

Revue de presse du 26 mars au 14 avril 2020

Si le transport aérien a été frappé de plein fouet par l'effondrement du trafic, les effets du coronavirus ont mis quelques semaines de plus à se faire sentir dans l'industrie aéronautique.

Personne ne doutait que cette crise sanitaire allait avoir des conséquences à moyen terme sur les commandes, les livraisons, le rythme de production..., mais la célérité de la propagation du virus en Europe et les mesures de confinement décidées par une partie des gouvernements ont accéléré le cours de l'histoire.

Certes, les acteurs de l'aéronautique - en France du moins - avaient commencé à préparer la mise en place de mesures pour le télétravail, la distanciation des employés, voire la séparation des équipes. Jusqu'au 15 mars environ, tout semblait réuni pour que l'industrie continue de tourner. Le confinement total annoncé le 16 mars puis effectif le lendemain midi a tout changé.

Il n'en fallait pas moins pour jeter le doute sur le niveau des mesures prises, notamment pour la protection des fonctions de production très exposées et non éligibles au télétravail. Plusieurs syndicats ont rapidement exigé un arrêt total et immédiat du travail pour protéger les salariés. Une mesure extrême, sans doute indispensable, à laquelle les industriels se sont résolus avec plus ou moins de bonne volonté.

L'enjeu est désormais la reprise du travail dans des conditions sanitaires satisfaisantes. Si la santé des personnes doit rester la priorité absolue, directions comme syndicats savent qu'ils ne doivent pas tarder à s'accorder sous peine de compromettre l'avenir des entreprises. Chaque jour qui passe sans production, c'est de la trésorerie qui disparaît alors que celle-ci sera vitale pour rebondir après crise.

Le coronavirus va en effet coûter cher, très cher. **L'effondrement du trafic a déjà provoqué la faillite de certaines compagnies et mis à mal les autres. Des reports, voire des annulations de commandes sont inévitables. Et les constructeurs devront se montrer compréhensifs sur l'aménagement des livraisons et des paiements sous peine de voir disparaître d'autres transporteurs.**

Dans le même temps, ces grands acteurs doivent s'assurer de la pérennité de leur chaîne d'approvisionnement, déjà sous tension avant crise. Le ralentissement de la production dans un système dimensionné pour une hausse des cadences pour encore plusieurs années va entraîner une explosion des coûts. Cette situation va mettre à genoux nombre de fournisseurs de rang inférieur et sans doute aussi quelques acteurs majeurs.

Les constructeurs et les grands équipementiers ont donc l'obligation de trouver très rapidement un équilibre entre l'exigence sanitaire, la reprise de la production, l'aménagement des cadences et la préservation des capacités de financement. Et les Etats doivent aussi prendre rapidement leur part dans cet équilibre, sous peine de voir des pans entiers de l'industrie aéronautique européenne s'effondrer. Le temps est compté.

Le Journal de l'Aviation 26/03/2020

L'aide aux grands groupes aériens est déjà actée. En revanche, le sauvetage des compagnies de taille moyenne dépend en grande partie de la durée de la crise sanitaire...

Le transport aérien mondial subit une vraie catastrophe. **La plupart des compagnies aériennes ont réduit au strict minimum leur activité, certaines l'ont carrément stoppé. Nombre d'entre elles sont déjà à bout de souffle.** Flybe a fait faillite, suivie plus récemment par l'américaine Compass Airlines. La menace est aujourd'hui sérieuse pour des compagnies de tailles autrement plus importantes... L'Association internationale du transport aérien (IATA) table désormais sur des pertes de revenus du secteur de plus de 250 milliards de dollars. **Pour son président, Alexandre de Juniac, la moitié des compagnies aériennes sont menacées de faillite si la crise sanitaire se poursuit jusqu'en juin.** Sur la situation du secteur aérien, « nous devons réfléchir au niveau européen », a insisté Bruno Le Maire, le ministre de l'Économie, ce mardi matin, lors d'un point presse, tout en ajoutant que Bercy suivait au quotidien la situation d'Air France. Car les compagnies aériennes, pour l'heure, comptent surtout sur les États, aujourd'hui clairement en première ligne. Pour la plupart des transporteurs aériens en effet, sans recapitalisation point de salut !

Le premier pays à avoir ouvert le bal est la Norvège. L'État norvégien a annoncé la semaine dernière qu'il allait garantir les prêts contractés par la low-cost à hauteur de 584M€. Actionnaire également de SAS, aux côtés de la Suède et du Danemark, la Norvège va adopter une même mesure pour le transporteur scandinave et la compagnie régionale Wideroe. Hors d'Europe, l'État néo-zélandais a déjà annoncé qu'il allait accorder un prêt de 480M€ à Air New Zealand.

Pour l'heure, les compagnies européennes se félicitent déjà des mesures d'urgence. Ainsi, l'ensemble des syndicats d'easyJet France, la deuxième compagnie aérienne dans l'Hexagone, se sont fendus, ce mardi, d'un communiqué commun pour remercier le gouvernement pour les mesures d'activité partielle. Comme l'a rappelé hier Muriel Pénicaud, la ministre du Travail, le secteur du transport aérien est "très pénalisé, avec 30 000 personnes qui sont en chômage partiel chez Air France et plus de 1700 chez easyJet (France)".

Le directeur général d'easyJet à Londres, Johan Lundgren, rappelait à ce titre, la semaine dernière, qu'un soutien gouvernemental coordonné était nécessaire pour assurer la survie du secteur. En Europe, à l'instar de Ryanair, la low-cost britannique dispose d'importantes liquidités. Et sa rentabilité ne fait guère douter de sa capacité à attirer de nouveaux investisseurs. Mais de nombreuses autres compagnies sont beaucoup plus fragiles. **Pour les observateurs du secteur, nul doute que la crise actuelle contribuera à sa consolidation et concentration, notamment en Europe. D'autant que les efforts des États se porteront en priorité vers les entreprises dont ils sont propriétaires ou actionnaires.** Ce sera bien sûr le cas pour les compagnies Emirates, Qatar Airways et Etihad portés à bout de bras pour les États du Golfe.

En Europe, Air France-KLM a accueilli positivement les déclarations des gouvernements français et néerlandais ayant indiqué chacun étudier toutes les conditions possibles d'un soutien. On devrait ainsi voir l'État français, son actionnaire à hauteur de 14,3%, recapitaliser l'entreprise en augmentant sa participation.

Les autres grands groupes aériens en appellent également aux États. Carsten Spohr, le président du Conseil d'Administration du Groupe Lufthansa, a déclaré la semaine dernière que le recours de l'État pourrait devenir nécessaires dans la situation actuelle : « Plus la crise dure et moins il est probable

que l'avenir du secteur puisse être garanti sans aides publiques». Même constat outre-Manche. Les patrons des compagnies aériennes britanniques ont déjà demandé au gouvernement une aide financière d'urgence, jusqu'à 8 milliards d'euros. Chez nos voisins transalpins, l'État italien n'a plus guère de choix que de nationaliser Alitalia, en très grande difficulté, par le biais d'une nouvelle société contrôlée par le ministère de l'Économie ou une société à participation publique majoritaire.

Outre-Atlantique, un projet de loi vise à injecter 50 milliards de dollars dans le secteur aérien, sous forme de prêts, avec l'option de prendre des participations dans les transporteurs. Les financements seraient conditionnés à l'interdiction pour les compagnies US d'augmenter les revenus de leurs dirigeants et de verser des «golden parachutes» pendant deux ans. Visiblement pas une évidence pour tout le monde...

Déplacements Pro 25/03/2020

India is now locked down and loaded in its fight against the coronavirus. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced a 21-day nationwide shutdown in an effort to break the chain of transmission.

As the nation of 1.3 billion people shut down, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said India's covid fight could make or break the global war. WHO said India has a tremendous capacity to deal with the pandemic as it has experience of eradicating smallpox and polio.

India's fight against the Covid-19 outbreak has been unique. Clampdowns have been imposed much earlier than in many countries, including China, which failed to contain the spread of the virus. But **the real test for India, curbing community transmission, has just begun.**

While India placed travel restrictions relatively early, and many states quickly shut off access to public places, the country's high population density, overburdened public health infrastructure, high prevalence of non-communicable diseases and the prospect of transmission from younger people to the elderly in joint families all stack the odds against effective containment.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the country has been growing at a rate seen at the early stages in countries where there was subsequently an exponential rise in infections in a matter of weeks.

India vs the world

When studying the progression of the outbreak, two phases remain important - the first 100 cases, and every case after the first 100. India took almost 3 months to reach the first 100 positive cases of coronavirus, which then multiplied four times over the next ten days.

Comparatively, Japan saw a 13% daily increase in cases before reaching 100 cases and a 8.1% daily increase in cases from its 100th case to its latest. The decrease in the average daily increase is indicative of a flattening curve and several countries, like South Korea and Singapore are on the same path.

But at least 23 countries, including India, are going in the opposite direction — the number of cases

has risen faster after the 100th case than before it. In these nations, **the curve is rising and measures to control the outbreak are either yet to take effect or have failed.**

After reporting the highest number of cases initially, East Asian countries have managed to flatten their curves. The percentage change in daily average cases was lower after the 100th in China, Singapore, South Korea and Japan than before. They appear to have successfully flattened their curves compared to Western Europe, the US and India.

Compared to countries like the US, Spain and France, Italy has begun to flatten its daily new case tally but the number of cases continues to remain high, over 69,000 on last count.

19 countries brought daily average cases down by over 10-percentage points. Only a handful of largely high-income countries, like Denmark and Ireland, have managed to considerably control the spread after reporting 100 cases. However, the number of cases in most of these nations remains much lower than heavily impacted parts of Western Europe and East Asia.

Eight of them saw more than 30-percentage-point drop in daily cases. Iran, which has among the highest cases outside of China, saw a 60-percentage point decline in daily average cases after reporting its 100th case.

The Economic Times of India 25/03/2020

C'est officiel. En raison de la suspension quasi-totale du trafic aérien, ADP va fermer temporairement l'aéroport d'Orly au trafic commercial régulier à partir du 31 mars à 23h59. A Roissy-Charles de Gaulle, ADP va seulement maintenir le terminal 2E (hall K), une partie du 2F et le 2A. ADP prévoit un trafic de seulement 10 à 15% jusqu'à mi-mai, puis une reprise progressive.

C'est officiel. En raison de la suspension quasi-totale du trafic aérien, ADP va fermer temporairement l'aéroport d'Orly au trafic commercial régulier à partir du 31 mars à 23h59. **Le terminal sera donc fermé au public, mais les fonctions vitales seront maintenues pour permettre le redémarrage. Orly restera par ailleurs un terrain de déroutement en cas d'urgence, et sera ouvert aux vols d'évacuation sanitaire et aux vols destinés à stocker les avions, a expliqué à La Tribune Edward Arkwright, le directeur général exécutif du groupe.**

Maintien à CDG du "2E" (hall K), du "2F" avec une péninsule, et du "2A".

Le gestionnaire des aéroports parisiens va proposer aux compagnies aériennes présentes à Orly d'opérer les quelques vols qu'elles prévoient encore à l'aéroport de Roissy-Charles de Gaulle, lequel va lui aussi être redimensionné pour s'adapter au trafic résiduel parisien envisagé. Après la fermeture temporaire du terminal 3 et du terminal 2G lundi, d'autres infrastructures vont fermer.

"Nous allons nous replier sur le terminal 2E, hall K, le 2F avec une péninsule, voire une deuxième s'il y avait plus de trafic que prévu, et nous conserverons une capacité d'accueillir une activité au

terminal 2A. Tout le reste sera fermé à partir de dimanche 29 mars à 23h59", a précisé Edward Arkwright.

ADP pense pouvoir conserver entre 10 et 15% du trafic de CDG.

Reprise progressive

Pour combien de temps? Avec le manque de visibilité sur la durée de la pandémie, aucun calendrier n'a été donné.

"Nous allons travailler avec les compagnies aériennes sur les critères d'appréciation pour réarmer une reprise. C'est pour cela que nous allons garder des équipes nominales à Orly", a indiqué Edward Arkwright.

