

Revue de presse Semaine 51 (15-21 December 2018)

New Delhi: **Moving full steam ahead to privatise six big airports on the lines of Delhi and Mumbai's mega airports, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) on Friday issued request for proposal (RFP) for Lucknow, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Mangaluru and Thiruvananthapuram. The state-run airport operator wants to hand over the operations, management and development of these six growing airports to private players for 50 years.**

The authority has given a tight timeline for this **second big round of privatising airports after Delhi and Mumbai were bid out over a decade back**. The last **date for submission of bids is February 14, 2019**. Technical bids will be opened two days later to decide the winner. And the winning player will get the letter of award on February 28, according to the schedule AAI plans to follow.

However, whether all or any of these six airports pass on to private hands in the last few months of this government's tenure remains to be seen. "Any private player taking over a government-run airport or airline expects resistance from the PSU employees working there. They want certain comfort of support from the government that has privatised these airports or airline after taking over the place. Doing so in the last days of a government means the interested players are uncertain of getting support from the next administration in case of a change in guard following the elections," said an airport official on conditions of anonymity.

AAI has had several disagreements with the private airport operators in Delhi and Mumbai over the amount of revenue to be shared. There have been allegations in the past that the private airport operators formed subsidiaries to hive off certain non-aero operations at these airports in a bid to avoid revenue share with AAI as per the privatisation pact.

To avoid such disputes, **the authority has now opted for a new model of revenue generation from these six airports' prospective bidders. "The concessionaire shall pay to the Authority, on a monthly basis, a fee (the 'per-passenger fee') in respect of each passenger (both domestic and international) handled at the airport in accordance with the concession agreement ... the concessionaire shall be entitled to collect charges from users of the airport in accordance with the concession agreement,"** the RFP document says.

[17/12/18 Saurbh Sinha/Times of India](#)

Ending speculations over the privatization of Thiruvananthapuram International Airport, Airport Authority of India has invited proposals for operations and management of the airport. The tender invited for the proposals was released by AAI on Saturday.

The Union cabinet had given an **in-principle approval for leasing out six airports of AAI, including Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Mangalore and Trivandrum, for operation, management and development under public-private partnership (PPP)** through public-private partnership appraisal committee (PPPAC) on November 8. It was proposed as a move to bring efficiency in service delivery, expertise, enterprise and professionalism, apart from investments in the public sector. **As per the AAI tender, the concessionaire will be entrusted with the responsibility of operations and management of the 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 term of concession agreement is mentioned as **50 years** in the tender document. And **concessionaire will have to pay a per-passenger fee for each passenger (both domestic and international) on a monthly basis to the authority. While the concessionaire is permitted to collect charges from users of the airport facilities.**

A pre-bid conference regarding the tender is scheduled to be held on January 17, while the technical bid and financial bid will be opened on February 16 and on February 25 respectively. As per the proposal, letter of award will be issued on February 28.

The airport authority has also appointed two officials to monitor the bidding process and execution of concession agreement. And a data room has been arranged for bidders to visit the airport and ascertain the site conditions, traffic, location, surroundings, climate, availability of power, water and other utilities for access to the site, handling and storage of materials, weather data and applicable laws and regulations.

However, the airport employees have decided to obstruct the entry of any person to the data room, in protest against the move to privatize the airport. The city corporation in its recent council meeting has passed a resolution against the privatization of the airport. Also, the state government has proposed to form an SPV to take over the airport management.

[17/12/18 ANasooya S/Times of India](#)

New Delhi: Shares of Jet Airways fell as much as 4 per cent on BSE in early deals on Monday after news reports suggested Nikos Kardassis, the former CEO of private airline, who made a comeback to the carrier in an advisory role and was tasked to turnaround the cash-strapped airline, has once again parted ways with it.

The former chief executive parted ways with the airline after Naresh Goyal initiated discussions with his investment partner Etihad Airways for further stake sale to garner funds, said a PTI report.

The UAE national carrier Etihad Airways holds 24 per cent stake in Jet Airways, which it acquired in 2013.

The Greek-American aviation veteran in his third come back to the Naresh Goyal-controlled Jet Airways in May this year was roped-in to revive the fortunes of the full-service carrier following its dismal financial performance since January this year.

[17/12/18 Business Standard](#)

Shares of Jet Airways were trading 3% down in Monday's morning session after a PTI report said that the State Bank of India has ordered a forensic audit of the company's books.

A media report stated that the bank has mandated Ernst & Young to conduct a forensic audit of the airline's books for the period between April 2014 and March 2018. The bank is the lead lender to Jet Airways' over Rs 8,000 cr loans.

The development comes at a time when the airline is in talks with potential investors to raise funds to tide over its liquidity crisis.

Jet Airways (India) Ltd's share price is currently at Rs251.75, down by Rs8.2 or 3.15%, from its previous close of Rs259.95 on the BSE.

[17/12/18 India Infoline](#)

New Delhi: After the centre requested the Supreme Court to fix a "factual error" in its judgement that gave the government a clean chit on the Rafale deal for 36 fighter jets from France's Dassault, the opposition said that the ruling BJP allegedly gave "wrong information" in the documents asked by the top court.

Congress MP Sunil Jakhar moved a privilege notice in the Lok Sabha against Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday, while the opposition moved a privilege motion against Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad in Rajya Sabha.

"I have given a breach of privilege notice against the government and in particular against Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad as it was the Law Ministry that gave the go ahead for presenting the affidavit before the Supreme Court," Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said. This is the first time that a government has provided wrong information to the Supreme Court, he added.

On Friday, the Supreme Court had rejected any corruption in the Rs. 59,000-crore Rafale jet deal and dismissed all petitions asking for an investigation.

The Congress has been relentlessly alleging that the government scrapped the previous deal to sign a new one to help Anil Ambani's company bag an offset contract with Dassault. The costs jumped in this deal, Congress chief Rahul Gandhi alleged.

But the court, while dismissing the need for a probe, said, "There is no evidence of commercial favouritism to any private entity."

The bench had based the judgment on a CAG or Comptroller and Auditor General report that it said had been examined by the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee (PAC). However, senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge, who heads the PAC, clarified that he had not received any such report.

Amid uproar over the CAG report, the centre on Saturday said the Supreme Court misinterpreted that the Comptroller and Auditor General had examined the pricing of the jets and submitted its report.

17/12/18 Suni Prabhu/NDTV

Madurai: The Madurai bench of the Madras high court on Monday directed the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to constitute a committee to look into issues between the customs department and the Airport Authority of India that have stalled implementation of international courier service at the Trichy airport.

A division bench of Justice K K Sasidharan and Justice G R Swaminathan issued the direction in response to a petition filed by an association of courier operators.

The court had earlier summoned the customs commissioner and the Trichy airport director after the authorities had failed to implement a central government notification on international courier services at the airport.

While the airport officials submitted that they had provided all necessary infrastructure, customs officials claimed otherwise.

In July 2013, the finance ministry gave its nod for the launch of international courier operations at Trichy airport.

The association filed a petition before the Madurai bench in November 2017 since there were no visible efforts to implement the service.

17/12/18 Srikanth D/Times of India

Starting March, you could cut your drive time from Mumbai to Pune to 35 minutes [a road trip takes approximately 210 minutes]—and have champagne and snacks at both ends while you're at it. **Fly Blade, a New York-based company that works like Uber for helicopter charters, known for swanky, kitted-out lounges at their helipads, has entered India in a joint venture with investment firm Hunch Ventures. Amar Abrol, former CEO of AirAsia India, has signed up as CEO of the India operations.**

The company's maiden route will be between Mumbai and Pune, connecting flights from Mahalaxmi and Juhu in Mumbai to helipads in Pune and Shirdi.

