also considering a relief package for airlines to help tide over a squeeze in cash flows and severe business disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, Mint reported on Thursday. The steps being considered include staggered payments for jet fuel to state-run oil marketing companies, as well as for parking and other charges at airports.

Animal husbandry minister Giriraj Singh said he demanded loan restructuring for poultry, fisheries sectors which have been badly impacted due to a fall in demand.

A MSME ministry official said a slew of measures were discussed with the finance minister to reduce pressure on MSMEs. “We have asked deferment of various payments like GST returns, electricity bills for MSMEs. We have also sought state firms to clear outstanding dues to small and medium firms

expeditiously. Government will announce measures for MSMEs very soon," he said under condition of anonymity.

Live Mint Aviation 20/03/2020

New Delhi: **Two rumours gripped the aviation industry as the COVID virus revealed its full stranglehold over the sector earlier this week. One, the aviation industry in India has been speculating on which would be the next airline to down shutters.** This question has been a topic of much debate for a long time now — ever since Jet Airways became history. Many in the sector argue that there will be at best three to four players in the sector over the long term and that the weaker airlines will be weeded out sooner or later.

The epidemic has brought home that reality with a bang. Even CAPA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kapil Kaul, usually an industry cheerleader who always errs on the positive side of caution, seemed pessimistic. "If this continues for another two weeks with the same severity, a shutdown of certain players cannot be ruled out," he said.

Almost all the airlines are seeing a drop in loads, which is expected to intensify as the numbers for March come in. International operations have been suspended by almost all players. **A senior official in IndiGo said that while loads had currently shown a dip of 12-15 per cent, the drop in bookings in the coming weeks was even sharper and therefore they expected a further dip in loads for April.** But airports in India are equally stressed and claim they need support too.

On March 16, Mumbai-headquartered GoAir began to give everyone the jitters. The airline stopped all international operations, drastically reduced domestic flights, and asked employees to stay at home without pay. The contracts of 70-odd expat pilots, signed as recently as August last year, have been terminated and the pilots have been asked to return to their home countries with a promise that their "full and final settlement would be done in due course". The airline asked its own employees to go on leave without pay, aiming to cut at least 35 per cent of its staff across departments and close to 50 per cent in support functions. A staggered salary cut of 20 per cent has been suggested for the remainder staff. GoAir has reduced its fleet from 54 to 38 and will be reducing further down to 20 aircraft. In an email response, the airline maintained that this was temporary and in response to the present crisis but that the airline expects to remain on track and add 12-15 aircraft every year to its fleet right up to 2025. In the airline's case, sources maintained that it faced a double whammy as there was no senior management to handle the crisis.

22/03/20 Anjali Bharrgava/Business Standard

Guwahati: **Flight operations in all the airports of North East has been normal during the 'Janta Curfew' today March 22, though there is a shortage of transport to and from the airports in view of the lockdown.**

However, number of flights remain cancelled since yesterday flying in different sectors in the North East region due to operational reasons and for putting a brake to the spread of COVID 19.

"There is little short fall in transport as compared to normal days, but it is also being managed by different means," Airport Authority of India (AAI) spokesperson Indra Mohan Kumar said.

He added that operations at Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Silchar, Jorhat and Tezpur airports, Shillong in Meghalaya, Lengpui in Mizoram, Imphal in Manipur, and Agartala in Tripura are normal.

In Agartala, except a Spicejet flight in Kolkata-Agartala-Kolkata sector, other flights are operation as per normal schedule.

The sole international flights in Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport at Guwahati operated by Druk Airlines from Paro and Singapore have been cancelled from March 21 to March 29.

22/03/20 G plus

Surat: Airlines operating from Surat airport have started cancelling flights due to sharp drop in number of passengers amid virus scare.

Air India announced cancellation of its evening flight between Delhi and Surat for a week from March 22 to 27. The AI has also cancelled its morning flight every Wednesday and Saturday and evening flight every Saturday during the summer schedule.

SpiceJet had cancelled its flights from Surat to Goa, Jaisalmer, Jaipur and Udaipur on Friday. Majority of flights operating from Surat remained cancelled on Saturday.

Sources said passenger footfall at the airport has gone down drastically as the airport is also facing huge drop in passenger traffic.

22/03/20 Times of India

India's aviation industry had been tipped to become the third largest air passenger market by 2024 with demand growing by double digits in recent years but the high-flying times are fast coming to an end.

Domestic passenger growth fell to just 3.74 per cent last year, compared with 18.6 per cent in 2018, figures that have cast a gloomy outlook on a sector that had become habituated to dizzying growth.

An ominous sign came when Jet Airways, the country's largest international and second largest domestic carrier, went belly up last April. Since then, demand for air travel has been tepid because of a slowdown in the Indian economy.

Intense competition between the airlines, despite strained balance sheets and little liquidity, has not helped either.

Now a downturn precipitated by the coronavirus pandemic threatens to send the ailing industry into a tailspin. A new report last week from the Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation India (Capa India) said the country's aviation industry could see a fall of around 50 per cent in domestic air travel demand in the next six to eight weeks.

22/03/20 Straits Times

Mumbai: I had expected the funniest moment of a bizarre vacation to take place preferably in a Woolworths store in Sydney and ideally in the toilet paper aisle. Strangely and somewhat alarmingly, it had taken place surrounded by luxury perfumes in Singapore's Changi Airport on Wednesday evening when a fellow stranded middle-aged passenger I won't identify chose the wrong moment

and words to try and lighten the mood. “Ab toh Sushma Swaraj bhi nahi hai humko bachane ke liye,” he said, laughing alone.

It is perfectly normal for an Indian citizen stuck abroad to invoke the late external affairs minister when his government can't make up its mind about whether or not to allow him to return home.

For half a week before we had cut short our three-week trip, my mother and I had gawped at supermarket shelves devoid of toilet paper, serviettes and pasta among others, been taken aback at notices reminding customers to keep their hands on their wallets and not on fellow customers and had attended a baby brother's wedding in a virus hotspot, all in a carefree manner that said – this will never happen to us.

22/03/20 Srinath Rao/Indian Express

Kathmandu: Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) has postponed its regular flights to and from India's New Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore cities starting from March 22.

The national flight carrier said that a decision to that end was taken after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation of India released information, **regarding regular flights having been halted to those destinations till March 29 in response to COVID-19.**

Passengers who have tickets for the canceled flights are eligible for a full refund with no extra charge, NAC said in a statement.

22/03/20 Khabarhub

Pune: The Pune airport started screening domestic flyers with a history of foreign travel from Friday, a senior authority of the facility said.

A state health department official said, “We ask the flyers about their travel history in the last 28 days and on that basis we screen them. We are trusting the information they give us,” the official said, adding the travellers with history of travel abroad are asked which country they visited, following which they are screened.

Pune airport director Kuldeep Singh said the state health department had commissioned two teams to carry out the screenings at the facility.

He said on an average, one passenger takes between 10 and 15 seconds to get screened. At present, there are 170 flight movements at the airport and 85 domestic flights arrive at the facility. “There has been a drop of around 20 to 25% passengers in most flights,” an airline official said.

22/03/20 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Patna: Jayaprakash Narayan International (JPNI) Airport, Patna on Saturday started to 'stamp' coronavirus suspects, who are returning to city from abroad.

Suspected passengers were marked with inedible ink on their hands after the screening and symptomatic health check at the airport by the state health officials. The marked passengers are required to be home quarantined as a precaution to contain the potential spread of Covid-19.

CISF officials at Patna airport said the coronavirus suspects are being stamped on their left hands with a home quarantined tag.

Airport director Bhupesh C H Negi said all the passenger touch points, including chairs, railings, gate knobs, trolleys, washroom, counters and buses are being properly sanitized by the staffs. "We have also started thermal screening of departing passengers in security check area," he added.

[22/03/20 Faryal Rumi/Times of India](#)

A video shared by the official Twitter account of Delhi Airport providing assistance to the passengers is going viral. It is the most overwhelming thing you will see today.

In the viral video, staff at the international airport can be seen giving masks and food to the passengers waiting patiently in the sitting area. As the staff provides the passengers with the necessities, they can be seen applauding their efforts with much enthusiasm and smile on their faces. The video was shared on Twitter with the caption, "In these testing times, your appreciation is what keeps us going. We continue to try our best to assist passengers and extend all possible support. #JantaCurfew #CoronaUpdatesInIndia #Covid19India #IndiaFightCorona."

The official Twitter handle of Delhi Airport thanked the people for their appreciation and promised that they would try to "assist passengers and extend all possible support."

They also shared pictures of the staff providing food and masks to passengers on the same thread.

[22/03/20 India Today](#)

Just days after announcing suspension of its international operations, GoAir has joined IndiGo and Air India to cut salaries in order to tide over the Coronavirus pandemic.

Airline CEO Vinay Dube, in a message to its employees, said the top leadership has voluntarily decided to **take a 50 percent pay cut with immediate effect.**

Dube, who mailed employees on March 21, said the measure is temporary.

Apart from reducing salaries and suspending international operations, the Wadia family-owned airline has also terminated contracts of its expat pilots, and put about one-third of its employees on leave without day.

[22/03/20 moneycontrol.com](#)

New Delhi: On Saturday, **Delhi's international airport witnessed chaotic scenes as large crowds of passengers who'd arrived on international flights were subjected to long hours of waiting for the mandatory screening for the novel coronavirus, or Covid-19, before the authorities let them exit the premises.**

Several passengers took to social media to share their ordeal.

A Twitter user, Chaitanya Kabra said, "This is what is happening at Delhi airport. We landed at 7 am today and were made to stand in a long que for temperature checks. After that, we were made to sit in arrival hall for three hours."

So this is what happening at delhi airport. We landed at <https://t.co/kPHGPVY8Lz> today and were

made to stand in a long que for temperature check. After that we were made to sit in arrival hall for 3 hours, still with no medical check ups and amongst undeclared symptomatic people chaitanya kabra (@chaitanyakabra) March 21, 2020

Another user, Shailesh Patwa tweeted, "It is horrible situation at IGI Airport. Hundreds of travellers are being kept as a group touching each other for hours! My daughter is among them and she has sent me a video. It is SHOCKING that people are NOT maintaining safe distance! Can someone help IMMEDIATELY!"

22/03/20 Poulomi Saha/India Today

Ministry of Civil Aviation

Operations of domestic schedule commercial airlines to cease operation from the mid night 23.59 IST hours on 24/3/2020.