Dans ses scénarios de reprise du trafic, ADP a prévu un "point bas" entre le 15 mars et début mai, puis une très légère remontée du trafic en mai avec un trafic inférieur de 70% par rapport à une activité normale, suivie d'une remontée en juin et juillet (-50%). La reprise s'annonce donc lente et progressive.

Le groupe prévoit une perte d'un milliard d'euros de chiffre d'affaires à Paris en 2020.

La Tribune 25/03/2020

According to Jagannarayan Padmanabhan, Director, Crisil Infrastructure Advisory, the current situation is unprecedented. **All aspects of the aviation sector are taking a hit - Airlines, retail, airport operations.** The issue is quite unclear as to when this will end and what irreversible damage it will do to the sector. He adds that the aviation sector in India is quite fragile, a few are still in the startup mode and others were already challenged for operation. The post-corona world for the aviation sector will look drastically different.

Live Mint Aviation 26/03/2020

Mumbai: Averting a default, Air India has secured short-term funds to service Rs 700 crore worth non-convertible debentures (NCDs) due for redemption on Thursday, according to a source.

The debt-laden national carrier's operations and revenue flow have been crippled by coronavirus outbreak, which has also resulted in suspension of domestic and international flights.

On March 23, India Ratings warned that the national carrier may default on the debt payment, given the poor cash flow position after the announcement of the closure of national airspace.

Accordingly, the agency had on the same evening placed the instrument on rating watch with negative outlook.

On Thursday, an airline source told PTI that it has secured the needed amount from banks with government guarantee to pay interest to investors.

The source did not say how much money has been raised or the amount needed to pay.

A reply to a mail sent to an Air India spokesperson for confirmation is awaited. According to the source, Air India has secured short-term bank loans backed by government guarantee to refinance the entire principal amount of Rs 700 crore of non-convertible debentures.

These NCDs are due for interest payment or redemption on March 26. The airline needs Rs 30 crore to pay the interest.

The issuer's account was not provided for the same as of March 25, according to India Rating report last evening. The amount was on rating watch negative since March 23, which reflects delays in funding the designated account as on March 23, as confirmed by the trustee IDBI Trusteeship Services.

The Economic Times of India 26/03/2020

Mumbai: Air India pilots' unions, IPG and ICPA, have said their members will support the government and will operate any special flight irrespective of the extent of the coronavirus pandemic.

In a joint letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Indian Pilots Guild (IPG) and Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA) said, Air India pilots note with "admiration" the proactive way in which the government has been working round the clock to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

On Tuesday, Prime Modi announced that the entire country would be going under a 21-day lockdown. He said this lockdown is very important for India to fight against novel coronavirus and control its spread.

"Air India as the national carrier has always been proud to fulfill a myriad of diverse and challenging missions, whenever required by the government to fulfill this obligation," the two pilot unions said a joint letter on Wednesday.

The IPG represents Boeing fleet pilots while the ICPA has its members from the Airbus fleet in the flag carrier.

The national carrier has operated a series of rescue flights including to Wuhan in China, Japan, Milan and Rome in Italy to evacuate Indians stranded at these places.

Besides, Air India operated a relief flight to Tel Aviv to take the Israeli nationals back to their country due to coronavirus outbreak.

Of late, budget carrier SpiceJet announced operating a flight from Delhi to fly 142 Indians to Jodhpur, who were evacuated from Iran following the COVID-19 outbreak there.

Similarly, another no-frills airline, IndiGo has on its part offered the government its aircraft and crew to facilitate transportation of medical equipment within the country.

These announcements came only after the grounding of their entire fleet in the wake of temporary suspension of all commercial flights.

The Economic Times of India 26/03/2020

India has extended the ban on international commercial airlines operating to India till 18.30 GMT on April 14 (April 15 India time). Earlier, the ban on international flights to and from India was till March 29.

The extension of the ban on scheduled commercial international flights is in keeping with Prime Minister Narendra Modi declaring a lockdown in India till April 14 to combat the spread of the coronavirus.

A Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) circular states that the restrictions will not apply to international air cargo operations and flights, especially those approved by it. DGCA's special approval saw Lufthansa operate a special flight between Delhi and Frankfurt on Thursday morning to take back foreign citizens who had been stranded in India after it announced the ban on international commercial flights to and from India on March 22.

Scheduled international commercial flights are those operated by global airlines, including British Airways, Lufthansa, Singapore Airlines, and United Airlines, to and from India.

Interestingly, while the DGCA has extended the ban on scheduled international commercial airlines, the current ban on domestic airlines' operations is till March 31. It remains to be seen whether that too will be extended in line with the complete lockdown announced by the Prime Minister till April 14.

The Hindu Business Line 26/03/2020

All international commercial passenger flights will remain suspended till April 14, aviation regulator DGCA announced on Thursday, amid a nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on March 19 had announced that no international commercial passenger flight operations will take place in India from 1.30 am on March 23 to 5.30 am on March 29.

"In continuation of circular-II dated 19.3.2020 issued on the subject cited-above, it has been decided that all scheduled international commercial passenger services shall remain closed till 1830 hrs GMT (0000 hrs of Indian Standard Time) of April 14, 2020," the aviation regulator said.

"However, this restriction will not apply to international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA," it said.

The government suspended domestic passenger flight operations from midnight on March 24.

There are 649 coronavirus positive cases in the country and 13 people have died due to it till now, according to the Union health ministry.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a complete lockdown across the country for 21 days from Tuesday midnight, asserting that this is necessary for a decisive battle against the coronavirus.

Business Standards 27/03/2020

L'Association du transport aérien international (IATA) et ses membres tirent à nouveau le signal d'alarme pour demander, aux gouvernements, de prendre des mesures urgentes pour faciliter l'acheminement du fret aérien

La crise du Covid-19 a cloué au sol presque toute la flotte d'aéronefs de passagers du monde ; cette flotte transporte normalement près de la moitié des envois de fret aérien. Les compagnies aériennes s'efforcent de combler cet écart entre la demande de transport de marchandises et les capacités disponibles, y compris en remettant en service des avions-cargos et en utilisant des aéronefs de passagers pour les opérations de fret.

Pour soutenir cet effort, l'IATA demande aux gouvernements d'éliminer les obstacles en prenant les moyens suivants :

- **Mettre en place des procédures accélérées pour les permis de survol et d'atterrissage des vols cargo, en particulier dans les grandes plaques tournantes manufacturières d'Asie – Chine, Corée du Sud et Japon – pour réagir au nombre croissant de cargos nolisés qui remplacent les opérations du secteur passagers.**
- **Exempter les membres d'équipage qui ne sont pas en interaction avec le public de l'exigence de quarantaine de 14 jours pour assurer le maintien des chaînes d'approvisionnement du fret.**
- **Soutenir les droits de trafic temporaires pour les opérations de fret là où des restrictions peuvent s'appliquer.**
- **Éliminer les obstacles économiques, comme les redevances de survol, les frais de stationnement et les restrictions touchant les créneaux aéroportuaires pour soutenir les opérations de fret aérien durant cette période sans précédent.**
- **Éliminer les couvre-feux visant les vols de fret aérien pour rendre le fonctionnement du réseau mondial de fret aérien aussi souple que possible.**
- **Les compagnies aériennes prennent des mesures extraordinaires pour assurer le transport aérien de marchandises essentielles. IATA en a recensé un certain nombre.**
- **Delta, American et United ont instauré des vols exclusivement réservés au fret en utilisant des avions de passagers pour des vols intérieurs et internationaux, pour compenser la réduction de la capacité mondiale de fret aérien.**
- **Air Canada, Austrian, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Emirates, Iberia, Korean, LATAM Lufthansa, Qantas, Scoot, Swiss et plusieurs autres transporteurs ont rendu des avions de passagers de leur flotte disponibles pour les vols nolisés de fret aérien.**
- **Ethiopian Airlines joue un rôle clé dans le transport des équipements médicaux de lutte du Covid-19 transitant par son hub vers 54 pays d'Afrique, notamment en transportant récemment des équipements offerts par la fondation Jack Ma.**
- **Croatian Airlines a effectué des vols nolisés d'Abu Dhabi vers Zagreb livrant des équipements médicaux critiques.**
- **China Eastern a livré une quantité importante de fournitures médicales pour aider des médecins en Italie.**
- **Austrian a utilisé deux appareils de passagers B777 pour transporter des équipements médicaux de la Chine vers l'Autriche.**
- **Airlink, une organisation sans but lucratif travaillant avec des partenaires de l'aviation et de la logistique pour transporter des travailleurs humanitaires et des fournitures d'urgence, a transporté 7 tonnes de fournitures médicales et d'aide alimentaire pour contribuer aux efforts de lutte contre le Covid-19.**
- **FedEx Express a aidé le gouvernement américain à transporter des spécimens de test depuis plus de 50 centres de test à l'automobile installés dans des grands magasins dans 12 États américains.**
- **La fondation UPS a élargi son intervention d'aide en livrant d'urgence des fournitures médicales, de la nourriture et des abris, ainsi que de l'assistance financière pour contribuer aux efforts de rétablissement.**

- **Airbus a transporté deux millions de masques faciaux de la Chine vers l'Europe à bord d'un vol expérimental d'un appareil A330-800 – la majorité des masques sont destinés à l'Espagne et à la France.**

AeroBuzz 25/03/2020

En plein cœur de la crise engendrée par la pandémie de Covid-19, **les compagnies aériennes de l'Hexagone clouent leurs avions au sol et mettent en place des mesures de chômage partiel pour leurs salariés.** Dans ce contexte sans précédent pour un pavillon français déjà fragile, TourMaG.com donne la parole aux dirigeants du secteur. En commençant ce jeudi par Alain Battisti, président de la puissante Fédération nationale de l'aviation marchande (Fnam) ainsi que de la compagnie Chailair

TourMaG.com - Vous réclamez un « plan Marshall » pour le secteur aérien. Comment dialoguez-vous avec le gouvernement et quelles mesures demandez-vous concrètement ?

Alain Battisti : Pour l'instant, il n'existe pas de plan réellement défini pour l'aérien.

Le secteur - compagnies, aéroports, sociétés de handling, etc. - bénéficient des mesures générales comme le chômage partiel, qui sont opportunes et nécessaires.

Ce que je crains, c'est que cela ne suffise pas dans la mesure où les compagnies réalisent zéro de chiffre d'affaires et ce pour une durée que nous ne connaissons pas.

Nous sommes en contact permanent avec le Gouvernement. Nous discutons avec le Ministre des transports quotidiennement et avec Bruno Le Maire et Muriel Pénicaud, une fois par semaine.

Nous sommes en même temps plongés dans l'opérationnel et notamment les rapatriements pour lesquels Air France apporte un soutien décisif.

Nos demandes économiques sont prises en compte partiellement mais il y a trop d'inconnues à cette heure. Bruno Le Maire a annoncé, mardi 24 mars 2020, des aides pour Air France.

TourMaG.com - Justement, est-ce qu'un renforcement de la participation de l'Etat dans Air France serait une bonne solution ?

Alain Battisti : Je l'ignore. J'imagine que ce n'est pas la seule solution qu'il faudra mettre en place.

Actuellement, l'ata prévoit des pertes colossales de 252 milliards de dollars pour le transport aérien mondial. Nous vivons tous la même catastrophe, entreprise par entreprise.

Tour Mag 28/03/2020

Thousands of air passengers across the country are in limbo. The government has suspended all international and domestic air operations till April 14. Whether the air operations will resume post-April 14 remains uncertain even as the number of coronavirus cases in India continues to rise.

Every flyer wants to know if she would get a full refund on cancellation of her ticket.

India's aviation regulator, Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), has assured that it will try

its best to protect the interest of passengers.

“We will take care of cancellation once the situation returns to normal,” Arun Kumar, Head, DGCA, told Outlook.

As of now, none of the airlines has offered to refund money. They have announced various options -- from rescheduling dates to offering credit notes -- on their social media accounts and websites.

Anxious passengers have been making frantic calls to airlines or the booking agencies for an update. Many passengers rue they fail to get through.