"We are still working out the pricing, but what I can say is that no one has ever been able to fly in a helicopter in India as inexpensively as they will be able to," says Rob Wiesenthal, founder and CEO, Blade, the parent company. "We see a strong affiliation for brands in India, and a real drive for experiences. **There's a segment of consumer population that believes time is money, and one that really wants to say 'I blade into Pune' or 'I went to the lounge'.**"

17/12/18 Pankti Mehta Kadakia/Forbes India

The ministry of civil aviation has announced per passenger fee as the bidding criteria for the privatisation of six airports—Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Trivandrum and Mangalore.

According to the request for proposal (RFP) document released on Friday, the bidder quoting the highest per-passenger fee for domestic travellers will be awarded the rights to operate, manage and develop the six non-metro airports.

"The Concessionaire shall broadly be responsible for operations and management of the existing airport assets, as well as for designing, engineering, financing, construction and development of the further/additional air-side, terminal, city-side and land-side infrastructure for the Airport," the RFP document said. All the six airports are profit making entities for the government.

The government had bid out airports like Delhi and Mumbai on revenue sharing basis with the state-owned Airports Authority of India holding 26% stake. Under the latest document, the airports will be leased out for a period 50 years instead of 30 years in the last privatisation process.

"Per-passenger revenue criteria is better than revenue sharing model. It is difficult to become viable for airports if there is high revenue sharing with the AAI," an airport industry executive told FE.

This will be second round of airport privatisation in the country after Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru aerodromes were opened for private investment 12 years ago.

It will be a single-stage bidding process opened till February 14, 2019. The government has set the minimum net worth for bidders Rs 1,000 crore.

16/12/18 Financial Express

New Delhi: People will soon be able to make calls and access internet through their phones during air travel and ship voyage within the Indian territory as the government has notified rules for providing such services.

Indian and foreign airlines and shipping companies operating in the country can provide in-flight and maritime voice and data services in partnership with a valid Indian telecom licence holder.

"These rules may be called the Flight and Maritime Connectivity Rules, 2018. They shall come into force on the date of their publication in the Official Gazette," the notification dated December 14 said.

The in-flight and maritime connectivity (IFMC) can be provided using telecom networks on ground as well as using satellites.

The services can be provided by a valid telecom licence holder in India through domestic and foreign satellites having permission of the Department of Space, it said.

"In case of using satellite system for providing IFMC, the telegraph message shall be passed through the satellite gateway earth station located within India...and such satellite gateway earth stations shall be interconnected with the NLD (national long distance) or access service or ISP licensee's network for further delivery of service," the notification said.

16/12/18 PTI/The Hindu

Nikos Kardassis, the former chief executive of Jet Airways (India) Ltd., who had returned to the carrier in an advisory role, has once again parted ways with it, a source said.

The Naresh Goyal-controlled full-service carrier roped in the Greek-American aviation veteran for the third time in May this year, to help with the airline's turnaround efforts.

Kardassis hasn't returned since he went on leave to his native place in November, a source privy to the development said. The former chief executive parted ways with the airline after Goyal initiated discussions with his investment partner Etihad Airways for further stake sale to garner funds, said another source.

Jet Airways did not respond to queries on the issue.

Amid persisting financial turbulence, the airline has been implementing a turnaround plan, which includes both cost saving and revenue enhancement. With three back-to-back quarterly losses and a net debt of Rs 8,052 crore as on Sept. 30, the airline is also working on ways to raise funds and reduce costs.

The U.A.E national carrier Etihad Airways holds 24 percent stake in Jet Airways, which it acquired in 2013.

In 2013, Kardassis had quit the airline as its chief executive officer as he was largely kept out of discussions on the deal with Etihad at that time, the source said.

Goyal had brought Kardassis on board to help him and the senior management on cost-saving measures and productivity improvements, in the aftermath of Rs 636.45 crore loss in 2017-18, with the March quarter loss alone at a massive Rs 1,036 crore.

Jet Airways top-level executives led by Kardassis will spend 80 percent of their time focusing on revenue management, Goyal had told shareholders while making public his re-entry in the airline's annual general meeting in Mumbai in early August.

Kardassis served Jet Airways as its CEO in two stints spanning over 14 years—the first stint being between 1994 and 1999. He returned to the carrier in 2008, first as head of North American operations and adviser to the board before assuming the top position once again in 2009 and remained at the helm till 2013.

16/12/18 PTI/Bloomberg Quint

Low-cost carrier SpiceJet is likely to join the global airlines' grouping the International Air Transport Association (IATA) as a member.

The grouping has a membership of around 290 airlines that represent about 82 per cent of total air traffic.

"SpiceJet has requested to be a member," IATA Director General and Chief Executive Officer Alexandre de Juniac told PTI.

There was no immediate response to a query sent to a SpiceJet spokesperson.

Air India, Jet Airways, Jet Lite and Vistara are members of the IATA.

"All the low-cost carriers are welcome. Thirteen per cent of our members are low cost. Almost majority of our new members are low cost, especially in Asia," de Juniac said.

16/12/18 Business Standard

Geneva: **Competitive air ticket prices are a strong stimulator for demand in India but a pricing policy that makes airlines lose too much money is a problem, according to IATA chief Alexandre de Juniac.**

India is the world's fastest growing domestic aviation market and has registered double-digit passenger growth for 50 straight months in October. However, the local carriers are grappling with financial headwinds due to multiple factors, including inability to raise fares amid intense competition and increased fuel prices.

While noting that he is optimistic about Indian aviation market, **de Juniac also flagged concerns about infrastructure, taxation structure and high costs.**

The International Airport Transport Association (IATA) is a grouping of around 290 airlines, including Air India, Jet Airways and Vistara.

"In terms of working of the market, if you are forced to have a pricing policy that makes you lose too much money, then it is a problem at the end of the day," de Juniac told PTI.

His remarks came in response to queries about the Indian market and whether there could be a saturation point where the local airlines might be forced to hike fares.

16/12/18 PTI/Business Line

New Delhi: **The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has raised concerns over the security of airports and other aviation infrastructure in India following an audit at the Chennai airport and the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), the aviation security regulator.**

These concerns raised several questions on the capability of aviation regulators to manage unprecedented growth registered by the sector. In an earlier audit, the ICAO had found **discrepancies in the functioning of the aviation safety regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).** The ICAO has also **questioned the autonomy and authority of BCAS in being able to secure aviation infrastructure in the country.**

BCAS was created in 1978 after the hijack of an Indian airlines flight in 1976. **"ICAO rules make it compulsory for India to make BCAS an autonomous regulator, which it is not currently because it has been created under the Aircraft rules and not an act of parliament,"** said a senior government official, who did not want to be identified.

The ICAO audit of Chennai airport in March found glaring security gaps. The problem areas included low-quality security equipment, improper barricading of airport periphery, cargo safety and documentation of records. Low-quality equipment used for security clearance of baggage at the airport has also been flagged. These observations are set to reduce the rating of India's security regulator, ranking it below many other nations that have a much smaller aviation market compared to India.

16/12/18 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Prayagraj: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the new airport complex at **Prayagraj's Bamrauli airport** is a testament to 'rapid economic development' India has witnessed under the BJP-led Central government.

Prime Minister Modi inaugurated the complex earlier on Sunday, which includes a **new terminal and four aircraft parking bays. The complex, which has been constructed by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at the cost of Rs 169 crore, will allow the Bamrauli Airport, located on the outskirts of Prayagraj, to handle more passenger flights ahead of next month's Kumbh Mela.**

Addressing a gathering, Prime Minister Modi said, "Maybe this is the first-ever Kumbh Mela where people will be able to arrive by land, water, and air. This is proof of the rapid economic development the country is undergoing currently. The country's middle class is growing. Their purchasing capacity is also increasing".

While saying that India's aviation sector has become one of the fastest growing in the world, Prime Minister Modi said, "**Last year, the total number of people travelling in AC trains across the country was lesser than the number of people taking flights.** No one could have imagined that the aviation sector will compete with the Railways".

In a veiled attack on the Congress party, the Prime Minister said that since independence, there were approximately 450 aircraft in the civil aviation industry, while in 2018, around 1000 new aircraft orders have been placed.

