

Mumbai: **India's air passenger traffic is expected to grow sixfold to 1.1 billion per year by 2040**, according to the Vision 2040 report for the civil aviation industry released on Tuesday at the government-backed Global Aviation Summit 2019.

The Indian commercial air fleet is expected to be 2,359 by March 2040, says the report prepared by consultancy firm KPMG and industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. India is also expected to have 190-200 operational airports by 2040, with Delhi and Mumbai having three airports each, it says.

India may consider investments of up to \$2 billion for low traffic airports, excluding land acquisition costs, the report says. It also recommends that a strong leasing industry for financing of aircraft and maintenance, repair and overhaul, be established in India to prevent domestic airlines from going abroad for the facilities.

The Vision 2040 report was prepared in consultation with the government though it was not commissioned by it, said aviation secretary R.N. Choubey. "We didn't commission the report as we wanted suggestions from the industry," he said. The government will deliberate on the suggestions and take a call on which ones to implement, Choubey said.

Aviation minister Suresh Prabhu said the report will address the immediate challenges of the aviation sector. "**We are working on getting aircraft financing and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) industry in India**, which will also increase jobs in the country," Prabhu said. At present, most airlines go abroad for MRO services and for raising capital to finance aircraft purchases.

Four of the five engine issues related to the Pratt and Whitney engines on Airbus 320neo planes have been resolved, while the fifth issue, that of the gearbox, is being addressed, said minister of state for aviation Jayant Sinha.

Domestic airlines such as IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd) and GoAir have had several flights grounded over the last few months because of glitches in the Pratt and Whitney engine. "The director general of civil aviation is expected to issue further directives regarding this shortly," Sinha said.

The Centre also proposed **amendments to the draft drone policy, including allowing drones beyond visual line of sight. The amendment also proposes the use of algorithm to pilot drones, and a dedicated drone corridor, besides creating drone ports for landing and taking off. It also bats for 100% foreign direct investment in drone manufacturing.**

Meanwhile, Qatar Airways's group chief executive officer Akbar Al Bakr said on the sidelines of the event that the airline is in talks with IndiGo and GoAir for code share opportunities.

International Air Transport Association (IATA) expects India to become the third-largest aviation market worldwide in the next decade, it said in a report released at the summit.

"The fundamental drivers of air passenger demand, including population and demographics and increasing incomes, are favourable and supportive of ongoing growth over the longer-term," the report said.

The aviation industry in India is not yet on a sound financial footing and this remains a work-in-progress for the industry and its key stakeholders, including policymakers, it said.

"While the industry has demonstrated resilience in the face of various shocks and disruption, including the global financial crisis and airline exits, financial stability is a key factor for the industry to be able to successfully develop and grow," according to the IATA report.

Mint 16/01/2019

Raising concerns over delayed salary payments, a group of Air India pilots has said that financial stress could impact flight safety.

The Indian Pilots' Guild, which represents pilots of wide-body planes of Air India, has also told aviation regulator DGCA that the management has continuously used the guise of financial losses to illegally change their service conditions and withhold payment of arrears as well as overtime.

"We are already engaged in multiple litigations for our basic rights and service conditions."If even our salaries are now withheld and reduced at the whims and fancies of airline management, it is not

humanly possible to keep all this stress away from the cockpit," the guild has said. The guild has around 700 members.

In a letter to DGCA chief B S Bhullar, the grouping's general secretary Captain K Jayakumar said that such a prolonged atmosphere of financial uncertainty is not conducive to flight safety.

"For more than six months, our wages are not being paid on time. "Our January wages have still not be paid even after half the month is gone and even now nobody can give us a straight answer as to when we can expect payment," the letter dated January 17 said. The pilots have received their December salary.

Mint 20/01/2019

With ballooning debt and rising costs, Jet Airways founder and promoter Naresh Goyal is left with few options and little time to save the airline. He can take up an investment offer from Etihad Airways, which owns 24% of Jet Airways, and relinquish control of the airline he started about 25 years ago. Alternatively, Goyal can rush to gather his own funds or watch Jet shut shop like erstwhile rival Kingfisher Airlines did about six years ago. However, he knows it won't be an easy ride, for the carrier posted three straight quarterly losses of more than ₹1,000 crore each and is saddled with a debt of ₹8,052 crore as of end-September. Goyal may have his own reasons, perhaps valid, to thwart any offer that seeks to invest in his crown jewel, which he started in 1993 after about two decades of sales and marketing work for foreign airlines in India. **The offers from Etihad and the Tata group come with riders, the core being the transfer of management control.** However, Goyal does not have much time on his hands. Jet Airways has delayed payment of pilot salaries amid a crippling cash crunch caused by rising costs and a bruising fare war. On 31 December, the airline defaulted on interest payments to a consortium of lenders led by the State Bank of India. Analysts say Jet needs to immediately raise at least \$250-300 million to pay off lenders and vendors. It would need to raise another \$450-500 million by the end of 2020 when some of its overseas debt matures, analysts say.

Jet's predicament echoes the dire scenario of India's aviation industry. Several airlines mushroomed after the 1990s when the government liberalized the aviation sector. Only a handful have survived. **India has been ranked as the fastest-growing aviation market globally and airlines here have ordered planes worth several billions of dollars in the past few years. However, mostly everyone, other than the airlines, seems to be making money.** Crisil Ltd, the ratings company, expects Indian airlines to post their steepest loss in a decade this financial year. **The airlines will need equity infusion of about ₹35,000 crore over 3-4 years to reduce their debt, rating agency Icria said in November.** There are several factors that can be blamed. The weakening of the rupee last year has swollen airline costs as most non-fuel payments, such as aircraft maintenance and lease rentals, are dollar denominated. There is also the high cost of fuel, about double that of Dubai or Kuala Lumpur. The Union government last year cut excise duty on fuel from 14% to 11% but a much-needed move to bring fuel under the ambit of the goods and services tax, something which would have helped lower costs, is yet to happen.

The airline industry is traditionally a heavy capex business. For airlines working on wafer-thin margins, any increase in cost acts as a double whammy, especially when they are forced to offer lower fares in an intensely competitive environment. **Goyal** is now at the crossroads with some tough choices to make, something that can either sustain or shutter Jet Airways. He **has to choose whether he wants to give up the driving seat or continue frantic efforts for cash to run India's second-largest airline by market share.**

Mint 22/01/2019

After the year's worst spell of fog on Friday morning, at least 600 flights were held up at the Indira Gandhi International Airport. The restrictions on the flight operations during peak hours for Republic Day rehearsals also worsened the scenario. According to air traffic officials, the airlines did not prioritise their flights' departures after the visibility improved which led to every pilot calling the Air Traffic Control for permission to take off. This commotion lasted for around 7-8 hours, disrupting the schedules of the flight departures. According to officials, as cited by Hindustan Times (HT), lack of coordination worsened delays and forced many passengers to wait inside aircraft.

Normally, the process to clear backlog involves airlines communicating to airport authorities which of their flights must be sequenced first. "For instance, if five different airlines had 10 flights each to depart and there were only four slots, they were unable to tell us which four will go first. Passengers of all 10 flights were asked to board instead," an (ATC) official, not authorised to speak to the media, said, as cited by HT.

Although most of the airlines are equipped with systems and pilots for handling low visibility using the CAT3B technology, the take-offs and landings of the aircraft are normally suspended when the visibility drops below 75 metre.

"The visibility between 5:30 am and 9:30 am was below 75 metre but once it improved, we didn't receive any sequence and every pilot was calling us, requesting to depart. By the time things were sorted, restrictions for R-Day began. The airlines should prepare a list of flights they want to depart first, in advance," a second ATC official said, HT reported. Restrictions for R-Day rehearsals were from 10:35am to 12:15pm.

20/01/19 ZeeBusiness

Ahmedabad: In a major boost to air connectivity out of Gujarat, Airports Authority of India (AAI) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the state government, for the construction of airports at Ankleshwar and Dholera Special Investment Region (SIR). The MoU was signed on the second day of Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGGS) 2019, as part of which two greenfield airports will come up in the state.

According to state government officials, the airport at Dholera SIR will be constructed at the cost of Rs 1,500 crore, which is likely to be operational by 2020.

"I am pleased to announce that by 2022, a new international airport will be operational at Dholera SIR.

20/01/19 Times of India

Imagine that you have to shell out Rs. 10767 for Srinagar-Jammu flight on a day when you will be charged around Rs. 4800 for Delhi-Bangalore flight. Now, the same day you get a ticket for Delhi-Dubai on the same date at Rs 10800 only- isn't it astounding? What kind of pricing is this, one may respectfully ask.

Imagine the level of prices; we are being made to pay at a hike which is more than 2000% and it can never be justified, or can it? Every year, especially with the onset of winters here, this skyrocketing of fares becomes a routine and we, being helpless, are forced to buy the tickets on such exorbitant rates. We all know the condition of our "strategic" national highway.

Is Srinagar “International” airport the only airport in the world which is located in snowy terrain? Is Kashmir the only place on earth that faces a snowy winter season? With around 20 airlines, both private and government competing in the market, I think Kashmir is the softest target for all to exploit the travelers. With practically no regulations or regulators for pricing of tickets and even no intervention from the government too, it seems that the airlines have taken customers absolutely for granted. In case of an extreme contingency, one is forced to pay 2000% more for a flight. Imagine the state of affairs.

We have been hearing of ‘night landings’ here at our airport for a long time now but the claims are just only and precisely ‘claims’- nothing more nothing less! The lame and dumb reasons for the same are being given time and again. It might have helped the in bringing down the flight rates, but there is no sign of practically implementing any such design by the concerned authorities.

20/01/19 Nazim Humayoon/Kashmir Images

Mumbai: The first-ever two-day Global Aviation Summit was organised by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in association with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) here earlier this week, with the theme “Flying for all”, to ride the exponential growth India has been witnessing in the aviation sector over the last four years.

The event saw the participation of **83 different countries with more than 1,000 delegates visiting from these countries.** The event was also attended by Transport and Aviation ministers from countries like Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Maldives, Japan, Qatar, Poland, Georgia, Nigeria, among many others.

Apart from this, **aviation regulators and Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) of several countries were also part of the event. The event was also supported and attended by the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation), IATA (International Air Transport Association), ACI (Airports Council International), and CANSO (Civil Air Navigation Services Organisation).**

The summit also witnessed the presence of several CEOs and Managing Directors of top players in the aviation industry from across the world, including **Ajay Singh, CMD SpiceJet, Palash Roy Chowdhury, MD India, Pratt & Whitney, Svilen Rangelov, Co-Founder and CEO, Dronamics, Adel Abdullah Ali, CEO, Air Arabia, Anand E. Stanley, President & MD, Airbus India, Akbar Al Baker, Group CEO, Qatar Airways, among many others.**

19/01/19 Dibyendu Mondal/SundayGuardianLive

New Delhi: Defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday suggested "an international corporate rivalry" could be behind the "artificial storm" being unleashed against the Rafale deal despite the Supreme Court not finding anything adverse in it and the government repeatedly answering all questions.

"None of us should become part of an international corporate warfare... Is India's interests on the top of your agenda or becoming pawns of corporate rivalries?" she said, obliquely attacking Congress while delivering a lecture on "India's strategic interests in context of the Rafale deal".

Though she did not name any company, Eurofighter Typhoon manufacturer EADS had offered a 20% discount on its earlier bid after the French Dassault Aviation, which makes Rafales, was declared the (lowest bidder) in the original medium multi-role combat aircraft project for 126 jets under UPA in 2012.

The UPA government had rejected the EADS offer as it violated provisions of the Defence

Procurement Procedure and Central Vigilance Commission guidelines. The defence ministry, incidentally, on Friday had also said, **"It's a corporate battle that has been going on since 2012 and has adversely affected the capabilities of the IAF. The controversy should be put to rest in the interest of national security."**

20/01/19 Times of India

Mumbai: **The saga of Jet Airways (India) Ltd continues, with its founder and promoter Naresh Goyal making a financial offer to State Bank of India (SBI) to retain control of the ailing airline, even as its single-largest public shareholder, Etihad Airways PJSC, has sought to oust him in exchange for infusing much-needed funds.** Goyal has told SBI, Jet Airways' largest lender, that he is ready to invest up to ₹700 crore and pledge all his shares, provided he retains at least a 25% stake in the airline. "Should this not be possible, I will not be able to infuse any funds or pledge my shares, unless SEBI accords me an exemption permitting me to increase my reduced stake (if it is to be below 25%) without triggering the takeover code," Goyal said in a 16 January letter to SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar. A copy of the letter has been reviewed by Mint. Kumar confirmed the investment offer from Goyal. "We are working very fast. There are deadlines and it will be finalized very quickly," Rajnish Kumar told reporters on the sidelines of an event in Mumbai. "Lenders are very clear (about) what needs to be done and there is no disagreement among lenders in their approach." Jet Airways has been struggling to run its operations for the past six months amid a cash crunch caused by rising costs and a bruising fare war. On 31 December, the airline defaulted on interest payments to a consortium of lenders led by SBI. **The financial troubles have forced the airline to halt deliveries of Boeing Co. 737 Max planes and delay salary payments to pilots.** Jet Airways, which was scheduled to take delivery of 11 737 Max planes by March, has so far received five planes. According to analysts, Jet Airways needs to raise at least \$250-300 million immediately to clear its dues to lenders and vendors. The airline would need to raise another \$450-500 million by the end of 2020 when some of its overseas debt mature, analysts said earlier. Etihad Airways chief executive Tony Douglas has informed SBI that it will not exceed its offer of ₹150 per share of Jet Airways for making any fresh investment, according to reports. The Abu Dhabi-based airline has also demanded a complete exit of Goyal and his family from any management or even advisory role at the Mumbai-based airline. Goyal and his family currently own 51% of Jet Airways. Etihad Airways has a 24% stake. In the letter to the SBI chairman, Goyal said that under local laws, "amounts payable by the company to promoter group entities, should be treated on par with the other overdue creditors of the company and the same, and upon conversion into equity is considered cash". "I respectfully submit that unless my shareholding goes below 10% and/or my group is not represented on the board, I would continue to be held out as a promoter, and be faced with the attendant exposures/ risks of being a promoter— hence, it is only fair and equitable that our shareholding be at least 25%," Goyal said in the letter. A spokesperson for Jet Airways did not respond to queries. A spokesperson for Etihad Airways said the

airline “does not comment on rumour or speculation”. **An SBI spokesperson said that the lenders to Jet Airways “are considering a restructuring plan under the RBI (Reserve Bank of India) framework for resolution of stressed assets that would ensure a long-term viability of the company”.**

“Any such plan would be subject to approval of boards of the lenders and subject to adherence and clearance, if required, from the RBI and/or Sebi (takeover code, ICDR regulations etc.) and/or Ministry of Civil Aviation and in compliance with all regulatory prescriptions,” the spokesperson said in a statement. A meeting of lenders to Jet Airways on Wednesday to resolve the crisis appeared to be inconclusive, with neither Jet Airways nor Etihad issuing a statement at the end. The discussions contemplated options on the debt-equity mix, proportion of equity infusion by stakeholders and change in the airline’s board in case of a fund infusion. Mint on Tuesday reported that Etihad might gain effective control of Jet Airways if the lenders approve a resolution plan for the cash-strapped airline. The plan could see Etihad Airways raising its stake from the current 24% and Goyal ceding control of the airline, the report said, citing two people familiar with the ongoing discussions. “During the last two and half decades at Jet Airways, Naresh Goyal kept a tight grip on the airline that he built from scratch. As a result, Etihad had an uneasy relationship with him even after picking up a 24% stake in the airline,” said a person who had once worked closely with Goyal. “While Etihad clearly doesn’t want him around if they are to increase their stake and infuse more funds into Jet Airways, Naresh Goyal will not relinquish control at Jet Airways easily,” the person said, requesting anonymity. On Thursday, Jet Airways shares rose 5.09% to ₹284.80 apiece on the BSE, outperforming a 0.15% gain in the benchmark Sensex.

Mint 18/01/2019

Mumbai: **State Bank of India (SBI) Thursday said lenders are considering a resolution plan for Jet Airways to ensure long-term viability of the debt-laden company.** The SBI statement comes a day after the crisis-hit airline said discussions were “progressing well” with stakeholders on a comprehensive resolution plan that also contemplates equity infusion and consequent changes in its board of directors.

There are rising concerns over financial health of Jet Airways, whose shares have also taken a beating at stock exchanges.

“We would like to state that lenders are considering a restructuring plan under the RBI framework for resolution of stressed assets that would ensure a long-term viability of the company,” SBI said in a statement. It said the restructuring plan for the cash-strapped airline would need approval from boards of lenders.

“Any such plan would be subject to approval of boards of the lenders and subject to adherence and clearance, if required, from the RBI and/or Sebi (takeover code, ICDR regulations.) and Ministry of Civil Aviation and in compliance with all regulatory prescriptions,” the statement said. Shares of the airline are trading 4.24 per cent lower at Rs 259.50 apiece on BSE.

Mint 17/01/2019

Mumbai: To counter the immense stress that officials at the Air Traffic Control (ATC) and pilots go through during their working hours, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has launched a specially designed yoga drill known as “SkyFit” to help aviation professionals deal with stress.

“SkyFit” is a module especially designed for aviation professionals. It is a modern scientific technique infused with ancient yogic breathing practices and focuses on breathing exercises for self-healing and taking control of the body and mind.

The “SkyFit” mobile-based application was launched here by Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha on Wednesday on the occasion of the Global Aviation summit held here earlier this week.

This module of “SkyFit” has already trained 300 aviation professionals in Chennai and Delhi through several workshops that were conducted in these two cities by the AAI to train them into practising “SkyFit” yoga.

Dr Ashok Bhatt, who designed the “SkyFit” yoga drill, told The Sunday Guardian: “SkyFit consists of breathing techniques based on yogic traditions which we have especially designed to take care of stress and manage the stress which ATC officials and pilots go through as they work in a closed and cramped space and pilots have long flying hours without any breaks. We have tried to connect medical science with yogic science, where the most important thing is the correct way of breathing. Most of us are chest breathers which is not the right way.”

19/01/19 Dibyendu Mondal/SundayGuardianLive

Doha: IndiGo, an Indian low-cost carrier, has added its ninth destination from Qatar to India. It will start one daily non-stop flight to and from Kannur Airport in Kerala, a southern Indian state, from March 15, 2019.

Kannur, the newest and fourth international airport of Kerala had begun its commercial operations on December 9, 2018.

As of now, Air India Express, a subsidiary of India’s flag carrier airline Air India is operating three weekly services in Doha-Kannur sector.

IndiGo will be operating a daily flight 6E 1716 leaving Doha at 10:05 pm (Doha time) and reaching Kannur at 4:55 am (local time), while the return service. 6E 1715 will be depart Kannur at 7:05 pm (local time) to arrive in Doha at 9:05 pm (Doha time).

19/01/19 Peninsula Online

The Hyderabad unit of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) on Sunday (January 20) recovered gold worth more than Rs 66 lakh after intercepting a passenger at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad.

According to DRI officials, the passenger arrived in the city at 12:40 am on Sunday on a flight from Indore, Madhya Pradesh.

DRI officials had received a tip-off, based on which the officials intercepted the passenger.

Officials recovered two foreign-marked gold bars from him. The gold weighed a total of 1996.70 grams and was valued at Rs 66.27 lakh.

He had concealed the gold bars in his shoes, DRI officials said.

20/01/19 Ashish Pandey/India Today

The government has finalised a revival plan and a financial package for struggling Air India, which includes shedding of about Rs 29,000 crore of debt, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told CNBC-TV18 on Thursday.

"The revival plan for Air India has been completed. We have discussed it in parliament, we have discussed it in the media as well. There are multiple steps that we are taking but the first and most important thing that we are doing for Air India is a financial package which includes shedding of about Rs 29,000 crore of debt which goes to the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), leaving the airline with about Rs 25,000 crore of debt. We have also pumped in a lot more equity into Air India, which has happened through the supplementary in the budget, which should be coming into Air India right now. And of course with oil prices having come down, Air India once again at an operating level continues to do well," Sinha said at the CNBC-TV18 Indian Business Leader Awards on Thursday. But challenges still remain for the debt-ridden carrier.

"The challenge for us in Air India has continued to be the legacy burden – the debt that was accumulated in the past because of all the mistakes and all of the calamities that really were foisted on to Air India and made things very difficult for Air India, I think those are behind us now. At an operating level, we will continue to strengthen and improve Air India with best in class business processes, world class professional management and also doing whatever we can to motivate and improve working conditions for the workforce," he said.

Speaking about debt reduction target specifically, Sinha said, "That is an ongoing process. The important part of it in the revival plan was to be able to shed Rs 29,000 crore through the SPV. We will of course refinance Rs 25,000 crore that has left in more advantageous ways and we will continue to work at it so that we can restore Air India financially to the best possible situation that we can do and of course, there is further disinvestment that is required. We are looking at the subsidiaries, we are working with the non-core real estate, so there is a whole host of things that are part of the revival plan that we are embarked on."

18/01/19 Kritika Saxena/CNBC TV18

Mumbai: There have been 69 instances of engine failure of Airbus A320neo aircraft operated by IndiGo in 2018, according to the data available from the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation.

The data, contained in a January 8 note issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, show there have been 12 instances of failure of the Integrated Standby Instrument System since the aircraft with the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engines were inducted in 2016. The instrument system is meant to be a backup in case of a failure in the cockpit instrument system. It is designed to operate as reliably and independently as possible from the main instrument system.

Ministry officials said 42 of the engine failures pertained to oil chips that play a role in early warning. This was followed by 21 instances of distress in the combustion chamber, three cases of problem with the Fan Drive Gear System and one each of oil leak from the bearings and the engine stall, and high engine vibration.

In India, IndiGo and Go Air operate the Airbus A320neo with the Pratt & Whitney PW1100G engines. Air India and Vistara have Airbus 320neo aircraft with CFM Leap 1A engines. The DGCA on Thursday barred IndiGo and Go Air from operating A320neo planes to Port Blair, because the nearest landing place in an emergency is more than one hour away.

18/01/19 Aditya Anand/The Hindu

Mumbai: Pratt & Whitney continues to grapple with fresh issues in its new aircraft engines — the lead market for which is India — even after crossing 1 million hours of service, typically considered a significant period for identifying and resolving problems with a new product.

The geared turbofan engines, powering 350 planes in the world and 97 in India have crossed 1.5 million hours of service. Senior executives at the engine maker had earlier told ET that the company was trying to identify and resolve issues with the product within the 1 million mark.

“I am not aware of any hard target. Normally, one million is considered a significant body of experience in terms of operating hours. Any initial issues are normally resolved within that time frame. But there is no magic number,” Mark Cryan, vice-president, customers (India, Middle East and Africa) for commercial engines at Pratt & Whitney, told ET in an interview.

“Reliability rates will improve to a level that people realise it’s business as usual and there will be no drama like in the past,” he said, without alluding to a specific future target.

“Reliability rates will improve to a level that people realise it’s business as usual and there will be no drama like in the past,” he said, without alluding to a specific future target.

The latest problem to crop up is that of a gearbox failure. The company is doing what it calls a “root cause analysis” of the issue before it identifies how many engines are currently impacted by it. That will be followed by a solution, a new set of engines equipped with the solution and a retrofitting of those engines into the existing impacted fleet and future aircraft deliveries.

18/01/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

New Delhi: **The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday barred Airbus A320 Neos with Pratt & Whitney (PW) engines from flying to Port Blair or any other overseas route where an alternate landing place is over an hour away during any point in its entire journey over the ocean, said a senior regulatory official. This restriction will apply to IndiGo and GoAir that use PW engines on their A320 new engine option (Neo) aircraft.**

“The flight from Kolkata to Port Blair is of almost 1.5-hour duration. This restriction has been imposed for safety reason as there must be an airport within one hour of flying time during entire journey of A320 Neo with PW engines so that the plane can safely land at the nearest alternate on a single engine when one engine develops a snag,” said the official. Twin engine planes can land on one engine at suitable nearest airport when an engine has a snag. IndiGo and GoAir together have over 100 PW-powered A320 Neos currently. There have been some instances of PW-powered Neos developing snags while flying to and from Port Blair.

A-320 Neo Pratt engine troubles return, now IndiGo grounds at least five planes

Secondly, the no-long-overseas-flight decision has been taken for commercial reasons also. “When a Neo with faulty Pratt engine gets stuck in Port Blair, it takes longer for the airline to fly in man and material there to repair or replace the same. Examination of the faulty PW engine also takes longer there. And Port Blair is a small airport that has one less aircraft parking bay as long as the Neo remains grounded there, limiting its capacity,” the official added.

In addition, the DGCA has also asked IndiGo and GoAir to "create awareness among cabin and cockpit crew (pilots) about odour/burning smell/smoke (even if slightest) during approach phase and positive reporting to cockpit crew for necessary action.... Log all the cases detecting odours/ smoke in cabin during operation for necessary investigation and rectification. In all odour/smoke cases, engine to be inspected in detail and to be used only after rectification of defect.”

The regulator’s latest directives for PW-powered A320 Neos also include more rigorous checks on engine components.

17/01/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

IndiGo has for now stalled its co-founder Rakesh Gangwal’s ambitious plans to fly low cost long haul flights to Europe, as costs mount and margins are squeezed, said two people in the know.

“There will be no flights to European destinations in the next six months or even a year. I wouldn’t call it a reversal but plans are always reviewed,” said one of the people cited above.

He added the regulatory approvals haven’t been all received for flights to London, the first destination in the west that IndiGo was planning to fly to in the ongoing winters. It had got slots at the city’s Gatwick airport. Those slots will lapse by March.

IndiGo posted its first reported net loss in the July-September quarter. It will shortly announce earnings for October-December.

The halt in plans is also the result of a debate within the management on whether its planned no-frills model for the flights would garner enough demand in a market which is full of highly competitive premium products from carriers such as Emirates and Singapore Airlines, said one of the

persons cited above.

IndiGo operates about 55 daily flights or 15% of its total capacity overseas.

“...our internal work shows that IndiGo is a natural player to take advantage of the significant and lucrative international market opportunity that India offers. Specifically, because of our large domestic network, we are well positioned to capture this massive and growing international traffic. It is about time that IndiGo enters the long-haul, international markets and takes advantage of this lucrative opportunity,” Gangwal had said, explaining in part, the carrier’s intentions to buy a stake in state-run Air India to take advantage of its international airport slots and flying rights.

18/01/19 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

New Delhi: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) will conduct an year-long study to examine early arrivals at the Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru airports — among the busiest in the country — in order to devise ways to improve operational efficiencies. Early arrivals to an airport lead to bunching of flights and impact the punctuality of planes scheduled to land or arrive at the same airport. The three airports under study are among the most sought after by domestic and international airlines, but capacity constraints here mean there are no slots available to accommodate more flights.

“The exercise will help us to collect data, which will be used to optimise block-timings between city-pairs. We will be monitoring block-timings followed by various airlines during peak and non-peak hours, and in different parts of the year,” a senior official of the AAI said on the condition of anonymity.

Block-timing refers to the span of time between switching on the aircraft’s engines before take-off and switching them off after landing. Officials are of the opinion that if airlines are able to inculcate discipline or self-regulate, there may be no need for penalties.

17/01/19 Jagriti Chandra/The Hindu

Shree airlines, a carrier which has been providing regular domestic flights service has expressed desire to operate international flights.

The carrier commenced flight operation with its three aircraft was paying full attention only to a helicopter operation previously.

Recently, Shree airlines owns 2 Bombardier CRJ-200 series aircraft and 2 Bombardier CRJ-700 series aircraft.

Shree airlines has sent request letter to Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation (MoCTCA) asking permission to operate international flights targeting some cities of India and Bangladesh.

The carrier has been operating domestic flights to Dhangadhi, Nepalgunj, Rajbiraj, Biratnagar, Bhadrapur and Bhairahawa.

Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC) and Himalaya Airlines have been operating international flights from Nepal whereas Buddha Air has been operating international flight weekly to Varanasi.

Recently, **Buddha Air is preparing to expand its international flight operation to other various cities**

of India. The airline will be operating flights to Calcutta from upcoming Nepali New Year.

Buddha Air will be operating 3 weekly flight on Kathmandu-Calcutta-Kathmandu sector on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 2076 Baisakh 2 (mid-April). The airline will be operating flights initially from their current aircraft ATR-72.

If Shree Airlines receives permission to operate international flights, the carrier would be fourth airlines of Nepal to operate international flight.

17/01/19 Aviation Nepal

As many as 11 private players have evinced interest in operating, managing, and developing the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport for the next 50 years, the contract for which is to be awarded by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) on February 28.

At the pre-bid conference organised as per the schedule fixed for the bidding process by the AAI in New Delhi on Thursday, representatives of 11 entities interested in bidding for the airport participated.

GMR Group, the leading airport developer and operator, Adani Group, which is behind the upcoming Vizhinjam International Deepwater seaport project, and Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) were among those who had shown interest, sources in the AAI told The Hindu.

The highest of 11 private players was for Thiruvananthapuram International Airport followed by 10 for the Mangaluru airport from among the six AAI-managed airports for which the Request For Proposal (RFP) had been floated to select the private player.

With the last date for submission of the two cover bids fixed at February 14, representatives of the private players who have shown interest in the airport are arriving to see the terminal.

18/01/19 S Anil Radhakrishnan/The Hindu

Mumbai: **The mid-2020 deadline for the Navi Mumbai airport is an ambitious one, said Alexandre de Juniac, director-general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA),** a global trade body representing 290 airlines.

Implying that CM Devendra Fadnavis' deadline was impossible to meet, he said **constructing an airport is not a process that "can be hurried".** "Constructing an airport in five years itself is ambitious," said Juniac.

Construction of the much-delayed Navi Mumbai airport hasn't begun. Acquisition of 1,160 hectares is still on and the contract for construction of the Rs 16,000-crore airport is expected to be awarded in a month or two.

Juniac held up Istanbul's new airport, completed in four years, as an example of work in record time. It is considered an extremely challenging project given that it will eventually accommodate 200 million passengers.

Size is important for India as domestic passenger traffic has been registering double-digit growth for four years now. Juniac said it isn't easy to sustain a 15% growth. "Even in terms of infrastructure, it

puts an enormous pressure on all stakeholders. If the Indian government wants to sustain this level of growth, big decisions have to be made quicker and faster and implemented more rapidly. That isn't easy for any country, not just India," he said.

18/01/19 Times of India

Indian aviation sector's woes may prove to be a hurdle for the industry to achieve double digit growth, according to Alexandre de Juniac, Director-General and CEO, International Air Transport Association (IATA).

At a round-table meeting held in Mumbai, the IATA chief said that the Indian aviation market's slow pace is a matter of concern. The Civil Aviation Ministry had recently unveiled its 'Vision 2040' projecting growth in the Indian aviation industry over the next two decades.

Vision 2040

Speaking about the vision document, Juniac said, **"The Vision 2040 is a good way to align all the stakeholder and investors who want to build the infrastructure, it provides a broad horizon. Indian airline sector needs to be strengthened soon and the infrastructure needs to be built sooner, else the congestion could pose to be a big issue in the growth."**

He further said that the vision of inaugurating the Navi Mumbai airport by 2020 was ambitious. "It would take minimum five years to inaugurate the airport," he said.

Privatisation of airports

According to reports, **the tender process for the airport is likely to be carried out by the end of January 2019. The project has seen several delays already.**

Commenting on the Airport Authority of India's bid to invite bids to operate six airports on the basis of 'per-passenger fee' (PPF), he said: "We do not recommend the revenue sharing model, it's a mistake. **The PPF process is not the best way to select a private player for the airports.**

Currently, India has five major airports which are privately owned in metro cities. He added that privatisation of airports is a concern as it could lead to monopoly.

"Privatisation is not the only way, there are several countries that work quite well, besides privatisation of the airport." "The government should consult its stakeholders including us." The IATA chief explained, "At the end of it, it's the airlines who would have to pay more to utilise these airports which could affect the quality of services and the end customers as well."

18/01/19 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

New Delhi: **The airspace at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport will remain suspended on January 18 and from January 20 to January 26 for rehearsal and Republic day parade.** Following this, flights scheduled between 10:35 AM to 12:15 PM will be affected and those later in the day are also likely to be delayed. Moreover, there will be relaxation in the suspension on 19 January, said news agency ANI.

The shut down of the Delhi airspace is likely to affect over 800 flights which may be delayed or

cancelled owing to the Republic Day rehearsals. Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has asked Air India to cancel seven departures and five arrivals.

As per the new slot management system of the airport, called 'profile schedule', three runaways will handle nearly 73 scheduled flights per hour. A Times of India report quoted a DIAL official as saying: "IGIA in consultation with Airports Authority of India (AAI) and NATS (UK-based ATC expert agency) has implemented a profile schedule which has enhanced the overall capacity by almost 13%. However, keeping into consideration the capacity constraints and to minimise inconvenience to passengers, AAI, several major airlines and DIAL consulted on various options and jointly agreed that the best and safest course of action is to cancel domestic flights during NOTAM period. International carriers have been requested to re-schedule."

17/01/19 India.com

New Delhi: **Delhi airport operator DIAL will start levying X-ray baggage charges ranging from ₹110 to ₹880 per aircraft flying on domestic routes from next month.** For international flights, the charge would be \$209.55 for wide-body planes and \$149.33 for narrow-body aircraft, according to an AERA order. With the decision, air passengers flying out from the Delhi airport would have to shell out up to ₹50 as airlines are expected to pass on the X-ray baggage charges. **In a four-page order dated January 10, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) said that DIAL can levy X-ray baggage charges from February 1.** An airline official said X-ray baggage charges would be passed on to passengers. "A passenger -- who takes a domestic flight -- is unlikely to pay more than ₹5 as 'X-ray baggage charge'. On an international flight, the per passenger charge would be not more than ₹50," a source said. According to the order, the charge would be \$209.55 (around ₹14,908) on wide-body aircraft. Assuming that a wide-body plane has more than 300 seats, the additional charge per passenger would be not more than ₹50. For a narrow-body plane flying on international routes, the charge would be \$149.33 (around ₹10,624). On domestic routes, the charge would be ₹110 for a plane with up to 25 seats and ₹220 for an aircraft having 26-50 seats. The charge would be ₹495 for planes with 51-100 seats, ₹770 for 101-200 seater aircraft and the amount would be ₹880 for those having more than 200 seats. Taking into account the charges and number of seats, each passenger would have to shell out a marginal amount that is less than ₹5. "DIAL will bill airlines the X-ray baggage charges per domestic and international flight as per the AERA order from February 1, 2019. This will not be billed to passengers through airlines rather it would be cost to airlines only," a DIAL spokesperson said. The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) is a consortium that is majority-owned by the GMR group.

