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New Delhi: Air India posted an operating loss of around ₹4,600 crore in the last financial year mainly due to higher oil prices and foreign exchange losses but the debt-laden carrier expects to turn operationally profitable in 2019-20, according to senior officials. Reflecting tough business conditions, the airline's net loss stood at about ₹8,400 crore while total revenues touched around ₹26,400 crore in 2018-19, one of the senior officials told PTI. Another senior official said the airline is projected to post an operating profit of ₹700 to 800 crore in 2019-20, provided oil prices do not shoot up significantly and there is no steep fluctuation in foreign exchange rates. However, the airline incurred an operating loss of ₹175 to 200 crore in the three months ended June as closure of Pakistan airspace for Indian carriers resulted in higher costs and caused a daily loss of ₹3 to 4 crore when the restrictions were in place, the official said.

Air India had a loss of ₹430 crore in the four-month period when Pakistan closed its airspace after the Balakot air strikes. The official noted that load factor and yields are improving for Air India, which currently flies to 41 international and 72 domestic destinations. Load factor is a measure of seat occupancy and yield refers to average fare paid per passenger. The situation is anticipated to improve further as more wide-body planes would be available for operations in the coming months, the official added. Air India had grounded several of its wide-body aircraft for maintenance and most of them are in the process of being re-inducted into the fleet. Air India is to start flying to Toronto from 27 September and to Nairobi in November.

The airline has a debt burden of more than ₹58,000 crore and servicing the loans is a major challenge as the annual outgo is more than ₹4,000 crore. The official who was quoted first said the carrier is facing a financial crisis and disinvestment is the option.

Aviation consultancy **CAPA South Asia CEO and Director Kapil Kaul** said Air India's financial position is likely to "significantly improve" in the current financial year." CAPA expects a closer to break-even in FY 20 excluding increased costs incurred due to closure of Pakistan airspace. **With oil prices expected to stay below \$60, expect a closer to break-even for Air India in FY 20,**" he told PTI.

Noting that improved financial performance would be a positive for divestment, Kaul said a fully divested Air India that is well capitalised and with improved governance and management would ensure that the airline has a relevant future. India needs a stronger Air India which is viable without taxpayers' support, he added. The government has decided on disinvestment of Air India as part of efforts to revive its fortunes. Air India, which has been in the red for long, was sanctioned a nearly ₹30,000 crore bailout package for a 10-year period by the UPA regime in 2012.

LiveMint Aviation 15/09/2019

New Delhi: Vistara is planning a complete revamp of its frequent-flyer programme "Club Vistara" by increasing the number of partner companies across different segments and moving to a dynamic award-pricing system, a top airline official has said.

Under the proposed dynamic system, a seat will always be available for member-passengers in exchange for points and it will also allow members to earn and use points to book seats across all partner companies, the official said.

However, **Club Vistara currently has just two airline partners — Singapore Airlines and Silk Air**, but it has seven other partners across other segments.

Moreover, member-passengers can earn points by using services of any of the partners, the points earned can only be spent to purchase tickets on Vistara or other airline-partners.

Also, Club Vistara uses the traditional award chart system, wherein the seats available for members and the points required to get each such seat are fixed beforehand.

Frequent-flyer programmes across the world are junking the traditional award chart system as passengers complain that they are unable to get a seat on a flight when they need it.

"The new way that some airlines have moved is that they don't publish the award chart... There, the number of points that are required for booking a seat are dynamically prepared," Vistara's Chief Commercial Officer Sanjiv Kapoor told *PTI*.

"For example, a ticket on Saturday afternoon may be available for 7,000 points but the same ticket for Monday morning would be for 30,000 points. The benefit of this dynamic system is that a seat is always available in exchange for points," Kapoor explained.

There is another variant of this dynamic system.

If a person wants to book a ticket, he or she can estimate how much money and points should be spent in combination to book a ticket.

For example, when a seat is available for 20,000 points or for ₹8,000, the dynamic system shows the seat can also be bought by expending 10,000 points and ₹4,000 in combination.

"We are currently evaluating what system would be best for us moving forward," Kapoor said.

Any kind of dynamic award-pricing system requires advanced software in the back-end. "The IT work required as well the revenue management required is quite a lot. It is complicated," the Vistara CCO said.

The full-service Vistara airline is a joint venture between Tata Sons (51%) and Singapore Airlines (49%). At the moment, Club Vistara has about 1.6 million members.

Currently, Axis Bank is Club Vistara's co-brand credit-card partner, Avis is car-rental partner, booking.com is hotel partner and *The Economist* is its publishing partner.

"Over the coming weeks and months, you would be seeing us roll out a number of new partnerships. It would be not only airline partners, it would be partners across different segments," Kapoor said.

He also said members would soon be able to "earn and burn" the points across all the partners and Club Vistara is moving in that direction.

The airline connects 30 destinations — including three international destinations — and operates over 1,200 flights per week using 32 aircraft in its fleet. The flight operations to three international destinations — Singapore, Bangkok and Dubai — began last month.

In early days, Kapoor said, when the airline had just 10-15 aircraft, getting partners were not easy as Vistara was not "big enough for them to put in the investment".

He said even though the airline has overall 6% share of the domestic air passenger market, it has around 30% and 20% share in primary urban centres such as Delhi and Mumbai. "In these two cities, we are significant players," Kapoor said.

The airline is expanding internationally and it is planning to start flights to destinations such as Tokyo and London once it starts inducting wide-body aircraft Boeing 787-8 Dreamliner from February 2020 onward.

Kapoor said the number of Club Vistara members would increase but it would be a function of how well the members can be served.

"We just want to make sure that we become so greedy in getting the numbers that we dilute the value proposition for them," he said.

On 7 August, in Singapore, the airline's Chief Executive Officer Leslie Thng talked about the plans to turn Club Vistara into a lifestyle programme from a frequent-flier programme.

"We are part of the Tata group. There are a lot of opportunities that we can work within the Tata group of companies. If we can make the FFT (frequent-flyer programme) relevant and effective for Indian consumers, I think it will be the USP for us to compete against the middle-eastern carriers, even Singapore Airlines," he said.

Amid a tough operating environment, Vistara's losses doubled to ₹831 crore in 2018-19. However, earlier this month, its two promoters infused ₹500 crore in it to keep it expanding internationally and domestically.

LiveMint Aviation 15/09/2019

NEW DELHI : The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will conduct its own due diligence before allowing the grounded Boeing 737 Max planes to fly on Indian skies even if the US aviation regulator, Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), re-certifies the aircraft in near future, a person with direct knowledge of the matter told Mint.

India's civil aviation regulator is also likely to make it mandatory for pilots operating the aircraft to undergo simulator training before allowing them to fly the aircraft, the person added, requesting anonymity.

The Boeing 737 MAX aircraft, considered a more fuel-efficient plane than its predecessors, was grounded by the DGCA on 13 March after aviation regulators worldwide did the same following the crash of an Ethiopian Airlines 737 MAX near Addis Ababa on 10 March, killing 157 people, including four Indians.

This followed a Boeing 737 MAX of Lion Air crash last October that killed 180 people in Indonesia.

"Nobody is sure about when the Boeing 737 MAX aircraft will take to the air again. It will have to be firstly re-certified by FAA, following which DGCA will also independently conduct due diligence before allowing the aircraft to fly on Indian skies," said the person mentioned above.

Boeing Co has since the grounding of the 737 MAX fleet conducted more than 800 hours of test flight of the plane.

The American aircraft manufacturer is expected to approach FAA for re-certification of the planes by October.

"The earliest time frame for the re-induction of Boeing 737 Max fleet is likely to be early next year. However, we can't be too sure about it," said the person mentioned above adding that DGCA's due diligence process following FAA's re-certification of the aircraft will be a thorough process.

"DGCA will not allow the aircraft (Boeing 737 Max) to fly unless the agency is assured that it is absolutely safe to fly these planes," the person added.

The suffering of Indian carriers because of the grounding of the planes has been limited as local airlines operated only a dozen such planes compared with about 400 used by airlines worldwide.

SpiceJet Ltd, one of the world's biggest customers for the 737 MAX 8, has orders for 155 Boeing aircraft with purchase rights for 50 additional 737 MAX 8 and wide-body planes. The airline has taken delivery of 12 Boeing 737 MAX 8 planes so far, which are at present grounded.

Jet Airways (India) Ltd, had taken delivery of five Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. However, the airline has been grounded since April because of a fund crunch. Those planes have since been taken back by the leasing companies.

LiveMint Aviation 13/09/2019

Mumbai: Shares of Oil marketing companies, local airlines, tyre firms and paint companies fell on Monday after major rebel attack hits Saudi oil facilities.

While tyre companies use a lot of crude intermediates, paint companies use crude derivatives, and hence rising oil prices increase their input costs. Airline shares were trading lower on the worries that surge in crude may lead to hike in jet fuel prices.

Among oil marketing companies, shares of Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd fell 6%, Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd 5.8%, Indian Oil Corp Ltd 3.5%.

In Aviation stocks Interglobe Aviation Ltd fell 3%, SpiceJet Ltd 4.5%. Tyre companies like Apollo Tyres Ltd fell 1%, Ceat Ltd 1.5% and MRF Ltd 1%.

Paint companies such as Asian Paints fell 2.55%, Kansai Nerolac Paints Ltd fell 2.4%, Berger Paints India Ltd 1.8%, Shalimar Paints Ltd 2.1%.

Petrol and diesel prices are directly linked to international crude rates as India's imports about 70% of its crude requirements. As of now petrol, diesel rates are selling at the same rate as of end-August. Prices are still lower than what was in mid-July, Mint reported.

"We have a Brent price estimate of \$65/bbl for FY20 and YTD average is in line. We await official Saudi updates and further details. A sudden spike in oil prices is negative for OMCs (IOCL, BPCL,

HPCL). Higher oil prices are positive for GAIL. A \$65-70/bbl range is ideal for ONGC and Oil India", according to Emkay Research report.

Upstream companies like Oil & Natural Gas Corp Ltd rose 2.1%, Gail India Ltd 1.3%.

There was a major drone attack on two oil facilities in eastern Saudi Arabia early morning yesterday by Yemeni Houthi rebels, causing a severe fire. The Abqaiq and Khurais oil processing plants have capacities of 7mb/d and 1mb/d, respectively.

According to Emkay report, supplies have been disrupted, with two citing a 5mb/d impact. This is over half of the Kingdom's current production of 9.8mb/d and 5% of global oil supplies. Saudi officials have stated that the fire has been controlled although video and satellite footage show it is major.

LiveMint Aviation 16/09/2019

Mumbai: Indian equities are likely to be volatile on Tuesday, tracking developments in global peers even as oil prices have cooled off slightly. Asian stocks drifted on Tuesday as investors assessed heightened geopolitical risks in the aftermath of the strike on Saudi Arabia's crude facilities that sent oil prices soaring. Treasuries extended gains.

Benchmarks rose in Japan, fell in Australia and fluctuated in South Korea. S&P 500 futures were little changed after US stocks slipped on Monday.

Oil pulled back slightly after soaring 15% in the previous session. The dollar maintained gains against peers while treasury yields declined.

Saudi Aramco now faces weeks or months before the majority of output is restored at the giant Abqaiq processing plant, adding a fresh headwind for the global economy.

The developments in the Middle East will test sentiment for global equities and other riskier assets after a bullish start to the month.

President Donald Trump promised to help allies following the weekend attack in oil kingdom, saying the US is "locked and loaded." Saudi Arabia said preliminary findings show Iranian weapons were used in the attack on one of its key oil installations, but stopped short of directly blaming the Islamic Republic for the strikes.

The events have also overshadowed concern about the trade war. American and Chinese senior trade negotiators are expected to resume negotiations in the next week and a half. Meanwhile, Trump said the US and Japan have reached an initial trade accord over tariffs.

Elsewhere, the pound held on to a retreat after no signs of progress in Prime Minister Boris Johnson's first face-to-face meeting on Brexit with European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker.

Back home, shares of state-run NHPC Ltd, hydro power producer, will be in focus following the company's plans to leverage infrastructure investment trusts or InvITs to monetize 10 of its 22 projects, according to a Mint report.

Stocks of companies in the business of paints, aviation, and oil refinery and distribution may continue to be in focus as geopolitical tension has hit global crude prices.

Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), a special purpose vehicle created by the government to park a part of the national carrier's debt, has raised ₹7,000 crore through a bond sale to refinance its debt, according to a Mint report.

LiveMint Aviation 17/09/2019

New Delhi: **President Ram Nath Kovind's flight from Zurich to Slovenia was delayed on Sunday after the Air India Boeing 747 that was to fly as AI One developed a snag.** According to sources, the president drove to Zurich airport where a last-minute glitch on the 26-year-old jumbo jet (VT-ESO) was suspected. The VVIP returned to his hotel and AI aircraft engineers immediately started working on the aircraft "Khajuraho".

During this time, an AI Boeing 777 that was to operate on London-Mumbai sector with a schedule departure time of 1.15 pm (local time London) as flight 130 was kept on standby at Heathrow as alternate AI One to be flown to Zurich for the President's journeys if needed.

Luckily AI engineers rectified the jumbo jet which then flew President Kovind to Slovenia with a delay of a few hours. And AI 130 flew to Mumbai at 2.30 pm (local time London) from Heathrow without requiring to fly as alternate AI One to Zurich, say sources.

Keeping an Air India aircraft at a foreign base nearest from where AI One has to operate as standby is a regular practice. This overseas trip of President Kovind first made news when Pakistan on September 7 denied permission for it to fly over its airspace from India to Europe and back.

The B747 took a longer route to Europe when it left last Monday (Sept 9) and will take the longer route back home too. Now India is not going to seek clearance for VVIP flights to use Pakistan airspace till relations between the two countries improve.

16/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **National carrier Air India is leaving no stone unturned to strengthen its position in the growing Indian aviation industry while the government is preparing the final ground for its disinvestment.**

Be it international destinations or domestic routes, the Maharaja has been on an expansion mode adding more flights.

Sources said as the Central government prepares for disinvestment of the airline, efforts to fortify its financial position will help attract investors.

Notwithstanding the massive debt burden of over Rs 58,000 crore and threats of stopping fuel supply by the oil companies, Air India is missing no opportunity to tap new routes.

First, it started flights connecting major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Indore and Kolkata to Dubai.

Officials said the airline is all set to launch a daily direct flight from Lucknow to Jeddah this winter. At present, this flight is operated via New Delhi. Moreover, as part of its international network expansion, Air India is introducing flights from Delhi to Seoul, South Korea. The non-stop operations to Seoul will start from September 18.

The airline has also planned a Delhi-Toronto direct flight from September, Mumbai-Nairobi, and Delhi-Chennai-Bali flight service in October and November.

16/09/19 Kumar Vikram/New Indian Express

New Delhi: **The Centre is likely to allow domestic carriers to keep Jet Airways's slots at domestic airports and its foreign traffic rights until the end of March, or during the winter schedule,** a senior

official of the Civil Aviation Ministry said.

“The airlines said that a temporary allocation of Jet Airways’s slots and traffic rights for three months put them at a disadvantage as they are left with a shorter booking period as compared to foreign carriers and requested that these to be given to them until the end of the winter schedule. We will consider their request,” P.S. Kharola, Secretary, Civil Aviation Ministry, told The Hindu. The airlines raised the issue at a meeting with the Ministry last week.

Airlines plan their flight schedules twice a year — summer and winter schedules. The winter schedule will be in force from the last Sunday of October to the last Saturday of March. The government’s decision will help the airlines plan their flights for the winter season before they file their schedule with the Director General of Civil Aviation.

In April, the Ministry allotted 440 of the 750 airport slots held by Jet Airways to various carriers for three months after the Mumbai-headquartered airline stopped flying due to cash constraints. This was extended in August until the end of December.

16/09/19 Jagriti Chandra/The Hindu

New Delhi: The Narendra Modi-led Government’s plan to sell debt-laden airline Air India is well on track but the sale may not mop up the targeted yield owing to its value erosion over last several months since it decided to stop selling tickets on the platform of global ticketing distribution company Amadeus.