16/12/18 ANI/Business Standard

Ahmedabad: To tackle frequent incidents of bird-hits at the Sardar Patel International Airport, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation has decided to remove all illegal constructions around the airport boundary wall.

The AMC had earlier carried out a **survey** and marked **198 residences in the area**. Standing committee chairman, Amul Bhatt, said the AMC will check documents of these 198 residents who have been staying there for a long time. "If the documents are found to be genuine, they would be rehabilitated, and the remaining will be removed," he said.

The encroachment is mostly on the land of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) and hence in coordination with the AAI officials, the same would be removed.

Bhatt said that the AMC has removed fish vendors from the area, but if the corporation finds that the vendors are back, they would be removed again.

16/12/18 Osburn Oracle

Hyderabad: The Union ministry of civil aviation has identified Nagarjunasagar as one of the 10 locations for setting up water aerodromes, as part of Phase 3 of UDAN, a regional airport development scheme.

Minister of state for civil aviation **Jayant Sinha** informed the Rajya Sabha that the **water aerodromes were chosen based on a pre-feasibility study carried out by a multi-disciplinary team of Airports Authority of India.**

A water aerodrome is an area of open water where seaplanes or can land and take off.

The ministry will call for bids for water aerodromes under the 3rd round of Regional Connectivity Scheme. **Apart from Nagarjunasagar, sites include Statue of Unity at Sardar Sarovar Dam, Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad and two more sites in Gujarat, two in Assam, two in Maharashtra and one in Uttarakhand.**

An airstrip already exists in Nagarjunasagar on the Guntur side since 1955, when it was developed during the dam construction.

It is now unused and efforts to revive it has remained on paper for years. The AP government wanted to develop the area for tourism purposes, but it is yet to fructify.

16/12/18 Edward Rupert/Moveefy

New Delhi: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) will hold 70 press conferences across different parts of the country on Monday to "expose" the Congress for "plotting conspiracy" against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government by raking the Rafale deal.

The BJP said the Congress is trying to "mess up" the country's defence, news agency ANI reported.

The announcement to hold these 70 press conferences on Monday came just after the central government on Saturday filed an application before the Supreme Court, seeking correction in its December 14 order where the court had ruled that there was nothing wrong with the Rafale deal. The Modi government has been accused of misleading the Supreme Court in this case. To clear things, the government has filed an application stating that the pricing aspect of the Rafale deal, examined by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG), has not been probed by the Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) as yet.

16/12/18 India Today

Kozhikode: While Kannur International Airport is lobbying for increasing the frequency of flights, those who managed to get clearance for big aircraft from Calicut International Airport are campaigning for Air India to seize the opportunity.

There are reports that the flag carrier would conduct a couple of trials in landing and take off with wide-bodied planes here.

The airport closed for big aircraft since May 2015, started receiving them on December 5 with the landing of Saudi Airlines.

There were **allegations that the director general of civil aviation and the Union ministry had kept on hold the procedures under pressure from other major players in the state.**

Kannur and Cochin are corporate airports with the state government being the single largest stakeholder while the Airport Authority of India runs Calicut and Trivandrum.

16/12/18 Deccan Chronicle

In an effort to open North East India's doors to the International market, the Airport in Guwahati is all set to get a makeover very soon now as the planning, sketches and the fund allocations are all done.

At the Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International Airport in Guwahati, construction work for a new integrated terminal building has begun with over 200 pillars already being erected at the site. Built at a cost of Rs 1,232 crore, the new terminal will be spread across 90,000 sq m.

As per the plans, there will be **two new aerobridges, an international cargo complex and an extended canopy, a new two-level integrated terminal building and new stalls and washrooms in the airport.** Once these new constructions being implemented, the Guwahati Lokapriya Gopinath Bordoloi **Airport will turn into an international airport very soon.**

The new airport will be able to cater 3,100 passengers at peak hour with 2,900 domestic and 200 international commuters. The new terminal will also have a capacity of around 250 flights per day against the current traffic of 160 flights.

The new airport will have 64 check-in counters for the convenience of commuters. With 20 parking bays at the new terminal, the Guwahati airport aims to increase the flight capacity to 300 flights per day. For the convenience of passengers, the new building will also have 20 self-check-in kiosks.

16/12/18 Newsd

When Guillaume Féral and Mike Lomberg land their flight at an airport, they end up surprising the ground staff and Air Traffic Controllers for, the pilots are paraplegic.

"It is often a good conversation starter. The ground staff, the security and everyone else gets surprised to find that I am on a wheelchair and I was the pilot. The surprise also means that people talk to me as they want to know how do I do it. It is a good ice-breaker and conversation starter,"

said Lomberg laughingly.

The two were Ahmedabad as part of their efforts to fly across 40 countries and 80,000 km to help wipe out disability-related stereotypes, including the one that those with disabilities can't fly a plane. So far, the two have covered eight countries and 10,000 km. Both Lomberg and Féral fly their own individual two-seater plane. "The passenger seat has life boats and other equipment," said Féral.

The duo became paraplegic following a motor vehicle and glider accident respectively. On the challenges of flying for those with a disability, Féral says the planes have to be adapted to suit the pilot's disabilities.

"This means the controls that are usually managed by foot have to be managed by hands," said Féral. **The duo will be joined by other paraplegic pilots in South America and Australia. They also have an accompanying pilot, Joseph Rais, and Daniel Ramseier, co-founder and president of Handflight, following them in a third plane. Handflight is a Switzerland-based non-profit that works with and encourages disabled pilots around the world.**

The duo, who also talk about disabilities during their visit to the countries, said that often the perception is that not enough is being done for disabled people.

"In Saudi Arabia, Greece and India we have come across some excellent initiatives for the disabled people. **In India, the focus is on individuals. I visited the Polio Foundation in Ahmedabad and the sort of facilities being provided there is amazing,**" said Lomberg.

[16/12/18 DNA](#)

The Supreme Court has not stayed the suo motu order of the Meghalaya High Court requiring the concerned authorities and the airlines to take a final decision on the dates on which the flights will start operating from the Umroi airport.

Court has only stayed the portion of the high court order which required personal appearance of Aviation officials and officers of Airline carriers, in case of non-compliance with its order.

The high court had, on December 7, directed the Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation to convene a meeting of all the responsible officers and take a decision on the date from which the airport will start functioning.

The bench comprising Chief Justice Mohammad Yaqoob Mir and Justice SR Sen had further made it clear that in case of failure in taking a decision, the Secretary of Ministry of Civil Aviation, Chairman, Airports Authority of India and CEOs/CMDs of the respective airlines will have to remain personally present in court. In its order, the high court had noted with "amusement" the submissions of the airlines, which it said were in absolutely different directions. It had then clarified that the **Ministry of Civil Aviation, which in effect is the regulating authority, has the power to take action against the erring airlines.**

[16/12/18 Apoorva Mandhani/Live Law.in](#)

Visakhapatnam: A Jet Airways flight from Mumbai to Visakhapatnam was diverted to Hyderabad on Saturday due to bad weather in Visakhapatnam.

Jet Airways flight number 9W 979 was scheduled to leave Mumbai at 11.05am and reach Visakhapatnam at 1.10pm. According to passengers, the flight took off 40 minutes late from Mumbai airport. The plane reached Visakhapatnam but was unable to make landing due to bad weather. It was then diverted to Hyderabad. After the diversion, the flight finally landed in Visakhapatnam airport at 6.30pm.

One of the passengers, M Hari Narayanan, municipal commissioner, Greater Visakhapatnam,

requested the airlines staff to allow passengers to take another flight to Visakhapatnam but the request was turned down. Hari Narayanan said he needed to reach Visakhapatnam to supervise rescue arrangements in case cyclone Phethai made landfall in the region.