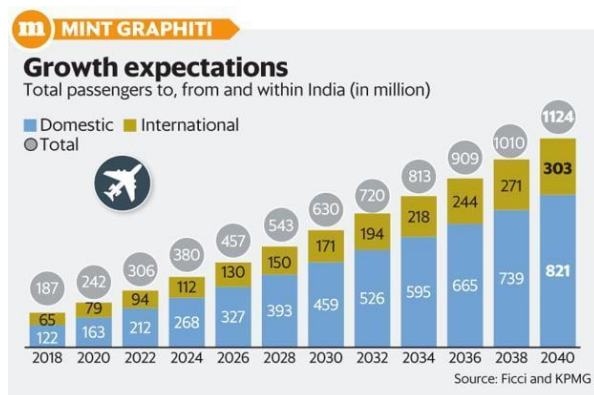
Mint 16/01/2019

Mumbai: **Jet Airways (India) Ltd is working hard to fix its debt problems and its efforts could see results in a month's time,** a top Boeing executive said. "A lot of activity is going on at Jet Airways; so I'm sure they will find a way. I am hoping that they resolve the situation in a month's time or earlier,"

said Dinesh Keskar, senior vice president, sales, for Asia Pacific and India at Boeing Commercial Airplanes. Keskar said Jet has not yet cancelled an order for 10 widebody 787 Dreamliner jets placed more than a decade ago. "Jet Airways (first) ordered Boeing 787-8 aircraft and then converted them into 787-9 aircraft. A lot of stuff needs to be done in advance like seat selections, etc. (for conversion)," Keskar said. Boeing 787-9s offer longer range than 787-8s, allowing an airline offer flights to more distant locations.

"They (Jet Airways) haven't done anything on the order yet, so we haven't built the planes for them. But, we expect this to happen in some time," Keskar said. He said Vistara, which has signed a letter of intent with Boeing for a firm order for six 787-9 aircraft and purchasing rights for four more from the Dreamliner family, could take delivery of its first Boeing widebody plane by 2020. "They don't have an option to convert their first six aircraft order (Boeing 787-9) but they can think about converting their remaining four orders," Keskar said. He said Boeing's latest widebody aircraft 777X, currently under production, will be rolled out by the end of this quarter. "Airlines like Singapore Airlines, Qatar, Etihad and Lufthansa have placed orders for Boeing 777X. Indian airlines like Air India and Jet Airways which have Boeing 777 ER aircraft in their fleet are candidates for buying the new 777X aircraft in future," Keskar added.

Mint 16/01/2019



Mumbai: India's air passenger traffic is expected to grow sixfold to 1.1 billion per year by 2040, according to the Vision 2040 report for the civil aviation industry released on Tuesday at the government-backed Global Aviation Summit 2019. The Indian commercial air fleet is expected to be 2,359 by March 2040, says the report prepared by consultancy firm KPMG and industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry. India is also expected to have 190-200 operational airports by 2040, with Delhi and Mumbai having three airports each, it says. India may consider investments of up to \$2 billion for low traffic airports, excluding land acquisition costs, the report says. It also recommends that a strong leasing industry for financing of aircraft and maintenance, repair and overhaul, be established in India to prevent domestic airlines from going abroad for the facilities. The Vision 2040 report was prepared in consultation with the government

though it was not commissioned by it, said aviation secretary R.N. Choubey. “We didn’t commission the report as we wanted suggestions from the industry,” he said. The government will deliberate on the suggestions and take a call on which ones to implement, Choubey said. Aviation minister Suresh Prabhu said the report will address the immediate challenges of the aviation sector. “We are working on getting aircraft financing and maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) industry in India, which will also increase jobs in the country,” Prabhu said. At present, most airlines go abroad for MRO services and for raising capital to finance aircraft purchases.

Four of the five engine issues related to the Pratt and Whitney engines on Airbus 320neo planes have been resolved, while the fifth issue, that of the gearbox, is being addressed, said minister of state for aviation Jayant Sinha. Domestic airlines such as IndiGo (InterGlobe Aviation Ltd) and GoAir have had several flights grounded over the last few months because of glitches in the Pratt and Whitney engine. “The director general of civil aviation is expected to issue further directives regarding this shortly,” Sinha said. The Centre also proposed amendments to the draft drone policy, including allowing drones beyond visual line of sight. The amendment also proposes the use of algorithm to pilot drones, and a dedicated drone corridor, besides creating drone ports for landing and taking off. It also bats for 100% foreign direct investment in drone manufacturing.

Meanwhile, **Qatar Airways’s group chief executive officer Akbar Al Bakr said on the sidelines of the event that the airline is in talks with IndiGo and GoAir for code share opportunities.** International Air Transport Association (IATA) **expects India to become the third-largest aviation market worldwide in the next decade,** it said in a report released at the summit. “The fundamental drivers of air passenger demand, including population and demographics and increasing incomes, are favourable and supportive of ongoing growth over the longer-term,” the report said. The aviation industry in India is not yet on a sound financial footing and this remains a work-in-progress for the industry and its key stakeholders, including policymakers, it said. “While the industry has demonstrated resilience in the face of various shocks and disruption, including the global financial crisis and airline exits, financial stability is a key factor for the industry to be able to successfully develop and grow,” according to the IATA report.

Mint 16/01/2018

Mumbai: **Seeking to develop an ecosystem for drone operations, the government has suggested establishing a corridor for flying drones as well as setting up a separate directorate for licensing and authorising of unmanned aircraft systems.** Coming out with a draft policy note on Tuesday, the civil aviation ministry has also proposed constructing droneports to facilitate take-off and landing of drones and a stricter regulatory framework, including features for protecting “personal data by

design". A Digital Sky Platform for registration of drones is already operational under Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) 1.0. Now, the ministry has issued a draft policy note on CAR 2.0. "Till such time the UAS (Unmanned Aircraft System) for commercial use are not certified as safe to fly alongside manned aircraft, they should be kept away from airspace in which manned aircraft operate.

"Alternatively, Drone Corridor i.e. an airspace segregated from flight paths of manned aircraft (with adequate safety buffer) should be provided for UAS operations," the Drone Ecosystem Policy Roadmap said.

Another suggestion is for setting up of a Drone Directorate within the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) that would issue necessary guidelines for the nascent industry. Besides, financial penalties have been proposed for violation of norms. "There is a need for a Member, Digital Sky -- an analogue of Member, Air Navigation Service, but specialising in airspace issues arising from usage of UAS. The Member, Digital Sky may be given responsibility for maintain existing Digital Sky Platform, and upgrading it to meet the technological demands for operations beyond visual line of sight and operation of autonomous UAS," the policy note said. To mitigate privacy risks arising out of drone operations, it has been suggested that original equipment manufacturers should include specific features that take into consideration principles of privacy and protection of personal data by design and by default. Further, the policy note has pitched for 100% FDI under the automatic route in UAS and RPAS (Remotely Piloted Aircraft System)-based commercial civil aviation services, subject to certain conditions. Among others, the Drone Directorate may prescribe a maximum lifecycle for each drone-type and operators must apply for re-certification at the end of the lifecycle, it added.

"Operators that deploy and use autonomous UAS should ensure that the UAS is humancentric i.e. it should be developed, deployed and used for an ethical purpose, and its operation must demonstrate respect for the ethical principles of Beneficence (do good) and Non-Maleficence (do no harm)," it added. According to the policy note, autonomous UAS should not under any circumstance harm human beings and should, by design protect the dignity, liberty, privacy, safety of human beings.

"CAR 2.0 may either be introduced as an amendment to the existing CAR 1.0 or it may also be introduced as separate set of Civil Aviation Requirements notwithstanding the conditions laid down under CAR 1.0," the policy note said.

Mint 15/01/2018

Mumbai: The government is working on a blueprint for the domestic manufacturing of aircraft and also looking at aircraft financing from within the country, Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said Tuesday. Speaking to the media at the Global Aviation Summit 2019, organised jointly by the civil aviation ministry, the Airports Authority of India and Ficci, the minister also emphasised on carrying out of maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) work domestically. **"We will soon roll out a**

road map for manufacturing of aircraft in India,” Prabhu said. Stating that the country needs 2,300 new aircraft to meet the future air travel demand, he said, “We would like to join hands with top players from across the globe.” The minister said the government wants aircraft financing to be done by domestic players. “We are already working on financing of aircraft and how that should happen from India. We are loosing out lot of resources to outsiders,” Prabhu said. He further said the government wants aircraft MRO to happen in the country. “There are so many planes and the maintenance and repairs can be done in India,” he said.

Prabhu warned that if MRO work is not carried out in the country then the government will be loosing out lot of money, besides job opportunities. He said the domestic passenger traffic has been growing at 17-18 per cent, adding the government is also now focusing on cargo and has for the first time unveiled a policy to boost the growth in the segment. Prabhu said the government has recently launched a drone policy and would like to make sure that drone becomes one of the preferred use for many sectors such as agriculture and disaster management, among others. « **We will make sure that drones are manufactured in the country,**” he said.

Mint 16/01/2019

NEW DELHI: IGI Airport in the capital may soon see introduction of a number of technologies to bolster its security.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which is in charge of the airport’s security, is looking at technologies like CT baggage screening, artificial intelligence-driven gadgets and even a biometric-based entry system.

WHAT CISF WANTS FOR A SAFER YOU



AI gadgets | A number of smaller gadgets that will help reduce human intervention, including robotic dogs, are being considered

Biometric-based access control | To track movement of staff and passengers

Automated tray return system | Trays won't be manually returned to the starting point, thus improving efficiency

CT-based screening system for cabin baggage | Already being implemented abroad, the technology generates an image that can be rotated by 360 degrees so that each item inside can be analysed

CISF will run trials of these this year and send the results to Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and ministry of civil aviation

The need to introduce these technologies was discussed recently at a Global Aviation Security Symposium (AVSEC 2018) in Canada and officials say they are checking a number of aviation gadgets, which are already being successfully used abroad.

One of the technologies is **computerised tomography (CT)-based screening for cabin baggage** — a technology that was recently tested at London’s Heathrow Airport. In addition to generating a comprehensive image that can be rotated to check each individual item inside a luggage, the technology can also improve efficiency with passengers not requiring to take out liquid items for

manual checking. A CISF official said its images are also clearer than those generated by an X-ray scanner, allowing security personnel to spend less time on a bag.

“We are looking at a number of technologies, some of which can be adopted this year. The first stage is to carry out testing and once we do that, we will send reports to Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and the civil aviation ministry. We have been keeping them updated and these new features have been in the works for some time,” said Hemendra Singh, assistant inspector general, CISF. **CISF also plans to utilise automated tray return systems (ATRS)** across airports in the country, similar to what is being used abroad, to reduce the time personnel spend in manually collecting trays during the security check. In this case, the tray will automatically return to the starting point, increasing passenger thoroughfare substantially, CISF says.

The symposium, organised by International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), also looked at artificial intelligence, with CISF planning to test new gadgets that can reduce human intervention. Among those options are robotic dogs. “While dog squads will continue to be a part of our security, robot dogs are also an option,” said a CISF official.

Last year, **CISF tested a biometric-based entry system at both Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports and its successful implementation is likely to reduce problems of fake ticket entry.** “The barcode system on the ticket will provide information immediately and allow entry to people only with a valid ticket. In cases of fake tickets, the system will reject it immediately,” said Singh.

CISF had last year incorporated body-worn cameras as part of its security at IGI Airport after testing it out at both Delhi Metro and the airport. The camera is worn with the uniform and generally attached around the torso, letting CISF personnel use the footage in cases of an argument due to suspicious passenger movement.

The Economic times of India 13/01/2019

New Delhi: **India on Sunday proposed a dialogue on air corridors with the countries of landlocked Central Asia in an attempt to boost trade languishing below \$2 billion for years,** as foreign minister Sushma Swaraj stressed on the need for connectivity initiatives to follow the principles of financial responsibility. In a speech at the first India-Central Asia Dialogue in Uzbekistan, Swaraj also called on the Central Asia Republics to participate in the Chabahar Port project jointly undertaken by India and Iran to move Indian goods to landlocked Afghanistan.

Swaraj arrived in the Uzbek city of Samarkand on Saturday on a two-day visit to chair the dialogue that focussed on a number of issues including ways to improve connectivity and stabilize war-ravaged Afghanistan.

In her speech, Swaraj noted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited all five Central Asian countries—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan—in 2015.

“We now want to build a modern and comprehensive partnership on these strong foundations,” Swaraj said.

“Development partnership has emerged as an important component of India’s engagement with other countries. Today, I offered to extend this partnership to Central Asia as well, where we can

bring our countries closer by taking up concrete projects...under our Lines of Credit and Buyers' Credit, and by sharing our expertise," she said.

India has been trying to forge closer links with the Central Asian Republics since their emergence as independent countries in the 1990s but the efforts have not yielded results. Bilateral trade with all the five countries is less than \$2 billion, with New Delhi blaming the lack of overland access to landlocked Central Asia for this and trying to find alternative routes like through the Chabahar Port to improve commerce.

"While geographically, Afghanistan and Central Asia are landlocked, there are several ways in which India, Afghanistan and the Central Asian countries can join hands to work on promoting connectivity in the region so that trade and commerce may flow between us and our people to people exchanges may prosper,' Swaraj said on Sunday.

"In this context, I would like to mention that the joint efforts of India, Iran and Afghanistan have led to the development of the Chabahar Port in Iran as a viable and operational trade route to connect to Afghanistan and potentially to Central Asia. Chabahar provides a shining example of what strong partnership can achieve to overcome any obstacles," she said inviting the Central Asian countries to participate in conference on Chabahar to be held next month in Iran.

To forge closer trade links with Central Asia, Swaraj said India would like "to organize a 'dialogue on air corridors' with the participation of civil aviation authorities, air freight and aviation companies of India and Central Asia so that goods, including perishable items, can be transported efficiently and swiftly." India already has opened air corridors for the transport of goods and perishables between India and several Afghan cities mainly to circumvent Pakistan's veto over India-Afghanistan trade passing overland through its territory.

While making it clear that India has supported "multiple options of connectivity in the region"—by joining the Ashgabat Agreement last year which aims at establishment of an International Transport and Transit Corridor between Iran, Oman, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and welcoming Kazakhstan's development of the dry port of Khorgos and linking it with the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas by rail—Swaraj, however, underlined the need for connectivity initiatives to be "based on universally recognized international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency and equality."

Mint 13/01/2018

New Delhi: Crisis talks between India's cash-strapped Jet Airways Ltd and aircraft lessors have failed to ease a row over late payments, prompting some lessors to explore taking back aircraft,

three people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

In what one of the people described as an ill-tempered showdown between the airline and some of the world's leading leasing firms, Jet's main lender State Bank of India sought to provide reassurance that India's biggest full-service carrier is doing all it can to pay its staff, suppliers and creditors.

"Jet has been delinquent for many months. Nobody wants to get in a situation where the problems worsen and it becomes even more difficult to take out aircraft," one of the people said.

Jet controls over a sixth of a market experiencing an unprecedented boom in air travel. Yet high fuel taxes, a weak rupee and price competition have squeezed profitability, leaving Jet with 80.52 billion rupees (\$1.14 billion) in net debt as at the end of September and defaulting on payments.

The airline had previously told some lessors it would clear arrears by Dec 31, but was unable to do so, the people close to the matter said.

At meetings on Tuesday, held at SBI's headquarters in Mumbai's business district, the bank's Chairman Rajnish Kumar was asked how Jet planned to raise equity or debt, said one of the people - an attendee, who found the responses lacked sufficient detail.

12/01/19 Reuters/Asian Age

Discussions between the debt-laden Jet Airways and lenders to the struggling carrier, led by the State Bank of India, are still inconclusive as bankers seek to recover dues that missed the repayment deadline in December.

Banks have classified Jet Airways in the SMA-0 category, which includes loans in default between 1 and 30 days, after the airline failed to pay its dues for the month of December.

"The loan is still in the operating portfolio. We have not moved it to stressed loans," said a senior executive at a large public sector bank. "We are in constant touch with the company and many rounds of meetings have taken place, but no concrete proposal is on the table yet."

Meanwhile, SBI and its investment banking arm SBI Capital Markets are discussing repayment plans with officials at Jet, although a resolution is yet to be reached, two people familiar with the discussions said. Jet Airways is a borrower from a group of 26 lenders, its 2017-18 annual report said. It has debt of more than Rs 8,000 crore on its books.

Bankers say SBI, which has the largest exposure, is taking the lead in the negotiations. "The best-case solution is for some equity infusion, either through existing shareholders or from someone else. It is still an early default; so, there is hope that normal payments will resume," said a second person familiar with the account.

12/01/19 Economic Times

Mumbai: The airline safety and product ratings for 2018 by global airline safety and product rating agency Airlineratings.com has Jet Airways topping the 'product' category list with a score of 7/7 in the full-service carrier category. Indigo has scored 4 in the low-cost airline category.

In the ratings announced this week, Air India has scored five, while Air Asia India has got a rating of 2 on 5.

An airline is rated from 1 to 7 stars on product category, with seven being the highest ranking for full service carriers, while the low-cost ones are rated out of 5.

While Indigo and SpiceJet have managed a product rating of 4 each out of 5, Air India and GoAir have got 5 on 7 and 3.5 on 5 respectively. Vistara Airlines is the only Indian carrier not rated.

The criteria for product ratings include personal in-flight entertainment, cabin space and comfort, beverages, food, seat recline, website information, etc.

In the 'safety' category, Air India, Go Air, Indigo, Jet Airways and Jet Konnect have all managed a rating of 6 on 7. Air Asia India and SpiceJet have got 3 on 7 each, while Air India Express, the only Indian carrier without a fatality-free record — due to the 2010 Mangalore air crash — has got a rating of 5.

11/01/19 Aditya Anand/The Hindu

New Delhi: Indian travellers have turned out to be the hottest bets for global carriers to jack up summer bookings.

Carriers with multiple connections across Asia, Europe and the US, such as Emirates, British Airways, Etihad, Qatar Airways and Oman Air, have zeroed in on Indian travellers with lucrative offers that are being cited as the best ever in the business.

Online travel agencies (OTAs) have seen about 15% spike in advance bookings for summer travel to international destinations and they expect more travellers to lap up these early bird discounts.

"Most of the large Gulf carriers have multiple connections across Asia, Europe and the US and these fares are designed to attract customers who are planning their summer vacations well in advance. These fares are at least 25% cheaper than the regular fares," said John Nair, head of business travel at Cox & Kings. "The summer bookings for 2019 have been encouraging."

The Emirates offer, for instance, valid for over 159 destinations during January 8-15 for travel between January 15 and November 30 is giving return trips to destinations such as Milan for about Rs 40,000, while a trip to Washington or New York could cost Rs 65,000- Rs 75,000.

12/01/19 Anumeha Chaturvedi/Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

New Delhi: **Firm up your travel plans quickly as both India and foreign carriers have a sale on to lure passengers with lower fares. While Indian carriers are offering domestic and international fares starting at Rs 899 and Rs 3,399, respectively, foreign airlines have also reduced fares for travel from India for some time. The airlines do it with the twin objective of filling up seats in lean travel periods this year as also to generate cash through advance sales.**

Qatar Airways, for instance, is offering upto 35% and 25% discount on economy and business fares on all its flights booked upto January 16 for travel up to December 31, 2019. Qatar Airways chief commercial officer Ehab Amin said: "We are delighted to invite all our passengers to start planning their next trip with this exciting global promotion offering extensive discounts across all cabin classes on all flights... With this new promotion, passengers... are truly spoilt for choice with Qatar Airways' ever-expanding global network of more than 160 destinations."

British Airways' has started its "January sale" for over 100 destinations across its economy, premium economy and business cabins. Return fares to London start from Rs 43,779 and the sale runs until January 31. The travel period varies by destination and cabin. BA's acting Head of sales Asia Pacific and Middle East Moran Birger said: "We have offers to suit a range of budgets and requirements with prices starting from INR 43,779 and more than 100 destinations on offer across our network. Customers should log on to ba.com to take advantage of this exciting offer."

12/01/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Dubai: After inauguration of Kannur International Airport, Kerala has become the only state in India which has the highest number of airports. Utilizing this fame is the government of Kerala, trying to promote itself at international level by advertising globally.

One would be surprised to spot Dubai buses promoting Kannur International Airport through display advertisements. The promotions handled by Dubai RTA states that Kannur International Airport is a main connection point between Gulf countries and Malabar.

As per sources more international flights will operate from Kannur International Airport soon. So to give information about new airport and attract the foreigners, the government of Kerala is branding its airport globally.

Trivandrum, Cochin, Calicut and Kannur are the four international airports present in Kerala, setting a new record in the Indian aviation industry. At the time of inauguration itself, the flights from these airports operated internationally.

11/01/19 Daijiworld

Nagpur: In a first, city-based Ashfaque Ahmed Consultancy Services Private Limited (AACCSPL) has bagged order for design and consultancy services for an airport aviary in Devanahalli, Bengaluru. This will be the first such aviary inside an airport in the country. The Rs30-crore project will be implemented by Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) at Kempegowda international airport. When contacted, AACCSPL director Ashfaque Ahmed confirmed the development and said his firm was shortlisted through competitive bidding in which global consultancy firms participated. Earlier, his firm has done master planning of Gorewada International Zoo in Nagpur.

"We have submitted concept level drawings for BIAL approval after which detailed drawings and estimates will be prepared," said Ahmed.

Ahmed said the aviary will be situated between the terminal and the pier building. The basic idea is to attract international flyers who check-in three hours before the flight departure. "This will be the first walk-in aviary in an airport, where birds will be in their natural habitat in India and elsewhere," he said.

The aviary will be spread in 6,035 sqmt area and will be 35-metre-high covered with a net so that birds inside do not fly out and there will also be clear vision.

12/01/18 Vijay Pinjarkar/Times of India

Thiruvananthapuram: **Representatives of GMR Group, one of the bidders for the operations and management of Trivandrum International Airport, visited the airport on Friday to inspect the facilities ahead of the pre-bid conference scheduled to be held on January 17.** The members of Airports Authority Employees' Union, who have been on an indefinite protest in front of the airport for the past 51 days, tried to block the GMR team and disrupt their visit.

It was the first visit by a bidder to the airport after AAI floated the tender. It has been learnt that more bidders will visit the airport in the coming days. GMR Group currently operates the Delhi International Airport and Hyderabad International Airport and is developing a greenfield airport at Goa.

As soon as the GMR team of four officials arrived at the airport, the employees' union staged protest and shouted slogans at the team and demanded that they leave the airport.

As soon as they got the information regarding the delegation visit, the employees, who have been staging dharna in front of the administrative office of airport at the domestic terminal since November last week, rushed to the spot and tried to stop the officials from carrying out inspection.

"It was a peaceful protest conducted by the union members. The GMR team wanted to conduct a visit to airport, which we prevented and they had to leave the airport after three hours of meeting with senior airport officials," said S Ajith Kumar, district branch secretary of Airports Authority Employees' Union.

11/01/19 Times of India

Mumbai: **A man from Tamil Nadu has claimed that he was humiliated and denied visa at an immigration counter of Mumbai's international airport for not knowing Hindi,** prompting the immigration department to initiate an investigation against one of their officers.

In a series of tweets on Tuesday, Abraham Samuel alleged that an immigration officer at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport denied him immigration for "knowing only Tamil and English and not Hindi".

"Was just denied immigration by an immigration officer in counter 33 at Mumbai CST AIRPORT, for knowing only Tamil and English and NOT hindi! What a disaster! Reported the officer, hope they take action. @SushmaSwaraj @mkstalin @narendramodi (sic)," Samuel said in one of his tweets tagging the foreign minister and the external affairs ministry.

Samuel said the immigration officer at counter 33 'profiled' him after seeing his Indian passport and "assumed that I should know Hindi and even after politely informing him that I do not know Hindi".

"No one in India should be denied immigration for not knowing Hindi! Such a disgraceful and arrogant behavior by this immigration officer in counter 33 at Mumbai CST! Hope this is the last instance of this in India (sic)!" he tweeted.

"The only reason i left was because my flight was scheduled to be boarded at 1:00 AM. Otherwise i would have stayed to lodge a formal complaint against this nincampoop! How do idiots like him make way into the indian government? He is a disgrace! @SushmaSwaraj @MEAIndia (sic)," Samuel said.

A senior immigration official said the officer in question has been taken off duty temporarily. "We regret that such an incident took place at Mumbai airport. The said officer who has been taken off the counter, pending investigation, will be given soft skill training and his counselling will be done," a senior immigration officer was quoted as saying by Hindustan Times.

10/01/18 News18.com

Mumbai: Jet Airways India Ltd, the airline which had its credit rating cut to default this month, is weighing a resumption of stake sale talks with Tata Group as the carrier is poised to run out of cash, people with knowledge of the matter said.

While its founder and chairman Naresh Goyal has been discussing a deal with Etihad Airways PJSC, talks with the foreign partner stalled over the latter's demand that Goyal step aside from his management role, the people said, asking not to be identified as the discussions are private. With Jet Airways set to run out of cash in about a month, the carrier is now looking to restart talks with India's biggest conglomerate, they said.

Tata said in November that it held "preliminary" talks with Jet Airways though no proposal was made. Acquiring Jet Airways's business could give Tata Group's fledgling aviation unit a shot at dominating the fastest-growing major air-travel market, where fares as low as 2 cents have kept the industry unprofitable for a decade

A Jet Airways representative said the company does not comment on speculation, while Tata Sons didn't respond to an email seeking comment.

Jet Airways reported its third straight quarterly loss in November as liabilities surged. It has fallen behind on payments to staff and lessors.

Goyal and Tony Douglas, chief executive officer of Etihad, which owns 24% of the Indian carrier, have met State Bank of India Chairman Rajnish Kumar multiple times to explore ways to keep the airline afloat, the people said.

Discussions stall

Creditors are open to lending \$500 million to Jet Airways if Goyal and Etihad inject a similar amount into the company, the people familiar said. A decision will be made once a forensic examination being conducted into the airline's books is completed, one of the people said. The Tata Group and lenders to Jet Airways have been in touch on the progress of discussions with Etihad, the people said.

The Indian carrier missed an interest and principal repayment at the end of last year, giving it about 90 days to clear the dues and avoid becoming a non-performing asset. **Credit assessor ICRA Ltd cut its rating on Jet Airways' loans and bonds to D, a score that signifies that borrowers are in default or are expected to be soon.**

Jet Airways is the latest Indian airline in trouble. Kingfisher Airlines, founded by beer tycoon Vijay Mallya, ended operations in 2012 after failing to clear its dues to banks, staff, lessors and airports. SpiceJet Ltd almost collapsed two years later before its founders returned to gain control and revive the company.

On Thursday, Jet Airways shares fell 0.72%, or ₹1.75, to ₹242.20 apiece on the BSE while the benchmark Sensex lost 0.29%, or 106.41 points, to end the day at 36,106.50.

Mint 10/01/2018

Mumbai: Celebi Aviation Holding India, the local arm of the Turkish ground handling services company, hopes to bag ground handling contracts at many of the airports that are being privatized.

“We have bid for quite a few of them. Results should be out soon,” Celebi Aviation Holding India’s chief executive officer Murali Ramachandran said in an interview.

Six airports—Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru—that are currently run by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) are up for biddings. The last date for submission of bids is 14 February and contracts will be issued on 28 February.

Mint reported on 8 January that international airport operators, including those of Zurich and Singapore’s Changi airport, are evaluating India’s privatization plans for these six airports. Celebi already provides ground handling services at three major Indian airports— Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru—and also operates in smaller cities like Cochin, Ahmedabad and Kannur.

Celebi recently won the ground handling licence for Hyderabad’s Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) for a period of 10 years after an international bidding process. The company, which hopes to start its Hyderabad operations by March-end, will make an investment of about \$5 million, primarily in ground handling infrastructure needed to operate in airports, and in building workshops and other facilities.

Celebi had last year showed an interest in acquiring Air India’s ground handling unit, Air India Air Transport Services Ltd (AIATSL), when the government was considering divesting the national carrier. However, the government refused to sell subsidiaries of the national carrier separately.

“AIATSL is a big opportunity for us. But, we don’t know when the government will actually divest it,” Ramachandran said. “Now, they (government) are looking at separately hiving off the subsidiaries and selling them,” he said, adding, “We haven’t been involved in the official process yet since it hasn’t officially begun. But, we are eagerly waiting to hear from the government.”

At present, AIATSL is the largest ground handling service provider at airports across the country.

Other prominent players include Air India SATS Airport Services Pvt. Ltd, Bird Group and Celebi Aviation Holding India.

Mint 10/01/2019

Bengaluru: Bengaluru’s international airport is expecting passenger traffic to surge nearly 70% in an expansion over the next two years as multinational companies pour money into the city known as the Silicon Valley of India.

Airport authorities laid out plans on Thursday for a nearly \$2 billion investment that will add a new terminal and a second runway, boosting the airport’s capacity to 45 million passengers per year.

The population of south India’s biggest city has more than doubled since the turn of the century as banks, IT consultancies and startups set up bases, concreting over a city of trees, bungalows and lakes once favoured by the country’s retirees.

The Kempegowda International Airport, already the third busiest in India with 27 million passengers in 2017-18, is expecting traffic to triple in the next 10 years, said Hari Marar, the chief executive officer of the airport.

“We will be as big as Heathrow is today,” Marar told a news conference on the expansion.

London’s Heathrow Airport had about 78 million passengers walk through its terminals in 2017.

Along with a new terminal, Bangalore International Airport Ltd is also nearing completion of a second runway, capable of handling Airbus’s A380s and operating in near zero visibility.

India’s total passenger traffic rose about 16.5 % in 2017-2018 to nearly 309 million, according to the Airports Authority of India, making it one of the world’s fastest-growing aviation markets. Boeing Co expects the country to become the third-largest commercial aviation market by the early 2020s.

While demand for air travel has never been higher, domestic airlines are struggling to turn a profit in the face of intense competition and fluctuating oil prices.

The country's oldest private airline - Jet Airways - is cash strapped and is falling behind on debt repayment and wages owed to staff.

Other carriers IndiGo and SpiceJet also reported losses in their latest reported quarters.

To escape the tough domestic market, airlines are adding international routes in search of better returns. Marar, however, said Indian cities would find it difficult to become hubs for international air traffic in South Asia as Indian airlines do not operate through hubs as many global carriers do.

"India has missed out a huge opportunity to have Indian airports as hubs ... It is the biggest loss India has had from an aviation perspective," Marar said.

Mint 10/01/2018

NEW DELHI: Flyers can now bid for business class, while booking economy class, on Air India non-stop flights to the US, Australia and Europe. With this feature, the successful bidder will be able to land a business class seat for up to 75% less than the actual cost.

According to officials, an economy class flyer with Air India will be given the option to bid for business class while booking the flight. They said a higher bidding amount will translate to more chances of landing a business class seat.

A successful bid will lead to an upgrade to business class, and a new boarding pass will be issued at the boarding gate. The seat will be allotted after check-in and is subject to availability of seats in business class. However, the upgrade will not allow access to lounge. Baggage allowance will also be as per economy class specifications. Only the meal and the seat will be business class.

Flyers will be refunded the amount in case of an unsuccessful bid. The bid will be allowed at different levels, officials said.

BID AND UPGRADE

AI says the economy class fare + bid amount will up to **75%** less than the regular business class fare

How it works

- After paying for AI economy class ticket, you will be asked if you wish to bid for an upgrade to business
- Those opting for it will be given different amounts for placing bids
- Select a bid amount and pay
- Choosing a higher bid price will mean higher chances of an upgrade



For instance: India-US nonstop business class return ticket starts at ₹ 2.5 lakh while economy starts at about Rs 70,000. The bidding amount starts at about \$450 (per sector which is about ₹ 32,000 at current exchange rate)

➤ Bidding amount for one-way upgrade on Delhi-London at present is between ₹13,609

and ₹ 41,193. Business class return on this sector starts at about ₹ 2 lakh, while economy starts at about ₹ 55,000

➤ Delhi-Mumbai business return fares start at ₹ 25,000, while the economy fare can be ₹ 7-9,000. Bidding for business on this sector currently is in the range of ₹ 2,218 to ₹ 6,720

When will flyer know about upgrade | About an hour before boarding aircraft

What an upgraded flyer gets | Business class seat, gourmet meal, amenity kit



What an upgraded flyer does not get | Lounge access, business class check-in baggage weight allowance, priority check-in, security check and immigration

➤ If a passenger who bid and did not get upgrades, bid amount will be refunded in five days of flight departure

Source: AI

The India-US nonstop return ticket starts at Rs 2.5 lakh while economy starts at about Rs 70,000. “For US, the bidding amount starts at about \$450. If a passenger bids and gets the seat, then he would have paid just \$450 (about Rs 32,000 at current exchange rate) over and above the economy fare for one sector,” said a senior AI official.

Similarly, the bidding amount (payment over and above the economy fare already paid at time of booking) for one-way upgrade on Delhi-London at present is between Rs 13,609 and Rs 41,193. AI is the only Indian carrier with direct flights to the US and Australia.

The bidding will be for domestic sectors also. Delhi-Mumbai business return fares start at Rs 25,000, while the economy fare can be Rs 7-9,000. Bidding for business on this sector currently is in the range of Rs 2,218 to Rs 6,720, said the official.

AI chairman Pradeep Singh Kharola said: **“While our overall seat occupancy is about 80%, the business class occupancy is 50-60%. A business class seat going vacant once the gates are closed is revenue lost forever. So we thought of this bidding scheme to offer business class seats at a discount to economy passengers which is a win-win for both the airline and the flyer.”** AI offers 72,000 seats daily of which 4,500 are business class seats across its network.

“As of now we have started bidding for flights to US, Australia, Europe, Japan, Hong Kong and on domestic sector to flights between the six metros. We will expand the scheme that was started in last week of December,” Kharola said.