Posted On: 23 MAR 2020 4:49PM by PIB Delhi

The operations of domestic schedule commercial airlines shall cease operations with effective from the mid night 23.59 IST hours on 24/3/2020.

Airlines have to plan operations so as to land at their destination before 2359 hours on 24/3/2020

The restrictions shall not apply to solely cargo carrying flights.

RJ

(Release ID: 1607740) Visitor Counter : 416

NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Monday suspended breathalyzer test through the tube process till further orders for air traffic controllers (ATC) amid the novel coronavirus outbreak.

The court also directed the Directorate General of Medical Sciences (Air), Air Traffic Controllers' Guild (India), Airport Authority of India and doctors to explore new methods to conduct the test.

The order was in response to a plea filed by advocates Piyush Sanghi and Khushbu Sahu for Air Traffic Controllers' Guild (India).

The plea had sought direction for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Airports Authority of India (AAI) to suspend the test.

According to norms, the test has to be conducted on those engaged in air traffic control service, aerodrome management, aircraft maintenance and repair, ground handling agency, aircraft operation to gauge alcohol levels of the staff while on duty.

The plea said the apparatus "used is never sanitized or sterilized after each use. Even a single ground staff who closely interact with the aircraft and passengers is a carrier of COVID19 (dormant stage) who in turn appears for breath analyzer examination, she or he can transmit the virus to the other staff members who are next in queue for the test by the usage of infected apparatus."

[Live Mint Aviation 23/03/2020](#)

New Delhi: India will ban passenger flights on all domestic routes from Tuesday midnight in a desperate bid to arrest the spread of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic in the world's second-most populous nation.

"Domestic scheduled commercial airlines shall cease operations with effect from 25 March," a senior government official said on Monday. Dedicated cargo airlines would be exempted from the suspension, the official said.

The official said all airlines will have to plan operations in such a way so that they are able to land by 23.59 hours on 24 March.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said in a circular late Monday that the ban will remain in force until 31 March midnight.

The Union government's decision follows requests by several states, including Bihar and West Bengal, asking the Centre to suspend flights in a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19.

The ongoing pandemic has resulted in significantly reduced global travel demand, accelerated by border closures, travel bans and country lock-downs, which has impacted global businesses adversely.

Globally, over 14,717 people have died due to the deadly virus, while the number of infected crossed 339,645, according to the latest data by Johns Hopkins University.

Many governments, including the US, have implemented a temporary travel ban.

The Indian government has also imposed a temporary ban on foreigners entering the country.

The aviation and travel sector has been one of the worst hit by the Covid-19 outbreak, which has led to travel restrictions. Most Indian airlines have already suspended international operations or reduced it to a bare minimum.

India has also banned all international flights from midnight on Sunday for a week.

The timing and resumption of services is entirely in the control of the government but it will most likely be beyond 31 March, CAPA India said in a statement on Monday. "As a result, the entire Indian commercial fleet of 650 planes lies grounded" it said.

According to a survey by industry chamber FICCI titled Impact of Covid-19 on Indian Economy, some domestic airlines have reported a more than a 30% drop in domestic travel this summer, compared with last year, while airfare on popular domestic routes have fallen by 20-25%.

"According to the data available with the ministry of civil aviation, nearly 585 international flights have been cancelled to and from India between 1 February and 6 March because of the outbreak of coronavirus. Cash reserves of airline companies are running low and many are almost at the brink of bankruptcy," the FICCI report said, adding that the industry needs an urgent bailout from the government.

Globally, airlines are likely to cut capacity by 40-60% for the second quarter of 2020 and, in some instances, over 75% year-on-year, according to Moody's Investors Service. "On a full-year basis, we expect global industry capacity to fall 25% to 35%, assuming the spread of the virus slows by the end of June and, subsequently, passenger demand returns," it added.

While large airlines have adequate liquidity "to manage through a fairly significant short-term disruption through June, and a continuing but more moderate disruption through the third quarter", the rating agency said smaller airlines with limited cash reserves "will be more exposed, and there is potential for some airlines to collapse within a short period without additional support from shareholders and central governments".

The aviation industry lobby group, The International Air Transport Association (IATA), has warned that the Covid-19 outbreak, if not contained, could cost airlines \$113 billion.

"IATA now sees 2020 global revenue losses for the passenger business of between \$63 billion (in a scenario where Covid-19 is contained in current markets) and \$113 billion (in a scenario with a broader spreading of Covid-19)."

[Live Mint Aviation 23/03/2020](#)

NEW DELHI: As the ban on international flights came into effect in India in the wake of novel coronavirus outbreak, the Union health ministry on Monday told Indian airlines that passengers with "home quarantined" stamps on them should not be allowed to board any domestic flight.

The ministry had on Sunday asked the airlines to let the passengers with stamps of "home quarantine" on them board domestic transit flights so that they can reach their final destination.

The ministry believes that such passengers, who came from coronavirus-affected countries and have instructions to be under home quarantine for 14 days, have reached their final destination by now, a statement said.

The government has directed that every asymptomatic passenger coming from abroad must stay in home quarantine for 14 days. Such passengers are stamped with "home quarantined" stamps on their hand before leaving the airport.

"As all international flights have stopped on Sunday (March 22, 2020). The home quarantined

passengers were permitted till now to travel on connecting flights to reach their final destination within India.

"They should've already proceeded on the connecting flights by now. With the stoppage of all international services 24 hours back, there is no rationale in carrying these passengers anymore," the Airport Health Organisation (APHO) told airlines in an e-mail on Monday.

"Please do not accept any passengers with Home quarantine stamps anymore. Any specific cases henceforth will have to be cleared by APHOs positively and discussed with the Regional Medical Officers," it said.

COVID cases in India rose to 415, the health ministry said, as much of the country locked down on Monday with the Centre warning of legal action against those violating the restrictions enforced to curtail the pandemic, which has claimed more than 14,500 lives globally. In India, seven people have died due to the disease.

The Economic Times of India 23/03/2020

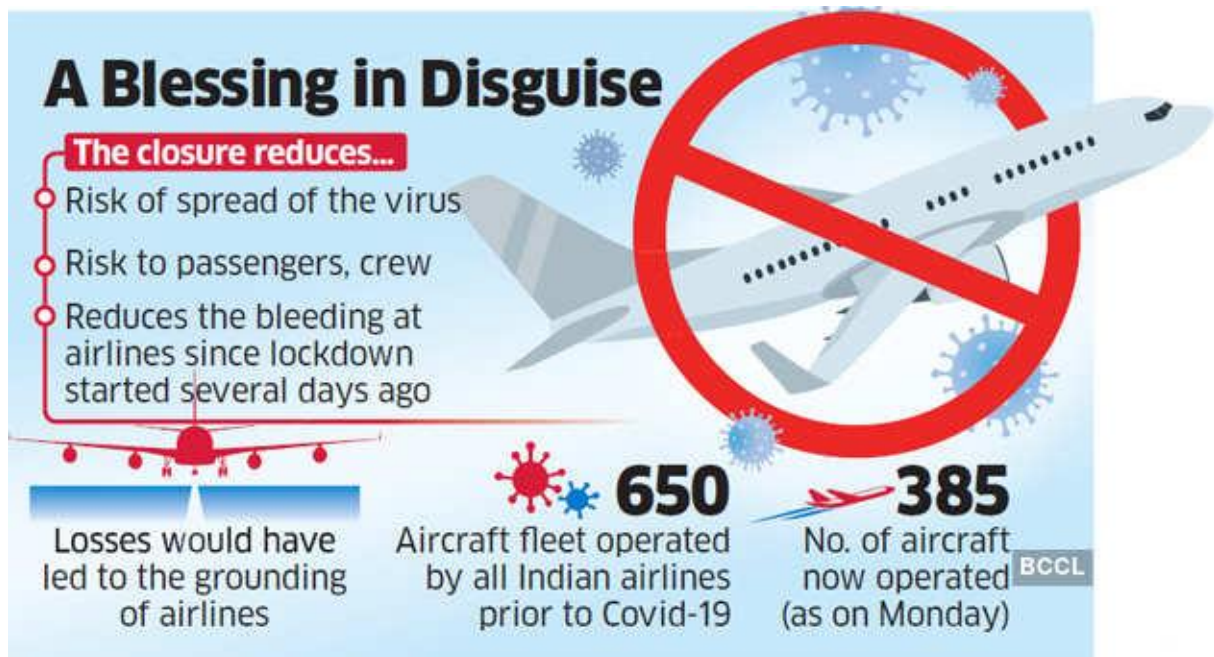
NEW DELHI: The government's decision on Monday to suspend all domestic airline operations from Tuesday midnight is a blessing for the airline industry, which was struggling with low passenger yields and losses.

"Airlines were losing money and the situation was so grim that some airlines would have anyway grounded operations this week," said an executive, who did not want to be identified.

Soon after the announcement of the shutdown, some routes to smaller towns like Delhi-Lucknow and Delhi-Gorakhpur registered a huge spike in fares as people rushed to fly out of the last flights available. However to other cities, like Delhi-Mumbai, did not see any increase in average fares.

Industry executives ET got in touch with said all domestic carriers were losing money.

"This closure not just reduces risk of spread of the virus but also the risk to pax and crew. It also reduces the bleeding at the airlines since the lockdowns started several days ago. Every airline was bleeding cash, flying with demand non-existent. A better choice was to not fly, to preserve cash. But no airline wanted to do this unilaterally or be the first mover as they would be perceived as being weaker than the others," said an industry executive, who did not wish to be identified. "Bigger the operations, bigger the losses. But smaller airlines, with less or no cash reserves, were at bigger risk of going down," said another executive on the condition of anonymity.



After coronavirus hit India, Indian airlines have been rescheduling operations to adjust to the low demand across the country. All carriers, prior to Covid-19, operated a fleet of over 650 aircraft, which had already reduced to 385 aircraft by Monday morning.

CAPA, an aviation consultancy firm, predicts the aviation industry will be hugely impacted by Coronavirus-led slowdown.

“The severity of the disruption, which the Indian aviation the industry is experiencing, will have an impact that is felt well beyond FY2021, unless the government is able to provide quick and meaningful support. Industry stability in the post-Covid-19 period will also depend upon promoters of distressed airlines themselves bringing in significant funds,” CAPA India CEO Kapil Kaul said in its assessment of the grounding of domestic flights.