16/12/18 Times of India

In Pune Jeet Aerospace Institute, set up by Capt Anil Gadgil in Pune in memory of his son Flt Lt Abhijit Gadgil, who was killed in a MiG-21 crash in 2001, has won the prestigious Flight Simulation Medal 2018 awarded by the Royal Aeronautical Society, London.

While the news may have been lost in the haze of recent assembly elections and the controversial SC order on Rafale deal, the award is a recognition of a long struggle by Capt Anil Gadgil and his wife Kavita to wake the government up to the dangers posed to pilots' life by the ageing fleet of MiGs that had earned the unfortunate monicker "flying coffins" in the late 1990s.

While Kavita Gadgil's relentless campaign against MiGs led the then National Democratic Alliance government to start fixing/phasing out MiGs, Capt Anil Gadgil channeled his grief to set up Jeet Aerospace Institute on a piece of family land near Khadakwasla in 2006. **The institute, which has India's only mobile flight simulator, has since trained more than 460 pilots, a feat recognised by Royal Aeronautical Society.**

Capt Gadgil is the first Indian to be honoured with the Flight Simulation Medal and he now stands in some august company –Wright Brothers were one of the earliest recipients of a medal from Royal Aeronautical Society.

The Gadgils, who returned to Pune last week from London, where Capt Gadgil was honoured, remember 2001 like it was yesterday. They could have easily let grief take over their lives. But the fact that those in power tried to portray the MiG crash that killed their son as an error on his part spurred the couple to launch a campaign that has made the skies safer for young pilots.

On an average, eight to ten MiGs crashed every year in the late 90s and early 2000. The Gadgils were not going to let their son take the rap for machines that were not fit to fly.

16/12/18 Satish Nandgaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

Mohali: The poor visibility factor has started showing its effect at Chandigarh International Airport as the Kolkata and Srinagar flights were delayed by over 4 hours on Saturday. A total of eight flights were delayed rendering inconvenience to the passengers.

The most affected were the flights arriving from Delhi as three flights out of seven got delayed. Air Alliance flight got delayed by over two hours owing to poor visibility, said the airport manager of Air India. The flight with scheduled arrival of 7 am arrived at 9:06 am. The flight was delayed by 2:06 hours. The flights departed late from Delhi, at 8:26 am against scheduled departure of 5:55 am, said the official.

The Indigo flight from Kolkata arrived late by 4:34 hours at 12:04 pm against the scheduled arrival of 7:30 am. The flight departed from Kolkata at 9:20 am against the scheduled departure of 4:50 am.

The total air travel time from Kolkata to Chandigarh is 2:40 hours.

Another Indigo flight from Srinagar got delayed by 4:37 hours at 3:22 pm against the scheduled arrival of 10:45 am. The flight departed late at 2:15 pm against scheduled departure of 9:30 am from Srinagar. The total air travel time from Srinagar to Chandigarh is 1:15 hours.

Similarly, other flights of Air India from Delhi, Air Asia from Bengaluru, Indigo from Mumbai, Indigo from Bengaluru, and Jet Airways from Delhi were delayed between 43 to 17 minutes.

16/12/18 Times of India

Mohali: Two were cancelled and 26 others at the Chandigarh international airport owing to low clouds formation on a day the city received one of its strongest monsoon showers on Monday.

As it rained intermittently almost throughout the day, visibility dropped to 1,500 metres, which is much below the minimum permissible visibility of 2,600 metres, according to an airport spokesperson. One flight was diverted back to Delhi, he said.

Flights from Dubai and Sharjah were also delayed along with those from Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Indore and Pune. One IndiGo flight from Delhi was diverted back, whereas an IndiGo flight from Dubai was also diverted to Delhi as they failed to land due to very poor visibility. The 6E 842 IndiGo flight from Delhi did not arrive because of which its departure was cancelled. Similarly, Air flight UK 880/879 also did not arrive from Delhi and Air India flight from Kullu was also cancelled.

16/12/18 Canton Caller

Rajkot: The famous rock song "I would do anything for love... I'd run right into hell and back... I would do anything for love" would be apt to describe what 20-year-old Priyanka Parsana did to help her boyfriend of two years Het Shah (20) become a commercial pilot.

Priyanka allegedly stole cash and jewellery worth over 1 crore to pay for Het's fees at the pilot training academy in Bengaluru. She also vandalised her house to make the incident look like a burglary. Both Priyanka and Het were arrested on Saturday for planning and executing the burglary. Police has also recovered the stolen jewellery and cash from the duo.

According to police, Priyanka's family broke down when they were told that it was their daughter who had stolen the valuables and cash on November 29 for her boyfriend. The case was cracked on Friday late evening, nearly 17 days after Priyanka's father Kishor Parsana, an industrialist, lodged a burglary complaint with the Bhaktinagar police.

Priyanka, a resident of posh Gitanjali Park area in Bhaktinagar, and Het, a resident of Geet Gurjari society on Airport road, were in a relationship for two years. Both were studying to become chartered accountant and had met at a tuition class

According to police, Priyanka stole 3kg gold jewellery worth over Rs 90 lakh, 2kg silver ornaments and Rs 64,000 cash from the cupboard of her house when her mother and married elder sister went out of station on November 29.

She vandalized the house to make it look like a burglary before leaving the house after locking it at 1.15pm. When her father came for lunch from the factory around 2.30pm, he found the house vandalized and informed the police. It was only on December 1, when Priyanka's mother returned, the family came to know that the jewellery and cash from cupboard were missing.

"There was no forced entry and cupboard was opened with the help of duplicate key. It was clear that somebody with a duplicate key was involved in the burglary," assistant commissioner of police, crime branch, Jaydeepsinh Sarvaiya said.

"We became sure that somebody from the family or someone close to them was involved," he added.

16/12/18 Times of India

Kathmandu: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, India, has arrested two Nepalis with 33 kilograms of undeclared gold from West Bengal, which Nepali authorities said could be the precious metal that had disappeared mysteriously.

The DRI said, "On the basis of specific intelligence, its officers intercepted a Maruti Swift VXi car with two occupants — Nepali citizens Rakesh Prasad and Hem Prasad Sharma — at Dankuni Toll Plaza along the Delhi-Kolkata Highway on December 12." While searching the car, 33 pieces of gold bars weighing one kg each were found. The gold bars were concealed in a false compartment behind the dash board and inside a cavity of the vehicle's gearbox.

The DRI said the gold bars were of foreign origin. Indian officials also confiscated INR 54,760 from one of them. This seizure has led Nepali authorities to suspect that gold intercepted by the Indian DRI officials could be the consignment of the 'lost' gold allegedly smuggled by the racket of Chudamani Upreti aka Gorey.

16/12/18 Himalayan Times

Patna: Police has arrested a person with 10 live cartridges at local Jai Prakash Narain International Airport on Sunday.

Police said here that one Rajeev Ranjan, a native of Masaurhi in Patna district was arrested with 10 live cartridges at the airport when he was thoroughly searched on suspicion.

Sources said that Rajeev was going to catch a Mumbai bound Spicejet flight.

The nabbed person is being interrogated at Airport police station, sources added.

16/12/18 UNI

As Air India has a target of improving its numbers by Rs 2,000 crore annually through savings and increase in revenue, the pilots' union has sought the aviation minister's intervention and asked for expansion of the national carrier's network to become profitable.

In a letter to aviation minister Suresh Prabhu, the Indian Commercial Pilots' Association (ICPA) highlighted that the national carrier has increased its network domestically by only 50 flights in the past 10 years.

"All the private carriers have together amongst them hundreds of aircraft on order to keep themselves at par with the demand of ever growing Indian aviation market with a futuristic view of at least the next decade. But we have remained quite stagnant in the domestic market. We still continue to operate the odd 350 flights daily domestically from about 300 flights 10 years ago, whereas IndiGo has gone from 0 to over 1,000 flights a day in the same period," said a letter by ICPA and seen by ET.

It added that the load factor across all Air India flights is very high, but market share is slipping because of want of additional capacity.