Given the fare difference, AI says it is getting good response to the new bid policy. “On Tuesday (Jan 8) we got 300 bids, of which over half were able to get business class upgrades. The day we hit 1,000 upgrades via bids a day, AI will generate Rs 1 crore extra,” Kharola said.

Since bidders will know if they have got a business seat at boarding gate, they will be beyond the point of availing the lounge facility and would have taken baggage as per economy allowance. So, AI will not need to spend on these two fronts on them.

The Economic Times of India 10/01/2019

India's cash-strapped Jet Airways proposed to creditors that it would catch up with debt payments in arrears by September and from April would meet debt payments as they come due, according to a document seen by Reuters.

Jet met with lenders, lessors and vendors in India on Tuesday to discuss its financial situation and a debt-repayment plan, two sources with direct knowledge of the matter told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Jet did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The airline has to make large debt repayments over the next few years, starting with about 17 billion rupees (\$242 million) by the end of March, ratings agency ICRA said in a note on Jan. 2.

The airline last week said it had defaulted on a debt payment to a consortium of Indian banks, led by State Bank of India, that had been due on Dec. 31, prompting ICRA to downgrade the carrier's credit ratings and sent its shares sharply lower.

The 25-year-old airline also owes money to pilots, lessors and vendors. Intense pricing competition, a weak rupee and rising fuel costs weighed on Indian airlines in 2018.

An installment of interest and principal on debt due on Dec. 31 was delayed "due to temporary cash flow mismatch", the company said last week, without disclosing the size of the missed payment.

In a presentation slide from the meeting with lenders on Tuesday seen by Reuters, Jet proposed a "resolution plan" that would involve making payments on loans originally due in December, January and February in several tranches between Mar. 31 and Sept. 30.

"The management is taking every effort to ensure that the arrears accumulated until now do not grow," the slide said. "Jet Airways shall be current on its payments for services beyond 01-Apr-2019."

Mint daily on Wednesday reported that the airline's lenders proposed a \$900 million resolution plan at the meeting on Tuesday.

The controlling shareholder and chairman of Jet Airways, Naresh Goyal, and major shareholder Etihad Airways are likely to jointly inject \$450 million the carrier, while Indian lenders will restructure another \$450 million of debt, Mint quoted sources as saying.

[The Economic Times of India 10/01/2019](#)

New Delhi: The government has decided to not open for now the financial bids submitted by Air Deccan and Air Odisha for eight routes currently being auctioned under the third phase of the UDAN scheme, a senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said on Tuesday.

Six networks that had been awarded to the two airlines in the first round of the auctions under the Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme have already been cancelled by the ministry due to "non-performance" or "poor performance". UDAN is a subsidised low fare initiative to connect small cities in the country and to help more people fly.

“We have decided that at present, we would not open the financial bids for Air Deccan and Air Odisha. We will go ahead as it is not a valid proposal. The final decision regarding this would be taken at the highest level only,” the official said.

“As they have come for bidding (for UDAN-3), if we have to eliminate them, we have to follow the due process,” he added.

“We have to open technical bids because without opening them, we would not know who the bidders are. When we opened the technical bids, we came to know that there are **five proposals from Air Odisha and three from GSEC Monarch and Deccan Aviation Private Limited**,” the official said.

GSEC Monarch and Deccan Aviation Private Limited jointly run the airline Air Deccan.

Under UDAN-I, there were five proposals from Air Odisha and four from Air Deccan. “Out of these nine proposals, we have cancelled six proposals (networks),” the official said. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told the Rajya Sabha on January 2 through a written reply that **six networks awarded to Air Deccan and Air Odisha in the first round of auctions under the UDAN scheme had been cancelled due to “non-performance” or “poor performance”**. The six networks consisted of 16 flights of Air Deccan and 40 flights of Air Odisha, and they were cancelled for “non-commencement of RCS flights” or “not maintaining 70 per cent RCS flight operation”, Sinha stated. The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS), named “UDAN”, on October 21, 2016 to facilitate and stimulate regional air connectivity by making it affordable.

Mint 09/01/2019

New Delhi: **Import of electronics and IT goods without registration with the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is prohibited**, the government said Wednesday.

Under the Electronics and IT Goods (Requirement of Compulsory Registration) order 2012, imports of these goods is allowed through the registration with the BIS or on specific exemption letter from the ministry of IT and electronics (MeitY).

Without the registration, it said, the imported goods would be re-exported by the importer.

“Import consignment without valid registration with BIS shall be re-exported by the importer failing with customs shall deform the goods and dispose them as scrap under intimation to ministry of IT and electronics,” the directorate general of foreign trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Under the order, **certain electronics and IT products like mobile phones, LED TV, LED lights etc are required to comply with BIS requirements for sale in the country. Companies are required to register these products with BIS for clearance.**

In a separate notification, the DGFT said import policy for aviation gasoline is ‘free’ subject to actual user condition.

Mint 09/01/2019

Mumbai: Local lenders to Jet Airways (India) Ltd, led by State Bank of India (SBI), on Tuesday proposed a \$900 million resolution plan, comprising fresh equity infusion and restructuring of \$450 million of its loans, two people directly aware of the development said. The Jet Airways’ turnaround plan, if approved by all stakeholders, will trigger a change in Jet Airways’ shareholding, with founder chairman Naresh Goyal’s stake falling below the current 51%.

The resolution plan was shared with Jet Airways’ lessors and vendors at a meeting chaired by SBI and attended by the airline’s senior management, including Goyal and a representative of Etihad Airways PJSC, which holds a 24% stake, the people cited above said on condition of anonymity.

“While the finer details are still being worked upon, the broader contours entail that Naresh Goyal and Etihad will together infuse \$450 million in the company, while the Indian lenders will restructure another \$450 million of the airline’s debt, which is up for maturity between now and March this year,” said one of the two people cited earlier.

“The final plan will be put in place by the end of January and the lenders are hopeful that the resolution plan will be in force by 31 March this year, which is well before the 180-day period under the Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI’s) 12 February circular,” said the first person cited earlier.

The 12 February RBI circular relates to how lenders need to deal with stressed assets. The circular said a resolution professional should be appointed within 180 days for defaulting accounts with aggregate exposure of ₹2,000 crore and above.

Jet Airways defaulted on its debt repayment on 1 January, following which ratings agency ICRA Ltd cut from C to D the long-term rating on loans and bonds issued by the airline, which has reported three consecutive quarterly losses of over ₹1,000 crore each since the quarter ended March 2018.

“The lenders have also assured Jet Airways’ vendors and lessors that their dues will be cleared in three tranches till April, by which time the lenders expect the payment cycle to become regular,” said the second person.

“As part of the restructuring, the lenders have also proposed a moratorium on repayments on loan facilities which are due till April,” the second person said.

Mint reported on 7 December that Etihad Airways has offered to guarantee loans worth \$150 million for Jet Airways to keep the airline operational.

According to estimates, Jet Airways needs close to \$500 million between now and April to meet repayment obligations and manage operating expenses.

“There is a possibility that Goyal may cede operational control to Etihad, which can increase its stake to 49% under the current regulation,” said the first person cited earlier. Requests for comments sent to Jet Airways and SBI remained unanswered until publishing of this story.

An Etihad Airways spokesperson said the airline “does not comment on rumour or speculation”.

Jet Airways, which has been facing financial turbulence for a while, has been in talks with potential investors to raise fresh equity. **The various fundraising options it has explored include a stake sale in its loyalty programme, Jet Privilege Pvt. Ltd, and a stake sale in the airline to the Tata group. While the stake sale in the loyalty programme drew interest from several private equity funds, including TPG Capital and Blackstone Group, discussions with the Tata Group ended over Goyal’s future role at the airline.**

Mint 09/01/2019

NEW DELHI: The government is eyeing around USD 1 billion (about Rs 7,000 crore) from the sale of national carrier Air India in the next financial year, a government official said.

The government will initiate the process of strategic disinvestment of Air India in the **second half of 2019-20** and in between it would work towards selling some of its subsidiaries and monetise assets.

Air India has a debt burden of Rs 55,000 crore. In November last year, a ministerial panel headed by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had approved transferring Rs 29,000 crore debt to a special purpose vehicle (SPV)- Air India Asset Holding Company.

"We are eyeing USD 1 billion from the sale of Air India," the official told PTI.

After a botched attempt to sell Air India in May last year, the Jaitley-led panel in June decided to scrap the stake sale plan for the time being. It was decided to infuse more funds into the carrier and

cut down debt by raising resources by selling land assets and other subsidiaries.

The government had initially planned to offload 76 per cent equity share capital of the national carrier as well as transfer the management control to private players. The buyer was required to take over Rs 24,000 crore debt of the carrier along with over Rs 8,000 crore of liabilities.

However, the stake sale failed to attract any bidders when the bidding process completed on May 31.

In August 2018, the government had received Parliament nod for Rs 980 crore equity infusion in Air India under a "turn around plan". Earlier this month, Parliament approved a further Rs 2,345 crore equity infusion into the airline.

The ministerial panel has already cleared strategic sale of Air India's ground handling subsidiary, Air India Air Transport Services. Plans are afoot for selling another subsidiary, Air India Engineering Services.

The proceeds from sale of subsidiaries and land and building assets would go to the SPV and will be utilised towards lowering the debt burden of the airline.

The national carrier had in September last year invited bids to sell its properties located across India.

The airline had put up for sale 28 flats in Mumbai, seven flats in Ahmedabad, and two flats and an office space in Pune, besides several other properties across the country.

On December 27, the civil aviation ministry told the Lok Sabha that the government has prepared a revival plan for Air India.

A comprehensive financial package, including transfer of non-core debt and assets to a SPV, implementation of robust organisational and governance reforms by the board and differentiated business strategies for each of the core businesses of Air India, are part of the plan.

The Economic times of India 09/01/2019

Mumbai: International airport operators, including those of Zurich and Singapore's Changi airports, are evaluating India's privatisation plans for six airports, according to two people close to the development.

Other overseas entities that have shown interest include **German airport operator AviAlliance, US financial investor Global Infrastructure Partners (GIP) and Sydney-based investment manager AMP Capital**, the people said, requesting anonymity. Among Indian companies, **Anil Ambani's Reliance Infrastructure, the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund and Adani group, besides Indian airport operators GVK and GMR**, are likely to participate in the bidding, said one of the two people cited above.

Six airports—Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru—that are currently run by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) are up for bidding. The last date for submission of bids is 14 February and the letter of award will be issued on 28 February.

Redevelopment of these airports may attract investments worth \$1.4 billion, according to Jagannarayan Padmanabhan, director and practice leader, transport and logistics, Crisil Infrastructure Advisory.

“Based on interactions that we have had with interested parties, each of the six airports roughly needs private investment of \$200 million,” Padmanabhan said. “Individual airports will have lower or higher investment requirements, but I believe it will be in the range of \$1.2-1.4 billion that will come into the airport sector.”

A spokesperson for Flughafen Zurich AG, the operator of Zurich airport, said the company was considering a bid, but did not specify for which airports. Changi Airports International said that it “continuously evaluates opportunities in airport projects” where it could add value and where there was a strong fit with its global strategy.

Spokespersons for GIP, AMP Capital, and AviAlliance declined to comment.

“GVK would be interested in participating in these bids as we firmly believe in the long-term growth of the Indian aviation sector. However, we would not be able to comment on the bid terms as we are still evaluating them,” said a spokesperson for GVK. A RInfra spokesperson said the company was evaluating the opportunity, while a spokesperson for Adani Group declined to comment. An email to GMR remained unanswered at the time of publishing this story.

In November, the cabinet cleared the privatization of these six airports under the public-private partnership (PPP) model. At present, five airports, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Kochi, operate under the PPP model, which not only “helped create world-class airports, but also helped AAI in enhancing its revenues and focusing on developing airports and air navigation infrastructure in the rest of the country,” the government said.

In a departure from the framework used in the first round of airport privatisation undertaken more than a decade ago, AAI is offering a concession period of 50 years to the winning bidder, instead of 30 years. The concessionaire shall broadly be responsible for operations and management of existing airport assets as well as for designing, engineering, financing, construction and development of the additional air-side, terminal, city-side and land-side infrastructure for the airport. The winning bid will be decided on the basis of the highest monthly per-passenger fee to AAI, again a departure from the much-contested revenue-sharing model that AAI adopted in the existing privatized airports.

“India’s experience so far with airport privatization has been mostly positive,” Padmanabhan said. “Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad have been decent money spinners for their private sector owners. Even the six that are now up for privatization are all profitable and have been giving more than 10% compound annual growth rate over the last 4-5 years. Besides this, Jaipur and Ahmedabad are in crying need for capacity augmentation,” he said.

Analysts concur that the success of the airport privatization plan will depend on how much freedom operators get in managing airports, something that has often been a bone of contention. “Private players are bound to seek more clarity on whether the government will make land available for expansion, the exit process and how favourable it is to them, ease of operations and the freedom that private party is given in operations and the fitness and transparency of data on current health of the airports that is given to them,” said a senior infrastructure adviser, requesting anonymity.

India has the fastest growing aviation market in the world, despite some airlines faring poorly financially, according to the International Air Transport Association.

“Given the rapid airline passenger growth in India, capacity is being breached in multiple airports. So there is a definite business case for multiple airport developers and investors to take a positive view on the privatization proposal,” Padmanabhan said.

Mint 08/01/2019

New Delhi: India’s civil aviation watchdog will issue an advanced safety management protocol in one week for airlines operating Airbus A320neo aircraft fitted with the troubled Pratt & Whitney engines, the civil aviation secretary R.N. Choubey told Reuters on Tuesday.

Low-cost airlines IndiGo, owned by InterGlobe Aviation, and GoAir operate these aircraft in India.

Ministry officials and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation met with executives from IndiGo, GoAir, aircraft maker Airbus and engine maker Pratt & Whitney to discuss the ongoing issues with the engines that have led to several planes being grounded in recent months.

Authorities have identified five issues broadly with engines out of which Pratt & Whitney has taken corrective action on four of them, R.N. Choubey said, adding Pratt is working on resolving the fifth issue related to the gear box.

Measures such as grounding of existing planes and halting the induction of new A320neo aircraft are not needed as of now, Choubey added.

Mint 08/01/2019

New Delhi: **The financial headwinds in the airline industry have caused turbulence in the Centre's flagship regional connectivity scheme UDAN, in which the third version of the bidding saw interest for only one network with zero viability gap funding (VGF) sought from the government.** Compared to this, in UDAN 2.0, there were bids for 48 routes, from India's two largest budget carriers IndiGo and SpiceJet, with nil funding sought to operate on the routes. This, a senior civil aviation ministry official pointed out, indicated a slack in competitiveness from the airlines for whom cash flow has become a concern.

Notably, while there were 111 bids from 15 airlines for the third version of UDAN, there were 107 unique bids, indicating lack of competition on most routes.

"Airlines are not doing very well and there is a lot of turbulence in the industry. The airlines only want to take up comfortable routes now, don't want to venture into various other routes and don't want to bid zero (VGF). Earlier, the feeling was very buoyant and we saw competition among major players including IndiGo and SpiceJet who bid with zero VGF because they thought that they will manage with only exclusivity and some tax concessions. Now, cash flow has become very important (for airlines). Everyone is saying that if cash flow is not available from (a particular flight), it is not viable," the official said.

08/01/19 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express

The turbulent time at Jet Airways is now beginning to show in its passenger numbers. The Naresh Goyal-led airline flew 14.7 lakh passengers in November 2018, down by about 1.5 lakh passengers from January.

In January 2018, the airline had flown 16.2 lakh passengers, show statistics from the DGCA.

The trying times have, in fact, pegged back Jet Airways by a year. It had ended 2017 flying about 16.1 lakh passengers in December that year. That was 1.4 lakh more passengers than its January 2017 level.

The airline's troubles had begun from the fourth quarter of FY2018. It had reported a massive net loss of Rs 1,045 crore pushing annual numbers for the financial year in the red. It ended FY2018 with an annual loss of Rs 634 crore, as against a profit of Rs 1,442 crore, a year earlier.

The airline's troubles had begun from the fourth quarter of FY2018. It had reported a massive net loss of Rs 1,045 crore pushing annual numbers for the financial year in the red. It ended FY2018 with an annual loss of Rs 634 crore, as against a profit of Rs 1,442 crore, a year earlier.

Since that fourth quarter, the airline has reported two more consecutive quarters of net loss. In the

quarter ended September 2018, Jet Airways suffered a loss of Rs 1,297 crore, despite an increase in its revenues.

Not just Jet Airways, peers including IndiGo and SpiceJet have also suffered from adverse conditions. Intense competition and increase in supply kept fares low, and high costs, mainly due to an increasing crude, which eventually corrected by the end of 2018, have been the biggest worrying factors.

But the impact has been most on Jet Airways, which unlike the other two, is a full-fledged carrier and has higher costs.

Jet Airways defaulted on its debt repayments in December 2018 and has delayed salary payments to its pilots. Even as its lenders now put pressure on the company to improve liquidity position, Goyal is looking for fresh investments.

08/01/19 Prince Mathews Thomas/Moneycontrol.com

After more than one-and-a-half years of plying on domestic routes, the low-cost, regional connectivity scheme, or UDAN, is set to go international from March this year. Low-cost carrier **SpiceJet** has bagged two overseas routes from Guwahati under the International Air Connectivity Scheme (ICAS-UDAN), a civil aviation ministry official told FE.

The carrier emerged as the lowest bidder for the **Guwahati-Bangkok and Guwahati-Dhaka** routes out of six destinations on offer.

The licences to operate these sectors are likely to be awarded after the civil aviation ministry receives funds from the Assam government for viability gap funding.

“The Assam government has given its consent (for the operator) but we are waiting for funds from the state. As soon as we have it, operations permit will be awarded. **The international operations could start from March,**” an aviation ministry official said.

Other routes such as Guwahati-Kathmandu, Guwahati-Kuala Lumpur, Guwahati-Yangon and Guwahati-Singapore did not receive bids from the airlines.

Under the International Air Connectivity Scheme (ICAS-Udan), the Assam government offered a per seat subsidy of Rs 2,370 to Dhaka and Rs 4,400 to Bangkok to promote tourism and investment from Asean nations to Northeastern states.

Meanwhile, the government is likely to announce the successful bidders for the third round of UDAN for domestic routes next week. Around 86 proposals by 15 airlines, including IndiGo, SpiceJet, Jet Airways and Alliance Air are under consideration. These include tier II and III cities, tourist and seaplane destinations. New players such as Andaman Airways could be among the UDAN licence

winners.

08/01/19 Arun Nayal/Financial Express

Mumbai: Domestic and foreign lenders of Jet Airways (India) Ltd have asked the company to explain its liquidity situation, just a few days after the airline defaulted on a scheduled loan repayment. The lenders will now meet the airline executives, along with various vendors, and help Jet Airways renegotiate contracts and revive its poor cash flow position in the coming days, according to two people with the knowledge of the discussions.

A consortium of the airline's domestic lenders, led by State Bank of India (SBI), and vendors, including lessors, and those providing engineering, spare parts, credit card and airport services, will meet officials of the beleaguered-airline on 8 January, said a senior banker with knowledge of the matter.

Jet's foreign lenders are expected to meet its executives next week, said a second person with knowledge of the matter.

The airline faces the daunting task of turning around its loss-making operations and raising money from the market to fund its operations and service debt.

The airline had in September informed its overseas lenders that it will raise about ₹3,500 crore over six months through a stake sale in its loyalty programme—Jet Privilege Pvt. Ltd—and infuse fresh funds into the company. The airline had also told lenders it will shave off costs by as much as ₹2,000 crore over two years, after it missed several loan covenants that the airline had earlier agreed to. However, Jet Airways is yet to find fresh funds or monetize its stake in its loyalty programme. The airline's cost cutting measures may also take a few more quarters to show significant results.

Covenants are conditions put in place by lenders to protect themselves from defaults by borrowers. Lenders may recall a loan, seize assets or slap penalties in case the borrower violates a loan covenant.

"Lenders want to ensure that the outstanding dues of lessors and vendors are sorted out to avoid any cancellation of lease contracts," said the senior banker mentioned above, who did not want to be named.

“Jet Airway’s lenders, along with SBI Caps, are working on a restructuring package that includes conversion of debt into equity, additional loan facility, and equity infusion by promoters,” the banker said.

To this effect, SBI, Jet Airway’s largest lender, appointed EY to conduct a forensic audit into Jet Airways books, from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2018. The process is underway.

The audit carried out by EY could also determine if the SBI-led consortium of banks will make further funds available to Jet Airways, which has the guarantee of its partner Etihad Airways to raise up to \$150 million.

Any further restructuring steps taken by bankers may be conditioned to the promoter diluting his stake, said an analyst tracking the sector for a foreign brokerage.

Bankers also have the option to convert Jet Airways’ debt into equity, or take the airline to the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) if its current promoters don’t resolve the situation at hand quickly.

The lenders, led by SBI, could also ask Jet Airway’s vendors to give the airline some concessions or allow the airline defer certain payments, to help it turn its operations around on the back of lower oil prices, the analyst said.

“Considering that Jet Airway’s liabilities are more than its assets, bankers may have to take a huge haircut if they approach NCLT for the airline’s liquidation,” said the analyst who didn’t want to be named.

“The bankers could rather recapitalize the airline by converting debt into equity and consider turning around the airline on back of low oil prices,” the analyst said.

A Jet spokesperson said: “We remain optimistic about outcomes with regard to discussions with lenders. The talks are progressing well and we hope to reach a positive resolution at the earliest.”

Jet Airways has been struggling with cash flows for the past six months because of rising fuel costs. It has defaulted on payments to a consortium of lenders led by SBI, the airline informed the stock exchange last week.

This was the first time Jet Airways has defaulted on debt repayment. The airline, which has reported three consecutive quarterly losses of more than ₹1,000 crore each, has about ₹8,052 crore of debt as on 30 September. Rating agency Icra Ltd cut the long-term rating on loans and bonds issued by Jet Airways from C to D, after the default announcement.

Mint had on 3 January reported that **the promoters of cash-strapped Jet Airways may have to give up management control if they want to raise capital**. The airline had to delay salaries and payments of a section of its staff and vendors to service its debt on time, the report said. However, with the cash situation deteriorating, the airline didn't have an option but to default.

On Monday, Jet Airways shares rose 0.45% to ₹246.25 apiece on the BSE while the benchmark Sensex gained 0.43% to end the day at 35,850.16 points

Mint 08/01/2019

New Delhi: **With the Centre finalising bids for the Guwahati-Dhaka and Guwahati-Bangkok routes, the Assam's largest city is likely to be the first to be connected internationally under the UDAN scheme**, a senior official said Monday.

"We got the bids for two airports: Bangkok and Dhaka. For the remaining four, we got invalid bids. There was competition for these two cities. There were more than one bid. We have finalised the bid for Bangkok as well as Dhaka. The file is already with the (aviation) minister, the day minister signs it, we will announce it," said the official of the ministry of civil aviation.

Under the UDAN scheme for affordable international connectivity, Assam government is likely to provide a subsidy of Rs2,370 and Rs4,400 for a certain number of seats on the flights operating on the Guwahati-Dhaka and Guwahati-Bangkok routes, respectively.

"For the last one year they (Assam) have been pursuing the ministry and they have committed the funds. They are keen that whatever money is there should be used to bid for six destinations. We got the bids for two airports: Bangkok and Dhaka. For the remaining four, we got invalid bids," said the official.

Assam had proposed subsidised international connectivity under UDAN scheme from Guwahati to six destinations —Singapore, Dhaka in Bangladesh, Yangon in Myanmar, Kathmandu in Nepal, Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia and Bangkok in Thailand.

Under international version of the UDAN scheme, the subsidy will come from the states and not the central government. Moreover, in contrast to the domestic UDAN scheme, no airline company will be given any exclusivity over any route under international UDAN scheme.

On October 14 last year, the central government invited proposals from interested air operators for the international version of its 'UDAN' (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) scheme as it seeks to enhance air connectivity from India to select overseas destinations.

The government, in an effort to make flying affordable for masses, had in October 2016 announced the domestic UDAN scheme with airfares capped at Rs 2,500 for one-hour journey through subsidised ticket rates and to provide air connectivity to smaller towns.

Five airlines were mandated to fly on 128 regional routes in the first phase of the bidding in March 2017, and 15 airlines on 325 regional routes, including those having chopper operations, in the second phase in January last year.

Wire 08/01/2019

New Delhi: **The central government has received bids for 111 routes from 15 airlines under the third round of auction for the UDAN scheme**, a senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said Monday. **The Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme is a subsidised low fare initiative to connect small cities and to help more people fly.**

“There were 15 airlines that have bid total 111 initial proposals, which were then placed in the counter bidding. **Among these 15 airlines, six airlines participated in counter bidding and these six airlines put in a total of 17 counter proposals,**” the MOCA official said.

SpiceJet and IndiGo has bid for 37 routes and 20 routes in the third round of auctions. Ghodawat Enterprises Private Limited has bid for total 15 routes in this round. The Centre did not include chopper routes under the third round of auctions as there have already been “so many pending routes under UDAN-2 that have not been initiated through helicopters”, the official said. Under the second phase of the UDAN scheme, the government last year had auctioned various routes in the Northeast and hilly districts as chopper routes. “There are 31 heliports and these heliports are not ready yet. There was no licensing of heliport earlier...It used to be just helipad. These helipads are not permitted for scheduled or commuter operations,” the official explained. “Helicopter operation in a scheduled environment requires a high-level of safety and security. So, nobody wants to take any risk now. So that is why it is taking time because all these heliports are either owned by state governments or defense department,” the official said. The government, in its bid to make flying more affordable for the masses, had in **2016 announced the UDAN scheme wherein the fares were capped at ₹2,500 for a one-hour journey for connecting smaller towns.**

Following this, five airlines got the licence to operate on 128 routes in the first round of auctions in March 2017, and 15 airlines on 325 routes, including those having chopper operations, in the second round in January this year.

Mint 07/01/2018

Mumbai: **Domestic carriers inducted, for the first time, over 100 planes in 2018 with budget carrier IndiGo accounting for nearly half of them,** according to industry figures.

The **nine major Indian carriers together took deliveries of over 120 planes comprising both twin and single aisle as well as regional jets in the just-concluded year as against 88 planes inducted in 2017.**

Significantly, domestic passenger traffic has been growing at about 20 per cent for more than four years now and capacity addition along with other factors has played a key role in this robust growth.

Majority of the planes inducted by the carriers last year, according to available figures, were Airbus **A320 neos**, with four carriers - **IndiGo, GoAir, Air India and Vistara - taking deliveries of more than 60 of these planes besides other types of aircraft.**

At present, these carriers together have over **660 planes**. Budget carrier IndiGo has 206 planes including A320 neos, while both Air India and Jet Airways have 125 and 124 aircraft, respectively, in their fleets. IndiGo inducted a total of 55 aircraft, including its first long-range A321 neo; Air India and its subsidiaries took deliveries of 18 planes followed by GoAir 16 and SpiceJet 14 in 2018.

While IndiGo and GoAir A320 neos are powered by Pratt & Whitney engines, Air India and Vistara have CFM engines in their A320 neo planes.

Five carriers combined - IndiGo, Jet Airways, SpiceJet, GoAir, Vistara -- have placed orders for around 1,115 planes with global aircraft makers since 2011.

“With a total of 1,055 aircraft on order, as many as 100 planes consisting of wide-body, narrow-body and regional ones are to be delivered to Indian carriers each year for the next five years,” Sydney-based aviation think-tank Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) had forecast in 2017.

However, its forecast had not included the Vistara order of 60 planes in July last year.

Mint 06/01/2019

New Delhi: **Air India’s Bangkok-Delhi flight of Saturday night with about 150 people on board had to make an emergency landing in Kolkata reportedly due to fuel leakage from right wing.** The flight, AI 335 operated on an Airbus A320 (VT-EXV), landed safely in Kolkata at 10.30 pm Saturday. The aircraft is learnt to have stopped on the taxiway and then was taxied to the terminal.

06/01/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

After Airbus 320 (neos), new Boeing 737 MAXs operated by Indian carriers are also reporting problems.

Passengers had a nervous moment on Sunday, when a SpiceJet Boeing 737 Max flying from Hong

Kong to Delhi suffered one engine shut down.

One engine shutdown over Patna airspace, when fuel flow to one engine got stopped and leading to its shut down.

Since twin-engine aircraft can land safely on one engine, the B737 Max did so at the nearest airport that was Varanasi.

SpiceJet is learnt to have sent another aircraft to Varanasi with man and material to fly back passengers to Delhi. And leave the required repair material with technicians at Varanasi to inspect the engine.

05/01/18 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Following a sharp rise in snags on Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines powering the Airbus A320 Neo, the government has finally decided to review this safety concern next week.

Aviation secretary R N Choubey told TOI the “(aviation) ministry has taken serious note and we will review it on Tuesday.” This decision came after yet **another serious incident** involving the perennially snag-prone PW engines of Airbus A320 Neo. An IndiGo A320 new engine option (Neo) operating from Chennai to Kolkata Thursday (January 3) experienced trouble in one of the engines. According to sources, one of the **two PW engines of the Neo (VT-ITR) emitted a bang sound followed by sparks, smoke and vibration in the engine**. Since twin-engine aircraft can land on one engine, this flight with 136 passengers on board, also did so safely by returning to Chennai.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB) **has sent a team to Chennai to examine the engine to do a preliminary analysis**. PW comments were sought on the latest snag and awaited till the time of filing this report.

An IndiGo spokesperson said the flight “6E 923 (Neo) operating Chennai-Kolkata route on January 3, 2019, returned to Chennai after take off due to a technical caution noted by the crew. The crew followed the normal operating procedures and asked for a priority landing. There was no engine shutdown and no emergency landing was declared.”

05/01/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Passengers of an IndiGo Chennai-Kolkata flight were in for a massive scare when the plane they were travelling in stalled mid-air. As per details available with Times Now, Flight 6E 923 (Neo) operating on Chennai-Kolkata route on January 3 witnessed a loud bang and passengers noted sparks and smoke coming out of the engine.

All this happened shortly after the flight took-off from the Chennai airport. The pilots turned back the flight to Chennai amid heavy vibration of engines, it has been reported.

While IndiGo’s Airbus A320 Neo aircraft have been witnessing problems and causing scares, the January 3 incident is being seen as the most serious case so far. The aircraft witnessed all the

problems, which Neo planes have been encountering in recent times, in a single flight - smoke, heavy vibration, loud bang and stalling of engine.

It was also the third case since December 10 of smoke coming out of the Neo aircraft operated by IndiGo. The said aircraft has now been grounded in Chennai. It has been reported that the engine blades of the plane were completely burned in the incident and will have to be replaced.

The airline, however, denied that the flight witnessed stalling of the engine and had to make an emergency landing.

05/01/19 TimesNowNews.com

The government will meet various stakeholders and review the repeated problems with Pratt & Whitney's engines equipped on Airbus A320neo aircraft on Tuesday, a senior government official told The Indian Express. The development comes after an IndiGo flight on Thursday from Chennai to Kolkata had to return mid-air after an engine glitch that was followed by "loud bang and sparks" from the power plant and smoke leading to heavy vibrations of the engine, according to sources.

This was the third incident in the last one month involving an IndiGo flight where smoke was observed during a flight. **On December 10, an IndiGo aircraft made emergency landing in Kolkata after its cabin was filled with smoke. After this, on December 23, an Airbus A320neo aircraft operated by IndiGo to Kolkata from Port Blair reportedly suffered mid-air engine failure.**

In a statement on Saturday, the low-cost carrier said: "An IndiGo flight 6E923 (Neo) operating Chennai-Kolkata route on January 3, 2018 returned to Chennai after take off due to a technical caution noted by the crew. The crew followed the normal operating procedures and asked for a priority landing. There was no engine shutdown and no emergency landing was declared as per the report." The concerns around Pratt & Whitney's geared turbofan engines have remained for more than a year with a different set of problems having arisen lately.

According to a government official, post the Tuesday meeting, the aviation ministry and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) are expected to take action on account of the rising incidents and snags on engines used by India's largest airline. Apart from IndiGo, budget carrier GoAir also uses the P&W engines to power their A320neo aircraft.

05/01/19 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express

New Delhi: India's aviation sector is fast moving forward in the world. It is said in a statement that **in the next 20 years India will need about 1600 more aircraft.** The Indian government's initiative UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik) scheme is to provide further momentum to the aviation sector. Under the scheme, the government has tried to make an ordinary person fly in the country as well.

According to estimates, the vast aviation market side is stepping into **the Indian aviation sector will need to buy planes of 224 billion dollars over the next 20 years.**

The scope of the Indian aviation sector will also increase in the area of care. **The maintenance and repair of aircraft (MRO) business will now increase from \$ 0.7 billion to \$ 1.5 billion in the year 2020.** In the coming years, there will be a lot of opportunities in the field of aviation. The most important part of aircraft maintenance and repair area is engine maintenance. This includes line maintenance, component maintenance, airframe heavy maintenance, and modification. **At the moment is with the help of more than 40 MRO services provider in the world because of the weak infrastructure of MRO in India.**

The number of domestic air travelers in India has been steadily increasing in the last few years. It is believed that the number of 14.5 million passengers in Air Traffic in 2011 will increase to 35 million in 2020. Domestic air traffic has seen doubledigit increase since 2014. Since then, the average growth

rate has been recorded at 17 percent. **In the next few years, the number of flights is likely to double in comparison to the present.** Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu has said that we are continuously working to increase the capacity of the aviation sector.

05/01/19 Urban Transport News

New Delhi: **With the Air Quality Index in New Delhi reaching dangerous levels, fog in the capital city only added to the problems this morning.** PM 2.5 readings reached a risky 544 in Anand Vihar area. Fog in the city worsened and visibility was very low, making it extremely difficult for vehicles to manoeuvre on roads.

At least four domestic flights are scheduled to be delayed between 6:00 am and 12:00 pm.

Flight SG 8194 (SpiceJet) from Ahmedabad is scheduled to be delayed by 44 minutes while flight 6E 2132 (IndiGo) from Bengaluru will be delayed by 55 minutes. Flight 6E 5013 (IndiGo) from Indore to Delhi will be delayed by 55 minutes while flight SG 2196 (SpiceJet) from Varanasi will be delayed by 50 minutes.