Airlines, on the other hand, say that an unexpected increase in calls and complaints have choked their system. They promise to protect customers' interest in the best possible manner.

Industry experts believe that except IndiGo, which is cash-rich, none of the airlines can refund.

However, they believe the DGCA or the Ministry of Civil Aviation should have issued a clear directive on March 24 when the lockdown came into force.

29/03/20 Jeevan Prakash Sharma/Outlook

Kochi: IATA Agents Association of India has requested the Civil Aviation Ministry to allow passengers full refund of the ticketed value (including basic fare and fuel surcharges) of unutilised tickets as well as rescheduling travel dates by utilising total ticketed value or EMD as credit.

Considering the worldwide spread of Covid-19, majority of the domestic and international passengers in the country are not in a position to prepare for a new travel plan immediately due to the prevailing uncertainty.

Biji Eapen, national president, IATA Agents Association pointed out that many Indian and foreign carriers including OTA's are arbitrarily and illegally using the technical term "non-refundable" by taking advantage of force majeure clause as outlined in the Air Passenger Charter Act 2019.

Worldwide governments encouraged flexibility for air passengers so that they can postpone or cancel their tickets with nil / less financial loss, he said.

The air passengers in India are facing the hardship of the extraordinary situation and consequential suspension of all domestic and international flights. The majority of the air tickets issued by travel agencies or directly bought by passengers through airline websites or Online Travel Agency (OTA) websites, usually fall under the lowest fare category with several terms and conditions including the "non-refundable" tag. And for processing the cancellation/refund/date change, passengers have to approach the same booking channels.

29/03/20 V Sajeew Kumar/Business Line

New Delhi: Aviation personnel, including pilots and cabin crew, have been temporarily exempted from breath analyser (BA) tests in wake of the coronavirus pandemic. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Sunday said this test is temporarily suspended at all airports till further notice.

The regulatory move comes after a SpiceJet pilot tested positive for corona on Saturday, after which pilots of Air India sought relaxation from this test due to fears that the apparatus used for the same could spread the infection. Pilots of other Indian carriers also backed this demand.

".. due to the extraordinary circumstances in view of the outbreak of COVID-19 and also in view of the directions issued by High Court of Delhi and High Court of Kerala (for air traffic controllers), the conduct of breath analyser test in respect of all aviation personnel as required under subject Civil Aviation Requirements in force is temporarily suspended at all airports till further orders," a DGCA order issued Sunday said.

"However every aviation personnel, who is reporting for duty, is required to submit an undertaking in respect of the fact that he/she is not under the influence of alcohol and that he/she has not consumed alcoholic/ psychoactive substance in the last 12 hours from the time of reporting for duty. The undertaking must also contain a warning that in case of violation of the undertaking, the licence/approval will be suspended for a period of three years," it adds.

Airlines have been asked to conduct random tests. BA test is mandatory for flight crew. The DGCA clarifies this "direction/arrangement is purely a temporary measure in view of the extraordinary circumstances due to outbreak of COVID-19. The restoration of provisions of respective Civil Aviation Requirements on the subject will be reviewed from time to time."

The Air India pilots had on Sunday written to the DGCA that the "machine/ apparatus for BA test remains the same, and that droplets/ aerosols of infected pilots may further infect the healthy."
29/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Calcutta: The federal foreign office of Germany has arranged an Air India flight from Calcutta to evacuate its nationals stranded in eastern India because of the cessation of international flights in India to fight the spread the coronavirus.

Citizens of other European Union nations and the UK will be allowed on board as well.

The plane is expected to fly out from Dum Dum airport with more than 150 passengers on Tuesday morning.

"The embassy signed a contract with Air India on Saturday morning in Delhi. This repatriation programme is for short-term visitors who do not have back-up to stay on as well as Indians who hold permits of residency in Germany," deputy consul general Jurgen Thomas Schrod told Metro.

The flight will stop at Delhi for refuelling before flying onwards to Frankfurt.

There will be about 100 Germans on board, along with citizens of Britain, France, Italy, Denmark, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium, Greece and Finland. "Since this is a special flight, flyers will not get a boarding pass but will have to sign a form to pay a fare equivalent to normal economy class ticket rates."

The flight has a capacity of 238 passengers but will carry only about 150 to ensure social distancing. "We still have a few seats available to fill up," Schrod said.

The deputy consul general worked a 10-hour shift on Saturday, attending calls on three phones and answering emails, and was back at his table on Sunday at the consulate general with his colleagues. "We are a small consulate but this needs to be done. My colleagues in other European consulates in

the city are also working hard to make this a success. We want to ease the burden on society and the government here in the midst of the pandemic.”

29/03/20 Sudeshna Banerjee/Telegraph

Bengaluru: Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) the managers of Kempegowda International Airport has appealed to the Residents Welfare Associations (RWA) to stop evicting Airport workers as it needs to maintain a certain level of critical manpower to continue to handle cargo flights despite the shutdown of passenger operations. The staff of KIA complained that the landlords are asking them to vacate their residences due to fears that they would spread the deadly Covid-19 disease among the community.

BIAL Managing Director and CEO Hari Marar said in a letter to the Bangalore Apartments Federation, General Secretary. Cargo operations continue to ensure that people across the country are able to receive their essential commodities like medicines, medical equipment and kits, and household parcels, among others. Besides this, relief aircraft and evacuation flights are also operating from the airport on a need basis”

29/03/20 UNI

New Delhi/Mumbai: As fears of coronavirus spread grows, air crews are often faced with stigma and not salute for their contribution in rescuing Indians, mainly pilgrims or students, who were stranded abroad. It's a phenomenon that often repeats across metros, when air crews, doctors and even journalists and their families face the ordeal of being ostracised on a daily basis. **Latently, Air India and IndiGo's air crew faced such situations, as many of them were asked by neighbours to vacate their homes, just out of fear that they might be asymptomatic carriers of coronavirus. This, even while many of them were on a self-imposed quarantine or are currently working as essential services providers.**

The problem, says a senior Air India commander, who faced such a situation recently in one of the posh localities of South Delhi is "the lack of understanding and rumour mongering that is going on, especially on certain mobile-app based chat groups".

"I was under a self-imposed quarantine, after completing a tour from Europe. Understandably, local administration placed a poster outside my house which mentions that the flat is under quarantine. Within a few hours pictures of that poster were all over many chat groups."

"What's worse is the fact that my family members weren't even allowed to take our dog out for walks or the fact that daily supplies which are meant to be delivered at our door steps under the provisions of the quarantine rule was not facilitated by my neighbourhood association."

This experience is of a senior commander who was instrumental in operating some of the last few flights to major European capitals to bring stranded Indians back home.

However, without holding any animosity, the Commander added: "At the end of the day, they are just people who are scared. After all this is over, I really wish they collectively realise that empathy is the real motivation that drives air crews to go for such rescue ops."

29/03/20 IANS/daijiworld

Air India is planning to operate up to nine charter flights from various India cities such as Delhi and Mumbai and then on to Frankfurt in the coming days. These charter operations could begin on Monday.

During the current Covid-19 crisis, while Air India has operated several relief flights to get Indians

stranded abroad back, this will be the first time that the national carrier will pick up foreign citizens from around India and take them to Germany.

Plans include getting mostly German nationals stranded in various Indian cities including Hyderabad, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Chennai and Thiruvanthapuram into Delhi and Mumbai before transferring them on to the wider Boeing 777 and B 787 which will depart for Frankfurt. Air India will make use of its varied fleet size to do these operations. The plan, which is in the final stages, will see Air India operate the smaller Airbus A-320 aircraft to various cities to evacuate the foreign nationals to Delhi and Mumbai from where the bigger aircraft in the national carrier's fleet will be used to fly the Germans back home. There is also a possibility of a government from across the Atlantic chartering Air India aircraft to get its citizens home through London in this week.

Sources do not rule out Air India operating more charter flights to ferry out foreign nationals. The airline could also possibly evacuate foreign nationals of a friendly country to India from a third country other than India or the country which is seeking to get its citizens back home.

29/03/20 Business Line

Mumbai: An employee of the Air India's ground handling subsidiary has tested positive for novel coronavirus, sources said on Sunday.

The female employee of the Air India Air Transport Services Ltd (AIATSL) has been admitted to the BMC hospital in the western suburb of Jogeshwari, according to the sources.

AIATSL is the ground-handling arm of national carrier Air India. AIATSL chief A K Sharma could not be contacted despite several attempts.

Sources said the female employee had handled the last arriving flight of Air India before all domestic air passenger flights were temporarily suspended by the government from last Wednesday.

29/03/20 PTI/Outlook

Mumbai: In-line with its commitment to provide support to the nation in the current scenario, IndiGo operated a relief flight from Delhi to Jodhpur on March 29, 2020. India is currently under a 21-day lockdown till April 14 to curb the spread of the coronavirus and consequently, all international and domestic commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

However, as per an official statement, the flight 6E-9121 operated by 2 captains and 4 cabin crew, carried 139 Indian passengers to Jodhpur to be shifted to the Army isolation centre. **All passengers were certified as being corona negative prior to the flight. These passengers had arrived from Iran to Delhi on another flight as part of the evacuation process of Indian citizens from the Covid-2019 impacted countries.**

Furthermore, the statement apprised about the precautionary measures while checking in and operating the flight, including overall staff, crew and aircraft maintenance engineers using personal protective equipment like masks and gloves, spraying disinfectant on all the bags prior to loading, meal boxes placed on seats prior to boarding and passenger disembarkation in lots of 20 and x-ray treatment of all check-in baggage.

Meanwhile, **Indian airlines are currently in "grave and immediate danger" of insolvency as a result of disruption in air travel due to the coronavirus pandemic that can reduce about 5.75 lakh jobs in the Indian aviation industry, global airlines body IATA has told Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**

29/03/20 Prachi Mankani/Republic World

The global airline industry has never had it so bad. Not even after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Airlines could lose a quarter of a trillion dollars in revenue this year, according to the International Air Transport Association, as travel comes to a standstill with countries locked down to fight the coronavirus. Most carriers will go bankrupt by the end of May if they can't find support, Sydney-based CAPA Centre for Aviation said last week.

"In this very difficult period, it will only be the survival of the fittest" – Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker

Which airlines are most at risk? Like the virus, the crisis is indiscriminate, affecting everyone from budget operators to national flag carriers. Aircraft manufacturers and their suppliers also are under immense pressure, with Boeing Co. calling for billions of dollars in state support and Airbus SE extending credit lines and canceling its dividend.

Using the Z-score method developed by Edward Altman in the 1960s to predict bankruptcies, Bloomberg News filtered out listed commercial airlines to identify the ones most at risk of going bust, based on available data. The calculations don't take into account government bailouts or other funding sources that could help keep operators alive.

While the list is concentrated in Asia, mostly due to high debt levels, European carriers aren't immune, as the collapse of U.K. regional airline Flybe Group Plc proved. According to Altman, scores of 1.8 or below indicate a risk of bankruptcy and scores over 3 suggest sound footing. Indebted low-cost carrier Norwegian Air Shuttle ASA and Air France-KLM both landed below the threshold, as did American Airlines Group Inc. and SkyWest Inc

29/03/20 Indian Express

New Delhi: SpiceJet said on Sunday that one of its pilots who did not fly any international flight in March has tested positive for the coronavirus.

"One of our colleagues, a first officer with SpiceJet, has tested positive for COVID-19. The test report came on March 28. He did not operate any international flight in March 2020," the airline's spokesperson told PTI.

"The last domestic flight that he operated was on March 21 from Chennai to Delhi and since then he had quarantined himself at home," he added.

As a precautionary measure, the spokesperson said, all crew and staff who had been in direct contact with him have been asked to self-quarantine by staying at home for the next 14 days.

29/03/20 PTI/Times of India

Pune: The Pune airport has seen big cargo movement of medical equipment and essential material in the last three days amid the 21-day nationwide lockdown in the wake of COVID-19 spread. According to officials, of the total 6 tonne cargo movement at Pune airport in the last three days, 2.5 tonne was medical equipment that was sent from the city.

Since midnight of March 25, movement of all civil aircraft has been suspended till April 14. However, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has given permission for cargo operations in the country.