After Tuesday, there will be no commercial airplanes in the skies, as India had already suspended international flight operations starting Monday. These closures have impacted airports, which have asked the government to announce a charge on passenger fares that will be collected to fund the revenues losses of airports.

Aviation under stress

As the country struggles with the ongoing Covid-19 crisis, domestic carriers IndiGo and SpiceJet are likely to face a combined loss of Rs 5,526 crore in the April-June quarter, according to Anshuman Deb and Ravin Kurwa, research analysts with ICICI Securities. However, lower prices of crude oil prices and increase in demand when the airlines get back in full operation mode will help offset losses.

	IndiGo		SpiceJet		(fig ₹cr)					
	Q4FY19		Q4FY20 (E)		Q1FY20		Q1FY21(E)		FY20(E)	
Total revenue	8,260	2,531	6,852	2,574	9,420	3,002	NII	150	34,309	12,069
Fuel	2,781	819	2,868	1,136	3,136	1,028	NII	NII	12,462	4,667
Rentals (net)	1,465	400	137	91	129	64	139	71	510	322
Rentals (Supplementary)			1,670		1,024		1,433		5,856	
Employee costs	876	286	1,090	350	1,108	354	1,010	170	4,655	1,502
Finance costs	133	28	480	150	484	124	530	250	1,868	549
Depreciation	219	67	1,050	470	900	377	1,100	450	2,517	1,748
Net (loss)profit	589	56	-1,653	-911	1,203	262	-4,114	-1412	-1,016	-1,038

The Economic Times of India 24/03/2020

New Delhi: India will ban passenger flights on all domestic routes from Tuesday midnight in a desperate bid to arrest the spread of the deadly Covid-19 pandemic in the world's second-most populous nation.

"Domestic scheduled commercial airlines shall cease operations with effect from 25 March," a senior government official said on Monday. Dedicated cargo airlines would be exempted from the suspension, the official said.

The official said all airlines will have to plan operations in such a way so that they are able to land by 23.59 hours on 24 March.

Meanwhile, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said in a circular late Monday that the ban will remain in force until 31 March midnight.

The Union government's decision follows requests by several states, including Bihar and West Bengal, asking the Centre to suspend flights in a bid to contain the spread of Covid-19.

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[Live Mint Aviation 24/03/2020](#)

More special flights planned to evacuate Malaysians from India
22/03/20 Borneo Post

New Delhi: Malaysia is waiting for the Indian government's permission to organise six more special flights to evacuate hundreds of Malaysians stranded in India while 372 flew out of Tamil Nadu on two chartered planes on Saturday night.

One AirAsia plane carried 186 passengers from Chennai and an equal number left on another flight from Tiruchirappalli.

"The priority was given to women, children and those unwell. We received approval for these two flights on Saturday and we assisted those requiring urgent evacuation. There are still hundreds of people waiting in Chennai and Tiruchirappalli for evacuation," a person from the Malaysian consulate in Chennai told Bernama.

"Only those who came to India with return tickets issued by any airline were allowed on the two chartered flights," he said.

There are four more such flights planned to evacuate Malaysians stranded in the southern state of Tamil Nadu, while Malaysia Airlines (MAS) has applied for permission to evacuate passengers from Chennai early on Tuesday and plans one flight from Mumbai on Wednesday afternoon.

Rumours & fears grip aviation sector as coronavirus dampens operations.

22/03/20 Anjali Bharrgava/Business Standard

New Delhi: Two rumours gripped the aviation industry as the COVID virus revealed its full stranglehold over the sector earlier this week. One, the aviation industry in India has been speculating on which would be the next airline to down shutters. This question has been a topic of much debate for a long time now — ever since Jet Airways became history. Many in the sector argue that there will be at best three to four players in the sector over the long term and that the weaker airlines will be weeded out sooner or later.

The epidemic has brought home that reality with a bang. Even CAPA's Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Kapil Kaul, usually an industry cheerleader who always errs on the positive side of caution, seemed pessimistic. "If this continues for another two weeks with the same severity, a shutdown of certain players cannot be ruled out," he said.

Almost all the airlines are seeing a drop in loads, which is expected to intensify as the numbers for March come in. International operations have been suspended by almost all players. **A senior official in IndiGo said that while loads had currently shown a dip of 12-15 per cent, the drop in bookings in the coming weeks was even sharper and therefore they expected a further dip in loads for April.** But airports in India are equally stressed and claim they need support too.

On March 16, Mumbai-headquartered GoAir began to give everyone the jitters. The airline stopped all international operations, drastically reduced domestic flights, and asked employees to stay at home without pay. The contracts of 70-odd expat pilots, signed as recently as August last year, have been terminated and the pilots have been asked to return to their home countries with a promise that their "full and final settlement would be done in due course". The airline asked its own employees to go on leave without pay, aiming to cut at least 35 per cent of its staff across departments and close to 50 per cent in support functions. A staggered salary cut of 20 per cent has been suggested for the remainder staff. GoAir has reduced its fleet from 54 to 38 and will be reducing further down to 20 aircraft. In an email response, the airline maintained that this was temporary and in response to the present crisis but that the airline expects to remain on track and add 12-15 aircraft every year to its fleet right up to 2025. In the airline's case, sources maintained that it faced a double whammy as there was no senior management to handle the crisis.

SpiceJet reported a sharp fall in loads starting mid-March. While the February loads remained high, it is March onwards that traffic has virtually dried up. The airline is suspending its international flights but has not yet grounded any aircraft although it has reduced utilisation and future grounding cannot be ruled out. Ajay Singh, the airline's CEO, is likely to delay vendor payments and is largely expected to manage to keep his ship afloat as he has through past crises. He is expecting a large compensation for the delay in the Max aircraft by Boeing but the two sides have not yet agreed on the final amount. The chances of compensation, however, are looking brighter since the US government is expected to bail out Boeing in the coming weeks. Vistara too has not yet grounded its domestic fleet but has reduced utilisation.

In a more precarious position, sources argued, is Air Asia India. That the Tatas have been less than happy with the way this venture has unfolded is well known but sources in Mumbai's aviation circles

and in the ministry of civil aviation (MoCA) speculated that this might be the “perfect opportunity” for the Tatas to put an end to this sad saga.

“Considering the mayhem that airlines in Malaysia too are currently facing, the Tatas’ partner in the venture Air Asia Berhard may not be as resistant either,” pointed out a senior government official. Sources said that a Tata team had gone recently to meet Tony Fernandez to stress the fact that the Tatas could no longer put in any more funds to keep the airline going. This has been conveyed to him more than once, said a Tata source. The auditors of the airline have raised concerns on it being called a going concern on the grounds that the accumulated losses of the airline for the year ended 2018-19 are now Rs 1,284 crore against a share capital of Rs 534 crore. In addition, the company’s current liabilities exceed current assets by Rs 962 crore.

According to sources, the MoCA and finance ministry are looking at a package to bail them out. The bailout includes waiving all kinds of taxes (including on aviation turbine fuel) and lowering various charges. A top MoCA official, however, told this writer that “consolidation among Indian carriers has been long overdue and perhaps this is the best time”. He argued the government’s financial situation itself was precarious with goods and services tax collection below expectations.

But private airlines argue that this is by that yardstick perhaps the best time for the government to close down Air India also. The airline recorded a higher than ever before loss of more than Rs 8,550 crore in 2018-19 and this year is expected to be even higher. The beating the traffic has taken since the beginning of this year will reflect in the financial year’s results, many argued. They pointed out that cancelled flights were in fact the bright spot because the aircraft loads had dipped so sharply.

Moreover, there are unlikely to be any buyers for Air India for a while to come. “The chances of sale of the airline are down to nil in the present environment. Before suggesting the private airlines consolidate, the government should put its own house in order,” said a private airline CEO. He argued that the most inefficient players should be the first to bow out and Air India should lead that pack.

Airlines around the world are seeking support from their governments and several governments are stepping in to support the sector. India has not yet announced anything and pressure on the government is building up. Whether it succumbs is a several billion rupee question.

The Economic times of India 24/03/2020

Budget carrier IndiGo has assured its employees that it will not make any deduction in their salaries or leaves due to the suspension of domestic flights till March 31.

In an e-mail to the staff, IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta said the company has "reasonable" level of advanced bookings for April and it was "anxious" to fly again albeit with a reduced capacity

"For those who don't have to be working during this temporary suspension of operations, we will make no deduction of salaries or leaves," Dutta added.

At an aviation ministry meeting last week, airlines had raised concerns of poor passenger load on domestic flights. With people largely avoiding travel, a large number of flights were being merged to fill planes.

Last week, IndiGo announced salary cuts of up to 25% across its workforce, following global airlines that have been forced to take similar steps in the wake of the Coronavirus crisis.

The extreme step, taken by India’s largest and richest airline, is likely to be followed by its smaller,

financially weaker peers, senior industry executives said.

All international flights had already been stopped starting Monday morning.

The government had also cancelled train services, inter-state bus services, metro services and all other public transport services in an attempt to contain the spread of Coronavirus in the country that has infected almost 500 people in India — a number that could rise much higher over the next few days.

The Economic Times of India 24/03/2020

Amid coronavirus pandemic, Union health ministry on Monday told the civil aviation ministry that airlines have to take the responsibility of monitoring the health of crew members, who flew abroad on duty, during their stay in India.

In a letter to Civil aviation ministry, the health ministry noted: **"If a laboratory positive case of COVID-19 is found in a flight, the entire crew has to be de-rostered for minimum 14 days. The crew needs to follow home-isolation during the time at their own country."**

The letter enumerated the steps that need to be taken for crew members of international flights landing at Indian airports.

"The crew has to fill the self-declaration forms, similar to the passengers. The crew needs to present the self-declaration forms to the health authorities and clear the health screening at the respective airports," stated the letter.

Coronavirus cases rose to 415 in the country on Monday. Seven people had died till Saturday evening due to the virus.

The health ministry's letter stated that if a crew arrives in India with COVID-19 symptoms, then they have to declare the same to the APHO (Airport Health Organisation) and follow the isolation protocols as directed by them.

"During the stay in India, if the crew develops any signs/symptoms of COVID-19, they should immediately inform APHO for isolation and testing. The airlines should take the responsibility of monitoring the health of the crew members during their stay at India," the letter noted.

