

Revue de presse 1-15 Juillet 2019

Mangaluru: A team of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation has commenced its probe into the Air India Express flight from Dubai skidding off the taxiway at the Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) here two days ago, airport sources said on Tuesday.

The aircraft was towed to the apron (parking area) of the terminal building on Monday, a day after the incident, they said.

The plane with 186 passengers and six crew on board skidded off the main taxiway and got stuck in an unpaved portion Sunday evening while proceeding to the terminal, reportedly due to high speed and wet runway conditions.

However, the passengers and crew on board were safely deplaned at the spot using a ladder platform.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had sent its team to probe the incident, the sources said. Air India Express (AIE) engineers with the help of the Airports Authority of India personnel retrieved the aircraft and towed it to the apron during a lean period in the airports operations on Monday, they said.

Airport Director V V Rao said the AIE engineers are examining the aircraft for its airworthiness.

Apparently, there was no damage to the aircraft after it veered off the taxiway, he said.

02/07/19 PTI/News18

Mangaluru: A wet runway and over-speeding were the likely cause of the Air India Express flight veering off the taxiway after landing at the Mangaluru International Airport, airport sources said Monday.

The 183 passengers and crew on board the Dubai-Mangaluru flight were safe, the airport and airline had said in separate statements after the Sunday evening incident.

The airline has ordered an investigation into the episode.

The incident evoked memories of the air tragedy at the same airport on May 22, 2010, when an Air India Express flight from Dubai overshot the table-top runway and plunged into a gorge, killing 152 of the 160 passengers and all six crew members.

According to airport sources, weather-related problems due to heavy rain had forced the aircraft to go around on Sunday when it was about 1,000 feet from the ground and it landed safely on the second attempt.

After skidding off the taxiway, the aircraft moved a little further and got stuck in the mud when the pilot applied the brake.

All the 183 passengers and six crew on board were deplaned at the spot using a ladder platform.

Mangaluru International Airport (MIA) Director V V Rao said the plane may have skidded off the taxiway due to high speed, while the exact reason can be ascertained only after the probe.

He, however, said flight operations from the airport were not affected after the incident.

The flight INX 384, which departed from Dubai at 12.39 pm local time, landed at the airport here at 5.35 pm.

While the plane did not overshoot the runway, the mishap occurred when the aircraft vacated the runway and entered the taxiway towards the terminal, the sources said.

The Air Traffic Control observed that the aircraft was moving at a higher speed when it skidded, they said.

01/07/19 New Indian Express

Mangaluru: A day after an Air India Express Boeing 737-300 veered off the taxiway to an unpaved portion and its nose got stuck in the grass, thereby affecting operations at Mangaluru International

Airport for nearly 2 hours from 5.45pm, normal operations resumed at the airport on Monday. The engineers from Air India Express retrieved the aircraft and towed it to a remote part of the airport apron sometime between 3.30pm and 4pm.

V V Rao, airport director, MIA, told TOI that the Airports Authority of India provided assistance to AIE engineers to retrieve the aircraft that got stuck in the grass. The IX384 flight had landed in Mangaluru from Dubai. "The engineers used the lean period in the airport's operation schedule to retrieve the aircraft, thereby minimising possible delays to other scheduled flights," Rao said. The Air India Express engineers are assessing the aircraft for its air-worthiness, he added.

With the airline mandatorily reporting the incident to directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA), the airline regulator sent its own team to probe the incident. The DGCA has its own set of parameters which they will enquire from stakeholders in case of any such incident, Rao said. The DGCA team will submit its findings to the regulator, which will decide on the best course of action to avoid such incidents in future, Rao said.

On flight disruptions due to the incident on Sunday, Rao said certain critical measurements had to be given to DGCA. "We had to assess the aircraft location in the strip for clearance from the Instrument Landing System and runway strip before resuming operations," he said. The delayed departures were cleared with approval of DGCA, Rao said. All the flight backlogs were cleared systematically and normal operations resumed on Monday, he said.

02/07/19 Times of India

While largest airliners in terms of market share like Indigo and SpiceJet have asked passengers to check flight status to or from Mumbai airport, other airlines like GoAir and Vistara have cancelled a number of flights due to heavy rains. These flights which have been cancelled are mostly from Mumbai to places like Kolkata, Delhi, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Chennai and others. Mumbai rains have been copious and they have continued now for the last five days, with more to come. This has forced airlines to announce flight delays and even waivers on cancellation or change fee have been ordered. GoAir and Vistara have asked guided passengers to check their flight status as they have cancelled a host of flights on Tuesday. **Mumbai airport has been filled with stationary air-traffic as both domestic and international carriers are facing a slowdown in operations due to weather conditions and now, with the main runway being shut down.**

02/07/19 ZeeBiz

New Delhi: A SpiceJet flight from Jaipur skidded and overshot the main runway while landing at the Mumbai airport amid heavy rains on Monday, although none of the passengers were hurt in the incident, an airline spokesperson said.

The incident occurred on Monday around 11.45 pm when the aircraft skidded and overshot the main runway, a source said.

"On July 1, **SpiceJet Boeing 737-800 aircraft operated flight SG 6237 from Jaipur to Mumbai. There was heavy rain in Mumbai and the aircraft, after landing, overshot the runway.** Passengers were deplaned normally. There was no injury to either the passengers or the crew," the spokesperson said. **Due to the incident, a secondary runway is in operation at the airport currently.**

Many subsequent flights have been diverted to other airports such as Ahmedabad and Bengaluru, sources said.

02/07/19 PTI/Times of India

New Delhi: Two aircraft have suffered tail strikes on landing in last two days. An Air India Express (AI-Ex) Boeing 737 bounced slightly on touch down at Calicut and then had a tail strike on Monday. And in the other case, a GoAir Airbus A320 suffered this on landing at Ranchi Sunday (June 30). Luckily, in both incidents no one on board was injured and the aircraft involved were also not damaged.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is probing these two incidents of tail strikes. The AI-Ex flight was coming in from Dammam as IX 382 with about 190 people on board. "After touching down, the aircraft had a light bounce. After touching down for the second time following the bounce, it reached the terminal safely. During inspection before being released for the next flight, our engineer observed that the B737 had had a tail strike," said an official.

An AI-Ex spokesman said: "There was a tail strike on landing. The aircraft has been checked thoroughly and there was no damage. The plane is now being released to operate a flight to Sharjah."

In the second case, GoAir's Bengaluru-Ranchi flight had a tail strike during landing at its destination. A GoAir spokesperson said the airline's flight G8-374 on Sunday "had a minor operational glitch. All the passengers on-board had a safe landing. After inspection, the aircraft has been put back into service (on Monday)."

These twin tail strikes comes after two incidents of aircraft veering off runway and taxiway on Sunday. And on Saturday (June 29), an IndiGo Airbus A320 neo operating from Dehradun to Bengaluru as 6E-912 had to divert to Delhi after yet another snag in the Part and Whitney engines that power this plane.

02/07/19 Times of India

Indian budget carrier IndiGo is currently awaiting regulatory approvals for commencing new flight services to Riyadh and Dammam in Saudi Arabia, according to sources in the airline.

IndiGo, which has launched its first service to the kingdom with a Mumbai-Jeddah direct flight last month, is the second Indian budget carrier to launch direct flight services to the country from India. SpiceJet was the first Indian budget carrier to launch services to Saudi Arabia from multiple locations in India.

"We are still awaiting necessary regulatory approvals for these flights and hence will not be able to share the details of the new flights," an IndiGo executive told Arabian Business.

Sources said IndiGo had set a launch date for its Dammam flight, but had to defer the launch plan as it failed to get the regulatory approvals on time.

Indian airlines are currently in expansion mode in their operations to the Middle East sector to fill the supply-demand gap caused after the grounding of Jet Airways.

Air India is set to commence two new direct flights to Dubai from mid this month – one from Kolkata and the other from Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

The state-owned carrier had launched two daily flights each from Delhi and Mumbai to Dubai last month.

02/07/19 Arabian Business

A tour manager detained by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) at the Mumbai airport on Friday for claiming he was a "human bomb" has denied he made the remark and alleged that the CISF tricked him into writing a note of apology.

Ahmedabad-based travel company manager, Akul Patel, 36 – who was detained just before he was to board an Emirates flight to Oslo – was granted bail by a magistrate's court on Monday. The CISF,

however, said that there was no reason for them to pick on Patel among the thousands of passengers screened at the Mumbai airport on Friday.

"In aviation industry across the world, when a passenger utters words like 'bomb' or 'terror attack', it is considered a serious breach of security protocol. We followed the procedure," said CISF spokesman Hemendra Singh.

This is the second case in Mumbai of a passenger making light of aviation security protocol. South Mumbai diamond trader Birju Salla was convicted and sentenced to life in jail in June this year for a note he left in a Jet Airways flight about an imminent terror attack. According to the investigations carried out by the National Investigating Agency (NIA), Salla wanted his wife, a Jet employee in Delhi, to move to Mumbai to live with him. He thought the "terror note" would lead Jet to shut its Delhi operations and transfer her to Mumbai. CISF on Monday said senior officers present at the gate when Patel claimed to be a "human bomb" will testify in the case.

"We also have his apology letter – a clear admission of guilt," Singh said. Patel's passport has been seized and he has been asked to report to a police station in Ahmedabad every Sunday. He will also have to mark his presence at the Sahar police station in Mumbai once every fortnight. Talking to Mumbai Mirror on Monday in his lawyer's office, Patel claimed his detention was all a big misunderstanding.

"All I did was answer the four questions posed to me at the security check. Travelling, taking people on tours is my job. Why would I make such a faux pas? My passport has been impounded. My career ruined. Now I will have to come to Mumbai from Ahmedabad once every fortnight," he said. Patel said after he was detained, CISF officials asked him to write a letter of apology and promised that if he complied he would be put on the next flight to Oslo. "But the moment I finished writing the letter, they arrested me," he said.

02/07/19 Vallabh Ozarkar/Mumbai Mirror

Weeks after Prime Minister Narendra Modi asked all ministries to prepare a five-year vision document each, the civil aviation ministry has chalked out its plan and formulated a list of "high-impact" decisions as well, sources close to the development told CNBC-TV18.

The vision of the civil aviation ministry under the five-year plan is **to create an environment where the aviation industry is sustainable, affordable, safe and internationally competitive and provides connectivity to all parts of the country.**

The ministry's mission entails a 13-point agenda, touching upon a key point of bilateral rights, a subject of extreme importance in the context of suspension of operations of India's largest international player, Jet Airways. As per the mission, the ministry aims for efficient and effective use of international traffic rights by increasing the share of Indian carriers to 50 percent as compared to the current level of 20 percent.

It is important to note here that domestic airlines have not fully utilised 80 percent of their capacity entitlements on overseas routes, but foreign carriers have utilised their bilateral rights.

Creation of airport infrastructure by operationalising 100 more airports and enhancing the regional connectivity scheme or UDAN-Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik are also part of the ministry's five-year agenda.

"The ministry has also aimed to create a transparent and efficient digital regulatory environment. Creating a non-intrusive but effective security system and in being sync with latest technologies, the focus will also be on drones-formulating regulations and building monitoring infrastructure,"

sources aware of the development said.

In order to reduce the expenditure on maintenance and aircraft acquisition for airlines, the mission document also aims to make India a hub of aircraft maintenance and encourage lease financing within the country.

In fact, **the government is also looking at the creation of an Indian GDS or global distribution system.** GDS is a software that travel agencies use to sell tickets or book hotel rooms. Currently, the largest GDS providers are all foreign companies such as Amadeus, Sabre among others.

"Manufacturing a commercial airliner, encouraging private sector participation in airports, airlines and allied sectors, making Indian carriers globally competitive, creating training capabilities in the country in order to address the issues of pilot shortage are also part of the agenda," the sources added.

02/07/19 CNBC TV18

Chennai: Flight diversions and peak hour air congestion may soon be eliminated at Chennai airport as a command centre for Air Traffic Flow Management which was opened recently in Delhi will work to allot slots for airlines for take-off and landing.

This will be done by monitoring the air and ground congestions at airports — especially the most congested ones in Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru.

A senior official said that air traffic controllers sitting in Chennai will be in touch with controllers at the command centre in Delhi and based on their instruction, they will give clearance to planes for take off.

This will avoid the need for diversion of planes to other airports if there is a problem at the destination airports.

Similarly, incoming planes will get a better idea about the number of flights that are lined up over the airport waiting for landing permission. On an average, around 15 to 20 planes are approaching to land at a time. And peak hour congestion is a major problem that airlines face in Chennai. Often, flights to Delhi get diverted to Jaipur and nearby airports because of air congestion at the national capital.

Flights to Bengaluru from other airports get diverted to Chennai during night peak hours adding pressure on the air traffic controllers and ground staff. Recently, there were major delays at Mumbai airport due to rains.

"A flight which is ready for take off in Chennai will be given clearance only after checking if there is a congestion at destination airport and whether it will be cleared by the time the plane reaches. If that is not possible planes to the destination will be delayed in Chennai," he added.

02/07/19 Times of India

Bengaluru: A remote car parking facility for taxis, fitted with automatic ticket-dispensing towers and boom barriers with radio-frequency identification technology (RIFD), will soon be built at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA).

The remote car-parking facility will have the capacity to accommodate more than 1,600 taxis, and the **Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL), which operates KIA, has issued a RFQ (request for quotation) for supply, installation, testing and commissioning of a management system for remote car-parking facility at the airport.**

The facility will accommodate 2,000 cars to help in all-time taxi availability at the terminals, according to BIAL. With the forecourt area of the new terminal currently undergoing a makeover for construction of elevated approach and exit roads for the second terminal, the parking facility at terminal one was proposed to be moved to the newly constructed parking lots.

BIAL is also building a bus-staging facility adjacent to the southern access road and a multi-modal transport hub in the forecourt area of terminal 2. The hub will serve as an interchange between multiple transport models, including the future Bengaluru Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) public bus services, taxis and other modes of transport.

02/07/19 Swathy Iyer/Times of India

Kochi: Furthering the airport security measures, the Cochin International Airport Limited (Cial) plans to provide biometric-based Airport Entry Cards (AEC) thereby enhancing the access control of its staff and keeping track of the movement of crew members, security personnel, airline staff and ground handling agents at airport. The AEC will be foolproof and impossible to replicate, creating a mechanism for monitoring/control of the movements of personnel into airport building and terminals. **The project will be implemented in line with the directions of Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and according to sources, its tendering will be initiated soon.**

At present, the restricted entry or exit points at the airport is manned by Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and they permit access to all airport personnel entering the building after manually checking their ID cards called Airport Entry Permit (AEP). AEPs have alphabetical codes, based on which their access control to different places are validated. This will change once the new biometric pass system is implemented.

According to a Cial official, manual checking of IDs have the possibilities of human errors and it could be easily duplicated. "The terminal and airport offices are situated in a huge cluster of buildings spread across acres. The physical examination of current plastic IDs may compromise security of the airport. Unauthorized personnel can enter the premises using forged IDs. Moreover, there is no system to centrally track the movement of personnel inside the buildings and no means of knowing whether the individual is on duty. New cards will resolve these issues," said the official.

02/07/19 Times of India

Kolkata: Passengers flying in and out of the city had a harrowing time on Monday as a group of app-cab drivers held pickets outside the entry-exit points of the airport and stopped every commercial vehicle that tried to enter or leave the premises carrying passengers. Those who agreed to their terms were asked to drop the passengers, suspend services and join them, and those who didn't and argued, were assaulted and had their mobiles and vehicles damaged by the protesters.

The rampage went on for the better part of Monday morning and such was the impact that by afternoon, app cabs vanished from the airport's app-cab zone and the surrounding areas, leaving flyers at the mercy of pre-paid taxis and touts. Those which stood there, went offline.

"I had no clue about the app-cab strike and tried to book one the moment I came out of the airport. But there was none. I stood in the queue for a pre-paid taxi for more than 45 minutes before I finally managed to get one," said Sangeeta Jaiswal, who came to Kolkata from Delhi.

While queues outside the pre-paid counter started growing, cops struggled to bring in taxis from outside to fill in the void created by the absence of app cabs.

"In the morning, I was taking a passenger to Birati and the men attacked my car just outside the airport. I tried to make them understand that I was not driving an app cab but a commercial vehicle that takes passengers on rent but the men didn't listen and broke my car glasses," said Vicky Shaw, a car rental driver.

02/07/19 Tamaghna Banerjee/Times of India

Thiruvananthapuram: There has been a fall in the number of domestic and international flights from Thiruvananthapuram International Airport recently, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said.

Replying to a question by V.S. Sivakumar in the Assembly on Monday, Mr. Vijayan attributed this to a number of issues, including reallocation of flights. The services of Saudia and flydubai were recently shifted to Calicut International Airport. Besides, the flights of Jet Airways were discontinued owing to the crisis faced by the airlines.

He added that various steps were being adopted to improve connectivity from

Thiruvananthapuram. **Spice Jet has now decided to commence daily flights to Mumbai. Besides, IndiGo has increased its services to Kochi and Kannur. Budget carrier GoAir has also initiated steps to increase the number of flights from the State capital.**

Scoot airline has launched daily services to Singapore.

The Airports Authority of India had also intervened to facilitate services on the vacant slots from the airport, Mr. Vijayan said.

02/07/19 The Hindu

Madurai: Two cold storage units which will allow traders to store perishable items like vegetables and flowers have been setup at the cargo terminal of the Madurai airport. The two cold storages, one each for export and import, come with a five-tonne capacity. At present, they are being tested and will be made functional soon, officials said.

The facility, set up at a cost of **Rs 10 lakh**, will be useful to store perishable items in case the consignment misses the flight. Around **90% of freight sent through Madurai airport is vegetables and flowers**. Till now the consignment used to be sent back to the sender. It has come up one-and-half years after international cargo operations began at the terminal.