"Only cargo operations are going on from all airports. Around 2.5 tonne of medical equipment besides soybean and computer parts have been delivered from the airport," said Kuldeep Singh, Pune airport director.

Pune Customs department on Sunday said that testing kits from the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune were dispatched via a special flight to Ranchi, Raipur and Jamshedpur.

"...Pune Customs officials coordinated with the Airports Authority of India, Air India, NIV and successfully facilitated smooth transport of COVID-19 testing kits and chemical reagents to Raipur, Ranchi and Jamshedpur," said a customs official.

SpiceXpress – SpiceJet's dedicated cargo arm – has been doing doorstep deliveries of essential supplies, medicines and medical equipment across the country, including from Pune, said an official.

"Corona warriors all over the country – be it our doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, police, volunteers – and our government are doing an excellent job. We at SpiceJet are proud and honoured to help our government and people," Ajay Singh, SpiceJet's chairman and managing director, said in a statement.

29/03/20 Indian Express

Bengaluru: With all national flights grounded till April 14, what are cancellation options open to those who have booked tickets? But it appears that airlines are going all out to retain passengers rather than give them the option of cancelling tickets free of charge even during COVID-19 crisis. Most airlines give customers a one-year window to rebook tickets but offer no cancellations.

Airlines on Friday and Saturday were flooded with calls from angry customers demanding full refund for their cancelled tickets. Many complained that the response of airlines was poor. IndiGo created a "Credit Shell" for all existing and new bookings until April 30. The amount of the booked ticket will be deposited in the Shell and details will be shared with passengers in 5-7 days. "This is valid for one year and one can use it to make another booking for the same passenger," IndiGo said. For cancellations processed by travel agents or online booking platforms, one needs to contact the travel agent to make a new booking. A customer, Aditi, said, "My flight from Nagpur to Delhi on March 28 is cancelled. Can you process my refund pls? I stay in UK and was in India for a holiday."

To which IndiGo replied that it was not possible. Air India is allowing all passengers who booked tickets between March 23 to April 30 to rebook their tickets up to September 30. "Air India will waive No-Show charges (ticket will be protected at full value)," it said. No date change or travel change fee will be charged. Charges for changes in date, flight or route too are waived.

29/03/20 S Lalitha/New Indian Express

The Air India and the IndiGo operated seven flights to 13 destinations to transport medical supplies, according to a senior official co-ordinating relief efforts along with the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The Air India flew a Boeing 787 from Mumbai to Delhi and back and an Airbus A 320 from Delhi to Imphal carrying medical equipment and medicines, according to the airline's spokesperson.

Its subsidiary Alliance Air also operated three flights on its smaller 72-seater aircraft including Delhi-Raipur-Bhubaneswar-Delhi sector, Kolkata-Tripura and Mumbai-Pune-Raipur.

The IndiGo also operated a flight from Delhi to Bengaluru with four stops in between, which included Kolkata, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru. It carried 3 tonnes of cargo for medical requirements.

28/03/20 The Hindu

Mumbai: Vistara Airlines will implement one to three days of leave without pay for 30 per cent of its employees in April and has deferred its annual increment to July, following the suspension of all domestic operations till April 14.

"While we are doing all possible, including a recruitment freeze, we have to look at other means to further reduce our cost," the airline's chief executive officer Leslie Thng said in an email to employees today.

Air India, GoAir and IndiGo have already announced salary cuts to tide over cash crunch caused by suspension of operations.

In Vistara the leave without pay will be implemented between April 1-14 and will cover all employees except junior ground staff and the cabin crew.

28/03/20 Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard

New Delhi: Amid a 21-day nationwide lockdown to combat coronavirus, Air India will conduct nine special flights between March 31 and April 3 to transport essential items such as medicines, test kits and equipment to various cities across the country, senior airline officials said on Saturday.

"On March 31 morning, one B787-8 aircraft would be operating a flight on Mumbai-Bengaluru route. The plane would return to Mumbai in morning itself," the official said.

Another B787-8 will be used to conduct a flight on March 31 **between Mumbai and Chennai**, the senior official noted.

"These planes would be carrying essential items such as medicines, test kits and equipment," the official added.

More than 900 people have so far been infected by the coronavirus in India and 19 fatalities recorded, according to the central government.

A second official told PTI that Air India would be conducting special flights on the Mumbai-Goa, the Mumbai-Trivandrum, the Mumbai-Chennai and the Chennai-Hyderabad routes.

28/03/20 PTI/Outlook

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28/03/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: **The government has formed a ministerial level committee to mitigate supply chain problems as India undergoes one of the longest curfews in history.**

Headed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Home Minister Amit Shah, the committee has been tasked with ensuring unhindered supply of essential items during the lockdown. Seven secretaries from the ministries of consumer affairs, road transport, civil aviation, shipping, textile, health and Chairman of the Railway Board are part of the committee which will meet daily at 11 AM through video conferencing

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 announced a 21-day lockdown- the most far reaching measure by any government to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The move, which experts believe is essential, but hastily drawn has thrown the country's logistics system into disarray as local administrations are confused the over interpretation of the government orders.

"The biggest need is now that all administration work in tandem and implement the orders in unison. Hence the committee has been formed which will collect daily inputs and ensure coordination to solve the issues," said an official, who is part of the committee.

For instance, according to minutes of the meeting held yesterday, Priyank Bharti, a joint secretary in the road transport ministry raised the issue of truckers facing the shortage of food on their way as all roadside eateries are closed. He also mentioned that local police authorities were stopping goods carriers.

28/03/20 Arindam Majumder, Shine Jacob & Megha Manchanda/Business Standard

New York: **The US government was arranging to airlift American citizens stuck in India because of the lockdown imposed in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a State Department official.**

Ian Brownlee, the official dealing with consular affairs, said on Friday: "We are working directly with both US and foreign carriers to lay on aircraft direct from India to the US," to bring them back.

He said that the flights could start in about three days, "but it's the permitting that takes a while both in India and the US".

Last week, the State Department issued a "Level 4" travel alert advising its citizens not to travel internationally and asking those abroad to return home.

India is under a lockdown to fight the coronavirus pandemic with all commercial passenger flights cancelled.

Brownlee said that about 1,500 Americans in the New Delhi area, between 600 and 700 in the Mumbai area and 300 to 400 elsewhere had expressed interest in returning home.

He said that a church group has chartered a large aircraft to bring 150 or so Americans from India and the State Department was helping them get the necessary permits for the plane.

28/03/20 Arul Louis/daijiworld

Thiruvananthapuram: After screening over 2 lakh passengers who arrived in Kerala after Covid-19 outbreak entered a crucial stage, four airports in the state have ceased operations for passengers. However, Trivandrum international airport has been included in the list of standby airports in the country, along with four other airports, as it is close to the international air route. The airport will be used for refuelling and technical landing of aircraft that use the international route.

Chennai, Kolkata, Varanasi and Ahmedabad airports are the other standby airports. C V Ravindran, Director, Thiruvananthapuram international airport, told TNIE though the normal functioning of the airport has come to a halt, it would function as standby airport due to its proximity to international air route. The aircraft passing through the international air route can land here for refuelling purpose. Aircraft can also make technical landing. For this purpose some skeletal staff have been pressed into service.

Staff deployed in non-essential wings have been asked to work from home, but personnel attached to air traffic control, radar, fire services, operations, ground lighting and other key wings would work as usual as the air space is open for other flight operations. A few cargo aircraft have been operating from here chiefly to West Asia with strict restrictions, he said. The airport has also screened 1,023 aircraft from January 29, subjecting a total of 1.13 lakh passengers to thermal scanning. Of them 34 tested positive for Covid-19, while 210 were recommended home quarantine.

28/03/20 Dhinesh Kallungal/New Indian Express

New Delhi: Flying out of Hyderabad will pinch passengers less, once the corona pandemic ends and normal travel resumes. The Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) has slashed user development fees (UDF) for departing domestic passengers from Rs 430 to Rs 281, reduced by 35%; and for departing international flyers from Rs 1700 to Rs 393 (without taxes), reduced by 77%. "The revised UDF shall be applicable for tickets issued on or after April 1, 2020," the AERA order on Hyderabad Airport's aeronautical tariff for the second control period (April 1, 2016, to

March 31, 2021) issued on Friday says.

At the current rate of Rs 430 for domestic departing passengers, airline websites show Rs 507 as with tax figure indicating a rate of almost 18% tax. An international UDF of Rs 1,700 with taxes, show airlines websites, comes out to Rs 2,006 (with 18% tax). So the UDF saving for flyers flying out of Hyderabad will be about Rs 170 and Rs 1,540 per domestic and international departing passenger, respectively.

28/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: The Union civil aviation ministry announced on Friday that an air cargo management group has been created to move essential commodities across the country, which is under a lockdown to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"Private airlines or freighters have been co-opted to link the request of states or union territories for smooth movement of essential items," the ministry said on Twitter tonight.

It said that "additionally, ATR aircraft of Alliance Air have been kept on standby at Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Bengaluru & Hyderabad".

Planes are being chartered at concessional rates for boxes that need a large aircraft, especially to move items of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to states, the ministry said.

"Helicopters are ready in the north-east for intra-region movements. Support is being given to private agencies interested in aiding efforts," it said.

The country is under a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of the coronavirus and all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

"An air cargo management group for COVID-19 has been created with a dedicated team for smooth movement of cargo. Ministry is adopting a hub & spoke approach to move essential commodities across the country. Resident commissioners of states/union territories are part of the group," the ministry said on Twitter.

Essential items especially medicine and ICMR kits were transported from Delhi to Aizawl, Dibrugarh, Kolkata and Hyderabad on Friday, it said.

"The second flight of the day transported essential items from Mumbai to Pune, Bengaluru and Trivandrum," the ministry said.

28/03/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: Indian airlines are currently in "grave and immediate danger" of insolvency as a result of disruption in air travel due to the coronavirus pandemic that can reduce about 5.75 lakh jobs in the Indian aviation industry, global airlines body IATA has told Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a letter to the PM dated March 24, Alexandre De Juniac, director general of the International Air Transport Association (IATA), said, "IATA estimates that COVID-19 could result in a 9 per cent loss in

passenger volumes and \$2.1 billion loss in passenger base revenues for the air transport market in India in 2020".

India is currently under a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of coronavirus. Therefore, all domestic and international commercial flights have been suspended during this period.

"The disruptions in air travel from COVID-19 could reduce about 575,000 jobs and \$3.2 billion in GDP supported by the air transport industry in India," Juniac said in the letter.

IATA has around 300 airlines as its members, comprising around 82 per cent air traffic globally.

"Unless government action is taken now, the post-pandemic economic recovery in India would be seriously impeded," Juniac stated in the letter, which has been accessed by PTI.

Various Indian airlines have already announced their cost-cutting measures as there has been a drastic fall in revenues due to the virus outbreak.

27/03/20 PTI/Times of India

New Delhi: Schedule domestic passenger flights, like international ones, will restart on the midnight of April 14-15.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) Friday said its earlier order for suspension of schedule passenger, charter and private aircraft flight "is hereby extended till 2359 hours (India time) on April 14, 2020. All domestic operators engaged in scheduled, non-scheduled and private aircraft operations in India shall ensure strict compliance of the order."

DGCA had this Monday ordered suspension of domestic flights up to the month-end. Later a 21-day lockdown was ordered across India to contain the spread of coronavirus which will end on April 14. Accordingly the previously-announced suspension periods for domestic and international schedule passenger flights, charter flights and private aircraft movement is now till April 14-15 midnight. Only all-cargo, medical evacuation and special DGCA-approved flights, apart from off-shore helicopter operations, will be allowed in the civilian space till then. To be sure, authorities are hoping the spread of coronavirus gets under control during the 21-day lockdown.

"We hope all flights, and normal life, can resume and that the 21-day lockdown is able to contain the spread of the virus. We are constantly reviewing the situation and taking all required steps in real time," said an official, when asked if the flight suspension could be extended beyond April 15.

27/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Kolkata: With suspension of all international and domestic passenger flight services in India, due to the corona virus outbreak, some Indian airports are reeling under shortage of aircraft parking space.

The Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) airport in **Kolkata which has 58 parking bays, now has a total of 53 aircraft parked inside.** The outbreak has already dealt a massive blow to the Indian aviation industry and now some airports in the country are reeling under space crunch for aircraft parking.

Due to suspension of both domestic and international flights in India, many airlines have their aircraft grounded at several airports in the country. It recently came to light that the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport in Delhi is reportedly running out of space for aircraft parking and has hence made space in its remote bay area and hangars for the purpose.

The Kolkata airport though at present has space for parking but it is only a matter of time when the space runs out. A senior official in the Kolkata airport administration, today, told The Statesman, "At present, there are 53 parked aircraft in the Kolkata airport. The NSCB airport has a total of 58 parking bays."

Asked whether it already is witnessing paucity of space, the senior official pointed out, **"For now, there is no space crunch since there is no flight operation at the airport. Only medical flights are operating, which are one or two at a time. We still have vacant space for parking aircraft."**

27/03/20 Soumyadip Mullick/Statesman

Malaysian low-cost carriers AirAsia and AirAsia X will suspend operations from 28 March due to growing border restrictions imposed by various countries amid the coronavirus pandemic.

AirAsia will be grounded until 21 April, while long-haul sister carrier AirAsia X is to be grounded until 31 May, says AirAsia Group, which made the announcement on behalf of its component carriers and AirAsia X Group.

The two Malaysian AirAsia carriers are joining their overseas affiliates in India, Thailand, and the Philippines, which began grounding their aircraft earlier this month.

AirAsia India suspended flights since 25 March for three weeks, in line with a nationwide lockdown that began on the same day. Philippines AirAsia has halted flying since 20 March, over a similar measure imposed on the country's main Luzon island group. Thai AirAsia X also began a three-month suspension on 16 March.

Cirium fleets data show that close to 190 aircraft operated by the five carriers will not fly during the suspension.

"We believe this temporary fleet hibernation is the right thing to do to ensure the well-being of our guests and employees, which will remain as the top priority of our business during this challenging time," says AirAsia Group.

27/03/20 Flight Global

New Delhi: In line with the unprecedented situation arising out of 21-day nationwide lockdown in the wake of Covid-19 outbreak, the aviation regulator DGCA today took a slew of exemption measures, including extension to the validity of pilots' licences that were nearing expiry for next 90 days.

At the same time it has also extended the validity of medical assessment certificates, aircraft rating certificates, skill test certificates, etc. for a period of 90 days from now.

"The DGCA is aware that operators and individual licence holders are facing issues in completing

their requirements towards renewal, issuance of various pilot licences and ratings and to exercise the privileges of their respective licenses and ratings, **including temporary authorisations (FATA),**" it said in a public notice issued by the regulator.

FATA stands for foreign aircrew temporary authorisation, which is issued to foreign pilots that are working for Indian airline companies.

27/03/20 Tribune

NEW DELHI : Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman is working on a fiscal-stimulus package to help businesses impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, a government official said, requesting anonymity.

The stimulus package will cover tourism, hospitality, retail, civil aviation and automobiles. The final package will be decided as the Centre gets more clarity about the pandemic's impact on specific sectors, he added. Another person, also requesting anonymity, said **the size of the package will also depend on the Centre's ability to raise additional revenue.**

A key consideration for the finance ministry is to prevent a wave of bankruptcies. Many vendors and service providers who fall in the category of operational creditors have been pressing their corporate clients to pay dues by dragging them to bankruptcy tribunals. To give them some relief from this possibility, Sitharaman, earlier this week, had raised the threshold of payment default for invoking the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code from ₹1 lakh to ₹1 crore. Industry representatives have also asked for specific relief measures for exporters, including exemption from the lockdown to transport goods from warehouses to ports, easier paperwork and interest subsidy.

The government has so far taken a calibrated approach to offering relief by relaxing compliance requirements under various statutes and a welfare package for farmers, workers in the unorganized sector and the poor.

Industry representatives said the Centre should weigh the impact of the unfolding situation as accurately as possible before announcing a stimulus package for optimum result. Sachchidanand Shukla, chief economist, Mahindra Group, said the Centre has tried to assuage concerns of consumers and the common man first, before moving on to businesses.

"We need to know the rate of infection, the impact of the lockdown and the fatalities. If there is a need to double down on the lockdown, it may warrant a greater rescue act for businesses. The welfare package announced by the government and the RBI's measures are mostly to protect the cash flow of families. The government is expected to address the cash flow and balance sheet issues of India Inc. in some time," said Shukla.

The finance ministry is also considering a further increase in excise duty on petrol and diesel, and a surcharge or cess on income that need not be devolved to states, in order to raise the resources for a stimulus.

According to former chief statistician of India Pronab Sen, it is vital for the government to focus on humanitarian assistance for the time being and take big measures to revive demand after the current lockdown is lifted. "The point is how to rescue the industry if there is no demand for their goods and services. After the lockdown is lifted and production comes back to normal, you have to

think about getting the demand back. A GST rate cut will not suffice. The government directly has to buy goods and services so that there is active demand in the market," said Sen.

"A stimulus package given too early does not help. Timing is of critical importance. If you get it wrong, you are in trouble."

LiveMint Aviation 28/03/2020

Investors are evidently less worried about the future prospects of InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, compared to, say, those of SpiceJet Ltd. In the past five weeks, the latter's shares have plunged nearly 60%, while those of InterGlobe have fallen 33%.

InterGlobe runs IndiGo, India's largest airline with a 48% market share for domestic air travel.

"IndiGo is in the best shape with cash availability of 6-7 months, whereas other airlines can survive for 1-2 months only," said Varun Ginodia, analyst at Ambit Capital Pvt. Ltd.

Analysts at Kotak Institutional Equities echoed the view: **"IndiGo's sufficient cash buffer (₹9,400 crore as of December 2019) should be enough to weather this storm, though other airlines will need external support in the form of interest payment moratoriums and lower taxation on crude and other imports."**

According to a Business Standard report, **airlines in India have sought help from the government to help them pay salaries. It remains to be seen how much help comes.**

But as things stand, IndiGo is clearly better off with its higher cash position. As such, its share of the market may well increase on the other side of Covid-19.

Even though the airline remains better placed in riding this tide, things are hardly going to be easy. "There remain imponderables: When does normalcy return in airline operations, does it incur higher near-term costs (if it grounds aircraft and does not return it to lessors) as it plans for the future, and when can global supply chains return to normalcy for the airline to begin receiving neo deliveries (Airbus is facing falling build-rates as EU supply chain struggles)," said the Kotak analysts in a report on 24 March.

Meanwhile, with flights not operating during the three-week lockdown period in India till 14 April, airlines won't earn revenues, but they would still have to incur costs, such as salaries, lease rentals and maintenance. Some costs, such as fuel expenses, will decline with operations halted. And IndiGo has already announced a cut in salaries. Analysts say **airlines could try and renegotiate with vendors on some fronts, say, lease terms, or explore possibilities of deferring payments.**

"45-50% of cash requirement is towards lease rent which could see some support from lessors," said Ginodia of Ambit Capital.

Lower load factors and yields would cloud the March and June quarters' profitability. Ambit Capital expects IndiGo's June quarter passenger traffic growth to decline by more than 45% on a year-on-year basis. Further, one cannot be certain that the lockdown won't extend further and this uncertainty won't help investor sentiment

Live Mint Aviation 26/03/2020

More than 500 staff of Delhi airport are staying put, away from families to ensure rescue flights are being handled.

After international flights were suspended on March 22, as many as 10 evacuation flights have been operated by various countries, including India, to fly stranded Indians back and take their citizens from here.

Operational staff, cleaning staff, baggage handling, airside management, bird chaser are among the staff of Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) who are staying at airport and will remain there till the end of lockdown period on April 14.

Besides, staff of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), customs, Air Traffic Controller and immigration are also present at the airport for smooth operation.

“Though the airport is shut for commercial operations, but these heroes are engaged in extensive sanitization of the entire terminal buildings like check-in area and counters, chairs, baggage belt, Immigration counters, custom area, trolley, wash-rooms to maintain the hygiene label within the terminal. They are continuing to keep the airport operational despite the lockdown, for cargo, emergency operations, evacuation, security. They are working round the clock and staying at the airport premises, away from families,” said an airport official.

GMR led DIAL, which operates Delhi airport is providing free food to the staff.

The biggest aircraft used for evacuation was an Airbus 380, operated by Lufthansa, that flew around 500 German nationals to Frankfurt.

“They are engaged in distribution of food items/water to the arrived or departing passengers, managing the queue to get the immigration/security clearance faster. They are present at the location where passengers are, to facilitate in any crisis situations. Cityside team is managing the traffic outside the terminal to avoid any traffic congestions,” the official added.

Airport rescue and firefighting team (ARFF) is also ready to handle any crises like any emergency landing at any runways.

The Economic Times of India 27/03/2020

MUMBAI: Premium carrier Vistara has announced a top down 1-3 day compulsory no pay leave (CNPL) for 30% of its 4,000 employees in a bid to cut costs as the airline, like its peers, is forced to suspend operations at least till mid-April.

In a letter to employees, CEO Leslie Thng said the move will be implemented for *April 1 to April 14*.

The CNPL stretches from the CEO all the way down to managers. The top down approach means that CXOs, senior vice presidents and vice presidents will take three day leaves, while the ones lower down take 1-2 days. Most of cabin crew, security and ground staff will be exempted.

“I am aware that the above measures have financial impact on you, but I urge you to understand the

unprecedented situation that we are going through which are impacting our business and cash flow," Thng said in his communication.

"Our main priority is to preserve job and maintain employment for everyone within the Vistara family," he added.

Vistara's parent Singapore Airlines has already implemented pay cuts. Its other main shareholder is diversified conglomerate Tata Sons.

In India, both IndiGo and GoAir have implemented salary cuts across staff. IndiGo's CEO Rono Dutta has taken a 25% cut while GoAir's Vinay Dube has foregone half of his salary.

The Economic Times of India 27/03/2020

The airport industry is expected to report USD 5.6 billion loss in the first quarter following a traffic volume loss of about 1.5 billion passengers in the Asia-Pacific region due to prolonged duration of coronavirus outbreak, Airports Council International said on Friday. "Taking into account the rapid developments, ACI estimates place the first quarter loss in Asia-Pacific in the range of USD 5.6 billion, almost double earlier estimates, a large portion of which comes from the contraction in traffic as well as non-aeronautical revenue.

"The impact on the Middle East will generate a loss of approximately USD 1 billion for the first quarter and at least double for the full year," the global grouping said. Airports Council International (ACI) Asia-Pacific has also revised the revenue forecast for 2020, according to which the revenue impact on the aerodromes in the APAC region is expected to the tune of USD 23.9 billion and USD 5.75 billion for the airports in the Middle-East region.

The impact on revenue is irrespective of the airport size, it said in a release. Stating that a large portion of the losses is expected to come on account of contraction in traffic as well as non-aeronautical revenue, it said the impact on the Middle East will generate a loss of approximately USD 1-billion for the first quarter and at least double for the full year.

The airport industry in Asia-Pacific and the Middle East employs more than 63 per cent of aviation industry jobs, which include airport management, maintenance, and security to retail outlets, food and beverage and duty-free concessionaires, according to the grouping. ACI-Asia Pacific also urged governments across the APAC region to swiftly implement relief measures to safeguard airport employment and connectivity.

The Economic times of India 27/03/2020

Something was wrong. The chow hall line at New York's Rikers Island jail had halted. For three hours, the men stood and waited, without food, until a correctional officer quietly delivered the news: A civilian chef was among those who tested positive for the coronavirus.

"We was like, 'What? The cook?'" said Corey Young, who spoke to The Associated Press last week by phone from Rikers. He and others wondered if the chef had sneezed on trays or into the food. Some men later floated the idea of a hunger strike to protest.

"I don't want to eat nothing that comes from the state," Young said. "They are not going to take care of us properly here."

Health experts say prisons and jails are considered a potential epicenter for America's coronavirus

pandemic. They are little cities hidden behind tall fences where many people share cells, sit elbow-to-elbow at dining areas and are herded through halls to the yard or prison industry jobs.