In October last year, Travelport had announced that it had “won competitive tender process undertaken by Air India for the sole provision of distribution of its domestic flight content in the airline’s home market”.

The national carrier had decided to shift to Travelport despite several senior officials raising objections against the move. Joining hands with Travelport meant giving access to details of AI’s flyers to Interglobe Technologies Quotient, a strategic business unit of InterGlobe Enterprises which is the parent company of IndiGo, India’s largest airline by market share and Air India’s biggest competitor.

It is understood Amadeus managed about 50 percent of Air India’s ticket sales through its GDS network.

GDS is a globally connected computerised reservation network offering a one-point access to airline bookings, hotel reservations as well associated travel-related areas including car rentals.

Dr Sanat Kaul, Chairman International Foundation for Aviation Aerospace and Drones said “Air India has been on the proverbial ventilator for long time. Divesting it’s saleable assets and properties is not the answer to this mess. Reducing it’s vast GDS distribution network to one vendor is shrinking its catchment area of passengers. The government policy of appointing one CMD after another who have no background in aviation or airlines business shows its lack of seriousness. Taxpayers are the victims of this policy unlike other airlines which go in for liquidation.”

16/09/19 Pioneer

New Delhi: By the end of this year, airports across India will begin conducting breath analyser (BA) tests on aviation personnel like air traffic controllers (ATCOs), people driving vehicles in the operational areas, firefighters and aircraft maintenance engineers.

So far only pilots and cabin crew have to clear BA tests to ensure they are perfectly sober before being allowed to operate flights. But Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) chief Arun Kumar has now expanded the scope of this test to all aviation personnel providing critical services as it is essential they are not tipsy when on the job.

The tests will kick off by October 30 at ten of India's busiest airports that include the six metros, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Lucknow and Guwahati. By November-end, 33 more airports including Jaipur, Vadodara, Srinagar, Mangalore and Juhu (Mumbai) will start conducting these tests. By the year-end all licensed airports will need to do so.

The categories of aviation employees who will now have to clear the tipsy test include aircraft maintenance engineers; drivers of fuelling and catering vehicles; aerobridge operators; rescue and fire fighting personnel (ARFF); ATCOs and flight dispatchers.

"At least 10% individuals involved in the above mentioned activities, employed in their respective organisations (category wise) shall be randomly subjected to BA examination on a daily basis... The (airport operator) management shall be responsible for the conduct of BA test on the personnel of the ground handling agency and aerodrome operational personnel, while airlines, air navigation service provider, maintenance organisations for their employees," a statement issued by DGCA said.
16/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Kalaburagi: The airport that has been set up here under Public-Private Partnership with the Government of Karnataka at a cost of Rs 175.5 crore, is likely to be inaugurated on Karnataka Rajyotsava Divas on November 1.

This was disclosed by the Kalaburagi MP Dr Umesh Jadhav at a media conference on Sunday.

Speaking to the media, Dr Jadhav said Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa was making efforts to see that the airport was inaugurated on November 1 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Barring a few civil works which are in the final stages, most of the works have been completed. The Deputy Commissioner B Sharath a couple of days back handed over 743.23 acres of land acquired for the project to Airport Authority of India(AAI) officials.

The District IN-Charge Secretary Kapil Mohan and the Regional Commissioner Subodh Yadav, who chaired separate review meetings, have instructed the officials to complete all ongoing works by the third week of October.

It may be mentioned that the foundation stone for the project was laid by Mr Yediyurappa in June 2008 during his previous tenure as Chief Minister.

The contract for building the airport was given to Gulbarga Airport Development Limited, a special purpose company.

But delays in completion led to the termination of the agreement in 2015 and the state government handed over the remaining work to the Public Works Department.

Initially the government had decided to limit the runway length to 1000 metres, but later extended it to 1970 metres to facilitate the landing of larger aircraft.

16/09/19 KN Reddy/Deccan Chronicle

New Delhi: A leading charter operator is under the regulatory lens following three crashes in the last eight years. Delhi-based Air Charter Services (ACS) saw its most recent crash last month when a trainer aircraft went down in Aligarh during approach for landing. Luckily, all the six people onboard the private aircraft survived. However, the other two crashes involving ACS planes had seen 11 deaths.

"The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is auditing the charter company," said DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) chief Arun Kumar, who is known for zero tolerance to any safety violations and has recently cracked down on big airlines also for lack of safety culture.

ACS did not comment on what steps it is taking to improve its patchy safety record.

In May 2011, 10 people were killed after an ACS Pilatus PC12 aircraft crashed in Faridabad while operating a medical charter Patna to Delhi flight. And in March 2017, another Pilatus PC 12 of the company crashed during a Delhi-Bangkok medical charter, killing the pilot and leaving several others injured.

16/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines (SQ, Singapore Changi), the two joint-venture partners in India's Vistara (UK, Delhi Int'l), have agreed to inject an additional INR5 billion rupees (USD70.5 million) into the carrier to fund its accelerated expansion, the Business Standard has reported.

The injection is earmarked to help Vistara grow at a more rapid pace, taking advantage of the vacuum in the market left by the collapse of Jet Airways (9W, Mumbai Int'l). The promoters hope that by expanding the full-service carrier they will also propel it towards profitability. In the last financial year, ending June 30, 2019, Vistara lost INR8.3 billion (USD117 million).

Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines, which hold a 51% and a 49% stake in the carrier, respectively, last boosted Vistara's coffers in April 2019, injecting INR9 billion (USD127 million) in total.

In the wake of Jet's collapse, Vistara added eight B737-800s to its fleet which also includes thirteen A320-200s and ten A320-200neo. While the steady growth of the carrier's Airbus narrowbody fleet and its international expansion were planned ahead, the addition of Boeing jets was an opportunistic move that presented additional capital requirements.

16/09/19 ch-aviation

Pune: Pune airport is planning to implement facial recognition biometric technology under the central government's Digi Yatra scheme, which will make entry of passengers to the airport hassle-free and fast.

Pune airport is among the four airports across the country that have been selected by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to undertake the project.

A contract to set up and run the system has been awarded to a New Delhi-based company.

Under the 'Digi Yatra' programme, the Ministry of Civil Aviation is planning to start biometric boarding system at airports across the country. Initially, it will be installed at Kolkata, Varanasi, Pune and Vijayawada airports.

"Passenger entry will be automatically processed based on facial recognition systems at checkpoints like entry, security and aircraft boarding, thus facilitating paperless travel. The system will be operational by next year," said Pune Airport Director Ajay Kumar.

"The tender has been awarded to M/s NEC Technologies India Private Ltd, based in New Delhi with its headquarters in Tokyo, Japan. The cost of the project is approximately Rs 14 crore for Pune airport. The firm will also be responsible for operation and maintenance for a period of seven years after the implementation of the project. The project is likely to be completed within one year," he said.

16/09/19 Indian Express

A father and his son, both citizens of the United States, were detained on Saturday for flying a drone fitted with a camera above the high-security zone in Lutyens's Delhi. The drone was spotted above Rashtrapati Bhavan around 6.45 pm Saturday, and its camera was found to contain footage of Central Secretariat and nearby buildings.

Flying of drones is banned over Delhi, and specifically over the Vijay Chowk area — something that the two Americans, Peter James Lynn (65) and Guillaume Leadbetter Lynn (31) have reportedly claimed they were unaware of.

While this prohibition follows a specific security threat from terrorists, the general guidelines issued by the civil aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), also lay down specific no-go areas for drones.

These guidelines, issued last year, classified civilian remotely piloted aircraft systems into specific types, and made it legal for ordinary enthusiasts to operate drones in India, subject to various requirements and clearances. The guidelines came into effect on December 1, 2018.

DGCA has identified multiple categories of drones, which can be broadly classified as 'Nano' (weighing up to 250 g), 'Micro' (more than 250 g but less than 2 kg) and 'Small and above' (weighing 2 kg or more).

Every drone that is bigger than a 'Nano' must obtain a unique identification number (UIN) from the aviation regulator (similar to the registration number for a car). This number must be displayed on the remotely piloted aircraft.

16/09/19 Indian Express

Taif: A SpiceJet flight from Kozhikode to Jeddah made an emergency landing at Taif airport due to technical snag. The flight carrying 184 passengers landed at Taif international airport on Sunday around 8.40 am.

Among the passengers 101 were Umrah pilgrims. Others were returning to Jeddah after spending holidays in Kerala.

Passengers in the flight were taken outside the airport after immigration clearance.

Umrah pilgrims were taken to Mecca via bus around 5 pm from Taif airport. Bus service was arranged for other passengers to Jeddah.

16/09/19 Mathrubhumi

New Delhi: The surge of TikTok videos filmed by airline crew, often mid-flight and at times in the cockpit, has caught the Directorate General of Civil Aviation's attention and the regulator is not pleased.

As yet another TikTok video of a crew member "modelling" down the aisle of an aircraft went viral Monday, a senior DGCA official told ThePrint that the trend was "not desirable at all".

"We have checked those videos," the official added. "This not desirable at all and we will counsel them all on this."

TikTok is a social media app where users can film short videos that involve lip-sync to dialogues and lyrics, or other antics. It enjoys viral popularity, and has over 500 million downloads on the Google Play Store alone.

Airline crew seem to have caught on to the trend as well, filming videos displaying all manner of antics, be it dancing to Bollywood numbers, or giving followers a view from the cockpit.

Under hashtags such as "#Pilotslife", "#crewlife", and "#flightattendant", there are hundreds of videos on TikTok showing airline crew with babies on board, chatting with fellow crew members, and even shutting the exit door of the aircraft.

Among Indian airlines, the staff of SpiceJet — as in the ramp walk video — and IndiGo are most commonly seen in the videos.

The DGCA is frowning upon these videos because airline crew are not allowed to take photographs during any phase of flight. A 2011 DGCA circular on managing "Disruptions and Distractions" said

photography during flight was a source of distraction that may lead to error and reduce safety.
16/09/19 Ifrah Mufti/Print

New Delhi: On a flight from Delhi to Istanbul on September 15, 2019, IndiGo did something which led to the hashtag #ShameOnIndiGo trend on Twitter. IndiGo, which was flying the passengers to Istanbul, left behind the luggage of the entire aircraft back in Delhi.

Twitter user Chinmay Dabke, who was on this Delhi-Istanbul flight, took to his account to share the details of the incident.

Chinmay wrote, "Just flew in on @IndiGo6E flight 6E 11 from Delhi to Istanbul last evening. We received this piece of paper when we were waiting for our luggage at the belt. The airline did not load the luggage of the ENTIRE FLIGHT. Not a single passenger got their luggage (1/n) #shameonindigo," as he shared a picture of the apology note handed to the passengers.

He continued by saying, "How can an airline as big as @IndiGo6E 'forget' or 'miss out' on loading luggage. I get you forgot the luggage for a few people on the flight. But the ENTIRE flight? What are Indian operations in Delhi doing? (2/n) #shameonindigo."

That was not all, he wrote all the problems that this created for the passengers. He tweeted, "My father has his necessary medication in his luggage. He is a diabetes patient who needs his daily dose. Some other travelers were on connecting flights to their end destinations in different countries. What do these folks do? (3/n) #shameonindigo @IndiGo6E."

Finally, while praising the ground staff at the Istanbul airport, Chinmay wrote, "However, the only positive from this ordeal is that the ground staff at Istanbul airport was extremely cooperative and helped everyone fill out requisite forms so they can identify luggage and give it back to us. It is not easy dealing with 130+ angry Indians."

16/09/19 India Today

Kannur: The decision of the Kannur International Airport Limited (KIAL) authorities not to let comptroller and auditor general (CAG) to conduct an audit of the airport has led to controversy. Though the CAG used to audit KIAL accounts till 2016 and the general impression was that it was a company controlled by the government, the company claims that it is a public-private partnership firm with a 35% government stake and hence the CAG need not audit it.

"The CAG does not audit the airports that are not under the Airports Authority of India and we all know that the accounts of the airports, including KIAL, are not audited by CAG, and this airport is also functioning in the same model," said an official, who said this is a private company as per the Companies Act.

The official said that this decision was made after legal opinion was sought.

The managing director was not available to comment on the issue.

But there is something fishy about it and the civil aviation department should probe the irregularities associated with this, demanded the Congress.

"We suspect something dubious because the company which was registered as a private limited company was converted into a public limited one and auditing was held till 2016, but the CAG has been denied permission since 2017, and we suspect it was after the intervention of the chief minister," alleged DCC president Satheesan Pacheni, who said that this was against the Companies Act. The BJP had also earlier raised similar allegations.

16/09/19 Times of India

New Delhi: **New changes are coming to the Indian airports and very soon, the screening would be on par with US standards. There is a tie-up between the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and the US Transport Security Administration for this purpose.**

Training for the second batch of 50 Indian officials has begun. The training for the first batch of 50 Indian officials was completed recently and the move aims at making India more travel secure.

The officials were trained on how to study body language. This means that security officials would mingle with people in the waiting areas to interpret body language. Another level of security personnel would also converse with passengers.

Further, the movement of staff of other agencies who operate in the airport would be restricted. In the US, additional layers of security for persons working within the airport were introduced. These staffs include airlines staff, luggage loaders, vendors and service support personnel.

16/09/19 Vikash Aiyappa/One India

Mumbai: **An A320 aircraft, with 150 passengers and crew on board, flying in from Ahmedabad had an engine failure during approach into Mumbai airport and “crashed” into the grounds of SNDT University at Juhu on Sunday morning. If you didn’t hear about this crash yesterday, it’s because it didn’t happen in reality. It was a mock exercise organised by Mumbai airport.**

The three-hour exercise ‘Aircraft Accident off the Airport’ began at 10 am with about 500 participants. In the exercise, a domestic aircraft carrying 150 passengers and crew on board from Ahmedabad to Mumbai was supposed to have developed an engine failure, after which it descended rapidly, crashed and went up in flames. The incident was assumed to have resulted in 75 passenger fatalities and 75 injuries.

“To make the mock exercise realistic, a dummy aircraft was created and partially set on fire to execute the magnitude of the situation. Similarly, the local police were actively involved for panchnama of ‘deceased’ passengers, allowing for movement of the deceased to Cooper Hospital for post-mortem,” said a release issued by MIAL which claimed that it was the first time that “an airport of this stature had conducted an emergency response exercise outside the premises”.

16/09/19 Times of India

Mohammed Ayub Tonk had applied to the Haj Committee of India through the Rajasthan State Haj Committee to undertake a Haj pilgrimage. After completion of all formalities, he went for Haj. On the way back, Tonk was carrying 13 bags which he deposited at the check-in counter of Al Wafeer Airlines. When he landed in India, four bags were missing. He lodged a complaint, but the bags could not be traced.

Tonk file a complaint before the District Forum against the airlines as well as the National and Rajasthan State Haj committees and its officials.

Neither the airline nor the Haj committees bothered to file a reply or to contest the case. So the forum allowed the complaint and held the airline as well as the Haj committees jointly and severally liable.

The National Haj Committee challenged this order before the Rajasthan State Commission. However, it did not make the airline party to the appeal. The State Commission dismissed the appeal and upheld the forum’s order.

The National Haj Committee filed a revision petition questioning the orders holding it to be liable, and contended that it could not be held liable.

16/09/19 Jehangir B Gai/Times of India

Hyderabad: Imagine flying to the US with your spouse in premium business class for as little as Rs 350 even though actual tickets cost a steep Rs 10 lakh. Or how about paying Rs 14,000 to fly from Hong

Kong to London, Oslo to Minneapolis, and Seattle to Taipei all under Rs 14,000 even if the actual price comes to Rs 5 lakh?

That's possible if you are a frequent flyer and have diligently accumulated air miles from your past travels.

Unfortunately, though Indians are flying frequently on domestic routes these days, they are less lucky than foreign travellers. It's because unlike foreign carriers, who credit loyalty points to passengers for every flight they take, few of our domestic carriers have attractive air mile programmes.