Deputy general manager (operations) S S Raju said that temperature between 2C and 8C is ideal for keeping vegetables and flowers fresh. "Storage of seafood requires sub-zero temperatures. It was not considered for Madurai since there is hardly any seafood export here," he said

Exporters and traders have welcomed the facility as it will be very helpful in case of a situation like flight cancellation. However, their main concern is the appointment of a permanent plant quarantine officer. At present, there is an officer appointed only on deputation basis.

Director of ABS Xpress operations, S A Sayeed said the plant quarantine officer is not available during the weekends and on government holidays, due to which nothing can be exported. "Nowadays, officials from other countries are very strict and they will not allow any perishable item without certification from the quarantine officer. As Madurai exports mostly perishable items, a permanent officer is mandatory here," he said.

02/07/19 Times of India

Hyderabad: For the first time in India, about 120 passengers walked into Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) simply by looking into a camera. This is part of a pilot project under the Centre's DigiYatra programme to try out its face recognition (FR) system.

For the time being, authorities are testing the system at only the airport's entry points. In the long term, it will be extended to all security check points, allowing the passenger to virtually board a flight using just his face.

The trials will be conducted till July 31 and will be open to all domestic fliers. "As many as 180 passengers voluntarily signed up for FR, though 70% used it on the Day 1. The numbers are certain to increase," said a representative of GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL).

To begin with, the facility is being extended only to passengers with hand baggage and flying to Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada.

"This will eventually be extended to all domestic fliers. It will not only make the process of boarding smoother but also help them save time. At present, CISF staff spend at least half a minute on physically checking every passenger's ID card," the official said.

In 2018, the FR system was tested on GHIAL staff. It has been conceptualised as an extension of its e-boarding framework and ultimately aims at making air travel completely paperless.

"If the pilot is successful, it will be used for security checks as well. Instead of displaying the boarding pass, passengers can just look into the camera to ascertain their credentials. If found genuine, the system will automatically clear their passage towards boarding," a GHIAL staff said.

GHIAL clocks a daily footfall of close to 60,000 passengers.

02/07/19 Sudipta Sengupta/Times of India

Amritsar: In view of the annual fair at Gurdwara Santsar situated in its vicinity on Tuesday, special arrangements have been made for devotees at Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport. The death anniversary of Baba Jawand Singh will be observed on Tuesday at the Sikh shrine on the airport premises.

Manoj Chansoria, airport director, said passengers departing from the airport had been requested to reach at least three hours in advance to avoid any inconvenience. He said they had also been advised to contact their airlines concerned in case of any assistance.

In addition, the airport authorities said vehicular traffic would also be reorganised to facilitate the movement of devotees. The shrine was set up about 69 years ago when the airport was under the control of the Indian Air Force.

02/07/19 Tribune

Navi Mumbai: The Nerul police have booked a conman for allegedly cheating a 24-year-old man, who was in search of a job in the aviation sector, by posing as an executive of the job search portal Monster.

A resident of Sector 6 in Nerul, the victim has completed a diploma in aviation hospitality after graduating from a hotel management course. "As I was looking for a job in the airline industry I checked for vacancies on job portals and uploaded my resume. On April 1, I received a call from a person named Alok Verma, who claimed to be a senior manager at Monster, that I had been selected for an interview with IndiGo," he said.

The complainant appeared for an online test and a telephonic interview. "They asked me to pay different amounts at various stages. In total, I paid ₹1.15 lakh," the man said. The money was deposited into accounts in the name of Surendra Singh and Dhiraj Bhola Singh in Union Bank of India as charges for document verification, security service, insurance and the interview.

On April 8, the man received an appointment letter from monsterjobsindia@outlook.in for a position in air ticketing with IndiGo. "They told me there is no training programme in Mumbai, so I opted for

Lucknow. They said the training would cost ₹1 lakh and I would have to pay half the amount. Since they demanded more money, I told them to cancel my appointment and refund what I had paid," he said.

When there was no refund, the complainant approached the Nerul police and filed a case on June 27. "The accused had created an email id which looked like that of Monster. The fact that they used another domain to create the account shows it was a fake id created for the purpose of cheating people," police inspector Bhaguji Auti said. **Mr. Verma has been booked under Sections 420 (cheating) and 406 (criminal breach of trust) of the Indian Penal Code and sections of the IT Act.**
02/07/19 Raina Assainar/The Hindu

Ranchi: A GoAir flight met a freak accident after its rear portion hit runway during landing. Bengaluru-Ranchi flight G-8/375 was carrying 165 passengers when its rear portion hit the runway of Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi. The pilot was able to control the flight and all passengers were deplaned safely.

The incident took place at 1:30 pm on Sunday. A flight engineer carried out a check up of the the airplane which was then declared grounded. The plane was to take-off for Bengaluru at 2.20 pm but it was not allowed to take off till 7.30 pm.

Passengers who were due to travel to Bengaluru were forced to wait at the Ranchi airport. They were onboarded on flight G6/116 incoming from New Delhi and the plane proceeded to Bengaluru.

01/07/19 India TV News

New Delhi: The flying time between Kerala and Saudi Arabia has increased by 30 minutes from last week as airlines operating these routes are taking a longer route to avoid the over-water area of Tehran (Iran) airspace with the Strait of Hormuz that connects Persian Gulf and Gulf of Oman at its heart.

"We are taking a 200-mile detour to avoid that area which has increased flying time of Kerala-Saudi Arabia flights by 30 minutes, leading to an extra fuel burn of 1 ton per flight on our Boeing 737s," said a senior official of Air India Express' (AI-Ex) that also flies between Kerala and Saudi cities like Riyadh and Dammam.

The budget airline has so far not hiked airfares due to the higher fuel burn and longer flying time. "As of now we are bearing this extra cost. But if this airspace restriction also goes on for a long period (like Pakistan airspace that has been closed for overflying since February 27), we will have no option but to pass on the cost to flyers," the AI-Ex official added.

01/07/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

With prospective buyers lining up to take a shot at bagging Jet Airways cheap, its prime asset -- the flying license -- is under the aviation regulator's scrutiny that might derail the NCLT-backed resolution process.

Industry insiders privy to the development say that buyers are waiting for the final word from the regulator which is expected to be announced on July 16.

Even the bankers to the now grounded airline are nervous. **A revoked Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will render lower than expected recovery from the airline which has an outstanding of over Rs 8,000 crore.**

A meagre return will be equivalent to bank's taking a massive haircut, somewhere in the tune of over 90 per cent.

However, since the NCLT has stated that matter of resolution at Jet Airways is considered to be of "national importance", the resolution professional is widely expected to request the aviation regulator to extend the AOC's validity.

At the same time, buyers have shown interest in the grounded airline.

Recently, London-based AdiGroup partnered with Jet Airways Employee Consortium partnered to bid for 75 per cent stake of Jet under the insolvency resolution process.

AdiGroup Chairman Sanjay Viswanathan said the combined bidding entity expects a likely investment of Rs 2,500 crore-Rs 5,000 crore, adding that the exact figures will be reached once complete financial details about the company's liability emerge.

Similarly, he did not reveal the source of funding, but said that AdiGroup will hold 49 per cent followed by employees consortium's 26 per cent and the rest will be handed to Indian lenders.

The NCLT process entails that resolution professional will first finalise a list of genuine claimants of due money from Jet. It has asked all to submit claims before the IRP by July.

Jet Airways prospective buyers await regulators scrutiny of airlines's flying licence.

01/07/19 New Minute

Bengaluru: Thousands of passengers who were set to travel with IndiGo airlines on Monday across the country were left stranded after the airline's passenger system server —Navitaire-- was down for more than 30 minutes early in the morning, due to technical issues. Passengers in Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Pune and Hyderabad were worst affected and were left waiting in long queues near the Indigo counters in departure terminals, waiting for the check-in process to begin for nearly an hour.

The airline's server was down between 4:29 am and 5:07 am, on Monday said IndiGo officials, while confirming that the system is now up and functioning normally. During this time, manual boarding passes were issued to passengers at airports, including the Bengaluru International Airport.

Passengers however, quickly took to social media to complain about the server glitch and about how they were made to wait for nearly an hour across airports in the country.

IndiGo, in a statement said "Due to some technical reasons, IndiGo server at Bangalore airport was down from 4:29am to 5:07am this morning. The server is restored and functioning normally. We regret the inconvenience caused to our passengers."

01/07/19 Swathy R Iyer/Times of India

New Delhi: Jet fuel price was on Monday cut by a steep 5.8 per cent to a four-month low on softening international oil prices, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) price in Delhi was cut by Rs 3,806.44 per kilolitre to Rs 61,200.36 per kl. This is the second straight monthly price reduction.

State-owned fuel marketing companies revise ATF prices on 1st of every month based on average of benchmark international oil price in the previous month.

In Mumbai, home to country's busiest airport, ATF price was cut to Rs 61,199.79 per kl from Rs 64,946.04 per kl, according to a price notification issued by oil companies.

Rate were last cut by a marginal Rs 61.05 per kl on June 1.

Reduction in ATF rates will bring relief to cash strapped airlines.

01/06/19 PTI/Times of India

As Jet Airways undergoes bankruptcy resolution, the Tata Group is looking to bid for the airline's aircraft and bilateral rights to scale up and tap the gap created by the exit of the Naresh-Goyal led airline.

The Tata Group has two joint ventures in the aviation space. One is with budget airline **AirAsia** and the other is its stake in full-service carrier **Vistara**, a joint venture with Singapore Airlines. Both Vistara and AirAsia India, along with their partners, are quietly putting together an aggressive plan to become a formidable force in the skies. AirAsia India plans to double their fleet from 21 to 40 aircraft by April next year and also plans to start international operations to Sri Lanka, Thailand and Malaysia by September 2019.

Vistara recently got permission to fly abroad after a delay of over a year due to the investigation in the alleged bribing and lobbying charges against AirAsia India. To back their plans, the Tatas, according to sources, have lined up Rs 4,500 crore for the two airlines. If everything goes to plan, they would be the only player in India to straddle both the low-cost carrier as well as the full-scale service space in the international arena among private players, Business Standard reported earlier. According to a report in Economic Times, **Vistara has sought to get more aircraft into its fleet, including those grounded at present.** "Acquiring (Jet's) Boeings makes our otherwise A320 Airbus fleet asymmetric but it will at least service the gap even if temporarily." Tata SIA Airlines chairman Bhaskar Bhat was quoted as saying by ET. Clearly, with Jet Airways out of the picture, **the airline is finally ready for take off with a new international flight plan.**

01/07/19 Business Standard

Gulf Air, the national carrier of Bahrain, is set to increase its direct New Delhi service from two to three daily flights starting from July 9.

Gulf Air operates a total of 75 weekly flights to eight destinations in India - Mumbai, Delhi, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Cochin, Hyderabad, Calicut and Bangalore.

Gulf Air's CEO, Krešimir Kucko said: "We are constantly developing strategies to satisfy the high demand to and from India and cater to our passengers' needs across the Gulf Air network.

"Gulf Air's increased Delhi frequency will enhance the existing Gulf Air service to one of our national carrier's eight destinations in India.

"With additional flights between Bahrain and Delhi we are offering enhanced schedule flexibility for our valued travelers while also creating improved connections for those travelling to and from Gulf Air's network of onwards destinations across the globe."

01/07/19 Sam Bridge/Arabian Business

Airports Authority of India (AAI) Employees Joint Forum wrote a letter to Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri, registering their protest against the proposed privatisation of the six profit-making airports across the country. The Government of India is currently in the process of privatising six airports, namely Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Mangaluru, and Thiruvananthapuram.

In the letter, AAI Employees Joint Forum referred to the previously privatised airports of Delhi and Mumbai, and said, "The privatisation of these airports have not brought any good to the country and the people at large as far as facilitation, providing additional employment to society, participation in the development of Aviation infrastructure in the country etc. are concerned. Moreover, privatisation has encouraged monopolistic operation, exploitation of employees and additional burden on the general public."

Talking to NewsClick, Balraj Singh Ahlawat, the general secretary of Airport Authority Employees Union (AAEU) and convenor of the joint forum, said, "There is no financial support from the

Government of India or any other sources. Our financial position has further been hard hit due to inability of Air India to clear our dues and other airlines, which have either folded their business and/or are at the verge of complete closure. The financial effect on AAI due to these developments is never compensated in any form."

The employees of AAI have been constantly protesting against the move since it was declared in November, 2018. They have repeatedly held demonstrations at airports across the country, opposing the move to privatise six more airports. Ahlawat said that before the privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi airports, 60% of the income of AAI came from these two airports. After privatisation, the total revenue earned from these two airports has been reduced to 30% of the net income of AAI. He said, "As per the records of 2015-16, out of the net income of Rs 12,542 crore from all the airports, only Rs 3,836 crore came from Delhi and Mumbai airports."

"Before privatisation, 60% of the income of AAI came from Delhi and Mumbai airports. However, after privatisation, that number has decreased to 30%. As per the records of 2015-16, out of the net income of Rs 12,542 crore from all the airports, only Rs 3,836 crore came from Delhi and Mumbai airports," Ahlawat said, adding that this was an indication that income would further decrease after privatisation of these six airports, which are making good profits now.

01/07/19 Ditsa Bhattacharya/Newsclick

IndiGo on July 1 announced that it has awarded a pilot training contract to the New Zealand International Commercial Pilot Academy (NZICPA).

The contract was given to NZICPA under the airline's flagship 'cadet pilot program', it said.

"The **first group of students** will begin the **Wanganui, New Zealand** based component of the cadet program in **January 2020**, where they will live in a campus environment," the low-cost carrier said in a statement.

Prior to moving to New Zealand, the applicants will be shortlisted through an "extensive pilot selection process" in India that will have its final approval, the airline said.

"After training in New Zealand, the cadets will return to India for flight license conversion of the New Zealand Commercial Pilot License and then proceed for Airbus A320 type rating training, before beginning line-training with IndiGo," the airline said.

The Indian license conversion part of the training will be conducted in partnership with Flightrule Aviation Services, a Delhi-based aviation training company, it added.

01/07/19 moneycontrol.com

Bhopal: Adding yet another feather to its cap, the Raja Bhoj airport has registered a growth of 72.7% in passenger footfall. In May 2019, a total 1.20 lakh passengers travelled from Bhopal airport, the highest ever in its history. Notably, such a surge came after the state capital was connected with more cities since January. In May 2018, the total passenger footfall was 69,619.

Better air connectivity at the Raja Bhoj airport has started delivering results. The airport has registered growth both in passengers as well as aircraft movement. According to the latest data, Bhopal airport has witnessed daily movement of 44 flights, which was only 10 till December 2018.

Bhopal is now connected with Delhi, Mumbai, Raipur, Jaipur, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Shirdi, Udaipur, Surat and Pune.

Just six months ago, flights from Bhopal airport were limited to two major cities -- Delhi and Mumbai. Since January 2019, Bhopal has witnessed a big jump in air connectivity. According to the latest data, an annual footfall of 8.1 lakh was registered. Incidentally, Bhopal airport recently witnessed footfall of 2,000 in a single day, the highest ever at the airport.

Speaking to TOI, airport director, Anil Vikram, said such increase in passenger footfall is encouraging. "Whatever efforts were made in the recent past, they have started paying dividends. Such growth has encouraged us. It is also proved that the efforts are in the right direction," said Vikram. Vikram said that witnessing 72.7% growth in passenger footfall is a big jump. However, he added, "Still we are far behind from the potential available at the airport. We can handle 2.5 million passengers. It means we have not even achieved half of the potential. However, the best part is that the big leap was registered after air connectivity increased in January," said the airport director.

01/07/19 Ramendra Singh/Times of India

Mumbai : It rained cats and dogs in Mumbai last weekend, but at the Juhu airport the downpour was all about catfish. The runway of the busiest heliport in the country was briefly taken over by aquatic life from the lake on the premises on Saturday.

The unusual intruders-most of them catfish, some even up to 3 ft long-left the airport officials and helicopter pilots bemused. Even those who have landed in airports across the country and boasted of runway encounters with nilgai, mongoose, antelopes, snakes and dogs were left feeling like fish out of water in this new work environment.

The flippity-flop on the runway shouldn't have come as a surprise though, as the low-lying Juhu airport has a lake, a large nullah and Arabian Sea, all within half a kilometre radius. It lies like a trough and on its bank are residential colonies and S V Road at an elevation of 4-5ft. "Water from these parts pour into Juhu. It's gets flooded even in light rain. There are certain areas in Juhu airport that remain under water for most part of monsoon," said a senior helicopter pilot.

A senior official of the Airports Authority of India said: "There is a big lake on the northwest side of the runway, which is frequented by locals who fish there. In heavy rain, the airport gets inundated and when the water recedes, one finds fish and other aquatic life left behind."

A video clip shows two uniformed men from Juhu airport's fire services clearing the runway of these 'intruders', with an airport vehicle in tow. One of them picks up a rather big catfish, holding onto to its head with his two hands, and dunks it into a plastic drum in the vehicle while collecting the 'foreign objects' from the runway and tarmac. Another clip shows catfish slithering away into the wet grass patches near the paved track.

01/07/19 Manju V/Times of India

New Delhi: After two major airline crashes and several restrictions imposed by the United States aviation regulators on Boeing, faults are being blamed on "temporary" Indian engineers, claiming the 737 Max software was outsourced to engineers from Indian companies HCL and Cyient Ltd.

Boeing, however, has refuted the allegation, saying it did not rely on engineers from these companies for the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation (MCA) System, a fault in which allegedly caused Lion Air crash in October 2018 and the Ethiopian Airlines disaster in March. Boeing has also denied involving these engineers for addressing cockpit warning light issue, which was revealed after these crashes. As many as 356 people were killed in these two crashes.

A report published in Bloomberg has said the iconic American planemaker and its subcontractors relied heavily on temporary workers from India, which earned as low as Rs 620 per hour (\$9/hour). The company, which bagged its biggest ever contract worth \$22 billion from SpiceJet Ltd in 2017, reportedly outsourced work to several employees of HCL at its Seattle Boeing Field office in the US. It was reportedly working in partnership with HCL and Cyient since 2010-11.