The Economic Times of India 23/03/2020

Le Fonds monétaire international (FMI) a révélé le 23 mars ses perspectives de croissance pour 2020. En pleine épidémie de coronavirus Covid-19, l'institution s'attend à une récession au moins aussi forte que lors de la crise de 2008

La pandémie de coronavirus Covid-19 devrait provoquer une nouvelle récession économique mondiale, selon le Fonds monétaire international (FMI). Lundi 23 mars, l'institution a révélé ses perspectives pour la croissance mondiale en 2020. Elle s'attend à **un choc aussi fort que celui**

observé lors de la crise financière de 2008-2009. Malgré tout, un rebond pourrait avoir lieu en 2021.

"Plus vite nous arrêterons ce virus, plus rapide et plus forte sera la reprise"

"Les perspectives de croissance mondiale [...] sont mauvaises pour 2020, avec une récession au moins aussi dure que lors de la crise financière mondiale, voire pire", a déclaré la directrice générale du FMI, Kristalina Georgieva, à l'issue d'une téléconférence des ministres des finances et des gouverneurs des banques centrales du G20.

L'institution s'inquiète particulièrement de la situation des pays émergents ou à faible revenu en situation de surendettement. Ces pays connaissent déjà des sorties de capitaux importantes depuis le début de la crise sanitaire. Selon le FMI, les investisseurs ont déjà retiré 83 milliards de dollars de pays émergents.

Selon elle, "une reprise est attendue en 2021". "Pour y parvenir, il est essentiel de donner la priorité à la maîtrise de la contagion et au renforcement des systèmes de santé publique dans le monde entier. Les conséquences économiques sont importantes et s'aggraveront, mais plus vite nous arrêterons ce virus, plus rapide et plus forte sera la reprise", a-t-elle ajouté.

Plans de soutien à l'économie : "Il faudra aller encore plus loin"

Kristalina Georgieva a tout de même accueilli favorablement les plans de soutien à l'économie annoncés par de nombreux pays ainsi que les mesures d'assouplissement monétaire prises par les banques centrales. "Il faudra aller encore plus loin, en particulier sur le plan budgétaire", a encouragé la directrice générale.

Kristalina Georgieva a déclaré que le FMI allait augmenter massivement le financement d'urgence, soulignant que 80 pays avaient déjà demandé son aide. Le Fonds est prêt à déployer la totalité de sa capacité de prêt de 1 000 milliards de dollars (926 milliards d'euros), a-t-elle précisé.

L'Usine nouvelle 24/03/2020

La crise du coronavirus devrait provoquer une perte de chiffre d'affaires de 252 milliards de dollars cette année, et non plus de 113 milliards de dollars comme prévu il y a une semaine par l'Association du transport aérien international (IATA). Cette dernière appelle les États à soutenir les compagnies aériennes.

La totalité de la flotte d'avions est clouée au sol. Et plus les jours passent, plus l'évaluation de l'impact de la crise du Covid-19 sur le transport aérien s'amplifie. Ce mardi, une semaine après avoir estimé à 113 milliards de dollars la perte de chiffre d'affaires des compagnies aériennes pour 2020 (soit -19%) l'Association du transport aérien international (IATA) évalue désormais la perte de recettes à 252 milliards de dollars. Ce qui représenterait un plongeon de 44% par rapport à 2019. Le trafic passagers devrait en effet chuter sur l'année de 38%.

Pas de courbe en "V", la reprise sera lente

La durée, plus longue que prévu, de la fermeture des frontières et l'intensité de la crise économique qui va probablement se traduire par une récession mondiale en 2020 expliquent cette révision des prévisions. IATA estime en effet que les "sévères restrictions de voyages ne seront pas levées avant trois mois".

Et la reprise n'est pas pour demain. Alors qu'elle tablait jusqu'ici sur une courbe en "V" avec une forte chute d'activité suivie d'un rebond tout aussi rapide, IATA s'attend désormais à une reprise "graduelle", a expliqué son chef économiste, Brian Pearce, qui n'est pas attendue avant 2021. En cause, "l'impact de la récession mondiale sur l'emploi et la confiance". Réduite de 65% au deuxième trimestre, la capacité des compagnies aériennes mesurée en sièges-kilomètres offerts ne sera pas encore revenue en fin d'année au niveau espéré avant crise. La baisse devrait encore être de 10% au quatrième trimestre.

Crise de liquidités

Problème, les compagnies aériennes sont dans une situation d'urgence. Sortant de la saison hivernale - une période de basse saison consommatrice de cash -, et privées de rentrées d'argent frais liées habituellement aux prises de réservation pour la saison d'été, les compagnies manquent cruellement de liquidités. Selon une note publiée la semaine dernière par CAPA Aviation, un cabinet de consultants spécialisé dans le transport aérien, la plupart des compagnies aériennes risquent d'être en faillite fin mai. Une compagnie moyenne a deux mois de trésorerie dans les caisses, précise IATA.

"Une crise de liquidités se précipite sur nous à pleine vitesse : nous n'avons aucune recette mais toujours des coûts", a déclaré le directeur général de l'Association internationale du transport aérien (IATA), Alexandre de Juniac, lors d'une conférence téléphonique.

IATA appelle les gouvernements à intervenir

Ce dernier appelle à nouveau les États à intervenir rapidement, que ce soit sous la forme d'aides directes, de prêts, de garanties de prêts, ou encore d'allègements d'impôts de charges sociales.

"Nous avons besoin d'un package d'aides de toute urgence" et "nous avons désespérément besoin de cash", a-t-il poursuivi.

Selon IATA, 200 milliards de dollars d'argent public (185 milliards d'euros environ) sont nécessaires pour sauver le secteur.

Plusieurs États sont déjà passés à l'acte. L'Italie est en train de nationaliser Alitalia. La Norvège a accordé sa garantie pour les prêts de ses compagnies aériennes, dont Norwegian. La France a assuré qu'elle allait aider Air France-KLM, mais ne dit rien pour les autres compagnies françaises.

La Tribune 24/03/2020

Les compagnies aériennes n'auront bientôt plus besoin de faire voler leurs avions à vide pour conserver leurs créneaux aéroportuaires, l'Union européenne (UE) ayant donné son feu vert à une suspension de cette mesure afin d'aider le transport aérien durement affecté par la crise du coronavirus.

La Commission européenne avait annoncé la semaine dernière qu'elle allait proposer un assouplissement temporaire de cette règle européenne qui oblige les compagnies aériennes à utiliser au moins 80 % des créneaux horaires qui leur sont attribués dans les aéroports européens, faute de quoi elles perdent leurs droits la saison suivante. Cette suspension était réclamée par les compagnies aériennes, confrontées à une chute du trafic, pour éviter d'avoir à faire voler des avions à vide pour garder leurs créneaux.

Hier, les pays de l'UE ont approuvé une suspension des règles du 1er mars au 24 octobre 2020, qui s'appliquera aussi de façon rétroactive du 23 janvier au 29 février pour les vols entre l'Union européenne et la Chine ou Hong Kong, a indiqué le Conseil dans un communiqué. La date du 23 janvier correspond à la première fermeture d'aéroport en Chine. Si la situation actuelle persistait, cette suspension pourrait être prolongée par le biais d'une procédure rapide.

Ce moratoire devra être approuvé par le Parlement européen lors de sa session du 26 mars puis adopté formellement par le Conseil. « Cette dispense sur les créneaux permettra de donner de la flexibilité et de la certitude à notre industrie de l'aviation dans cette situation sans précédent », a déclaré le ministre croate des Transports, Oleg Butkovic, dont le pays exerce la présidence de l'UE. « Personne ne veut que des avions volent à vide, c'est une priorité absolue pour la présidence croate que cet amendement soit adopté le plus vite possible », a-t-il ajouté.

L'UE avait déjà eu recours à de telles dérogations après les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, lors de l'épidémie de Sras en 2003 et la crise financière en 2009.

Air Journal 21/03/2020

Face à la pandémie de Covid-19, la compagnie aérienne Air France n'opère plus que 10% de ses capacités à partir de ce lundi, a priori pour deux mois. La filiale régionale HOP suspend ses opérations, et le chômage partiel débute pour les employés qui verront leur temps de travail réduit à 20%.

Air France a continué dimanche d'opérer des vols de rapatriement, avec cinq rotations entre Paris et les aéroports d'Alger, Casablanca (deux vols) et Marrakech (deux). Et des vols supplémentaires ce lundi, tous à destination de Paris-CDG : Vol AF1529 au départ de Porto à 11h15, vol AF4149 au départ d'Alger à 15h05, et vol AF719 au départ de Dakar à 23h15.

Mais à partir de ce 23 mars 2020, « face aux restrictions croissantes sur la possibilité de voyager et face à une demande fortement orientée à la baisse », la compagnie nationale française réduit de

90% son activité : elle n'opèrera plus qu'une centaine de vols par jour, dont ceux vers les destinations sous obligation de service public : son programme inclut la desserte de 17 aéroports en région (plus la Corse en partenariat avec Air Corsica), quatre outre-mer (Cayenne, Fort-de-France, Pointe-à-Pitre, Saint-Denis de La Réunion), 14 en Europe et 12 sur le long-courrier (dont Abidjan, Conakry, Cotonou, Libreville, Kinshasa). Les avions de la filiale régionale HOP sont cloués au sol à partir d'aujourd'hui, et la low cost Transavia France a déjà suspendu les opérations jusqu'au 19 avril.

Côté emploi, les quelque 45.000 salariés d'Air France connaîtront à partir d'aujourd'hui le chômage partiel : ils ne travailleront plus en moyenne qu'un jour sur cinq, avec un revenu réduit à 84% de la normale. Seuls les employés affectés à des « fonctions vitales » ne seront pas concernés ; des mesures spécifiques seraient à l'étude pour les pilotes, hôtesses de l'air et stewards. « On prendrait très mal que nos salaires soient amputés de plus de 20% quand pour les autres salariés, ils sont maintenus à 84% », témoigne Guillaume Gestas, président du SNPL Air France et Transavia France, dans le Journal du Dimanche.

Selon le syndicat Force Ouvrière, la compagnie aérienne a annoncé un taux d'inactivité de 80% les trois premiers mois (soit jusqu'à la fin juin) et de 20% les trois derniers mois (soit jusqu'à la fin septembre). « Mais ces chiffres sont également des moyennes, qui recouvrent des aménagements différents selon les secteurs d'activité. Lundi, les agents chargés de la maintenance des équipements ne seront pas en chômage partiel à 80% mais à 50% ; ceux s'occupant de la maintenance des moteurs seront en chômage partiel à 40% », précise le syndicat. « La quasi-totalité du personnel au sol, qu'ils soient opérationnels, dans les fonctions « support » ou les agences, débiteront avec un taux d'inactivité de 80% », commente Christophe Mallogi, le secrétaire général du syndicat FO Air France, parlant d'un « grand soulagement » parmi les salariés

Pour aider ses clients à adapter leur voyage « à la situation sanitaire », Air France a mis en place des mesures exceptionnelles sur l'ensemble de son réseau.