05/01/19 India Today

Mangaluru: **A general physician from the coast saved the life of a 55-year-old woman who suffered a heart attack mid-air on a Jeddah-Mumbai flight. Dr AK Kasim not only resuscitated the passenger, he made sure the flight didn't have to return to Jeddah.**

Kasim, from Uppala in Kasaragod, heads the health insurance department of Asian Polyclinic in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. He was flying back home for a holiday. He booked a Jet Airways flight from Jeddah to Mumbai a few days ago. The flight took off from Jeddah around 1am and soon after, the passengers fell asleep. A few hours later, the shrieks of a woman woke them up. A 55-year-old female passenger seemed to be having a heart attack.

The flight attendants immediately made an announcement asking if there were doctors on board. Kasim swung into action and offered to treat the woman after showing his identity card. The crew made all arrangements: the woman was made to lie on the aisle and a first-aid kit was brought.

05/01/19 Times of India

The government on Friday decided to form an inter-ministerial panel to roll out in-flight and maritime mobile services within three months, an official source said.

The inter-ministerial group will meet every 15 days to sort out issues and expedite the process of approvals till the rollout of in-flight and maritime connectivity (IFMC) services stabilises, the source told PTI.

"A meeting was held today with industry players -- **airlines, shipping companies, telecom operators and government departments. It has been decided to form an inter-ministerial group for a quick rollout of IFMC services. The group will meet every 15 days to sort out issues that arise till the implementation smoothens,**" the source said.

The government has notified rules for providing mobile phone services during air travel and ship voyage within Indian territory.

The meeting on IFMC services, chaired by Department of Telecom (DoT) Additional Secretary Anshu Prakash, lasted for about two hours.

It was attended by representatives from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Directorate General of Shipping, Department of Space as well as DoT.

Industry players like Air India, Vistara, Indigo, SpiceJet, Go Air, Jet Airways, AirAsia, BSNL, Reliance Jio,

Bharti Airtel, Hughes India, Tata Telenet, Inmarsat, Panasonic and Nokia also attended the meeting. "Based on the discussions, it was felt that the services will be rolled out within three months.

SpiceJet said that they have made arrangement for the service in 10 aircraft. DGCA said it will expeditiously approve modifications in aircraft," the source said.

05/01/19 PTI/Business Today

Pune: Over 100 passengers had to sit inside a Pune-Bengaluru Jet Airways flight for more than an hour on Friday morning due to a glitch in the rostering system, which failed to record the absence of a flight officer, who was on leave for health reasons.

The flight (9W773), which was scheduled to take off at 5.55am, finally departed around 7.30 am after a flight officer was brought in.

Virag Mantri, a Pune-based marketing executive who was on the flight, told TOI that the boarding started around 5.30am. "At 6am, the pilot made an announcement that the flight would be delayed by around 30-35 minutes due to operational issues. Later, the pilot made another announcement that the flight would be delayed further but efforts were being made for its departure. Around 7.20am, the pilot announced that the first officer of the aircraft had fallen sick and, hence, a new crew would take over. The flight finally took off at 7.30am," Mantri said.

Another passenger said that if there was any issue, the authorities should have de-boarded the passengers. "It's frustrating to sit in the aircraft for so long. If there was a problem, passengers should have been de-boarded and taken to the terminal building," the passenger added.

Jet Airways said that the first pilot had not fallen sick but was on leave because of health reasons. **"A change in the cockpit crew had to be made due to a technical glitch in the rostering system. Jet Airways regrets the inconvenience caused to guests,"** an airline spokesperson told TOI.

05/01/19 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Thiruvananthapuram: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has posted C.V. Ravindran as the new director of the Thiruvananthapuram international airport.

Mr. Ravindran, now Joint General Manager, Electrical, Mangaluru airport, will take charge as the director of the city airport next week. He succeeds George G. Tharakan who was transferred to Kolkata three months ago.

Mr. Ravindran, who hails from Kannur, is assuming charge when the government is striving to participate in the bidding to select a private player for the management, maintenance, and development of the airport, following the Centre's decision to privatise it along with five other airports.

05/01/19 S Anil Radhakrishnan/The Hindu

All morning flights were cancelled at Srinagar airport due to poor visibility and snowfall during the night.

Officials of Airport Authority of India and airline executives said SpiceJet, Vistara, AirAsia, Air India, Jet Airways, GoAir and IndiGo cancelled all their morning flights due to presence of **snow on runway and poor visibility.**

05/01/19 Saqib Malik/Greater Kashmir

New Delhi: **Notwithstanding high fuel prices, financial headwinds for airlines and bizarre incidents in the last 12 months, Indian aviation sector witnessed the 51st straight month of double-digit air traffic growth indicating high demand potential in the Indian air travel market. This, coupled with infrastructure constraints at larger airports, could lead to a potential uptick in air fares on trunk routes in 2019, experts said.**

From an infrastructure perspective, while the larger airports remain constrained, the Centre's flagship regional connectivity scheme **UDAN** – or Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik – **has resulted in addition of airports in smaller towns and far-reaching areas such as Northeast India, Jammu & Kashmir, etc** taking the total airport count in the country beyond 100.

However, routes from these smaller airports have not contributed significantly to the passenger traffic growth. In the first nine months of 2018, a total of 6.25 lakh passengers were carried on UDAN routes, compared with 10.28 crore domestic passengers that India witnessed during the same period.

"It was a good start to the scheme and it definitely helped in improving infrastructure at many of our smaller cities by getting the airports in place. At the end of the day, these are smaller routes and they can't be a large part of the market in any case. These are things that will grow over a period of time from a passenger point of view in terms of impacting the overall market. Going ahead, hopefully we will see more flights on these routes which could have a positive impact on passenger traffic," Sharat Dhall, COO (B2C) at online ticketing aggregator Yatra.com told The Indian Express.

01/01/19 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express

New Delhi: **Jet fuel price on Tuesday was cut by a record 14.7% on the back of decline in international rates, making it cheaper than both petrol and diesel.**

The price of Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) — used to power airplanes — was slashed by Rs 9,990 per kilolitre, or 14.7%, to Rs 58,060.97 per kl, according to price notification issued by state-owned oil firms.

This is the second straight monthly reduction in rates and the biggest single cut ever. Prices were slashed by Rs 8,327.83 per kl, or 10.9%, on December 1.

The two consecutive price reduction has brought ATF rates to their lowest levels in a year and will provide much-needed relief to cash-strapped airlines.

Rates are now cheaper than both petrol and diesel in most parts of the country and it is less expensive than even non-PDS kerosene in cities like Mumbai.

A litre of petrol, used in motorcycles and cars, costs Rs 68.65 in Delhi as compared to Rs 58,060.97 per kl or Rs 58.06 per litre price for ATF. A litre of diesel, which is mostly used as fuel in trucks and buses, comes for Rs 62.66.

ATF costs just a shade higher than the price charged for kerosene sold through non-PDS (public distribution system) outlets in Delhi. Non-PDS in Delhi is priced at Rs 56.59 per litre.

ATF in Mumbai, home to one of the busiest airport in the country, costs Rs 58,017.33 per kl or Rs 58.01 per litre. A litre of petrol in the city costs Rs 74.30 and diesel is priced at Rs 65.56 per litre. It costs less than even non-PDS kerosene in the city which is sold at Rs 59.53 a litre.

01/01/19 PTI/Times of India

The government's plan to infuse fresh blood into Air India (AI) through a global search process boggles the mind. The national carrier is in deep distress not because any management—past and present—was or is incompetent, but because its hands are tied behind its back. The simple fact is the carrier's costs are bloated because of a large workforce, which has led to the debt piling up to

unsustainable levels. And, the interest payments on these borrowings of close to Rs 50,000 crore are weighing it down.

Unless the flab is shed, no CEO can turn it around. Currently, AI's staff costs are 30-35% more than those of its rivals and there is little chance of trimming the team; else, the government would have offered a VRS. Indeed, the information memorandum put out when the government sought to privatise the carrier said that 37.6% of the permanent staff of 11,000 plus would retire over the next five years. That would still leave close to 7,000 people on the rolls. Ahead of a general election, it is hard to see the government calling for a cut in the workforce. That is why it had sought Parliament's nod for a grant of Rs 2,345 crore and Rs 1,300 crore for Air India Asset Holding Company, the special purpose vehicle housing the airline's debt. The government has so far infused Rs 28,175 crore of taxpayer money since 2012—throwing good money after bad, some would argue. However, the airline remains in the red after all these years, having posted, between FY2013-FY2017, an average annual loss of Rs 5,400 crore. Indeed, despite all the financial support, the airline has failed to grow revenues meaningfully; the increase in revenues in 2017-18 was just 5.3% compared with Indigo's nearly 20%.

01/01/19 Financial Express

Rajkot: Year 2019 began on a positive note of people of Rajkot, who are set to get direct connectivity to the new under construction international airport at Hirasar near Chotila.

The Rajkot Urban Development Authority (RUDA) during its budget board meeting on Monday approved 18-km long Ring Road III from Gauridad to Kuvadva which will also connect Ring Road 1 and 2 and provide direct connectivity to people wanting to go to the new airport without entering the Rajkot city.

The Ring Road 3 is a part of Master Development Plan-2031 which was prepared in 2013 considering the future development of the city.

Kuvadva connects falls on the Ahmedabad-Rajkot national highway. The new ring road will connect the newer parts of the city directly to the under construction international airport at Hirasar. The proposed Ring Road 3 will meet existing Ring Road 2 at Ronki village.

RUDA chairman Banchha Nidhi Pani said, "From Ring Road 2 a new road will be constructed to connect Raiya smart city. The new ring road will link international airport to smart city."

In the next phase, the Ring Road 3 will connect Para Pipalia village on Jamnagar road where the Khandheri stadium is already located and where new Inland Container Depot (ICD) and AIIMS are also proposed.

After completion of this new ring road the vehicles coming from Junagadh and Somnath can directly reach Khandheri stadium and go towards Kuvadva road or Ahmedabad or the international airport in Hirasar.

The proposed road will also ease the traffic in the city specially on Kalavad road and 150-feet Ring Road.

RUDA chief executive officer P V Antani said, "This is part of 89km of four-phased Ring Road out of which first phase is Gauridad to Kuvadva, followed by second phase joining Jamnagar road to Kalavad Road, third phase connecting Kalavad Road to Gondal Road and fourth phase between Gondal Road and Ahmedabad Highway." The entire ring road will pass through 29 villages and process of land acquisition has already begun, Antani added.

01/01/19 Times of India

In a major development, Kurnool city in Andhra Pradesh entered the aviation map with the trial run of the Orvakal Greenfield airport being conducted successfully on Monday morning. As part of the trial run, an aircraft flew from Hyderabad and landed at the airport, carrying the state's Principal Secretary (Energy) Ajay Jain. The Andhra Pradesh Airports Development Corporation Ltd. (APADCL) was in charge of developing the airport.

According to media reports, **the airport is being developed over 1,000 acres with an initial investment of Rs 100 crore and is expected to be formally inaugurated by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on January 8. The airport will help many cities and towns in the state's Rayalaseema region get air connectivity.**

It was in February last year that the Andhra Pradesh government gave its nod to the Revenue Department to allocate roughly 639 acres of land across several villages in Kurnool, for building a greenfield airport at Orvakal. This came a few months after the Civil Aviation Ministry recommended an 'in principle' approval to three new greenfield projects in the state.

The Steering Committee on Greenfield Airports, headed by Civil Aviation Secretary RN Choubey, considered the proposals for four new airport projects in the state.

"The committee recommended 'in principle' approval to three projects in Andhra Pradesh viz., Bhogapuram, Dagadarthi (Nellore) and Orvakal (Kurnool). The committee also recommended for 'site clearance' to the project of Kothagudem in Telangana," the Ministry had said in a statement at the time.

"These clearances are expected to enhance the aviation infrastructure facilities in newly created states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana and will also boost the regional connectivity scheme announced recently by the Government of India," the statement had said.

01/01/19 News Minute

Tirupati: Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu will inaugurate the Orvakal greenfield airport in Kurnool district on January 8. A New Year gift to people in the district, this was one of the 50 low-cost airports proposed to come up in 2013 during the UPA II regime. The chief minister laid the foundation stone for the greenfield airport in 2017.

A small aircraft took off from Begumpet airport in Hyderabad and landed at Orvakal airport successfully during a trial run on Monday. The trial run was held as the works of the upcoming airport are nearing completion.

"The new airport is being developed at a time when several industries started coming up in Kurnool district in the last 4 years or so. So, the airport will boost the industrial and tourism sectors in the region. **We hope the domestic flight carriers will start operations by May 2019,**" he said.

01/01/19 Sandeep Raghavan/Times of India

Ahmedabad: Most part of New Year Eve was spent shuffling around at the Ahmedabad airport for some 79 passengers travelling to Jodhpur via SpiceJet flight SG-2976, as their flight got delayed and later cancelled. Passengers said that the flight was scheduled to take-off from the city airport at 10.40am however, there were a series of announcements of delay which pushed the flight's take-off time to around 3pm.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) confirmed that the flight took off from Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) Airport at 3.09 pm, only to return to the city airport within minutes.

Narrating the incident, Manish Mehta (name changed), a traveller, said, "The flight did not take off till 11am, by when we were informed that the flight would take-off by 1pm. By then we learnt that

the flight would take-off at 3pm. However, **immediately after take-off, the flight had to return to the city airport due to some technical snag."**

AAI officials confirmed that the aircraft had suffered a technical snag due to which it had to return immediately after take-off. "At time 3.15pm while at 15,000 ft above ground, the pilot informed Ahmedabad Air Traffic Control (ATC) that the aircraft had **pressurization failure**. In view of the safety of passengers and aircraft, ATC immediately facilitated priority landing of the aircraft. The flight landed at Ahmedabad at time 3.29pm safely," said a statement issued by AAI officials.

31/12/18 Niyati Parikh/Times of India

Mumbai: The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA) has asked the Airports Authority of India (AAI) to consider relocating the radar of Mumbai Airport for the International Financial Services Centre (IFSC). The new proposed height of IFSC (96 meters) may hinder the operations of the radar, hence the authority has asked AAI to carry out a study for shifting the radar. The plot where the IFSC will come up falls under the funnel zone of the airport.

"We have requested the AAI to appoint the ICAO (International Civil Aviation Organisation) to suggest ways to increase the height or relocate the radar. The radar, if relocated, can be equivalent to the height of IFSC. AAI has been asked to go into details and carry out a study on it and we have even offered to share the cost of the study," said R.A. Rajeev, Metropolitan Commissioner, MMRDA. The Asian Age tried contacting AAI, but the authority remained unavailable for comment.

The airport surveillance radar is a system used to detect and display presence and position of aircrafts in the terminal area. It acts as a main air traffic control system for the airspace around airports. "Earlier one radar was decommissioned, which resulted in an increase in height from 65 to 72 meters. But this won't be sufficient for us. They will have to conduct a further study for us. Relocation could also result in reducing height of certain buildings, that cannot be done," added Rajeev. Currently, the height restriction in BKC is 80 meters, increase in height will allow developers to consume entire Global Floor Space Index of 4 in the area.

01/01/19 Aishwarya Nair/Asian Age

Patna: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Shatrughan Sinha will no longer be treated as a VIP at the Patna airport, said a senior official.

Rajendra Singh Lahauriya, Director at Jay Prakash Narayan Airport, on December 31 said that Sinha, who was **earlier exempted from security checks and regular frisking**, will no longer hold the privilege.

The former Union Minister was earlier **allowed to bring his vehicle to the tarmac** and was also exempted from the security frisking.

"The facilities were extended to Sinha for a period which ended in June this year. No orders have been received for extending the same," informed Lahuriya.

01/01/19 ANI/India Today

Local fruits from various districts of Assam will find markets in Dubai and Hong-Kong with AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd (AAICLAS) on Monday started a **dedicated air freighter service** at Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi International airport at Borjhar here.

AAICLAS is a wholly owned subsidiary of Airports Authority of India (AAI) to handle air cargo and allied services.

A total of 2 tons of oranges through air cargo will be sent by SpiceJet's newly inducted Spicefresh

services, one ton each to the markets of Hong-Kong & Dubai. APEDA, the coordinating agency of Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry, is working with various stakeholders to bridge the gaps for exports and to link produce of North East to the international markets. The APEDA has persuaded with various airlines to charge competitive rates for exports from these regions.

Flagging off the Monday's event at LGBI Airport here, State Industry & Commerce minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said it was a dream come true for **farmers of Assam as their agriculture produces would find markets overseas**. He said farmers of the State are hard working and they could produce huge amount of quality agriculture produces to capture international markets.

01/01/19 Sentinel

Guwahati: Air cargo in northeast received a fillip with the launch of a dedicated air freight service started by SpiceFresh, a subsidiary of SpiceJet, at the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) airport here on Monday. On the occasion, two flights took off for Hong Kong and Dubai, with each carrying 1000kg of mandarin fruits for export.

Flagging off their journey, industries and commerce minister Chandra Mohan Patowary said he hoped that the mandarin fruits, which were produced in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh, will usher in a bright prospect for exporting agri-horti produces from Assam to the global market. "Assam as well as the other northeastern states are considered to be an organic hub. With a view to creating a sustainable market for these fruits, the state industries and commerce department has initiated efforts to provide logistical and infrastructural support for export of agri-horti produces of the state," said Patowary.

In its statement, SpiceJet said its flights will serve Hong Kong with 18 tonnes of freight between Guwahati and Kolkata daily, while both the Hong Kong and Dubai routes will be connected via the SpiceJet flights which operate on the airline's international network.

Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority, the coordinating agency of the Union ministry of commerce and industry, is working with various stakeholders to bridge the gaps for exports and to link produces of the northeast to the international market, an airport official said.

01/01/19 Times of India

The government raised a record Rs 77,417 crore from stake sale in public sector units in 2018, and the disinvestment programme is headed for another blockbuster year in 2019 with the planned privatisation of national carrier Air India.

The Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance, which in its previous stint privatised the most number of public sector undertakings ever, continues to shy away from the outright sale of bluechip state-run firms to the private sector in the present regime and is instead pursuing a new-found strategy of merging companies to meet its revenue targets.

While big-ticket disinvestments, including Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Ltd.'s acquisition of Hindustan Petroleum Company Ltd., Central Public Sector Enterprise Exchange Traded Fund, Bharat-22 ETF, and Coal India Ltd. stake sale, along with six initial public offerings brought Rs 77,417 crore to the government coffers last year, the year was marred by a botched attempt of the government to sell 74 percent stake in Air India.

The government has now firmed up a fresh plan for the sale of the airline. As part of the plan, it will sell subsidiaries, like Air India Air Transport Service Ltd., Air India Engineering Services Ltd., and land and building assets of Air India separately to help trim Rs 29,000 crore debt burden of the national carrier.

Alongside, the government will continue to infuse funds into the airline to keep it viable, and finally sell it after extensive deliberations with potential investors to ensure that the airline gets the best valuation.

The subsidiaries and assets alone are expected to fetch the government close to Rs 9,000 crore.

The first off the blocks in strategic sale plan for 2019 will be Pawan Hans where the government holds 51 percent, while oil major ONGC holds the remaining stake. The sale of helicopter service provider Pawan Hans is expected to be completed by March.

01/01/19 PTI/Bloomberg Quint

New Delhi: **In a major relief to India's struggling-to-survive airlines, the government has deferred its order that from January 1, 2019, all planes they import should be equipped to receive signals of the indigenous navigation system GAGAN. Now airlines will need to do so from June 30, 2020,** said a senior aviation official.

In another relief, oil companies are going to lower aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices by over 14% for January. "ATF prices are being lowered about 14.5% effective midnight today. Great respite for airline industry in India," AirAsia India COO Sanjay Kumar Tweeted on Monday.

The move to defer GAGAN-enabled planes will be especially beneficial to those operating small planes like trainer aircraft and small business jets as equipping them with GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) would have cost about \$3 lakh per plane, say sources. "Retrofitting a small old plane, like when importing one for pilot training here, to make it GAGAN-enabled would have cost more than the plane itself," said an industry source.

The national civil aviation policy mandated that all aircraft being registered in India from January 1, 2019 should be GAGAN enabled. This GPS-enabled navigation system was launched by Airports Authority of India (AAI) in July 2015. Accordingly, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) had earlier said, "aircraft being imported for registration on or after January 1, 2019 shall be suitably equipped with GAGAN equipment."

31/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Patna: **The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has shortlisted Synergy Company to design the model of proposed civil enclave at Bihta airbase. Commercial flight operations are slated to commence from there.**

Patna airport director Rajender Singh Lahauria said on Monday the company's representatives with AAI officials would visit Bihta on January 4 for the initial survey. The state government has already transferred 108 acre land to the AAI for Bihta civil enclave.

AAI has targeted to commence construction work soon after the foundation laying of the new Patna airport terminal building in 2019. Lahauria said the built-up area of the proposed terminal building at Bihta would be approximately 50,000sq metres. Over Rs350 crore is estimated to be spent on the project. "Once completed, the airport will have the capacity to handle 2.5 million passengers per annum," he said.

Lahauria also discussed the ongoing progress at the city airport. "In a recent meeting between Union minister of state for civil aviation Jayant Sinha and the AAI, we discussed how to decongest the existing terminal building at Patna airport. We also discussed about new terminal building and security upgrades," he told mediapersons.

The airport director said the number of passengers had increased five times at the city airport since 2012-13 and it was likely to cross 40 lakhs by March 2019.

01/01/19 Fayal Rumi/Times of India

A flight departing from the Midlands this morning was forced to make a U-turn and divert back to the UK.

The TUI flight departed Birmingham Airport at 9am for Dabolim Airport in Goa, India, but turned around high above the border of the Netherlands and Germany.

Returning to the UK, the Boeing 787 Dreamliner landed at London Gatwick Airport just before 11am. It landed immediately at the airport, with Flightradar 24's playback showing that it did not have to

hold before landing.

At this time, it is not clear why the flight was forced to divert.

The U-turn occurred around two hours into a flight which typically takes eight hours and 32 minutes. The aircraft was at around 39,000 feet high at the time that it altered its course over the North Rhine-Westphalia region of Germany.

31/12/18 Elis Sandford/CoventryLive

Eighty chartered (special) flights are expected to arrive at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International airport (SVPI) during the three-day Vibrant Gujarat Summit (VGS) that will begin here on January 18.

The airports authorities have received intimation of accommodating 80 charters which would fly VVIP's and other dignitaries for the summit.

Confirming the number of the flights, highly placed sources at the airport told DNA that the airport will try to accommodate as many as they can. "For the rest, we will seek help from nearby airports like Vadodara, Jaipur, Udaipur."

It is to be noted that SVPI airport, this month, had accommodated six chartered planes as Udaipur airport lacked space for nearly 200 charters that were flown for the pre-wedding celebrations of Isha Ambani and Anand Piramal wedding.

The city airport here has 33 parking stands and 19 more will be added in 2019.

"Of the 33 parking stands, 13 are reserved for scheduled flights and the rest for non-scheduled flights. It will be very difficult for the airport to accommodate so many aircraft," sources said.

"City airport has been observing restrictions on runway operations on Sundays, for maintenance purposes. Since the VGS is falling on the weekend, the same will be lifted and the runway would be made operational for smooth functioning," the source further added.

01/01/19 Tanushree Bhatia/DNA

Air services provider Swissport is further expanding its business in the Middle East with new contracts at Saudi airports.

A deal from the Dutch airline KLM will provide it with ground handling services in Dammam, while a deal from India's IndiGo will initially be handled at Jeddah, followed by Dammam and Riyadh. As of February 1 2019, Swissport said it will be providing the full range of ground services from passenger services to ramp operations to the Dutch airline KLM for its 10 weekly flights at King-Fahd airport in Dammam.

Swissport will serve KLM's Airbus A330 widebody aircraft during the stopovers of flights between the Dutch metropolis of Amsterdam and Muscat, the capital of Oman.

With KLM, the first major European carrier has opted for Swissport's Saudi affiliate, a statement said. As of March 15 2019, **Swissport will handle IndiGo's daily flights at Jeddah, followed by Dammam in April and Riyadh in September,** supporting the carrier's rapid growth in the region.

IndiGo is a private-owned carrier with a hub in the Indian capital of Delhi. With a fleet of currently 195 Airbus A320 family aircraft, which is to grow to 250 aircraft the near future, IndiGo has become the largest Indian carrier.

01/01/19 Sam Bridge/Arabian Business

India is likely to hold informal talks on increasing bilateral foreign flying rights with nearly nine countries including the United Arab Emirates, China and Saudi Arabia on the sidelines of the Global Aviation Summit to be held in Mumbai this month. The meeting is set to take place on January 14, a day before the beginning of the two-day summit, which will be attended by representatives of about 30 countries, said people aware of the matter. Foreign flying rights between two countries allow carriers from each side to operate a certain number of seats or services as agreed in the bilateral air services agreement.

The development comes amid expansion of operations of Indian carriers such as IndiGo and

SpiceJet to overseas destinations, although the Narendra Modi government has so far refrained from allowing additional flying rights to countries in Asia owing to the possible negative impact on domestic airlines. “There are about nine countries with which the government will hold informal talks on bilateral flying rights. Some countries like Qatar have requested to be part of those talks, as the current flying rights quota is almost getting exhausted,” said one of the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity. ET had reported on October 4, 2018 that the Enforcement Directorate was investigating bilateral air services agreements signed with West Asian countries between 2001 and 2012. The probe will also examine the impact that the bilateral agreements had on the operations of debt-laden Air India.

01/01/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India and the Maharashtra state government are bidding for beleaguered Air India’s iconic Nariman Point headquarters in Mumbai, the Times of India reported. “So far, only LIC and the state government of Maharashtra (have submitted their bids),” aviation secretary R N Choubey told the newspaper on Monday evening after the deadline lapsed.

It is not yet clear whether the government will go ahead with the LIC and Maharashtra government bids, or extend the deadline to allow more bids, said the report.

The debt-laden carrier had issued a tender notice on December 10 inviting bids from “government entities only for sale of lease hold rights of the land and its iconic AI building at Nariman Point, Mumbai.” **The deadline for submitting the sealed bids was 2.30 PM on December 31.**

01/01/19 CNBC-TV18

Mohali: The reinstallation of the runway lighting and instruments landing system (ILS-I) at the Chandigarh international airport has failed to invoke a sense of confidence amongst flight operators, with two more flights being temporarily withdrawn.

Air India, the premier flight operator of the country, has announced to temporarily withdraw its morning Delhi flight owing to poor visibility factors at the airport from January 2 to 8. Similarly, Air India’s Kullu-Chandigarh-Kullu flight has been withdrawn till January 15 owing to the bad weather conditions at Bhunter as well as Chandigarh, said Air India airport manager M R Jindal.

“The visibility factor is very poor during the morning hours at the airport. So, the authorities decided to temporarily suspend the Delhi morning flight which generally gets delayed due to fog. Secondly, the Kullu flight has also been withdrawn till January 15. The next decision will be taken after January 15.”

Recently, two airline operators had pulled out of the international circuit connectivity to Bangkok (Air India) and Dubai from Chandigarh owing to bad weather conditions, which lead to cancellation and diversion of flights and render losses to the operators. **Chandigarh is left with just a single international flight to Sharjah.** Air India has already sought temporary suspension or change in time slot for the Sharjah flight, said sources.

01/01/19 Barinderjit Saluja/Times of India

Navigating through tail winds and air pockets, the country’s aviation space imbibed high passenger growth, battled oil shocks as well as survived mid-air scares in 2018, with the government focused on making flying “as good as possible” in the new year. From spiralling costs and cut-throat competition pushing airlines into the red to government initiatives aimed at boosting the fast-growing sector, a mixed baggage greeted the stakeholders. **India remained the world’s fastest growing domestic aviation market with 51 straight months of doubled-digit traffic growth but the woes of passengers as well as carriers manifested in myriad forms.**

While the country’s largest airline **IndiGo faced brickbats**, including from a Parliamentary panel, **25-year-old Jet Airways and national carrier Air India continued to grapple with financial woes.** “We will try to make air travel as good as possible. We are working on many issues related to that,” Civil

Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu said when asked about priorities for next year.

Apart from existing initiatives, the Civil Aviation Ministry is to unveil an integrated cargo policy as well as Vision 2040 document for the aviation sector next year. Despite high passenger growth, domestic airlines remained financially vulnerable as surge in oil prices, rupee depreciation and inability to raise fares amid intense competition crimped their earnings. In the three months ended September, all the listed carriers — IndiGo, Jet Airways and SpiceJet — were in the red.

On the safety front, India retained the highest rating in the audit done by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and improved its score in the audit carried out by UN aviation watchdog ICAO. However, Pratt & Whitney (P&W) engine problems continued with A320 neo planes operated by IndiGo and GoAir, which even resulted in **incidents of mid-air engine shutdowns**. An incident involving Jet Airways flight where 30-odd passengers suffering nose bleeding due to a sudden drop in cabin pressure also raised safety concerns while a private plane crash at Ghatkopar in Mumbai this year killed five people, including one bystander. **Disinvestment-bound helicopter services provider Pawan Hans saw a major accident in its history when the chopper carrying seven persons crashed into the sea off Mumbai coast.**

Though many new routes and unserved airports came into the aviation map with the ambitious regional connectivity scheme UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik), the trajectory seems bumpy, with at least three carriers — Air Odisha, Air Deccan and Zoom Air — suspending services due to their own troubles. After the strategic sale of ailing Air India failed to attract any bidders, the government is charting out new strategies and is continuing with fund infusion.

Transfer of non-core debt and assets to a special purpose vehicle, differentiated business strategies for each of the core businesses and roping in professionals for top management positions through global search are among the revival proposals on the anvil. Bugged down by financial problems, Jet Airways continues to face turbulent times and its staff are getting deferred salary payments apart from overall rise in operational costs. The airline, which has significant overseas presence, is looking at various options to raise funds. IndiGo grabbed headlines for bad as well as good episodes.

Apart from P&W engine woes, the airline saw the departure of its long standing chief executive Aditya Ghosh in May apparently over differences with one of its promoters. On the flipside, **IndiGo became the only carrier to have 200 aircraft in the fleet with the induction of an A320 neo in early December. It also took delivery of A321 neo plane. Becoming the sixth domestic airline to start international operations, GoAir commenced services to Thailand and Maldives.**

The carrier saw ex-EasyJet executive Cornelis Vrieswijk joining as its chief executive. **SpiceJet operated the first bio-fuel-based test flight with a Bombardier Q400 plane from Dehradun to the national capital. Next Generation Airports in Bharat (NABH) Nirman to prepare for one billion passenger trips and DigiYatra that seeks to provide hassle free travel with the option of biometric identification for passengers are among the initiatives being rolled out. In flight wi-fi connectivity would soon be a reality, enabling passengers to use Internet while flying in the Indian airspace and registration for flying drones have commenced.**

31/12/18 PTI/Financial Express

A male passenger on an Air India flight from Dubai to Lucknow stripped naked mid-air and began strutting in the aisle in that state.

The cabin crew quickly wrapped the man in a blanket and he was made to sit down on, reported ANI. After the flight landed at Lucknow's Chaudhary Charan Singh airport at 12:05 pm, the passenger was handed over to the security.

One passenger who was on the flight and who saw the entire incident said, "As soon as the aircraft crew saw him walking nude, they pounced on him and wrapped him in a blanket. Initially, the man resisted but the staff managed to overpower him."

Air India in-charge in Lucknow, Shakeel Ahmed, said, **"The man after being detained by the authorities revealed that he had been harassed by his Pakistani coworkers in Dubai who far outnumbered him as he was the only Indian there. He said he was mercilessly beaten by the**

Pakistanis and tortured to go back. In frustration, he had resigned and was returning to India."
30/12/18 Priyanshi Mathur/India Times

Mumbai: **Aircraft MRO services provider Air Works has been accused of indulging in various malpractices including releasing planes for flights "without recording and rectifying known defects".**

During an audit carried out at the company's facilities in **Mumbai, Delhi, Pune and Ahmedabad between July and September**, the regulator **DGCA also found that dedicated store inspectors had not been made responsible for the Juhu (Mumbai) and Pune facilities**, said a source.

The Gurugram-based over six-decade old **Air Works provides maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services to airlines, business jets and chopper operators through its 17 facilities in India and abroad.**

"You are advised to take immediate corrective and preventive action to address the findings," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in a notice to Air Works late last month.

When contacted, a top Air Works Executive Director, Ravi Menon, said the company will take all "required steps" following the audit findings, but also added that nobody "compromises" on the issue of safety.

"Aircraft were found to have been released for flights without recording or rectifying the known defects. Such practice was noticed across many product lines and stations during sample verification.

"Operational and maintenance personnel had failed to record the defects/abnormalities observed by them. Maintenance personnel had issued certificate (s) of release to service without carrying out appropriate maintenance work on the defective aircraft," said the audit findings, a copy of which is with PTI.

The audit also found that the **"company did not have system of assessing maintenance man-hour requirement to establish that it has sufficient staff to plan, perform, supervise, inspect and quality monitor the organization in accordance with the approval at any given time and at each approved facility."**

Notably, the DGCA, which conducted a similar audit of another MRO Indamer Aviation following an aircraft crash in Mumbai in June this year, had found the company indulging in similar malpractices and subsequently suspended the aircraft maintenance and repair work at its Ahmedabad facility and partially restricted the operations at Mumbai unit.

A parliamentary panel, which submitted its report in the Lok Sabha last Friday has said that **the civil aviation ministry and DGCA "must be more serious about safety."**

31/12/18 PTI/ZeeBiz

More than 300 exhibitors, including top global and domestic players from the defence industry, have confirmed their participation in Aero India 2019, a defence official said on Sunday.

Aero India 2019 will be held in Bengaluru from February 20 to 24 and the defence exhibition will see participation of top fighter-jet manufacturers, defence equipment makers and companies related to the sector.

All activities related to Aero India 2019 have been made online -- be it booking of tickets or selection of space for stalls, the official said.

The participants can arrange business to business meetings and book conference rooms online.

With nearly 50 days to go for Aero India, we already have 308 exhibitors. They include **178 domestic and 130 foreign players.** We have generated a revenue of Rs 62 crore from the bookings so far.

There will be no cheque transaction for Aero India as all payments have been made online. The arrangements correspond to the best practices in the world, the official added.

There will also be a mobile application for Aero India 2019 show that will guide the users about the event.

30/12/18 PTI/Business Line

Loss-making carrier Jet Airways is in discussions with the State Bank of India for raising Rs 1,500 crore short-term loan to meet its working capital requirement and some payment obligations, a source said.