These coders, many of them college graduates, were given the task of writing codes for complex specifications set by Boeing. "It was controversial because it was far less efficient than Boeing engineers just writing the code," Mark Rabin, a former Boeing software engineer, told Bloomberg. He said this resulted in a lot of "going back and forth" due to incorrect codes. Boeing had fired several senior engineers from the company as it no longer needed them because it felt Boeing's products were mature, he claimed.

The engineers who worked on the Max projected -- developed to beat rival company Airbus' SE plane -- also faced "pressure" from the senior management, which directed to them limit changes that could have caused a delay in its launch, said the report. It also claims to have seen resumes of HCL and Cyient engineers who said they worked on the project that developed Max's flight-display software and flight-test equipment. In one such resume posted on social media, an HCL employee reportedly claimed he "provided a quick workaround to resolve production issue which resulted in not delaying flight test of 737-Max".

Boeing's association with HCL and Cyient dates back to early 2000 when cockpit electronics maker Rockwell Collins started outsourcing work to HCL. In 2010, Boeing also partnered with HCL to "create software critical for flight test". The next year in 2011, it announced to work with Cyient Ltd for design, stress analysis and software development of 787 and 747-8 planes. A major reason to outsource work to Indian tech companies was contract obligations. For example, Boeing in 2005 grabbed \$11 billion order from Air India, and in return, it promised to invest \$1.7 billion in Indian tech companies.

Meanwhile, the company said its "focus is on always ensuring that our products and services are safe, of the highest quality and comply with all applicable regulations." Indian IT services giant HCL also told Bloomberg it would not comment on "specific work" it did for Boeing. Cyient also refuted the claim that it was involved in the development of the Boeing 737 MAX MCAS or the cockpit warning light. "Cyient takes immense pride in our association with Boeing and look forward to growing our partnership across engineering, design and manufacturing across various platforms," the company said.

30/06/19 Business Today

Hyderabad: As part of its fourth anniversary, Trujet Airlines, under the 'Wings of Pride' program, provided free air travel to 45 elderly people belonging to St. Anthony's Old Age Home (Malkajigiri) from Hyderabad to Nanded. Trujet flew the inmates of the home to Nanded for a visit of Gurudwara and dropped them back to Hyderabad. The Airlines as part of corporate social responsibility (CSR) service, conducted several programs for the children in Spoorthy Orphanage in Dundigal, Hyderabad on June 29th.

The pilots, Captains, Airhostesses, and other crew members of the airlines arranged a cake cutting program for the children in the orphanage.

The staff presented the children with toys and gifts. They conducted a motivational class for them.

30/06/19 Hans India

Indian private airlines such as the Tata group-majority owned Vistara and SpiceJet may make a bid for embattled Jet Airways, according to aviation industry sources.

Jet Airways has been referred to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) for resolution under India's Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).

The NCLT-appointed Interim Resolution Professional (IRP) is expected to begin searching for buyers for Jet next month, following the July 4 deadline set for receiving claims of dues by all its creditors.

According to sources, Vistara and SpiceJet are likely to bid, while on Friday, the London-based Adi Group and the Jet Airways Employees Union said they would bid for a 75 percent stake in Jet. "We have already informed NCLT through the IRP about forming a consortium with [the] Jet Employees Union," Adi Group chairman Sanjay Vishwanath told reporters in New Delhi.

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways holds a 24 percent stake in Jet.

"The significant number of flying rights, especially in the international sector, and airport parking slots of Jet Airways could elicit interest from domestic aviation players such as the Tata Group and SpiceJet to make a bid for Jet Airways," Dhiraj Mathur, an aviation industry expert and former executive director of PwC India told Arabian Business.

He added, however, that prospective suitors for Jet are expected to offer only a fraction of its current market valuation or liabilities should they make a bid.

"SpiceJet has already got about 43 percent of Jet's airport parking slots, besides a considerable number of airline seats from Jet's quota, both within and outside India, without investing a single penny in the airline," Mathur added. "So why should it offer any significant valuation to pocket the remaining flights rights?"

30/06/19 Arabian Business

The increasing number of flights and congestion at busy airports has compelled the Airport Authority of India to plan for 380 additional parking bays at 23 airports in the country. Most of these parking bays will come up within the next two-three years. While Kolkata airport will get 46 parking bays — the largest number — Ahmedabad will get 40, which will come up latest by December 2020. Similarly, Jaipur will have 32 additional parking bays and Lucknow will have 38.

These parking bays are also being planned at airports in **Delhi (39), Bengaluru (36), Chennai (7), Amritsar (10), Trichy (13), Patna (6), Ranchi (6), Hyderabad (22), Kochi (11) and at few more places.** The aviation sector has witnessed continuous growth, barring turbulence in the last few months. According to the International Air Transport Association (IATA), with more people preferring air travel, India is one of the fastest growing domestic aviation markets in the world for five years.

However, the growth turned negative in April mainly due to flight cancellations and subsequent grounding of Jet Airways. The negative growth in the Indian market is temporary, said IATA. At present, nearly 600 aircraft are in operation in the country and 900 more are scheduled to be inducted in the next few years. Officials said the additional parking bays have been planned to keep in mind the rising number of flight operations due to growth in air passengers.

30/06/19 Kumar Vikram/New Indian Express

New Delhi: **The Airport Authority of India (AAI) spent Rs 4 crore in 2018-19 to maintain its 26 non-operational airports**, according to an official document.

In 2017-18, the AAI had spent Rs 2.66 crore to maintain these 26 airports, the document stated.

The AAI owns and manages around 100 operational airports across the country. However, it also has 26 non-operational airports with it that have no flight operations currently.

Some of these 26 airports are in the following places: **Donakonda in Andhra Pradesh; Daparizo in Arunachal Pradesh; Rupsi and Shella in Assam; Jogbani, Muzaffarpur, Raxaul in Bihar; Deesa in Gujarat; Chakulia and Deogarh in Jharkhand; Panna, Satna and Khandwa in Madhya Pradesh.**

As per the document, the remaining of these 26 airports are in the following places: Aizwal in Mizoram; Nadirgul and Warangal in Telangana; Vellore and Thanjavur in Tamil Nadu; Kailashahar, Kamalpur and Khowai in Tripura; Bareilly and Lalitpur in Uttar Pradesh; Asansol, Balurghat and Malda in West Bengal.

In 2018-19, Rs 85 lakhs was spent by the AAI to maintain the non-operational airport at Vellore in Tamil Nadu, as per the document.

30/06/19 PTI/Economic Times

The Delhi High Court on Monday granted anticipatory bail to an Air India pilot who was suspended for allegedly violating aircraft rules, including evading a breath-analyser test and forgery.

Justice Mukta Gupta granted relief to **Arvind Kathpalia** on his plea apprehending arrest in a case lodged against him on the direction of a lower court. He is also accused of tampering with evidence, criminal conspiracy and intimidating a doctor working with the airline in January 2017. The court had earlier restrained police from taking coercive steps against Kathpalia, who was removed as the director of operations of Air India last November after failing to clear a pre-flight alcohol test, with the government citing "serious nature of the transgression and (his) failure to course-correct".

According to police, Kathpalia had operated a flight from New Delhi to Bengaluru without undergoing the mandatory pre-flight breath analyser test on January 19, 2017. Further, even at Bengaluru he refused to undergo a similar test, police had said. Later, on his arrival in New Delhi, he had allegedly gone to the Pre-Flight Medical Examination Room and made a false entry in the Pre-Flight Breath Analyzer Examination Register for the flight he had operated.

The Delhi Police had opposed his anticipatory bail plea saying it was not a normal case of forgery as the consequences were grave and he also threatened the doctor on duty. A trial court had earlier directed the police to lodge the FIR for alleged violation of aircraft rules, tampering with evidence and intimidating a doctor working with Air India in January 2017.

30/06/19 PTI/Financial Express

New Delhi: **A Lucknow-bound passenger was arrested at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying 14 live bullet rounds in his baggage**, an official said on Saturday.

A Central Industrial Security Force officer, deputed at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) to scan the baggage of commuters, detected bullet-like objects on the X-ray monitor while checking the bag of passenger Athar Abbas Naqvi on Friday, he said.

"Fourteen live bullet rounds were recovered from the passenger who was supposed to take a flight to Lucknow," the official said.

The man was handed over to the police which charged him under various sections of the Arms Act as weapons and ammunition are not allowed to be taken either in the terminal area or aircraft under the Indian aviation rules, he added.

30/06/19 PTI/NDTV

Kochi: Gold seizures continue to break new records in the state with Customs seizing over 100 kg of gold at airports in the first three months of the fiscal year.

As per Customs data, over 85.7 kg of gold alone was recovered from **Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode and Kannur** airports, monitored by the Commissionerate of Customs (Preventive), between April 1 and June 27.

As many as **140 cases have been registered across the three airports**. Around 20 kg of gold has been seized from CIAL till now and 40 cases have been registered. Around 56.6 kg of gold was seized from Kozhikode airport in 110 cases. In the last fiscal, 417 kg of gold was seized from four airports across the state with 1,102 cases being registered.

“Compared to the same quarter in the previous fiscal, the number of cases has come down, but the quantity of gold seized has gone up this year. The gold seized by various customs formations in the last fiscal year alone has recorded a 400 per cent growth in Kerala. If the current gold seizure trend continues in the following quarters, the quantity of gold recovered will surpass the previous year’s record,” Customs Commissioner Sumit Kumar said.

30/06/19 New Indian Express

New Delhi: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Saturday recovered foreign currency worth Rs 10,67,000, concealed in two dummy mobile charger at chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, Mumbai, an official release said here on Sunday.

Around 2040 hrs on June 29, during PreEmbarkation Security Check (PESC) at Security Hold Area (SHA) of CSMI Airport, Mumbai, a CISF personnel detected 58,145 Dirhams worth approx INR 10,67,000/- concealed inside two dummy mobile chargers, carried by an Indian passenger Shaikh Irfan Kadir bound for Sharjah by Air Arabia flight. On enquiry, he could not produce any valid document for carrying such high volume of foreign currency and then the matter was informed to Customs Officials.

30/06/19 UNI

Mumbai: A “suicide bomber” joke at the Mumbai international airport has landed an Ahmedabad businessman behind behind bars. If convicted, Atul Patel (35) faces up to six years in prison.

Patel, who was on his way to Dubai for a business meeting, allegedly told a CISF official at the international airport’s security checkpoint around 10.30pm on Friday that he was a “suicide bomber” and asked the official to check him quickly.

Security was immediately tightened at the airport as the joke came a day after the airport received a mail that said explosives were being loaded on three flights, including the Air India Boeing 777 that was forced to land in London.

CISF officials examined Patel, who owns a travel agency, for an hour and handed him over to the police after no explosive was found. “His baggage was removed from the screening machine and checked thoroughly. When the CISF asked him to give in writing what he told them, he wrote on a piece of paper, ‘I am a suicide bomber, mujhe jaldi check kar lo (Check me quickly),’” said an officer of Sahar police station. “He did not explain why he did this,” the officer added.

Patel has been booked under IPC sections 505 (1) (rumour to intent cause fear) and 506 (criminal intimidation), which provide for maximum six years in jail. He was produced before a local court, which remanded him in police custody till July 1.

The Sahar police had just the previous day (June 27) slapped the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for the first time against unknown persons for sending a bomb scare mail to the Mumbai airport. The email had said that three flights were laden with explosives.

30/06/19 V Narayan/Times of India

In her two hours and nine minutes long maiden speech as the country's first full-time woman finance minister, Nirmala Sitharaman, a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka, has made some ambitious announcements for the aviation sector. The minister said that "as the world's third largest domestic aviation market, the time is ripe for India to enter into aircraft financing and leasing activities from Indian shores."

"This is critical to the development of a self-reliant aviation industry, creating aspirational jobs in aviation finance, besides leveraging business opportunities available in India's financial special economic zones (SEZs), namely, International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)," the minister said. India is one of the fastest-growing aviation markets. At present, there are about 600 commercial aircraft in operation, and this number is expected to reach 1100 planes by 2027. **The theme of the Budget for aviation particularly focused on giving a boost to the domestic capabilities and setting up of leasing companies in India and making India a Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) hub.** As it stands right now, India doesn't have a single aircraft leasing company, at least not a big one to cater to demands of domestic aviation players such as IndiGo, SpiceJet, GoAir or Vistara. All these airlines are heavily reliant on leasing companies for aircraft. More than 90 per cent of their aircraft are leased.

Leasing companies are based out of India primarily because they don't find viable business opportunity in the country. Aircraft leasing requires huge investments from lessors, and India doesn't have competitive debt and equity raising mechanism for such kind of investments.

"There are two issues with leasing. One is the asset funding and interest rates, and the other is cash flows that would come over a period of time. At the same time, at the end of a lease agreement, the lessors have re-leasing risk. Lessors have to be sure that they can earn revenues over a number of years. The budget is trying to say that there will be attempts at developing the aircraft financing and leasing activities in India," says Kinjal Shah, vice president at ratings agency ICRA. Typically, aircraft leasing is for eight to 10 years, after which the chances of re-leasing are risky. That could be due to the age of the aircraft or improvements in aircraft technology (such as fuel-efficiency etc). Big leasing companies working with Indian carriers include Avolon, SMBC Aviation Capital, AerCap Holdings and BOC Aviation.

The other major aviation-related announcements from Sitharaman was creating an enabling ecosystem for growth in India of MRO industry, disinvestment of Air India, increasing FDI cap, and the role of UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme in bridging the rural-urban divide. The domestic airlines get almost 90 per cent of their MRO work done overseas, particularly in the neighbouring countries like Singapore and Sri Lanka. This is due to the cost advantages in those countries and high tax rates in India.

06/07/19 Manu Kaushik/Business Today

The Budget announcement to further relax Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the civil aviation sector may help the government to find buyers for Air India as well as Jet Airway, which will also be put up for sale under the bankruptcy proceedings.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced in the Budget today that the government will look at relaxing FDI norms for sectors like Aviation, Media and Single-brand retail. In the same speech, she

also announced that the government will continue to go ahead with the divestment of various Central Public Sector Undertakings, including Air India.

This will not be the first time that the government is trying to divest its stake in Air India. An earlier attempt by the government to divest 76% stake in the national carrier did not find any taker.

The government now intends to sell 100% in the national carrier and the move to relax FDI may interest buyers of Air India.

However, there is no clarity on the Substantial Ownership and Effective Control (SOEC) clause yet. The SOEC clause bars any foreign investor from taking complete control of the operations of the airline and be run by a board that has two third members as Indian.

Other announcement of making India a hub for aircraft leasing is also a work in progress and the civil aviation ministry has a committee with various stakeholders, including airlines, to make Ahmedabad's GIFT city – a tax free zone – as the hub for aircraft leasing.

05/07/19 Mihir Mishra

The aviation sector is set to get a major boost with the government proposing to make India a hub of maintenance repair and overhaul (MRO) activities and aircraft financing, besides relaxing foreign direct investment rules for overseas carriers.

Policies would be changed to foster growth in MRO services, a long-standing demand of the industry. Further, aircraft leasing businesses, including leveraging opportunities at the financial special economic zone—International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) -will also be on the agenda. The Budget has also increased allocation to the regional connectivity scheme (Udan) by around 10% to `480 crore in FY20. India boasts of the third-largest domestic market in the world behind USA and China. It carried 139 million passengers in 2018, up 18.6 % year-on-year.

Aviation experts noted that the government will have to create a level playing field in terms of rationalising tax levies on MRO and aircraft leasing activities to fulfill its ambitions. For instance, the domestic MRO activities are taxed at 18% as compared to 5% in nearby countries Sri Lanka, Singapore and Thailand, forcing airlines to do service jobs on aircraft overseas. These services include periodic engine checks, propellers and airframes, besides the intensive and multiple checks at the end of lease tenor of aircraft. The proposed enhancement of foreign direct investment in aviation could ease divestment of national carrier Air India and Jet Airways, which is facing bankruptcy proceedings.

Currently, the FDI limit in scheduled commercial airlines stands at 100% but foreign carriers are barred from holding equity stake in domestic carriers above 49%. This is some kind of a spoiler as non-aviation firms are often not keen to pick up stakes in airline firms. Airlines like Qatar Airways have shown interest in picking up stakes in Indian carriers if the FDI rules are relaxed. Also, increasing FDI cap could help domestic carriers like GoAir to fuel international expansion.

“Relaxing FDI norms will give flexibility to airlines and remove their economic constraints. It bodes well for the proposed disinvestment of Air India as well,” Peeyush Naidu, partner, Deloitte India, explained.

The ministry of civil aviation had set up a working group last year to formulate policies for aircraft leasing in India. As per the ministry, passenger traffic is expected to grow six-fold to 1.1 billion by 2040 and the number of operational airport would double to 200 till that period. The fleet size of domestic airlines is poised to reach 2,350 planes in 2040 from 600-odd currently. According to plane makers Boeing and Airbus, this would translate into \$5 billion financing each year.

06/07/19 Arun Payal/Financial Express

New Delhi: **The Aviation Ministry has been allocated Rs 4,500 crore in the Budget for the current financial year, which is 115 per cent less than Rs 9,700 crore that was given to it during 2018-19 fiscal.**

According to Budget documents released on Friday, the Centre has allocated **Rs 480 crore for regional connectivity scheme UDAN, under which the "proposal is for revival of 50 airports and Viability Gap funding for North East Connectivity".**

In 2018-19, the UDAN scheme was given Rs 441 crore.

The Centre has allocated just Rs 1 lakh in 2019-20 for the "turnaround plan for Air India", as compared to Rs 3,975 crore that was given to the national carrier in the last financial year, as per the documents.

The Air India Asset Holding Ltd, a special purpose vehicle (SPV), has been set up as part of financial restructuring of the debt-laden national carrier.

According to the documents presented in the full Budget for 2019-20, **the government has decided to allocate Rs 2,600 crore for the SPV this fiscal.**

05/07/19 PTI/Business Standard

She was a high-flying international human right's lawyer who worked with refugees. Then she was found dead on a beach in East Sussex. What happened in-between is a story of crime and punishment, and a question of how justice works in the social media era.