They say it's nearly impossible to keep 6 feet away from anyone, adding to tensions. Medical services behind bars have long been substandard and even hand sanitizer is considered contraband in some facilities because of its alcohol content.

More than 2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States - more than anywhere else in the world. But the threat posed by COVID-19 behind bars extends well beyond prison walls. Even though most personal visits have been stopped, hundreds of thousands of guards, wardens and other correctional facility administrators go in and out 24 hours a day, potentially carrying the virus home to their families and communities.

And - as the incarcerated understand better than anyone - jail and prison employees are also the ones most likely to bring the virus into overflowing facilities already grappling with older men and women, those suffering from chronic health conditions and the mentally ill.

Nascimento Blair, locked up at Fishkill Correctional Facility in upstate New York, said one officer had returned from a cruise vacation and was coughing and showing other flu-like symptoms in common areas. That person was eventually sent home, but only after a few days.

"Now we don't even know if we've been exposed," he said, adding there had been one confirmed coronavirus case at his prison, but the men were aware of three others. "And how do you run from this?"

The first positive tests from inside America's correctional facilities started trickling out two weeks ago, with more than 350 cases now confirmed in New York, California, Michigan, Alabama and a dozen other states.

But information and transparency about the number of infections are lacking, and some in custody are afraid to report symptoms because they've seen others being placed in solitary confinement for doing so, several men said in interviews with the AP. Many correctional departments across the country do not even identify affected facilities, let alone name those who test positive, citing privacy concerns.

"It's like we are expendable," said Blair, from Fishkill. "The last thing you want is to be around someone and not know that that person has it, because that's a potential catastrophe."

Most of the coronavirus cases in jails and prisons so far have been reported from New York City, with the Department of Corrections said Saturday that one of its longest-serving officers passed away at a local hospital and that 104 staff and 132 men in custody have now tested positive at Rikers and city jails alone - five times what was reported just a week ago.

Homer Venters, former chief medical officer of the New York City jail system, said the rise in infection rates at Rikers Island foreshadows what's to come elsewhere.

"America's 7,000 jails, prisons, juvenile and immigration detention centers are completely unequipped to handle this pandemic," he said.

He called for authorities to "rapidly empty these facilities of everyone with risk factors for serious illness and death, and create pathways to hospital-level care." If nothing is done, he said, people will die and the virus will spread faster.

The Bureau of Prisons said Saturday that the first federal inmate had died of coronavirus. The man, Patrick Jones, 49, had been housed at FCI Oakdale I, a low-security prison in Louisiana and had "long-term, pre-existing medical conditions," the agency said.

Officials said Jones had complained of a persistent cough on March 19 and was taken to a hospital. His condition declined the next day and he was placed on a ventilator. He died at the hospital on Saturday. Jones was serving a 27-year sentence for possession of crack cocaine with intent to distribute near a junior college.

Already, New York, Ohio, Florida and a handful of other states have started letting some people out - the elderly, pretrial detainees, those being held on technical violations and low-level offenders who are at high-risk of severe illness. But some health advocates say thousands more need to be freed. Meanwhile, youth justice groups in nearly two dozen states are also calling for the release of detained and incarcerated juveniles and a halt to new admissions.

However, new men and women continue to cycle in and out of the prison system and others are still being transferred in crowded vans between facilities, sometimes across state lines. All increasing the chances the virus will spread.

Juan Giron was transferred to Rikers Island from an upstate facility last week for resentencing.

After going through intake and undergoing a health screening, he went to a dormitory, where dozens of beds were lined up next to one another, just a few feet apart. Four or five other men arrived soon after, he said, and within a few hours it became clear one of them might be infected.

"Two police officers come in with masks and gloves on and try to give the guy a mask ... and they took him out," Giron said. "We asked one of the officers and they said, 'that's the process we are doing now for guys who have the virus.'"

No one else from the dorm was isolated, he said, or even told to look out for symptoms.

With little information coming from within correctional facilities or from the outside world, those inside often try to figure out who's been infected on their own. Sometimes they learn about it from jail staff members, who have weighed orders to remain silent with their own concerns about the health of inmates and staff, the men say. Others make assumptions after vague memos about COVID-19 infections are posted in their units and a guard, cook or someone in their unit suddenly disappears after showing flu-like symptoms.

However, protocols on paper for dealing with infectious diseases behind bars do not always translate into reality. Even the simplest guidelines like hand washing and social distancing are often impossible to follow inside. Some men also said they had neither soor toilet paper.

So far, most of the confirmed cases in prisons and jails across America have been correctional officers, staff and civilian employees. Sometimes, incarcerated men known to have come into contact with infected people are sent to segregation or to their cells - whether they have a bunk mate or not.

But more often, it's just business as usual. Several men told the AP they are trying their best to take care of themselves, washing their hands as much as possible and wiping down surfaces. Without masks, some people improvise by covering the receiver of communal phones with a sock or wearing gloves used for sports to try to keep from picking up germs.

At Waupun Correctional Institution in Wisconsin the warden sent a vaguely worded email to staff saying someone had tested positive for the virus. Days later, it surfaced in the media that the infected person was a prison doctor who had been working for two weeks after returning from a vacation in Italy.

Elijah Prioleau, who is locked up there on a three-year revocation after serving 16 years in the state's prisons, said sick people are not being tested quickly.

Instead, he said they are sent to another part of the jail, even though there are still healthy prisoners housed there. If someone who is sick refuses to be moved out of fear that they may infect others there, he said the only alternative is segregation, or solitary confinement - a place no one wants to go.

"As far as the quarantine goes, it's a joke," Prioleau said on a call with the nonprofit Forum For Understanding Prisons posted on Facebook Live. "They putting you in seg. They're throwing you in the hole and quarantining you if you refuse to go over there."

He added that the men are also not being given enough cleaning supplies, and that guards and prisoners do not have any protective gear so some are forced to improvise.

"I got on handball gloves right now holding the phone," Prioleau said, adding many men were coughing and sneezing in his tier.

Anna Neil, a spokeswoman for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, said Waupun is following a detailed pandemic plan, which includes quarantining people in separate areas. She said COVID-19 tests are being given, but only after people with symptoms test negative for influenza.

"For this case, individuals in our care were moved to a cell hall with the best means of isolation," she said.

Visits from friends, relatives and, in most cases, lawyers have all but stopped in jails and prisons nationwide, making it harder to get information in and out. Though some prisoners have access to phones, and at times now a few free calls, many say they are more isolated than ever.

"Guys are just idle, waiting for the next shoe to drop," said Rickey Fu-Quan McGee, 42, who's serving a life sentence at MCI-Norfolk, a prison in Massachusetts. With so many men suffering from mental health issues, he said he's concerned about their well-being. "No one's coming around asking guys how they're dealing with it. ... This can be a very volatile environment, but you have a lot of seasoned guys walking around checking on everyone, making sure everyone's good."

In states, such as Minnesota, with no confirmed cases inside prisons, everyone is nervous and doing their best to protect themselves.

"The same rules that apply out there should apply here," said Antonio Williams, who is serving time at the state's Rush City Correctional Facility, about an hour north of the Minneapolis-St. Paul metro area.

He said he and others are paying careful attention to the guidelines issued in the outside world, even though they are all but impossible to follow inside.

"Meeting between 10 or more people should be restricted, right?" Williams said. "They force us to the chow hall. Literally elbow to elbow. If it comes here, it's gonna spread like wildfire."

NEW DELHI: **The Centre on Sunday asked state governments and Union Territory administrations to effectively seal state and district borders to stop movements of migrant workers during lockdown, officials said.** During a video conference with chief secretaries and DGPs, cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba and Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla asked them to ensure that there is no movement of people across cities or on highways as the lockdown continues.

"There has been movement of migrant workers in some parts of the country. Directions were issued that district and state borders should be effectively sealed," a government official said. States were directed to ensure there is no movement of people across cities or on highways. Only movement of goods should be allowed.

District Magistrates and SPs should be made personally responsible for implementation of these directions, the official said.

Adequate arrangements for food and shelter of poor and needy people including migrant labourers be made at the place of their work, the official said.

The Economic Times of India 29/03/2020

Time for Modi to bring in the helicopters

India's covid tally is steadily rising. With 873 cases reported so far, and 19 casualties, India's covid problem has just begun. **Noted economist Swaminathan Aiyar today said herd immunity may be the only way India can properly counter the coronavirus.**

He also said that the government should drop its fiscal deficit fascination and go all out to help the poor and the needy bearing the brunt of the crisis. Swami said that the government should shed inhibitions about a rising fiscal deficit and let the Reserve Bank of India monetize it through printing of currency notes even if it were to be inflationary.

India also got its first glimpse of the covid-19 virus under a microscope.

To deal with the outbreak, Indian Railways has readied a prototype of coaches that can be used as isolation units for Covid-19 patients. To begin with, 10 coaches will be converted into isolation units for those affected by Covid-19, by each zonal railway every week.

As India grapples with coronavirus, cases of bird flu, H1N1 has surfaced in Bihar. Deaths of hundreds of crows and other birds have been reported from Patna, Nalanda and Nawada district, which were confirmed for bird flu. **Cases of swine flu have also been reported from Bhagalpur and Rohtas** and action is being taken in this regard, informed the secretary of the department.

The Economic Times of India 28/03/2020

New Delhi: **Air India pilots who have flown to various parts of the world to bring back Indians who were stranded because of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic have written to Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri complaining about the poor quality of protective gear that they have been provided on their flights.**

"Our pilots and cabin crew are being provided substandard, ill-fitting and flimsy Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that tear/disintegrate easily on rescue flights," the letter, accessed by NDTV, said.

"Sanitisers are not provided in sufficient quantities and disinfection processes are short of industry best practices," it added.

The pilots have requested for better medical care in the middle of the COVID-19 outbreak.

"...every resource of the AI medical services that currently exists (e.g. doctors, ambulances, infrastructure) be made available 24x7 to support the flying crew and their families for consultations, coordination with respective State Health Depts, COVID testing and treatment - as may be required for affected crew members should such a need occur. This is the minimum level of support expected from an organisation that sends its employees to a bio-hazard frontline," the letter said.

"There is no additional insurance policy for our pilots or cabin crew to cover any COVID-19 related risk," it added.

"Our flying related allowances, comprising 70% of our total emoluments, remain unpaid since January 2020," the letter said.

"To add insult to injury, we have also recently been informed by our management of a substantial pay cut, while in the midst of the above mentioned COVID rescue operations!" it added.

However, Air India management told NDTV that all possible measures have been taken towards the health and safety of the crew as "safety is paramount to us at Air India".

"Best available Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) are procured for our crew including masks, gloves, apron, hazmat suits, sanitizers. Aircraft are fumigated and disinfected as per Ministry and Manufacturers SOP," the management said.

30/03/20 Vishnu Som/NDTV

New Delhi: **Air India crew, which has been operating evacuation flights to corona hotspots like Wuhan, Japan and Europe, has complained of poor quality personal protective equipment (PPE).** Crew members say there have been occasions when hazmat suits have got ruptured on these flights.

Indian Pilots' Guild, union of erstwhile Air India (before with Indian Airlines), wrote to airline chairman Rajiv Bansal last Saturday (March 28), saying: "During our recent rescue flights, the protective equipment being provided to the flight crew has been failing with an alarming frequency or has been plagued with other issues. For example, shoe covers have failed in as little as 10 minutes, gloves in 3 hours, hand sanitisers on board have not been provided in sufficient quantity, hazmat suits have been ill fitting and (are) available only in limited quantity increasing the risk of rupture."

"We have repeatedly emphasised that the risk of contagion (spreading) is very high for flight crew because of the nature of duty. Even at the peak of this crisis if corners are being cut when it comes to protecting rescue personnel adequately, the entire purpose of the government initiative (21-day lockdown to prevent spread) is lost and the repercussions will be felt widely not just in the airline industry but the country as a whole... request you to ensure that our flight crew get the best equipment available to perform these important duties," says the letter by Captain Kanav Hingorani, IPG general secretary.