Take for instance IndiGo, which runs no such loyalty programme and yet manages to get repeat customers. While SpiceJet has SpiceClub membership to reward customers with points, it has stopped adding new entries. Jet Airways' JetPrivilege was an exception, rewarding flyers handsomely with points or miles, while Vistara's frequent flyer programme Club Vistara has miles to go.

National carrier Air India too runs a frequent flyer programme, which is part good and part bad. Good because it allows members access to 27 other airlines that are part of the Star Alliance programme. Bad because, it takes years to accumulate sizeable points as Air India's tickets are often steep, forcing passengers to fly other low-cost carriers.

In short, even if you fly frequently on domestic routes, you rarely are compensated for your loyalty.

In contrast, foreign carriers like American Airlines or British Airways sell miles, not just air tickets, through special sales. So, you buy air miles and get bonus miles as a reward.

But don't lose hope. Here are some ingenious ways to accumulate air miles and with a bit of smartness, patience and luck, you too can travel at a fraction of the cost. Some credit cards allow you to accumulate air miles every time you swipe your card for groceries and goods. Air India has tied up with SBI to offer an Air India SBI Signature Credit Card, which lets you earn 4 miles for every Rs 100 spent.

As a bonus, if you spend Rs 100 to book Air India tickets, you get 30 miles. Similarly, Vistara too offers co-branded credit cards, but experts say such co-branded cards make customers captive to one airline.

16/09/19 Sunitha Natti/New Indian Express

Aurangabad: In contrast to claims of IndiGo launching its flight services from Aurangabad and Nashik by October-end, the budget airline has shot internal communication to its employees — informing them that the launch at these destinations has been postponed to the end of the year.

The airline instead told its staffers that operations from Shirdi airport would start by October-end.

"The launch of Aurangabad and Nashik has been deferred to the end of 2019. Shirdi will be launched in October 2019," the communication said.

The airline had started its office in Aurangabad and had also hired staff. The airline's communication, however, said that the staff in Aurangabad and Nashik will be transferred to their respective base locations as soon as the stations are launched. The employees recruited for these two destinations have been given the option to take a permanent transfer to Shirdi.

An insider said: "Since the deputation period at Pune has been prolonged, the employees have been asked to find accommodation around the Pune airport. During this time, they will be paid a deputation allowance."

IndiGo's decision to prioritize Shirdi operations — over Aurangabad, which is the tourism capital of Maharashtra and is also an industrial, medical, administrative and educational hub of the region — has stunned many in the tourism and hospitality industry. In fact, the authorities and the Travel Agents' Association of Aurangabad had been claiming that IndiGo's Aurangabad service will take off by end of October. However, it is also acknowledged that the airline had not officially declared the

dates for the Aurangabad service.

16/09/19 Mohammed Akhef/Times of India

The skies are getting darker as the economic downturn is making people cautious when it comes to travel. According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation data, about 82.56 million passengers travelled on domestic routes in January to July 2019 as against 80.04 million passengers a year earlier. This shows that there is a **slump in the travel industry**.

Second, the results of travel companies in the first quarter (April-June 2019), indicated that the **growth in travel is in the higher single digits**. The commentary that we hear from people in the industry is that there is a slowdown and this is getting even more obvious with each passing day. Third, the **Rupee continues to weaken against major currencies**, though a global phenomena but this is not a good sign for the Indian traveler. Fourth, the recent economic data that has been splashed across media indicates the **beginning of a slowdown** and we have to brace for it.

While the signs are not good, we need to brace for it and arrive at solutions.

The nascent Indian outbound travel industry, which is not more than 30 years old, has experienced such shocks in the past. We have come out of such cycles, more fitter with the support of all the stakeholders contributing to this turnaround so therein lies the opportunity as well.

So, what are the **opportunities for the travel industry**? First, **short-haul travel will be the new flavor** and this should be lapped up by the closer destinations such as Singapore, Malaysia, Macau, Dubai, Thailand, Vietnam and Sri Lanka amongst others. These destinations have products that attract the Indian travelers with a mix of nature and First World attractions. Second, they are well connected by air from the metros and mini-metros. This provides the traveler the luxury of travelling on a budget but and a value for money holiday.

16/09/19 Murari Mohan Jha/T3

Bhopal: Poor visibility due to rain disrupted flight operations at the Raja Bhoj Airport on Sunday morning giving passengers a tough time. The poor weather affected arrival as well as departures of all airlines operating at Bhopal airport, delaying most of the flights.

The worst affected were the flights in the morning hours. Poor visibility made landing difficult. IndiGo Delhi-Bhopal flight 6E-2035, scheduled to arrive at 8 am, had to be diverted back to Delhi after the pilot could not land the aircraft.

IndiGo Mumbai-Bhopal flight 6E-5301 had to be diverted after it could not land. The flight was diverted to Indore. Haj flight was also affected due to the poor visibility at the airport. Air India flight 5461 had to be diverted to Nagpur. Later, all flights reached Bhopal airport after a delay of 2 to 3 hours.

The disruption of flights due to poor visibility has brought to fore the need for higher version of Instrument Landing System (ILS). Passengers who faced the delays also raised the demand for technological upgrade at the airport.

The Raja Bhoj airport is equipped with ILS CAT 1 facility. It is a basic system of precision instrument for approach and landing with a decision height not lower than 60m (200ft) and with either a visibility not less than 800m or a runway visual range not less than 550m.

In simple terms, it provides precision guidance to an aircraft approaching and landing on a runway, using a combination of radio signals to enable a safe landing during instrument meteorological conditions (IMC), such as low ceilings or reduced visibility due to fog or rain.

16/09/19 Times of India

New Delhi: Air India Assets Holdings Ltd (AIAHL) on Monday raised Rs 7,000 crore through bonds issue, which was oversubscribed.

AIAHL is a special purpose vehicle of national carrier Air India.

As part of efforts to clean up the balance sheet of Air India, which has a debt burden of more than Rs 58,000 crore, little over half of the amount is to be repaid by way of proceeds from the issuance of bonds by AIAHL.

An Air India spokesperson on Monday said AIAHL's bond issue with a three-year tenure of Rs 1,000 crore with a green shoe option of Rs 6,000 crore has been fully subscribed at 6.99 per cent.

"The company received bids worth Rs 20,830 crore, which is the highest in the yield based bond market in the history of BSE. The company has decided to accept the entire issue of Rs 7,000 crore," the spokesperson said.

16/09/19 PTI/India Today

The Bangalore International Airport (BIAL) posted 22.5% year-on-year decline in profit after tax (PAT) to Rs 656 crore for the financial year 2018-19 due to lower user development fee (UDF). The airport operator had reported Rs 846 crore profit in FY18, according to the data available with the ministry of corporate affairs. While passenger footfall at Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) jumped 23.8% y-o-y in FY19, operating revenues were down 3% y-o-y to Rs 1,505 crore as Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) slashed UDF for domestic and international passengers by 67% in August 2018.

The UDF for domestic passengers came down to Rs 100 from Rs 306, and to Rs 400 from Rs 1,226 for international passengers. While GMR-owned Delhi International Airport reported Rs 112-crore loss for the year ended March 31, 2019 against PAT of Rs 38.3-crore in FY18 due to sharp reduction in aeronautical revenues, GVK's Mumbai International Airport more than doubled its PAT to Rs 96 crore in FY19 on the back of higher passenger count. Delhi and Mumbai airports witnessed passenger traffic growth at 5.4% y-o-y and 1% y-o-y, respectively, in FY19.

16/09/19 Arun Nayal/Financial Express

First half of (January to June) 2019 has been a tough period for Goa, wherein room night demand dropped by 4.4% as compared to the corresponding period in 2018. Major contributors to this slowdown have been the grounding of Jet Airways in April, grounding of Boeing 737 Max aircraft, a long drawn general election and reduced international charters primarily from Russia due to the weakening of the Russian Ruble. Another factor that contributed to the drop in the occupancy of branded hotels in Goa is the rise of a variety of affordable lodging formats such as Airbnb and private villas/holiday homes, which has gained popularity among the domestic clientele.

International air passenger traffic in Goa declined from 0.48 mn in H1 of 2018 to 0.46 mn in H1 2019 according to Airports Authority of India (AAI) in their monthly passenger traffic reports. International charter flights during the season months (October to May) of 2018-19 dropped by 17% as compared to 2017-18 to 813 flights with the number of passengers dropping by 12% in the same period to 0.21 mn. On the other hand domestic air passenger traffic in Goa has continued to grow almost touching 4 mn passengers in H1 2019, which has proved as the only silver lining in the hotel demand landscape. Despite the dip in demand, Goa's hospitality market performance remains stable primarily on the back of room rates. This is evident from the 1.9% growth in ADR in H1 2019 over H1 2018. Goa ranks second in ADR next only to Mumbai. With increasing Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and

Exhibitions (MICE) business and growing domestic tourism due to a rise in disposable income, the market is expected to remain stable in the short term.

In the medium to long term, development of Mopa Airport will be a game-changer for the leisure market. It will enable a larger inflow of tourists, both foreign and domestic with an expected handling capacity of 5 million passengers annually. On completion, this development will benefit the entire Goa tourism industry and in particular, will help develop the hospitality market in North Goa and even Sindhudurg district in Maharashtra.

16/09/19 Accomodation Times

New Delhi: An Indian has been arrested at the Delhi airport on his arrival from Saudi Arabia for allegedly smuggling gold worth over Rs 27 lakh by concealing it in speakers and bucket handle, customs officials said on Monday.

The passenger, who landed at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Sunday from Saudi Arabia's Jeddah city via Bahrain, was intercepted by the customs officers after he had crossed the 'green channel', the officials said.

A personal and baggage search resulted in the recovery of two gold rods and two circular gold disks, weighing 780 gm, concealed inside bucket handle and speakers, the officials said.

16/09/19 India Post

Mangaluru: The Bajpe Police arrested Arif Kothikkal, a resident of Kasaragod in Kerala, for alleged criminal trespass into the international airport here on Saturday night.

According to a press release, Central Industrial Security Force personnel found Kothikkal using a **fake e-ticket to gain entry to the departure gate of the airport.**

Kothikkal reportedly fabricated the e-ticket of a SpiceJet flight to Dubai and entered his name along with four of his family members who were to board the flight. He produced the fabricated e-ticket to enter the departure gate and was caught by CISF personnel while he was exiting, the release said.

16/09/19 The Hindu

Kolkata: In a bizarre incident, a Kolkata-Agartala Air India flight was delayed after a swarm of bees attacked the aircraft on the runway at the Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata on Sunday.

The Air India flight - AI 743 – was delayed for almost two hours after a swarm of bees was noticed in front of the cockpit window when the aircraft was taxiing towards the main runway.

136 passengers and crew members were on board the Airbus A319 which was scheduled to take off from Kolkata for Agartala at 9:40 am today.

However, the pilots noticed the bees in front of the aircraft when it was being taken to the main runway for departure. The pilots immediately informed the Air Traffic Control (ATC) about the situation.

The aircraft was brought to a standstill as further movement could have damaged the plane and even harmed the passengers if the bees would have entered the aircraft through its engines, an Air India spokesperson was quoted as saying by a news agency.

Meanwhile, the fire department had to use water jets to remove the bees from the windowpane of the cockpit.

Upon further investigation, officials found that the bees had not entered the aircraft and that the

plane had not been damaged in the incident.

15/09/19 TimesNowNews.com

Chengdu: IndiGo Airlines would open a direct flight between Delhi and Chengdu, capital city of southwest China's Sichuan Province.

William Boulter, chief commercial officer of the Indian airline, made the announcement at Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport on Sunday. The direct flight from Chengdu to Delhi would be opened **on September 16.**

This was the first time for the Indian budget airline to enter the Chinese mainland market.

According to Boulter, **IndiGo is the fastest growing airline in India, operating about 1,400 flights daily.** IndiGo planned to open more flights between Chinese cities and India.

15/09/19 Xinhua

Singapore: Airport and food services provider Sats has joined forces with logistics giant DHL to offer carriers like Singapore Airlines (SIA) new ways to better manage food and other resources.

The initiative will deliver costs savings for airlines while giving travellers more choice of in-flight meals and a greater array of amenities such as duty-free goods, among other benefits, the firms said. They will be focusing on the airline market in India, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Sats, Changi Airport's biggest ground handler, and DHL said the memorandum of understanding combines their strengths: "The comprehensive ... solution spans demand planning, menu customisation and planning, to supply chain consultancy and reverse logistics."

Reverse logistics involves moving goods from where they are consumed back to their point of origin for reuse or disposal.

The firms added: "With end-to-end visibility, airlines will be able to achieve higher consistency, better inventory management, reduced waste and greater customer insights."

They also said the tie-up will remove the need for airlines to seek out different providers for different services.

15/09/19 Straits Times

A move to privatize major airports held by the government-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI), which owns around 100 airports, has met with stiff resistance from the many unions representing more than 85,000 airport employees who fear losing their jobs. Union members are protesting the privatization plan under which AAI-owned airports would transfer to private entities. Under the plan, AAI retains a minority stake while Adani owns a majority stake.

The airport employee unions recently formed a joint forum to voice their common concern and to hold peaceful protests. As the government moves ahead with its plan to privatize 13 more airports, the protests stand to get louder and a strike could ensue.

"Why does AAI, which has brought these airports to a profitable state, have to be arm-twisted into giving these airports away?" asked Harindra Tiwari, a senior official in one of the airports unions.

"Monopoly of private bodies is very dangerous. The AAI has strong capabilities in airport development and operations."

AAI already has transferred six airports to concessionaire Adani Enterprises for operation, management, and development through the public-private partnership. They include AAI-owned facilities in Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Thiruvananthapuram, and Guwahati.

The Delhi and Mumbai airports, which underwent privatization 13 years ago, proved a model for efficiency and improved quality, said Ravi Shankar Prasad, minister of law and justice.

15/09/19 Neelam Mathews/AINonline

A passenger was found carrying **foreign currencies worth Rs five lakhs** was detained by CISF officials during the frisking process and later offloaded from the Dubai bound Air India Express flight (IX 813) at Mangalore International Airport on the evening of September 15.

Foreign currencies worth Rs 588066 (Dirham- 293291; Dollar -294475) were seized from the passenger, Harrysta D'souza who was all set to travel to Dubai by an Air India flight. The seized foreign currencies along with the passenger was handed over to customs officials by CISF.

15/09/19 Deccan Herald

GoAir, the country's fourth largest airline by market share, is looking to raise close to Rs 5,000 crore through its initial public offer (IPO). Sources close to the matter claim that the airline is looking to dilute around 25% or more for the same. The airline has appointed Morgan Stanley, JM Financial, ICICI Securities and Citi as lead bankers for its public issue.

ICICI Securities and JM Financial did not respond to queries till the time of going to press. FE has also learned from reliable sources that the draft red herring prospectus is expected to be filed before November end and that the airline is aiming for a listing in February/March 2020.

The airline has been keen on listing its shares for few years now as it has been profitable, but chose to hold back in 2016 due to concerns on valuation. The airline has expanded at a break-neck speed since then and is now looking at the equity dilution to fund its expansion plans through an IPO.

After reviewing economy and the sector, the airline decided to double its aircraft orders from 72 aircraft to 144 in 2016. **The airline is expecting deliveries of at least one aircraft every month, but sources claim that Airbus is expected to deliver 15 planes instead of the expected 18 each year. In a matter of two years, the airline has doubled its fleet size to 50 aircraft.**

The airline has gained market share, especially after Jet Airways was grounded in April this year to 11.1% in July, up from 9.2% in March 2019. GoAir currently operates 320 flights a day compared to 230 daily flights a year ago and flies to seven international destinations; it will add Kuwait and Singapore as new destinations this month.

14/09/19 Financial Express

Chennai: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is working to complete by September 2020, a new integrated terminal in the space between the domestic and international terminals at Chennai airport. It will be used partly for domestic and international passengers.

A senior AAI official said around 21% of the work was over. "It is moving at a pace good enough to meet the next September deadline. **The terminal work is being done in two phases. The first is to complete the building. We will then move the international arrival to the new building and pull down the old one for rebuilding.**"

The project is expected to be completed by 2022, he added. AAI chairman Anuj Agarwal held a review meeting on Thursday to assess progress.