Simone Burns, who is also known as Simone O'Broin, first achieved international infamy in the business class cabin of an Air India 777.

She'd been drinking. Three bottles of wine had hit her like a freight train, and the cabin crew decided to stop serving her, provoking a fiery backlash from the intoxicated lawyer. Burns spat in the face of one attendant. **She called the cabin crew "Indian money-grabbing cunts," and tried to smoke a cigarette in the toilet.**

When the plane touched down at Heathrow, police were there to take Burns into custody. **She was convicted of being drunk on an aircraft and assault and was sentenced to six months in jail.**

In a just world, that'd be where this story ends. Our legal system is imperfect, but it's the best thing we've got. It's based on well-defined rules of engagement, with punishments meted based on precedent and proportionality. And crucially, it provides an opportunity for penitence, redemption, and ultimately rehabilitation.

But in the 21st century, we've got a parallel legal system, where we're all participants, and we're all judge, jury, and executioner. This isn't an original thought – it's explored in detail by Jon Ronson's excellent book, *So You've Been Publicly Shamed*.

In the case of Burns, the Internet, outraged by what she'd done, set about dismantling her life. This isn't hypothetical, and it's not up for debate. It happened, the details of which are indelibly etched within the public record. During her case, Judge Nicholas Wood acknowledged that she'd been the target of a vicious campaign of cyber-bullying on social media.

"You are a woman, not just of good character but a positive and impeccable character – a righter of wrongs. What this has done, thanks to social media, [has meant] you have had death threats and been a hermit in your home," Wood is acknowledged as saying in *The Guardian*.

In the days following her death, which has not yet been confirmed by police as a suicide, Burns' friends spoke to the Telegraph, saying that she was unable to come to terms with her infamy. Her "world fell apart," said one friend.

Social media is a dehumanization machine – which is ironic, given that it's also a great connector. You can ruin someone's day from across the planet. And you can do it without the guilt or anxiety of a face-to-face confrontation, because social media reduces people to a handle, a profile, or just an

opinion.

06/07/19 Matthew Hughes/TNW

Mumbai: Acting quickly on the government's second attempt to sell the financially-crippled national carrier Air India, its chief Ashwani **Lohani has called a meeting of all the 13 unions Monday to discuss the terms of privatisation**, according to sources.

The government Friday reiterated its intent to exit Air India with finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman stating in the budget speech that **government will go ahead with privatisation of the flag carrier and has just earmarked a paltry Rs 1 lakh from the budget for the airline, that has been somehow keeping afloat.**

The Narendra Modi government in its first term had also attempted to exit from the airline business but failed to get a buyer, forcing it to defer the plans.

"The government has directed the Air India chairman and managing director to meet all trade unions and discuss the privatization move," a source close to development told PTI Friday night.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the budget said, "in view of the current macroeconomic parameters, the government would not only re-initiate the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India, but would also offer more central enterprises for strategic participation by the private sector."

Lohani along with AI board members are expected to meet all the 13 unions Monday, the source added.

05/07/19 PTI/Economic Times

The proposed enhancement of foreign direct investment in the civil aviation sector announced in Union Budget 2019-20 could ease the proposed divestment of Air India.

Delivering the Budget speech, Nirmala Sitharaman talked about the strategic divestment of Air India.

An industry watcher with over four decades of experience in airlines' finance feels that **the proposed relaxation of Foreign Direct Investment in the civil aviation sector will bring the necessary investments and would lead to healthy competition.** "However, the Substantial Ownership and Effective Control clause should be protected. Besides, having a SEZ in aircraft leasing would lead to conservation of foreign exchange as millions of rupees are spent in US Dollars for leasing aircraft and paying rentals which can now be made in Indian Rupees. India can become a hub like Dublin in Ireland for leasing companies to set up businesses in India," he pointed out.

The implementation of proposals stated in the Union Budget 2019-20 will help create jobs in the maintenance, repair and overhaul facilities in the country.

Commenting on the Budget proposals, Ravi Menon, Executive Director, Air Works said that the proposals are not about cost reduction. "Hopefully, the intent stated will create a level playing field in the region in terms of cost competitiveness. **The larger benefit will be the progressive development towards self sufficiency in aircraft maintenance and engineering services. India has the potential to transform into a MRO Hub in this region.** As the saying goes 'Even Eagles need a push'. How the stated intent translates into reality will become evident in the next couple of months," he said.

05/07/19 Business Line

Imphal: **The Airport Authority of India (AAI) is planning to develop seven more airports including three greenfield airports and two water aerodromes in the Northeast region**, said AAI senior official.

Currently 12 airports is operation in north-eastern states.

Speaking to this reporter on the sideline of the two-day conference-cum-international buyer seller meet which concluded recently in Imphal , Regional Executive Director Sanjeev Jindal said the **water aerodromes will be developed at Brahmaputra and greenfield airports at Rupsi in Assam and Hollongi in Arunachal Pradesh.**

"We're also exploring another around Silchar," he added.

The Rupsi Airport, located about 15 km from Dhubri town, in Assam was said to be constructed during by the British during World War II to supply arms, manpower and ammunition to the allied forces while Hollongi Airport located about 25 km from Itanagar will boast some state-of-art infrastructure.

The remaining two airports will be developed in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram.

06/07/19 Eastern Mirror

Hyderabad: **Hours before the arrival of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday, the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport witnessed high drama due to a bomb scare which turned out to be a hoax from a 'drunk' youngster who was depressed about his love failure.**

Police said that said that K.V. Vishwanathan (24) working as sales executive in a private firm in Secunderabad, who was supposed to board the same aircraft, informed the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel that he got information about a **bomb being placed in two flights, belonging to IndiGo and TruJet.**

Acting on the information, the security personnel sanitised the flights before declaring the threat a hoax and detained the man, who was later handed over to RGI Airport police of Cyberabad. A case under 'Suppression of Unlawful Act Against Safety of Civil Aviation Act' (SUAASCAA) has been registered against the accused and he was taken into custody.

Shamshabad DCP N Prakash Reddy told The Hindu that the accused had a flight to Chennai at 8 a.m. and reached airport around 1.30 a.m. Since then he was consuming liquor at a bar inside the airport and around 6.30 a.m. he went to a smoking room. After coming out the man saw a CISF Officer and gave false information about the bomb, Mr. Reddy said.

06/07/19 Abhinay Deshpande/The Hindu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration plans to make India a hub for financing aircraft purchases and leasing of planes, as the South Asian nation moves to support local carriers, which are among the biggest customers for Airbus SE and Boeing Co.

"As the world's third largest domestic aviation market, **the time is ripe for India to enter into aircraft financing and leasing activities from Indian shores**," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her maiden budget speech. **"This is critical to the development of a self-reliant aviation industry, creating aspirational jobs in aviation finance, besides leveraging the business opportunities available in India's financial Special Economic Zones."**

The ability to fund purchases and lease aircraft locally will be a boon for local carriers like InterGlobe Aviation Ltd.'s IndiGo and SpiceJet Ltd., as it will significantly insulate them from

foreign exchange fluctuations. Airlines are increasingly moving toward an asset-light model, under which they sell aircraft to lessors for a profit, only to lease them back, which helps them keep a younger fleet.

The centre will also examine relaxing foreign direct investment rules in the aviation sector, Ms Sitharaman said, without giving details. Indian laws now allow foreign airlines to take a maximum of 49% stake in local carriers, preventing them from taking effective control and ownership of the local company.

05/07/19 Anurag Kotoky/Bloomberg/NDTV

The main runway of Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport is back to operating mode.

The primary runway 09/27 has been made available for normal operations from 16.47 hrs, officials of the Mumbai International Airport Ltd said. This follows the **successful recovery of the SpiceJet aircraft** and its subsequent shifting away from the main runway.

A 60-member team from MIAL's Airside Operations, Maintenance, Projects and Fire team along with about 100 contract staff of AIC, worked day and night over 90 hours through incessant rains and created pathways to facilitate the disabled aircraft to be pulled onto firm ground after it was lifted from the mud by the Air India team using their Disabled Aircraft Recovery Kit (DARK) equipment. Even as rains were pouring continuously, MIAL team worked 24 X7 to create a pathway of around 130 x 20 metres using stone bed and gravels. On top of the stone bed, steel plates and FRP sheets were placed to enable the towing equipment to move the aircraft weighing around 41 tonnes after it was emptied of all cargo and fuel.

The lack of nose gear of the disabled aircraft presented a huge challenge to the MIAL team even as they worked during pounding rain. To mitigate the impact of non-availability of the nose gear, a trailer had to be positioned at the front of the aircraft to support it while the aircraft was being pulled from behind using towing aides.

05/07/19 Mrityunjay Bose/Deccan Herald

Kasargod: Direct flight to Dubai from Kannur will be available for passengers from July 25 onward. There were no direct flights from Kannur to Dubai from Kannur airport, which became functional on December 9, 2018.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation has permitted the company to operate daily direct flights to Dubai. GoAir also has bagged permission to operate flights from Kannur to Kuwait from July 29 onward.

Passengers, particularly those residing in north Kerala working in the Gulf had been demanding for direct flights from Kannur to Dubai since the airport was commissioned.

06/07/19 Daijiworld

New Delhi: **A Delhi High Court judge recused himself on Friday from hearing Jet Airways founder Naresh Goyal's plea challenging a look out circular (LOC) issued against him barring him from travelling outside the country.**

When the matter came up for hearing before Justice Vibhu Bakhru, he said that "this matter will have to go before another bench" and directed that it be listed before another judge on July 9.

The judge, however, did not give any reasons for recusing from the matter.

According to Goyal's plea, the LOC was issued against him on the request of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) which comes under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA). He has sought quashing of the LOC as well as several office memorandums which lay down the guidelines for issuing the travel ban.

Goyal said he came to know of the LOC on May 25 when he and his wife, Anita, were offloaded from a flight to Dubai with an onward connection to London.

He has contended that no ECIR/FIR has been registered against him and he has not been named as an accused in any case warranting issuance of the LOC.

05/07/19 PTI/Business Standard

Kozhikode: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has accorded Air India and Emirates airlines permission to recommence operation of wide bodied (Code- E) aircraft from Karipur Airport.

The two airlines had to discontinue operations of the jumbo aircraft from Karipur in May 2015 following the ban imposed by the DGCA over runway safety concerns.

The DGCA on Friday granted nod for Air India to operate Boeing 777-300 ER, Boeing 777-200 LR, Boeing- 787- 8 Dreamliner and B 747-400. Emirates has been given permission to operate Boeing 777-300 ER and Boeing 777- 200LR.

The decision was taken on the basis of the safety assessment on the compatibility study done by the two airlines.

The DGCA has stipulated that the operations of jumbo flights will be restricted to day time during the first six months.

Following the DGCA ban, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) had carried out a series of mitigation measures including strengthening and re-carpeting of the runway and grading of runway strip to cater to the requirement of large aircraft. AAI had also taken steps to increase the runway end safety area (RESA) and has installed simple touchdown-zone lights on both runways.

05/07/19 Rajeev K R/Times of India

Surat: As many 117 passengers of the Air India flight going to Delhi were stranded at the Surat airport for hours after the pilot detected some technical snag in aircraft's engine on Friday morning.

Sources said that the Surat-Delhi Air India flight was scheduled to depart at 7.45 am, but took off at 2:30 pm due to the snag.

A passenger, who did not wanted to be named, said, "We were told there was some technical problem in the aircraft. While many passengers left for their homes, those who had come for the business meet or other engagements preferred to sit at the airport till 2.30 pm. It was a harrowing experience."

The flight had arrived from Delhi and it boarded passenger from Surat.

06/07/19 Times of India

New Delhi: A woman has been apprehended by CISF at the Delhi airport for allegedly carrying five bullets in her hand baggage, a senior official said Saturday.

Trisha Mondal, bound for Kolkata on an Air India flight, was intercepted by a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer after he detected the bullets on the X-ray monitor around 4 pm Friday at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA), he said.

A total of 5 bullets were recovered from the passenger's bag.

The woman could not give a satisfactory reply as to why she was carrying the ammunition that is banned to be brought in the airport terminal area or to be carried inside an aircraft, the official said.

06/07/19 PTI/India Today

The government is getting ready to re-initiate the disinvestment process of national carrier Air India in view of the current environment.

"The government would re-initiate disinvestment of Air India," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her first Budget speech. Sitharaman presented the Union Budget for 2019-20 today.

The minister also said the government would consider keeping its stake below 51 percent in some public sector enterprises on a case-by-case basis, hinting at selling over 49 percent stake in Air India. The government today also said that it would further consider liberalising foreign direct investment in the aviation sector.

Last year, the government had failed to sell Air India when it had offered 74 percent stake. While a lot of parties had shown interest, none of them actually submitted bids. A few companies such as IndiGo suggested that they weren't comfortable in a joint venture with the government.

This year, it is expected that the government may divest up to 100 percent stake in the debt-ridden carrier, making the deal a lucrative one for the buyer.

As first reported by CNBC-TV18 last year, the government had decided to transfer debt amounting Rs 29,464 crore along with other non-core assets to the newly created special purpose vehicle to attract bidder interest for the carrier.

As per the provisional figures of FY 2018-19, the total debt of Air India Ltd as on March 31, 2019, is Rs 58,351.93 crore. While no party has come forward till now to buy Air India, IndiGo has shown interest, however, only for the international segment.

05/07/19 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

In a time when Indian Aviation Industry is going through turbulent times, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that India will enter into aircraft financing & leasing. This is a first time any finance minister spoke about aircraft financing & leasing in their budget. **The finance minister said as the world's third largest aviation market, time is ripe to enter aircraft financing and leasing from Indian shores.**

The commercial aircrafts are very expensive and need finance and leasing options for any aircraft carrier to induct planes in their fleet. Finance Minister also announced that the Government will examine opening up FDI further in aviation.

Sitharaman, 59, became only the second women in the history of independent India to present the Union Budget. Prior to the presentation, the Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi approved the Budget for 2019-20. She handed over a copy of the Union Budget to President Ram Nath Kovind before her maiden budget speech. Breaking away from the brown Budget briefcase, Sitharaman held a red parcel like bag with a key hole on the emblem.

She said the interim budget focused on 10-point vision to boost economy. In the current year, India's economy will grow to become USD 3 trillion economy, sixth largest in world. "We need to invest in infrastructure, digital economy and job creation in small and medium enterprises," Sitharaman said.

05/07/19 News18.com

A faulty thrust reverser and aquaplaning were the primary factors that caused an Air India Express Boeing 737-800 to overshoot the runway on 10 July 2018 at Mumbai airport, but the crew handled the situation well.

In its final report on the incident, India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) says the incident involved the aircraft bearing registration VT-AXT (MSN 36331) operating flight IX-213 from Vijayawada.

At 09:20 local time, the aircraft touched down 962 metres from the threshold of runway 14 at Mumbai and travelled 5 metres before coming to a halt beyond the end of the runway and on the paved surface.

None of the 82 passengers and 7 crew sustained injuries. The tyres of the aircraft were worn out due to excessive braking, but suffered no other damage.

There was moderate rain at the time of the incident, and the crew was told at 09:18 when receiving landing clearance that wind speed was 12 kts at 270 degrees and the runway surface was wet.

Three seconds after touchdown, the crew found that one of the thrust reversers did not deploy and took steps to apply maximum manual brakes. This was insufficient to decelerate the aircraft, but they used the rudder to control direction.

This reduced nearly 40% of the available landing distance, DGCA says in the report, citing dynamic aquaplaning and prevalent weather conditions as other factors.

The report states that maintenance of the aircraft's thrust reversers was conducted according to schedule and completed before the incident flight. The aircraft was considered airworthy and serviceable.

The regulator agrees with the crew's course of action: the landing configuration was correct "as per briefing and landing calculations," and the crew followed standard procedures and checklists in all phases of flight.

"The decision to use maximum manual brakes was correct... Rudder input was used to effectively maintain the direction control of the aircraft post-touchdown," it says.

05/07/19 Simin Ngai/Flight Global

Singapore: The Indian government is counting on a jumbo Rs220bn (US\$3.2bn) bond sale to revive efforts to privatise debt-ridden national carrier Air India after a first botched attempt last year.

Air India Asset Holdings Limited, a government-owned special purpose vehicle formed last year to take over Rs295bn of the airline's Rs575bn debt, in addition to various assets and subsidiaries, is set to name underwriters for the proposed bond issue on Monday, according to a source close to the plans.

The SPV is planning to raise Rs70bn from three-year government-serviced bonds on July 15. A sale of Rs150bn 10-year government-guaranteed bonds would follow by the end of the month.

The proceeds will be used to further streamline Air India's debt structure and make it fit for a share sale later this year.

In May 2018, the government offered a 76% stake in the airline but failed to attract a single bidder, causing great embarrassment at the time for the administration of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. AIAHL was formed afterwards to start cleaning up the company's debt burden.

The government confirmed in its budget statement on Friday that it will now "reinitiate the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India".

The company is expected to report a loss of more than Rs76bn for the year to March 2019, up from a loss of Rs53.37bn a year earlier, according to Reuters, despite receiving Rs39.75bn of government funds in the last fiscal year.

According to local media reports, Air India does not have enough funds to pay employee salaries

beyond October.

Much is riding on the success of the AIAHL bond issue. "The removal of the huge chunk of debt improves the attractiveness of the airline," said a partner from an accounting firm.

However, Air India's previous attempt at issuing a large government-supported bond was not a success. In March, it sent an RFP to raise up to Rs70bn from bonds backed by a government guarantee at tenors of up to 15 years, but the issue did not materialise because investors were not comfortable with the structure.

"There was a clause in the issue that if the ownership changes, the government guarantee will cease to exist," said a DCM banker. That was clearly a concern for investors, given that the government wants to sell its stake.

"Hopefully there will be an unconditional guarantee from the government of India" this time, said a fund manager.

Investors are expected to be keen on the bonds because of the government guarantee and the pick-up over government securities.

"Investors do not have to worry about repayment. If Air India Asset Holdings is not able to sell the assets and subsidiaries, the government will pay the coupon and principal to the bondholders," said another DCM banker.