Jet Airways strategic partner and Middle-east carrier **Etihad**, which holds 24 percent stake in the Indian full service carrier, **is likely to provide guarantee for the loan**, he said.

Significantly, the talks for availing loan are going on at a time when EY is carrying out a forensic audit of the Jet Airways on the orders of the airline's largest lender for alleged irregularities.

31/12/18 PTI/Quint

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has requested the Finance Ministry to include the Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) in the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

This has been conveyed to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture.

The ministry had suggested that the **aviation fuel for small aircrafts including freighter aircrafts** (maximum take-off weight of less than 40 tonnes) **should lie under the 5% GST slab**, according to a report tabled by the Committee in the Rajya Sabha.

"It further recommended that the **ATF should be under 18% slab for the larger aircrafts including the freighters**. With this, the ATF would be at par with the AvGas," the report said.

The Committee had sought a reply from the Ministry of Civil Aviation after it noticed that airlines were facing a major issue because of the high cost of the ATF.

The committee had noticed that the ATF which is already available at a huge price was being further aggravated due to the taxation policies. This was affecting the financial liability of the airlines.

30/12/18 WebIndia123

Air India, Jet Airways and SpiceJet lost market share, even as the industry witnessed an overall number of passengers increased 19.2 per cent, between January and November.

According to CRISIL, which analysed data released by DGCA, **domestic capacity in terms of Available seat kilometre, (ASKM) of airlines in November increased by 20 per cent, year-on-year, driven by capacity addition by low cost carriers (LCC) which accounted for 90 per cent of the capacity addition.**

On the other hand, **capacity additions by full service carriers (FSC) have relatively been muted due to the financial constraints of the players.**

Air India has been facing headwinds for the past few quarters, yet, the airline carried 160.44 lakh passengers between January and November 2018 in comparison to 141.09 lakh during the same period last year. However, the airline saw its market share decline to 12.7 per cent at the end of November, as compared to 13.3 per cent in 2017.

An Air India official said, "Air India has not expanded its domestic operation in last few months vis-a-vis the other operators, the Market Share of Air India remained constant." Full service carrier, Jet Airways carried 175.93 lakh passengers as on November 2018, as compared to 163.61 lakh carried same period last year.

30/12/18 Forum Gandhi/Business Line

New Delhi: Foreign tourists can now directly fly to the Andaman and Nicobar Islands as the government has designated Port Blair airport as an authorised immigration check post for entry into and exit from India with valid travel documents.

The decision came more than a month after the killing of an American national by members of a highly protected tribe in one of the islands of the Union territory.

"In pursuance of sub-rule (b) of rule 3 of the Passport (Entry into India) Rules, 1950, the central

government hereby designates Port Blair airport of Union territory of Andaman and Nicobar Islands as an authorised immigration check post for entry into/exit from India with valid travel documents for all classes of passengers," a home ministry notification said.

In another notification, the home ministry appointed the Superintendent of Police, CID, the Andaman and Nicobar Police, as the "civil authority" for the immigration check post at Port Blair airport with effect from December 31, 2018.

The Andamans, under global spotlight after the killing of an American national, has emerged as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the country receiving on an average four lakh tourists, including several thousand foreigners, annually.

31/12/18 PTI/Times of India

Guests attending the Vibrant Gujarat Summit (VGS) next month will get a first-hand glimpse at a spate of latest technologies, which are being showcased by the state government. Right from the time they reach Ahmedabad airport, guests will be welcomed and guided by a robot.

Biology Electronics Aesthetics and Mechanics (BEAM) robots will be present at Ahmedabad airport while VGS is on, and they would exclusively service the invitees at the event. BEAM would not only welcome the guests but also provide them with information about the event and the accommodation available.

Principal secretary, tourism department, SJ Haider, said, "We have decided to offer an escort service to guests at VGS through BEAM. Units of this robot will be at Ahmedabad airport, and would be operated by persons sitting in Ahmedabad or Gandhinagar."

"We have completed all formalities to engage service providers of BEAM, and we will take a final call very soon on the number of units to be used. The expense behind this is a policy matter and cannot be disclosed, but it is not a huge amount for sure," Haider added.

31/12/18 Chintan Acharya/DNA

Mumbai: Budget carrier IndiGo has become the first domestic airline to have longer range Airbus A321neo plane in its fleet with the first aircraft arriving Saturday morning in New Delhi from the European aviation major Airbus' Hamburg facility in Germany, an airline source said.

The maiden A321neo (new engine option), VT-IUA, landed at 9.06 am at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in Delhi and was accorded the traditional water canon salute on arrival, the source told PTI.

The new aircraft has joined the fleet after a delay of one month. It was to join the fleet on November 29 as per the earlier schedule, he said.

The induction of the first A321neo, of the 150 on order, will help IndiGo spread its wings to medium-haul international destinations.

Flights of up to six hours duration come under medium- long haul category of operations.

IndiGo now has 204 planes in its fleet, including one A321neo, 65 A320neos, 126 A320neos (current engine option), and 12 ATRs, the source said.

The longer range A321neo plane has been delivered to the airline at a time when it is struggling with the frequent glitches in the Pratt & Whitney engines, powering these planes, and taking these aircraft out of operations on a regular basis.

30/12/18 PTI/Business Standard

According to Hindustan times (HT), **SpiceJet conducted the trial of a 10-seater seaplane.** This was the first time in India that a seaplane landed on water. After being delayed by more than one-and-a-half hours owing to low visibility, **the amphibious aircraft landed at Girgaum Chowpatty at 3.10 pm.** **The airlines aims to buy five 10-seater seaplanes and begin commercial operations within a year.** **Sources said that Japan's Setouchi Holdings will deliver the first batch of aircraft in next six**

months. With former civil aviation minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju and shipping minister Nitin Gadkari on board, the aircraft took seven minutes to reach Girgaum from the Mumbai airport. Sources said that the 10-seater aircraft costs around **\$4 million**. "The formation of air routes takes three to six months. We are considering route suggestions from chief ministers," said Ajay Singh, CMD, SpiceJet.

31/12/18 TravelBizMonitor

Canada-based Mohd Faizy flew his first solo at the age of 14 years in a fixed wing Cessna 152, creating a world record. The Hitavada received the news about Mohd Faizy's record, through his uncle Quaid Faizy, a city-based commercial pilot, presently Captain on SpiceJet Airline.

It was fun talking to Capt Quaid, who, himself a Pilot with vast flying experience and appeared quite excited in sharing the news with The Hitavada. This scribe being a student Pilot licence holder in his college days, also could not contain the excitement and could virtually visualise the thrill of taking the first solo, soaring in the blue sky, controls in hand, no instructor to bark at.

Capt Quaid Faizy spoke at length about how his nephew went about doing that record breaking feat. **"Mohd Faizy is a fourteen-year-old boy from Mississauga, who created a world record of flying solo in the Cessna 152 on December 18, 2018.** Mohd Faizy broke his own cousin's record Mansoor Anis, who did this in 14 years, 3 months. Interestingly both are cousins and belong to Nagpur. I like to tinker with computers, that is how I made and developed my own flight simulator at home, equipped with best of basic avionics, on which Faizy played about, like how children today play computer games. That is how, he got the hang of it. Added to this was his sister Zahabia's taking him on board for a joyride several times, that Faizy got hooked on to, like a duck taking to water. Mohd Faizy took his first solo flight in Vancouver with a flight instructor when he was twelve-year-old.

Guinness Book of World Record has accepted his claim to becoming the youngest Pilot to fly solo.

Mohd Faizy's father is Hassan Faizy from Ujjain and mother is a Physiotherapist".

31/12/18 Nandu Andhare/Hitavada

Kolkata: The Airport Authority of India (AAI) on Friday lodged a complaint with the airport police alleging that a promoter had filled up a wetland on the airport premises and was attempting to illegally build flats. The complaint prompted the Bidhannagar Municipal Corporation to demolish the illegal structures. However, the promoter is absconding.

The FIR (a copy of which is with TOI) stated that on December 28, an inspection of the airport areas by AAI revealed that some miscreants had filled up a waterbody in Khamruipara on Kaikhali-Nayaranpur Road. The AAI attached 12 photographs of the disputed zone. The FIR also stated that the waterbody was being filled up by a builder/promoter, adjacent to the airport, to construct flats. "The office has received various representations from citizens who are apprehensive of flight safety and illegal construction in the airport's vicinity," the FIR read. AAI urged the police to stop the illegal filling of the pond and take punitive action against the miscreants. A copy of the complaint, which was signed by AAI AGM (land management) Chaitali Das, was also marked to Bidhannagar mayor Sabyasachi Dutta.

The mayor said, "We received the complaint and immediately initiated action. I spoke to the local councillor and after obtaining details, we demolished the illegal construction. We also urged police to take appropriate action against the builder/promoter."

"This is an unfortunate situation and should not have been allowed to reach this stage. Henceforth, we shall keep a strict vigil. I have also apologized to the AAI for this incident and have assured them our cooperation," he added.

31/12/18 Times of India

Incidents of fake e-tickets usage to gain illegal entry into Indian airports were highest in 2018 in past four years, prompting security agencies to moot biometric or barcode-based access system for passengers. While security officials ruled out any terror-like or extreme sabotage threat in these

recorded incidents, they expressed concern over the potential of this menace being misused in future to breach the airport security.

As per a CISF data, a total of 140 incidents (about 26 per cent more) of illegal entries of passengers using fake or cancelled e-tickets were intercepted till early December as compared to 111 such incidents registered last year. The comparative figures for 2016 were 74 while for 2015 it was 43.

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is the mandated security unit to guard Indian civil airports and it has 61 such facilities under its umbrella at present.

The force has caught both Indians and foreigners for these offences.

It found that either ignorance of rules or sheer desire to see off a family member or friend has prompted the offenders to gain illegal entry into the airport terminal by showing a paper printout or mobile-based PDF attachment of an air ticket, that has been cancelled, to a CISF security personnel at the gate.

30/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), which guards airports across the country, has raised concerns over increase in incidents of people entering airports using fake E-tickets. According to the security force, there has been considerable increase in cases of people entering airports using fake E-tickets.

The CISF has said that 140 such incidents had been recorded in 2018 while 111 cases were registered in 2017.

The issue assumes significance as incidents of people entering airports illegally have increases every year. In 2015 and 2016, number of such cases was less than 100.

Though the CISF does not suspect any terror angle with regard to such cases, but the force considers it as a major threat to security of airports. It suspects that such incidents may lead to some major incident if not curbed.

Considering the threat, the CISF and the Civil Aviation Ministry both want to implement a new entry system for airports using a uniform identity. **The CISF is pressing for implementation of biometric system for travellers to enter airports.**

31/12/18 Sameer Dixit/ZeeNews

The aircraft involved in the Ghatkopar crash that killed five people earlier this year was on an "illegal test flight" and the plane itself was once brought to Mumbai in pieces in trucks, according to a report.

Besides, the aircraft was insured for Rs 7 crore in January last year in an illegal and non-transparent manner, a Parliamentary panel has said.

On June 28, a King Air C-90 charter aircraft crashed during a test flight in Ghatkopar, Mumbai. Four people onboard -- two pilots and two aircraft maintenance engineers --, as well as a bystander, were killed in the incident.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is already probing the incident and its report is expected early next year.

Describing the facts that have come out regarding the incident as "shocking", the panel chaired by BJP MP Kirit Somaiya said the test flight was illegal and done during bad weather.

The plane belonged to U Y Aviation Pvt Ltd and the latter had a pact with Indamar Aviation Pvt Ltd for carrying out repairs and making the aircraft serviceable.

The particular aircraft was bought from Silver Jubilee Traveler Pvt Ltd, which had purchased the same from the Uttar Pradesh government in early 2014 as a "scrap".

In its report, the panel said the plane in question had belly landed in Uttar Pradesh in 2008.

"It was kept in abeyance for five years. In early 2014, it was purchased by Silver Jubilee Traveler Pvt Ltd as scrap". It was brought to Mumbai in pieces in trucks, the report said.

The committee has also flagged serious concerns, including that operating a test flight without the

approval of aviation regulator DGCA is criminal negligence.

"The shocking information that came before the committee is that the aircraft was insured for Rs 7 crore in January 2017 in an illegal and non-transparent manner by a PSU insurance company.

30/12/18 PTI/DNA

The government plans to rope in professionals for top positions at Air India through a global search process, as part of efforts to revive the national carrier, according to Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu.

With the proposed strategic stake sale of the Air India failing to take off in May this year, the government has been working on various initiatives, including hiving off a significant chunk of over Rs 55,000 crore debt into a special purpose vehicle, to turn-around the ailing airline.

Against this backdrop, the **government is now actively considering the proposal to professionalise Air India management.** Talking about steps for reviving the national airline, Prabhu said there are plans for complete professionalisation. "I have already ordered a global search for professionalisation of Air India completely. All top positions in Air India should be filled by some sort of a global search. That proposal is now under active consideration of the government," the minister told PTI in an interview.

A source in the know said the government plans to set up a search committee that would look for aviation professionals from across the world who can be brought to Air India.

Currently, the national carrier — which is staying afloat on taxpayers' money — has nine members on the board, including two officials from the civil aviation ministry. The chairman and managing director is senior IAS officer Pradeep Singh Kharola while two well-known businessmen — ITC chairman Y C Deveshwar and Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla — are independent directors on the board. Ravinder Kumar Tyagi, Syed Zafar Islam, Daggubati Purandeswari are the other independent directors. Air India Director (Finance) Vinod Hejmadi, as well as Civil Aviation Ministry's Additional Secretary Gargi Kaul and Joint Secretary Satyendra Kumar Mishra, are also part of the board.

30/12/18 PTI/Indian Express

Whether it was men, machines or the business itself – it was a year of turbulence and disruption for airlines in the country. Bad news landed at the start of the year as US aviation watchdog Federal Aviation Authority and European Aviation Safety Agency issued **emergency airworthiness directive for operators flying the Airbus A320neo single aisle aircraft powered by the Pratt & Whitney engine PW1100G warning of a in-flight shutdown and rejected take off on aircraft fitted with this engine type.**

Stumped by the directives Indian operators, budget airlines **IndiGo and GoAir** were forced to ground a part of the fleet, reassess their expansion on this aircraft type, pay more for maintenance and still grappling with an unresolved problem. The machine scare continued into the later part of the year, this time with **US aircraft manufacturer Boeing's latest and upgraded 737 aircraft type-MAX, impacting full service carrier Jet Airways and SpiceJet** both large customers of this aircraft type.

Boeing issued a **safety warning about the 'angle of attack' sensor** post a fatal crash involving Indonesian carrier Lion Air killing all 189 passengers on board followed by directives issued by the Indian aviation watchdog to take corrective measures for a possible altitude loss manifestation.

Bleeding and distressed- words that best describe business performance of Indian carriers. **Market leader IndiGo announced its first ever quarter loss after it listed on the stock exchanges in the year 2015 of Rs 652.1 crore, while Jet Airways reported losses of Rs 2,620.46 till the first half of FY18/19 to add to its accumulated losses of Rs10,772 crore. SpiceJet wasn't able to buck the trend either. The Tata Group promoted airlines – budget carrier AirAsia India (AAI) and full service airline Vistara together put up a bad show with Rs 2,000 crore of accumulated losses and 2018 bled them further.**

30/12/18 Manisha Singhal/Financial Express

Kolkata: Sarod player Amaan Ali Bangash has alleged that someone at Kolkata airport deliberately broke his sarod on Saturday morning. The musician was travelling to Delhi on Jet Airways flight 9W 964 after a concert in the city on Friday.

Bangash noticed the damage to the instrument on reaching home in Delhi. According to him, the nature of damage pointed to a “deliberate” act and not an accident. Coming in the middle of the peak music season, he hinted at sabotage and blamed the airline’s lax security for the loss.

“The nature of damage points to a deliberate act. When the sarod breaks on impact, the pecks and the skin also get damaged. Someone has done this very viciously. I had a show last night in Kolkata. I’m all the more upset because I have a concert in Bangalore tomorrow,” he told TOI, expressing hurt, fury and frustration.

When TOI contacted Jet Airways, an official said the airline couldn’t comment on the matter as it has not received any such information from the guest. “The airline however, is concerned to note the reported development and shall have it reviewed,” the spokesperson said.

According to Aaman Ali Banghash, who flies business class with Jet Airways and is a platinum card holder, he had given the sarod for ‘special handling’ while checking in at Kolkata airport on Saturday morning.

30/12/18 Priyanka Dasgupta/Times of India

Tiruchy: The International Airport at Tiruchy drew global attention recently as a Dubai- bound Air India Express flight miraculously escaped when it brushed past the airport compound wall here at the end of the runway, while taking off in the wee hours of October 12. All the 130 passengers and six crew members had a miraculous escape.

Airport sources told DC that around 0119 hours, the flight commandant Capt. Ganeshkumar operating the aircraft on its taking-off process hit and damaged the Instrument landing system (ILS), one runway end light (RWY 27), five ILS functional monitoring antennas and an ILS monitor controlled antenna, before the wheelbase of the aircraft crashed the compound wall very close to the Tiruchy- Pudukkottai National Highway. It resulted in a small portion of the compound wall collapsing at two places and also damaged the fencing.

The Air traffic Control (ATC) duty staff gave a note to airman and also directed the pilot to come back for an emergency landing, but he told the ATC that they were safe and continued their journey as if nothing happened.

Realising the trouble and danger, the ATC alerted the Air Indian Express authorities and the Mumbai airport. Then, at Mumbai airport ATC’s instruction, the aircraft nearing Muscat returned to Mumbai for an emergency landing there. The passengers of the aircraft came to know about the episode only after the aircraft alighted at Mumbai airport.

According to local residents residing on the Tiruchy-Pudukkottai National highway, **fortunately at that time when the flight crashed the compound wall, very close to the National highway, there was no vehicular movement; otherwise a major mishap could have taken place.**

This incident has given the jolt to the Airports Authority of India to pursue the expansion of the existing runway, which has been long delayed due to the bottlenecks faced in land acquisition for the proposed runway expansion.

Though the AAI instituted a high level inquiry into the incident, the outcome of the probe is yet to be released. However, after setting right the damaged compound wall and other communication equipment, flights movement in and out of Tiruchy International airport is going on as usual.

30/12/18 R Valayapathy/Deccan Chronicle

In order to speed up the proposed Navi Mumbai International Airport, the Maharashtra government has decided to set up a grievances redressal cell to resolve the issues faced by the local residents.

According to a notification issued by the Urban Development Department, the government has agreed to most of the demands made by the residents. "There are still some issues that need to be discussed so that the proposed Navi Mumbai Airport development work can be sped up. The grievances redressal cell will be set up under the principal secretary," the notification read.

"We had aimed to complete the airport work by 2019. But, we are facing a lot of issues to acquire the land from the local villagers and farmers. We have agreed to all their demands. However, they are demanding more things that cannot be easily granted. This protest is delaying the development of the proposed airport resulting in an escalation of the cost of the project," said urban development officials.

Congress leader, Mahendra Gharat and local activist said that the nodal agency of the proposed airport itself is responsible for the delay. "They earlier promised many things and now they are turning their back. They had promised to local villagers Rs 1,500 per sq ft for the construction of their new houses at different locations. Now, CIDCO is offering only Rs 1,000 per sq ft. Besides, even after 450 hearings, no decisions were taken. Unless and until the project affected people's (PAP) demands are fulfilled, there is no point for them to vacate the places," Gharat said.

He said that CIDCO has also promised to develop the schools, playground, and crematorium for the affected people in the new area. "If there is no school, how will the people relocate themselves. The government should first develop the infrastructure and then only ask the people to vacate the premises," Gharat added.

30/12/18 Sudhir Suryawanshi/DNA

Jamshedpur: The district administration has sent a fresh proposal to Airport Authority of India (AAI) to set up an airport at Dhalbhumgarh in Ghatshila sub-division. The district administration has agreed to provide 240 acres of land at Dhalbhumgarh despite the fact that the AAI had asked for only 150 acres of land for the same.

Addressing a press conference, Kumar said that in every sector education, health, infrastructure, energy, women empowerment and social security, the government has made tremendous progress. "We have made progress in each and every sector. Now each and every house, irrespective whether located in the most interior part of the district is electrified. We have implemented the Central government-sponsored Saubhagya Yojana, also known as Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana that had been launched in October 2017," said the DC.

On the infrastructure sector, the DC said that led by the Raghubar Das government district has 337 kms two-way roads, most of them constructed in the rural areas. Before four years ago, there were only 47 kms two-way road in the district.

30/12/18 Parvinder Bhatia/Pioneer

In a bid to address the poor infrastructure and frequent cancellations at the Srinagar Airport, the two-phased plan of Indian Air Force (IAF) to upgrade the aerodrome is witnessing steady progress, officials said. Ninety per cent of work on the first phase of the project has been completed and the second phase is likely to take two more years.

Once completed the project will upgrade Instrumentation Landing System (ILS) and runway facilities at the airport including the lighting and other capacities.

The project has been undertaken under the IAF's "Modernization of Airport Facilities and Infrastructure (MAFI)" scheme.

Talking to Greater Kashmir, an IAF official said the upgradation of ILS will also ensure that flight operations are undertaken in lesser visibility.

"The IAF will install **ILS Category-II at the Srinagar Airport** which will allow operation of flights even at a minimum visibility of 350-metre," the official said. "Currently the minimum visibility required for operation of flights at the Airport is 1300-meter".

The official said the completion of the second phase of MAFI, which might take a "couple of years" will also provide several other facilities at the airfield.

30/12/18 Saqib Malik/Greater Kashmir

Ahmedabad: **Regional connectivity as well as tourism is set to get a major boost in Gujarat, as seaplane operations are likely to begin at four locations in the state.** These are Sardar Sarovar Dam, Narmada (Kevadia); Sabarmati Riverfront, Ahmedabad; Dharoi Dam, Mehsana (Dharoi) and Shatrunjay Dam, Bhavnagar (Palitana). According to data by Union ministry of civil and aviation, these **four water aerodromes are among 14 in India that have been included in the third round of bidding under Regional Connectivity Scheme – UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik).**

If all works fine, these destinations will be provided air connectivity through seaplane under the scheme, giving a major boost to tourism. Top officials of Airports Authority of India (AAI) **confirmed that the bidding process for these water aerodromes is under way and the bidder will be finalised by the end of January.** Sources confirmed that three players have submitted their bids for Sabarmati Riverfront and Sardar Sarovar Dam, among others.

A memorandum of understanding will be inked between Government of Gujarat and AAI and the MCA to set up infrastructure to facilitate seaplane operations, a source revealed.

"Initial studies have estimated a cost of around **Rs 15 crore** for developing **basic infrastructure including a jetty, arrival and departure area, office space and a security checkpoints. Smaller 7- to 9-seater twin-engine aircraft would be then deployed by airlines concerned for seaplane operations,**" said Guruprasad Mohapatra, chairman, AAI.

30/12/18 Niyati Parikh/Times of India

In comatose for long 35 years, Rupsi Airport in Dhubri district is coming alive from September 2019. This is what the Ministry of Civil Aviation has informed the Parliament recently. Constructed by the British during World War II to supply arms, manpower, and ammunition to the Allied forces, Rupsi Airport was functional until the 1980s. Now the Airport Authority of India (AAI) is going to include this airport into the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) – UDAN from September 2019. The AAI initiated construction work of the terminal building and strengthening and re-carpeting of the runway from May 2018 after the Bhoomi puja (land sanctification).

The reopening of this airport has come to light in the Parliament recently when Civil Aviation Minister of State Jayant Sinha informed the House while replying to an unstarred question that **'the air route Guwahati-Rupsi-Guwahati has been awarded to M/S Turbo Megha Airways Private Limited under RCS-UDAN and a number of Rs 71.63 crore has been allocated under the scheme for development of the airport.'**

30/12/18 Sentinel

The reasons may be innumerable, the year 2018 saw aviation industry in the city touching new skies. Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport, **Nagpur has witnessed a boom in air passenger traffic** as more people preferred air travel as one of the most convenient means of transport. With more people travelling to domestic and international locations the air ticketing passenger traffic has shot up remarkably. **“The aviation sector is booming and had registered a phenomenal rate of growth of more than 30 per cent compared to the year ago period,”** said Jatinder Nakade, Past President of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) Nagpur while speaking to The Hitavada.

The air ticket bookings are mostly of group tours compared to individual bookings, he said. The number of air passengers is expected to cross 25 lakh by end December 2018. Official numbers say that the number of air passengers has grown to 23,87,570 for the period January 2018 to November 2018 compared to 20,61,350 full year from January to December 2017. This was disclosed by a senior airport official on the condition of anonymity.

“Nagpur is fast developing as a vibrant commercial hub and popular tourist destination which is evident by looking at the increasing number of flights departing from Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport every day,” he added.

Looking at the huge potential and surge in air passenger traffic, a few airlines which are operating from the airport have increased the number of flights on existing routes and opened up new routes across the country recently. **Nagpur airport handles two international flights to Sharjah and Doha** in Middle East which is adding fuel to the rise in air passenger traffic. Sources said that the air passenger traffic increased to 2,38,020 in November 2018 as compared to 1,81,990 in November 2017.

In order to meet future growth in air passenger traffic The Maharashtra Airport Development Corporation (MADC) has chalked out **ambitious expansion and development plans for the airport**. For this a tender has already been floated. The highest revenue sharing bidder has been selected.

29/12/18 The Hitavada

Gurgaon-based Zoom Air, which has been grounded since July, is likely to restart operations from next month after the aviation regulator renewed the carrier’s flying permit which had been held back over safety concerns.

A senior Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) official said the airline had been asked to send a revised operating schedule. **Zoom Air, which connects towns like Tezpur, Jorhat, Jabalpur to Kolkata, could not operate a single flight in the past six months due to financial and operational challenges. Its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) was renewed earlier this week.**

“There were concerns regarding aircraft management systems that we looked into. The airline has passed the safety audit requirements which allow them to re-start operations,” the DGCA official told FE.

Zoom Air recorded around 77% passenger load factor (PLF) on its 50-seater, CRJ200 aircraft, during 2018 before it was grounded. The airline, at the beginning of the year, had announced **plans to raise Rs 100 crore to extensively connect northeast under the government’s regional connectivity scheme** — Udan.

29/12/18 Arun Noyal/Financial Express

On Friday, a plane registered as VT-IUA took off from Hamburg for New Delhi to join the ballooning fleet of IndiGo. This marked the 52nd time IndiGo bumped up its fleet this year. This is also the first of the several A321neos that the airline will fly. IndiGo has 205 planes in its fleet, which comprises 126 A320neos, 65 A320neos and 14 ATRs, with VT-IUA being the first A321 and 206th plane.

With the newest plane, IndiGo, India's largest carrier by domestic market share and fleet, has leapfrogged to the **sixth position by fleet in Asia**. The airline ended the last calendar year with 153 aircraft, which included 32 A320neos and 3 ATR 72-600s.

At an average induction of 1 aircraft per week in 2018, IndiGo is poised to overtake ANA, AirAsia Bhd, and Emirates in size of fleet. AirAsia group, which operates in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and India, has 252 planes, Dubai-based Emirates has 260 and Japanese carrier ANA operates 232 planes.

IndiGo's fleet size pales in comparison to Chinese carriers, which lead the fleet in Asia. China Southern has 601 aircraft, China Eastern flies 525 planes and Air China has a fleet size of 410.

IndiGo recently converted a sizable order of 125 A320neo planes to A321neos. That takes the total order for the A321neos to 150. Airbus offers the A321neo in multiple variants, including the standard type – A321N, A321NX and the A321neoLR.

IndiGo has opted for the **cabin flex configuration offer** from Airbus. The new second over-wing exit replaces the second door pair in front of the wings, which has helped increase capacity to **240 seats** from 221. IndiGo's first A321 is equipped with 222 seats.

This increase is without any additional crew cost because at least five cabin crew members would be required for either 221 or 240 seats. The manufacturer will also offer the A321neoLR (long range), which aims to have a range in excess of 7000 km with nearly 200 seats.

Following the LR will be the A321XLR, which boasts of a range of 9,300 km. These two sub types will fill up the middle of the market demand, which is hitherto being fulfilled by the Boeing 757 planes and existed primarily in Europe and America but has graduated to Asia as cheaper flights, burgeoning incomes and a large population looks to fly direct to places farther away. The airline has the flexibility to choose the sub-type of the A321neo at a later date since it involves additional AFT (Auxiliary Fuel Tanks) based on the version.

While IndiGo has seen a rapid fleet growth, the destinations it serves are dwarfed by those of its competition. **The airline today is operating or has announced flights to 67 destinations, which include 15 international ones. The A321neos could propel IndiGo to the big league in terms of destinations as well.**

Preparing for the A321s and subsequent expansion, **the airline launched a flight blitzkrieg in 2018, introducing flights to Colombo, Dhaka, Phuket, Male, Kuala Lumpur, Kuwait, Abu Dhabi and Hong Kong. Domestic expansion continued unabated with the launch of new stations such as Allahabad, Surat, Hubli, Rajahmundry, Tirupati, Vijaywada, Jorhat, Tuticorin and Trichy.** For an airline that launched less than 50 stations in its 12 years of existence, the 17 new destinations in a single year indicate IndiGo's renewed ambitions to expand and quickly at that.

However, this kind of expansion comes with its own set of challenges. India is short of talented manpower in the crew department. The regulator has increased the notice period of captains to one year. Though this will help IndiGo as the market leader as it stands to lose fewer pilots to competition, it also stops pilots from competition joining its ranks.

[29/12/18 Ameya Joshi/CNBC TV18](#)

Andhra Pradesh BJP Leaders are often critical on the TDP Government for Overriding Airports Authority of India (AAI) from the Tenders for the proposed Bhogapuram Aerotropolis project giving the Tender to a Private Player. They allege that the State Government has canceled the tenders as they do not get kickbacks from the Government Agency.

But if that is true, **BJP led Central Government is moving towards the Privatization of Six Airport taking it away from AAI.** The ones chosen for operation, management, and development through a public-private partnership (PPP) model are **Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati.**

The Central Government says that after the modernization of airports in Delhi and Mumbai through the PPP model, they saw a great improvement in the quality of the airports and the increased flow of Tourists. Hence taking the route of Privatization. But then, while the State Government made a

similar claim, the BJP leaders refused to buy the argument.

29/12/18 Mirchi9

In an incident that yet again raises concerns about aviation safety in India, three aircraft came alarmingly close to each other in the Delhi flight information region. The incident reportedly took place on December 23 and involved Dutch carrier KLM, Taiwanese carrier Eva and American charter National. First, there was a breach of separation between the National and Eva aircraft setting off the collision avoidance system alarm in the flight cockpits. Thereafter the American charter reportedly made an unauthorised climb, bringing it in conflict with the Dutch KLM flight. Subsequently the American aircraft changed its flight level once more, again bringing it in conflict with the Taiwanese airliner. Thankfully, the controller intervened to resolve the situation. But the three aircraft shouldn't have been in this predicament in the first place. **The sequence of events indicates miscommunication and technical errors which are simply unacceptable.** India is one of the fastest growing aviation markets. But the infrastructure needed to cater to this growth is not keeping pace. For example, India has between 2,500 and 2,800 air traffic controllers. It needs to hire at least 1,200 more to relieve enormous stress on these officers.

In fact, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) which manages air traffic controllers **is too bureaucratic a body.** To make air traffic management better, there's a good case to **hive off air traffic control from AAI and run it as a separate corporatised outfit with adequate rewards for high skills. This will not only lead to more efficient management of Indian airspace and improve safety, but also create a framework for India to become an aviation hub** like Dubai or Singapore. **It's time deep structural reforms are undertaken – to keep fliers safe, but also to help Indian aviation reach its full economic potential.**

Times of India 29/12/2018

Kochi: Several passengers, including students on their way to Canada, had to wait for about 24 hours after their Air India flight to Delhi, supposed to take off on Thursday 8.30pm, developed a snag.

Making matters worse, the students said the staff behaved rudely with them and made them wait till 5am on Friday at the airport before arranging them accommodation at a hotel.

Sijo Jose, a passenger aboard the flight, said that they were told about the flight developing a snag at around 8pm and they were asked to collect baggage and wait outside. "We were called back in at around 3am and later we were sent to a room. By the time we reached our hotel, it was about 5am. It was a horrible experience," said Jose.

Manuel Abraham, another passenger said that the staff wanted them to give in writing that if they are sent back from Canada after reaching there, the airlines wouldn't have any responsibility.

"Many of us face financial problems and it was absurd of them to demand something like that. However, they made alternate arrangements even as we refused to give anything in writing," said Abraham.

Meenakshi Binu, another passenger who was heading to Canada said that they boarded another flight to Mumbai at around 8.30pm.

"We were asked to go to Mumbai and then to Vancouver. Our original plan was to go to Delhi, then Vancouver. We had also paid for a domestic flight there in Canada to go to Campbell River there, now we will have to find money to book that flight again on our own," she said.

29/12/18 Times of India

New Delhi: The invitation to apply for the chairman's post at airport regulator Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has seen higher than usual interest with the country's top bureaucrats applying for the postretirement job that comes along with a five-year tenure.

Responding to the aviation ministry's call, senior bureaucrats such as Finance Secretary AN Jha have

even applied for the job. **Other bureaucrats who have applied for the post include DG of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation BS Bhullar**, former DGCA DG **Prabhat Kumar**, currently posted as additional chief secretary in Uttar Pradesh, and Pawan Hans chairman and managing director **BP Sharma**.

The post of AERA chairman gets vacant in March after current incumbent S Machendranathan's term ends the same month, next year. While Jha and Sharma retire in January next year, Kumar retires from service in April next year and Bhullar retires in May next year.

AERA chairperson post is open for retired and serving officials with experience in aviation and financial sector and offers a fiveyear term, or job till 65 years of age, whichever is earlier.

AERA chairman gets a fixed pay of Rs 4,50,000 per month but is not entitled to any other facility such as housing and vehicle from the government.

AERA is an airport regulator created in 2009 with its headquarters in Delhi, and decides on airport charges at all major airports across the country. The regulator was created after the government allowed private companies to own airport with the privatisation of airports in Delhi and Mumbai.