VOUS ÊTES À L'ÉTRANGER ET SOUHAITEZ RENTRER EN EUROPE

Nous mettons en place des tarifs spéciaux destinés aux citoyens et résidents français et européens qui souhaitent rentrer en Europe. Si vous êtes en possession d'un billet pour un vol effectué par Air France, nous vous conseillons d'anticiper votre retour en Europe au plus vite, en modifiant vous-même votre réservation en ligne, dans la rubrique « Mes Réservations » de notre site ou de l'application mobile. Vous avez aussi la possibilité de contacter votre point de vente. Vous pouvez également bénéficier directement de nos tarifs spéciaux dès à présent et par la suite vous pourrez annuler votre vol initial et obtenir un avoir valable 1 an sur l'ensemble des vols Air France, KLM, Delta Air Lines et Virgin Atlantic.

Si vous n'avez pas de billet pour un vol effectué par Air France, vous pouvez acheter un billet sur notre site ou auprès d'un point de vente Air France, et bénéficier de nos tarifs spéciaux. Nous vous rappelons que seuls les ressortissants de l'Union Européenne, de l'espace Schengen et du Royaume-Uni, et leurs familles, sont autorisés à voyager à destination de la France.

VOUS SOUHAITEZ REPORTER VOTRE VOYAGE

Si vous avez déjà réservé votre billet (hors tarifs groupes et allotements), pour un voyage avant le 31 mai 2020, vous avez jusqu'au 30 septembre 2020 pour reporter votre date de départ sans frais de

modification. Votre nouveau voyage doit commencer avant le 30 novembre 2020 inclus. Gagnez du temps en modifiant vous-même votre réservation en ligne, dans la rubrique « Mes Réservations » de notre site ou de l'application mobile. Vous avez aussi la possibilité de contacter votre point de vente. Reporter mon voyage

VOUS SOUHAITEZ ANNULER VOTRE VOYAGE

Si vous avez acheté un billet pour un voyage avant le 31 mai 2020, merci de contacter votre agence de voyage pour plus d'informations. Si vous avez acheté votre billet sur notre site, vous pouvez compléter le formulaire ci-dessous et obtenir un avoir non remboursable valable 1 an sur l'ensemble des vols Air France, KLM, Delta Air Lines et Virgin Atlantic. Compléter le formulaire de remboursement

VOTRE VOL A ÉTÉ ANNULÉ

Si votre vol a été annulé et que vous avez renoncé à voyager, nous vous invitons à vous rapprocher de votre agence de voyage. Si vous avez acheté votre billet sur notre site ou auprès d'un point de vente Air France, vous pouvez compléter le formulaire ci-dessous et obtenir un avoir valable 1 an sur l'ensemble des vols Air France, KLM, Delta Air Lines et Virgin Atlantic. Cet avoir sera remboursable après un an si celui-ci n'est pas utilisé. Compléter le formulaire de remboursement

VOUS SOUHAITEZ PLANIFIER UN VOYAGE

« Réservez vos billets en toute confiance ». Pour toute réservation effectuée avant le 31 mars 2020, vous avez jusqu'au 30 septembre 2020 pour reporter votre date de départ sans frais de modification, sous réserve de la disponibilité du même tarif. Votre nouveau voyage doit commencer avant le 30 novembre 2020 inclus. Avant de prévoir un voyage, veuillez contacter les autorités nationales compétentes pour connaître les conditions d'entrée et de séjour dans vos pays de destination et de transit. Des restrictions de voyage s'appliquent déjà à de nombreuses nationalités et/ou aux voyageurs ayant visité certains pays récemment. Veuillez noter que les restrictions de voyage sont susceptibles d'être modifiées sans préavis. Si vous souhaitez toujours voyager, veuillez à prendre les dispositions nécessaires (comme prévoir des options d'hébergement ou de voyage alternatives) pour limiter les risques, conclut Air France.

[Air Journal 23/03/2020](#)

Afin de faciliter le retour de milliers d'Italiens pris dans la pandémie de Covid-19, la compagnie aérienne Alitalia renforce des lignes régulières – y compris à Paris et Bruxelles – et multiplie les vols de rapatriement.

« Conformément à sa mission d'assurer un service public essentiel », Alitalia a augmenté ce weekend le nombre de vols réguliers opérés sur certaines routes européennes. Elle propose désormais 5 vols par jour vers Londres-Heathrow, deux vers Paris et deux vers Bruxelles (« pour répondre aussi aux besoins de ceux qui se trouvent aux Pays-Bas, après l'arrêt des fréquences vers Amsterdam). Les billets pour ces vols sont également en vente en ligne.

Côté rapatriements, des vols spéciaux sont prévus par Alitalia depuis l'Espagne (Madrid et Malaga) entre le 21 et le 26 mars, ce lundi depuis la Grèce (Athènes) et la Pologne (Varsovie), mercredi depuis l'Ukraine (Kiev) et jeudi au départ de la Serbie (Belgrade). « En collaboration avec l'Unité de crise du Ministère Italien des Affaires étrangères », l'organisation de ces vols spéciaux contribue également à faciliter le rapatriement de milliers de ressortissants italiens « des pays vers lesquels il n'est plus possible d'exploiter des liaisons régulières normales en raison des restrictions imposées au trafic aérien à destination et en provenance de l'Italie ».

Depuis le début de la crise, Alitalia a déjà effectué des vols spéciaux au départ des Maldives, de Pointe-à-Pitre (Guadeloupe), de Varsovie, de Sofia, de Kiev, de Madrid, de Malaga, de Bucarest, d'Alger et de Tunis, ramenant « plus de trois mille ressortissants » en Italie.

Pour l'instant, il n'y a pas de demandes en suspens pour d'autres vols spéciaux, souligne la compagnie de l'alliance SkyTeam qui est en contact avec la cellule de crise du ministère italien des affaires étrangères afin d'organiser de nouveaux vols spéciaux, tant pour les passagers que pour le fret.

Air Journal 23/03/2020

Le groupe Lufthansa, qui réduit son offre à 5% des capacités habituelles, prépare une centaine de vols de rapatriement supplémentaires. Air Canada met en avant deux vols effectués vers le Maroc.

Dès « le début de cette semaine », un nouvel horaire de vols de rapatriement sera en vigueur pour les compagnies aériennes du groupe Lufthansa, initialement valable jusqu'au 19 avril 2020. **Afin de « ramener rapidement autant de personnes que possible chez elles », environ 130 vols supplémentaires ont déjà été opérés par Lufthansa, Eurowings, Swiss, Austrian Airlines, Brussels Airlines et Edelweiss, transportant vers chez eux environ 25 000 passagers. Une centaine de vols supplémentaires sont déjà en préparation selon le groupe, qui ne précise pas vers où.**

Le groupe aérien a déjà arrêté les opérations de ses filiales Brussels Airlines et Austrian Airlines, et va réduire à partir de mercredi prochain son programme de vols à 5% de l'habituel, clouant au sol 700 avions. Des vols long-courriers restent proposés depuis Francfort par Lufthansa : trois fois par semaine à destination de Newark, Chicago (États-Unis), Montréal (Canada), Sao Paulo (Brésil), Bangkok (Thaïlande), Tokyo (Japon) et Johannesburg (Afrique du Sud). Outre un horaire court et moyen courrier considérablement réduit (48 liaisons) au départ de Zurich, SWISS propose encore trois vols hebdomadaires uniquement vers Newark (USA). Pour le moyen-courrier depuis ses deux hubs en Allemagne, Lufthansa propose toujours une quarantaine de liaisons quotidiennes vers « les villes les plus importantes d'Allemagne et d'Europe ». Le programme de vol d'Eurowings se concentre sur l'approvisionnement de base des aéroports de Düsseldorf, Hambourg, Stuttgart et Cologne.

Selon Harry Hohmeister, membre du directoire de Deutsche Lufthansa AG, « **cette situation a une dimension historique. Presque personne ne veut ou n'est actuellement autorisé à voyager. C'est pourquoi notre programme de vols de retour est désormais essentiellement adapté aux besoins des citoyens européens qui veulent retourner dans leur pays d'origine. Nous transportons maintenant autant de personnes que possible par avion** ». Le même communiqué précise que Lufthansa renonce à plus de 920.000 masques faciaux déjà commandés, pour les mettre « à la

disposition des autorités sanitaires » ; le Groupe « dispose d'une quantité suffisante de masques en stock pour les employés ».

Air Journal 23/03/2020

Entre les restrictions de voyage et les clients inquiets, la compagnie aérienne est sur tous les fronts pour assurer l'information des passagers, la protection de son personnel, ainsi que l'accompagnement économique de l'entreprise. Si tout le secteur touristique et notamment l'aérien est aujourd'hui affecté, Air Austral indique être confiant quant à la sortie de la crise, "mais il faut tout de même la passer".

Moins de vols, moins de contacts, pour moins de risques de propagation. C'est un peu le mot d'ordre au sein de la compagnie aérienne locale, qui a drastiquement réduit ses liaisons entre La Réunion, Mayotte et la métropole, et a complètement arrêté toutes les autres liaisons régionales.

La liaison Réunion-Marseille vient également d'être arrêtée cette semaine, mais les passagers encore autorisés à voyager selon les conditions imposées par les restrictions gouvernementales, peuvent s'ils le souhaitent, être transférés sur un vol à destination de Paris.

"La situation et les restrictions qui nous sont édictées nous ont emmené à concentrer nos vols long-courriers sur Paris. Des raisons logistiques, telles que le fonctionnement des aéroports ou encore les décisions de la SNCF ont également joué sur cette décision", détaille Air Austral.

Annulation et report des vols: jusqu'à 16.000 appels par jour

"Même si c'est paradoxal pour une compagnie aérienne, face à cette situation exceptionnelle nous invitons nos clients à reporter leur déplacement", nous explique Air Austral, qui a encore élargi ses conditions de modification ou d'annulation des billets:

Tout voyage réservé ou payé avant le 31 mai 2020 peut être modifié ou reporté sans frais, jusqu'au 30 novembre 2020, voire plus loin dans le temps sous certaines conditions cette fois.