Few investors participated the last time Air India came to the market in December 2012, when it raised Rs74bn from 19-year bonds at 9.27%. That issue had an unconditional government guarantee and was taken up by Employees' Provident Fund Organisation and Life Insurance Corp of India, both of which are controlled by the government.

05/07/19 Krishna Merchant/Nasdaq

Air India Assets Holdings Ltd, a special purpose vehicle that holds debt of the national carrier, is set to finalise bankers for its 220.64-bln-rupee bond issue, moving a step closer with its fund-raising plans, according to sources.

The company on Wednesday held fee bidding for merchant banks to participate in the bond issue.

"Around 20 merchant bankers expressed interest to arrange the issue. 16 bankers may get selected. However, we are awaiting an official confirmation from the company," a merchant banker closed to the development said.

Air India Assets Holdings is planning to raise 70 bln rupees through the issuance of government-serviced bonds maturing in three years. The principal and interest payments on such bonds are serviced by the government, though the issue shows as debt on the entity's books.

The company also plans to raise 150.64 bln rupees through bonds maturing in 10 years, which will carry a government guarantee.

04/07/19 Bhakti Tambe/Cogencis

Nashik: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Wednesday gave its approval for passenger aircraft to land at night at the Ozar airport, 20 km from here, following successful trials in the past few months.

The airport is managed by Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL). The DGCA had already certified night landing instruments at the airport in the first half of May and asked HAL to conduct trials. Thereafter, a private airline conducted 10 trials during night during the second half of that month.

HAL, city MP Hemant Godse and industrial associations in Nashik were making efforts to get approval from the DGCA. TOI is in possession of a copy of the DGCA's letter of approval for night landing.

"We have been waiting for DGCA's approval for night landing for passenger aircraft. Private airlines will now be able to start operations from Ozar," said Godse.

Spicejet was unable to start its Goa-Nashik operations under Udan as the arrival time of the flight

from Goa is at 7 pm. The airline had won the bid under the second phase of Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) to operate on Nashik-Goa and Nashik-Hyderabad routes.

Earlier, the airline had even urged Goa airport authorities to advance the take-off time from there so that flight could reach the Nashik airport before sunset and take off to Hyderabad. The Goa airport has, however, not given an early slot.

04/07/19 Tushar Pawar/Times of India

Intermittent rain and soft slushy mud ensured that despite a 15-member Air India Engineering Services Ltd (AIESL) team working non-stop at recovering the disabled SpiceJet aircraft, it continued to remain stuck at Mumbai airport, making the main runway unusable throughout Thursday.

Air India's engineers, who are using a damaged aircraft recovery kit to recover the disabled Boeing 737-800, said in a media interaction that they had managed to move the aircraft by only about 50-60 metres so far. The aircraft has sunk about 250 m into slushy soil.

The SpiceJet flight from Jaipur, carrying 167 passengers and the crew, overshot the runway on Monday night after landing amid heavy rain, leaving the plane stuck partially on the main runway. Airport operator Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) issued a Notice to Airmen declaring the main runway closed, and the shorter secondary runway was put to use.

Bibek Kumar Bagchi, general manager, engineering, AIESL, whose team has spent sleepless nights trying to extract the aircraft, said the challenge was steering aircraft through the soft mud. "Three attempts were made at recovering the aircraft. However, it kept moving and the wheels sunk in the soil. The airport operator is working on constructing a hard surface path using metal sheets, so that it can be pulled out onto the paved area," Mr. Bagchi said.

The AIESL team had placed four airbags to lift the aircraft. "We have used two 40-ton and two 30-ton airbags below the aircraft. After lifting the aircraft, we have placed the nose on a trailer truck that will push it out once the hard surface path is ready," Mr. Bagchi said.

Explaining the concept of aircraft recovery, he said Air India was a member of the International Airlines Technical Pool and thus offered services to both members and non-members. SpiceJet, is a non-member, Mr. Bagchi said.

For non-member, the **cost for the use of an aircraft recovery kit — like the standard kit that Air India has — includes an uplift fee of \$1,20,000 and a usage fee of \$6,000 per day.** In the present case, the kit has been in use from Tuesday noon.

05/07/19 Aditya Anand/The Hindu

Mumbai: A total of 25 flights were cancelled at Mumbai airport on Thursday as the Spice-Jet Boeing 737 that went off the runway a little before Monday midnight is yet to be removed. All the 25 cancelled flights—14 departures and 11 arrivals were of IndiGo, the largest operator on domestic routes.

SpiceJet would be billed at least USD 160,000 (nearly Rs 1.1 crore) for aircraft removal, said a source. Initial DGCA probe has revealed the SpiceJet plane touched down at high speed about 1600 metres ahead of the threshold of the 3600-metre runway 27 and there was no problem with friction on the main runway. An hour later, another SpiceJet plane went off secondary runway and came to a halt in the stopway, but the pilot taxied it back to the parking bay with the help of a follow-me vehicle.

SpiceJet in a statement said: "We are in receipt of the show cause notices issued by the DGCA. The concerned officials will submit their replies within the timeframe given by the regulator. Safety is the core value of our operations and is a shared objective of both the DGCA and SpiceJet. We will take all possible steps that may be required to further strengthen our safety mechanism."

The DGCA notices have been issued to **GP Gupta, accountable manager, SpiceJet; Capt GPS Grewal, chief of flight safety; Capt SPS Suri, senior vice president (operations) and Capt Vishal Sawhney, head of training**, said a source. "The regulator carried out an unplanned surveillance of SpiceJet on Wednesday during which it came across a number of deficiencies," said a source. For instance: SpiceJet's Flight Operational Quality Assurance (FOQA) department which monitors flight data to gauge pilot performance had forwarded certain violations and shortcomings for action to SpiceJet's training department for action. "But SpiceJet's training department did not act on them," said the source. "No corrective training was given to the pilots who were found to be lacking in skills and who were involved in exceedances," he added.

05/07/19 Manju V/Times of India

New Delhi: **In an unprecedented move, India's aviation regulator on Thursday served a string of notices to SpiceJet — which saw three of its planes veering off runways on landing in as many days — for "lack of safety management system in the organisation" and alleged failure to take timely action to prevent these back-to-back incidents. The notices to four senior officials seek their replies within 15 days after which the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will decide on the action to be taken against them.**

A team of DGCA officials conducted surprise surveillance of SpiceJet at its Gurugram office on Wednesday and checked its operational records. Based on findings of this, show cause notices have been issued for a number of alleged lapses to the low cost airline's heads of training, operations, flight safety and the overall accountable manager.

The alleged violations say sources, include: "lack of implementation of safety management system in the organisation... (and that) timely action on part of the organisation could have arrested the adverse trends and helped in prevention of the recent occurrences."

The notices are learnt to have pointed that **SpiceJet "failed to analyse these trends and did not take any remedial action"; that the crew involved in the "exceedances were not made available for corrective training"; "majority of cases requiring correction action/training, the involved crew has been given counselling (sometimes even one telephone)" and "(official incharge) did not ensure implementation of SMS (safety management system) in flight crew training department".**

A SpiceJet spokesman said: **"We are in receipt of the show cause notices issued by the DGCA. The concerned officials will submit their replies within the timeframe given by the regulator. Safety is the core value of our operations and is a shared objective of both the DGCA and SpiceJet. We will take all possible steps that may be required to further strengthen our safety mechanism."**

04/07/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Ranchi: **The industries in Jamshedpur, which is known as a steel hub of India, have been stressing on the need of Dhalbhumgarh airport which will not only provide better connectivity but will also generate employment opportunities for large number of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in state, said Jharkhand Small Industries Association (JSIA).**

The association believes that MSMEs will have a positive opportunity to grow with the proposed Dhalbhumgarh airport establishment in Jamshedpur.

Commenting on the need of the airport, President of JSIA, SK Agarwal told KNN India, **“For a better infrastructure and to boost up the employment even more folds, airport connectivity is a must to the city and it is necessity has been started feeling.”**

Airport development will not only provide better connectivity but it will raise many more small scale industries to come forward. Employment potential will increase by it which will encourage the service sector the most, he added.

JSIA President said that the Service sector will give employment for a long term basis and people are looking to Jamshedpur but before mega industries come here, infrastructure needs to be well equipped.

04/07/19 Knn

Nagpur: Days after two Indigo Airlines aircraft were forced to land in the dark at the Nagpur airport, two more aircraft of the airlines were grounded here on Thursday. Sources in the airport said this was not due to bad weather, indicating there were some technical issues in the planes.

First, the aircraft coming from Mumbai at 1.30pm, and supposed to go back at 3.30pm, was grounded at Nagpur airport due to a snag. The airline decided to engage the aircraft supposed to fly back to Bengaluru after coming here to accommodate the Mumbai-bound passengers.

The Bengaluru flight was cancelled to do this. However, even the Bengaluru aircraft is reported to have developed a **technical snag**, and was grounded here itself.

Finally, the passengers were flown to Mumbai by a third flight of Indigo Airlines that was supposed to take off from Nagpur at around 4pm.

The entire week remained turbulent for Nagpur airport. The week was marked by cancellations and diversions due to bad weather.

04/07/19 Shishir Arya/Times of India

New Delhi: India ordered an investigation on Thursday into alleged **mismanagement of funds at Jet Airways**, which halted operations in April after running out of cash.

The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has ordered India’s Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) to carry out the investigation, a government order seen by Reuters showed.

The order refers to alleged siphoning of funds and unspecified financial irregularities at Jet Airways, which was once India’s largest private airline, but did not include details on the allegations or name any individuals.

A Jet Airways spokeswoman did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the order, which also called for investigations into Jet’s group companies including low-cost Jet Lite and Jet Privilege, which manages its loyalty programme.

In a separate development, a government source told Reuters that the former chairman and founder of Jet Airways, Naresh Goyal, had approached Delhi High Court, seeking to overturn an order that stops him from travelling abroad.

The source said the government plans to oppose the appeal by Goyal, who along with his wife Anita, was stopped from leaving India at Mumbai airport in May.

Goyal, who Jet Airways said in March would step down from the board and reduce his stake in the airline, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

04/07/19 Aditya Kalra/Reuters

New Delhi: Indian airlines have suffered losses worth over Rs 548 crore due to airspace closure by Pakistan after the Balakot air strike in February, the Centre said on Wednesday.

In a written response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) Hardeep Singh Puri said the national carrier Air India lost Rs 491 crore till July 2, while IndiGo suffered a loss of Rs 25.1 crore till May 31.

SpiceJet and GoAir lost Rs 30.73 crore and Rs 2.1 crore, respectively till June 20. "The airspace closure by Pakistan is a unilateral measure that followed the non-military counter-terrorism airstrike by the Indian Air Force against terror camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019," Puri said in the upper House of Parliament.

Earlier, an **Air India** official told ANI that the national carrier was **losing 6 crore a day due to airspace closure by Pakistan.**

On Friday, Pakistan announced to extend the closure of its airspace till July 12.

Pakistan had fully shut its airspace on the eastern border with India after the Indian Air Force carried out aerial airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot on February 26.

In mid-April, Pakistan opened one of its 11 air routes for west-bound flights from India; and airlines like Air India and Turkish Airlines have started using it.

05/07/19 ANI/India Today

Bengaluru: **Star Air (www.starair.in), a scheduled commercial airline by Sanjay Ghodawat Group (SGG), having its base at Kempegowda International Airport Bengaluru has recorded the best OTP of 89% since its inception.** It is the best achievement by a startup airline in the Indian commercial aviation sector.

Mr. Simran Singh Tiwana, CEO Star Air, said, "Our team is dedicated to provide the best-in-class service, and we strive for the On-Time Performance. I congratulate every member of Star Air family for this exceptional achievement and their commitment towards their duties and 'customer-first attitude'."

Star Air is currently operating at five stations, Bengaluru, Hubballi, Belagavi, Ahmedabad, Tirupati with Mumbai route commencing shortly.

Mr. Sanjay D. Ghodawat, Chairman - Sanjay Ghodawat Group, said, "We are very proud of these achievements in the first five months of our operations, and we are confident in maintaining the same OTP in future. The recent turmoil in the aviation industry was very unfortunate. But, at the same time, there are enormous possibilities for an airline like us, we are focused and committed, with a prior experience in the aviation sector and backing of 25-year-old Sanjay Ghodawat Group, an established conglomerate."

Star Air commenced its latest route, Belagavi to Ahmedabad from 15th May, 2019. This route received the 85% load factor, which is highest in its class. Star Air has received a very positive response from the areas of North Karnataka (Hubballi, Dharwad, Belagavi and Vijapur districts), South Maharashtra (Kolhapur, Solapur and Sangli districts) and Gujarat (Ahmedabad region) where it operates currently.

04/07/19 PTI/Business Standard

The number of pilots with commercial pilot licenses has increased in India over the last five years even as airlines have hired more number of foreign pilots during the same period, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told Rajya Sabha on Thursday.

Replying to an unstarred question by BJP MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy, Puri said the number of Commercial Pilot License (CPL) and Type Rated Pilot License holders had been increasing over the past five years.

In the year 2015, the number of CPLs issued was 394 and it rose to 659 in the year 2018. For the year 2016 and 2017, the number of CPLs issued were 458 and 593 respectively.

In 2019 a total of 313 CPLs were issued till May 31.

The type rating issued on pilot licenses in the year 2015 the number of endorsements were 1521 and it rose to 2611 in the year 2018.

In his reply, Puri said that the number of foreign pilots employed by aviation companies over the last five years also rose from 280 in the year 2015 to 324 in the year 2018.

In 2019 up to the month of June, a total of 404 foreign pilots were employed.

Puri also said to overcome the shortage of pilots, all the schedule and non-schedule airlines have been advised to develop their own strength to reduce the dependency of foreign pilots.

"Accordingly, airlines train their pilots to upgrade them as a pilot in command/commanders to reduce the dependency on foreign pilots," the minister said.

05/07/19 ANI/Wion

New Delhi: **In the next five months, Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport will become the first in the country to be entirely free of single-use (disposable) plastic.** The project covers all three terminals and the airside portion of the airport.

The initiative, in line with India's pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic by 2022, will be replicated in other airports as well.

IGIA currently doesn't allow the use of plastic for grocery bags, food packaging, bottles, straws, containers, cups and cutlery, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) officials said. Outlets in its terminals have replaced single-use plastic with paper and bio-based compostable materials. DIAL plans to ensure use of smart and bio-friendly packaging for food takeaways and beverages, use of paper or environmental friendly bags for retail shopping and engage key stakeholder groups to raise awareness, enforce, monitor and the measure.

The Bengaluru International Airport has also been taking steps to ban the use of single-use plastic. DIAL officials said they have been, since a long time, ensuring there is minimal use of single-use plastic items at the airport. In order to eliminate its usage, they have ensured they raise awareness and enhance waste management systems apart from promoting the use of eco-friendly sustainable alternatives.

05/07/19 Pankhuri Yadav/Times of India

The sharp drop in passenger traffic that is being witnessed by Delhi Airport, if prolonged, will pressure its credit metrics, revealed Moody's Investors Service.

In a report that was released on Thursday, the US-based financial firm said the fall in passenger traffic for Delhi Airport over the past two months is a sharp turnaround from the average annual increase of 15 percent between 2016 and 2018.

DIAL's (Delhi International Airport Limited) credit metrics are already likely to stay at the lower end of the range considered appropriate for its Ba2 ratings, because of additional debt incurred to fund its major expansion program and Moody's base case assumption that tariffs will remain at around the current low level.

"The decline in traffic is credit negative for DIAL because most of its revenue is linked to passenger and aircraft movements at the airport...Nevertheless, our base case scenario assumes that the downward pressure on DIAL's passenger traffic will gradually dissipate in the remaining months of the fiscal year ending March 2020, and passenger traffic will grow at a high single-digit percentage annually over the next 2-3 years," said Spencer Ng, Moody's vice president and senior analyst.

Earlier, the Airports Authority of India published data which revealed that passenger numbers at the airport fell 12 percent in May 2019 versus May 2018, after a 15 percent decline in April 2019.
04/07/19 CNBC-TV18

New Delhi: **The firm stance and intense lobbying by the state government against privatization of Trivandrum international airport seems to have had its impact at the Centre.** Though it is unclear whether the Centre will review the decision, two developments in New Delhi on Wednesday threw enough hints that the Centre was seriously considering the proposal of the state that the management of airport should be given to the special purpose vehicle - Trivandrum International Airport Limited - floated by the state government.

Union civil aviation minister Hardeep S Puri told the Rajya Sabha that the suggestion of the state government to hand over the management of Trivandrum international airport to a state government-run agency is under the consideration of the government.

Later in the day, the Union cabinet meeting decided to put off the decision to privatize the Trivandrum international airport, although the cabinet approved the proposal for leasing out Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru airports to Adani group for 50 years.

04/07/19 Rajiv G/Times of India

Chennai: Though a two-way data communication system called Controller Pilot Datalink Communication (CPDLC) for exchanging text messages between pilots and controllers are available, **majority of the narrow-body planes, especially those of Indian carriers that fly the international route over the Bay of Bengal, do not have the facility installed.** Around 44% of the traffic on the route comprises A320 or B737-800 narrow-body aircraft.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) has made its air **traffic control unit in Chennai capable of using CPDLC system** by which text messages can be exchanged using satellite link when the planes fly over areas where VHF and HF communication is erratic. This is part of the plan to track the aircraft effectively over the sea, where weather is turbulent, and radar coverage and voice communication are poor.

Automatic Dependent Surveillance – Broadcast (ADS-B), implemented to track the planes via satellites, also does not allow pilots to communicate with the air traffic control.

05/07/19 Times of India

Mumbai: The Air France-KLM combine is open to other commercial partnerships in India after Jet Airways' grounding, senior executives of the megacARRIER said on Wednesday. **"We will continue to look for opportunities to serve the Indian market better,"** Welmer Blom, Air France-KLM's senior vice president for India, Middle East and the Gulf, told ET.

While the Franco-Dutch airline is yet to identify potential partners, it is increasing capacity to the country by 25% to 1 million seats in the winter schedule starting October.