"Air India's market share has dropped from 19.8% in January 2014 to just 11.8% in September 2018 which incidentally is the lowest market share ever for Air India. We have just five more A-320 aircraft to join us out of the 27 ordered on lease about 3 years back," the union said.

15/12/18 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

On June 15, 1937, Amelia Earhart, the pioneering aviator, and her navigator, Fred Noonan, landed at Karachi airport in their specially modified Lockheed Model 10 Electra plane. They had been flying for over **13 hours** and travelled **more than 1,800 miles from Assab, in Eritrea.** By doing so, **they'd completed the first ever non-stop flight from the Red Sea to India, as Karachi was a part of then.** Earhart had flown from Assab that morning and had used Aden as a checkpoint along the way. Permission had also been given to land at the British enclave should it be necessary. From Aden,

however, the Americans were restricted to flying a course along the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula. This restriction has often been attributed to Saudi refusal to grant permission to fly over its territory, but the region in question was not, and still is not, part of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The flight would have passed over the Hadhramaut, at the time under a loose British protectorate, and the territories of the sultan of Muscat and Oman, where British influence and control was strong. In December of the previous year, the United States embassy in London had written to the Foreign Office giving details of Earhart's plans for a round-the-world flight and requesting permission to fly through and land in British territories along the way. The matter was passed on to the government of India, who agreed to the flight, with certain restrictions, but envisaged complications with the stretch along the South Arabian coast.

Civil aviation was in its infancy at the time and the British had been developing an air route along the Arab side of the Persian Gulf from Baghdad. For various strategic and pragmatic reasons the British had gone to some lengths to establish control over the air space in the region, securing agreements with the Arab sheikhs that gave them a good deal of authority over the management of air traffic.

[15/12/18 John Hayhurst/Scroll.in](#)

Madurai: District Consumer Disputes Redressal Forum, Madurai has directed the Kingfisher airlines limited to compensate a sum of Rs 44,130 to a customer from Madurai whose flight tickets to Madurai from New Delhi were cancelled at the last moment, forcing his family a delayed and tedious travel to their native town, Karaikudi.

The petitioner, K.S.Muthu, a Deputy Manager with the Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation (TNSTC) has had booked air tickets from New Delhi to Chennai for himself, wife and son for travel on **25th May 2006** by paying a fare of Rs 11,922 and from Chennai to Madurai by paying Rs 6,600. Both the tickets were booked in Air Deccan Airways, later merged with Kingfisher airlines.

The petitioner stated that he left the hotel room with his family after confirming with the airline that the flight was scheduled. However, to his surprise, when he reached the Delhi airport, a representative informed him that the flight was cancelled and no reason was assigned for the same, according to the petition.

After several talks, the airline refunded the fare of New Delhi to Chennai, but only returned half the fare amount of Chennai to Madurai. Subsequently, the petitioner managed to avail tickets in another airline for the next day and ended up spending on the air ticket and additional transport and boarding charges.

[15/12/18 Times of India](#)

Pune: A GoAir flight to Delhi was delayed by over four-and-a-half hours on Friday morning, leaving passengers fuming.

A GoAir spokesperson said, "The Pune-Delhi flight (G8 174) was delayed because of late arrival of the incoming flight. Some incoming flights were diverted to other stations for bad weather and low visibility in Delhi this (Friday) morning. The cascading effect of this delay affected the outbound flight to Pune and, in turn, the overall schedule. All passengers were cared for and the airport staffers kept passengers informed about developments from time to time. GoAir regrets the inconvenience caused to its passengers."

GoAir's same aircraft flies from Delhi to Pune (G8 173) and back (G8 174).

A woman booked on the incoming (Delhi-Pune) flight uploaded a 22-second video on Twitter showing passengers engaged in a heated argument with the airline's staffers and a CISF jawan trying

to pacify them at the Delhi airport. "Traumatic experience as flight to Pune delayed by over five hours; reason given is bad weather, but every other flight has already left. Refusing to give any ETA (estimated time of arrival) or any sort of compensation," the flyer wrote.

The flight from Delhi to Pune (G8 173) was scheduled to take off at 8.35am, but it departed only by 2pm. With the incoming flight delayed, the same flight from Pune to Delhi (G8 174), which was supposed to take off at 11.15am, departed at 3:51pm.

15/12/18 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

Chennai: Chennai airport may build three more parking bays for planes after removing a hangar of Air India near the domestic terminal.

The airline is likely to vacate the hangar after a meeting of top executives was held two days ago to discuss about the changes needed in the operational area of the airport to accommodate ongoing taxiway work. AAI has been asking for the hangar for many month, but the airline was delaying the move though it has scaled down it's operations in Chennai over the years.

Airports Authority of India (AAI) is looking at retrieving a huge parcel of land where the hangar and the aviation turbine fuel facility are located on the eastern side of the domestic terminal.

A senior official said the airport needed more parking bays closer to the terminal as bringing planes parked in the remote bay, located between the main runway and the second runway, to the terminal is time-consuming.

15/12/18 Times of India

Coimbatore: Low-cost carrier SpiceJet will expand its regional connectivity from Coimbatore International Airport from New Year with a new flight from Coimbatore to Kolkata via Hyderabad.

The new flight will **commence operations from January 1**, online bookings for which have started.

As per the booking schedule shown in SpiceJet website, the flight will depart Kolkota at 9.55 a.m. and reach Hyderabad at 12.05 p.m.

The flight will resume journey at 12.35 p.m. and arrive Coimbatore at 2.10 p.m.

The return flight will depart Coimbatore airport at 2.40 p.m. and reach Hyderabad at 4.15 p.m.

The flight will depart for Kolkata at 4.45 p.m. and arrive the destination at 6.55 p.m.

The approximate fare announced by SpiceJet is ₹2,134 to Hyderabad and ₹3,689 to Kolkata.

R. Mahalingam, Director of Coimbatore International Airport, said that the new flight will expand regional connectivity from the industrial city.

15/12/18 Wilson Thomas/The Hindu

New Delhi: For the first time this winter, over 100 flights were delayed and another nine were diverted at Indira Gandhi International Airport on Friday morning owing to bad weather conditions. Officials quoted low visibility, traffic congestion and flights or pilots not being CAT compliant as reasons for the trouble.

The visibility on the runway, officials said, was worst at 50m between 7am and 9am when nine flights were diverted. "The diversions were due to reasons like the aircraft or pilot not being CAT compliant. Others include flights low on fuel or congestion due to poor visibility. Conditions started improving from 9.30am, and there was no problem in the evening," said an airport official.

The runway visual range (RVR) gradually started to improve to 300m by 10am.

15/12/18 Times of India

Raipur: Flight operations were severely affected at Swami Vivekananda Airport between 7 am and 10 am on Friday morning with visibility dropping to almost 10 meters. The extremely poor visibility resulted in delay of some odd 11 flights and diversion of one flight to other airport. The unforeseeable delays led to bunching up of flights which took hours to clear up. Even as thick fog enveloped Capital city since the wee hours, the Meteorological Centre has predicted another dense fog in next 3 to 4 days.

“Air India (AI 477) flight from Delhi to Raipur was diverted to Nagpur Airport due to abrupt weather shift. The flight’s Scheduled Time of Arrival (STA) was 0705 hours, but its diversion to Nagpur delayed its Actual Time of Arrival (ATA) by 4 hours and 14 minutes. The flight finally arrived here at 1119 hours and that too after refuelling. Also, another Air India flight (AI 651) from Mumbai to Raipur was also delayed by 44 minutes. Its STA was 1155 hours but its ATA read 1239 hours,” Rakesh R Sahay, Airport Director told The Hitavada.

Apropos, according to the Airport Director, two Jet Airways flights were also delayed from the take-off point once the operators came know about the weather abnormalities at Raipur end. The Jet Airways (9W 746) flight from Delhi to Raipur was delayed by 3 hours and 10 minutes, wherein its STA was 0825 hours while it ATA read 1145 hours. Similarly, another Jet flight (S2 377) from Mumbai to Raipur was delayed by 3 hours and 45 minutes. The flight’s STA was 0830 hours whereas its ATA read 1215 hours,” he added.