"C'est une souplesse absolument nécessaire, d'autant que nous savons qu'il n'était pas forcément simple de nous joindre la semaine dernière. Nous recevons jusqu'à 16.000 appels par jours, mais c'est redescendu depuis", explique la compagnie.

Pour faciliter encore les annulations pour les clients, un formulaire est disponible en ligne sur le site internet de Air Austral, qui permet au voyageur de ne pas perdre son billet s'il n'a pas réussi à joindre la compagnie.

Solidarité et chômage partiel pour le personnel

Avec une réduction drastique de son activité, Air Austral n'échappe pas aux conséquences économiques de cette crise sanitaire sans précédent:

"Nous avons dû réajuster en fonction des programmes des vols et nous avons appliqué des mesures au niveau du personnel", indique la compagnie, qui a d'abord encouragé à la prise de congés sans solde et à la prise de temps partiels, avant d'envisager la solution du chômage partiel là où cela est possible.

"La totalité du personnel est impliqué dans ces actions mises en place par l'entreprise pour passer cette crise économique. Des appels aux dons de congés et de primes ont été lancés, et l'ensemble de la direction s'y est joint. L'heure est à la solidarité: nous sommes confiants quant à la sortie de la crise, mais il faut la passer."

"Le personnel qui est en vol le fait avec le sourire, même si c'est derrière un masque"

La protection du personnel toujours mobilisé, sur terre comme dans les airs, ainsi que des passagers, est une priorité pour Air Austral, qui a équipé ses hôtesses et stewards de masques, de gants, et de gel hydroalcoolique.

"Pour compléter ce dispositif, notre service uniforme est en train de fabriquer des masques en tissu selon les tutoriels proposés par certains hôpitaux en métropole, pour pouvoir équiper nos personnels si on devait manquer de masques", ajoute la compagnie

En lien étroit avec les autorités sanitaires depuis le départ, Air Austral informe continuellement ses salariés de l'évolution des mesures de protection.

À bord, les contacts ont notamment été réduits en appliquant une distance de sécurité à l'accueil des passagers dans l'avion, et en limitant certains gestes de service qui ne seraient pas absolument nécessaires.

"À noter que, à bord d'un avion, l'air de la cabine est purifié et renouvelé toutes les trois minutes, ce qui vient limiter les risques de contamination."

Parce qu'ils sont équipés et appliquent rigoureusement les mesures barrières, le personnel de bord n'est pas considéré comme des "personne-contact". Une fois au sol, il n'est pas soumis aux mesures de quarantaine, mais adopte tout de même une attitude de distanciation sociale.

"Si la plupart des personnels navigants habitent à La Réunion, et peuvent se tenir à l'écart de leur famille, des chambres d'hôtel ont été réservées pour ceux qui ne le peuvent pas."

"On fait en sorte que les règles de distanciation sociale soient respectées pour pouvoir continuer à opérer ces vols qui restent nécessaires. On a vraiment besoin d'eux, et aussi du personnel d'escale, qui est bien mobilisé et reste à l'écoute des passagers", ajoute la compagnie.

Zinfos974.com 23/03/2020

Bercy prévoit «déjà des dispositions» pour aider la compagnie tricolore, en difficulté, a déclaré le ministre de l'Économie, Bruno Le Maire

Le gouvernement va-t-il desserrer les cordons de sa bourse pour soutenir Air France ?

Il semble bien que oui. Ce mardi, lors d'une conférence de presse, le ministre de l'Économie, Bruno Le Maire, a déclaré que Bercy prévoyait «déjà des dispositions» pour aider la compagnie tricolore, en difficulté depuis plusieurs semaines. «Nous sommes en réflexion sur les mesures qui doivent être apportées», a-t-il ajouté. Les services du ministère suivent la situation d'Air France-KLM de près, et se tiennent prêts à agir si nécessaire.

Le groupe Air France-KLM traverse une mauvaise passe, à l'instar de l'ensemble du transport aérien. La semaine dernière, il a annoncé des mesures «exceptionnelles, prévenant qu'il allait devoir «réduire progressivement son activité de manière très significative, avec une offre en sièges kilomètres offerts (SKO) qui pourrait baisser entre -70% et -90%». Cette baisse est complétée par un plan d'économie et diverses autres mesures, dont le recours massif au chômage partiel. En février, le groupe franco-néerlandais a vu son trafic baisser de 1,4%, une diminution qui s'est probablement accentuée ces dernières semaines, notamment depuis la fermeture des frontières américaines souhaitée par Donald Trump. Pour mars, la compagnie disait s'attendre à l'annulation de 3600 vols, soit «13% de ses capacités sur le réseau long courrier», 17% dans l'Hexagone et 25% sur le réseau européen.

Si Bruno Le Maire n'a pas voulu entrer dans les détails de ces «mesures», il a toutefois précisé que la nationalisation n'était pas la seule option à laquelle le gouvernement pouvait faire appel. Plus largement, le ministre a redit que l'exécutif mettrait tout en œuvre pour défendre ses fleurons industriels mis en difficulté par l'épidémie de coronavirus. «Un certain nombre de secteurs sont attaqués sur les marchés» et «fragilisés» par la conjoncture : «l'État est derrière eux», a-t-il martelé. Bercy utilisera «tous les instruments à [sa] disposition pour protéger notre patrimoine industriel».

La perspective d'une nationalisation d'Air France-KLM ne semble pas encore d'actualité : il y a quelques jours, Bruno Le Maire confirmait qu'aucune décision sur ce point ne serait prise sans l'aval préalable des Pays-Bas. «Nous discutons régulièrement avec mon homologue néerlandais [...] je souhaite que sur Air France, quelles que soient les décisions que nous prendrons, nous le fassions en bonne intelligence», a commenté laconiquement le patron de Bercy ce matin.

Un peu plus tôt dans la matinée, Bruno Le Maire avait déclaré que ses équipes avaient préparé une «liste d'entreprises» qui pourraient avoir besoin d'aide pour traverser la crise du coronavirus. Il n'a cependant pas souhaité la communiquer: «ce serait une très mauvaise politique de dévoiler nos cartes à l'avance», a-t-il noté ce mardi.

[Le Figaro 24/03/2020](#)

Le recours au jet privé n'est pas devenu la solution universelle pour parcourir le monde, soumis aux nombreuses contraintes du transport aérien.

Le temps d'un grand week-end, l'aviation d'affaires a, certes, connu une hausse conséquente de son trafic, de l'ordre de 30 %, pour quitter les grands centres urbains, pallier les allègements des compagnies régulières ou pour voyager en étant mieux protégé d'une éventuelle contamination.

C'était avant l'annonce officielle du confinement lundi 16 mars. Certains affréteurs ont alors rebondi sur ces chiffres passés et laissé entendre que la demande explosait. De quoi friser la fausse information ! La confusion a été soigneusement entretenue entre demande de vols et réalisation. « Avec la fermeture des frontières, nous comptons entre 10 et 15 % de vols par rapport à un mois de mars habituel », constate Bruno Mazurkiewicz, directeur de l'aéroport Paris-Le Bourget, première plateforme européenne d'aviation d'affaires. « Nous enregistrons sensiblement la même chute

d'activité, soit de zéro à dix vols quotidiens contre cinquante en temps normal », nous explique le patron d'une compagnie qui exploite une trentaine d'avions d'affaires. « Dans les escales, il n'y a pas d'hôtel ouvert, pas de restaurant, pas de loueur de voitures pour nos pilotes et nous devons parfois affréter des avions pour aller les récupérer. »

Les opérateurs d'avions d'affaires hésitent aussi à envoyer leurs équipages vers certaines destinations à risques. Au retour, les navigants pourraient être placés en quarantaine, ce qui rendrait les effectifs ingérables.

Vols sanitaires en hausse

Courtier aérien britannique, Privatefly recense plus de 7 000 avions d'affaires pouvant être affrétés dans le monde. Son PDG, Adam Twidell, fait la différence entre une hausse de requêtes de clients potentiels de 50 % à 60 % et la réalité des vols effectués. « **Les liaisons domestiques sont les plus faciles à organiser, car il n'y a pas de droits de trafic** », explique-t-il sans donner de chiffres. « **À l'international, la situation est fluctuante et les autorisations de rapatrier des passagers peuvent être modifiées alors que le vol a déjà décollé. En revanche, nous enregistrons une hausse de 200 % d'évacuations sanitaires ou de vols médicaux.** »

Pour Avico, plus gros courtier français, l'activité rapatriement est devenue majeure avec pas moins de 24 opérations la semaine dernière mettant en œuvre des appareils de toutes tailles, du Cessna Citation de six places au Boeing 747 de 350 sièges. Gilles Gompertz, directeur général, note toutefois que le nombre d'aéroports ouverts diminue, tout en restant accessibles sur demande pour des vols sanitaires comme c'est le cas de Lille fermé depuis samedi.

Toute l'aviation générale est clouée au sol, à l'exception des missions sanitaires ou de service public. Même les ULM, les planeurs ou les avions de tourisme doivent rester dans les hangars, leur mise en œuvre étant contraire aux consignes de confinement.

Le Point 23/03/2020

Après quatre jours de suspension le temps de mettre en conformité les postes de travail avec les nouvelles mesures de santé et de sécurité en matière d'hygiène, mais aussi de nettoyage et d'auto-distanciation, la production d'Airbus en France et en Espagne redémarre comme prévu ce lundi de manière progressive. Par ailleurs, Airbus a annoncé une série de mesures pour renforcer ses liquidités. Le groupe dispose de 30 milliards d'euros de liquidités.

Après quatre jours de suspension le temps de mettre en conformité les postes de travail avec les nouvelles mesures de santé et de sécurité en matière d'hygiène, mais aussi de nettoyage et d'auto-distanciation, la production d'Airbus en France et en Espagne redémarre comme prévu ce lundi, de manière partielle.

"Airbus a effectué avec le soutien de ses partenaires sociaux d'importants travaux visant à garantir la santé et la sécurité de ses employés, tout en assurant la continuité de ses activités", a indiqué le directeur général d'Airbus, Guillaume Faury, lors d'une conférence téléphonique.

Ne seront ouverts que les postes de travail en totale conformité avec les nouvelles exigences précise Airbus.

"Si un poste de travail n'est pas conforme, il n'ouvrira pas", a indiqué Guillaume Faury.