The expansion includes daily flights to Mumbai and Delhi and new flights to Bengaluru. It will also include new products such as the Boeing 787 Dreamliner plane deployed by KLM on the Bengaluru-Amsterdam route and the Airbus A350 aircraft by Air France on the Mumbai-Paris sector.

In December 2017, the Air France-KLM combine had signed a pact with Jet through which the airlines aligned inventory and networks and sold each other's tickets. It gave Jet access to more than hundred locations in Europe as well as to the US through Air France-KLM's pact with Delta Air Lines.

After Jet ran into cash flow problems last year, its owner Naresh Goyal tried to woo both Air France-KLM and Delta Air Lines for a stake purchase, but without success.

Both Blom and Jean - Noel Rault, general manager Air France-KLM for the Indian sub-continent, said Jet's grounding left 80,000 passengers, booked on shared flights between the airlines, in the lurch. Flight occupancies "reached the skies" and both had to operate extra flights and deploy bigger planes to accommodate passengers.

05/07/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

Kozhikode: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has expressed unhappiness over the reluctance of some airlines to operate domestic flights under the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) at Calicut International Airport.

Earlier, the AAI had approved a route under UDAN RCS for **IndiGo** airlines to operate non-stop flights between **Delhi and Calicut**. The company, **which obtained the slot effective from April 30, has not yet commenced operation.**

The UDAN RCS is jointly funded by the Centre and the State government. For fixed-wing aircraft, there is a cap of fare at Rs.2,500 per hour of flight for the 50% of the seats. Airline companies bid for routes in various rounds of auction. Alliance Air, Trujet, Spice Jet, and Air Odisha had bid for various routes 1st time.

K. Srinivasa Rao, Director of Calicut International Airport, said on Thursday that IndiGo had said that it had no aircraft to operate direct flight between Delhi and Calicut. However, it operated flight from Kannur to Delhi. This could be because of the low 1% GST on aviation turbine fuel at Kannur airport. "It was only recently the State government decided to lower the GST on jet fuel from 28.75 % to 5% at Calicut," he pointed out.

05/07/19 The Hindu

New Delhi: **Rating agency Moody's on Thursday said that the fall in passenger traffic at Delhi airport over the past two months will negatively impact the operator Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL).**

According to Airports Authority of India (AAI) data, passenger numbers at Delhi Airport fell by 12% year-on-year in May 2019, after a 15 per cent year on-year decline in April.

The ratings firm said that the decline in passenger traffic was primarily driven by the **suspension of Jet Airways' operations on April 17**, which reduced the available seat capacity in the market, and was likely the reason for the reported increase in ticket prices in India. It also said that a slowdown in global GDP growth and the **grounding of 737-Max 8 aircraft** globally since March, were also factors likely to have contributed to weakening passenger numbers.

"The decline in traffic is credit negative for DIAL because most of its revenue is linked to passenger and aircraft movements at the airport," said Spencer Ng, a senior analyst at Moody's, in a statement. The agency, however, believes that the growth will come back to the airport. "Nevertheless, our base case scenario assumes that the downward pressure on DIAL's passenger traffic will gradually dissipate in the remaining months of the fiscal year ending March 2020, and passenger traffic will grow at a high single-digit percentage annually over the next 2-3 years," said Ng.

05/07/19 Economic Times

New Delhi: **Aviation regulator DGCA has grounded 12 pilots and served show-cause notices on them after the six recent cases of aircraft veering off runway or taxiway**, a senior official said Thursday.

SpiceJet, Air India Express and GoAir have been involved in three, two and one such incidents, respectively, in the past few days, prompting the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to take action against the 12 pilots.

The action come even as the main runway at Mumbai airport remained shut after a SpiceJet plane from Jaipur veered off it while landing amidst heavy rains on Monday night and got stuck in the adjacent grass area.

On June 30, another SpiceJet plane from Bhopal veered off the runway at Surat airport due to heavy rainfall and wind.

A SpiceJet spokesperson told PTI that the "pilots involved in both incidents -- which happened in Mumbai and Surat -- have been suspended as per the directions of the DGCA".

On July 2, another SpiceJet plane veered off its path on the runway while landing at Kolkata airport, damaging four lights. On the same day, an Air India Express flight coming from Dammam had a tail strike while landing at Calicut airport.

04/07/19 PTI/Economic Times

Kolkata: The spate of landing incidents in the past five days at airports across the country, all of them involving low cost carriers (LCC) like the SpiceJet flight that skidded at Kolkata airport on Tuesday, has put the scanner on airlines' practice of pushing pilots to the limit and throwing caution to the wind even in adverse conditions. **Regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has suggested that airlines use experienced pilots during monsoon and placed an embargo on flying by lesser experienced co-pilots.**

A Spice Jet flight from Pune had swerved dangerously to the right and grazed the runway edge lights on Tuesday afternoon before the pilot managed to steer the plane back to the central line. Five runway edge lights were damaged in the incident that left the passengers, as well as the crew, shaken. SpiceJet flights were involved in two other incidents while the remaining two involved Air India Express and Go Air flights.

"Uncontrolled expansion by airlines has led to lowering of standards and pilots being pushed into the hot seat even if their proficiency is in question. These relatively inexperienced pilots get away when everything is fine. But when conditions are challenging, they fail to perform," a veteran pilot said. Monsoon poses challenging conditions to pilots, both en route as well as during take-off and landing. The latter is the most critical phase in a flight operation and all the incidents reported in the past five days have occurred during touch-down. While adverse weather conditions like wet runway, strong cross winds and rubber deposit contamination at touchdown zones can trigger such incidents, senior pilots did not rule out inept handling by the pilots.

04/07/19 Times of India

New Delhi: Infrastructure constraint, high operational cost of airlines, low yields due to competitive environment and currency exchange rate fluctuations are the four challenges that the aviation sector is facing currently, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Puri said: "The Indian civil aviation sector has shown consistent double digit growth of passenger traffic more than four years in the past."

The Union minister was responding to a question about what are the constraints India faces in its road to become the third-largest aviation market in the world. The US, China and the UK are the

current top three aviation markets in the world.

"Challenges facing the aviation sector, inter alia, include: infrastructure constraint, high operational costs of the airlines; low yields due to competitive environment; currency exchange rate fluctuations adversely affecting profitability, etc," Puri said.

Yield is the average fare that is earned by the airline per passenger per kilometre.

03/07/19 Outlook

New Delhi: A private player has already won a bid to operate the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport but the central government will take a view on the second bidder, Kerala government, in the coming days, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in the Rajya Sabha Wednesday.

The cabinet has approved privatisation of six airports including one in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala, he said during the Question Hour in the Upper House.

"This is privatisation (of Thiruvananthapuram Airport). One private bidder has got it and then the Kerala government is apparently a second bidder. We have to examine that bid. I have seen a communication from chief minister of Kerala and we will be taking a view on this in the coming days," Puri said.

To a query by PDP MP from Jammu and Kashmir Nazir Ahmed Laway on steep rise in airfare during the pilgrimage period in the hill state, the minister said: "Jammu and Kashmir, which is an integral part of India, is no different from anywhere so far as airfares are concerned."

He said airfares are fixed by airlines on a competitive basis. For instance, the fare may range from Rs 5000 to Rs 40,000.

"If you book in advance, you can book at Rs 5000. If some seats are left in the end and nobody is taking, then they will sell at Rs 5000. If two seats are left and then they sell at Rs 40,000. That's what airlines claim," he added.

03/07/19 PTI/News18.com

New Delhi: The Union Cabinet today approved the proposal of the aviation ministry to lease out three airport projects – currently operated by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) - to Adani Enterprise.

"Cabinet approves proposal for leasing out of three airports viz. Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Mangaluru of Airports Authority of India through Public Private Partnership," government spokesperson announced it through Twitter.

ET had reported first during June first week that the airport projects are likely to be approved by the Cabinet in July.

Transfer of all six assets to Adani Enterprises will start after this. Employees at the airports, currently being run by AAI, will have the option of joining Adani Enterprises or staying with the state-owned organisation.

These airports are part of the six airports, including Trivandrum, Guwahati and Jaipur – all the six airports were won by Adani Enterprise for a period of 50 years in a bid process that saw participation from GMR, NIIF, Cochin International Airport, AMP Capital, among others.

03/07/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Mumbai: The Boeing 737 plane of SpiceJet that had been partially stuck on the runway and the nearby grassy area at the city airport since Monday night, has been pulled back from the spot, but has not yet been brought back to the runway, a source said.

Following the incident, the main runway of the nation's second-busiest airport remained shut since Monday mid-night, severely impacting operations leaving 75 cancellations Wednesday alone. The city airport has only one main runway, making the situation all the more complicated.

A dedicated team of Air India engineers and technicians, aided by a disabled aircraft recovery kit (DARK) was working on to remove the aircraft from the spot since Tuesday afternoon.

A SpiceJet flight from Jaipur carrying 167 passengers and the crew overshot the runway Monday night after landing amid heavy rains, leaving the plane stuck partially on the main runway (09x27). This forced the airport operator to shut operations at the main runway and shift the operations to the secondary runway (14/32). "The Air India team has successfully removed the plane from where it was stuck. Now taking it to the runway and subsequently to the hangar is the responsibility of the airport," a senior Air India official said.

When contacted, an airport spokesperson did not share a specific timeline for completing the recovery process. The airport had prepared a 150-metre long ramp to push the aircraft out of the grassy area.

The kit, used to remove a stuck aircraft, is available only with Air India and had arrived from Mangalore airport after rescuing the Air India Express B737 plane, which veered off the taxiway onto the grass Sunday.

04/07/19 PTI/First Post

3 mois après l'immobilisation de ses 120 avions, il n'y a **pratiquement plus aucun espoir de voir Jet Airways re-voler un jour.**

Le transporteur indien suit toujours un processus de faillite officiel, et l'ensemble de ses dettes est estimé à plus d'un milliard de dollars US.

Face à l'ampleur de ces dernières, plusieurs investisseurs, dont Etihad Airways, ont jeté l'éponge. Dernier espoir : un consortium d'employés qui s'est associé au groupe britannique Adi pour tenter de prendre possession de 75% de la compagnie et de la sauver d'une mort quasi-inévitable.

Une disparition qui impacte directement le groupe Air France-KLM, lié avec Jet Airways depuis décembre 2017 par des accords commerciaux et de partage de codes, et qui se cherche maintenant un nouveau partenaire en Asie.

« Nous continuerons à rechercher des opportunités pour mieux servir le marché indien », a déclaré Welmer Blom, vice-président d'Air France-KLM pour l'Inde, le Moyen-Orient et le Golfe, dans des propos rapportés par l'Economic Times.

Car le groupe aérien franco-néerlandais a de grandes ambitions en Inde, et se cherche un allié pour y combattre les compagnies du Golfe sur les liaisons vers l'Europe.

Si aucun nouveau partenaire potentiel n'a pour l'instant été identifié, les capacités entre l'Europe et l'Inde vont augmenter de 25% à la prochaine saison d'hiver, avec plus d'un million de sièges proposés à la vente.

Dans le détail, cette expansion comprendra des vols en quotidien vers Mumbai et New Delhi, et un nouveau vol vers Bengaluru. KLM mettra en place des Boeing 787-Dreamliner sur cette dernière liaison, et Air France déploiera ses A350 entre Mumbai et Paris.

Lorsque Jet Airways a rencontré ses premières difficultés de trésorerie l'année dernière, Naresh Goyal, son propriétaire, avait tenté à plusieurs reprises de séduire Air France-KLM et Delta pour des prises de participation, sans succès.

Après l'immobilisation de celle qui était la première compagnie aérienne indienne en termes de réseau, Air France avait dû fortement augmenter son nombre de sièges disponibles depuis et vers l'Inde, augmentant la taille de ses avions et le nombre de ses fréquences.

Mais cela n'a pas suffi à éponger la disparition de Jet Airways, qui détenait jusqu'à 18% des parts de marché entre l'Inde et le reste du monde. En conséquence : les tarifs aériens s'envolent sur la destination.

D'après nos confrères de Voyages d'affaires, **les tarifs au départ de l'Inde vers Dubaï, Londres, New York, Singapour et Bali ont augmenté jusqu'à 32% au premier trimestre 2019 par rapport à 2018.** Sur les lignes intérieures, l'augmentation est de l'ordre de 20%.

Par ailleurs, de nombreuses agences de voyages françaises ont été directement touchées par l'arrêt des opérations de Jet Airways. Contactée, la direction du syndicat des Entreprises du Voyage (EDV) assure pour l'instant ne pas avoir de retour sur leurs dossiers de remboursement.

Le marché indien connaît l'une des croissances les plus importantes du secteur aérien mondial, et devrait d'après les prévisions bientôt se hisser à la troisième place des plus gros marchés émetteurs de passagers, derrière la Chine et les Etats-Unis.

Tour Mag 08/07/2019

New Delhi: **The build-up to Air India privatisation has taken off in full swing with the Union Budget announcing it as the centrepiece of divestment this year. The government is targeting October as the deadline for announcing the deal.**

Not leaving anything to chance after a failed attempt earlier, **the government has shortlisted the potential bidders, with the Tata group on top for its interest in aviation.** Sources in the know said the government would initiate talks with businesses, including Tatas, shortly for divesting its stake in the national carrier.

The proposed dialogue with potential buyers will coincide with the government procedure of issuing bid documents for expression of interest sometime this month.

"Now that the finance minister has committed in the Budget, we will start approaching prospective bidders," said a source close to the development. While pointing out that the Tatas will be approached first, he said, "They have a history with aviation and they know how to run an airline."

"In view of the current macroeconomic parameters, the government would not only reinstate the process of strategic divestment of Air India, but would offer more central public sector enterprises for strategic participation by the private sector," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said in her Budget speech on Friday.

08/07/19 Arup Roychoudhury/Business Standard

New Delhi: **Air India is ready with a plan to maximise its revenues and reduce costs so as to repay debt of Rs 4,500 crore this fiscal even as the Union budget has not allocated any funds for the national carrier,** two officials said.

"Air India will have to increase its revenues by about 10% and reduce its cost by about same percentage to be able to raise the amount to repay its debt of about Rs 4,500 crore," a senior government official told ET on condition of anonymity.

As per the proposed plan, the airline will launch new flights and increase its presence on profitable routes, the sources said. The airline is getting some benefit of the grounding of Jet Airways that has led to its premium class occupancy increase substantially on the international as well as domestic routes.

The government has already taken over Air India's debt of over Rs 29,000 crore, thus, reducing the annual interest repayment burden for the airline by about Rs 2,700 crore.

It "is highly unlikely to offer anything extra to the airline", said the second official cited earlier.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman did not announce any fresh fund infusion in the airline during her budget speech on Friday. Instead, she reiterated the government's intent to divest stake in Air India.

08/07/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Madurai: As Tuticorin airport is gearing up for expansion of the runway and its operations they are also working on a multipronged approach to **mitigate bird hits**. Though there are no recent incidents of bird hits in the airport, it has been an issue of many airports that not only affect flight movement or endanger passenger safety but are also affecting the reputation of the airport.

Airport director (APD) N Subramanian told TOI that recently they **signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Tuticorin district collector Sandeep Nanduri for the execution of Solid Waste Management (SWM)** in four villages adjoining near the airport – Muduvaithanenthall, Kartalangulam, Servaikaranmadam and Kumaragiri – in Tuticorin panchayat union at Rs 85 lakh.

"SWM is a key aspect to keep off birds from the air strip and the surrounding air space. The decision to implement it in the neighbouring villages was decided at the airfield environment management committee that is headed by the district collector. It is in addition to measures in place such as white flags at the boundary to scare peafowl, cutting grass near the airstrip to avoid insects (thereby not attracting birds) and crackers to scare birds," he said.

Estimating the solid waste generation of these four villages with a total population of 26,575 at 6.94 tonnes a day, the SWM has been designed to be technical, economically viable with a proper mechanism to collection, transportation, segregation, recycling as well as a disposal infrastructure.

08/07/19 MK Ananth/Times of India

A snap safety audit of airline major SpiceJet following a series of planes skidding on wet runways in the current monsoon season appears to have opened a can of worms. Turns out that the pilots who ought to have been given fresh training to learn to cope with adverse weather conditions were merely counselled over the phone by officials overseeing their functioning, putting the lives of hundreds of passengers at risk.

If the charges slapped by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), India's aviation watchdog, in its show-cause notices to four top SpiceJet officials are anything to go by, not all safety protocols were adhered to. In its current audit, the DGCA looked into various aspects like flight operational quality assurance monitoring, occurrence reporting, safety management systems and pilot training. In almost all of them, it found the airline wanting.

The accidents could have been prevented had the airline implemented the DGCA's earlier advisories, one of its notices said. The allegations come months after SpiceJet received the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) operational safety audit certificate. The IATA is a global grouping of around 290 airlines. SpiceJet is now an IATA member and its chairman and managing director Ajay

Singh is on the IATA board. How the IATA missed the safety lapses flagged by the DGCA remains a mystery.

The DGCA did the audit as three incidents within a week of planes belonging to the same airline veering off runways was too much of a coincidence. Three more planes belonging to two other airlines, GoAir and Air India Express, similarly went out of control while landing in the recent past, adding to the worry. The DGCA also derostered all 12 pilots involved in the incidents and put them on notice.

A special audit of all other Indian airlines and airports is also on the anvil. While the sector is expanding at breakneck speed, it cannot be at the expense of passenger safety. It's good the watchdog barked on noticing an unusual pattern. If required, it must be prepared to bite.

The New Indian Express 08/07/2019

New Delhi: India's civil aviation industry has been witnessing rapid growth in the past few years to become the pride of the nation, and rightly so. Driven by a growing economy, rising incomes, increasing competition among airlines and a supportive policy environment, India stands proud as the seventh largest aviation market with 340 million passengers being handled at our airports in financial year 2018/19. It is expected to become the third largest by 2024.