[15/12/18 Hitavada](#)

Mumbai: An IndiGo flight from Mumbai to Lucknow via Delhi was grounded Saturday after a bomb threat call, airport officials said.

The flight, with 169 passengers on board, was scheduled to depart at 6.05 am, they said.

"A passenger travelling with another private carrier told our staff at the Mumbai airport that there could be a bomb on Mumbai-Delhi flight 6E 3612. IndiGo reported the matter to the authorities concerned and followed the normal security protocol," an IndiGo spokesperson said.

"The passenger was found to be mentally unsound. Operations have resumed. However, the flight was delayed by one hour," the spokesperson said.

An airport source said, “A woman passenger travelling to Delhi on Go Air flight G8 329 approached an IndiGo check-in counter at T1 and informed that there was a bomb in flight 6E 3612 (operating on Mumbai-Delhi/Lucknow route).”

[15/12/18 PTI/Times of India](#)

The CBI on December 16 urged a Delhi court to grant it further custody of Christian Michel, alleged middleman charge-sheeted and arrested in the graft-tainted AgustaWestland VVIP chopper deal, for five more days.

The 57-year-old British national was produced before Special Judge Arvind Kumar. The probe agency told the judge he needs to be confronted with various documents in the case.

The court is likely to pronounce an order on his further custody shortly.

Michel was arrested in the UAE and extradited to India on December 4.

The next day, he was produced before the court which allowed his five-day custodial interrogation by the CBI which was later extended to five more days.

[15/12/18 PTI/moneycontrol.com](#)

New Delhi: **Allahabad nee Prayagraj will get a new civil “airport complex” on Sunday when Prime Minister Modi inaugurates the terminal and other infra created by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) in a record time of 11 months. A new terminal and four additional aircraft parking bays have been built at the Bamrauli Airport at a cost of Rs 164 crore.** This terminal can handle upto 300 passengers in an hour and allows Allahabad to have more commercial flights just ahead of the Kumbh Mela that starts mid-January.

A team of top Union aviation ministry officials had last year gone to meet UP CM Yogi Adityanath to discuss how to augment state’s airport infra. During discussions, the CM wondered if AAI could augment Allahabad’s airport infra in time for the Kumbh Mela.

“The time remaining was very less, just over 11 months. We decided to take this project as a challenge. It was not just building a new civil airport terminal but other infra was also required to be added like more aircraft parking bays. That project is now complete and will be inaugurated on Sunday,” AAI chairman Guruprasad Mohapatra said.

Under the Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik-II (UDAN) of regional connectivity scheme (RCS) where fares for flights are capped at Rs 2,500 per hour, AAI has awarded several routes linking Allahabad to 13 other cities. “Routes connecting Allahabad to Bangalore, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Dehradun Gorakhpur, Indore, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, Patna, Pune and Raipur have been awarded. Out of these, flights (between Allahabad) and Lucknow, Patna, Nagpur and Indore have commenced. A non-RCS flight from Delhi to Allahabad has been operated by Alliance Air for a long time,” said Mohapatra.

15/12/18 Times of India

Pune: **Travel agents across Pune held a protest** outside the office of Air India, opposite the Pune RTO, **against the airline’s decision to shift to a single Global Distribution System (GDS).** The move, protesters said, will spell trouble for booking agents across the country and abroad, but will also cause a major dent in the airline’s business.

A GDS is a computerised system that enables transactions between travel industry service providers, like airlines, hotels, car rental companies and travel agencies.

It gives these service providers access to real-time inventory, such as number of hotel rooms available, number of flight seats available, or number of cars available.

Air India’s new GDS will have exclusive access to inventory. Travel agents said this will adversely impact their business.

“Agents earn incentives from service providers and the airline’s decision will hit them hard. It will also **disconnect at least 18 codeshare partners and over 100 inter-line partners.** It will also lead to **loss of business from Star Alliance Partners, a membership that Air India got with difficulty.** It is also understood that GDS companies have proposed alternative strategies with reduced costs to avoid this exclusivity by Air India,” said Nilesh Bhansali, director, Travel Agents’ Association of Pune.

15/12/18 Indian Express

Hyderabad: **Low-cost carrier IndiGo on Friday lodged a complaint with RGI Airport police alleging that four of its staffers working at the airport were issuing boarding passes to international passengers, particularly those travelling to Gulf countries, in a fraudulent manner.**

According to Shamshabad DCP N Prakash Reddy, the complaint by an IndiGo representative alleged that the airline’s ticketing executives — Md Jishan, Khalid Ali Khan, Md Ibrahim and Md Zaheeruddin — colluded with a travel agent to issue boarding passes fraudulently. The complaint, filed after an internal inquiry by IndiGo, alleged the employees executed the fraud in connivance with a

Mehdipatnambased travel agent, Zubair.

“The Protector of Emigrants clearance is necessary for people having educational qualifications below a certain level that are looking to take up employment abroad,” the DCP said.

15/12/18 Mahesh Buddi/Times of India

Tiruchirappalli: Undeclared gold worth Rs 12 lakh was seized from an air passenger by the Customs officials at the airport here Saturday, officials said.

Air Intelligence officials seized gold bangles and chains totally weighing 338 grams and worth Rs.12 lakh from the baggage of Ummul Bargat who arrived here late last night from Malaysia.

15/12/18 PTI/Hans India

No-frills carrier NokScoot, which will start flights from the national capital to Bangkok on Wednesday, plans to have a partnership with an Indian airline, according to an official.

The Thailand-based airline would operate a total of **eight flights on the Delhi-Bangkok route every week**

The airline's Deputy CEO Toh Giam Ming on Tuesday said it is mainly looking at leisure travellers on this route and would add more destination from India next year.

"Following the launch of the Delhi service, NokScoot plans to further spread its wings in India with yet another destination in the first half of 2019," he told reporters here.

NokScoot, a joint venture between Singapore's Scoot and Thailand's Nok Air, would be operating Boeing 777-200 aircraft on the Delhi-Bangkok route. The carrier would be offering 391 economy seats and 24 premium economy seats.

The flight schedule was chosen carefully and provides enough options for leisure travellers. The airline expects to have an **occupancy of 85 per cent,** he added.

From Delhi, the flights would be on Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Saturday while from Bangkok the services would be on Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

Ming also said NokScoot has initiated discussions for a partnership with an Indian carrier. Specific details were not disclosed.

Passengers travelling in the economy class can carry up to 10 kg as hand baggage and would have to pay extra for check-in baggage. In the case of ScootBiz class or premium economy travellers, they would be entitled to 30 kg of free check-in baggage and 10 kg of hand baggage.

Currently, NokScoot -- a medium haul low-cost carrier -- has a fleet of five Boeing 777-200 planes and flies to cities in China, Japan and Taiwan from Bangkok.

Generally, medium haul flights have a duration of four to eight hours.

By the end of 2019, the airline would have a total of 12 planes in its fleet, including five narrow body aircraft, Ming said.

Thailand's Ambassador to India Chutintorn Gongsakdi said that the rise of India would help in opening up new flights and connections.

As many as 1.7 million tourists from India are expected to visit Thailand next year and rise to 2 million by 2020. A total of 10 million tourists are expected by 2030, he added.

The Economic times of India 18/12/2018

New Delhi: India's aviation safety oversight will not be downgraded and continue to retain its top billing. **The American Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which recently conducted an audit of Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), on Tuesday said that India will remain in Category 1-status of safety.**

The thumbs up from the FAA means that Indian carriers will not face hurdles while expanding flights to the US.

Air India, the only Indian carrier that flies to America, will not face stringent checks on its aircraft when they land there and the Maharaja will be able to add frequencies on existing routes as well as have new destinations there on its network.