29/12/18 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Travellers boarding Vistara flights from the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport, Mumbai might have to face a lot of inconveniences in February and March. **Due to scheduled runway closure at the airport, a few Vistara flights will not operate from February 7, 2019, till March 30, 2019, on each and every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.**

The passengers should also take it into consideration that the flights operated on March 21, 2019, will not get affected by the runway closure. This is not the first time this is happening. Earlier, both the runways were shut down from October 18, 2016, through November 28, 2016.

Next, the main runway was non-operational for six days a week from February 2017 throughout April 2017 and for six hours on October 23, 2018. Recently, the airport will shut both the runways for three days a week in February and March.

29/12/18 ZeeBiz

Regulatory mechanism for private non-scheduled aircraft must be improved, states a Parliamentary committee report on labour, submitted by Member of Parliament Kirit Somaiya in the Parliament on Friday. **This comes in the light of five deaths in the Ghatkopar plane crash on June 26 this year.**

The report states that the plane carried two ground engineers on the test flight, violating norms, and provided no insurance cover following their death. "The agencies informed the committee that the particular aircraft was grounded due to an accident in February 2008 and its certificate of airworthiness was cancelled. Also, it was repaired in a non-scientific manner, and was taken for test flight without getting completion certificate from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation(DGCA)," read the report.

In July, the DGCA had audited Indamer, the agency that repaired King Air C-90 aircraft that crashed in Ghatkopar. Two pilots, two engineers and a local pedestrian, died in the crash. Observing that aircraft were allowed to undergo test flights without rectifying all defects, the DGCA partially suspended Indamer from conducting aircraft repair or maintenance work.

29/12/18 Indian Express

The CBI has registered two separate cases of illegal trafficking of women and children to the United States of America and Kenya.

Both the cases were registered on Thursday and the first relates to a complaint from the US embassy which reported that an attempt was made by a woman Gagan Gupta, in August last year, to smuggle four minor children to that country allegedly using assumed identities of four students of St Joseph's Convent in Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar district in Punjab. Five persons have been named as accused in the case. The second case registered following a reference from the Ministry of External Affairs which stated an unregistered recruitment agency was involved in trafficking girls and women to Kenya on the pretext of providing them employment.

The embassy said that the staff of United Airlines-83 flight stopped them from boarding the flight as the faces of four children did match with their photographs in the passport, according to the us Embassy complaint to the CBI, which is now part of the FIR.

However, their passports were not seized and they were allowed to leave the Indira Gandhi International Airport. The airline staff did not contact the local police but it provided photos of the minor subjects, of the passports and the airline tickets to the embassy officials.

During inquiry by the embassy, it surfaced **visas issued to the kids were part of a school group from St Joseph Convent for which a trip to the United States was organised by Click Education Services Pvt Limited.**

29/12/18 Pioneer

Ahmedabad/Panaji: **Two days after a passenger was caught smoking aboard an Ahmedabad-Goa flight, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) officials at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) Airport on Thursday ordered an inquiry into the matter.** The alleged incident occurred on December 25 — a 23-year-old student from Ahmedabad, Karan G, was found smoking in the lavatory on Indigo Airlines flight 6E-947 from Ahmedabad to Goa. Smoking violates aircraft safety regulations.

The director of SVPI Airport said: “We have initiated a departmental inquiry into the matter and appropriate action will be taken once the inquiry committee submits its report within a week.” The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) bans flyers from carrying such material as flammable items like lighters and strike-anywhere matches; sharp objects such as scissors; realistic replicas of weapons; sporting goods; tools; and guns and firearms.

Well-placed sources confirmed that the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) official who was deployed at the checkpoint at the domestic terminal of the city airport for scanning cabin luggage has been removed from screening duties in the security hold area. **“The person has been issued a chargesheet. After clearance, the person will be put through a refresher course,”** a source said.

29/12/18 Times of India

Kochi: **The Excise Department has introduced a unique special crack team along the roads leading up to Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) to counter drug movements to and from the airport.**

The team has been constituted by drawing officials from the excise units at Aluva and Ernakulam.

Their deployment will be in sync with the schedule of select flight movement at the airport.

They will be on the roads at the appointed hour to search vehicles. The department has chosen to keep under wraps details of specific flight movements when the team springs into action for surprise checks.

“The decision to deploy such a team was based on information that drug movements were taking place to and from the airport, with Kochi fast emerging as a major transit point. We hope that the experiment will pay dividends,” K. Chandrapalan, Deputy Excise Commissioner, Ernakulam, told The Hindu.

29/12/18 MP Praveen/The Hindu

New Delhi: **In perhaps the first incident of its kind, three wide-body aircraft came alarmingly close to each other within seconds. The first alert of an aircraft being too close to another while flying in Delhi’s flight information region (FIR) sent it into the path of a third. Avoiding this, ironically took it back into the path of the first plane.**

Top aviation officials said the **three aircraft involved in this rare triple trouble a few days ago were Dutch carrier KLM’s Boeing 777 flight 875 from Amsterdam to Bangkok; Taiwanese carrier EVA’s Boeing 777 from Bangkok to Vienna and an American charter company National’s Boeing 747 jumbo jet flight NCR 840 from Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan to Hong Kong.**

Aviation authorities have categorised this as a **serious incident** and referred the probe to the Aircraft Accident Investigation Board (AAIB).

“In the first instance, there was a breach of separation between NCR 840 and EVA Air and the Traffic

Collision Avoidance Systems (TCAS) alarm went off in the flights cockpits,” revealed a source. At this point, NCR 840 was at 31,000 feet, while EVA Air was at 32,000 feet. After the TCAS alarm, NCR 840 asked for higher flight level of 35,000 feet. The air traffic controller asked NCR 840 to ‘standby, expect 350’. This meant that the aircraft was not cleared to climb at that point as the ATC had asked the jumbo jet to standby at the same level.

The controller, however, observed that NCR 840 had started to climb without approval while there was traffic in both its direction (behind it) and in opposite direction. “KLM 875 was flying in the same direction (from Amsterdam-Bangkok) behind NCR 840 at 33,000 feet. During this unauthorised climb, NCR 840 had another TCAS, this time with the KLM flight,” said sources.

28/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Thiruvananthapuram: The state government’s attempt to take over the Trivandrum International Airport has seen a major shift with Cochin International Airport (CIAL) deciding to not take part in the bidding separately. But CIAL, Kannur International Airport (KIAL), and other institutions like KSIDC, KIIFB and NIIF will be part of the special purpose vehicle (SPV) to be formed, with state providing equity in it as technical partners/investor/financial institution.

It follows a December 12 communication from the Centre informing the state they have considered the latter’s request seeking rights of first refusal (ROFR) to the SPV to be formed to participate in the bid along with the strategic partner, who has vast experience.

The Centre said in its communication the option of ROFR evinced by the state is the most practical option, which is acceptable to it as well as the state government.

Speaking to Express, CIAL Managing Director V J Kurian said it would not contest in the bidding independently, but would be part of the consortium of institutions formed in connection with the SPV. If CIAL contests separately, it will amount to conflict of interest and as per the terms and conditions of the Centre’s request of proposal (RFP), a company is not eligible to contest for bidding through two different ways.

CIAL Managing Director V J Kurian said the SPV would have more chances to win the technical and financial bids as it can simply achieve the pre-qualification figure of Rs 3,500 crore stipulated by the RFP.

According to Principal Secretary K R Jyothishil’s order, **the state has decided to set up an SPV called TIAL, to be registered as a private limited company with an initial authorised share capital of Rs 10 lakh and paid-up capital of Rs 5 lakh, after examining the matter in detail.** Share-holding pattern in the SPV would be modified according to the requirements as part the terms and conditions in the RFP to be released by the Centre in case it goes ahead with the bidding.

KIAL, CIAL, KSIDC, KIIFB, NIIF and other institutions may be offered equity in the SPV as technical partners/investor/financial institutions. Similarly, MD, KSIDC, will take necessary action to register the SPV as a company at the earliest and follow-up action as and when GoI takes a final decision in this regard.

28/12/18 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

Kolkata: The Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport has entered Level 1 Mapping of the Airport Carbon Accreditation Programme after it successfully met the necessary requirements. Airports Council International (ACI), an organisation representing the world's airports, announced that NSCBI Airport has successfully completed the first step towards carbon mapping. The airport has achieved a significant milestone through its sustained efforts in using clean and green energy for its day-to-day operations. Its ground mounted grid connected solar plant had been commissioned last year.

The 15 MW plant, capacity wise one of the largest among all the AAI airports across the country, has successfully been able to reduce the carbon emission level at the airport. **Airport Carbon Accreditation Programme is the only institutionally endorsed carbon management certification**

standard for the airports and it recognises the efforts made by the various airports to cut the carbon emission level.

28/12/18 MillenniumPost

Alliance Air, a subsidiary of Air India, is to launch a four-times-a-week flight between Pant Nagar and Dehradun from January 4. The flight is being launched under the regional connectivity scheme of the government. In a statement, the airline said the flight would operate on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. The airline will use an **ATR-42 aircraft which will offer 70 seats.** The airline has launched a promotional fare starting at Rs 1,590.

28/12/18 Business Line

New Delhi: The government on Thursday blamed erstwhile Congress-led UPA regime for turning the national Air Carrier to a loss making unit for not utilising the routes efficiently and said a Revival Plan has been prepared to take it out from the crisis.

Responding to a question from Trinamool Congress lawmaker Dinesh Trivedi, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha said: "Our efforts have brought in change, and there is impressive turnaround of Air India".

He told the Lok Sabha that the government has prepared a **Revival Plan of Air India which focusses on building a competitive and profitable airline group.**

He said the Revival Plan focusses on a comprehensive financial package and that also includes transferring non-core debt.

"The efforts also include higher levels of operational efficiency by strengthening management and implementing best practice business processes," he said.

Asking supplementary questions, Mr Trivedi said when it comes to 'monetisation of assets', the government ought to take care of the 'routes' and how these were handed over to other operators.

27/12/18 UNI

New Delhi: Fliers took to Twitter on Friday to express their concern over the extra baggage fees charged airlines in India, forcing aviation minister Jayant Sinha to intervene. Extra baggage charges have been a matter of concern for people for quite some time now. Twitter user Satish Yadav complained on Friday about IndiGo airline charging Rs 4,000 for 10 Kg extra baggage. He tagged aviation minister Jayant Sinha in his tweet and asked on what basis extra luggage charges are decided.

It may be noted that IndiGo's website clearly states that passengers will have to pay Rs 400 per Kg extra baggage beyond the 15 kg free baggage limit. Yadav in his Twitter rant asked "One 100kgs passenger with 15kgs baggage can board but one 45 kgs passenger cannot board with 35kgs baggage. Is it justified by airlines and government !!! Also, airlines fare is not fixed."

Jayant Sinha responded to Yadav's tweet tagging IndiGo's official Twitter handle and asked the airline to follow up. The airline replied saying, "Hi, Sir. We will connect with the passenger shortly."

Twitterati agreed with Yadav and called IndiGo's extra baggage charges unethical and not customer-friendly.

As per an IANS report, a Parliamentary panel in its recent report stated, "The excess baggage charges, charged by the airlines, are on the higher side. **The Committee feels that the airlines should not consider excess baggage charges as an opportunity to increase their revenue apart from their ticket sales.**"

28/12/18 ETNowNews.com

A plane that crashed in Ghatkopar in June last year killing five people had ineligible employees on board at the time of the mishap, according to a scathing report of the parliamentary standing committee on labour.

The committee headed by BJP MP Kirit Somaiya submitted its findings to the Lok Sabha on Friday. DNA is in possession of a copy of the report that points to gross violations and said **UY Aviation had forced unqualified staffers to carry out a test flight when it crashed.**

The committee said aviation regulator DGCA and the civil aviation ministry must be more serious about safety. It expressed concerns that proper justice/respect was not shown to the family members of the victims by the system and despite illegal behaviour of the aviation company the DGCA Mumbai has not registered any FIR of the accident.

The report calls the crash an eye-opener saying it occurred due to lack of transparency, and manipulation. Citing DGCA' submission, it says the company and the aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) went ahead with the test flight in a bad weather (which prohibits any type of test flights) and that too without the DGCA's mandatory legal sanction.

"The flight carried two ground engineers in illegal manner [ground engineers are not supposed to fly in the test flight]. The family of deceased also stated which is confirmed by the officials that the pilot and ground engineer are pushed into the aircraft forcefully in an illegal manner," said the committee in its report.

Quoting various agencies, the committee said the aircraft had been grounded following an accident in February 2008 and its certificate of airworthiness was cancelled. It was repaired in a non-scientific manner and taken for test flight without DGCA clearance. It was criminal negligence that resulted in the five deaths, said the committee.

According to the committee, the labour ministry in its submission clarified that **the employees, who were on board and died, were not legally appointed and were also not covered for accident death insurance.** "The aircraft was insured for Rs 7 crore in January 2017 in an illegal and non-transparent manner by a PSU insurance company. The deceased employees will not get any insurance," the committee said in its report.

28/12/18 Sanjay Jog/DNA

New Delhi: **Even as the controversy over the Rafale fighter jet deal continues, the Narendra Modi government has taken the next step by issuing 25 per cent of the payment due to the French government in the over Rs 59,000 crore deal.** This was revealed in a report by news agency ANI citing top Air Force sources. India is procuring 36 Rafale fighter jets from France's Dassault Aviation in flyaway condition in a government-to-government deal.

Sources told the news agency the plane delivery schedule was on track and the Indian Air Force is expected to get the **first aircraft in September 2019.** The jets would be put to extensive testing by Indian pilots to evaluate the India-specific enhancements.

"More than 25 per cent of the payments have been made to the French government for the deal as part of the contractual terms and conditions of the project. The amount of the payment is being paid to the French government as the contract is government to government," ANI reported sources as saying.

The sources added that the first batch of four aircraft to be delivered to the IAF by the middle of 2020 would be equipped with advanced avionics and sensors.

The deal to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets was inked during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to France in September 2016. **Dassault Aviation is manufacturing 36 advanced fighter jets with India-**

specific requirements.

28/12/18 TimesNowNews.com

Drones have proven to be game changers in the health-care space – the residents in the island nation of Vanuatu have very few airfields, paved roads or available refrigeration. Here, vaccine availability has been transformed by drone delivery. Applications extend to the delivery of life-saving medicines, blood packets and organs for transplant.

In India, another particularly useful example is in agriculture. Early assessment of crop health, better irrigation practices and even soil and field analysis can only improve agricultural practices across the board. With a number of state governments already using drones to assess and quantify crops and farmlands to try and predict water usage and expedite relief, it is clear that drone applications have more good to offer than popular hysteria would suggest.

However, all of these virtues fall by the wayside when incidents like the ones at Gatwick or HAL airports occur. In both of these cases, unauthorised drones hovering near the runway led to security concerns and disrupted operations. **In the case of Gatwick, it resulted in the airport being shut down for 36 hours and hundreds of flights being cancelled, delaying and stranding thousands of passengers shortly before the start of the holiday season.**

Examples like these are quickly used to make a case for banning drones citing security and safety concerns. **Reasoning along these lines guided the regulation regime around the drone industry in India, which made it prohibitively difficult to for the industry grow or operate over the past two years.**

But if we were to take a step back and evaluate – the issue in both of these incidents was not the drone itself, it was the unauthorised operation of drone flights and their use in restricted areas. For a while now, the perception has been that drones and their abuse were inherently linked and creating a distinction between the two seemed impossible. Fortunately, this is what the new drone regime in India seeks to address.

The recently launched Digital Sky platform has come up with a technology platform for permitting and regulating drone flights and controlled airspace. The innovative NPNT (No Permission No Take Off) system is the key component of this platform. It requires the operator of the drone to apply for permission to fly their drone/s on an online platform. This permission would require details of time of flight, drone specifications as well as the area in which it seeks to fly. The system then immediately generates the permission artefact if all the details sought are accepted.

With this artefact loaded on the drone, the drone will then be able to fly only if the actual flight parameters match the details in the permission sought. Simply put, this system ensures that drones cannot take-off at a time and place the authorities don't want them to, regardless of the pilot's intervention or intent. NPNT is designed to ensure safety and security at a very fundamental level so that incidents like the one in HAL and Gatwick can be prevented even before they occur.

28/12/18 First Post

New Delhi: **The government has prepared a revival plan for Air India that provides for a comprehensive financial package, differentiated strategies for each of the airline's core businesses and robust organisational reforms,** Union Minister Jayant Sinha said Thursday.

Various initiatives to turnaround the national carrier, which is staying afloat on a bailout package extended by the previous government, including monetisation of real estate assets are progressing. Sinha told the Lok Sabha that the government has prepared a revival plan for Air India which focuses on building a competitive and profitable airline group.

A comprehensive financial package, including transfer of non-core debt and assets to a Special Purpose Vehicle, implementation of a robust organisational and governance reforms by the board and differentiated business strategies for each of the core businesses of Air India are part of the plan.

27/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

Mumbai: Aviation watchdog DGCA has proposed duty time limits and rest hours for air traffic services personnel, wherein an individual can be on duty for up to 12 hours in a day.

This is the first time that the regulator has mooted duty time limits for Air Traffic Services (ATS) personnel and it also comes at a time when air traffic has been growing exponentially.

ATS comprises Air Traffic Management and Communication, Navigation and Surveillance (ANS). Duty period will not exceed 12 hours and "the aggregate of duty period will not exceed 50 hours within a defined period of 144 consecutive hours or six consecutive days, according to the draft norms.

The proposal is part of the draft Civil Aviation Requirement (CAR) on 'Watch duty time limitations and rest requirements of air traffic services personnel engaged in air traffic services'.

The watchdog has suggested that the aggregate of the duty period will not exceed 200 hours within a defined period of 720 consecutive hours or 30 consecutive days.

26/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

The Indian government has revealed that 15 aircraft from Air India's fleet have been grounded due to lack of engines and spares.

Responding to queries in parliament, minister of state for civil aviation Jayant Sinha says that as of 6 December, two Boeing 787-8s, three 777s and 10 Airbus A320 family aircraft "were on ground for want of engines and spares".

Air India has a fleet of 123 aircraft.

Sinha adds that due to the grounding of the aircraft, Air India has not been able to add more routes and has had to re-schedule and combine some flights.

The Star Alliance carrier has a long history of well-publicised financial woes.

In October, New Delhi said it was finalising a revival package for Air India that would include financial assistance and a strategy aimed at making it a more competitive carrier.

27/12/18 Aaron Chong/Flight Global

Dehradun: Finance minister Prakash Pant on Thursday announced that the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has given the licence to Naini Saini airport in Pithoragarh for commencing regular flight operations.

Speaking to TOI, Pant said, "The licence now authorizes the aerodrome to be used as a regular place for flight operations. The new airport would boost tourism and give enhanced air-connectivity to the Kumaon region."

Regular flights from the airport are expected to start in January although the minister did not specify a date. "It is now upto the airlines and airports authority to finalise the operations and commence the flights," he said.

The airport once functional is expected to cut travel time to the Kumaon hills significantly especially places frequented by trekkers and tourists like Munsyari and Pithoragarh.

27/12/18 Times of India

New Delhi: **Pilots of Indian carriers will now need to make announcements of important landmarks and monuments while flying over or near them so that passengers can try to catch a glimpse of them. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday issued this advisory to airlines, asking them to do so in local languages apart from English and Hindi also if possible.**

The regulator's advice comes after Prime Minister Narendra Modi had on December 21 tweeted, "I would specially urge you all to visit Kevadia and see the 'Statue of Unity.' Some friends told me that the Statue can also be seen during Delhi-Mumbai flights. So, next time you are flying that route do try to spot the Statue."

The DGCA advisory issued by DGCA's deputy director of flight operations RS Jamwal asks airlines to consider making "following additional in-flight announcements without compromising any safety requirements or the core job functions of crew members: Use of local language, to extent feasible, while making in-flight announcement, other than English and Hindi (and) To enhance awareness about cultural heritage of India, pilot can make In-flight announcement about the important monument or site such as Taj Mahal, Konark Temple, Ajanta Ellora, Statue of Unity etc, which are enroute the flight."

27/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **Regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday asked airline bosses to make in-flight announcement in regional languages.** Airline executives, however, said it was virtually impossible to execute this citing the diverse language spoken across the country.

In an instruction to the head of operations of all airlines, the regulator's flight safety department said that the local language should be used for in-flight announcement wherever possible. The regulator also asked pilots to make an announcement about important national monuments while flying over them.

"All airlines may consider to use local language, to extent feasible while making in-flight announcement other than English & Hindi. Additionally to enhance awareness about cultural heritage of India, pilot can make in-flight announcement about the important monument or site (such as Taj Mahal, Konark Temple, Ajanta Ellora, Statue of Unity) which are en route the flight," a DGCA advisory issued on 27 December said.

Airline bosses speaking anonymously said that implementing announcement in local language will lead to issues of rostering for crews. "A single aircraft sometimes fly through half a dozen language zones in a single day- it may start from Delhi, fly to Mumbai, then to Kochi, then onwards to Chennai, then to Vizag, then to Kolkata and to Guwahati. So which language cabin crew to assign to this aircraft? Obviously it is not possible to have 7+ crew with at least one knowing Marathi, Malayalam, Tamil, Hindi, Telugu, Bengali and Assamese. **This adds a new level of complexity to cabin crew hiring, training and deployment process, which means more money,**" said an executive of a private airline.

"Even pre recorded announcements not possible for so many languages in India," said a second airline executive.

27/12/18 Arindam Majumder/Business Standard

Bengaluru: **A Jet airways flight with 71 passengers onboard was grounded at the Bengaluru airport before takeoff this morning after reports of smoke from the aircraft. The passengers were moved to a different aircraft and the plane was sent for repairs.**

The airline issued a statement confirming the "technical snag", adding that the incident took place while the aircraft was parked at bay.

"Our flight **9W 713 from Bangalore to Mangalore** was delayed due to technical snag, while parked at bay, prior to departure. An alternate aircraft was immediately arranged and the flight departed with 71 guests. We regret the inconvenience caused to our guests."

The latest scare comes days after an IndiGo aircraft made an emergency landing after smoke was detected in the cabin. The airline said all the passengers and crew are safe and that the plane had no earlier report of any malfunction. A video, however, showed thick smoke inside the cabin as passengers were leaving the plane on an inflatable slide.

27/12/18 NDTV

Country's largest airline IndiGo has clarified that its codeshare agreement with Turkish Airlines doesn't entail an equity deal.

"The principle underlying such arrangement... does not have any impact on the shareholding pattern of both parties," the airline said a statement to the National Stock Exchange. IndiGo reiterated that the mutual cooperation arrangement "is purely a commercial arrangement between the parties."

The two airlines had announced a code share agreement on December 21.

IndiGo's clarifications come amidst increasing buzz in the industry that Turkish Airlines could follow up the codeshare agreement with an equity deal with its Indian peer.

The code share is a first that IndiGo has done, and will offer its customers more destinations in Europe through Turkish Airlines' network. The Turkish carrier's customers will get access to destinations in India, through IndiGo's operations.

In its statement on Thursday, IndiGo said that no shares have been issued to any party under the code share agreement.

27/12/18 Moneycontrol.com

New Delhi: The government Wednesday directed all airports to make public announcements in local language first, followed by Hindi and English, officials said.

The latest move follows a directive from civil aviation minister Suresh Prabhu.

Officials said that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has issued a directive to all aerodromes under its control to start making public announcements in the local language in addition to Hindi and English.

The civil aviation ministry has also sent out a communication to private airport operators regarding public announcements to be made in the local language.

26/12/18 PTI/Times of India

Mumbai: IndiGo grounded an A320neo aircraft after its Pratt & Whitney engine shut down midair on December 23, a source said Thursday.

The **Kolkata-bound plane returned to Port Blair and made an emergency landing after the pilot reported an engine had failed**, said the source. **It was the fourth since December 10 when an IndiGo plane faced a technical glitch mid-air**

"On December 23, an IndiGo A320 aircraft (VT-ITE) operating flight 6E-6616 from Port Blair to Kolkata returned to Port Blair. During the flight, the pilot observed low engine no 2 oil pressure. The pilot followed his procedures and landed back to Port Blair," said an IndiGo spokesperson. The aircraft was

withdrawn from service for checks at Port Blair.

IndiGo did not respond to a question on whether it was considering stopping deliveries of the A320neos till the engine issues are fixed.

It also did not reveal how many of its A320 neo's were out of operations due to the engine issues.

P&W did not respond to similar queries.

Significantly, both the aircraft maker and the engine maker have been monetarily compensating the two domestic carriers -- IndiGo and GoAir -- for each grounded plane.

27/12/18 PTI/Business Standard

Did you know that **a consumer court in Maharashtra has ordered Jet Airways to pay a 72-year-old Rs 25,000 along with interest as compensation for rescheduling his flight without informing him?** It was reported last week that the consumer court, while passing the order, clarified, "Rescheduling a confirmed ticket without prior permission of the individual amounts to negligence on part of the company. It caused him inconvenience which also amounts to mental harassment of the senior citizen, for which the complainant is entitled to compensation."

Now this is good news for fliers. Many of us, if not most of us, have at least one horrifying story about the bad service of an airline. It could range from a rescheduled or cancelled flight to fighting for refunds. Not many of us know the recourse that we can take or our basic rights as a flier in such situations.

The aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has laid out rules that airlines should follow in case of delays, cancellations and refunds.

What with it being winter now, delays and cancellations are commonplace and as a flier it would do well to know your rights. Here is a look at some consumer's rights according to the DGCA.

27/12/18 Tania Jaleel/Economic Times

New Delhi: **Holding an airline deficient in services for "abruptly" cancelling a flight, a consumer disputes redressal forum here has directed SpiceJet to compensate a passenger by paying over ₹18,000.**

"We are of the considered view that there is gross deficiency in service on the part of the [airline] in abruptly cancelling the flight without making provision for alternate flight. Holding the [airline] deficient in service, we award a sum of ₹7,466 in favour of the complainant along with an interest of 9% from the date of complaint," said the consumer panel.

The airline has been directed to pay an additional compensation of ₹10,000 towards litigation charges.

Complainant Justice (retd) V.K. Gupta had alleged that the airline had cancelled a flight from Delhi to Kolkata in January 2013, and that he had to book a separate flight by paying additional charges. The airline however contended that "severe fog" led to the cancellation of the flight.

27/12/18 The Hindu

Chennai: Commuters to the airport be warned. The pick-up and drop points at both domestic and international terminals of Chennai Airport will not be the same from today. **In a bid to reduce the time taken to enter and exit the airport, and ease the congestion in front of the international and domestic terminals at Chennai airport, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) will put in place a revised traffic pattern which will be in effect from 11 am, today.**

AAI will provide separate access to departure and arrival levels in both domestic and international terminals. The vehicles in the departure level will have to drop passengers and exit the airport, and will not have access to parking facility both in domestic and international terminals. However, the hitch will be for those picking up passengers from the airport as there is a separate pick-up lane earmarked for private vehicles and cab aggregator Ola. The commercial vehicles will not have access to the pick-up lane; they have been slotted the parking lanes at the airport. Passengers will have to walk down to the parking lane to get access to the commercial vehicles.

Similarly, vehicles in the pick-up lanes cannot use the parking lanes, Chennai airport director G Chandramouli said. The time allowed for vehicles in front of the terminal will be a minimum required time. However, 10 minutes free time from entry to exit of toll booths will continue. A penalty will be imposed on vehicles parking (pick-up /drop) in front of the terminal more than the reasonable time.
26/12/18 New Indian Express

Ambala: Health Minister Anil Vij said on Wednesday that the Centre had decided to develop a civil airport in Ambala Cantonment and a team of the Airports Authority of India had identified land for the purpose.

Speaking to mediapersons, the minister said, “**Under the UDAN scheme**, a civil airport will be developed in Ambala Cantonment by the Centre and a team of the Airport Authority of India has carried out a survey of the land for the purpose. The team has identified land Speaking to mediapersons, the minister said, “Under the UDAN scheme, a civil airport will be developed in Ambala Cantonment by the Centre and a team of the Airport Authority of India has carried out a survey of the land for the purpose. The team has identified land at Barnala village adjoining an Air Force station.”

“Some more information has been sought by the Airports Authority of India and if everything goes right, a domestic airport will be established in Ambala Cantonment soon, which has been a long pending demand. Ambala is a junction and a large number of people reach here daily for business purposes. It will be a successful airport,” he said.

26/12/18 Tribune

New Delhi: Airports in India will be able to use body scanners from next year and spare “clean” passengers physical frisking. The Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) is soon going to come out with technical specifications of these scanners and then airports can install and machines meeting those norms. For infra-starved Indian airports handling way more passengers than their built capacity, this technology — used widely abroad, especially the US — promises to speed up security checks as well as check spiralling security manpower costs.

“We will be issuing the specifications and regulations for active and passive millimetre wave body scanners by early next year. This is being done after their trial runs were conducted successfully (at some Indian airports),” BCAS chief Kumar Rajesh Chandra told TOI. India’s Atomic Energy Regulatory Board did not clear full transmission scanners due to the harmful effect of amount of radiation they expose passengers to, unlike the safer active and passive millimetre wave body scanners.

The scanners to be used in India will need to be customised for Indian ‘conditions’ so that it can penetrate the layers of clothes unique to the country — like chunnat (front fold) of a sari, lungi and pallus. The Central Industrial Security Force had earlier this year said it wanted scanners at airports “improve the efficiency of screeners”.

27/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **After the Authority for Advanced Ruling (AAR) ruling on duty-free shops, the Madhya Pradesh High Court has also ruled out GST exemption on such supplies at airport by Indian manufacturers.**

With this, trader supplying goods to duty-free shops at the airport can't be exempted from paying the GST as the supply isn't a form of export, the court order said.

It said "The petitioner is selling to a person, who is having duty-free shop (to a duty-free operator), which is located in India as per the definition clause as contained under the GST Act."

The petitioner who wanted to supply goods to duty-free shops situated in the duty-free area at international airports was aggrieved by the fact that the benefit available to him under the erstwhile central excise regime (when goods supplied to such shops were exempt from the excise duty) was not available to him under the goods and services tax (GST) regime.

Clarifying on this, the court order said "Undisputedly, in light of the definition as contained under the IGST Act, 2017 **a duty free shop situated at the airport cannot be treated as territory out of India.**

The petitioner is not exporting the goods out of India. He is selling to a supplier, who is within India and the point of sale is also at Indore as the petitioner is receiving price of goods at Indore."

26/12/18 KNN

Were the customs officials you interacted with polite and courteous? How quickly were your customs formalities cleared? Passengers coming from abroad can now give their feedback on these questions at an electronic kiosk inaugurated Wednesday at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport here.

The kiosk at the international arrival hall of the airport has been set up to gather feedback from passengers on ease of customs clearance.

After inaugurating the e-kiosk, chairman of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) S Ramesh said that the customs have been keeping pace with international best practices in respect of passenger as well as cargo facilitation.

"Technology is being used in all aspects of customs functioning to reduce dwell times and to engage constructively with stakeholders," he said.

Ramesh said similar feedback mechanisms would be implemented at other international airports in metropolitan cities of the country as well.

"This (e-kiosk) is representative of our constant endeavours to further the ease of doing business and to conscientiously seek stakeholders' inputs in order to serve them better," said S K Sawhney, Principal Chief Commissioner of Delhi customs.

26/12/18 PTI/DNA

New Delhi: **A Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, working as Chief Photographer with global news agency Reuters at its Delhi office, has been denied entry back into India for alleged violation of visa conditions.**

Cathal McNaughton and his colleagues were awarded the Pulitzer Prize in May 2018 for their photographs that "exposed the world to the violence Rohingya refugees faced in fleeing Myanmar". When contacted, officials in the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said that McNaughton "**violated visa conditions by travelling to restricted and protected areas in Jammu and Kashmir without permission**". Sources told The Indian Express that when McNaughton was sent back from Delhi airport — he was returning from an overseas trip — he had a "valid visa" to enter India.

McNaughton's timeline on Instagram shows he was in Jammu and Kashmir in April 2018 and had covered protests following the rape and murder of a minor in Kathua.

In a photograph of stone pelters, posted on Instagram, he wrote, "A protester throws rubble at

Indian police during a protest against the killing in Kashmir, April 13, 2018". He also posted pictures taken at the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar.

In another Instagram message summing up his work in 2018, posted on December 26, McNaughton wrote, "2018 has been interesting. From winning the Pulitzer to being denied entry back into India. The frigid cold of Pyeongchang Winter Olympics to the stifling heat of the Asian games in Jakarta. Finally the theater of the Whitehouse and the tragedy of a mass shooting in Pittsburgh. Over the next few days, I'll be sharing some highlights and low lights."

28/12/18 Rahul Tripathi/Indian Express

A Delhi-bound IndiGo plane returned to the parking bay from the runway at Hyderabad on Wednesday to offload luggage of an individual who did not board the aircraft.

The early morning flight **6E-308**, carrying 175 passengers, was delayed by 56 minutes, the airline said. The flight was scheduled to take off at 0435 hours.

A passenger said the aircraft returned to the parking bay after being on the runway as the airline had loaded the baggage of a individual who was not on board.

In a statement, an IndiGo spokesperson said one of the passengers who was scheduled to board 6E-308 along with two more passengers, who were travelling under group booking, was a gate no-show. Gate no-show refers to a passenger not turning up at the boarding gate.

26/12/18 PTI/DNA

New Delhi: The Kerala government can bid for operating and managing the Thiruvananthapuram airport at the time of leasing out the aerodrome, the Civil Aviation Ministry said Thursday.

The Centre's decision to lease out the Thiruvananthapuram airport on public private partnership basis has been opposed by the Kerala government.

In November, the central government approved leasing out six airports for operation, management and development under public private partnership. These are Airports Authority of India (AAI) aerodromes at Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru.

Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha told the Lok Sabha that the Kerala government can be a bidder for the Thiruvananthapuram airport.

To a query on whether the Kerala government has requested the Centre to re-consider the decision and allow forming a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) to run the airport, Sinha replied in the affirmative.

27/12/18 PTI/Times of India

The government plans to put in place an "enabling regulatory ecosystem" for aircraft financing and leasing at international financial service centres in India amid domestic airlines placing large orders for planes, according to Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu.

India is the fastest-growing domestic aviation market in the world and many of the local carriers are to induct a substantial number of planes into their respective fleets.

Currently, there are around 600 aircraft operated by domestic scheduled airlines and firm orders have been placed for another 1,000 planes to be taken in the next five to six years, as per official estimates.