30/03/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

New Delhi: **Vistara on Monday asked crew members of its Mumbai-Goa flight on March 22 to self-quarantine after a passenger flying with it was tested positive for coronavirus.**

The airline issued the direction soon after the Goa government announced that one person, who tested positive in the state on Sunday, had travel history from New York. He took Vistara domestic flight UK861 from Mumbai to Goa on March 22.

"We have provided all relevant information to the authorities for contact tracing. **Staff who had operated the flight or come in contact with the passengers have been asked to self quarantine,**" a Vistara spokesperson said.

The Goa government has appealed to people who had travelled on the flight to immediately call on helpline 0832-2421810/2225538 or report to the nearest health centre.

30/03/20 PTI/Times of India

New Delhi: **Amid the 21-day lockdown imposed to combat the coronavirus pandemic, aviation regulator DGCA on Monday asked all companies to ensure that the personnel dealing with cargo flight operations are provided protective gear like masks and gloves.**

Moreover, the DGCA said that all these **personnel should be made aware of the importance of ensuring adequate distance (minimum 1 to 1.15 metres) at all work stations.**

Shift in-charge of airports, packaging and handling centre should ensure the same, the DGCA circular said.

As India is under a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of coronavirus, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

However, cargo flights, special flights conducted with the approval of the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), offshore helicopter operations and medical evacuation flights have been exempted from the flight ban.

"All personnel dealing with cargo operations will be provided with personal protective equipment like masks, gloves etc. All agencies shall ensure that repeated disinfection of common working areas is carried out at timely intervals, the DGCA circular said.

The circular was addressed to all companies flying cargo flights, all airport operators, cargo terminal operators, ground handling agencies, custom clearing agents and freight forwarders.

30/03/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Ministry on Monday said it is coordinating with the state governments to ensure cargo flight operations so that medical equipments and related essential items reach all parts of the country to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

The country is under a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of the coronavirus and all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

"Based on requirements received from various states on urgent basis, the senior officials of the ministry coordinate with supply agencies for providing required material which can be further transported to the desired destinations," said a statement by the ministry on Monday.

Air India and Alliance Air flights are being operated to carry out the necessary supply operations across the country, it noted.

The ministry had announced last week that an air cargo management group has been created to move essential commodities across the country.

On Monday, the ministry said in order to cater to eastern and north eastern parts of the country, an Alliance Air flight from Delhi to Kolkata carried shipments for Kolkata, Guwahati, Dibrugarh and Agartala on Sunday.

30/03/20 PTI/Outlook

Germany and the U.K. have approached the Indian government expressing their interest to charter Air India's flights to facilitate the return of their nationals stranded in India following travel restrictions to curb the spread of the COVID-19, according to several officials.

Between March 31 and April 3, the Air India will operate nine flights to Frankfurt with its 256-seater Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft. These special flights come at a time when India has banned all commercial flights, i.e. domestic and international, until April 14.

The Air India will operate five flights on March 31 to Frankfurt, of which four will be from Mumbai and one from New Delhi. Over the next three days, there will be four flights from Mumbai. It will first bring Germans from various parts including Goa, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram and to Delhi or Mumbai before undertaking the long-haul flight. The Canadian High Commission, too, is exploring ways to help Canadians in India return to their country.

"The High Commission of Canada is aware that there are Canadians currently located in many parts of India seeking to return home. The High Commission is actively working to identify possible solutions for Canadians wishing to return from India to Canada. Updates regarding departure options are shared with our Canadian consular clients as they become available," the High Commission said in response to a specific query.

Officials also said there was a request to operate charters to London to enable the U.K. citizens to return to their homes and it was under consideration.

A British High Commission spokesperson said, "The Foreign Secretary has spoken with the Indian External Affairs Minister and we are working urgently on a plan to get our people back home. This is an absolute priority for us and we hope to be able to share news very soon."

30/03/20 Suhasini/HaidarJagriti Chandra/The Hindu

New Delhi: **The Indian High Commission in the UK took to Twitter to clarify that no evacuation flights were being scheduled for Indians.** The Indian mission refuted WhatsApp forwards that stated that stranded Indians are being evacuated from the UK onboard Air India flights.

The WhatsApp message says, "If anyone knows anyone who is stuck in London, Air India is operating evacuation flights from DEL and BOM. They will need to contact the Indian High Commission in London to figure out about a seat. These are on the 1st, 2nd, 3rd of April DEL LHR DEL. Apr 3rd BOM LHR BOM." As referred in the message, DEL is Delhi, BOM is Mumbai and LHR is Heathrow airports.

The Indian High Commission said that these are just rumours and asked Indians not to pay any heed to them. "High Commission notes with dismay that some rumours are being spread even in such trying times. We request all not to pay attention to rumours. Stay connected with us for updates," it said.

It further added, "Such a misleading message is being spread. Please do not share it with others. At this difficult time please refrain from spreading rumours. Stay connected with us for updates."

This WhatsApp message as well as the High Commission's clarification comes as many Indians find themselves stuck in the country following the travel ban imposed by India. Amid the lockdown, the Boris Johnson government stated that they will extend till May 31 the visas of Indians whose documents are expired or are due to expire.

30/03/20 BusinessToday.In

New Delhi: **At least four former senior officials of the Union Civil Aviation Ministry are under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in its money-laundering probe into losses suffered by Air India due to a multi-crore aviation scam during the UPA regime.**

According to sources, the agency wants to know what role these four former officials played in allowing some private airlines to operate on specific routes.

These sources, however, refused to divulge the identity of the four former public servants.

The ED has already examined senior Congress leader and former Union minister P Chidambaram in connection with the case. His statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The case pertains to the purchase of 48 aircraft from Airbus and 68 from Boeing for around Rs. 70,000 crore in 2007.

In December 2005, the Manmohan Singh cabinet approved the deal for Air India to purchase 68 aircraft from Boeing. A year later, Indian Airlines signed up to buy 43 more planes from Airbus.

The two national carriers were later merged in 2007 to operate under the brand Air India. This merger is being probed by the ED and CBI.

30/03/20 Asian Age

Kolkata: On Tuesday, a passenger aircraft will touch down at Kolkata airport for the first time since international flight operations were suspended on March 22, followed by domestic flights three days later. Only cargo aircraft have been flying to the city since.

According to sources, an empty Air India Boeing B-787 aircraft will come to Kolkata on Tuesday and pick up German nationals, including the envoy and diplomatic mission staff as well as select staffers of other European missions in the city. The plane will then head to Delhi, where more

German citizens and those from other EU nations will board the flight that will then depart for Frankfurt.

“This evacuation flight is one of nine chartered flights that AI will operate from Delhi and Mumbai to Frankfurt, following a request from the German chancellor Angela Merkel to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Following the lockdown, German nationals are stuck in Kolkata, Bengaluru, Goa, Trivandrum, Chennai, Delhi and Mumbai. AI will operate these one-way flights to help them return home,” a source in the national carrier told TOI.

According to airline sources, **AI will operate five flights on March 31, one flight on April 1, two on April 2 and the final one on April 3.**

With a capacity of 236 seats, the nine B-787 flights can evacuate over 2,000 Europeans. There will be no passenger on the return flights. The crew will wear personal protection equipment (masks and gloves) during the flight and on-board services will be limited to avoid exposure and infection. Sources said pre-packed meals are likely to be kept in the seat pockets for passengers. **On their return, the crew will undergo health checks at a hospital before being put in home isolation for two weeks. The evacuation aircraft will also carry hazmat suits in the cockpit for the crew in case any Covid-19 suspect is on board.**

30/03/20 Times of India

New Delhi: **HDFC Trustee Company Ltd has bought 3.4 crore shares of SpiceJet from the open market constituting 5.45 per cent stake in the Delhi- headquartered low-cost airline.**

HDFC Trustee Company is the Trustee to HDFC Mutual Fund (country’s largest mutual fund) and is a wholly-owned subsidiary of HDFC.

“This act shows that companies such as HDFC, which owns the country’s largest mutual fund, has confidence in the airline to come out of the current crisis,” a source close to the development said. SpiceJet officials were unavailable to comment and there was no listing on the BSE.

30/03/20 Business Line

New Delhi: **As the country extended its aviation ban to inbound special flights, an India Today analysis has found how the lockdown is grounding the entire sector that accounts for more than \$70 billion to the national GDP.**

On Monday, civil-aviation authorities prohibited planes carrying VIPs and VVIPs from flying down to India till April 14

Let's take a closer look at how these restrictions have impacted the aviation industry in the country, home to the fifth of the global population.

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) earlier projected a 2% dip in international passenger capacity for India in the month of February when the Covid-19 outbreak was progressing

slowly.

In the aftermath of the disease declared a pandemic, the same projections were recalibrated to a whopping 27% for India in the month of March.

Since then, owing to the increase in the number of imported Covid-19 cases, the Indian government has ordered the suspension of all international air traffic from March 23 to March 29 and subsequently till April 14. The domestic flights were also stopped from the midnight of March 24.

30/03/20 Saikiran Kannan/India Today

New Delhi: Employees of the Airport Authority of India (AAI) have raised Rs 20 crore as an initial contribution for the PM CARES Fund to fight the menace of coronavirus (COVID-19). Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday saluted the AAI employees for their professionalism.

"AAI employees raised Rs 20 crore as an initial contribution to the #PMCARES Funds to fight the menace of COVID1-9. Collectively, as responsible citizens of this country, we shall make all efforts to protect, empower and help effected communities to tide over this emergency," the AAI tweeted.

The airport authority also donated Rs 15 crore from its CSR funds to the PM Cares Fund to deal with the challenges arising out of the unprecedented coronavirus crisis.

"The COVID-19 India crisis is one of the toughest challenges we are facing. The AAI has decided to donate Rs 15 crore from its CSR Fund to the PM-CARES Fund to meet this challenge before the nation. At this moment, contributing to such a collective fund is the need of the hour #AAICares," it said in another tweet.

29/03/20 ANI/TimesNowNews.com

The battle against coronavirus has been tough for India, especially for the people who strive hard to keep it under control, such as doctors, nurses, policemen and sanitation workers.

Sanitising every nook and corner of an entire city or village can take a toll on one's own health as well. Cleaning every inch in one day can be challenging, as one person can cover limited space in a day.

Sanitising building, especially the high-rises can be challenging as well. The life of a sanitation worker can be at risk, at the same time.

In order to help the workers, the Garuda Aerospace and student engineers from Agni College of Technology in Chennai joined hands with the Tamil Nadu government, and have come up with a bright idea.

They had demonstrated earlier, last week to the Tamil Nadu government, **a plan to sanitise the state using drones. Around 500 pilots are to use 300 drones with payloads to disinfect public places like hospitals, metro stations and roads across Tamil Nadu.**

The trial run took place at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on March 23 and 24.

29/03/20 Deccan Herald

Amid the coronavirus pandemic, Indian airlines such as Air India, Indigo and Spicejet are undertaking massive rescue missions to evacuate Indians stranded on foreign soil or within the country.

As a part of this, **Spicejet operated a special flight from Delhi to Jodhpur, on March 29, for 136 Indian nationals evacuated from Covid-19 hit Iran**, who have been taken to a government quarantine facility in the city.

The flight took off at 0625 from Indira Gandhi International Airport, Delhi and landed at Jodhpur airport at 0820. The crew followed all safety protocols laid down by the government, and the aircraft was disinfected after the flight.

Spicexpress, Spicejet's dedicated cargo arm, has been doing doorstep deliveries of essential supplies, medicines and medical equipment in Bengaluru, Patna, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Raipur, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Visakhapatnam, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Vadodara, Kochi, Guwahati, Jammu, Lucknow among other cities.

Likewise, Interglobe Aviation-led **Indigo also operated a relief flight from Delhi, carrying 139 Indian passengers to the Army Isolation centre in Jodhpur**. All passengers were tested negative for virus test prior to the flight.