Work on the integrated building began in July 2018 at the old Kamaraj domestic terminal. The new building is being designed to help handle domestic and international flights simultaneously.

International arrivals are currently operated from the old building which will have to be pulled down and a new building constructed and linked to the integrated building. This will boost the terminal

capacity to 30million passengers a year. AAI wants to speed up the work as the airport is expected to get saturated by 2022 and the state government is yet to identify land for the second airport. Once ready, the new building will handle international arrivals and the existing building would be pulled down. The new international arrival terminal is to be ready by 2022 under a Rs 2,000crore project that is part of the airport's phase-2 expansion. A domestic terminal and international terminal were commissioned in 2013 in the first phase.

14/09/19 Times of India

Aurangabad: A charter plane, carrying medicos from Mumbai, skidded off the runway after landing at Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Airport in Nanded on Thursday.

The charter plane along with an air ambulance had come from Mumbai for harvesting organs of a brain-dead patient and taking it back to the financial capital where two patients were waiting for heart and liver transplant.

A doctor, privy to the overall process, said that team of doctors had come to Nanded after a 22-year-old youth, Om Kale, was declared brain dead. Before the doctors could reach the hospital and harvest his organs, the youth had passed away.

Owing to this, the surgery on patients in Mumbai was also cancelled. Airport authorities could not be reached for comments, but sources informed that all the five passengers, including the pilot and co-pilot, did not sustain any injury.

Preliminary reports suggest that presence of water on the runway led to the plane skidding off the run way. Soon after the incident, fire brigade teams and technical experts were rushed to the spot for carrying out on-site repair of the charter.

14/09/19 Mohammed Akhef/Times of India

New Delhi: Two Myanmar women were arrested at the Delhi airport upon their arrival from Thailand for allegedly smuggling gold jewellery worth over Rs 1 crore, Customs officials said on Saturday.

The passengers, who arrived at T-3, IGI airport on Thursday from Bangkok, were intercepted by the Customs officers after they had crossed the green channel, they said.

A personal and baggage search resulted in the recovery of gold jewellery studded with diamonds, rubies, emeralds, blue sapphire, pearls and other semi-precious stones weighing 2,075 grams having a tariff value of Rs 1,39,18,394, the officials added.

14/09/19 PTI/News18.com

The Delhi Police nabbed a 68-year-old man on Friday from Terminal 3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport. The accused had traveled with a fake passport from Hong Kong.

Sanjay Bhatia, DCP of IGIA said that the person whose actual name is Gurdeep Singh, a resident of Moga in Punjab, had come from Hong Kong with a passport issued in the name of Karnail Singh.

"When he reached at the immigration clearance, it was noticed that his date of birth in passport was October 10, 1930 while he looked more younger than that. The immigration officials took him for questioning where he revealed that his actual name was Gurdip Singh and his date of birth was March 10, 1951," Bhatia said.

The accused said that he had travelled on an original passport till 1995 but since he was not able to obtain a Hong Kong Permanent Residence Card (HKPRC), he contacted a travel agent who facilitated

him a fake passport in the name of Karnail Singh.

14/09/19 Ajay Kumar/India Today

The government is likely to go for 100 per cent stake sale in Air India, sources have told ET NOW.

Air India Specific Alternative Mechanism (AISAM) will soon meet to finalise contours of expression of interest. The new EoI will enable "clean bids" for interested buyers.

AISAM will give a go-ahead for 100 per cent stake sale when they meet next, sources said.

The Civil Aviation Ministry and Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) are of the view that any buyer will come only if the government exits completely.

The debt overhang will also be reduced significantly in the new EoI for Air India.

AISAM is also likely to mull further transfer of debt to a special purpose vehicle (SPV).

13/09/19 Economic Times

New Delhi: **The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is making breath analyser (BA) test compulsory for airport staff including aircraft maintenance engineers, flight dispatchers, Air Traffic Control officials (ATCOs), all machine operators and vehicle drivers. The new rules will be implemented by next week.** The decision is taken to reduce human error. Currently, the DGCA conducts 100 percent breath analyser test on pilots and cabin crew. Hair Serum Cause Positive Alcohol Test, Air India Pilot Suspended.

As per International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommendations, the alcohol level in should be zero for safe flying. According to a report published in The Asian Age, around 250 - 300 crew members fail in BA test, while nearly 50-60 pilots fail BA test every year. In July, reports also surfaced that over 20 pilots from various airlines across the nation were temporarily suspended by the aviation regulator that month. Air India Pilot Arvind Kathpalia Sacked as Director of Operations for Failing Alcohol Test.

13/09/19 Latestly

New Delhi: **India has decided to allow the Boeing 737 Max to fly in its skies again only after rigorous testing of its own, even if the US Federal Aviation Administration gives the nod for it to fly again.** About 400 of these aircraft were grounded globally this March after 346 people were killed in two crashes, one in Malaysia and the other in Ethiopia. In India, 13 B737 Max of SpiceJet are grounded and the budget airline is the only desi customer for these planes.

"Even after the US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) gives the nod for this plane to fly again, India will conduct its own checks and we will require simulator training for all our pilots before allowing the B737 Max to take to the skies in India. **These planes are unlikely to start flying again in India this year,**" said a senior official of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Reacting to this, a Boeing spokesman said that it "continues to work with global regulators and our airline customers as they determine training requirements in their home market."

A Lion Air Boeing 737 Max had crashed on October 29, 2018, killing all 189 on board. On March 10, 2019, an Ethiopian Airlines B737 Max crashed killing 157 people on board. By that time about 400 Max were flying globally and they all are grounded since March 13.

In India, SpiceJet has up to 205 of these planes on order, of which it had received 13. In addition, there were five Max once registered in the name of Jet Airways that ceased operations this April. Jet had ordered 225 B737 Max planes before shutting down.

India's stand on the Boeing 737 Max was made clear by DGCA chief Arun Kumar at a conference of

Asia-Pacific region aviation regulators, in Kathmandu last month. Kumar had told Boeing it has to "win back passenger confidence. Travellers must feel safe inside the Boeing 737 Max whenever it flies again." He had told Boeing that the safety of the aircraft has to be established very clearly. Global regulators will do their own checks and validations and Boeing will also need to instil confidence of the flying public in this plane again, Kumar said.

13/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Government-run AAI said on Tuesday it plans to implement its Airport- Collaborative Decision Making (A-CDM) platform at Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram by early next year amid the rapidly growing passenger and aircraft traffic at these aerodromes.

Implemented as a pilot at the city's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) in 2015, developed in-house the A-CDM platform is a common information sharing platform for processing timely and accurate information for quick and precise decision making.

"A-CDM will be implemented at Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram airports by January 2020, considering the growth in passenger and aircraft movements," the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said in a release.

A CDM solution takes into consideration aircraft's expected time of arrivals, target off block times of departure, runway in use along with runway handling capacity and accordingly determines the aircraft arrival and departure sequence.

As part of its efforts to market in house solution to other private airport operators, AAI also held a meeting in Mumbai with its private sector peers on sharing the information among stakeholders in bringing further efficiency and improvement in operations across congested airports, using the platform.

Keeping in line with facilitating air travel and navigation services, senior officials of the AAI met private airport operators in Mumbai on Monday to discuss the usage of the A CDM solution which helps improve the efficiency of airport operations at busy and congested airports', the AAI said.

The Economic times of India 17/09/2019

New Delhi: Embarrassed over technical glitch in the plane that was scheduled to fly President Ram Nath Kovind from Switzerland's Zurich to Slovenia on Sunday, national carrier Air India has ordered probe into the issue.

The snag had delayed the VVIP flight for several hours as it took more than three hours to fix, forcing the President to return to his hotel.

"A thorough investigation would be done to ascertain the issue," said an Air India official.

The Air India One that flies VVIPs is a **26-year old B747 jumbo jet**. After rectifying the engineering glitch, the plane flew the President on after delay of few hours.

An airline executive quoted above said that spares for the B747 are always in the inventory to ensure no operational disruption takes place.

VVIP operations aside, Air India has in the recent months seen frequent break-down of its planes in foreign countries costing it a lot of money to bring them back on the runway. Some of its flights had developed technical glitch in cities such as Paris, Chicago and Tel Aviv taking heavy toll on the airline's precarious finances.

16/09/19 IANS/Outlook

IndiGo has requested the civil aviation ministry to increase the bilateral traffic rights with Turkey as the airlines have exhausted the current capacity, a senior official told CNBC-TV18.

IndiGo's co-founder Rahul Bhatia and Turkish Airlines chief executive officer Bilal Eksi called on aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Monday and requested to enhance the foreign flying rights on the sector, people aware of the matter said.

As per the current bilateral arrangement between Turkey and India, airlines can operate 14 frequencies every week between the two countries or a total traffic of 3,000 passengers can be carried on a weekly basis from each side.

As of now, IndiGo operates two direct daily flights between Delhi and Istanbul. Turkish Airlines operates one direct flight each from Delhi and Mumbai to Istanbul.

"They have requested to enhance the bilateral air service arrangement. The ministry has not promised anything as of now," another official added.

IndiGo, the country's largest carrier, started daily direct flights to Istanbul in March from Delhi and the move is seen as a gateway for the airline's European ambitions.

"Istanbul holds immense potential for IndiGo, and this launch is part of organic expansion within Europe for us, as we complement our domestic network with international connectivity," chief commercial officer William Boulter had said at the launch of Istanbul operations in March.

IndiGo and Turkish Airlines are also codeshare partners since December 2018. Turkish Airlines is the first codeshare partners of IndiGo as part of its international expansion.

17/09/19 CNBC TV18

Trichy: A Sri Lankan Airlines flight, which landed safely despite suffering a bird-hit at the Trichy international airport on Sunday, flew back to Colombo in the early hours of Monday after the snag was rectified. A total of 146 passengers including crew members had a miraculous escape when a bird hit the right engine of the flight minutes before its scheduled landing at 8.40 am on Sunday. Subsequently, the pilot got in touch with the air traffic control and sought permission for emergency landing. Though fire tenders and other equipment were deployed to handle the emergency, the pilot managed to make a safe landing and the passengers were evacuated quickly.

Later, the airline flew in technical experts from Colombo who attended to the aircraft's trouble. It took nearly **15 hours for the engineers to rectify the problem** and the flight was able to take off to Colombo on Monday morning.

17/09/19 Times of India

Bengaluru: A Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) drone crashed in the Chitradurga district of Karnataka early Tuesday morning.

No injuries have been reported in the crash.

The unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) crashed in an agricultural field in Jodichikkenahalli, Chitradurga district on Tuesday. The drone crash took place at 6 am in the morning.

The incident created quite a scare at Jodichillenahalli village as a loud noise was heard after the drone crashed. Soon, a large number of people gathered at the spot. Videos of the broken UAV went viral on social media.

A statement released by DRDO said, "An unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) being developed by the DRDO on experimental flight trial in new configuration crash-landed in fields near ATR Chitradurga.

Data is being analysed."

The DRDO has a test range very close to its Chitradurga district headquarters. The Challakere Aeronautical Test Range (ATR) is an out-door testing and evaluating facility being set up by DRDO exclusively for unmanned and manned aircraft.

Confirming the incident, Chitradurga Superintendent of Police Arun K said that the UAV crashed in the areca nut farm this morning, but no one was injured.

17/09/19 Nagarjun Dwarakanath/India Today

New Delhi: **The Modi government, in its second tenure, is once again considering having a unified transport ministry through combining the road, railways, civil aviation and shipping ministries,** officials familiar with the matter told ThePrint.

A top panel of secretaries, constituted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to recommend transformative ideas for the infrastructure sector, discussed the unified transport ministry idea with the cabinet secretary last month.

"We have recommended that the way forward is a unified transport ministry to provide integrated multi-modal solutions," one senior official who did not want to be named said.

The secretarial panel is likely to make a presentation before the Prime Minister soon. "A final call on whether to go ahead with the recommendation will be taken only after the meeting with the PM," the official added.

17/09/19 Maushumi Das Gupta/Print

Mumbai: **The CSIR-National Aerospace Laboratories, that is developing a 19-seater indigenous light transport aircraft 'Saras Mk2' has plans for a 70-seater aircraft, Union Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan said on Monday.** "Today itself they have started talking to me to get the permissions from and meetings with civil aviation ministry for their future plan of the 70-seater. That is also very heartening to know," Harsh Vardhan said.

"Seventy-seater has always been in the long-term vision and since they have mentioned about this today we will have to bring the civil aviation ministry on board. We have to take the approval of the Prime Minister's office. Also, we will have to take scientists also on board, so as a science and technology minister I will facilitate them to move in the right direction," he said.

The Minister was speaking to reporters after laying the foundation for NAL's system check facility, aircraft integration facility, and the inauguration of smart aerospace composite manufacturing facility here. NAL Director Jitendra J Jadhav said since NAL has a fair amount of experience, it would start the design of 70-seater.

He said, "First, we will have to get in-principle approval from Ministry of Science and Technology, and Civil Aviation, also from Ministry of Finance, then we can finish design phase one-and-a-half year from that, which will be the preliminary design phase. Then we will submit it to the government, once the government sanctions, we will develop."

CSIR-NAL is currently engaged in the design, development and certification of Saras Mk2, a twin-engine turboprop 19-seater transport aircraft for connecting small cities. Harsh Vardhan said everything was ready for the 19-seater and the government has given all its support in terms of clearance and fund requirement to NAL.

16/09/19 PTI/Republic World

New Delhi: **The civil aviation ministry has asked the finance ministry to waive income tax on the money earned through the passenger services fee (PSF), which is spent on security at all airports. If implemented, the move will dent the government's direct tax collection by a tad.**

"The income tax department charges tax (in the highest slab) on the fee that was earlier collected by airports. We have made a request to the finance ministry to exempt it from tax, as it is collected by us but managed by a trust," said an aviation ministry official, refusing to be identified.

The aviation ministry has also requested the finance ministry to bring jet fuel under GST. It is expected to ease the burden on the aviation turbine fuel, which is now taxed up to 36% across states. Jet fuel has up to 50% share in the cost of operations for airlines.

The government has cleared a long-pending issue of increasing the PSF from July 1 to ensure that the collection is enough to meet the cost of securing the airports. PSF has also been linked to inflation, which means it would increase every three years based on the inflation rate. It will take care of any increase in costs.

17/09/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

A GoAir Airbus A320-200N, registration VT-WGN performing flight G8-358 from Jaipur to Mumbai (India) with 165 people on board, was accelerating for takeoff from Jaipur's runway 27 when the left hand engine (PW1127G) ingested a bird prompting the crew to reject takeoff at high speed.

The aircraft slowed safely and returned to the apron.

The aircraft remained on the ground for about 9 hours, then departed again and reached Mumbai with a delay of 8.5 hours.

16/09/19 Simon Hradecky/AV Herald

Air India has grounded two pilots whose aircraft entered the active runway of Mumbai airport on Monday while it was taxiing to the end of the airstrip for take-off. Due to the inadvertent runway incursion, an incoming flight that was about to touch down had to do a last-minute go-around. The go-around was safe and the AI aircraft took off to its destination, with the crew being grounded after operating the return flight to Mumbai.

"The pilots have been grounded pending investigation, which will determine why the runway incursion took place. Did air traffic control give instructions correctly and our pilots misunderstood them? Or were the ATC instructions not clear? Only a probe will determine whose fault it was," said a senior AI official.

The scare happened around 2.30pm when the AI669 was taxiing to take off to Bhubaneswar. Sources said the Airbus A320 aircraft was to reach the take-off point of the runway from T2 by crossing the airport's main runway. It had to take a series of turns on taxiways to do that. But it instead entered the active runway due to a wrong turn.

Mumbai's CSMIA has two cross runways due to which only one can be used at a time. With the AI plane on the runway, sources said alert air traffic controllers told the crew of a flight that was on final approach to land on that airstrip. The incoming flight had to do a take-off, go-around. Pilots are trained to handle such situations and the crew of the incoming flight also did so safely.