A senior DGCA official said, **"FAA conducted an audit of DGCA in July 2018 to confirm India's adherence to the standards laid down by ICAO (UN's aviation arm International Civil Aviation Organization) and oversight of Indian airlines. During consultations held with FAA in early November, DGCA presented the actions taken to address the findings of the July 2018 audit. On Tuesday, FAA has formally communicated that India is adhering to the safety standards of ICAO and have confirmed that India's International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) rating remains Category 1."**

The FAA had made about 30 observations earlier this July, all of which were satisfactorily addressed by the DGCA. "Their biggest finding in July was that some charter/private plane operators from India fly to US using aircraft for which DGCA does not have flight operations inspectors type-rated on those planes. That issue has been resolved," said sources.

India, meanwhile, expects its overall aviation safety score given to different countries by ICAO to also improve significantly.

18/12/18 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Two news items hit the Jet Airways stock on December 17, resulting in its share price falling nearly 4 percent, on a day when the market was up. The first news was that SBI, the lead banker for Jet Airways, had ordered a forensic audit of the company's books for the period between April 1, 2014, and March 31, 2018.

Any banker ordering a forensic audit on a company is not good news since the impression it gives is that the bank suspects something. Why else should it not trust the books of accounts? In the case of Jet Airways, it is even more intriguing as the chosen period of 2014-2018 is right after Etihad invested over Rs 2,000 crore for a 24 percent stake in the company in 2013.

Some bankers have been quoted as saying ordering a forensic audit on the company is merely a procedural matter as Jet Airways has approached the banks for a restructuring of its loans. If that is indeed the case and the banks are seriously considering restructuring Jet's loan then it is good news for the company that is struggling to keep afloat.

The money and more importantly the business which came in with Etihad was good enough for Jet Airways to survive for a few years. But a big reason for its survival was the low oil prices prevailing at the time. As soon as oil prices started rising, Jet was back in trouble.

There have been reports of Jet Airways not paying salaries on time, cutting unviable routes and moving towards a no-frills airline by stopping free meals. Jet Airways had earlier said it intends to cut its operating cost by Rs 2,000 crore over the next two years.

17/12/18 Shishir Asthana/Moneycontrol.com

Mumbai: The Union Cabinet’s Appointments Committee has approved the removal of Capt Arvind Kathpalia from the post of director (operations) of Air India.

Kathpalia had failed the mandatory pre-flight breathalyser test an hour before he was to operate AI’s Delhi-London flight 111 on November 11. Two days later, AI decided to remove him from its board of directors. The proposal was sent to the Cabinet for final approval, which came last week. **The order issued by the civil aviation ministry on December 12 says “the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the proposal for removal of Capt Arvind Kathpalia from the post of director (operations), Air India, with respect to November 13, 2018”.**

The 56-year-old commander had reported for flight duty on November 11 with alcohol in his blood, when India’s safety norms state that “the level of blood alcohol compatible with safe flying is zero”. This is also recommended by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

On November 12, the Indian civil aviation regulator suspended Kathpalia's flying licence for three years. According to DGCA norms, even 12 hours after drinking, when blood alcohol level may show zero, there is decrement in task performance. “Alcohol present in body even in small quantities jeopardises flight safety,” the rules say. But reporting for flight duty with alcohol in blood isn’t a criminal offence in India, unlike in countries like the US and UK. In India, licence is suspended for three months for a first-time offender, for three years for a second offence, and the licence is cancelled after the third time.

18/12/18 Times of India

Distressed airlines may get a new line of funding from foreign lenders, as the government is mulling opening up the external commercial borrowing (ECB) route for them to raise.

“Airlines, in their correspondence with the government, have requested that since aviation has become a primary mode of transport and an imperative part of the infrastructure, they should be given benefits such as **access to ECB**. We have written to the finance ministry asking for it,” said a senior ministry official.

The ministry has also asked that the **cap of such borrowings is to be set at \$500 million (Rs 34.5 billion) for a single firm and \$1 billion (Rs 69 billion) for the entire sector**. “Some airlines such as Jet Airways and IndiGo had demanded that the cap be higher, so we have asked for it,” the official said. A Reserve Bank of India (RBI) spokesperson did not respond to queries.

ECBs are loans raised by an Indian corporate entity from a foreign commercial bank or alternate financial institutions to be used for commercial purpose such as capital expenditure.

17/12/18 Canton Caller

If there was a definitive airline story in 2018 it was of disruption – but of quite the wrong kind, and 2019 is promising more of the same. Carriers and their passengers were at the mercy of **gyrating oil prices, striking pilots** at Air France, Virgin, Ryanair and elsewhere, **pilot shortages, militant baggage handlers** around the globe and **extreme weather**. On top of all of that, the major engine makers, Rolls-Royce, Pratt & Whitney and GE and plane manufacturer Boeing all still have **major product problems that have grounded planes**.

The scale of the delays competed for the headlines and won, pushing down column reports on technical innovation. However, while it is no longer the stuff of ‘hot news’, **digitalisation continues to force a shift in business models** as airlines increasingly realise they can no longer focus solely on

controlling their ticket sales and leave other businesses to capture the ancillary revenue. Yet, what is grabbing attention here is the speed at which **Google and Uber are moving to offer to do a better job than the airlines in connecting passengers with the transport solutions they want.**

As Forbes magazine points out, "Google Flights, a simple travel shopping app, is now starting to show baggage and other restrictions along with schedules and fares. It's a safe bet that this functionality will improve before long to show the right combination for each customer — simplicity itself.

Meanwhile, the airlines continue to layer on complexity.

"Less apparent to the consumer, this capability will enable Google to capture richer data about the demands of customers, based on what they search for and click on. For Google, this creates opportunities to sell more targeted advertising, which commands a higher price."

A very different endeavour by Uber, albeit a 'blue-sky one' at this stage, is its white paper outlining **possible plans to develop a network of on-demand, electric air taxis over congested cities** like Los Angeles and Sao Paulo. "It's not that farfetched," adds Forbes. "Last year, Uber partnered with the European airline Transavia to offer UberESCAPE. For one week, customers were able to grab a flight on the app as easily as a car!"

Amazon is also moving in, although only to **cargo handling** at this stage, having committed \$1.5bn toward building an air cargo hub at Cincinnati's airport.

18/12/19 Eye for Travel

Kolkata: Over 100 members of two travel associations held a demonstration in the city on Tuesday in protest against Air India's decision to shift to a single platform for ticket sale and distribution.

The airline has recently switched to a single Global Distribution System (GDS), giving it exclusive access to its entire inventory.

GDS is computerized network that enables transactions between travel industry service providers, mainly airlines, hotels and tourism agencies.

The protesters - members of Travel Agents Association of India (TAAI) and Travel Federation Association of India (TAFI) - gathered outside Air India office around 11.30 am with posters and placards, seeking a review of the new policy.

"The recent decision of the AI to work with just one Global Distribution System (GDS) partner will harm the interest of scores of travel agents as well as the national carrier," TAFI (East) Chairman Anil Punjabi told reporters.

In October, Air India chose UK-based firm Travelport for its ticket distribution services, severing ties with two other platforms, Amadeus and Sabre.

18/12/18 PTI/Business Line

Here's some contrarian holiday travel news: Anyone planning to travel by air in the upcoming holiday week between Christmas and New Year may find it cheaper to book tickets right about now. India's carriers seem to have junked traditional fare economics, selling advance bookings at fares dearer than last year but reducing prices as the window narrows, said industry experts and airline executives. **Ticket prices generally rise closer to the travel date, with airlines taking advantage of lastminute desperation.**

Thanks to competition on the main routes, that's being reversed, which could be a bonanza for air passengers but will be a drag on airline profitability, already under pressure.

"We have already seen an up to 8% year-on-year decline in fares when tickets are booked about 22-28 days before the travel date, compared to a 6% increase when they were booked a couple of

months back for the same date of travel,” said Balu Ramachandra, head of the airline business at Cleartrip.com.