Against this backdrop, Prabhu has said that the Civil Aviation Ministry is proposing to have an enabling regulatory ecosystem for aircraft financing and leasing business.

This business is dominated by entities based out of foreign countries, including Ireland and China, while India's role is not significant in this segment.

In a communication, Prabhu said aircraft financing and leasing is a “highly profitable business proposition” that has provided double-digit returns to investors globally even during the financial crisis.

27/12/18 Business Line

New Delhi: The Indira Gandhi International Airport is set to get an elevated taxiway in 2-3 years to link the runways on either side of the existing Centaur Hotel.

But people driving on the expressway below it — to and from Terminal 3 — will not give a clear view of aircraft taxiing like they do at Singapore’s Changi or Germany’s Leipzig/Halle airports. The reason: security agencies have asked Delhi International Airport Pvt Ltd to build a 10ft high wall, or any other view cutter, on the portion of the elevated taxiway over the expressway.

Being a precondition for security reasons, DIAL will have to abide by it. “There was an advice regarding this from the Intelligence Bureau about the proposed elevated taxiway at IGI. Later, a committee was set up with officials from various agencies like the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security, Delhi Police, IB and the Defence Research and Development Organisation. This panel has decided that DIAL should build a 10ft-high wall, or any other view cutter,” said a source. **The idea is to prevent the possibility of aircraft being attacked by shoulder-launched rocket launchers or manpads.**

DIAL’s comments were sought on the issue and were awaited till the time of going to press. DIAL is going to start work on building the “elevated eastern cross taxiways” to provide quick access to aircraft on Runway 27 (closest to Dwarka) and 28 (the main runway) on one side and Runway 29 (closest to the Gurgaon side near Shivji statue) and the fourth runway that is now going to be built on the other side.

This elevated expressway will pass close to where the Centaur Hotel is currently located and which will soon have to be demolished to make way for expanding the airport infrastructure.

27/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Puducherry: The premier institute has procured a nano drone that could be used for various medical purposes including monitoring patients in ICUs'.

Director of JIPMER R P Swaminathan commissioned the service recently, a release from the institute said Thursday.

JIPMER is the first government medical institute to introduce the innovative and unique service, it said.

Head of the IT wing Dr Ravi Kumar Chittoria, who is in charge of medical drone service said, "adoption of medical drones are well established in European countries whereas in India, it is still in the preliminary stage."

He said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has defined five categories of drones including 'nano drones,' which weigh less than or equal to 250grams.

Drones weighing more than 250 gms should be registered with the DGCA.

The institute has already placed orders for micro drones weighing over 250 gms and would get it registered, he said.

Nano drones can be flown into an ICU ward to check on patients without entering the ward to avoid spread of infection.

The drone could also be used to monitor large crowd of patients in Out Patient wards, which would

be useful during emergencies.

27/12/18 PTI/ZeeBiz

Controversies, continuing losses, corner room changes. **For AirAsia India, 2018 was no different from 2017. Its Chief Executive Officer Amar Abrol left following a disciplinary enquiry and the company had a hard time finding his replacement. Its image took a nosedive when the Central Bureau of Investigation accused chairman Tony Fernandes of bribing government officials for regulatory approvals.**

The upshot of all this was a change in the dynamics of the company's management. Tata Sons, the majority shareholder, is now playing a far more active role. For the first time, the CEO has been handpicked by Bombay House. **Sunil Bhaskaran, a former Tata Steel honcho with experience in dealing with corporate affairs (read: dealing with government and regulators) has been appointed CEO. To streamline operations, it has roped in Sanjay Kumar, a veteran in Indian aviation, as chief operating officer. The airline has started a re-evaluation of its route network and is cutting the number of destinations to which it flies.** This marks a major change from the days when, it was alleged, the company's day-to-day operations were handled from AirAsia headquarters in Malaysia.
27/12/18 Arindam Majumder/Business Standard

Pune: A frequent flyer, middle-aged Sudhir Sharma forgot his jacket at the x-ray baggage scanner of the customs in the city airport on his way back from Europe on December 1. About a fortnight on, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) found and returned it to him.

The credit goes to the tenacious CISF men and their "Lost and Found" cellphone application, introduced in March. The CISF contingent at the city airport has been successful in finding at least 20 lost items of flyers after the latter approached the security force through the cellphone application. Sharma, a city based professional, said, "I came back to Pune from Germany via Abu Dhabi that day (December 1). I accidentally left my jacket costing 1,500 euros (close to Rs1.22 lakh) during the checks of the Pune customs and walked out of the airport. I realized it only when I reached home," Sudhir told TOI.

From the next day, Sharma tried to locate his jacket.

A week on, he had to fly to Delhi for a business meeting. "I had crossed the security check when I saw a poster at the airport about the cellphone application — UMANG. It read that if there was a lost and found case, one could report the same through the application," Sharma said.

He downloaded the app and uploaded the details of his lost jacket on the portal in Delhi airport before boarding the plane back to the city. "Just 10 minutes later, I got a call. The caller identified himself as inspector Sunil Jadhav of the CISF from Pune and requested me to tell him about the incident. After I narrated the episode, the inspector assured that he would try his best to locate the jacket," Sharma said.

"The next day, the CISF inspector called me again for a photograph of mine so that he could trace me in the footage of the airport's CCTV cameras and check the belongings I was carrying that day (December 1). I immediately sent him my picture. On December 14, I received a call from Jadhav. He told me that the jacket had been retrieved. I sent a person to the airport to collect it on my behalf," Sharma said.

28/12/18 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet has announced special daily flights between Prayagraj (Allahabad) in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi for the Maha Kumbh Mela, the world's largest Hindu congregation. The proposed flights on the Delhi-Prayagraj route will be operated from **January 6, 2019, to March 30, 2019**, the airline said in a press release. The flight for the Delhi-Prayagraj and Prayagraj -Delhi route can be booked at a price of Rs 3762.

The flight from Delhi will depart at 10:15 AM and arrive in Prayagraj at 11:20 AM, while the flight from Prayagraj will take off at 11:20 AM and land in Delhi at 1:15 PM. Kumbh Mela 2019 is slated to be held at Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj (UP) from January to March 2019. The occasion is expected to witness a footfall of more than 15 crore people.

Meanwhile, the Gurugram-based airline has also announced a host of other new non-stop flights and frequencies connecting Hyderabad to Ahmedabad, Bagdogra and Goa, Hyderabad-Goa. These flights will start from January 10, 2019.

[27/12/18 Financial Express](#)

Kochi: In a freak mishap, two Navy personnel were killed Thursday when a door of an aircraft hangar collapsed at the naval base here, the Navy said.

The two, sailors attached to the aviation electrical branch, were "tragically killed when one of the hangar doors of the Indian Naval Air Squadron 322 collapsed at INS Garuda," a defence statement said.

Naveen (28) and Ajeet Singh (29) were passing by when the door was "dislodged from its supporting rails above" and fell on them, it said.

Initial reports had said the two were killed when the hangar collapsed on them.

"Both the sailors were rushed in a critically injured state to the naval hospital, INHS Sanjivani, where despite best efforts of the doctors to resuscitate them, they succumbed to their injuries at about 9.40 am," the statement said.

A board of inquiry has been ordered into the cause of the accident, it said.

[27/12/18 IndiaPost.com](#)

Chennai: Haru Manju Datta, an unassuming 55-year-old woman from Khar West in Mumbai, has been in Puzhal prison for a couple of weeks now, charged with human trafficking. The Chennai police say during interrogation she admitted she had made five trips to the UK with teenagers posing as her sons. She charged the parents Rs 10 lakh each time for ensuring their sons got menial jobs in the UK. She got caught on her sixth trip from Chennai to London on April 9.

Though she was sentenced to two years in jail by a London court, she was deported back to India on December 1 and the Mumbai police arrested her on arrival. Later the Chennai police took her into custody to unravel the web of contacts she and some agents used to run their trafficking network.

The police here and in Mumbai first learnt about her activities only when she was arrested in London. During interrogation, Datta told investigators how she was approached by some agents in Mumbai promising good money if she would escort teenagers to UK masquerading as mother and son. She said the agents put her in touch with some immigration officers in Chennai airport, and she used to fly to London from Chennai using a fake passport for the teenager. In fact, she said she would use the same passport for the boy with her, only changing the photograph each time.

[27/12/18 Times of India](#)

Mumbai: A Venezuelan national was on Wednesday arrested by customs' air intelligence unit (AIU) for possessing 1.2kg of the drug methaqualone worth Rs 3 crore. The woman, Luisa Garcia Lopez (27), told officials she was supposed to deliver the contraband to someone at a prominent hospital in South Mumbai. She is now in the custody of the narcotics control bureau (NCB), which is investigating the matter.

The NCB is using a translator to interrogate the Spanish-speaking accused, who was intercepted at the airport, so that the person the consignment was meant for can be identified. Lopez was cornered based on a specific tip-off. She arrived in Mumbai from Sao Paulo via Dubai by an Emirates flight. A search of her baggage yielded nine wooden cloth hangers. Finding the nature and the quantity of the item to be suspicious, the AIU put the hangers into the screened machine, which revealed hollow interiors filled with some substance. "We broke open a hanger to find white powder, which we suspected to be a banned drug. With the help of a spot testing kit, we found the powder to be methaqualone," said an officer.

27/12/18 Times of India

Panaji: On the day of Christmas, a passenger of an IndiGo flight was caught smoking in the aircraft toilet by the cabin crew as a strong odour of cigarette smoke came from the toilet. The cabin crew questioned the man on board IndiGo flight 6E-947, going from Ahmedabad to Goa on December 25. Smoking is not allowed in domestic flights under India's air safety rules. The cabin crew then alerted the captain and told him about the policy that bans smoking in planes.

When the flight landed in Goa, the matter was brought to the notice of the local police station. An FIR was filed against the accused, who was then handed over to the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).

27/12/18 ANI/DB Post

Panaji: Customs officials at the Goa airport recovered gold worth Rs 31 lakh from the toilet of an international flight early on Tuesday. The Air India plane, which had arrived from Kuwait, was headed to Chennai after a brief stopover in Goa.

During the halt at Dabolim airport, customs officials searched the aircraft and found gold in a plastic bag stashed in one of its toilets and seized. The exercise was conducted under the supervision of customs commissioner R Manohar.

Since April, Goa customs has seized 7kg of gold valued at around Rs 2 crore at the Dabolim airport. Similarly, foreign currency valued at Rs 36.4 lakh, and commercial goods in trade quantities worth Rs 38 lakh have been seized.

27/12/18 Times of India

Mumbai: Aircraft accident probe agency AAIB has sought assistance from its US counterpart NTSB in investigating the incident of an IndiGo plane's Pratt & Whitney engine emitting smoke mid-air, a senior official said Tuesday.

The incident, which took place in the A320 neo aircraft operating the Jaipur-Kolkata flight on December 10, is also the first time globally that smoke was detected from a P&W engine.

The Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB), which has refuted allegations that it was going slow with the probe, is already pursuing the matter with Airbus and P&W.

"In this case, AAIB is sending this engine to M/s P&W facility for detailed investigation and is seeking assistance from NTSB, USA also," a senior AAIB official told PTI.

Responding to queries about the incident, wherein the plane made an emergency landing at Kolkata airport, the official also said the "question of hushing it (the probe) up doesn't arise at all".

25/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

Union civil aviation ministry has said that no airline was interested in operating night flights from Srinagar Airport.

The ministry told Parliament—in reply to a query by Srinagar MP Farooq Abdullah— that though the infrastructure needed for night flight operation was available at the airport, no airline was interested in doing so.

Farooq had told Parliament that people were facing a lot of inconvenience because night flights were not available at the airport that has been cleared for 'international' flights.

A tiny slice of about 200 kanals of land of the Indian Air Force base, which is built on thousands of kanals of karewa land, is maintained by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) as the Srinagar 'International' Airport, housing the terminal and parking space for aircraft. The runway and everything else belongs to the IAF.

After a commercial aircraft carrying members of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and IAF personnel landed in the night in August, the airport was "technically" cleared for night operations.

Former governor NN Vohra later pushed the issue of night operations with the Union ministries of defence and civil aviation. The Centre recently had asked the IAF to clear the decks for night flights.

26/12/18 Mukeet Akmal/Greater Kashmir

Within a year United Airlines plans to start direct flights from Delhi to San Francisco. With strong local contenders in the Indian commercial airspace, how does US-based United Airlines look at strengthening its hold over the market?

In October, United launched the new Polaris business class, after 12,000 hours of research identifying sleep as a priority for passengers. Globally, United has invested \$400 million over the past two years to ramp up its services. In the backdrop of this, BusinessLine caught up with the Country Manager of United Airlines India, Harvinder Singh. Excerpts:

United Airlines has ordered Boeing 787-9 and Boeing 787-10, but not meant for India route? Given that Boeing 787-9 and 787-10 have range and more fuel efficient, is the fact that the Boeing 777 offers more seats driving the decision?

The Boeing 777-300ER is one of the newest aircraft in our fleet featuring the new United Polaris business class seat and we believe it is the right aircraft type for this route at this time.

Designed for efficiency, the environmentally progressive Boeing 777-300ER aircraft creates less noise leading to a cleaner eco-footprint.

India and the US have an Open Sky agreement yet you fly only in two Indian cities? Why is this? Is it lack of aircraft which have capacity to fly non-stop or you feel it is not a big enough market?

We are proud to have served the India market for over a decade and during that time have carried over three million customers on more than 14,000 flights between India and the US.

Our commitment to this important market is further underpinned by both the introduction of the Boeing 777-300ER on our Mumbai–New York/Newark route in October this year and the launch in December 2019 of a new non-stop seasonal service from New Delhi to San Francisco.

25/12/18 Maitri Porecha/Business Line

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is all set to take over security of hyper-sensitive Srinagar International Airport with the force conducting maiden man-power drill there.

To begin with, the CISF will take over the Anti-hijacking operations that are presently being handled by the Jammu and Kashmir police.

The move comes after the proposal to handover security of all three airports of the State—Srinagar, Jammu and Leh to CISF was cleared by the ministry of home affairs (MHA) in a high-level meeting convened in New Delhi last month. The meeting was participated by top officials from the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), who, according to sources, had recommended CISF deployment at all the three airports of J&K

“The proposal was mooted four-years ago, but got stuck in the technical hitches. Last month, the MHA directed the officials to implement the proposal on fast-track basis,” a source in the MHA said. Out of around 100 airports in India, CISF is managing the security affairs of 61 major airports. A source said that all the three airports in J&K fall under hyper-sensitive category given the “prevailing security scenario in the State.”

25/12/18 Abid Bashir/Greater Kashmir

New Delhi: Last-minute international airfares on most sectors have witnessed a sharp jump this Christmas-New Year due to a combination of factors like the recent spurt in airlines’ operating costs and choked Indian mega airports’ inability to provide slots as per rising demands.

Travel portal Yatra analysed international fares from Delhi and Mumbai for December-end which shows spot Mumbai-San Francisco airfares rising by 45% and Delhi-New York up by 26%. The data shared with TOI shows a few sectors have also seen fall in fares too due to airlines adding some flights to those places.

Airfares have seen a rise to the four hot destinations for Indians during vacations — US, Europe, Southeast Asia and Australia. “As we head into the last couple of weeks of the year, fares are higher on most of the key routes in and out of the country. Indian travel market is growing in double digits and international travel is on the rise. Overall, demand from Indian travellers on these key routes is increasing, while the airline capacity has not kept in pace with that, resulting in fares going up during the peak travel period,” said Yatra COO Sharat Dhall.

Anil Kalsi, a leading Delhi-based travel agent, said international travel from India is constantly growing at 10-12% for past few years. “Those who plan their trips and buy tickets in advance, can get reasonable fares and these get sold out. At last minute only highest fare tickets are available in this peak travel season, with the spot fares being higher than same time 2017-end,” Kalsi said.

26/12/18 Sauabh Sinha/Times of India

In a first, the government has set up an inter-ministerial panel with three Cabinet ministers to decide if Tata-backed Vistara should be given an international flying permit, Business Standard reported. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has the final authority to grant this permission to airlines, according to Aircraft Rules, 1937. In this case, the Centre formed an expert panel due to fears of 'witch-hunts' by investigating agencies, government officials told the publication on condition of anonymity.

"There is a growing risk aversion among bureaucrats and hence, the need of delegating the decision to a joint committee to escape finger-pointing by anyone later," a source said.

AirAsia was in trouble with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for the alleged lobbying for international flight permits. The agency is also looking into the government's decision to amend the 5/20 rule, as part of the same investigation.

According to the 5/20 rule, only the airlines which have been functional for over 5 years and own more than 20 aircraft can fly international routes. The Centre's amendment dropped the 5-year rule. Vistara, which started operations in 2015, directly benefits from this, as it already has a fleet

of 22 aircraft.

25/12/18 Moneycontrol.com

The aviation sector was a story of contrasting fortunes in 2018. **While market leader Interglobe Aviation, or Indigo, added its 200th aircraft in December, rivals Jet Airways and Air India are trying to forge partnerships and seeking funds to stay afloat.**

While Air India's divestment plan failed to attract a single bidder, Jet Airways Chairman Naresh Goyal is negotiating with Etihad Airways to save the airline. The industry was hit badly by the surge in the prices of aviation turbine fuel. This, coupled with the depreciating currency, increased the operating costs of airlines. In the second quarter, IndiGo, Jet Airways and SpiceJet posted a combined loss of Rs 23.38 billion. Things are, however, better in the current month, as ATF prices have declined on a month-on-month basis.

25/12/18 Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard

New Delhi: **The growth in the aviation sector has been low key in 2018. Weakening of the Indian rupee put a strain on airlines as the cost of the main input, air turbine fuel (ATF), soared.** IndiGo which is the market leader in domestic aviation reported losses. Jet Airways has not been able to pay salaries owing to its financial condition.

The UDAN scheme, which was meant to revive unserved and underserved routes, has been unable to lift the spirits of the aviation leaders. While **SpiceJet, IndiGo and Air Alliance** (subsidiary of Air India) have gradually **scaled up operations**, smaller airlines are struggling. **Air Odisha and Air Deccan did not even have the aircraft at the time of bidding.** The government has cancelled a number of routes awarded to Air Odisha and Air Deccan in the first round of route bidding as they could not start operations despite show-cause notices. Air Odisha is facing problems in getting investors. In the second round of bidding as the **government increased the viability gap funding for the helicopter operators**, many of them applied and secured flying rights

26/12/18 Abhijeet Anand/Statesman

Cash strapped national carrier Air India should disclose its assets abroad and earnings from them, the Central Information Commission has ruled.

It "summarily" rejected the contention of Air India that the information sought by activist Aseem Takyar regarding rent, lease fee fetched by it from April 01, 2008 with regard to its properties abroad; demarcation plan and total area of these properties, arrears attracts exemption of commercial confidence under the RTI Act.

"Commission summarily rejects the application of Section 8(1)(d) of the RTI Act in the matter as CPIO has failed to provide any tenable justification for the same," Information Commissioner Divya Prakash Sinha said.

Section 8(1)(d) exempts from disclosure the information which is of commercial confidence, trade secrets or intellectual property, the disclosure of which would harm the competitive position of a third party, unless the competent authority is satisfied that larger public interest warrants the disclosure of such information.

"Appellant has merely sought to know the amount of rent, lease fee and arrears of rent accruing to Air India from its properties abroad and disclosure of this information can by no stretch of imagination impact aspects of commercial confidence," Sinha said.

26/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

After the gloom and doom that characterised the Indian aviation sector in 2018, flyers can look forward to a better travel experience in 2019 as airports, airlines and travel providers eye increasing use of technology to make it easier for travellers to plan, book and fly.

Heading the list is the second busiest airport in the country, **Bengaluru airport**, which **promises to go live with biometric-based, self-boarding during the first quarter of 2019**. The airport also has fully automated check-in facilities, which too will gather momentum.

Bengaluru airport claims that it will take just 45 seconds to complete the baggage check-in at Bangalore International Airport Limited. The self-bag drop will use a two-step process — a passenger will first print a boarding pass and a bag tag at a self check-in kiosk. Once tagged, the passenger will go to the bag drop machine, scan the boarding pass to initiate the bag drop process. The bag will be measured, weighed, scanned and automatically fed into the baggage handling system.

At the moment, Bengaluru airport has 16 fully-automated self-bag drop machines, which it claims is the first in the country. The service is initially available to passengers flying with AirAsia and SpiceJet but will be extended to other airlines as well.

The airport is also on track to have a **new runway** scheduled to become operational by September 2019. The coming up of the second runway will facilitate airlines to operate more flights, which will translate into easier and faster access to the airport.

25/12/18 Ashwini Phadnis/Business Line

Union Civil Aviation Minister Suresh Prabhu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday inaugurated the civil enclave at Indian Air Force (IAF) station in Darbhanga Airbase. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) will develop a new terminal which is likely to boost the connectivity to the region with the commercial flights for Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru. The terminal building with an estimated expenditure of Rs 76 crore is expected to accommodate 200 people and will be developed by May next year.

The move came under the umbrella of the Modi government's ambitious Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (**UDAN**) scheme aimed at improving the regional connectivity by expanding civil aviation network across the country.

The Darbhanga airport with an approximated cost of Rs 92 crore will be developed for commercial flights expected to be launched in June next year. This will be the first airport in Bihar under UDAN scheme. AAI will take charge of operation and management of flight operations.

SpiceJet, a domestic airline has won the bid to operate the flights from Darbhanga airport.

Prabhu addressed the foundation ceremony and claimed that the commencement of civil aviation facility will open new avenues for the development of Mithila, which is a great cultural center. He promised that the Centre will work together with the Bihar government to expand the aviation sector in other parts of Bihar as well.

25/12/18 Asthasavyasachi/Indian Wire

Pune: The poor visibility in the national capital had a cascading effect on flight operations from the city airport on Tuesday, triggering hassles for passengers.

As many as **19 Delhi flights, including arrival and departure, of different airlines** — mainly IndiGo — **were delayed by half-an-hour to close to five hours between 3am and 6pm**. A spokesperson of IndiGo said the main reason for the delays was the **fog in Delhi**.

"The foggy condition led to poor visibility in Delhi, adversely affecting our network in Pune as well as other centres. There was also air traffic congestion at Delhi airport because of the fog. The situation is now returning to normal," the spokesperson told TOI.

The visibility near the Delhi airport dropped to 50 metres on Tuesday morning, delaying flight

operations. A source said as many as 45 flights were delayed in the morning hours, while five others were diverted. He said the poor visibility in Delhi had resulted in all departures being stalled from around 7am to 9:15am.

Anurag, travelling on a Delhi-Pune IndiGo flight, scheduled to take off from the national capital at 8.20am, was flummoxed because his flight was delayed by almost five hours. "I had a plan of meeting my cousin in Pune for a few hours before he travelled to Nagpur. My flight was supposed to land in Pune around 10.20am. But it took off from Delhi only at 1.15pm and landed in Pune around 3pm. By then, my cousin had left for Nagpur," Anurag said.

26/12/18 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Planes are revolutionising the way we travel. They take us across continents in hours and some even travel at speeds faster than sound.

But airline operators across the world — from Hawaiian Air in the US to Air India and Vistara Airlines in India to Thai Airways International in Thailand and Druk Air in neighbouring Bhutan — make sure that these sleek machines are blessed by the divine before they are inducted into their fleets.

"Prior to launching any new planes into service, we invite a kahu (Hawaiian for reverend) to conduct a traditional Hawaiian blessing at the front entrance of the aircraft," a senior official of Hawaiian Airlines tells BusinessLine in an email interview. In addition to the traditional blessing, each aircraft in Hawaiian Airlines' fleet is given a unique and special name as well.

The Thai Airways' website too is full of photographs of monks blessing the nose of aircraft which one assumes are new ones being inducted into its fleet (the airline did not respond to questions). In a statement issued last year when its 51st aircraft joined the fleet, Thai AirAsia had said that it invited an abbot who anointed both the front exterior and cabin of the aircraft for its good fortune. Thai staff members and their families were invited to be part of the ceremony.

In India too, many airlines follow the practice of doing a puja when an aircraft enters service.

Air India has a simple puja at the airport with generally the Chairman and Managing Director or Director, Finance or Engineering, performing it. "A coconut is broken in front of the plane and prasada distributed amongst the people present," says a senior former Air India official.

Earlier, Vijay Mallya, the promoter of the now **defunct Kingfisher Airlines**, insisted that any aircraft joining the fleet first had to fly to **Tirupati** where a **special puja** was performed before it entered commercial service. And a spokesperson of **Vistara** confirms that the **airline performs ceremonious rites under the nose of the aircraft every time a new aircraft enters its fleet. Incidentally, KLM, the Royal Dutch airline, also broke a coconut at Delhi and Mumbai airports when its Boeing 787 Dreamliner landed in India, to herald the launch of the service with this new variety of aircraft.**

25/12/18 Ashwini Phadnis/Business Line

Hyderabad: Forging documents to send illegal immigrants to the Gulf countries started about six months ago, and at least 10 persons have been sent abroad by travel agents in connivance with an employee of Indigo airlines, a probe by Cyberabad police has revealed.

The arrested airline employee was on duty at the arrival lounge on the day but his superiors spotted him roaming at the departure counter using a computer without authorisation.

A senior police official from Cyberabad said that it was an **organised crime being run by travel agents from Kadapa, who come to the city, take shelter and settle things to ensure the successful deal of sending a person illegally abroad, in collusion with employees of private airlines.**

A person who is willing to work in the Gulf countries has to obtain a clearance from the Protector of Emigrants, where the Centre will verify the genuineness of the employer and then allow its citizen to

take up the job there, an officer said.

“This will be verified by the immigration department before departure, but also has to be checked by the airline through which the passenger is flying,” the officer explained.

26/12/18 Jayendra Chaithanya/Deccan Chronicle

Kannur: Customs officials on Tuesday night caught hold of a person who tried to smuggle gold at the newly inaugurated Kannur International Airport. The incident comes within a month since the airport was officially opened for flight operations on December 9.

According to Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), the person identified as Muhammad Shan landed at Kannur from Abu Dhabi in an Air India Express flight on Tuesday.

He had hidden the gold inside a microwave oven, said the officials. Shan who has been taken into custody is being quizzed by DRI officials

Those waiting to receive the accused at the airport are also taken into custody.

26/12/18 New Indian Express

Panaji: Customs Department on Tuesday seized gold jewelry worth Rs. 31.03 lakh from an Air India flight

The flight **AI-976** was operating on **Kuwait-Goa-Chennai** route. The jewelry, packed in a plastic bag was left in the toilet of the aircraft.

Earlier on the intervening night of December 21 and 22, Customs officials intercepted an Indian man who arrived at Bhubaneswar airport from Kuala Lumpur and seized from him gold worth Rs 8.2 lakh.

25/12/18 ANI/Business Standard

A 30-year-old man was arrested at the Jaipur International Airport for allegedly trying to smuggle gold into the country by hiding it in his rectum, a Customs official said Tuesday.

Pankaj Saduwani was taken into custody at the airport Sunday night after the Customs personnel suspected odd behaviour. He had alighted from Thai Airways, Assistant Commissioner, Customs, Hoshiyar Singh said.

During questioning Saduwani revealed that he was hiding **six pieces of gold, weighing about 1 kg, in his rectum,** he said.

Subsequently, he was arrested and the gold seized, Singh said.

26/12/18 PTI/DNA

Goa Customs officials seized 1086 grams of gold worth Rs 31.03 lakhs from Kuwait-Chennai bound flight via Goa VASCO: Customs officials seized 1086 grams of gold worth over Rs 31 lakhs at Goa International Airport on Tuesday.

On arrival of Kuwait-Goa-Chennai Air India Flight AI 976 on December 25, officers of Goa Customs headed by Assistant Commissioner of Customs N G Patel under the supervision of Additional Commissioner of Customs T R Gajalakshmi who rummaged the aircraft recovered assorted gold jewellery weighing 1086 grams valued at Rs 31.03 lakhs which was kept in a plastic carry bag and was placed in the toilet of the aircraft.

The said modus-operandi was to pass the gold jewellery to some domestic passenger boarding from Goa. The Customs officers inquired about the ownership of gold from the passengers but no

passenger came forward to claim the ownership. The said gold was seized under the Customs Act 1962. The whole exercise was conducted under the overall guidance of R. Manohar, Commissioner of Customs. Further investigation is under progress.

26/12/18 Herald

Mumbai: The government Monday said the aircraft accident investigation wing AAIB is pursuing with Airbus and Pratt & Whitney (P&W) the incident of IndiGo plane emitting smoke mid-air with amid allegations that the probe is going slow.

On December 10, IndiGo's A320 neo plane made an emergency landing in Kolkata after smoke filled the plane's cabin. The pilots issued a MayDay call and the passengers were evacuated using emergency chutes.

"There is no question of any probe being hushed up. On the contrary, **the AAIB is pursuing the matter with Airbus and P&W for assessing the reasons and recommending remedial measures,**" civil aviation secretary RN Choubey said.

He was responding to a query about allegations that the probe was being hushed up due to pressure from the ministry and IndiGo.

IndiGo, on its part, also denied "influencing" the probe.

According to an industry source, the AAIB mid-way changed the probe team and brought an official, whose integrity has come under question in the past.

"The AAIB investigation team that was sent to Kolkata after the incident, was discarded the moment they returned back to Delhi. The decision was taken after a senior airline official met a top ministry official and AAIB chief," the source alleged.

According to the source, as per the the AAIB procedure manual only the officer who has visited the spot should be made the investigating officer.

"In this particular case neither the DG nor the senior official who had accompanied him are investigating officers of the case," the source alleged.

24/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

Thiruvananthapuram: A survey conducted by Trivandrum Airport Users Forum – a collective of airport users – found that over 50% of passengers preferred Cochin airport (Cial) over the one in Trivandrum due to the fare difference.

The survey was conducted in the capital after the Centre proposed a PPP model to develop the airport.

The collective surveyed 700 frequent flyers at the airport to compile views on the facilities available (connectivity to international and domestic routes), operation of budget airlines, frequency of connectivity and overall quality of services. The collective includes members of Trivandrum Development Front, a Thiruvananthapuram citizen collective and Technopark employees.

Based on survey findings, **the collective concluded that the proposed PPP-model development will give a much-needed impetus to Trivandrum airport.** "The survey aims to identify the trend by collating info only from frequent travellers. We will give recommendations to government and other stakeholders on development of the airport and improving connectivity," said spokesperson of the collective Anil Kumar Pandala, a former vice-president of Thiruvananthapuram Road Development Company.

Interestingly, 80% of the respondents were familiar with Cial as they had that airport too. "We noticed that demands of airport authority employees, airline operators and political leaders are reported everywhere. Nobody asked travellers or airport users on the PPP proposal for Trivandrum

airport. Thus, the idea for a survey took shape,” said Robin K Rajan, a software engineer at Technopark.

24/12/18 Anasooya S/Times of India

Darbhanga: Union Minister of Civil Aviation Suresh **Prabhu today said the Centre would soon announce the new Integrated Logistics and Air Cargo policy soon taking into account the interest of all the stakeholders.**

Mr Prabhu, while addressing a function organised on the occasion of laying foundation stone of Civil Enclave at Darbhanga Airport here, said the new Integrated Logistics and Air Cargo policy will be formed considering every minute detail pertaining to logistics and cargo to the best of the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

24/12/18 UNI

New Delhi: **Passengers flying into Delhi from various parts of the country this winter will no longer have to worry about diversion of their flights due to fog, thanks to a new technology being introduced by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).**

The Air Traffic Flow Management (**ATFM**) system, in use in nine countries and being introduced in India for the first time, **will provide information to airlines at the place of origin of a flight about the status of fog and congestion in Delhi so that they can plan their flights to the national capital accordingly**, a top Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) official told ANI on Monday.

As of now, in case of fog at Delhi airport, incoming flights are diverted to nearby airports, which causes a lot of inconvenience to the passengers.

Explaining the operation of the ATFM, DIAL CEO Videh Kumar Jaipuria said that **in case of fog at Delhi airport, the status would be conveyed well in advance to the aircraft at the place of their origin itself, asking them to delay departure.**

Talking about other measures taken for passenger convenience, he said the DIAL has set up 24/7 helpline desk and call centres besides increasing the number of inquiry counters at the airport to deal with situations created due to flight delays.

24/12/18 ANI/NDTV

Last week the **Gatwick Airport** at London was **shut for nearly three days**. The reason – unidentified drones! It seems to be unbelievable but it is true that one of the busiest airports in Europe was shut **for business due to drones**.

It appears to be a scene from a sci-fi movie where certain powers from a different planet or Galaxy might have attacked the earth and suddenly there are certain unidentified flying objects, UFOs – in this case, these objects could be identified as drones, but their owners or persons who were controlling them were unknown – threatening the world's existence. Lack of explanation of the presence of these drones is worrying and that is why there has been tremendous confusion and chaos resulting in the closure of the airport for 3 days with an adverse impact on more than 1,000 flights and having about 1,40,000 people stranded, waiting for their flights in the festive season of Christmas and New Year, and spending time at the airport or in the nearby hotels with great deal of uncertainty.

It is really the limitation of the administrative institutions that something as innocuous as a drone – which appears to be a simple device, very benign in operation, and is usually used by people as a hobby and passion or by certain professionals for taking photographs and for collecting data – can be

a source of creating so much confusion that business worth billions of dollars is impacted and schedule of so many people can get affected.

25/12/18 Anuraj K Agarwal/DNA

Dense fog at Delhi airport led to flight departures at Delhi airport being stopped for over two hours starting 7 AM in the morning.

Departures resumed at 9:16 after the visibility improved to over 125 metres, minimum visibility required for departures to happen.

Early morning for also saw diversions for 3 international and one domestic flight, which could not land due to low visibility at Delhi airport.

A minimum visibility of 125 metres is needed for safe flight operations.

Arrivals, however, require minimum visibility needed for them is 50 metres at Delhi airport, which has India's most efficient instrument landing system.

25/12/18 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Hyderabad: Scores of passengers travelling to or via Hyderabad were left in the lurch on Christmas eve with over a dozen flights either reporting inordinate delays, diversions or cancellations all through Monday. While airline authorities attributed the disruptions to bad weather, many passengers demanded that the service providers cough up a compensation, as prescribed by the DGCA.