"The AI flight a few minutes later took off for Bhubaneswar. The crew was grounded pending inquiry when it returned to CSIA after operating the return flight. We will determine who was at fault and act accordingly," said the AI official.

18/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **Aviation regulator DGCA has grounded three pilots and two aircraft maintenance engineers of IndiGo for not reporting vibrations in the Pratt and Whitney (PW) engines of the A320neo planes in separate incidents that have occurred since March, senior officials said on**

Wednesday.

"Three pilots -- Captain **Krishna Arjun Reddy**, Captain **Sanjay Gupta** and Captain **Pankul Nag** -- have been suspended for not reporting the vibrations observed in the PW engines of their A320neo planes," a Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) official said.

While Nag was suspended for three months, Reddy and Gupta were suspended for a period of six months from the date of their respective incidents, another official said.

The PW engine-powered A320neo planes of GoAir and IndiGo have been facing glitches mid-air as well as on-ground since their induction in 2016. This has led to grounding of some of these planes.

18/09/19 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi: **The government is likely to consider selling Air India in such a way that the acquirer does not have to take on its working capital debt, thus halving the burden and making it a more attractive prospect, said people with knowledge of the matter.**

The carrier, which the government is again trying to sell after having failed in 2018, will then be left with just Rs 15,000 crore of debt, for loans taken to buy planes.

The proposal, among others, is likely to be discussed at the first meeting of a ministerial group on Air India's divestment headed by home minister Amit Shah. Other members are finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman, commerce and railways minister Piyush Goyal and civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

The government had already transferred Rs 29,400 crore of debt last year to Air India Asset Holdings Ltd, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) that houses debt and assets of the national carrier. It is repaying the debt through government-guaranteed bond issues in three batches. The move halved Air India's Rs 59,000-crore debt. Of the Rs 30,000 crore remaining, about Rs 15,000 crore is working capital debt.

"The bigger problem with this proposal is managing the optics of the government selling the company without debt," said a senior government official who did not want to be identified. The government will have to take a call, as any decision to absorb working capital debt may have a political fallout, the person said. But, "reducing debt may ensure more bids for the carrier, which did not get any bids last time."

18/09/19 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

Mumbai: The core problem which led to the grounding of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft worldwide has surfaced on the Airbus 320Neo as well. Both these aircraft have a tendency to pitch the nose up, excessively to an unsafe degree, during certain stages of flight.

The big difference though is that unlike the Boeing 737 MAX, the A320NEO has never had an excessive pitch problem during flight operations. The problem came up recently only during laboratory testing carried out by the European aircraft manufacturer.

But a wary European Union aviation regulator, which had certified the A320NEO safe to fly, has issued an interim directive asking airlines to load the A320Neo in such a manner that the tail-end stays comparatively lighter in weight. Which is why airlines like Lufthansa and British Airways have recently started leaving the last row of six seats vacant on their A320Neo.

Unlike the European regulator, the Indian aviation DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) regulator hasn't put out a directive in public yet. But to comply with the European regulator's directive, airlines in India have started leaving the cargo compartment closest to the tail empty, said the director-general of civil aviation Arun Kumar on Tuesday.

On July 31, European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) issued an airworthiness directive, applicable to all A320Neo aircraft. Citing the problem, EASA said that an excessive pitch attitude (high nose) could result in increased workload for the pilots. "To address the potential unsafe condition, Airbus (the aircraft manufacturer) issued an Aircraft Flight Manual Temporary Revision, limiting the centre of gravity envelope, which prevents the aforementioned condition," said the EASA directive, which came into effect on August 14.

What is an aircraft's centre of gravity and how can it help in preventing an excessive high nose-up

pitch? Centre of gravity is a point around which an aircraft balances itself. An aircraft balances like a see-saw, with its nose on one end and tail on the other. It is loaded with fuel, passengers and cargo in such a way that its centre of gravity remains within a prescribed range (area) through all stages of flight like take-off, climb, descent etc.

"If the tail-end is lighter than the nose-end, the aircraft will be nose-heavy and it will tend to pitch downwards. A heavy nose will counteract the excessive nose-up tendency of the A320Neo," said a senior commander.

India is one of the largest operators of A320Neos with over 100 aircraft in operation. Director-general Arun Kumar said: "On August 7, we held a meeting with airlines and stake holders and asked them to implement the EASA directive. Three out of four Indian carriers that operate the A320Neo have already complied with the directive. These include IndiGo and GoAir. We will ensure that the fourth is in compliance by Wednesday."

18/09/19 Manju V/Times of India

New Delhi: **The recent set of financial numbers for Air India is indeed a matter of concern. Just when the airline companies started posting record profits, the national carrier is going from bad to worse.** National carrier reported **net losses of Rs 8,400 crore in 2018/19**, up 57 per cent from Rs 5,337 crore in 2017/18. Air India's losses in the last financial year are attributed to **elevated ATF (aviation turbine fuel) prices, rupee depreciation, airspace closure over Pakistan and debt servicing.**

The airline hopes to turn operational profitable in the current financial year with expected operating profits of Rs 700-800 crore on conditions that the crude oil prices don't go up and rupee exchange rate remains stable.

The airline has reportedly lost Rs 430 crore - or about Rs 3.5 crore per day - after neighbouring country Pakistan decided to shut down its airspace for Indian carriers following the Balakot strikes in February. On some days, the per-day losses were even higher at Rs 6 crore. Air India flights have to take longer routes to destinations such as the United States, London, Paris, Rome, Madrid and Frankfurt as it could not suspend flights due to legal and diplomatic reasons. Since Air India is the only long-haul carrier out of India after the suspension of Jet Airways, the airline's share of loss due to Pakistani airspace closure was far bigger than other carrier - SpiceJet lost Rs 30.73 crore, IndiGo Rs 25.1 crore and GoAir Rs 2.1 crore.

Ironically, the airline's regional subsidiary Air India Express has been reporting net profits for four consecutive years. For instance, the budget carrier reported a net profit of Rs 169 crore for the financial year 2017/18, which is in stark contrast to the performance of the parent company. Despite a slowdown in air passenger traffic growth, Air India Express is expected to benefit from the Jet Airways' shutdown.

17/09/19 Manu Kaushik/Business Today

New Delhi: Union home minister Amit Shah-led group of ministers (GoM) on Air India divestment is slated to hold its first meeting on Thursday and set the ball in motion for the second attempt to sell off the Maharaja. **Learning from last time's experience, Modi 2.0 administration could sweeten the terms of sale to attract investors which include opting for near-total exit and attaching a lower debt burden on the on-sale Maharaja.** That will be finalised by the Shah-led panel that has Union finance, commerce and aviation ministers N Sitharaman, Piyush Goyal and H S Puri, respectively, as members.

Last March, Modi 1.0 had offered to sell 76% stake in AI. And of the airline's total debt of almost Rs 60,000 crore, bidders for the airline arm were expected to take over debt of Rs 24,576 crore and current liabilities of Rs 8,816 crore or a combined burden of Rs 33,392 crore. These terms saw no bids coming in for AI.

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This time, the conditions could be majorly revamped to ensure AI gets a good buyer. Puri has already

spoken of complete exit from AI. About 1-2% may be retained for being offered to employees. The debt burden could be significantly reduced and the process of cleaning up AI's book has begun. "The meet is tentatively planned and is subject to the ministers' availability," said sources.

"There should be a plan B also this time to decide what to do with AI if the second attempt is also a cropper. The Plan B must decide right now whether the government will continue running AI as a PSU or shut it down if it gets no buyers/or not the right price offer. This is similar to us planning a flight from origin to destination where we keep fuel to fly to an alternate airport in case we can't land at the destination for any reason," said a senior pilot.

18/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

India has formally requested Islamabad to give permission for PM Modi's plane to use Pakistani airspace during his upcoming US Vist. PM Modi will be in United States from 21st to 27th of September for big-ticket events like diaspora event in Houston and address to United Nations General Assembly.

New Delhi had sent the request last week and Pakistan is still to respond. The country has to respond before the 20th of September. A rejection this time will be considered a violation of ICAO or International Civil Aviation Organization charter. Under the charter, unless its war, denying the use of airspace by singling out cannot be done by any country. New Delhi can take Pakistan to ICAO where the country can be slapped with a heavy fine.

Earlier this month, India had requested Islamabad to allow President Ram Nath Kovind's plane to use the Pakistani airspace during his Europe visit but it was rejected by the country. Rejecting the Indian request, Pak FM SM Qureshi had said, "Indian government had asked Pakistan to use its airspace for its president's movement. Given the current situation, we have decided not to give permission to India for this airspace usage"

India had regretted Pakistan's "futile" decision of not allowing President Ram Nath Kovind's plane to use the country's airspace.

Ministry of External Affairs in a statement said, "To deny overflight clearance for the VVIP special flight which is otherwise granted routinely by any normal country. We call upon Pakistan to recognise the futility of such unilateral actions." Last month India had requested Islamabad to grant the use of airspace for Prime minister Narendra Modi's visit to France which the country allowed despite the ongoing India-Pakistan tensions.

02/09/19 Sidhant Sibal/DNA

Maldivian, the national carrier of Maldives, established an overseas branch in Thiruvananthapuram, India.

The airline's operator, Island Aviation Services (IAS), assured that Maldivian's new branch will provide booking services and relevant information, working closely with passengers.

"All of the services available from other Maldivian offices will be provided [in Thiruvananthapuram]", said IAS' Public Relations Manager Moosa Waseem.

Maldivian commenced operations to the southern state of Kerala in 2008. The airline currently operates daily flights to Thiruvananthapuram.

17/09/19 Fathmath Shaahunaz/The Edition

New Delhi: **Air India's monthly fuel bill might rise by at least Rs 50 crore if the crude oil prices continue to surge in the wake of drone attacks on oil facilities in Saudi Arabia**, a senior airline official said on Monday. The national carrier's fuel bill every month is around Rs 500 crore.

According to the official, **the bill could go up by at least Rs 50 crore if the oil prices jump 10 per cent from \$60 per barrel level on a sustained basis.** An increase in oil prices could also result in fares going up as costs would have to be passed on, he added.

Besides, steep foreign exchange rate fluctuations would increase the fuel costs since payments are made in dollars, the official said.

17/09/19 News Today

British Airways is planning to open a cabin crew base in Hyderabad, India. The move is to provide more Telegu speaking crew on the route from London to Hyderabad from 2020.

India is an important market for British Airways. In fact, over the past six years, the airline has launched several adverts targeted at passengers travelling between London and India. Today, Business Traveller revealed that the British airline is going to start basing crew in India. This will see Telegu speakers trained in London, and acting as crew on the London to Hyderabad route. Around a year ago BA announced it was closing its Hong Kong crew base.

British Airways' is attempting to tailor its Indian services towards all passengers. Indeed, according to Business Traveller, two Indian crew members are rostered onto every flight operating to and from the country.

The airline currently operates to five destinations within India. These flights all operate from the airline's home at Heathrow and fly to Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Mumbai. Indeed, the route to Bengaluru is set to be the fourth to receive the carrier's new Airbus A350 aircraft.

Now, passengers on the Hyderabad to London route will benefit from cabin crew speaking the local dialect for the region, Telegu. According to the 2011 Indian census, there are 81 million native speakers of the language. These speakers are mostly concentrated in the central part of the east coast of India.

The crew will be fully-fledged members of British Airways cabin crew. They will have been trained at the carrier's main location in London to the same standards as any other member of crew. The only difference will be that they start and end their workday in Hyderabad, not London.

17/09/19 Tom Boon/Simple Flying

The Delhi, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Kochi airports have evinced interest in the Airport Collaborative Decision Making (ACDM) system developed in-house by the Airports Authority of India (AAI).

The airport officials met senior officials of the AAI to discuss the use of ACDM, which results in reduction of congestion at holding point at the runway of an airport. It also helps reduce fuel consumption, carbon emission and taxi time of the aircraft. Implementation of ACDM helps air traffic control officers (ATCO) by reducing cognitive workload and resulting in safe and orderly flow of aircraft due to reduced number of simultaneous aircraft movements.

In a meeting that took place in Mumbai on September 16, Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), Hyderabad International Airport Limited (HIAL), Bengaluru International Airport Ltd (BIAL) and Cochin International Airport Ltd (CIAL) explored the usage of ACDM.

ACDM focusses primarily on reducing aircraft holding delays at runway holding point, which further results in substantial saving of aviation fuel and reduction in carbon emissions. This is achieved by improving the decision making process by sharing of relevant information among aviation stakeholders.

17/09/19 India Transport & Logistics News

Srinagar: High drama unfolded at Srinagar airport on Tuesday as former BJP leader Yashwant Sinha was not allowed to leave the facility and was forced to return to New Delhi. The veteran politician had flown to Srinagar earlier in the morning, however, he was not allowed to leave the airport.

Speaking to India Today TV, Yashwant Sinha said that he was asked not to leave the Srinagar airport by the authorities there as he was a "threat to peace".

"When I landed, I was told that I could not leave Srinagar airport and venture in the Kashmir. The authorities told me I cannot leave the Srinagar airport as I am a threat to peace," Yashwant Sinha said.

The former BJP leader claimed that he had decided to visit Kashmir as the government said that the situation was normal. "I wanted to say hello to my friends and burst crackers on the streets to celebrate," he said.

Yashwant Sinha had travelled to Kashmir as a part of an NGO group called Concerned Citizens Group. Apart from the ex-BJP leader, the group included Kapil Kak, Bharat Bushan and Sushoba Barnad. They were stopped from venturing out of the airport after landing at 11:30 am, sources said.

17/09/19 Shuja-ul-Haq/India Today

Chennai: Customs officials arrested a man and seized gold worth Rs 32 lakh from his possession at Chennai International airport on Tuesday.

The passengers had concealed the gold in LED lanterns and digital radio sets.

The accused has been identified as Mohammad Shah Alam, a resident of Dehradun, Uttarakhand.

After noticing suspicious movement, customs officials intercepted him and thoroughly checked his luggage.

18/09/19 ANI/Sify.com

New York: A 28-year-old Indian national was refused entry into the US after the border authorities found that he was travelling with a fraudulent German passport.

US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers intercepted the Indian national on Monday at the Washington Dulles International Airport.

Authorities declined to prosecute the Indian man, who was refused admission to the United States.

Due to privacy laws, the man's name was not released as he was not criminally charged, a CBP release said.

The Indian national arrived from Accra, Ghana and presented the German passport to a CBP officer during inspection.

The officer detected discrepancies in the passport's biographical page and referred the man to a secondary examination, during which CBP officers were unable to access the passport's electronic chip and suspected it to be altered or damaged.

When questioned, the man admitted to purchasing the passport in Ghana. CBP officers seized the passport and refused the Indian national admission to the United States, the release said.

18/09/19 PTI/News18.com

Despite its well-documented financial challenges, Air India is continuing to add new routes and expand its international network. In recent weeks, the state-owned carrier has announced or launched services to Seoul, Toronto and Nairobi among others.

Purnima Nerurkar, general manager commercial at Air India, told Routesonline that while uncertainty exists over its ownership - with India's government seeking to fully exit the airline before the end of

the financial year - it remains the market leader in terms of capacity deployment between India and international destinations.

According to data provided by OAG Schedules Analyser, the carrier's total number of weekly airline seat kilometres (ASKs) on international routes from India totals 439 million during the week commencing 23 September 2019. This is 194.4 million more than Indigo in second position.

"We have a very vibrant market and even with a change in ownership we are confident that the airline will only grow in one direction – that is upwards," Nerurkar said.

"Air India has already launched its new routes to Toronto and Nairobi this year, and has restructured its network and added new connections."

In July, the Star Alliance member started routes from Indore and Kolkata to Dubai, while it is preparing to launch flights between Delhi and Seoul from 19 September. Service between Mumbai and Hong Kong will also begin on the same day.