Des salariés ont été contaminés par le coronavirus, notamment à Toulouse.

L'usine chinoise complètement opérationnelle

Airbus emploie 48.000 salariés en France et 2.700 personnes en Espagne.

"Des mesures similaires sont appliquées à tous les autres sites du groupe dans le monde (Royaume-Uni, Allemagne, Etats-Unis) sans interruption totale des activités", a poursuivi l'avionneur.

Après avoir été suspendue, la chaîne d'assemblage final de Tianjin en Chine a repris ses activités en février et est "désormais parfaitement opérationnelle".

La semaine dernière, les syndicats français demandaient de suspendre complètement la production.

"C'est une reprise très partielle de 5 à 10% des salariés, uniquement avec des volontaires", a indiqué à l'AFP Jean-François Knepper, dirigeant de FO, premier syndicat au sein du groupe. "On n'a pas eu le choix, la direction a décidé de reprendre, on a essayé d'encadrer tout ça le mieux possible. On aurait préféré un confinement total", a-t-il ajouté.

Pour la chaîne de fournisseurs, cette reprise d'activité est en revanche un signal fort.

"Le redémarrage du système va sécuriser la production à moyen terme. L'aéronautique est une industrie complexe. On ne peut pas l'arrêter comme ça et la refaire repartir en appuyant sur un bouton", indique-t-on en interne chez Airbus.

Guillaume Faury n'a pas souhaité donner d'objectifs de production. L'objectif de cette reprise d'activité est en effet de stabiliser ce système de production adapté.

"On veut reprendre l'activité pour soutenir les efforts de crise, les clients, les fournisseurs et la reprise de l'économie mondiale quand elle reviendra", a-t-il déclaré. Et d'ajouter : "le point aujourd'hui n'est pas le niveau ou le rythme de production, mais d'apprendre à travailler dans un nouvel environnement. Nous n'avons pas défini d'objectifs".

Report et annulations de commandes

Il n'empêche, si des compagnies prennent encore livraison des avions qui viennent d'être construits, les demandes de reports de livraisons, voire d'annulations de commandes se multiplient. Surtout sur les gros-porteurs. Si pendant la crise de 2008-2009, Airbus avait pu remplacer les livraisons reportées par certaines compagnies en anticipant celles des compagnies (se situant dans des zones moins touchées par la crise) qui souhaitaient au contraire recevoir leurs avions plus tôt, l'avionneur doit aujourd'hui faire face à des clients touchés durement à l'échelle de la planète. De fortes baisses de cadences de production sont ainsi attendues par les experts au deuxième semestre sur les avions long-courriers. Sur les avions court et moyen-courriers, les prévisions de livraisons seront forcément

réduites et toucheront également 2021 estiment certains d'entre eux. Pour autant, Airbus a fait du "surbooking" sur les créneaux de livraisons des A320 et A321 et ce procédé peut lui permettre d'absorber en partie le choc en 2020 et 2021.

"Si on regarde les crises passées, il y a eu une reprise quelques mois après et la croissance a continué. Mais je ne suis pas sûr que l'on peut dire que cette crise est comme les autres. Nous discutons avec toutes les compagnies, nous regardons la situation cas par cas, et nous partageons nos points de vue pour établir des scénarios pour le reste de l'année et pour l'année suivante. Nous nous adapterons dès que nous aurons une meilleure visibilité. C'est important de regarder la situation en Chine. Le trafic a chuté très fortement et rapidement, et commence à reprendre", a-t-il indiqué.

Après avoir dégringolé de 85%, le trafic aérien chinois a repris et affiche une baisse de 70% par rapport à son niveau d'avant-crise.

Face à ces incertitudes, Airbus a suspendu ses prévisions financières.

Trente milliards d'euros de liquidités

Pour naviguer dans cette crise, l'avionneur européen a annoncé lundi une série de mesures pour renforcer ses liquidités et son bilan : une nouvelle facilité de crédit de 15 milliards d'euros en plus de la facilité de crédit renouvelable existante ; le retrait de la proposition de dividende 2019 de 1,80 euro par action soit une valeur totale d'environ 1,4 milliard d'euros ; et la suspension du financement volontaire des retraites complémentaires.

"Grâce à ces décisions, l'entreprise dispose de liquidités suffisantes pour faire face aux besoins de trésorerie supplémentaires liés au Covid-19", a déclaré Airbus, qui indique disposer d'environ 30 milliards d'euros de liquidités.

Appel aux gouvernements de supporter les compagnies et les fournisseurs

Avec ces mesures, Guillaume Faury ne demande pas d'aides directes aux Etats mais appelle les gouvernements à soutenir fortement "tout l'écosystème", les compagnies aériennes en priorité, mais aussi la chaîne des fournisseurs.

Don de masques

Par ailleurs, Airbus a "fait don de plusieurs milliers de masques aux hôpitaux et aux services publics européens et a commencé à utiliser ses avions test pour acheminer de plus grandes quantités de Chine", selon la même source.

"En outre, un A330-800 d'essai a transporté ce week-end environ 2 millions de masques médicaux de Tianjin vers l'Europe dont une large majorité sera donnée aux gouvernements espagnols et français", a-t-il précisé, ajoutant que "d'autres vols sont prévus dans les prochains jours".

[La Tribune 23/03/2020](#)

Monday, March 23, 2020

The Hague: A group of more than 100 passengers stranded at Amsterdam's airport after their flight to New Delhi turned around mid-air due to confusion over coronavirus rules finally departed for India on Sunday, officials said.

Because of the pandemic, India has imposed a bar on flights from Europe and from Sunday a one-week complete ban on all incoming international commercial flights comes into force.

The KLM flight carrying around 120 passengers left Amsterdam's Schiphol airport late Friday but had to make a U-turn over Russia mid-flight after being told by India to return to its point of departure.

"Today a group of stranded travellers from India have left from Schiphol to go home," said Hans Leijten, the head of the Dutch Royal Military Police, which deals with borders.

"Good work by the Royal Military Police, KLM, Schiphol and other organisations involved in receiving and taking care of the group in recent days," he said on Twitter.

KLM confirmed the flight was leaving, saying it was a "result of consultations between various authorities", the Dutch news agency ANP reported.

The passengers included a pregnant woman who needed medical treatment on returning to Amsterdam.

Most were forced to camp out at the airport while the problem was resolved as the Netherlands also refused to grant them entry -- most had been transit passengers from the US and Canada. 22/03/20 Deccan Herald

NEW DELHI: Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy on Tuesday urged people to abide by government orders issued to contain the spread of coronavirus as the disease is now spreading to family members of foreign returnees. People should take the deadly disease seriously and take more precautions because even developed nations like the US are not able to stop the spread of the disease despite having the best of resources and technology, he told media.

As many as 15.24 lakh people have been screened at various airports. Around 69,436 people have been advised home quarantine who are being treated by medical and paramedical officers, he added.

"So far, foreign returnees were infected with the virus. Now, it is spreading to their family members. So, we need to take precautions. People should not take the disease lightly and violate the curbs imposed to ensure social distancing," Reddy said.

He urged people to follow government orders imposed to stop the spread of the disease.

So far, 32 states and union territories have imposed complete lockdown covering 560 districts, as per official data.

Observing that even developed nations have not been successful in containing the disease, the minister said the number of coronavirus cases in Italy rose from 1000 on February 23 to 63,928 cases in a month.

In the US too, the number have cases risen from 4,000-odd to over 41,000 cases in a month.

"Developed nations with lesser population, good health facilities and best of the resources and technology have not been able to stop the spread of the disease," he said.

"India being the second largest populated nation in the world with people still living in slums cannot afford to neglect. Therefore, we need to take more precaution," he added.

He also mentioned that the world war was fought between nations but right now the emergency war each one has to wage is within and we must ensure that our bodies are not infected by the virus.

"This is a bigger war than World War," he said.

According to the health ministry data updated on Tuesday morning, the total number of COVID-19 cases stood at 492. The figure includes at least 41 foreign nationals and the nine deaths reported so far.

The Economic Times 24/03/2020

Produire à tout prix, tel semble être le credo d'Airbus. Comme prévu, **Guillaume Faury, patron de l'avionneur, a annoncé, lundi 23 mars, le redémarrage de la production. Le groupe avait décrété quatre jours de pause, en France et en Espagne, pour désinfecter les usines et préparer les mesures et les équipements de protection destinés aux salariés.** Pour justifier, la relance de la production, M. Faury a cité l'exemple du site de Tianjin, dans la grande banlieue de Pékin, qui « a rouvert » après avoir fermé ses portes pendant quinze jours.

Pour reprendre son activité, Airbus a conclu un accord d'entreprise signé par seulement trois des quatre syndicats représentatifs : FO, la CGC et la CFTC. En revanche, « la CGT n'a pas signé cet accord », signale Xavier Petrachi, délégué CGT du constructeur. Le syndicat aurait en effet préféré que l'avionneur suspende sa production au moins pendant la période de confinement de quinze jours décrétée par les autorités.

Le groupe voit au-delà du coronavirus. Son **objectif est de rester opérationnel pour pouvoir rebondir le plus haut possible lorsque la pandémie sera terminée.** « *Nous sécurisons également nos activités afin de préserver l'avenir d'Airbus et de reprendre efficacement nos opérations après la crise* », a déclaré M. Faury. L'avionneur ne veut surtout pas se mettre dans la même situation que Boeing. Son rival américain a dû stopper sa production de 737 MAX dès janvier après que son moyen-courrier a été impliqué dans deux catastrophes aériennes qui ont causé la mort de 346 passagers et membres d'équipages. Cet arrêt des chaînes du MAX menace d'être très pénalisant pour Boeing.

Selon l'équipementier américain Spirit Aerosystems, l'un des principaux fournisseurs du MAX, il faudra au minimum deux ans pour retrouver les cadences de production d'avant l'arrêt des chaînes. Un retard à l'allumage qu'Airbus refuse absolument. Notamment pour préserver tous les maillons du plus grand au plus petit de ses fournisseurs.

L'avionneur a promis d'apporter « un soutien très fort à cet écosystème, à sa chaîne de fournisseurs ». Guillaume Faury a rappelé que pour assembler « chaque avion, il fallait 500 000 pièces » dont beaucoup sont produites par des intervenants extérieurs. Outre un soutien

aux équipementiers, il veut aussi rester à l'écoute des compagnies aériennes clientes de ses avions. « Nous allons voir avec chaque compagnie pour nous adapter à la nouvelle situation », a-t-il expliqué.