As of last December, Indian aviation completed 52 consecutive months of double-digit growth. The first quarter of 2019, however, took a dip due to the unfortunate situation faced by Jet Airways, resulting in the rise in airfares. With the consistent airport development and expansion in airport infrastructure to improve air connectivity for passengers in the tier-II and III cities now, the sector is most likely to continue to witness growth in the years to come.

In order to ensure that the existing and the upcoming airports are equipped to handle the rising passenger footfall without compromising on the quality of experience, ground handling - including check-in and baggage handling, aircraft handling, servicing and cleaning as well as cargo handling services - is critical. It enhances comfort and ensures safety of passengers in addition to securing short turnaround time for flights.

Identifying ground handling as a core function in the sector, the Ministry of Civil Aviation introduced the draft Civil Aviation Policy in 2015 and issued a notification in 2017 that made modifications to the existing ground handling policy. **According to the policy, airports with a footfall of over 10 million passengers annually would have three certified ground handling agencies which would include Air India or its subsidiary/joint venture, one of the airport operators and one more to be shortlisted by the airport operator. The policy provisions also prohibit ground handling operations to be carried out by non-certified manpower companies with little or no on-field experience.**

08/07/19 Murali Ramachandran/Business Today

New Delhi: **With the budget done and dusted, the IAF is now finalising two long-pending mega 'Make in India' projects worth about Rs 1.5 lakh crore (\$22 billion).** But while the project for 56 medium transport aircraft by the Tata-Airbus consortium is set to take off this year, the much bigger one for 114 fighter jets will take several years to reach that stage.

Sources said IAF, which will receive the first four Rafale fighters in France in September under the Rs 59,000 crore deal inked for 36 such jets in 2016, is pushing for the RFP (request for proposal) in the

114-fighter project to be issued by late-2019 or early-2020.

“The 114-fighter project is crucial because the 36 Rafales and the indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft (only 16 of planned 123 jets inducted till now) will not make up for the fast depleting numbers (IAF is down to just 30 fighter squadrons when 42 are required). There is an urgent need to plan for the future,” said a source.

08/07/19 Rajat Pandit/Times of India

Lucknow: Dysfunctional runway lights at Amausi airport triggered trauma for more than 100 flyers after a Lucknow-bound IndiGo flight was diverted back to Delhi and another IndiGo flight from Mumbai was kept airborne for over 30 minutes before touchdown on Saturday night. The situation remained erratic at Amausi on Sunday too, when a 7am Delhi-Lucknow Indigo flight was left hovering for 15 minutes before getting the ATC nod to land.

Around 10.30 pm on Saturday, runway lights went on the blink due to rainwater seepage. This was confirmed by Air Traffic Control (ATC) officials after inspection of the airstrip at 10.35 pm.

The Delhi-Lucknow 6E528 IndiGo airlines which was scheduled to arrive at 11 pm at Amausi with 100 passengers onboard was informed about the defunct lights on the airstrip and was sent back to Delhi. Around 10.45 pm, the technical team arrived to fix the issue. While repair of runway lights was underway, ATC received another alert about arrival of the Mumbai-Lucknow 6E6446 IndiGo airlines, which was already running an hour behind schedule. The pilot of Mumbai-Lucknow flight was told not to land before the ATC nod. The plane hovered over the airstrip for over 30 minutes before touching down.

Passengers onboard the Delhi-Lucknow flight said, they faced inconvenience, missed their schedules and were traumatized, while those aboard the Mumbai-Lucknow flight spoke about a scare in the sky.

08/07/19 Times of India

Chennai: Flying from Chennai to Far East and onward to the US may get better by end of the year, thanks to competition among airlines.

All Nippon Airways is gearing up to enter the Chennai-Asia-US sector with fullservice flights between Chennai and Tokyo, from where connections to the US are aplenty. Passengers will also have the option to hop via Singapore, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong.

Sources said **All Nippon has filed for slots with the DGCA for starting services in December.** The most popular route to the US from Chennai now is via the Middle East and Europe, which is getting costlier due to demand. Return fares range from ₹80,000 to ₹95,000 to US cities via the Middle East. Industry sources said the fares of flights via Far East could be lesser by ₹10,000.

Waking up to competition, **Singapore Airlines is planning to introduce full-service flights between Chennai and Singapore by this year end. The airline currently operates its low-cost carrier Scoot Airways in the sector.** “They are likely to introduce three flights between Chennai and Singapore to cater to passengers who fly beyond Singapore to the US and Australia,” said an airport official. This will further reduce fares.

08/07/19 Times of India

Bhubaneswar: With frequent cancellation of flights due to bad weather at Veer Surendra Sai (VSS) Airport in **Jharsuguda** causing inconvenience to flyers, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has come forward to ensure flight regularity with changes in logistics.

The airport now operates under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) and a non-directional radio beacon (NDB) procedure. NDB is a radio transmitter used as an aviation or marine navigational aid.

Its signals follow the curvature of the earth so that they can be received at a much greater distance at lower altitudes. But, these signals are affected by atmospheric conditions, mountainous terrain, coastal refraction and thunderstorms, particularly at long range.

In order to overcome these hazards, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) plans to introduce Doppler Very High-Frequency Omni Range (DVOR) and Distance Measuring Equipment (DME) procedure in Jharsuguda airport, according to Ministry of Civil Aviation.

DVOR is a ground-based radio navigational aid that provides bearing information to aircraft to define air traffic control routes for en-route, terminal and instrument approach/departure procedures.

DVOR, when collocated with DME, provides both the angle and slant distance of aircraft with respect to the ground station.

The Ministry also stated that the Instrument Landing System (ILS) equipment is under installation at VSS Airport. ILS is a precision runway approach aid based on two radio beams which together provide pilots both vertical and horizontal guidance during an approach to land.

08/07/19 New Indian Express

Mumbai: Days after heavy rains in Mumbai and Pune left at least 40 people dead, the monsoon is rearing its head once again in the country's financial capital.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has predicted heavy to very heavy rainfall in the city and said that the next two hours are very crucial.

All flight operations were briefly halted at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport following heavy rainfall in Mumbai. **"Due to heavy rains, there are no movements at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport,"** ANI quoted a Mumbai Airport (MIAL) spokesperson as saying. They were resumed at 9.30 am despite the airport's public relations office confirming "a delay due to weather".

Several airlines including Spicejet has asked passengers to keep track of their respective flights. "Due to bad weather at Mumbai (BOM), all departures/arrivals and their consequential flights might get affected. The passengers are requested to keep a check on their flight status," Spicejet tweeted.

08/07/19 News18

Bengaluru: **The Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) has recorded a 13.2% year-on-year rise in the international passenger traffic during April-May, according to the latest statistics available with the Airports Authority of India (AAI).**

In April-May this year, the airport handled over 8.4 lakh international passengers as against the nearly 7.4 lakh passengers in April-May last year. However, other major cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai have recorded 13.3%, 5.1 % and 1.5 % year-on-year dip during this period respectively. KIA's domestic passenger traffic too grew by 3.6% during April-May while the domestic figures in Mumbai and Delhi airports dropped by more than 15% and Chennai airport witnessed a 6.1% decline. Across all airports in the country, a 2.3% decline in international passenger traffic and a 0.3% drop in domestic passenger traffic were recorded in May.

08/07/19 Times of India

Surat: Cargo movement from Surat airport will get a major boost with the Airports Authority of India (AAI) all set to throw open its state-of-the-art modular cargo terminal in the next two weeks. AAI has stated that the vetting of cargo terminal is under process and it will be completed within the next two weeks.

The modular cargo terminal, built at the cost of Rs 8 crore, is a steel-based structure constructed on the land between the Air Traffic Control (ATC) and the terminal building. The ground base of the cargo is 1,000 square metre and the first floor will have the same size. The cargo terminal has the cold storage facility for the export of perishable items, strong room etc.

At present, the cargo movement from Surat airport has touched 3,400 metric tonne in the last one year. Thanks to the private airlines operating from Surat airport providing cargo facilities to its operational destinations across the country.

Official sources said that cargo items like textile goods including saris, dress material, courier, chemicals, valuable goods such as diamonds, lab-grown diamonds jewellery articles etc. are transported from Surat airport to various destinations including Delhi, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Mumbai and Jaipur.

08/07/19 Times of India

New Delhi: A Turkmenistan national was arrested at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport for trying to smuggle in gold jewellery worth Rs 20 lakh.

The incident took place on Saturday evening when the woman alighted from Turkmenistan Airlines flight T5 535. Upon inspection of her baggage, Customs officials found jewellery items worth Rs 20.4 lakh hidden in it. "A total of 11 gold chains, three gold bracelets and one gold hair pin were recovered during the inspection. The total value of the gold is over Rs 20 lakh and the accused seemed to be a regular carrier," said an official.

Customs sleuths told TOI that they had received a tip-off earlier in the day about a passenger, matching the woman's description, who would be carrying smuggled gold items. As soon as the woman passed the green channel, officials took her for a routine baggage and personal check, during which the smuggled items were recovered.

The department said that upon further investigation, the woman revealed she had smuggled gold in a similar manner in the past as well.

08/07/19 Times of India

The Delhi High Court has permitted GVK Airport Holdings to approach the duly constituted Arbitral Tribunal for any interim relief in connection with the sale of Bid Services Division (Mauritius) Limited's sale of stake in the Mumbai International Airport.

The order was passed by a Division Bench of Justices S Muralidhar and Talwant Singh in an appeal moved by GVK against a Single Judge Bench order under Section 9 of the Arbitration Act. The Single Judge Bench had refused to restrain Bid Services from offering or selling its 13.5% shareholding in Mumbai International Airport Limited to any person other than GVK.

The Division Bench was informed that during the pendency of litigation before the Single Judge Bench, the parties had nominated their respective arbitrators and a three-member Arbitral Tribunal was already in place. It was further stated that the Arbitral Tribunal was slated to meet for the first

time on July 9.

In view of this submission, the Court decided not to deal with the merits of the appeal preferred by GVK. It also noted that the findings of the Single Judge Bench were only prima facie in nature and not binding on the Arbitral Tribunal.

07/08/19 Aditi Singh/Bar and Bench

New Delhi: The Budget announcement to unveil measures for aircraft financing and leasing activities in the country could help India enter an exclusive multi-billion dollar club into which China recently made an entry.

At present, like their global counterparts, airlines in India lease the aircraft that they operate. The leasing is done from tax havens around the world, but mostly from Ireland. **While leasing an aircraft ensures that an airline does not take on a huge financial burden on its balance-sheet, it has its own challenges.**

The biggest challenge of leasing is that the deal is structured in foreign exchange and any fluctuation in forex affects the airline's operations as it usually has to pay more for leasing the aircraft.

If the leasing companies are set up in India and lease rentals are in rupees, valuable foreign exchange can be saved and used for other useful purposes.

Entering aircraft financing and leasing activities will mean that aviation companies in India will be in a better position to manage their costs.

Vision 2040 for the Civil Aviation sector in India, a joint study by FICCI and KPMG which was released earlier this year at the Global Aviation Summit, pointed out that currently there are around eight aircraft leasing companies which have assets of \$10 billion with most being headquartered in Ireland. It added that China has successfully been able to create a local aviation leasing industry with strong support from its government and government-owned banks.

07/07/19 Ashwini Phadnis/Business Line

NEW DELHI: Indian airlines have suffered losses worth over ₹548 crore due to airspace closure by Pakistan after the Balakot air strike in February, the Centre said on Wednesday.

In a written response to a question in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation (Independent Charge) **Hardeep Singh Puri said the national carrier Air India lost ₹491 crore till July 2, while IndiGo suffered a loss of ₹25.1 crore till May 31. SpiceJet and GoAir lost ₹30.73 crore and ₹2.1 crore, respectively till June 20.**

"The airspace closure by Pakistan is a unilateral measure that followed the non-military counter-terrorism airstrike by the Indian Air Force against terror camp in Balakot in Pakistan in February 2019," Puri said in the upper House of Parliament.

Earlier, an Air India official told ANI that the national carrier was losing 6 crore a day due to airspace closure by Pakistan.

On Friday, Pakistan announced to extend the closure of its airspace till July 12.

Pakistan had fully shut its airspace on the eastern border with India after the Indian Air Force carried out aerial airstrikes on a Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terror camp in Balakot on February 26.

In mid-April, Pakistan opened one of its 11 air routes for west-bound flights from India; and airlines like Air India and Turkish Airlines have started using it.

The strikes on the terror camp were in response to the terror attack in Pulwama, Jammu and Kashmir, on February 14, in which 40 CRPF personnel lost their lives.

In March, the neighbouring country partially opened its airspace but did not allow Indian flight to fly over its airspace.

Since then, foreign carriers using Indian airspace have been forced to take costly detours because they cannot fly over Pakistan. The closure mainly affects flights from Europe to Southeast Asia.

Pakistan lies in the middle of a vital aviation corridor whereby the airspace restrictions, which have been continuing since a long time, impacts hundreds of commercial flights per day, extending flight timings for passengers, as well as fuel costs for airlines.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who attended the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit in Kyrgyz capital Bishkek last week, had to divert his special flight and went via the circuitous route through Oman and Iran, instead of using the Pakistan air space.

[LiveMint aviation 04/07/2019](#)

NEW DELHI: Admitting that drones can pose a security risk, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri told Rajya Sabha on Wednesday that the government will bring in more provisions to regulate their operation, especially in no-go areas.

"Yes, we have already introduced Civil Aviation Regulation in 2018 and we will, in the coming months as we progress this and devise the ecosystem, be issuing more and more regulations to regulate the operation of drones," he told the House when asked if the government was bringing in a new law to regulate use of drones.

He said the government is acutely conscious of the kind of security threats that drones can pose as they come in all shapes and sizes ranging from 250 grams to 250 kilograms.

"Therefore, we need to devise an ecosystem in overall system which is well regulated; and some of the steps that we are contemplating and which is work-in- progress is that we are trying to ensure that certain parts of the country are no-go areas or red zones," he said.

The minister said drones need to be equipped with technology which has to be manufactured here so that if they do not have the permission, they should not be able to take off.

"If on an electronic platform the drone has diverted from the prescribed route, then it must have an RTH or Return to Home. So we are taking a large number of steps and I want to assure the Hon. member that this is in good hands," he said.

"The government has taken measures to take care of safety concerns by provisions to mandate equipment requirements which include No-Permission No-Takeoff (NPNT).

"Further, No Drone Zones which are in high security areas have been geo-fenced. A NPNT compliant drone has compatible software with the Digital Sky Application for applying and receiving permission before each actual operation. Without this permission, the drone will not be able to fly," he said in a written reply.

Puri noted that if a NPNT compliant drone tries to breach geo-fencing (to go beyond the permissible boundary in the airspace), the in-built software will compel the drone to return-to-home (RTH).

These provisions have been made in the Civil Aviation Requirements Section 3-Air Transport Series X Part I Issue I, dated August 27, 2018 published by the DGCA, the minister said.

LiveMint Aviation 03/07/2019

Twenty-six passengers were asked to voluntarily deplane after a Paris-bound Air France flight suffered a "technical problem" at the New Delhi airport in the wee hours of Wednesday.

The pilot and crew of Air France AF225 told passengers that their checked-in luggage would be offloaded due to an unspecified technical glitch, urging them to disembark for the plane to take off.

It is not known if the deboarded passengers were flown out on the next flight to Paris, as is commonly done in such cases.

The Hindustan Times 10/07/2019

Mumbai: The government has proposed to hike the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in domestic air carriers from existing 49%, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her maiden budget speech on Friday.

"The government will examine suggestions of further opening up of FDI in aviation, media (animation, AVGC) and insurance sectors in consultation with all stakeholders," Sitharaman said.

The push from the government to increase FDI limits in aviation could help troubled airlines such as Air India and Jet Airways, which had been grounded since 18 April due to an acute fund crunch, find buyers.

The government will also implement measures to make the country a hub of aircraft leasing and aviation finance.

"As the world's third-largest domestic aviation market, the time is ripe for India to enter into aircraft financing and leasing activities from Indian shores. This is critical to the development of a self-reliant aviation industry, creating aspirational jobs in aviation finance, besides leveraging the business opportunities available in India's financial special economic zones (SEZs), namely, International Financial Services Centre (IFSC)," Sitharaman said in her budget speech. The government will implement the essential elements of the regulatory roadmap for making India a hub for such activities, he added.

The finance minister also said the government was keen to provide an enabling ecosystem for growth of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) industry in the country to achieve self-reliance in the aviation sector.

"The government will adopt suitable policy interventions to create a congenial atmosphere for the development of MRO in the country," Sitharaman added.

At present, most Indian airlines lease aircraft from overseas-based companies due to a dearth of domestic options. Most Indian carriers service their aircraft abroad as domestic MRO attracts high taxes, which further increases costs of airlines.

The government's emphasis on the MRO sector found resonance among local service providers.

"The MRO Association of India thanks the Indian Government, especially the Ministry of Civil Aviation, The Ministry of Finance and the Office of the Prime Minister for recognizing the potential and opportunity present by MRO industry," said Bharat Malkani, president of the MRO Association of India, in a statement.

"We are confident of turning India from an importer of MRO to a net exporter and create over 100,000 direct jobs and revenues exceeding ₹35,000 crore in the next five years," Malkani added.

Aerospace manufacturers Pratt & Whitney's India managing director Palash Roy Chowdhury said the government's plans to adopt suitable policy intervention in the MRO sector will not only boost the local industry but contribute to the government's tax revenues.

"We look forward to the much-needed government support that will enable the local MROs to compete with foreign ones which enjoy a more favourable import tax regime," Roy Chowdhury added.

Sitharaman however didn't explicitly mention the measures that the government will take to make the country a hub of aircraft lease and aviation financing, both in her speech and in the budget documents. The minister also didn't elaborate on the policy intervention it plans to bring about in the MRO sector.

Meanwhile, one of the key demands of the aviation industry, to reduce taxation on aviation turbine fuel (ATF) or jet fuel, was not addressed by the government in the latest budget. At present, jet fuel accounts for about 35%-50% of airline's costs. The domestic aviation industry has been lobbying to include ATF under the GST (Goods and Service Tax) regime.