In addition, Delhi - Toronto flights will start from 27 September, while operations on the Delhi - Chennai - Bali sector begin on 27 October. The four-weekly Mumbai - Nairobi will follow on 27 November.

"Air India's strategy was to first fill the vacuum created by Jet Airways' closure to minimise passenger inconvenience since April this year," said Nerurkar.

"Air India is the only airline in India with long-haul operations and we have been able to step in to effectively bridge the gap between demand and supply.

"Within the capacity constraints, we have restructured some routes to offer non-stop services. We have also added some capacity into the system with which we have been able to launch the non-stop DEL-YYZ and BOM-NBO flights.

After growing steadily on routes to Europe between 2014 and 2017, the airline's pace of expansion has quickened in the last two years. In September 2019 it will offer 164,904 two-way seats on routes to Europe, compared with 140,800 during the same month two years ago.

In the India-UK market, it has further added capacity to Heathrow and Birmingham, as well as adding Amritsar as one more point to Heathrow.

Nerurkar explained: "We have physical operations to points which have not only a strong affinity to India, but also a good catchment area.

"Some of the points have given us the opportunity to provide east-west connection on our network which has helped build the route. As of now, we are constrained with capacity and hence we will continue with the present network in Europe and consolidate the same in the near future."

Air India is hopeful that some of its capacity constraints will be eased in the coming weeks when 19 of its grounded aircraft are expected to re-join the fleet. It is understood that two Boeing 787s will be the first to be made available for service, followed by four Boeing 777s and 12 Airbus A320 family aircraft.

New Delhi: **Over the last eight months, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has grounded 74 pilots, of whom 41, or 55 per cent, were suspended for their alleged involvement in aviation-related accidents endangering the safety of the aircraft and passengers on board. The remaining 33 were grounded for failing the breathalyser test,** which determines if pilots are under the influence of alcohol while on duty.

The DGCA shared these figures, for between January and August 2019, in response to an RTI query seeking year-wise details of pilots suspended in the last two years. The aviation regulator, however, refused to disclose the details of pilots and airlines involved in the incidents.

The RTI reply also showed that 262 pilots were suspended between 2017 and August 2019 for various reasons. Of these, 98 pilots were suspended in 2017 while 90 pilots were grounded in 2018. A senior DGCA official, however, told ThePrint that the number of pilots suspended for their involvement in accidents, some of them serious, has risen sharply this year.

19/09/19 Ifrah Mufti/Print

The government is open to selling a partial stake in debt-laden state-run carrier Air India to a foreign airline, people familiar with the matter said on Wednesday.

The government has moved about Rs 30,000 crore (\$4.21 billion) of Air India's debt to a separate holding company, leaving the carrier with roughly another Rs 30,000 crore of debt, said a Reuters report quoting sources.

The government will also likely invite preliminary bids for the carrier by 10 October, the sources added.

In a major set back for the debt-laden Air India, the finance ministry is unlikely to infuse any additional funds into the debt-laden airline this financial year amid a report that the government may come out with a fresh disinvestment plan for the national carrier.

Accordingly, Rs 2,600 crore will be utilised to pay off the interest on bonds raised by Air India Assets Holdings Ltd (AIAHL).

AIAHL is expected to come out with its second bond offering worth Rs 15,000 crore in the next 10 to 12 days, according to a senior official.

AIAHL—the special purpose vehicle of Air India—mopped up Rs 7,000 crore through bonds on Monday and the issue was oversubscribed more than 20 times.

A total of Rs 22,000 crore is to be raised by sale of bonds by AIAHL and the proceeds would be used to repay the national carrier's debt, which is estimated to be over Rs 58,000 crore.

19/09/19 First Post

The Synergy Group, the sole suitor for Jet Airways, met with government officials on Wednesday to discuss the revival of the grounded airline. The group, promoted by Bolivian-born German Efromovich, sought assurance from the government on recovery of Jet's slots. The government sought clarity whether the group's business proposal was compliant with Indian foreign direct investment (FDI) rules, sources said.

"Officials from the ministry of civil aviation (MoCA) met with the group's representatives on Wednesday. The Synergy Group mainly sought assurance on the return of Jet's slots. In response, the government gave an assurance that reallocating the slots should not be an issue post March," a person aware of the developments told FE.

The Synergy Group will also send a technical team to evaluate Jet's assets, sources indicated to FE.

The slots of Jet Airways, which has been grounded for the past five months, have been reallocated to other airlines till March 2020.

The government, however, has serious concerns on whether the investment from the Synergy Group will comply with Indian FDI rules, as the group is yet to find an Indian partner. As per the Indian FDI regulations, a foreign airline can directly invest up to 49% in a scheduled Indian carrier. However, the rule applies only to those entities which directly own an airline. If the foreign entity is

an investment arm, private equity, fund, bank, or an industry conglomerate, FDI can go up to 74%, which is the maximum permissible investment that can be held by a foreign investor provided it is explicitly not an airline. "The Synergy Group has informed the government that it is looking for Indian partners and their legal team is looking for ways to resolve the concerns regarding FDI," the source said.

Last week, FE reported that the resolution professional (RP) for Jet Airways has approached at least two Indian companies to partner with the Synergy Group to invest in the grounded airline.

Independently, Synergy Group has also held talks with some Indian entities.

19/09/19 Anwasha Ganguly/Financial Express

Pakistan on Wednesday rejected India's request to allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi's VVIP flight to use its airspace for his upcoming visit to the US via Germany, citing "the current situation in Kashmir".

"India had requested Pakistan to allow Modi to use its airspace to travel to Germany on the 21st (Sept) and return on 28th (Sept)," Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi said.

Announcing the decision via a video statement, Qureshi said the Indian High Commissioner in Islamabad had been informed of Pakistan's decision to not allow prime minister's Modi's special Air India One aircraft to fly over the country.

"In the light of the current situation in Kashmir, India's attitude and atrocities there, we have decided to not allow our airspace for the flight of the Indian prime minister," he said.

Prime Minister Modi is travelling to the US on September 21 to attend the 'Howdy Modi' diaspora event on September 22 along with US President Donald Trump. He will also address the UN General Assembly in New York on September 27.

On September 7, Pakistan refused India's request to allow President Ram Nath Kovind to use its airspace for his flight to Iceland.

Imran Khan-led government has been under pressure from the Opposition and some ministers to impose ban on India to use its airspace after India revoked special status of Kashmir on August 5.

19/09/19 PTI/Business Standard

New Delhi: **India will next week get recognised by United Nations' (UN) aviation arm, international civil aviation organisation (ICAO), under its "no country is left behind" initiative.** In the past few years, Indian aviation has seen a number of audits by ICAO and the US federal aviation administration (FAA) that led to question marks. **India has been trying to resolve those issues and now the top aviation authorities — led by minister H S Puri, secretary P S Kharola and directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) chief Arun Kumar will be in Montreal, ICAO headquarters, to attend its 40th session of its assembly and receive the award.**

"...in recognition of your state's (India) progress in resolving its safety oversight deficiencies and improving the effective implementation (EI) of applicable ICAO standards and recommended practices during 2018, (India) has been elected to receive a Council President Certificate. (This award) was established in support of the 'no country left behind' initiative," ICAO council president Olumuyiwa Benard Aliu said in a letter to aviation authorities on June 20.

"It will be an honour to recognize your state by presenting the Council President Certificate to you at a special ceremony that will be held at ICAO HQ in Montreal during the 40th session of the Assembly (September 24-October 4, 2019)," it adds.

21/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Chennai: **A Doha bound flight of a private carrier carrying 240 passengers and a crew of five, on Saturday returned to the airport here, about 40 minutes after its departure due to technical issues,** officials said. As soon as the glitches were noticed when it was airborne, the pilot got the nod of authorities to return and safely landed the aircraft at the airport here, they said.

The passengers of the early morning aircraft were provided accommodation at a nearby hotel and the flight resumed its journey hours later. Following a similar episode, involving the same carrier days ago, the civil aviation authorities have asked the airline to look into such matters and submit a report.

21/09/19 Free Press Journal/Yahoo!

Two Air India planes were struck by intense turbulence this week, damaging the aircraft and in one case, injuring the cabin crew. An Air India plane from Delhi to Thiruvananthapuram, via Kochi with 172 passengers on board was hit by the turbulence on Friday, news agency PTI reported. While none of the passengers were injured and the plane landed safely, the aircraft suffered damages, an official said. The incident was reported to the airline's safety department, which launched a detailed investigation, he said.

"Air India's flight AI 048 hit air turbulence when it was on the way from Kochi to Trivandrum. Though no injury has been reported, the A321 aircraft suffered minor damages. It was grounded immediately after landing for inspection. Due to this, the return flight was delayed by nearly four hours," the official was quoted as saying by PTI.

Another Air India plane from Delhi to Vijayawada encountered turbulence on September 17. The Airbus A320 aircraft, caught in a thunderstorm, suffered damages while the cabin crew sustained injured, news agency ANI reported.

Photos on social media reveal the extent of the damage to the plane. In one of the photos, crew members can be seen being examined, while in another, food trays are seen scattered all over the aisle.

Air India has started the investigation in the matter, ANI reported.

22/09/19 Ria Saini/PTI/ANI/NDTV

New Delhi: Emirates' Delhi-Dubai flight on Sunday was among the two flights that could not land at their destination city as the airport there had to be shut down for some time due to suspected drone activity. The flight, EK-511, had to be diverted to nearby Sharjah.

In a statement, Emirates said: "Dubai International airport (DXB) was closed from 12.36 pm to 12.51 pm local time due to suspected drone activity in the surrounding airspace. As a result flight, EK 433 from Brisbane and Singapore to DXB was diverted to Dubai World Central (DWC) and flight EK 511 from Delhi to DXB was diverted to Sharjah International Airport (SHJ)."

"The diverted flights will return to DXB as the airspace has now reopened. Emirates will assist affected passengers with alternative re-booking options and hotel accommodation where required. Emirates regrets any inconvenience caused but the safety of our passengers and crew is of utmost importance and will not be compromised," she added.

22/09/19 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: An Australian national was on Sunday apprehended by the CISF at Delhi airport for allegedly carrying narcotics worth Rs 21 crore, a senior official said.

He said Mohammed Umar Turay was intercepted around 11.30 am when he arrived at the Indira Gandhi International Airport to take an Air India flight to Melbourne.

The traveller looked suspicious and was taken for detailed frisking during which **7 kgs of amphetamine category of drugs** was recovered from the false bottom of his bag, he said.

Amphetamine is a powerful stimulant and is majorly abused by youngsters.

22/09/19 PTI/Outlook

Mumbai: The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) recovered foreign currency worth Rs 71 lakh from an Indian national at the Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (CSIA) recently. The passenger was on his way to Hong Kong from Terminal 2 of the airport on Thursday night. During a pre-embarkation check around 8.30pm, CISF personnel noticed a passenger walking around the airport in a suspicious manner. Based on suspicion, he was frisked and also asked to open his luggage. Apparently, he panicked and showed reluctance in opening his bags. On conducting a check, the CISF came across 99,550 USD in his bag which comes to Rs 71 lakh in Indian currency. Customs officers were informed immediately. The passenger was interrogated as to why was he carrying such a large amount of currency. But he could not provide satisfactory answers. He was then taken into custody.

21/09/19 Times of India

New Delhi: **Amidst the reports of slowdown gripping various sectors, the number of domestic air-passengers has shown a steady decline in the last four months.**

Indian airlines carried 117.93 lakh passengers in August, down from 121.87 lakh passengers in May. The data released by the aviation regulator DGCA on Thursday showed that the number of domestic air-passengers in last few months saw some rise when compared with last year.

The DGCA said that passengers carried during Jan-Aug, 2019 were 943.58 lakh as against 913.95 lakh during the corresponding period of the previous year, registering an annual growth of 3.24 per cent and monthly growth of 3.87 per cent.

The year-on-year monthly growth in a number of air-passengers in July was 3.01 per cent and 6.19 per cent in June. The aviation sector suffered a major jolt after the shutdown of Jet Airways.

The year-on-year monthly growth was -4.5 per cent in April, but it rose to 2.79 per cent in May. Air-passengers volume in May was 121.87 lakh and down to 120.25 lakh in June, 119.05 lakh in July and 117.93 lakh in August. But, corresponding data of last year show that there was no steady trend.

In August, IndiGo carried 55.41 lakh passengers, SpiceJet 18.34 lakh, Air India 15.15 lakh, Go Air 13.91 lakh, Air Asia 7.63 lakh and Vistara 6.84 lakh.

IndiGo's market share was 47 per cent versus 47.8 per cent month-on-month while SpiceJet's was unchanged at 15.5 per cent.

20/09/19 Kumar Vikram/New Indian Express

New Delhi: **Fly your planes with 15% to 22% seats unoccupied while operating on the Delhi-Istanbul route on strong headwind days, India's aviation regulator directed IndiGo** on Friday. The budget airline's 186-seater Airbus A320 Neos should have upto 157 passengers on board and the 222-seater A321s should have no more than 173 passengers on board on such days.

Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) chief Arun Kumar's directive came after passengers on many of IndiGo's Delhi-Istanbul flights in recent days were discovering that while they reached their destination, their baggage hadn't taken off from Delhi. The reason: Due to strong headwinds IndiGo's Delhi-Istanbul flying time has been over seven hours in past few weeks which is pretty close to the maximum operating range of the single aisle Airbus A320/321s used by it. So to carry more fuel, baggage was being left behind on IndiGo's Delhi-Istanbul flights of last Sunday and a few more days of all or most of the passengers.

Now to ensure that such things don't recur and also to ensure the airline can carry more fuel on 15-22% emptier planes, Kumar issued this directive. Strong headwinds for west-bound flights will continue for some months. For this reason, Air India's Delhi-San Francisco flight frequently takes the Pacific route to US and then flies back to Delhi over the Atlantic to get tailwinds all the way and save fuel.

About Istanbul-bound passengers whose bags were left in Delhi in recent days, an IndiGo official said: “We have sent an individual letter of regret to the affected passengers along with a coupon of Rs 5,000 that can be used in their future travels.” IndiGo operates two daily flights between Delhi and Istanbul on its single aisle fleet. Turkish Airlines is the only other carrier to fly on Delhi-Istanbul route but they use wide body planes and therefore do not face issues like their code share partner IndiGo.
20/09/19 Saurbah Sinha/Times of India

Imphal: A day after an under-construction building collapsed at Manipur’s Bir Tikendrajit International Airport in Imphal on Wednesday evening, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) asked the state government’s Planning and Development Authority (PDA), an agency which executes the infrastructural works, to undertake an inquiry into the incident.

Speaking to reporters on Thursday at his office, director of Bir Tikendrajit International Airport, S Senthil Valavan, said that the AAI has advised PDA to conduct the inquiry and submit the report to them.

Meanwhile, the regional headquarters (NER) of the AAI in Guwahati will also conduct a separate investigation into the incident to ascertain the cause and bring out the report accordingly, Senthil said.

The director also disclosed that the project, supposed to be an electrical and mechanical workshop for the international airport, had started its initial work this year after signing a pact between AAI and state agency PDA in November 2017.

Of the estimated total budget of Rs 8.65 crore for the ambitious project, so far, as per the director, Rs 3.45 crore have already been released for the deposit work.

According to reports, a total of 50 workers were engaged at the site when a portion of the ground floor was collapsed right after completion of concrete layering of the single floor cargo terminal building at around 5:45 pm. **The incident left eight labourers were injured, including one in critical condition.**

Soon after the incident, rescue teams, including the Indian Army and Assam Rifles rushed to the site and rescued the injured workers from the accident spot. Later, the injured persons were taken to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) for first-aid.

“We were worried about the concrete debris and we used the JCBs to cut the steel and remove the debris. During the search and rescue, we also used the live detecting machines to find out if any person was left under the debris but everything was fine,” added Senthil

20/09/19 Vangamla Salle KS/East Mojo

Mumbai: Airports Authority of India has decided not to exercise its right to buy shares from its partners Bidvest and Airports Company South Africa (ACSA). The two South African companies have been trying to sell their combined shareholding in Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) and exit the 13-year old joint venture.