Avec ce tour d'horizon, Airbus espère « *établir de nouvelles prévisions* » de production et de livraisons de ses appareils. Pour fixer ce nouveau calendrier, le groupe veut s'inspirer de l'exemple de la Chine qui a été « *la première touchée, mais aussi la première à sortir de la crise* ».

Aider les compagnies à ne pas faire faillite

Pour se donner les moyens de passer la crise, mais aussi d'épauler ses fournisseurs et ses compagnies clientes, l'entreprise a levé une nouvelle ligne de crédit de 15 milliards d'euros. Elle dispose désormais de 30 milliards d'euros de liquidités. Pour faire bonne mesure, la direction a annoncé qu'elle renonçait au versement d'un dividende de 1,4 milliard d'euros et qu'elle suspendait le financement de la retraite complémentaire. Cette manne ne sera pas de trop pour aider l'avionneur européen à repartir de l'avant après que le Covid-19 aura été terrassé. Si le constructeur ne veut pas perdre trop de clients, il devra sûrement mettre la main à la poche pour empêcher les compagnies aériennes de faire faillite, et donc de renoncer à leurs commandes. Il pourrait suivre l'exemple du motoriste Safran, par ailleurs équipementier de premier rang d'Airbus. Selon les informations du Monde, plusieurs compagnies aériennes clientes des moteurs du groupe, lui ont déjà demandé des délais et des facilités de paiement.

Dans la plus grande majorité des cas, les compagnies veulent sécuriser leur trésorerie pour pouvoir rebondir dès que la crise sera passée », a assuré **Guillaume Faury**. Le dirigeant affiche sa très « **forte confiance** » en l'avenir, mais Airbus a quand même annulé ses prévisions de production et de livraisons pour 2020. M. Faury se veut optimiste car, selon lui, « *il y aura toujours une aviation et les gens auront toujours besoin de voyager. Toutefois, cela prendra du temps* » pour revenir à la normale.

Les usines du constructeur repartent dès ce lundi mais en configuration réduite, signale la CGT. En effet, certains salariés, testés positifs au SARS-CoV-2, sont confinés à leur domicile, tandis que d'autres doivent s'absenter pour garder leurs enfants. En pratique, les équipes de production travailleront six heures d'affilée avec deux à trois heures d'écart entre chaque équipe pour désinfecter les locaux. **Contrairement à beaucoup d'entreprises, Airbus se refuse à prendre des mesures de chômage partiel. Au contraire, rappelle la CGT : « Les jours non travaillés devront être récupérés avant la fin de l'année. »**

[Le Monde 23/03/2020](#)

IndiGo on Wednesday said that it has offered Union Civil Aviation Ministry its "resources, aircraft and crew" to transport medicine, equipment and relief material from one part of the country to another. As the Modi government has suspended all and international passenger flight operations in India to curb the spread of coronavirus, IndiGo's fleet of more than 250 planes is currently grounded.

IndiGo is the largest airline in India with around 47 per cent share in domestic passenger traffic, according to aviation regulator DGCA's February data.

In a press statement, the airline said, "In an endeavour to support Government of India, IndiGo, India's largest airline, today has offered its resources, aircraft and crew to assist the nation in the worldwide battle against coronavirus."

"The airline has expressed support to contribute in the ferry supply of medicine, equipment, and relief samples from one part of the country to another," the low-cost carrier said.

India has banned international commercial passenger flights for a period of one week from Sunday.

Moreover, domestic flights have also been suspended from Tuesday midnight.

The airline stated that its CEO Ronojoy Dutta has written a letter to the civil aviation Minister, wherein he said, "I know you must be facing major logistical challenges in moving medicine, equipment and relief supplies from one part of the country to another. We at IndiGo would be extremely proud to be associated with this critical life-saving activity at this hour of great need for our nation."

"Please be assured that all our employees are highly motivated in the service of this country and are eagerly looking for opportunities in which to contribute.

We would consider it an honour if you would engage us in this activity," Dutta noted.

The airline has aircraft and crews covering major cities across India and are willing to fly in the service of the nation, IndiGo stated.

PTI, 25/03/2020

NEW DELHI : India's aviation industry is expected to post losses of \$3-3.6 billion in the June quarter with airlines sharing the bulk of the hit following a raft of travel restrictions and diminishing travel appetite because of the Covid-19 pandemic, aviation consultancy Capa India said on Wednesday.

Domestic carriers are forecast to incur losses of about \$1.75 billion next quarter, followed by airports and concessionaires with losses of between \$1.50 billion and \$1.75 billion, according to Capa India. The ground handling industry could report a loss of \$80-90 million during the same period.

These estimates for the potential sectoral losses assume that all domestic and international operations remain grounded until 30 June, Capa India said in the report titled Projecting the potential financial impact of COVID-19 on Indian aviation.

"Most Indian airlines have not structured their business models to be able to withstand even regular shocks, such as elevated fuel prices or economic downturns, let alone once-in-a-century events," the report said, referring to the global outbreak of the viral disease.

"With global aviation almost grinding to a halt, and for what could be an extended period, this is a state of affairs that will heighten risks for even the strongest carriers in the world. Meanwhile, several weaker airlines are likely to exit," it said.

Indian airlines are not prepared for the kind of severe systemic shock that it currently faces, and the fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic will have an impact on the entire aviation value chain, including airport operators, duty free shops, retail, food and beverages, and other airport concessionaires, ground handlers, the maintenance, repair and overhaul industry, inflight catering companies, as well as ticket distribution platforms, Capa India said.

"The entire sector is now in a state of crisis, which will certainly impact FY2021 and quite possibly well beyond," the report said.

LiveMint, 25/03/2020

SpiceJet said on Thursday that it will conduct a special flight on Sunday to take 142 Iran-returned Indians from Delhi to Jodhpur so that they can be taken to a government quarantine facility there.

"The special flight will be operated as per Government of India's request and the airline will deploy its Boeing 737 aircraft for the assignment," the low-cost carrier said in its press release.

The airline's entire commercial passenger aircraft fleet of 82 Boeing 737, two Airbus A320 and 32 Bombardier Q-400s is currently grounded as the government has suspended domestic and international flight operations to curb the spread of coronavirus.

However, the airline's five B737 freighter aircraft have been operating as usual as there is no ban on cargo flights.

The aircraft, which will be used for Sunday's special flight, will be thoroughly cleaned and fumigated upon its return to Delhi and the airline will follow all the protocols for its crew members, the release noted.

PTI, 26/03/2020

MUMBAI: Low fare carrier GoAir has extended pay cuts to its entire staff, after being forced, like its peers, to suspend operations as the entire country went into a lockdown to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

The airline earlier implemented a 50% pay cut for its top leadership.

In a mail to staff on Wednesday, chief executive Vinay Dube said the management was left with "no choice but to extend salary cuts for all of us for the month of March,"

"We will ensure that the lowest pay grades suffer the least," he added without elaborating.

"When the tide turns again, GoAir will find a way to compensate all of you for the sacrifice you are being asked to make at this juncture" he added.

IndiGo has implemented a top down 5%-25% pay cut across its workforce. But its CEO Rono Dutta said no salary or leaves would be deducted for the staff not working because of the suspension of flights.

Economic Times, 26/03/2020

New Delhi: After rescuing several stranded Indian nationals from China and Italy, national carrier Air India has now been assigned the task to fly back more than 270 Israelis stranded in the country to Tel Aviv on Friday and bring home Indians struck there.

"We are doing such flights on the request from the government (external affairs ministry)," a government official said on condition of anonymity.

The stranded Israeli nationals will be flown from Delhi in a Boeing 777 aircraft, the person said. The number of Indian nationals to be brought back from Israel could not be ascertained.

Air India has been at the forefront in the evacuation of stranded Indians abroad. It did the first such flights to Wuhan in China to bring back stuck Indian students.

The national carrier, which the government plans to sell completely, was also instrumental in evacuating Indians – who were stuck in Italy because India barred commercial passenger flights from Italy and other countries to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus – earlier this week.

Economic Times, 26/03/2020

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The national carrier, which the government plans to sell completely, was also instrumental in evacuating Indians – who were stuck in Italy because India barred commercial passenger flights from Italy and other countries to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus – earlier this week.

Air India will also be assigned the responsibility to evacuate about 20,000 Indians stranded in Saudi Arabia, the official said, adding, “No decision has been taken yet in this regard.”

Meanwhile, the country’s largest airline, IndiGo, on Wednesday offered its aircraft and crew for moving medicine, equipment and relief materials to different cities.

“The airline has expressed support to contribute in the ferry supply of medicine, equipment, and relief samples from one part of the country to another,” said a statement by the airline.

In a letter to aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, IndiGo chief executive Ronojoy Dutta said, “I know you must be facing major logistical challenges in moving medicine, equipment and relief supplies from one part of the country to another. We at IndiGo would be extremely proud to be associated with this critical life-saving activity at this hour of great need for our nation.”

Economic Times, 25/03/2020

COVID-19: Air India to incur Rs 30-35 cr loss per day following suspension of operations
Flag carrier Air India is expected to incur losses to the tune of Rs 30-35 crore per day following the suspension of operations in the wake of coronavirus pandemic, according to a source.

With stringent border controls across the countries to restrict movement of people, many countries have barred international flights in their territory amid COVID-19. India has also announced a temporary ban on flying.

'We will not be operating a single commercial flight along with other domestic carriers as per the government's order, yet our daily losses will still be in the range of Rs 30-35 crore.

'Though there will not be certain costs such as fuel, ground handling, airport fee during the suspension of operations, we still will have to make payments towards salaries and allowances, lease rentals, minimum maintenance, besides the interest payment, among others,' the source told PTI.

Air India's total earnings per day are around Rs 60-65 crore and 90 per cent of this comes from passenger revenue, he said adding, 'the expenses too are in the same range. So we are earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation, and amortization (EBITDA) positive or in a way meeting our all expenses.' Air India's salary bill stands at around Rs 250 crore per month while the aircraft lease rentals outgo is around USD 30 million per month as per the source.

The airline has 21 Boeing B787-800s on lease in addition to 27 Airbus A320Neo planes. The lease rental for each Boeing 787 is USD 1 million per months and USD 400 per month for an A20Neo, as per the source.

Besides, the airline has to make as much as Rs 225 crore per months towards interest on borrowings among others.

PTI, 25/03/2020