Domestic airfares have been on the rise since October, driven by the onset of the peak travel period as well as an increase in fuel prices.

“However, with oil cooling off, we have seen a drop in fares over the past 10 days, for travel around Christmas and the New Year, with a couple of carriers even launching sales for this period,” said Sharat Dhall, chief operating officer of travel portal Yatra.

Some airline executives concurred. “While fares are definitely higher than the abject lows of October, they are still up to 15% lower on several sectors when compared to last year,” said the top executive at a low-fare carrier. “A Delhi-Goa ticket is still available for Rs 7,500. With the kind of Christmas demand we’re seeing, the market can absorb much more.”

Others said this is not true in all cases. “We are raising fares close to the date of travel,” said a senior executive at a full-service carrier. “It’s perhaps airlines with too much capacity and limited demand to fill planes that are doing it.”

But the overall problem has been acknowledged by airline executives. Senior executives at IndiGo, India’s top carrier by market share, complained in a recent post-earnings conference call that the pressure on yields — what airlines earn from ticket prices — is more two weeks or less before the travel date. Indi-Go’s co-founder Rahul Bhatia, however, said the airline does not start fare wars.

India’s airlines have been grappling with losses over the past few quarters as they undercut each other on pricing and sell below cost, at a time when higher oil prices and a free-falling rupee already hurt margins.

“Oil prices have now begun to cool off and there is a possibility for airlines to make money. That, however, won’t happen if they don’t bring some pricing discipline into their systems,” said an airline executive who didn’t want to be named.

The Economic times of India 19/12/2018

Captain Anand, Deputy Chief Flight Ops Inspector from DGCA, carried out an examiner release check on 2 pilots of a Delhi based charter company, on Dec 4th onboard a Pilatus, even as in the passenger cockpit his family members partied with the director of said charter company and his wife. The DGCA initiated an investigation into the incident after the Times of India carried out a report on December,11, exposing the happenings onboard the Delhi-Amritsar-Delhi flight, along with a photograph that showed the women in aircraft passenger cabin holding bottles of wine. Alcohol consumption is banned by the DGCA on domestic flights.

Captain Anand cleared the 2 pilots to be designated as examiners, where they can now carry out skill tests on commanders, copilots certified on Pilatus, impart training, carry out final simulator check etc.

Captain Anand was forced to resign. He was reluctant to put in his papers, **he argued that other DGCA officials too have taken favours from charter aircraft operators in the past.** But the DG of civil aviation stood his ground, said the DGCA source.

Times of India 19/12/2018

The number of domestic departure seats in India is set to top 165 million this year, with such “unprecedented” growth driving the need for more than 2,300 new jets over the next two decades

Boeing has raised its long-term forecast for commercial aircraft in India as an “unprecedented domestic passenger traffic” and expanding low-cost carriers drives demand.

The US manufacturer’s Commercial Market Outlook found the country would need 2,300 new jets – valued at \$320bn – over the next 20 years.

“To meet this increased domestic air traffic growth, we see the vast majority of available airplane seats coming from LCCs,” said Dinesh Keskar, senior vice president of sales for Asia Pacific and India, Boeing Commercial Airplanes.

“The success of this market segment will mean more than 80 percent of all new airplane deliveries in India will be single-aisles.”

Boeing has estimated India will need 1,940 single-aisle jets of 90 seats and above and 350 wide-bodies of 200 seats and above.

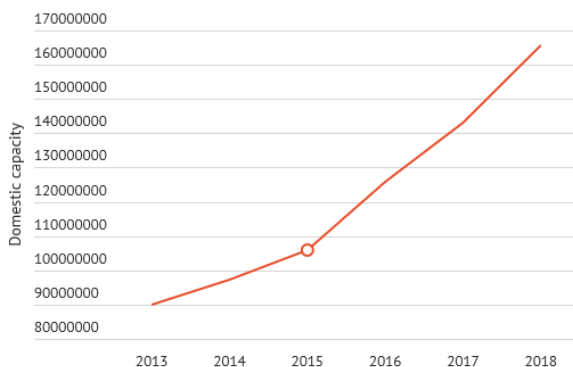
“The Indian economy is projected to grow by nearly 350 percent over the next two decades to become the third largest economy in the world,” said Keskar.

“This will continue to drive the growth of India’s middle class and its propensity to travel both domestically and internationally, resulting in the need for more new fuel-efficient short- and long-haul airplanes.”

According to data from OAG Schedules Analyser, capacity in India’s domestic market is set to top 165 million available seats this year, a rise of 15.7 percent on 2017. The figures show that more than 75 million domestic seats have been added in the past five years.

However, some of the country’s carriers have struggled in 2018 amid rising fuel prices and pressure to keep fares low. In October, IndiGo reported a loss for the first time since listing three years ago, while Jet Airways is undergoing a restructuring process. On Thursday (20 December 2018), it emerged that the Indian government has sought the approval of parliament to inject Rs 2,300 crore (\$330m) into flag carrier Air India. The move follows a failed attempt to sell the loss-making airline.

India's domestic capacity (2013-18):



Jet Airways from February 2019 is adjusting operational aircraft on **Delhi – Singapore** route, as the airline schedules the new Boeing 737 MAX 8 aircraft on this route. The 737 MAX 8 will operate this route from 10FEB19, on 2 of 3 daily flights, replacing 737-800.

9W020 DEL0100 – 0925SIN 7M8 D
 9W018 DEL0920 – 1800SIN 7M8 D
 9W016 DEL1135 – 2000SIN 73H x1
 9W016 DEL1135 – 2015SIN 73H 1

9W019 SIN1115 – 1505DEL 7M8 D
 9W015 SIN1415 – 1805DEL 73H D
 9W017 SIN1940 – 2320DEL 7M8 D

Routes online 18/12/2018

New Delhi: India's air security score has fallen by about 17 per cent in an audit conducted by the United Nation's aviation watchdog, the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), this newspaper has learnt.

The ICAO has voiced several concerns over the security of India's airports and aviation infrastructure. India also recorded a dip in its air safety score after it audited the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, India's aviation safety regulator.

India's poor performance in the security audit could potentially affect international expansion plans of India's airlines, experts said.

India has got a score of 79.36 per cent in maintaining security requirements as per International standards, sources privy to the audit said.

20/12/18 Sana Shakil/New Indian Express

Raipur: A thick blanket of dense fog that enveloped Swami Vivekananda Airport since wee hours of Wednesday severely affected the air operations. Virtually, landing and take-off of all the flights remained suspended till the requisite visibility of 1200 meter was achieved by 10 am. As many as seven flights to several destinations were delayed.

"Indigo 6E 445 Kolkata-Raipur-Indore was the flight of day, which was delayed by 4 four hours due to fog. The flight's Schedule Time of Arrival (STA) was 0715 hours and its Schedule Time of Departure (STD) was 0830 hours. But the airport runway merely had visibility of 50 meters at 7 am. Henceforth, the flight's Actual Time of Arrival (ATA) read 1115 hours whereas its Actual Time of Departure (ATD) today was 1155 hours," Raipur Airport Director Rakesh R Sahay told The Hitavada.

According to Sahay, the visibility of runway gradually improved. "It reached 100 meter by 9 am, then 350 meters at 9.35 am and finally 1200 meters at 10 am after which the flight operations resumed normalcy," he added.

Apropos, the other flights, which were delayed today also included Indigo 6E 2575 Delhi-Raipur-Hyderabad expected to reach here at 0835 hours (STA) was delayed by two hours and two minutes to arrive at 1037 hours (ATA). Thus, the flight's 0905 hours (STD) was delayed to 1118 hours (ATD). Alike, the private carrier's another flight 6E 405 Bengaluru-Raipur-Bengaluru flight was also partially affected today due to fog as its STA of 0950 hours was delayed by 30 minutes to read the ATA at

1020 hours and therefore, it's ATD read 1045 minutes.

20/12/18 Hitavada