The arbitration court has also given GVK, which operates Mumbai airport, time till October 30 to deposit the purchase price of the shares (Rs 1,248 crore) in an interest bearing escrow account failing which Bidvest has the freedom to sell shares to any third party they wish to after securing necessary regulatory approvals.

As per the original shareholder agreement between MIAL’s partners, AAI has right of first refusal over the Bidvest and ASCA stakes. “The matter was deliberated at the appropriate levels and finally AAI has decided not to purchase the shares which are subject matter of the present proceedings, pending before this Arbitral Tribunal either from Bid Services Division (Mauritius) or of M/S ACSA Global Limited,” said the interim order of the arbitration panel that ET has reviewed.

In April, GVK informed the stock exchanges that it had entered into a non-binding agreement with

NIIF-ADIA for its airports business at a valuation of around Rs 12,500 crore.

A deal was to reduce debt of up to Rs 5,750 crore. **Canadian pension fund PSP Investments later joined the NIIFADIA consortium.** The transaction to ringfence GVK's crown jewel is yet to be completed. Sources said that the prospective investors have been insisting on a co-control deal with GVK, irrespective of the economic interest, and the right to appoint MIAL's CFO.

AAI's decision removes a potential hurdle for Adani Group that had made a play for India's second busiest airport since January pitting them directly against GVK, the incumbent operator. The Hyderabad based infrastructure company needs to find a partner within the next one and a half months to stall the ongoing takeover attempt.

19/09/19 Mihir Mishra/Arjit Barman/Economic Times

India's SpiceJet Ltd. is weighing an order for at least 100 Airbus SE planes as Boeing Co. grapples with the fallout over its grounded 737 Max.

The budget carrier, a major global customer for the Max, may buy a "sizable" number of Airbus A321LR and XLR jets to accommodate a planned expansion, SpiceJet Chairman Ajay Singh said Tuesday. No decision has been made, he said, and the airline would consider a competing midrange jetliner if Boeing decides to build one.

Airbus has "pushed us hard since the day we started flying Boeing aircraft, and of course with the current problems, they've pushed us harder," Singh said in an interview at Bloomberg's headquarters in New York. "They have made us a commercial offer and we are evaluating it."

The discussions with Airbus threaten Boeing with a high-profile defection at a time when the US planemaker is enmeshed in one of the biggest crises in its 103-year history. SpiceJet, India's second-largest airline, has 13 Max jets already in its fleet and has committed to buy as many as 205 of the single-aisle workhorses as it expands capacity to handle the nation's fast-growing demand for air travel.

While Singh didn't specify the exact size of a potential transaction, he said "any aircraft order that SpiceJet places would at least be 100 aircraft." That would value the deal in excess of \$13 billion, based on 2018 list prices before customary discounts for the A321neo. The LR and XLR variants are longer-range variants of the plane.

The Max has been grounded worldwide since March after a pair of crashes killed 346 people. More than six months later, the timing of the return to service remains unclear as regulators worldwide conduct independent assessments of the jet's airworthiness.

'Pain Point'

Boeing has told SpiceJet that it expects US regulators to re-certify the plane in early November, Singh said. While Indian regulators plan to conduct their own checks, Singh said he hopes SpiceJet will begin flying its Max planes again in January.

"We look forward to the Max aircraft coming back because that's where the biggest pain point for SpiceJet is currently," he said. The carrier is in conversations with Boeing about compensation for the costs incurred from the grounding.

SpiceJet has taken a number of older 737s while the Max remains on the ground, but those jets are more expensive and less efficient to operate, Singh said. While the airline's fleet consists of Boeing

and Bombardier Inc. planes, Singh said SpiceJet would consider flying Airbus models as well, particularly if the Max issues continue to distract Boeing.

"You need to keep evaluating, and we are evaluating the Airbus options," he said. "It's not the easiest thing in the world to do, of course -- our entire infrastructure is geared for a Boeing fleet -- but if this takes too long, we may not have too much of a choice."

NMA Decision

The Max grounding is delaying Boeing's decision on whether to build a midrange jetliner called the "new midmarket airplane," or NMA, which analysts have dubbed the 797. The manufacturer has diverted engineers and the NMA's program manager to the 737 program, the company's largest source of profit, and reiterated that it won't make any decisions on the midrange plane until the Max is flying again.

SpiceJet isn't the only potential NMA buyer that's pushing Boeing to make a decision. Delta Air Lines Inc. Chief Executive Officer Ed Bastian said in a Sept. 18 interview that the carrier has "a significant need" for a jet like the NMA, which would be tailored for flights of about 5,000 nautical miles.

While Singh said he understands Boeing's decision to focus on the Max, he said SpiceJet needs to know within 12 months whether the planemaker is going to move ahead with the NMA.

"Right now, the NMA seems to be mostly on paper," he said. "We need for them to make a decision quickly, because clearly there is a market for that aircraft, and that space will be taken up by Airbus unless Boeing announces something soon."

SpiceJet, launched in 2005, has scripted a remarkable comeback since it was briefly forced to ground all flights five years ago after running out of cash. Singh, a co-founder of the airline, played the role of white knight by pumping in funds, cutting loss-making routes and renegotiating contracts with vendors.

The carrier will boost its capacity of flights and seats 60% this year and could expand another 50% next year, he said.

India had the world's fastest-growing aviation market last year as a slew of budget carriers including SpiceJet offered cheap fares to entice an emerging middle class flying for the first time.

While provincial taxes in India make jet fuel one of the costliest in the world, airlines can't afford to ignore the market of 1.3 billion people, where air-travel penetration is significantly lower than in markets such as the US.

[Live Mint Aviation 25/09/2019](#)

MUMBAI: European aviation major Airbus said on Wednesday it will provide component support and repair to the A320 fleet of Vistara under its Flight Hour Services - Tailored Support Package (FHS-TSP).

The long-term contract inked with the domestic full service carrier will cover engineering and maintenance for 62 aircraft, including 23 existing ones, a release said.

Airbus Services combined aircraft engineering capabilities, expertise in maintenance operations and data analytics know-how will help Vistara to increase its competitiveness and secure its operations.

"This contract also reaffirms our commitment to expanding and deepening our Airbus Services footprint in India," said Remi Maillard, Head of Airbus Services.

Under the agreement, Airbus will offer its expertise in the areas of maintenance, engineering and supply chain management, among others besides ensuring timely availability of spare parts, their maintenance planning, compliance with airworthiness advisories as well as technical records on all aircraft, the aircraft manufacturer said in the release.

An on-site Airbus team will support the daily maintenance activities, including spares, warehousing and engineering to ensure the highest standards of aircraft technical dispatch and operations, it added.

"We are delighted to announce the partnership with Airbus to avail the advantages of their TSP programme," said Sisira Kanta Dash, senior vice president for engineering, Vistara.

LiveMint Aviation 25/09/2019

New DelhiThe Indian Air Force (IAF) received the **first multi-role combat aircraft Rafale** from its manufacturer Dassault Aviation in France on Thursday, defence sources said on Friday.

The jet will be formally handed over to Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for induction into the IAF when he visits France on the occasion of Dussehra on October 8.

The defence sources said the Rafale jet was accepted by a team of IAF officials at the aircraft's manufacturing facility in Bordeaux after completion of certain testing formalities.

Sources said the first jet was test-flown on Thursday by IAF's Deputy Chief of Air Staff, Air Marshal V.R. Chaudhary who is also leading the team that is in France.

Officials said that on Thursday, India moved one step closer to acquiring the multi-role combat aircraft. However, the aircraft will physically arrive in India after installation of India-specific enhancements upon it. The first jet is expected to arrive in India only around May 2020.

The IAF has said that the occasion of Dussehra was chosen for receiving the first Rafale jet because it falls this year on October 8 which is also celebrated as Air Force Day.

India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France and Dassault Aviation in September 2016 to purchase 36 Rafale jets in flyaway condition from the French manufacturer. The deal had been signed for approximately ₹59,000 crore.

A set of IAF pilots have already been trained in France for flying the aircraft while more number of officers are expected to undergo training in different batches till the physical arrival of the aircraft in India.

The tail fins of the India-specific Rafale jets bear the initials RB-01 after the name of the Air Chief-designate Air Marshal R.K.S. Bhaduria. He had played a crucial role in the negotiations with France before India finalized the deal for the 36 fighter jets.

Live Mint Aviation 20/09/2019

The Bombay High Court has allowed the lawyers of Adani Properties time to seek direction from the company about the next course of action. Adani Properties has approached the court to restrain Bidvest from selling its stake in Mumbai International Airport (MIAL) to a third party.

The Gautam Adani-controlled Adani Properties has approached the court, seeking its direction to buy out minority stake of around 13.5% held by South Africa's Bidvest Group. "We have a binding agreement with the Bidvest that is sacrosanct and we are seeking the court's injunction to the minority investor of MIAL to transfer its shares to any third party," argued Vikram Nankani, a senior counsel who appeared for Adani Properties. "Under the agreement, they (Bidvest) have agreed to sell its stake for Rs. 1,235 crore to us".

Currently, two South African investors in MIAL — Bidvest Services Division (Mauritius) and ACSA — are looking to exit. Their combined 23.5% holding is at the centre of a dispute between the GVK Group and the Adani Group. GVK owns around 50.5%, while the Airports Authority of India owns remaining stake.

The Economic Times of India 24/09/2019

HYDERABAD: The GVK group, which is in the process of developing **Navi Mumbai International Airport**, will be spending Rs 8,500 crore in the first phase to cater to 10 million passengers per annum, Chairman of the infra major G V K Reddy said here on Wednesday.

The airport is a public-private partnership venture in which the GVK-led Mumbai International Airport has a 74 per cent stake with CIDCO, the Maharashtra government's nodal agency for the project, holding the remaining 26 per cent.

The greenfield international airport will be built on 1,160 hectares in phases and eventually cater to 60 million passengers per year.

"In the first phase, it is going to be about Rs 8500 crore. It goes in phases. It will be 10 million passengers (in the first phase). Maybe by spending another Rs 2,500 crore or Rs 3000 crore, another 20 million can go ahead.

The project is on track and going on well," Reddy told shareholders at the Annual General Meeting of GVKPIL (GVK Power and Infrastructure Limited).

The concession agreement for Navi Mumbai International Airport was signed on January 8, 2018 between Navi Mumbai International Airport and City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO).

GVK, which currently manages the Mumbai International Airport through its subsidiary GVK Airport Developers, said Yes Bank would be the lead bank and mandate lead arranger for phase I and phase II of the Navi Mumbai airport project

The initial concession period is 30 years from the appointed date which is extendable for a further 10 years.

Navi Mumbai International Airport Pvt Ltd proposed and submitted master plan to CIDCO and also provided performance security as per the terms of concession agreement.

The company has arranged its debt funding requirements for the phase-I of NIMIAL project from Yes Bank Limited and is in the process of finalising the financing and security documents.

Ninety four per cent of land development works have been completed as on April 30, 2019 and about 85 per cent of structures at the site have been demolished and vacated by CIDCO, Reddy said.

Replying to another query, he said the **group is determined to acquire the 13.5 per cent in Mumbai International Airport Limited owned by** South African firm Bid Services Division Mauritius or Bidvest.

Other shareholders are ACSA Global (Airports Company of South Africa) which owns 10 per cent, **Airports Authority of India (26 per cent) and GVK Airport Holdings, which is the majority owner with a 50.5 per cent ownership in the company that runs the country's second busiest airport.**

GVK has already announced its intention to acquire ASCA Globals 10 per cent stake

The Economic times of India 25/09/2019

Mumbai: **The dedicated bankruptcy court has directed the financial creditors of Jet Airways to provide interim finance immediately for maintenance of aircraft** and to keep the company as a going concern.

On Wednesday, the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) directed the financial creditors to approve and allocate funds to the resolution professional (RP) of Jet Airways

Earlier, the counsel for the resolution professional had informed the tribunal that the share of banks in interim financing was approved in the first meeting of the Committee of Creditors (CoC) held in July, where the lenders had decided to release collectively Rs 63 crore.



However, so far, only the State Bank of India (SBI) and the Syndicate Bank had released their part of the fund,” said the counsel for RP to the NCLT. “...other lenders including Yes Bank, Indian Overseas Bank, Punjab National Bank, IDBI Bank, Axis Bank and Bank of India have either not released or some have not even sanctioned funds.”

The RP had informed the tribunal that the lead consortium bank SBI has given Rs 10 crore while other lenders have sanctioned about Rs 26 crore, but not released yet while a few banks have not even sanctioned the funds despite agreeing to disburse in the CoC meeting.

After hearing the arguments, the tribunal presided over by VP Singh and Rajesh Sharma asked lenders to release the funds within two weeks.

Ashish Chhawchharia, partner and head of Grant Thornton India's restructuring practice and RP of the company, was not available for comments on the development.

According to Aisish Pyasi, Associate Partner at law firm Dhir & Dhir Associates, the principal bench has already taken a view in earlier matters that financial creditor will have to contribute for the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP), else the process will come to a halt.

The RP of the Jet Airways has received claims worth close to Rs 30,000 crore and has so far accepted only about one-third that came from financial creditors. The RP has accepted close to Rs 8,500 crore from financial institutions and is in the process of verifying claims worth Rs 15,000 crore.

Naresh Goyal founded Jet Airways over 25 years ago. The airline stopped flying on April 17, having failed to raise money to keep itself afloat. The court admitted its plea on June 21 and appointed a resolution professional to implement the insolvency procedure for the airline.

The Indian government has ordered the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) to carry out an investigation against Jet Airways and six of its affiliate companies, including subsidiary airline Jet Lite and Jet Privilege, the loyalty rewards company it owns with Etihad Airways

The Economic Times of India 26/09/2019

L'environnement est au coeur des débats de l'assemblée générale des 193 Etats membres de l'Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale, à Montréal. Les modalités de mise en oeuvre du premier programme mondial de réduction des émissions de CO2 continuent de susciter des désaccords.

Trois ans après l'adoption, en grande pompe, par 191 Etats du premier programme mondial de réduction des émissions de CO2 du transport aérien, la question du réchauffement climatique continue d'échauffer les esprits au sein des instances internationales. **Réunis cette semaine à Montréal pour la 40e assemblée générale, les représentants des 193 pays membres de l'Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale (OACI) doivent désormais se mettre d'accord sur les modalités d'application de ce programme CORSIA (pour « Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation »). Il entrera en vigueur sur une base volontaire en janvier 2021 et deviendra obligatoire à partir de 2027.**

L'objectif est de stabiliser les émissions de l'aérien à leur niveau de 2020, malgré la croissance du trafic. Pour se faire, il faut financer pour 40 milliards de dollars de projets qui permettront de compenser 2,5 milliards de tonnes de CO2 entre 2021 et 2035. Mais **si le but affiché fait l'unanimité, les Etats restent très divisés sur les moyens d'y parvenir.**

Recycler les vieux projets

72 pays, représentant 76 % du trafic aérien international, se sont portés volontaires pour la phase pilote, quelques gros pollueurs au premier rang desquels la Chine, n'ont pas encore signé. Et d'autres comme l'Inde et le Brésil contestent les **modalités d'application du programme. La Chine, le Brésil et l'Inde voudraient que d'anciens projets de compensation des émissions de CO2 - les CDM - réalisés dans le cadre d'un précédent programme onusien, soient pris en compte. Mais les promoteurs de CORSIA, au premier rang desquels l'Europe, s'y opposent**, estimant que l'intégration de ces vieux projets à l'efficacité souvent douteuse reviendrait à réduire très fortement l'impact du programme.