As per rules, an airline has to pay Rs 10,000 (plus ticket fare) to passengers in case a flight is delayed by more than two hours. Among many destinations that took a hit were Delhi, Kochi, Mumbai, Guwahati, Bengaluru, Visakhapatnam, etc – most of them serviced by IndiGo Airline. Sharing her ordeal, Nandini Gulati, booked on a Delhi-Kochi flight via Hyderabad said how she landed at RGIA about four hours behind schedule, thus missing her connecting flight. Worse, the airline made no arrangement for transit passengers. "The flight (scheduled arrival: 8.55am) was diverted to Chennai. It returned to Hyderabad only around 1pm. We were made to stand outside the gate after being stopped by the security as the boarding pass was no longer valid," said Gulati, lashing out at IndiGo staff for "running away", to avoid fliers' queries. "There was no place to sit, no food, no water," she added. Also, the airline failed to deliver her baggage, once she eventually managed to reach Kochi later in the evening.

25/12/18 Sudipta Sengupta/Times of India

Stiff competition in the skies meant airlines in India were unable to raise airfares for the most part of 2018, and it appears that things are unlikely to change in the coming year as well, as airlines continue to push their capacity expansion to new limits. 2019 will also be the year when low cost carriers (LCCs) will commence flights to long-haul destinations, challenging the incumbent full service carriers (FCCs), and thereby leading to a reduction in international fares.

Also, falling fuel prices may act as the catalyst in this development, as the carriers, after having bled heavily, find some breather to continue the fight, analysts claim.

The development comes even as India, among the fastest growing aviation markets in the world, posted its 50th consecutive month of double-digit growth (15.0 per cent) in November. While this was a step down from the 19.6 per cent posted in September, the strong upward trend in traffic remains in place, supported by structural changes, including ongoing rise in living standards as well as large increases in the number of airport connections within the country, claims the latest report

released by airline lobby group International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Talking about the low fares, John Nair, head (business travel) at Cox & Kings Ltd, said it was a rewarding year for fliers as airfares remained stable despite crude oil prices rising. "Domestic airfares will remain depressed as carriers are dumping capacity," said Nair, adding that LCCs running more international routes, especially long-haul ones, would mean affordable airfares to foreign destinations.

25/12/18 Shahkar Abidi/DNA

New Delhi: Air passengers flying out of Delhi faced inconvenience on Tuesday morning as all departures at the airport were put on hold for two hours due to dense fog and congestion.

Three international and one domestic flights have been diverted so far while arrivals have not been stopped, an official said. The minimum visibility required for take off is 125 metres.

According to the official, since the Low Visibility Take Off (LVTO) requirement is not being fulfilled, departure of flights were on hold for two hours from around 0715 hours. Departure of flights resumed at 0916 hours.

Private weather service Skymet had forecast a foggy morning on Christmas. "While the day will remain sunny, haziness will prevail in the sky. Minimum temperature may see a slight increase but will continue to be below normal levels," it said.

The national capital recorded its coldest December temperature in the past 12 years on Monday with mercury dipping to 3.7 degrees Celsius. The day's maximum temperature was recorded at 21.4 degrees Celsius, which is normal for this time of the season.

25/12/18 News18.com

Kolhapur: A tender worth Rs60 crore has been issued by the Airport Authority of India (AAI) for the Kolhapur airport recently, said Samir Seth, an advisory committee member of the Kolhapur airport. He also said that the tender will be opened on January 8.

According to Seth, the Rs60 crore work involves Rs40 crore work of the terminal building, Rs15 crore of the air traffic control tower and the technical department work and Rs5 crore for landscaping work, among others.

Seth said that the Kolhapur airport will get a fresh look once these works are completed and they are looking forward to a favourable response from the public.

He also said that a meeting for the **night landing facility has been requested in the first week of January in Delhi with AAI officials by city MP, Dhananjay Mahadik.**

Mahadik has sent a letter to the chairman of AAI on Monday, which read, "Mumbai airport is catering to flight operations at full capacity and there is a scarcity of space for parking planes. If the night landing facility is introduced at Kolhapur airport, a couple of night flights originally scheduled for Mumbai airport to Kolhapur, can be started. The flights will reach Mumbai and then carry Kolhapur-bound passengers to the city at night. The plane will be parked in Kolhapur and it will leave the airport the next morning with Mumbai-bound passengers."

25/12/18 Times of India

Guwahati: Airports Authority of India (AAI), in collaboration with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), has embarked on a resilience-building mission for communities living in the vicinity of Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) airport.

The project aims to address challenges to development, primarily by improving health services,

education and sanitation in order to reduce the drivers of vulnerability in the intervention areas of the communities residing in the neighbourhood of the airport, which include a significant tribal population.

Regional executive director of AAI's northeast region, DK Kamra, said through corporate social responsibility schemes here the AAI is trying to maximize the welfare of local communities who were affected by the airport project.

"The sectors like health, education, sanitation and skill development are primarily focused areas. And with UNDP, we are hopeful that it will cater to the needs of the unprivileged and underprivileged sections of society," he said.

Desktop computers have been distributed to schools. Distribution of solar LED lanterns and water purifiers to 10,000 people will follow under the project. Other facilities to be provided under the project include mobile medical units and toilets. Training and medical facilities will be given for three years under the mission.

25/12/18 Times of India

Panaji: The South Goa district administration on Monday imposed a ban on flying lantern kites and using laser beams within 2 km of the state's only airport, the Dabolim International Airport.

The ban, according to a statement issued by the South Goa district administration, would be in force for a period of 60 days.

District Magistrate, South Goa, has imposed a complete ban on lantern kites, wish kites and use of laser beams within 2 km of the Dabolim International Airport as they are a potential threat to flight operations, the statement said.

24/12/18 Outlook

Mumbai: Aeronautical Society of India (AeSI), Mumbai Chapter recently launched the Aviation Mentorship Programme at Vivekananda Education Society Institute of Management (VESIM). The program aims at mentoring and advising budding aviation professionals like Pilots, Flight Attendants, Air traffic Controllers, Flight Dispatchers, Aircraft Maintenance Engineers, Safety and Security Personnel and prospective students who are looking for guidance in their professional growth and to achieve success in their respective aviation streams.

The Chief Guest for the inauguration was Shri Keshava Sharma, Regional Executive Director, -WR- Mumbai, who along with other prominent dignitaries of the aeronautical industry such as Mr. Manmohan Chawla, Mr. Vivek Kulkarni and Dr Punita Masrani shared their immense knowledge and insights of the aeronautical space which were highly appreciated by the attendees.

25/12/18 Sachin Murdeshwar/APN News

New Delhi: Airports Authority of India (AAI) being the sole Air Navigation Service (ANS) provider and operator of Airports across the country is consistently honoring the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. By implementing cost effective carbon mitigation action to conserve environment and reduce its adverse impact on the society and the larger ecosystem, AAI is committed towards the reduction of Green House Gas (GHG).

The policy includes a framework to reduce emissions and develop a Carbon Footprint mapping for the airport's own emissions which are under its control. In line with national as well as global climate change initiatives, **AAI has initiated GHG management program at four of these airports with an objective of ensuring sustainable development of the aviation industry.**

25/12/18 Pioneer

Kochi: The Customs Department has launched a manhunt for the Afghan who has gone missing after being released on bail in a case related to the seizure of foreign currencies worth 10.86 crore - the largest foreign currency haul in the country - from the Cochin International Airport.

The Customs has sought the assistance of the police in Kerala and New Delhi for tracking down Mohammed Siddiqui Yusafi. Yusafi, 33, was arrested by the Customs sleuths while boarding a flight to Dubai from Nedumbassery in June. Yusafi had boarded an Air India flight to Dubai via Kochi from New Delhi. However, due to a technical snag, the passengers were asked to alight at Nedumbassery airport. The currencies - a mix of Dollars and Saudi Riyals - were detected when the baggage was scanned at CIAL.

In July, Customs invoked COFEPOSA detention against him. However, the COFEPOSA review committee decided to cancel the preventive detention stating the accused did not know about the charges against him as he understands only Dari language, a Persian variety spoken in Afghanistan. A top officer, on condition of anonymity, said a petition has been filed before the Ernakulam Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate Court (Economic Offence) for cancelling Yusafi's bail. The Customs officers are apprehensive about the possibility of him leaving the country.

The identities of the persons who stood as sureties for executing the bail were found to be bogus.

"We have already started the search for Mohammad Siddiqui Yusafi. We have approached the Kerala Police to take necessary action to track him down. Our units in New Delhi, where he had been staying, are also looking for him. We will also seek the assistance of Delhi Police in this regard. The persons who stood as sureties also have to be traced," he said.

25/12/18 Toby Antony/New Indian Express

The Abu Dhabi Investment Agency (ADIA) is among the international sovereign wealth funds and long-term investment funds in discussions with European and Southeast Asian airport operations for possible consortium arranged to bid for six state-owned Indian airports currently on offer for privatisation, according to sources.

A number of international and domestic airport operators and some leading infrastructure developers are currently in discussions with financial investors to put in place consortiums before forming up financial and technical bids for six airports in Indian cities, according to officials at leading management consultancy firms in India.

The Airport Authority of India (AAI) sent out requests for proposals (RFPs) on December 14 for the proposed privatisation of the six airports.

Luknow, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Mangaluru and Guwahati are the six brownfield airports for which RFPs have been issued.

ADIA is understood to be in talks with a leading European airport operator to be its consortium partner for bidding for some of the six airports on offer for privatisation.

According to sources, a management consultancy firm is assisting the two as they draw up the contours of their consortium structure and advising them on the details of the terms of conditions of bidding, existing aviation and non-aviation assets and in assessing current passenger and cargo traffic-related information about these airports.

When contacted, a spokesperson for ADIA told Arabian Business that the fund does not comment on possible investment plans.

International consultancy firm Deloitte is said to be assisting AAI in the privatisation process.

Sources said that the prospective bidders – private airport operators, infrastructure developers and

financial investors – are currently taking the help of firms such as PwC, KPMG and EY to study the proposed terms and conditions for operation and management (O&M) and development, besides the revenue sharing model in the RFPs.

These firms will also help the bidders draw up bidding strategies based on their assessments of the existing operations and future development prospects of each airport.

23/12/18 James Mathew/Arabian Business

New Delhi: A six-fold growth over the past two decades in international air traffic from India and a focus on business and leisure travellers has prompted not only foreign airlines such as Air Italy, United and NokScoot to launch new routes to destinations in the country but has also caused several Indian carriers including Jet Airways and IndiGo to start operations on foreign routes connecting airports other than Delhi and Mumbai.

Air Italy, in which Doha-based Qatar Airways holds 49 per cent stake, started three weekly flights each from New Delhi and Mumbai to Milan effective December 7 and December 14, respectively.

“The launch of our India-Italy sector represents another major step forward for Air Italy and reinforces our commitment to our network expansion plans in Asia,” Air Italy’s Chief Operating Officer Rossen Dimitrov had said at a briefing here. He had noted that India is a great market and there are “very high expectations” as there is an opportunity to grow. To leverage the traffic from points other than Delhi and Mumbai, **Air Italy is planning to enter an interline agreement with full-service carrier Vistara.**

Apart from Air Italy, low-cost airline NokScoot – which is a joint-venture between Thailand’s Nok Air and Singapore-based Scoot – launched non-stop service between New Delhi and Bangkok’s Don Mueang airport from December 19. “NokScoot believes these flights will appeal to both leisure and business travellers travelling between Delhi and Bangkok,” the airline said. NokScoot’s deputy CEO Giam Ming Toh pointed out that the carrier plans to add more Indian airports to its network in first half of 2019.

24/12/18 Pranav Mukul/Indian Express

Mohali: The Chandigarh International Airport has faltered in commissioning runway lighting and Instruments Landing System (ILSI), making the job of airline operators tougher during foggy conditions this winter.

The Chandigarh International Airport (CHIAL) authorities had claimed the runway lighting and ILS would be re-commissioned before December 15.

Recently, two airline operators had pulled out their flights to Bangkok and Dubai owing to bad weather conditions which lead to cancellation and diversion of flights, rendering losses. Now, Chandigarh is left with just a single international flight to Sharjah. Air India has already sought temporary suspension or change in time slot for the Sharjah flight, sources said.

CHIAL chief executive officer (CEO) Suneel Dutt said, **“We are facing some problem in re-commissioning the runway lighting and ILS-I, as the Airports Authority of India is yet to clear it. The clearance will be given soon and the AAI will issue NOTAM (notice to airmen) in this regard.”**

NOTAM is a notice filed with an aviation authority to alert pilots of potential hazards along a flight route or at a location that could affect the safety of the flight.

The runway lighting and ILS-I system was temporarily removed due to runway repairs and upgradation. Sources said the armed forces have re-installed the ILS-I system, but the AAI technical officer has refused to give clearance due to some technical faults.

24/12/18 Barinderjit Saluja/Times of India

Thiruvananthapuram: The Ministry of Civil Aviation's (MoCA) move to privatise the Trivandrum International Airport is likely to get entangled in legal battle as the Airport Authority Employees' Union (AAEU) has decided to challenge privatisation decision in the High Court.

The state government has formed a 'special-purpose vehicle' to keep the airport in the public sector, A delegation of union representatives from here the other day met Jayant Sinha, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, and requested him to drop the airport from the list of the airports put up for sale in the country.

The minister, however, refused to intervene in the matter, saying the Union cabinet took the decision to privatise the airports. S Ajith Kumar, secretary of AAEU Trivandrum, said the employees union has given a complaint to the Central Labour Commissioner, who has called a meeting on January 7 in New Delhi. If the meeting fails to reach a consensus, the Union will challenge the privatisation decision at the High Court, he said.

The request for proposal prepared by the MoCA ahead of the privatisation has almost nipped the chances off companies from Kerala from taking part in the bidding. According to Jacob K Phillip, aviation expert, who studied the RFP, the pre-qualification (PQ) criteria listed in the request for proposal included a net worth Rs 1,000 crore as the first pre-qualification to take part in the bidding.
24/12/18 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

Bhubaneswar: A passenger on board a Kolkata-Bengaluru Indigo flight died after suddenly falling ill, forcing the pilot to make an emergency landing at Biju Patnaik International Airport in Bhubaneswar on Saturday morning.

Rajkumar Karmakar (32), a resident of Malda, was taken to Capital Hospital in Bhubaneswar, where he was declared "brought dead". Karmakar was on his way to Bengaluru for a health check-up. Bhubaneswar airport director Suresh Chandra Hota said 45 minutes into the flight, the aircraft sought landing permission from Bhubaneswar air traffic control. "The patient developed some health issues on the plane, forcing the pilots to land. The aircraft took off for Bengaluru shortly after Karmakar was rushed the hospital," he said.

Sunil Choudhary, Karmakar's relative who was accompanying him, said, "His BP fell and his pulse dropped. I sought help from the crew, who contacted the pilots." He, however, refused to provide details of the deceased's medical history.

23/12/18 Riyan Ramanath V/Times of India

A mid-air medical emergency on board an Emirates flight from Dubai to Myanmar's Yangon forced the aircraft to divert to the city airport in Ahmedabad, the airline's spokesperson confirmed to Khaleej Times on Sunday.

The aircraft contacted the Ahmedabad Air Traffic Control (ATC) after **a five-year-old British national on board the flight developed medical complications.**

"The flight was met by airport medical services, and the sick passenger was offloaded with three other accompanying passengers. The flight continued to Yangon and arrived with total delay of 1 hour and 40 minutes," an Emirates spokesperson said in the statement sent to Khaleej Times.

Emirates apologises any inconvenience caused to our passengers for the delay, but the safety of our passengers and crew is of paramount importance," the spokesperson added.

Upon landing, the child was taken to a private hospital near the airport in an Airports Authority of India ambulance. He is still undergoing treatment at the hospital, officials said, adding that the flight

departed for Yangon around 3pm.

23/12/18 Khaleej Times

Margao: After having raked up a controversy by calling north Indian tourists visiting Goa "scum of the earth", town and country planning minister Vijai Sardesai said on Saturday that all airlines coming into the state should make inflight announcements in Konkani or they would not be allowed to land.

Sardesai, who is also the president of Goa Forward Party an ally of Manohar Parrikar-led BJP government, said Goa was not just for tourists.

"If there is no announcement in Konkani when a flight lands at Goa airport, then all these airlines should be stopped. We should project our language first," he said, exhorting the youth wing of his party to take up the issue.

Sardesai said Konkani is a unifier for Goans. "At Goa airport, there is no board that gives instructions in Konkani language. No announcement happens in Konkani. Is Goa airport only for tourists?" he said. He added that the usage of Konkani language at the airport is also a must.

Sardesai said he is not demanding that inflight announcements in Hindi and English languages be discontinued, but only demanding that they be made in Konkani too. In early February, Sardesai had said the heavy influx of north Indian tourists was making it difficult for the state to address the issue of garbage and cleanliness and they were trying to "convert Goa into Gurgaon" and called domestic tourists "scum of the earth".

Following Sardesai's remarks, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar had called his Goa counterpart Manohar Parrikar and lodged a strong protest.

On Saturday, Sardesai who unveiled a plaque to name a city square after his sister at his own constituency, spoke about the anguish she had once expressed over increased projection of casinos at the airports but absence of **Konkani** from the inflight announcements and signboards at the airport.

23/12/18 Times of India

New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (CAAB) has turned down India's proposal for conventional routes between Kolkata and Dhaka with further connectivity to Guwahati. "Proposal for conventional and now Performance-Based Navigation (PBN) routes between Kolkata and Dhaka with further connectivity to Guwahati has been declined by the CAAB," an official in the Ministry of Civil Aviation said.

The proposal for such conventional routes is needed to avert all possible mid-air disaster.

On October 31, two private airline flights were on a reciprocal track, which could have led to the breach of separation while flying in Bangladesh airspace. "However, timely corrective action taken by Air Traffic Controller in Kolkata avoided the emerging situation," the official said.

Sources said, till date, nine such incidents have been reported to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) in 2017 and 2018 along the India-Bangladesh region.

The CAAB was approached by Airports Authority of India (AAI) for conversion of various bi-directional ATS routes passing through Bangladesh airspace connecting Kolkatta, into pairs of uni-directional routes (inbound and outbound).

23/12/18 Sentinel

Low-cost flights between Hong Kong and India have arrived as budget carriers get creative to challenge traditional airlines' passenger volumes and profits.

The move is part of an "experiment" by India's largest carrier **IndiGo to offer cheap long-haul flights using smaller planes over greater distances, including midway refuel stops**, its chief commercial officer William Boulter told the Post in an exclusive interview.

His comments came with the debut of IndiGo's Bangalore to Hong Kong route last week.

Late last month, fellow no-frills carrier Spicejet also launched flights between New Delhi and Hong Kong.

Boulter said: "We are in a test phase and to an extent experimenting with some of these routes. The Hong Kong route is an example that stretches the A320neo [Airbus model]."

The main competitors on routes between Hong Kong and India are the city's Cathay Pacific Airways and Cathay Dragon, which fly to six destinations in the country, and other full-service carriers Air India and Jet Airways.

In the same vein, IndiGo plans to use a low-cost structure to launch flights to London with its existing fleet, with a stopover for refuel at either Baku in Azerbaijan or Tbilisi in Georgia, by the middle of next year. In doing so, it could offer cheaper tickets and expand more aggressively internationally without using larger twin-aisle planes – which it doesn't own or operate.

22/12/18 Danny Lee/South China Morning Post

Passengers at the **Kempegowda International Airport** who were travelling ahead of Christmas were in for disappointment on Saturday morning, as hundreds of them were stranded after flight operations were suspended between 6.30 am and 7.30 am. **Operations of 48 flights were disrupted and three other flights were diverted.**

According to TOI, 13 flights scheduled to arrive and 35 to depart, were delayed. A Bengaluru-bound BlueDart flight from Mumbai, an Indigo flight (6E521) from Kochi and a Spicejet flight (SG 1035) from Hyderabad were diverted to the Chennai airport. According to KIAL, due to the fog and poor visibility, operations were suspended till 8.30 am.

Mohandas Pai, Chairman of Manipal Global Education, who was also stranded tweeted about the "bad service" and impolite staff members of Indigo Airlines. "Kochi bangalore 6E 349 1750 D shows D as 2000 hrs, till now no D, no news, no change in timing; is this the service you give; no elementary courtesy to tell time to Pax? Staff is rude, non communicative! Service sucks! If you do not even have courtesy of communicating," (sic) Pai tweeted.

23/12/18 News Minute

Abu Dhabi: Shamnad was all prepared to attend his brother's wedding on Saturday. He reached the **Abu Dhabi** airport in advance on Thursday night with his family - wife, a four-year-old and two-month-old - for their flight to Kozhikode, Kerala on Friday.

And on Friday evening, a tired Shamnad explained to Khaleej Times the struggle the family went through after a **16.30-hour delay of Air India Express (AIE) flight IX348 to Kozhikode**. He was wondering how to reach the wedding venue in his hometown in Kasargod district, more than four-hour distance from the Kozhikode airport.

Shamnad and family were among more than hundred passengers, who were stranded in the Abu Dhabi International Airport for almost 19 hours. The flight, which was scheduled for 12.20am on Friday, finally took off at 4.50pm.

An Air India Express official told Khaleej Times that it was 'a very rare situation' due to a 'progressive

engineering delay'. "There was an **engineering issue** and we couldn't solve it as easily as expected," he said.

23/12/18 Anu Warriaric/Khaleej Times

Mumbai: Stressed carrier Jet Airways has asked its partner Etihad Airways to back loans worth \$150 million (Rs 1,050 crore) that it plans to raise from overseas banks to keep its operations running, said two people in the know.

India's second biggest airline by market share has made this proposal even as it undergoes a forensic investigation directed by its top local lender.

An Etihad spokesperson said the airline "does not comment on rumour or speculation". An email to Jet didn't yield a response before the story went to press. Etihad currently owns 24% stake in Jet. The airline's chairman Naresh Goyal has been asking owners of the Abu Dhabi-based airline to put in fresh equity, according to people in the know.

But Etihad wants a 49% stake in the Jet—the maximum a foreign carrier is allowed to own in its Indian peer according to current norms— which would mean a narrowing of Goyal's holdings, a proposition Goyal isn't agreeing to.

Jet, burdened with losses and debt and with too little cash to pay salaries or plane lease rentals regularly, needs funds to stay afloat and keep its operations running. With talks on equity infusion making no headway yet, debt raising is the only immediate option, said the people cited above. The airline already has more than Rs 8,000 crore of debt on its books.

Jet's board met Thursday to take stock of its financial restructuring and fundraising plans.

Backing loans raised by Jet would mean the creditors can turn to Etihad if its Indian partner fails to repay. Etihad hasn't yet agreed to the proposal, said the people cited above. It would "be surprising" if it does, they said. "The risks would be extremely high in backing such loans," said one of them.

22/12/18 Anirban Chowdhury/Economic Times

Chennai: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley sought additional grant of over Rs 2,300 crore from the Parliament to be infused as equity in debt-laden Air India.

Jaitley tabled second round of supplementary grants for 2018-19 in Rajya Sabha and sought Rs 2,345 crore as equity infusion coupled with Rs 1,300 crore as grant-in-aid for the national carrier.

According to figures from Air India, government has already infused close to Rs 1,600 crore as equity infusion during FY19. The government was planning further financial assistance for Air India.

Experts state the move suggests that the government has accepted defeat as the process of privatising the carrier failed to generate interest among private parties.

Thus, changing its course, the government under its current revival plan has decided to sell non-core businesses through a special purpose vehicle (SPV).

21/12/18 News Today

New Delhi: Parliamentarians have yet again sought a sector-wise upper cap on airfares after getting complaints from travelling public about high spot fares during certain times when demand peaks. The MPs have accused that the aviation ministry, "though aware of the rampant exploitation", has not done enough to regulate airfares. Accordingly, a report of the standing committee on transport, culture and tourism tabled in Parliament earlier this week has sought to cap of fares.

"Concerted efforts should be made to ensure that airlines increase low fare bucket seats ... With every long weekend and vacation in sight, airfares are increased manifold. Even during natural

calamities, people are not spared extremely high fares," the report said.

The aviation ministry's stand on this frequently-raised demand has been that it cannot regulate airfares which are determined by free competition between airlines and is a factor of demand and supply of seats. In its reply to this demand, the ministry has said every airline determines "tariff having regard to all relevant factors, including the cost of operation, characteristic of services, reasonable profit and the generally prevailing tariff. **Airlines are free to charge reasonable airfares as per their operation viabilities...**"

21/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **Domestic air passenger traffic rose 11.03 per cent in November, with Indian airlines carrying 116.45 lakh passengers during the month.**

The growth rate is one of the lowest in the last four years and the same stood at 13.34 per cent in October.

Latest data released by aviation regulator DGCA showed that no-frills airline IndiGo's market share inched up to 43 per cent while that of national carrier Air India remained unchanged at 12.2 per cent in November.

The traffic went up 11.03 per cent last month, according to the data.

In November, the market share of **Jet Airways** declined to **12.8** per cent from 13.3 per cent in the previous month while that of **SpiceJet** climbed to **12.5** per cent from 11.7 per cent during the same period.

The market share of **GoAir** and **AirAsia** India stood at **8.8** per cent and **5.3** per cent, respectively, as per the data.

"**SpiceJet** has once again clocked the highest **passenger load factor of 91.1** per cent in November 2018. This is the 44th successive month that we have flown with the highest loads in the country," the airline's Chief Sales & Revenue Officer Shilpa Bhatia said.

21/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

Mumbai: **Jet Airways board is understood to have agreed on additional fund raising.** While the Naresh Goyal-led airline refused to comment, industry sources said that some agreement has been cobbled up to ease the financial stress on the company.

On Wednesday, the airline held a board meeting at its Mumbai headquarters. According to sources, all board members and Naresh Goyal had flown down to Mumbai for the meeting.

Issues related to fund raising and the current health of the airline were discussed and the board, the sources said, approved the additional raising of funds.

Currently, Etihad Airways owns 24 per cent stake in the airline. In November, Jet Airways CEO Vinay Dube had said that the airline was in talks with multiple investors for fund infusion.

21/12/18 Business Line

New Delhi: **A hopping flight from Amritsar to Kolkata via Delhi had to return to the bay after taxiing from both the north Indian airports on Friday to offload passengers — one place voluntarily and the other an unruly flyer to be handed over to security agencies.**

These twin episodes happened on **Vistara's flight UK 707** which has a schedule departure time of 3.25 pm from Amritsar. "Once the aircraft started taxiing in Amritsar, a passenger said he wanted to get off the flight with his family due to some personal emergency. The aircraft returned to the bay

where this family got off and after that the plane resumed its journey with a delay of about 1.5 hours," said an official.

Once the plane landed in Delhi, a Kolkata-bound passenger who had boarded in Amritsar got agitated when it started taxiing to take off for Kolkata. "He said he wanted to smoke as he had been in the plane for a long time. He got into an argument with the crew and co-passengers. Once things got too heated, the crew informed the pilot," said the official.

The pilots gave a warning to this passenger. When he continued throwing tantrums and delaying the flight, the aircraft returned to the terminal where the passenger was handed over to security agencies.

22/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

A 32-year-old passenger travelling from Kolkata to Bangalore in a private airlines flight, fell ill mid-air and died at the Capital Hospital here Saturday, officials said.

The man, identified as Rajkumar Karmakar from Malda in West Bengal, was on his way to Bangalore for treatment. He complained of uneasiness 45-minutes after the take off from Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata at 10.10 am, his relative Sunil Choudhury said. The flight was diverted to Bhubaneswar and on landing at the Biju Patnaik International Airport and 11.15 am airport officials and doctors on duty provided necessary assistance to the passenger. He was then rushed to Capital Hospital, airport sources said

22/12/18 PTI/DNA

Pune: A SpiceJet flight to the city from Kolkata was diverted to Mumbai for air traffic congestion on Friday morning, leaving several flyers on-board stranded in the aircraft and those booked on the return flight at Lohegaon airport.

The flight (SG274) took off from Kolkata for Pune at 8.52am. But its pilots diverted to Mumbai because of congestion. A spokesperson of the airline said, "The flight SG274 was diverted to Mumbai due to congestion in Pune." The spokesperson did not respond to the query on the cause of the congestion.

The same flight, after reaching Pune, gets converted into SG275 and flies back to Kolkata at 11.40am. Many passengers were waiting for it in the city airport. The diverted flight finally came to the city around 3.15pm on Friday.

A Kolkata-bound passenger, while expressing frustration on Twitter, said, "Pune-bound SpiceJet flight from Kolkata not allowed to land in Pune for more than 70 minutes. It had to deviate and landed in Mumbai as it was running on low fuel. Passengers stranded now. Who's to blame for this gross inconvenience?"

Rana Dutta, another passenger booked on the Kolkata-bound flight said, "Flight from Pune to Kolkata (SG275) is indefinitely delayed and there's no communication. People are standing at the boarding gate for more than an hour now. The best response I got was the approaching flight is at 13000 feet!"

22/12/18 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Vistara, the joint venture carrier between the Tatas and Singapore Airlines, may have to wait longer to fly international as the civil aviation ministry wants to wait for the Central Bureau of Investigation to complete its inquiry into allegations that the overseas flying norms were relaxed due to lobbying efforts of AirAsia. The Tata group holds stake in AirAsia also and the CBI is probing allegations that the company illegally paid government officials and lobbyists to get overseas flying norms relaxed.

Though overseas flying norms were relaxed by the current government in June 2016, the move began during the earlier UPA rule.

Earlier norms allowed carriers to fly international only after domestic flying experience of five years and after attaining a fleet of 20 aircraft. However, under the new policy, an airline just needs to have 20 aircraft to be eligible to fly overseas. The 20 aircraft have to be deployed for domestic operations and the 21st onwards can be used for international operations.

Vistara, which began operations in January, 2015 got its 20th aircraft in April and currently has 22 aircraft in its fleet so it can begin services to two overseas destinations.

22/12/18 Arun Nayal/Financial Express

Surat: People of Diamond City may soon witness seaplanes operating commercial passenger flights to Statue of Unity with the Ministry of Civil Aviation inviting bids for connecting selected destinations under phase-3 of the regional connectivity scheme, UDAN.

Opening the **third round of RCS**, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has invited proposals to connect Surat with Statue of Unity and other 10 routes, including Baramati, Amby Valley, Ujjain, Lonavala, Mandvi, Kishangarh, Belgaum, Bhavnagar, Amreli and Rajkot.

Earlier, Air Odisha had won the bid for operating flight under RSC connecting Surat to Ahmedabad and Bhavnagar. However, the flight service was stopped due to cash crunch.

Sources said this is first time that the Centre has given Surat so much importance and offered 11 routes, including Statue of Unity in the RCS. This is going to boost the tourism sector as most of the destinations, included in the scheme are tourist places.

22/12/18 Times of India

There's been a lot of hugs and smiles at the Charlottetown airport these days.

Whether it's family members who haven't seen each other for a while or long-time friends reuniting, the airport can be a place where emotions run high.

Randi-Lynn Perry and her two children were eagerly awaiting the arrival of husband and father Tyler Perry, who was coming home for the holidays after spending the last three weeks working in Alberta. "Pretty excited to enjoy the holidays and get a little bit of a break from everyday life," said Randi-Lynn.

Tyler, who has been working in Alberta back and forth for about eight years, said it felt good to be home again.

"There's no better feeling, especially at Christmas."

Jogesh Sharma was waiting for his nephew, Haashish Sharma, to arrive from India. Jogesh has lived on P.E.I. for six years, and Haashish will be the first man in his family to visit him.

Haashish is going to school in Nova Scotia on a student permit, but he'll spend the first week in Canada with his uncle.

"Because he is coming to a new country he didn't know any rules, regulations ... whatever so he's very scared," Jogesh said.

"Instead of going directly to his university he wants to come and meet me so I can teach him a few things and then drop him off."

21/12/18 CBC.ca

Mumbai: Amid unprecedented domestic air passenger traffic and rapidly expanding Low-Cost Carriers' (LCCs') drive, the Boeing Commercial Airplanes has forecast a need of 2,300 new jets to the

present commercial fleet.

The Indian commercial aviation industry is set to positively outgrow over the next 20 years hence there will be the induction of new passenger aircraft valuing upto Dollar 320 billion in the coming years, a release said.

At a press conference on Thursday, Boeing Commercial Airplanes senior vice-president (Asia Pacific and India/Sales) Dinesh Keskar said, "This year alone more than 10 million passengers, on average, traveled within India each month."

"To meet this increased domestic air traffic growth, we see the vast majority of available airplane seats coming from LCCs. The success of this market segment will mean more than 80 percent of all new airplane deliveries in India will be single-aisles," added Mr Keskar.

21/12/18 UNI

Raipur: Flight services at Swami Vivekananda Airport here was affected in morning hours on Friday till 8.30 am due to poor visibility.

As a result, the early morning Air India flight was diverted to Nagpur. The operations then resumed after 8.30 am after the visibility reached 1200 meters in mist.

As per Airport authorities, the Indigo flights from Indore, Hyderabad, and Delhi were delayed by more than half-an-hour while the Kolkata flight was delayed by around two hours. Air India flight from New Delhi to Raipur scheduled to arrive at 7.05 am was diverted to Nagpur and it returned to Raipur at 10.19 am.

Similarly, the JetLite flight from Mumbai was to arrive at 8.00 am which arrived at 10.28 am and Jet Airways flight from Delhi arrived at 10.35 am. The scheduled time of arrival of flight was 8.10 am.

22/12/18 Pioneer

Budget carrier AirAsia India Friday announced the induction of 20th aircraft in its fleet, making it eligible to fly on international routes.

The Tata Sons-Air Asia invested joint venture airline also said it will add Mumbai in its network from early next year with the launch of daily flight services to the country's financial hub from Bengaluru, starting January 15.

This will be Malaysian airliner group's third entry into the Mumbai market after discontinuing the services to the city first by AirAsia Berhad in 2012 and then by its subsidiary Indonesian AirAsia X in April this year.

"We are pleased to make the much-awaited announcement of adding Mumbai to our network. We're also happy to welcome our 20th Airbus A320 aircraft to our fleet," Sunil Bhaskaran, chief executive officer, AirAsia India, said in a release.

The daily services on the Bengaluru-Mumbai route will commence from January 15, the airline said.

21/12/18 PTI/Economic Times