"The non-inclusion of ATF in the GST regime is extremely disappointing for the long term viability of the aviation sector," said Anuj Prasad, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co.

"(While) the increase in FDI limits in the sector probably comes too late for Jet Airways but may enable Air India privatization," Prasad added.

Some aviation sector officials were even disappointed not to find anything 'concrete' in the budget for the sector.

"We thought there will be a major roadmap to bring down taxes on ATF and even bring it under GST regime. We also thought that the government will lower the taxes on MRO (currently at 18%). However, none of this happened," said an official with an Indian airline, who requested anonymity.

"There isn't anything concrete on the aviation sector in the budget. We will wait till further announcements on 'suitable policy interventions' are made in the policy front," the person said adding, "At present Indian airlines go abroad to service their aircraft since domestic taxes on MRO are very high. I don't see this changing unless taxes are brought down."

An aviation consultant told Mint under the conditions of anonymity that the 2019 union budget had nothing new for the aviation sector that hasn't been already discussed by the current government.

"The government has been talking about making India a hub of aviation finance leasing, apart from MROs, for some time now. But, unless it gives tax exemptions and creates a robust mechanism that prevents double taxation, foreign leasing companies will not be interested to set up business in India," the consultant said adding that none of these have been addressed in the budget.

LiveMint Aviation 05/07/2019

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration plans to make India a hub for financing aircraft purchases and leasing of planes, as the South Asian nation moves to support local carriers, which are among the biggest customers for Airbus SE and Boeing Co.

"As the world's third largest domestic aviation market, the time is ripe for India to enter into aircraft financing and leasing activities from Indian shores," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her maiden budget speech. **"This is critical to the development of a self-reliant aviation industry, creating aspirational jobs in aviation finance, besides leveraging the business opportunities available in India's financial Special Economic Zones."**

The ability to fund purchases and lease aircraft locally will be a boon for local carriers like InterGlobe Aviation Ltd.'s IndiGo and SpiceJet Ltd., as it will significantly insulate them from foreign exchange fluctuations. Airlines are increasingly moving toward an asset-light model, under which they sell aircraft to lessors for a profit, only to lease them back, which helps them keep a younger fleet.

India will also examine relaxing foreign direct investment rules in the aviation sector, Sitharaman said, without giving details. Indian laws now allow foreign airlines to take a maximum of 49% stake in local carriers, preventing them from taking effective control and ownership of the local company.

The country was the world's fastest-growing aviation market last year, although the pace has slowed after a local carrier ceased flights due to a cash shortage. With an emerging middle class flying for the first time, India is one of the world's most lucrative markets, but a fierce price war by budget carriers often hurts profits.

LiveMint Aviation 06/07/2019

Mumbai: A SpiceJet technician was killed at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata after he got stuck in the main landing gear door of an aircraft he was working on.

According to sources, the accident occurred around 1.30am when 22-year-old technician, Rohit Pandey was working on the landing gear of a Bombardier Q400. "The doors closed, trapping him in," said a source.

The accident follows a week of runway excursions and incidents involving SpiceJet aircraft, which has put the airline under DGCA scanner.

Last week, following a surprise surveillance, DGCA issued four show-cause notices to SpiceJet on poor training standards.

A statement issued by SpiceJet read, "We are extremely saddened to share that our technician Mr Rohit Pandey passed away last night in an unfortunate incident at the Kolkata airport. Mr Pandey was doing maintenance work in right hand main landing gear wheel well area of a Q400 aircraft which was parked in Bay No. 32 at Kolkata airport on July 10, 2019. Inadvertently, the main landing gear hydraulic door closed and he got stuck in between the hydraulic door flaps. The hydraulic doors were broken to rescue Mr Pandey but he was declared dead. The entire SpiceJet family stands together in grief in this unfortunate incident."

Meanwhile, Kolkata police have initiated a probe in the death.

10/07/19 Manu V/Times of India

It is not every day that an acquirer gets to choose between two country's largest airline companies to acquire.

But the country's oldest business house, Tata Group is in that lucky position.

Jet Airways which was grounded in April due to debt as much as ₹8,500 crore is currently looking for a buyer, even as it is undergoing bankruptcy proceedings. State-owned Air India, on the other hand, is operational but also raking in record losses.

In the Budget 2019 announced on July 5, the Finance Minister said that they will revive divestment talks. A report by Business Standard says that they could expedite the process by October itself. And that, amongst others Tata is one of the parties interested.

Air India might be on a quick lookout for a buyer, as the stressed airline has been scrambling to pay salaries. In fact, reports say that the company will not be able to pay salaries beyond October.

In fact, the Tata Group has interests in two airlines- Vistara which is a domestic airline, and also stake in international carrier Air Asia.

They have been trying to expand their horizons by acquiring company, and this presents a dual opportunity. Earlier reports have suggested that Tatas could bid for Jet's international flights rights and aircraft.

Ever since the airline went in for bankruptcy, the group's view on it has changed. "There is no value in buying the company now anyway," an official told ET, and the group seems to be interested in buying parts of it.

08/07/19 Katya Naidu/Business Insider

Ahead of the proposed sale of the loss-making Air India, an anxious ministry of civil aviation has called for an impact analysis of the closure of Jet Airways. Ernst & Young (EY), the advisors to the sale, which flopped the first time, has been tasked with assessing the chances of a success in the light of shutdown of Jet Airways.

The very poor appetite for Jet Airways surprised the government given the carrier was financially in a far better shape than Air India is today. Jet's dues at close to ₹25,000 crore are smaller than Air India's staggering ₹58,351 crore. Moreover, it enjoyed the biggest share of international traffic out of India of 13.5% and commanded a local share of 15%.

Although the government has transferred an amount of ₹29,464 crore to an SPV, lowering AI's debt burden, investors may not be satisfied. This time around, the government intends to sell 100% rather

than 76% but Air India's large and expensive workforce — 27,000 employees at the end of December 2017 — could be a deal-breaker. Jet Airways had just 16,000 employees even though both airlines had fleets of roughly the same size with around 120 aircraft.

Adding to the government's worries is the fact that Air India's domestic market share has been consistently falling and plummeted to 11.8% in September last year. International traffic share was 10.4% in 2017-18 and has been declining for last few years. The national carrier has won bilateral flying rights with five countries — Dubai, Hong Kong, Qatar, Singapore and the UK — post the closure of Jet. In addition, it now has domestic slots for 22 flights, including Delhi-Bhopal, Bhopal-Pune, Delhi-Raipur, Delhi-Bengaluru, Delhi-Amritsar, Chennai-Bengaluru and Chennai-Ahmedabad, vacated by Jet Airways.

09/07/19 Arun Nayar/Financial Express

New Delhi: **Air India employees have opposed the government's move to privatise the state-owned airline.** The opposition to the proposed disinvestment proposal was conveyed to Ashwani Lohani, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India, at a meeting that 13 unions had with him on Monday. "We are not prepared to surrender on this issue (privatisation of Air India). We oppose the basic plan of the government. Privatisation is not the solution... look at what happened to Jet Airways," one of the union leaders who attended the meeting told newsmen.

The opposition comes days after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her Budget speech that the strategic disinvestment of select Central Public Sector Enterprises would continue to remain a priority for the Government. "In view of the current macro-economic parameters, the Government would not only re-initiate the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India, but would offer more CPSEs for strategic participation by the private sector," the Minister said. The privatisation process is expected to start in August after Air India's financials for 2018-19 are finalised.

Conceding that the government as the owner could do anything, union leaders said they wanted to convey the sentiments of employees to the government.

"We will approach all and the sundry whether it be Ministers or Members of Parliament or others," another leader said adding that the government should realise that Air India employees have not been paid their salary dues.

08/07/18 Business Line

Visibility had dropped to 350 metres on the primary runway at Mumbai airport on Monday.

Heavy rains on Monday morning led to temporary suspension of aircraft movements at Mumbai international airport for nearly 20 minutes, leading to cascading delays in domestic and international flight schedules ranging from 15 minutes to 45 minutes.

As suburban areas of Ghatkopar, Kurla, Santacruz, Marol and Andheri received heavy rainfall,

visibility dipped to just 350 metres on the primary runway

09/27. As a result, arriving flights had to either go around or land in close-by airports, while departing flights had to wait till visibility improved

considerably.

“Due to heavy rains, there are no movements at the airport. Visibility has been fluctuating. Runway operations have been suspended from 9.12 am to 9.31

am,” said a Mumbai International Airport Ltd spokesperson on Monday morning.

As visibility fluctuated, Indigo’s Mumbai-Bengaluru flight at 8.35 am, Indigo’s Mumbai-Delhi flight at 8.40 am, and Vistara’s Mumbai-Delhi flight at

8.45 am were delayed by 13 to 19 minutes. Thereafter, the departure delays began increasing to nearly 55 to 64 minutes. Air India’s flights at 9 am to

Chennai and Delhi were able to depart at 9.56 am and 10.09 am respectively. The delays lasted till 1 pm, and gradually started reducing, according to the

flight data on flightradar24.com, a global air traffic monitoring website.

Several flights hovered over Mumbai airport, while some were diverted to other airports during the brief 19-minute suspension of operations. British

Airways flight BA 135 from London Heathrow to Mumbai which had a delayed departure from Heathrow did several go-arounds before it was diverted to

Hyderabad. Spicejet’s SG 8701 Delhi-Mumbai flight was diverted to Ahmedabad.

09/07/19 Mumbai Mirror

New Delhi: If Naresh Goyal, founder of the cash-strapped Jet Airways, wants to go abroad, he should first deposit as guarantee Rs 18,000 crore his company owes to lenders, the Delhi high court observed on Tuesday while refusing to allow him to leave India.

The high court, however, sought the Centre’s reply on his plea challenging a look out circular (LOC) issued against him.

No interim relief can be granted to Goyal at this stage, Justice Suresh Kait said. “If you are ready to deposit Rs 18,000 crore bank guarantee, you can go abroad” he observed.

The court was informed by the Centre that it was a serious fraud involving Rs 18,000 crore and the investigation was going on by the SFIO.

The court was hearing Goyal’s plea challenging the LOC against him on the ground that as on May 25, when he was de-boarded from a flight to Dubai, no ECIR/FIR was registered against him.

Goyal said he came to know of the LOC on May 25 when he and his wife Anita were off-loaded from a flight to Dubai with an onward connection to London.

09/07/19 PTI/Times of India

New Delhi: **“Divestment is inevitable and I am meeting to get your views on how best to protect your interests.” Air India chairman Ashwani Lohani on Monday reiterated the government’s decision to sell off the debt-ridden airline to representatives of 13 unions representing different sections of employees on Monday morning, said a person who attended the meet. Almost all the unions opposed the move while the pilots focussed their concern mainly on the huge wage dues the airline has to them which they want to be cleared before the second attempt to disinvest in AI begins.**

“It was conveyed to us that if there is no fund infusion from the government, there is no way the Maharaja can remain in the cut-throat competitive and cash-intensive airline business. So divestment is going to happen,” said a person who attended the meeting. Last Friday’s Budget has given Rs 1 lakh (repeat Rs 1 lakh only) to AI even as the airline has to repay Rs 10,000 crore of debt this fiscal. Other union leaders (representing non-pilots) raised fears about job security if AI is sold off. “If a 53 or 54-year-old non-technical employee is laid off, who will employ him or her at that age? If divestment is inevitable, the government must give us a golden handshake, was the demand from them,” said a person in the know.

08/07/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **Budget carrier AirAsia India is planning to take its fleet strength to 30 by end of the year from the current 21 as it looks to expand its domestic network.**

A senior airline executive said **the airline is planning to lease nine narrow-body Airbus A320 in the next six months to serve key markets like Mumbai and Delhi in the wake of Jet Airways’ grounding.**

The airline, a joint venture between Tata Sons and Malaysia-based AirAsia Berhad, received eight slots at Mumbai airport that were earlier operated by Jet.

“There is an impetus for stabilising operations and expand network at major markets amid reduced overall capacities. We have added a couple of aircraft since Jet’s closure. We would add nine A320s by the end of December,” the executive told FE.

AirAsia has gained 40 bps to 6.3% between March and May mainly on account of Jet's grounding from April 17. Low-cost carrier SpiceJet has been aggressively adding aircraft to operate on Jet's vacant routes. It has inducted over 30 aircraft, earlier flown by the full-service carrier.

According to aviation consultancy firm Capa India, around 800 weekly slots have become available in Delhi and Mumbai alone, creating opportunities for airlines to increase their presence in these important markets.

"More than 35 million seats have been taken out of the system, resulting in more balanced demand/supply dynamics, which should improve yields significantly," Capa India noted.

AirAsia has been awaiting civil aviation ministry's nod for international operations since January. The carrier's overseas permit is held up due to ongoing investigations into alleged lobbying for change in government's foreign flying norms for domestic carriers. This relates to scrapping of 5/20 rule in June 2016.

09/07/129 Arun Noyal/Financial Express

New Delhi: Air India on Tuesday said that pilgrims returning from Saudi Arabia after Haj will be allowed to carry holy water from the Zamzam well within the permissible baggage allowance.

The well of Zamzam is located in Mecca in Saudi Arabia and many Haj pilgrims bring the holy water from the well for family and friends.

On July 4, the sales team of Air India's Jeddah office reportedly wrote to all travel agents stating that till September 15, due to change of aircraft and limitation of seats, Zamzam cans will not be allowed on flight Numbers AI966 (Jeddah-Hyderabad-Mumbai) and AI964 (Jeddah-Cochin).

Air India tweeted on Tuesday, "With reference to instructions regarding non carriage of Zamzam cans, on AI966 and AI964, we wish to clarify that passengers are allowed to carry Zamzam cans within their permissible baggage allowance."

"Please accept our apologies for the inconvenience caused," the airline added.

09/07/19 PTI/NDTV

Guwahati: The customer relations wing of IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd), in an email to The Telegraph on Monday, spoke of "scientific evidence" that "infectious HIV has been recovered from human corpses between 11 to 16 days after death in bodies".

This follows a mail to the airlines for a response to an incident at Chennai airport where the body of an HIV-positive child from Assam was allegedly refused transportation.

The email said the **“HIV virus falls under category A of dangerous goods, which is forbidden in pax and cargo aircraft”**.

The airlines cited a policy of the National AIDS Control Organisation (Naco), saying, “According to the Naco policy, infectious HIV has been recovered from human corpses between 11 and 16 days after death in bodies stored at the usual mortuary temperature of 2 degrees Celsius (unlike other virus and bacteria). It is unclear how long infectious HIV may persist in corpses left to decay at normal room temperature, but HIV has been cultured from organs stored at 20 degrees Celsius up to 14 days.”

It added, **“In this context, it is recommended not to carry humans affected by the HIV virus. In addition, the HIV virus falls under category A of dangerous goods, which is forbidden in pax and cargo aircraft. According to the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR) manual UN ID 2814, it is forbidden to accept HIV-infected (human retrovirus) on passenger aircraft.”**

AIDS activist Jahnabi Goswami slammed the airline for posting “blatant lies”.

She said the airline was excusing itself for its “discriminatory” behaviour and “using the Naco policy as a cover to hide from the truth”.

She said there was “no such Naco policy” and was mulling a letter to the ministry of civil aviation to highlight the point that such “discriminatory” behaviour may be repeated by other private airlines.

“We all know how HIV is transmitted. There are no restrictions in conducting a post-mortem on HIV-positive bodies. There are dos and don’ts in handling bodies. A body shouldn’t be touched with bare hands. I will write a letter to the ministry of aviation. Such an incident may be repeated by other airlines,” she said.

09/07/19 Gaurav Das/Telegraph

New Delhi: **Not maintaining “critical parts of aerodrome required to conduct safe aircraft operations ... in accordance with (rules),” has earned the Ahmedabad and Chennai airports a show-cause notice each from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Tuesday. The aviation regulator has told the airport directors of these two airports that “local airport management has failed to do timely preventive maintenance leading to this situation” referring to critical findings of the audit like slippery runway surfaces, uncovered drains in operational area and presence of large loose stones on the airstrip while asking them to submit their replies within 15 days.**

The DGCA, which is currently auditing airlines and airports after a spate of incidents in past rainy fortnight, had couple of days back issued four show-cause notices to SpiceJet for “lack of safety management system in the organisation” after three flights of the airline saw back-to-back incidents on landing. Comments from Airports Authority of India (AAI) have been sought and the story will be updated once it does so. Both Ahmedabad and Chennai are key airports handling significant number of hundreds of flights daily.

The Ahmedabad airport saw a DGCA team conducting a special inspection last Wednesday and Thursday (July 3-4). The show cause notice is learnt to have pointed out: “Analysis of six months’ data shows frequency of friction test is not maintained as (per rules) that mandate runway friction test is to be carried out every month. Friction test reports considered for analysis from December 2018 to June 2019 are showing downward trend in friction values below maintenance planning level and at few places, it has gone down to below minimum level.” This despite the fact that rules mandate airport operator to take “immediate corrective action when friction” readings go below required levels.

09/07/29 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Hyderabad: Suspecting a case of tax evasion, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) officials on Monday are said to have withheld a huge gold consignment in the cargo wing of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA). Though senior DRI officials were inaccessible, sources in RGIA said that the gold was withheld and that investigation is underway since it reportedly belongs to a jewellery merchant. In the past too, officials seized gold at the cargo for tax evasion.

Meanwhile in an another case, customs officials seized 574 gm of gold from an international passenger upon his arrival from Abu Dhabi.

The gold was hidden by the passenger in different articles such as a juicer, bluetooth speaker, watch and others. The gold was coated with a silver colour to misguide officials. The value of the gold seized was ascertained at Rs 19.63 lakh.

In a similar incident, Air Intelligence Unit (AIU) booked a case against a Sudan national when she tried to smuggle gold while entering at RGIA by concealing it in her undergarments. 193 gm of gold worth Rs 6.58 lakh was seized. The passenger had come from Dubai via Kuwait before she arrived in Hyderabad. The gold was in biscuit form and officials seized five pieces.

09/07/19 Times of India