Un seul programme mondial

L'autre source de désaccord majeure est la volonté de l'OACI de faire de CORSIA le seul programme obligatoire de compensation des émissions de CO₂ du transport aérien. Ceci afin de garantir aux compagnies, les mêmes règles de fonctionnement, conformément à la mission de l'OACI. Un objectif qui est aussi celui de l'Association du transport aérien international (IATA). « Pour pouvoir fonctionner efficacement, le transport aérien a besoin d'un cadre réglementaire homogène et stable, souligne son directeur général, Alexandre de Juniac

« Malheureusement, poursuit ce dernier, **il existe un risque bien réel que le CORSIA soit sapé par des gouvernements qui accumulent les instruments additionnels de tarification du carbone. Ils sont qualifiés de 'taxes vertes', mais à ce jour, nous n'avons pas vu que des fonds additionnels ont été affectés à la réduction réelle du carbone** ». Dans une interview aux Echos, le PDG d'Airbus, Guillaume Faury, exprimait les mêmes inquiétudes.

Taxes et permis d'émission

Du point de vue de l'IATA et de l'OACI, la décision française de créer une nouvelle taxe environnementale sur les billets d'avion ne va donc pas dans le bon sens. D'autant que le gouvernement français ambitionne désormais de convaincre les autres pays européens de créer une taxe européenne. **Mais la vocation universelle de CORSIA remet aussi en cause le système européen des permis d'émissions (ETS), inventé par l'Union européenne en 2012, qui prétendait l'imposer à toutes les compagnies.**

Devant la levée de boucliers des autres Etats, l'Europe avait dû faire machine arrière et limiter son application aux seuls vols intra-européens, en attendant un système mondial. « Nous avons toujours répété ce système des ETS n'était pas adapté, rappelle Alexandre de Juniac. Mais nous n'avons pas été entendus ».

L'Europe contre le reste du monde

Le scénario de l'Europe contre le reste du monde risque désormais de se reproduire avec l'entrée en vigueur de CORSIA, qui devrait théoriquement se substituer à l'ETS européen. Ceci afin d'éviter aux compagnies européennes, une sorte de « double peine » nuisible à sa compétitivité.

Mais la Commission européenne, soucieuse d'aller bien au-delà des objectifs de CORSIA, ne l'entend pas ainsi et recommande aux Etats européens de maintenir les deux dispositifs. Car si CORSIA vise à stabiliser les émissions de CO₂ au niveau de 2020, l'ETS lui entend réduire les émissions des vols intra-européens de 43 % d'ici à 2030, comparé au niveau de 2005.

Le cas des supersoniques

Un autre sujet de désaccord oppose l'Europe aux Etats-Unis, concernant un sujet mineur mais très symbolique des futurs jets d'affaires supersoniques . Pour favoriser la réalisation de ces projets, tous américains, Washington voudrait assouplir les limites de bruits et d'émissions de CO₂ pour les vols supersoniques. L'administration américaine étudie même la levée de l'interdiction des vols supersoniques au-dessus des terres, instaurée à l'époque du Concorde. Mais les représentants européens, qui n'ont plus le moindre projet de supersonique, s'y opposent, au nom des priorités environnementales. Là encore, l'assemblée générale de l'OACI sera peut-être l'occasion de faire avancer les discussions... ou d'entériner les blocages.

Les Echos 25/09/2019

NEW DELHI: Amid AirAsia India's continuing court war, the aviation ministry has asked the airline to give an undertaking that its operations are managed locally, and that it has complied with the substantial ownership and effective control (SOEC) clause.

Sources said that it would be an assurance of sorts to the government that the airline is managed locally. **"With the undertaking, the government is likely to award foreign flying permissions to AirAsia India, most likely after September 26, the next date of hearing in a case filed by BJP MP Subramaniam Swamy,"** a source said, refusing to be identified.

Swamy had moved the Delhi High Court, challenging the airline's foreign flying rights, saying it was in violation of the foreign direct investment norms.

Under the SOEC clause, an airline must have its operational base in India and two-thirds of its board members need to be Indian along with the chairperson. **AirAsia India, which is 51% owned by the Tata group and 49% by AirAsia Berhad, has Indian nationals as its chairman, chief executive officer and on key positions**



Despite a blanket approval from a ministerial group, the aviation ministry has not allowed AirAsia India to fly international because of the court case and also a query raised by the PMO after Swamy moved court. The aviation ministry has replied to the query, detailing the facts about the airline.

Vistara has been allowed to fly international under the new, relaxed foreign flying eligibility norms but AirAsia India was eligible even under the earlier, stricter rules.

The earlier rules required Indian carriers to have a fleet of 20 aircraft and five years of domestic flying experience. This was eased to zero domestic flying experience and 20 aircraft in the fleet, known as 0/20 rule, in 2016.

AirAsia India has more than 20 aircraft and over five years of local flying experience.

The Economic times of india 24/09/2019

SpiceJet will also launch new flights between Rajkot and Mumbai, Chennai and Durgapur from October 27

The airline will deploy a mix of its Boeing 737NG and Bombardier Q400 aircraft on the new routes

New Delhi: **Budget airline SpiceJet will launch 46 new non-stop flights on its domestic network next month.**

According to the airline, the new flights will begin in phases starting October 27.

Besides, the airline said with the addition of new flights, passengers from cities such as Rajkot, Aurangabad, Jodhpur, Varanasi, Shirdi, Vijayawada, and Vishakhapatnam among others will be able to "easily travel to a host of other cities both on SpiceJet's domestic as well as international network".

Further, **the airline has announced the on-boarding of Rajkot as its 54th destination on the domestic network with the introduction of a daily non-stop flight on the Mumbai-Rajkot route.**

Moreover, the airline will also launch services on the **Chennai-Durgapur UDAN route.**

"As we add newer cities and flights to our network providing affordable air travel options to more and more people, our focus remains firmly on connecting the unconnected parts of the country," said Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet.

"We are absolutely bullish on the growth potential of the smaller cities and towns of India and see great demand on the routes we have announced today."

LiveMint Aviation 26/09/2019

The government has for the third time as many as months pushed the deadline for submission of expressions of interest (EoIs) for Pawan Hans to October 10.

The earlier deadline for submitting the EoIs expired Thursday. The government has been planning to exit the chopper services provider RPT services provider for some time now.

According to a notice on the website of the aviation ministry, the deadline for strategic disinvestment of Pawan Hans has been now extended to October 10.

This is the third time that the date is being extended since the government came out with the preliminary information memorandum for selling its entire 51 percent stake in the chopper company was issued in July. Oil and gas behemoth ONGC holds the remaining 49 percent

The divestment bid comes after ONGC did not show any interest in taking the full ownership of the company last fiscal. Pawan Hans primarily serves ONGC's offshore operations with a fleet of 43 choppers.

The government had on 11 July issued fresh bid document for strategic disinvestment in the company with August 22 as the last date of submission for EoIs.

However, it extended the date to September 12 after no bids were submitted, and timeline for all other subsequent activities were also changed accordingly.

This deadline was extended again by two weeks to September 26.

The Economic times of India 26/09/2019

MUMBAI: Airports Authority of India (AAI) said on Thursday it has mandated its integrated logistics arm AAICLAS to carry out in-line baggage screening at various airports from next months.

In the in-line baggage screening system, passengers don't have to queue up near the X-ray machines to scan their baggage before check-in.

To this effect, **the AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd (AAICLAS) and AAI have inked a pact on Wednesday**, an official release said.

The pact entails AAICLAS carrying out hold baggage screening function under the control, supervision and administration of AAI at various domestic and international airports, the release added.

This is in compliance with the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) norms for ensuring safe and secure in-line hold baggage screening system, it said.

Starting October 1, AAICLAS will first commence operations on stand-alone screening system at Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Calicut airports, the AAI said adding subsequently, in a phased manner, it will switch over to Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)-approved in-line baggage system at all airports in the country.

The Economic times of India 26/09/2019

MUMBAI: **The government is confident of exceeding the divestment target for the fourth consecutive year**, a senior finance ministry official said on Thursday, affirming that privatisation efforts will also be speeded up.

Strategic sale involving a sale of the flag carrier Air India is also "doable" this fiscal year, and there can be one more strategic sale for which the ministry is awaiting the Cabinet nod, the official said.

The budget has set a divestment target of Rs 1.05 lakh crore for the current fiscal, up from Rs 90,000 crore last fiscal that it had overshoot.

In the past, the government has been using multiple methods to meet its divestment numbers. For instance, in share sale through the exchanges, it has been forcing LIC to snap up IPO/OFS equities, while in strategic sale, last year it forced ONGC to take over HPCL. Again, after its attempts to get an investor for the crippled IDBI Bank, it had asked LIC to take over the bank last fiscal.

The government has also been using exchange traded fund (ETFs) route to mop up resources. Last fiscal again, it sold a small portion of its holding in the Suuti (ITC, L&T and Axis Bank) stocks through this method.

According to experts, divestments hold the key to resource mobilisation for a cash-starved government, especially after last week it massively reduced corporate taxes, drilling a Rs 1.45-lakh-crore hole into the budget numbers presented in July.

"We have a very well laid-out strategy for achieving the divestment target this year also. Last three years we exceeded the target and there is no reason why we will not exceed the target this year as well," Dheeraj Bhatnagar, the additional secretary in the department of investment and public asset management, said addressing the annual Capam conference here.

He said there are 11 state-run companies which are in the process of going public and the government has drawn up other plans as well on the same.

On Air India, he said the government has taken care of a lot of apprehensions of prospective investors after the earlier unsuccessful bids to sell the company, and is now willing to sell beyond 74 percent as well.

Bidding for the national carrier will be carried out through a newly developed e-bidding system, he added.

The bureaucrat said the presence of home minister Amit Shah, who has a name for execution, as the head of the group of ministers, will also help.

Meanwhile, Bhatnagar also said the government is considering realising its "dream" of corporatising the national airports operator Airports Authority shortly and also the ports.

The government is also looking at selling its minority stake in Axis Bank, ITC and L&T held through the Specified Undertaking of Unit Trust of India (Suuti), he said, without disclosing a timeline.

It is also looking at selling its minority stake in Vedanta and Hindustan Zinc, subject to necessary clearances from the Supreme Court which is adjudicating a matter on the same at present, he said.

Seeking to allay investor fears over a possible glut of issuances, Bhatnagar said the government will time the issues well to ensure that every sale fetches the best price for an asset, and does not disturb the market.

He said a policy of targeting market capitalisation of state-run enterprises is under the works to ensure that the value of government holdings stays at a particular level.

Bhatnagar also said there is also a plan to launch a debt-ETF, wherein private investors will be able buy securitized debt of well-rated state-run companies which will deleverage the companies.

The Economic Times of India 26/09/2019

MUMBAI: GMR Infra has tied up with low-fare carrier Thai AirAsia as part of a consortium to bid for the \$2 billion expansion project of the U-Tapao airport in Thailand, one of the cornerstones in the country's plan to become an important trade hub, said people aware of the development.

The conglomerate has also shown an interest in an expansion project for the Batam airport in Indonesia, they said.

The first-of-its-kind tieup for GMR highlights its increasing focus on its profitable airport business--especially on international projects--as it aims to demerge it from the rest of the segments and list it as a separate entity, a move seen unlocking value for shareholders.

For the U-Tapao airport, GMR is part of a consortium that also includes Property Perfect Plc and Grande Asset Hotels and Property Plc., a Thai property and hotel development group.

Thai AirAsia is 55% owned by local holding company Asia Aviation and the rest by AirAsia Investment, a 100% subsidiary of AirAsia Berhad. Last year, AirAsia's group CEO Tony Fernandes said the company would be investing \$150 million in an aircraft maintenance repair and overhaul facility at the U-Tapao airport. AirAsia has long aimed to build its own low-cost airports.

Development of the airport, which serves Pattaya and Rayong, is one of the five mega projects which the Thai government is undertaking as part of its Eastern Economic Corridor plan to develop the area as a prime economic zone for the ASEAN region. Part of the scheme is to turn Thailand into an aviation hub.

Among the megaprojects are high-speed rail links between U-Tapao airport and the two main airports of Bangkok—Don Mueang and Suvarnabhumi—and between U-Tapao airport and the main centre of Bangkok city. The project, which entails building a new passenger terminal, among other things, seeks to expand the annual passenger handling capacity of the airport to 15 million from the current 3 million. The consortium that has GMR is among three that have submitted technical proposals for the airport.

The final round of bidding is yet to happen. Last month, one of the bidders, the Charoen Pokphand (CP) Group-led Thana Holding Consortium, filed a lawsuit against the committee alleging that the selection process was unlawful. This happened after the EEC Policy Committee, the nodal body for the project, refused to accept its technical proposal, business plan and price offer as they were submitted after the deadline had passed. The committee has, however, carried on with the bidding process. The Thai government expects \$43 billion as investment into the EEC over the next five years. The funding will come from the government, public-private partnerships such as the one for which GMR has shown interest, and foreign direct investment (FDI).

The persons cited earlier refused to share information regarding GMR's plan for Indonesia. But local Indonesian papers said GMR has formed a consortium with Indonesian companies Waskita Karya and PT Cardig. ET couldn't verify this independently. The project includes expansion of the existing terminal and building a new one.

GMR runs India's busiest airport in Delhi and fourth busiest in Hyderabad. It is building a new airport in Goa and has won the contract to manage the airport in Nagpur. In February, the company emerged as the highest bidder for building a greenfield airport in Bhogapuram, Andhra Pradesh. It operates the Mactan-Cebu International Airport in Philippines, is building a new airport in Crete islands, Greece, and has an engineering procurement and construction contract for Clark International Airport at Philippines

The Economic times of India 27/09/2019

New Delhi, Sep 27 (PTI) A Cheetah helicopter of the Indian Army crashed in eastern Bhutan Friday afternoon in which both the pilots were killed, official sources said.

The wreckage of the helicopter has been found, they said, adding the crash took place around 1 pm. A high-level inquiry has been ordered, the sources said.

A Delhi-bound IndiGo flight with 180 passengers on board made an emergency landing at Goa airport on Sunday after the aircraft's engine caught fire. All the passengers were safely evacuated. There is no report of injuries so far.

According to the media reports, the left engine of Goa-Delhi IndiGo flight caught fire after it took off from the Goa airport on Sunday night.

"Last night around 20 minutes into the flight, the left engine caught fire," Goa environment minister Nilesh Cabral, who was headed to Delhi along with other officers, told the Hindustan Times.

Around 20 minutes after the take off, passengers saw smoke was coming out of the plane's left engine. The passengers started panicking and screaming. Soon, the pilot decided to land the flight.

"The passengers saw the engine fire and soon everyone was screaming. But the pilot then turned off the engine and flew the plane on one engine and handled the situation very well," Cabral told the Hindustan Times.

IndiGo has accommodated the passengers on the next flight to Delhi after the incident.

On Friday, Mumbai International Airport Ltd. said that the full emergency was declared for Chandigarh-Mumbai. Mumbai airport did not elaborate the reason behind the emergency.

"Full emergency was declared for IndiGo 6E flight number 463 at 16:28 Hrs. IST. The IndiGo Airlines' flight landed safely at 16:44 Hrs. on RWY 27 and was fully parked. Following which the full emergency was withdrawn at 16:47 Hrs," MIAL said. IndiGo said that the aircraft is currently being checked by the maintenance team.

LiveMint Aviation 28/09/2019

MUMBAI : Union road transport minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday said using bio-fuels can reduce crude oil imports which will help save foreign exchange on one hand also achieve the \$5-trillion GDP goal by 2025.

Gadkari said his ministry has taken various steps to promote bio-fuels like ethanol and butanol which are not only feasible but also desirable for the nation as it will also help reduce the emissions.

"Every year we spend around ₹7 lakh crore on oil imports. In this scenario if we have alternate bio-fuels like ethanol and butanol which can be used in cars and aircraft, why should we not explore those options. They are not just cheap but also pollution-free," Gadkari said.

He said the aviation sector imports ₹40,000 crore worth of fuel and if they explore bio-fuels, it opens a ₹40,000-crore market for domestic players.

"Aviation bio-fuels are widely accepted in the US and Britain. If we also use it, we will save lots of foreign exchange," Gadkari said, adding steps are being taken to reduce coal imports as well.

"We are studying the feasibility of using napier grass which has higher calorific value instead of coal. I strongly feel that if we undertake these measures, we will be able to achieve our \$5-trillion GDP target," he said.

Live Mint Aviation 28/09/2019