30/03/20 Business Traveller

Hyderabad: **Union Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Saturday said there was no need for any contingency plan for the aviation sector in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak as the impact of global contagion was a only a brief passing phase.**

"No one has asked for any contingency plan or a bailout package even though issues like bringing Aircraft Turbine Fuel (ATF), which forms 40 per cent of the operational cost of an airline, under the GST, were matters the Ministry has been dealing with as we meet the stake-holders to understand their issues on a regular basis," Puri said after attending the CEOs forum deliberations held at Wings India 2020 summit.

The minister assured that bringing ATF under the GST regime, extending credit for one month to the airlines by the oil companies or adjusting the rates every 15 days instead of one month etc., would be done soon even though these issues were not specific to the current situation. The meeting has discussed matters like aviation financing and leasing, capacity building, aviation safety and security, UAVs among other things, according to him.

The Civil Aviation Minister asserted that the agencies under his ministry were able to effectively monitor airports against the spread of new coronavirus contagion without causing any uncertainty

and panic in the minds of the people.

"There may be a 15-20 per cent drop in domestic passenger traffic due to the virus threat but it is a temporary passing phase. We not only overcome this challenge but will also emerge as a robust aviation market in the future," Puri said. He added that the country will have 1,200 aircraft in next few years, going by the orders placed by some Indian operators.

14/03/20 Business Standard

La France a commandé plus d'un milliard de masques de protection. Cet achat massif s'est fait, entre autres (pour 600 millions d'exemplaires, en Chine, selon le ministre de la Santé Olivier Véran. "Je peux vous annoncer un chiffre qui dépasse désormais le milliard, plus du milliard de masques qui ont été commandés en tout depuis la France et l'étranger pour les semaines et les mois à venir", a-t-il déclaré samedi.

"Un pont aérien étroit et intensif entre la France et la Chine a été mis en place de manière à faciliter l'entrée des masques sur le territoire", a-t-il précisé. Une partie de ces cargaisons va arriver en France ce lundi.

Un avion-cargo Antonov 124 se posera en cours de journée sur l'aéroport de Vatry, à l'est de Paris. Sur cette plate-forme sont attendus au cours des deux semaines qui viennent une quinzaine de vols d'AN-124 transportant des masques en particulier. Chaque vol doit permettre de transporter dix millions de masques.

Cet acheminement est réalisé dans le cadre d'un marché récent passé par le ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé avec Geodis, Air France (un de ses avions-cargo a livré ce dimanche 5,5 millions de masques en provenance de Chine. Lire ci-dessous) etc.

Ce marché n'a rien à voir avec les marchés d'affrètement passés par le ministère des Armées.

Les masques et autres équipements livrés à Vatry seront immédiatement dispatchés par Santé Publique France (ex-Agence nationale de la Santé publique qui renvoie, lorsqu'on l'interroge vers le ministère des Solidarités et de la Santé) **vers des centres de stockage.** Il en existe à **Marolles** (Loir et Cher) où se trouve la plateforme nationale des stocks stratégiques santé d'une surface de 36 000 m², **Blanquefort** (Gironde), **Longueau** (Somme), **Alauch** (Bouches du Rhône) et **Champonnay** (Rhône).

Le coeur de métier de Vatry.

Le **choix du hub de Vatry** repose sur plusieurs facteurs, comme l'explique Christophe Parois, le directeur de l'aéroport:

- **une des plus longues pistes d'Europe** qui peut accueillir les gros porteurs: An-124, B-777, B-747 etc
- **une plate-forme spécialisée dans l'accueil des gros porteurs et qui maîtrise le contexte des urgences sanitaires,**
- **un temps de traitement très court entre le parking avions et le départ des camions**
- **une localisation idéale au centre d'un réseau routier dense**
- **la proximité de Paris**
- **une plate-forme en capacité d'accueil et dont le personnel est actuellement opérationnel.**

Lignes de Défense 29/03/2020

Air France poursuit cette semaine son opération rapatriement des Français encore bloqués à l'étranger, notamment en Afrique et en Amérique du sud.

Selon le ministre français des Affaires étrangères Jean-Yves Le Drian, quelques 30.000 Français, touristes et expatriés et leurs familles, sont encore coincés aux quatre coins du monde par la fermeture des frontières et l'arrêt des liaisons aériennes dû à la crise du coronavirus.

« Nous travaillons en lien étroit avec le Ministère des Affaires Étrangères français et les ambassades afin de proposer des solutions de rapatriement aux ressortissants français et européens. Nous vous conseillons de vous inscrire sur Ariane, sur le site France Diplomatie, pour recevoir toutes les recommandations du ministère français des Affaires Étrangères » , annonce Air France, et de publier la liste des vols supplémentaires de rapatriement des prochains jours à destination de l'aéroport Paris-Charles de Gaulle (sous réserve d'obtention des autorisations gouvernementales requises) :

- Vol AF165 du 30 mars 2020 au départ de Bangkok à 11h30
- Vol AF4142 du 30 mars 2020 au départ de Tunis à 15h00
- Vol AF4145 du 30 mars 2020 au départ d'Oran à 16h30
- Vol AF4081 du 31 mars 2020 au départ de Buenos Aires à 14h20
- Vol AF982 du 31 mars 2020 au départ de Yaoundé à 09h00 et au départ de Douala à 11h00
- Vol AF225A du 31 mars 2020 au départ de New Delhi à 01h05
- Vol AF655A du 01 avril 2020 au départ de Dubaï à 17h20
- Vol AF4147 du 02 avril 2020 au départ de Kinshasa à 08h30
- Vol AF986 du 02 avril 2020 au départ de Cotonou à 08h45 et au départ de Lagos à 10h50
- Vol AF4151 du 02 avril 2020 au départ de Bamako à 13h25

Attention, certains de ces vols partent à vide et ne sont pas disponibles à la vente/modification de réservation sur le site de la compagnie française. Ils sont gérés par les équipes locales en lien directement avec le ministère des Affaires étrangères.

Par ailleurs, le premier vol cargo AF 6901 en Boeing 777 Cargo en provenance de Chine et arrivé hier soir à Paris-CDG avec à son bord près de 100 tonnes de matériel médical dont 5,5 millions de masques médicaux.

[Air Journal 30/03/2020](#)

Que faire de tous ces avions que les compagnies aériennes immobilisent au sol en raison de l'effondrement du trafic aérien mondial ? Les parquer dans le désert, où les conditions de maintien en opération sont optimales ! De quoi faire fructifier un business jusqu'à présent méconnu. C'est un article du Financial Times, publié sur le site du quotidien lundi 23 mars, qui révèle l'ampleur du phénomène en pleine pandémie du coronavirus et alors que 80% de la flotte mondiale d'avions est clouée au sol

"Les compagnies aériennes garent les avions dans le désert lorsqu'elles estiment qu'ils ne seront pas remis en service avant au moins trois mois, détaille le Financial Times. **Un manque d'humidité, de condensation et de sel dans l'atmosphère réduit le risque de corrosion.**" Et le patron du Center for

Aviation (CAPA), Peter Harbison, d'assurer : **"l'air sec y est bon pour le stockage, et c'est moins cher que la plupart des aéroports."**

Des extensions de capacités qui se multiplient

Des exemples ? Delta Airlines a opté pour le Pinal Airpark (Arizona, Etats-Unis) et ses 200 hectares de superficie, American Airlines a choisi l'ex-centre militaire Roswell International Air Center (Nouveau Mexique) et Alliance Airlines a jeté son dévolu au niveau de l'aéroport Alice Springs, au cœur de l'Australie. C'est d'ailleurs au niveau de cet aéroport qu'explose l'activité de la société Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage, spécialisée comme son nom l'indique dans le stockage d'avions : elle est d'ailleurs en train d'étendre son site avec une nouvelle superficie de 110 hectares.

"Nous déplaçons un peu les choses sur place afin que nous puissions gérer au moins 30 avions, mais nous avons le feu vert pour commencer une expansion avant la fin du mois pour accueillir de 70 à 80 avions", a expliqué Tom Vincent au Financial Times, le fondateur de l'entreprise. Pour l'anecdote, le site accueillait déjà un certain nombre de Boeing 737 MAX, cloués au sol depuis un an déjà...

Et le phénomène devrait prendre de plus en plus d'ampleur. Delta Airlines prévoit de parquer environ 600 avions en raison de l'épidémie de coronavirus. *"Nous avons presque doublé nos capacités en deux mois, avec 200 avions, et nous avons la capacité de monter à 400"*, a détaillé au quotidien Scott Butler, le responsable commercial de la société Ascent.

Et le dirigeant de préciser que contrairement aux deux crises précédentes, celle du 11 septembre 2001 et celle liée à la crise économique de 2008, les compagnies aériennes se retrouvent cette fois-ci à immobiliser des flottes entières... Précision : **il en coûte 30 000 dollars par avion pour le stocker dans le désert. En Europe, à défaut de désert, les sites de stockage se trouvent, toujours selon le quotidien, au Royaume-Uni, en Espagne et dans le sud de la France.**

L'Usine nouvelle 23/03/2020

Il n'a aucune difficulté respiratoire, sa température culmine à 37°5, pas de doute, Jean-Louis Baroux, président d'APG Academy, est en pleine forme. La preuve avec cette tribune qui remet les points sur les « i ».

Personne ne pensait le transport aérien fragile. Il était même l'exemple d'un secteur d'activité en croissance continue et il envisageait sérieusement de transporter 4 milliards de passagers supplémentaires en 12 ans. Pour ce faire, les compagnies aériennes et les sociétés de leasing ont passé des commandes considérables : aux alentours de 15.000 nouveaux appareils dont la valeur moyenne est de 100 millions de dollars chacun. Les chiffres donnent le vertige.

Et puis, patatras ! Tout s'est effondré en moins de 3 mois. Comment cela a-t-il été possible ? Comment expliquer que les compagnies aériennes qui prônaient le désengagement des Etats au point de se faire des procès sur ce sujet, soient toutes amenées à crier à l'aide auprès des gouvernements ? Et finalement où est passé l'argent ?

Au fond il apparaît que **le transport aérien était bâti uniquement sur une dynamique de croissance. Une fois celle-ci à l'arrêt les déséquilibres s'avèrent flagrants.** Il vaut mieux en avoir conscience afin de tirer les bonnes leçons pour le futur.

Depuis des années, j'écris que les compagnies aériennes marchent sur la tête. Elles ont déconnecté leur prix de leur produit. C'est la conséquence de la dictature du « Yield Management ». Ce système qui consiste à maximiser la recette de chaque vol aurait pu s'avérer intéressant s'il n'avait pas commis des excès. Comment expliquer que sur un long courrier on trouve fréquemment plus de 60 tarifs rien que dans la classe économique et ces tarifs sont étalés sur une échelle de 1 à 20. On voit bien que cela n'a pas de sens. Cette stratégie, si on peut l'appeler ainsi, n'a été mise en place que pour **afficher des tarifs d'appels de plus en plus bas, qui ne paient pas les prix de revient.**

Par contre, cette politique a fortement démocratisé le transport aérien, il faut le reconnaître, avec néanmoins un grand défaut : un **surcroît de commandes d'appareils.** Sous la pression des constructeurs et des sociétés de leasing, et dans la crainte de se trouver trop loin dans la liste des livraisons, beaucoup de transporteurs ont passé des commandes sans avoir ce qu'ils allaient faire de ces appareils. Seulement ceux-ci sont livrés et les mêmes transporteurs font des pieds et des mains pour repousser les livraisons, ce qui ne fait pas l'affaire des fabricants car les avions ne sont payés qu'au jour de leur livraison.

Le défaut majeur du transport aérien est finalement son **arrogance.** Et d'abord **vis-à-vis de ses distributeurs. Cela s'est manifesté par l'arrêt des commissions versées aux agents de voyages.** Pour économiser entre 7% et 9% du prix du billet, les compagnies ont perdu 25% de leur recette car les agents de voyages, qui, rappelons-le contrôlent encore 70% du marché et une plus forte proportion du marché affaires, ont tiré les prix à la baisse alors qu'ils faisaient l'inverse lorsqu'ils étaient rémunérés.

Ainsi, petit à petit, **le secteur aérien s'est fragilisé. Sa prospérité apparente n'était due qu'à l'accroissement régulier des volumes. Les marges ont toujours été trop faibles.** Mais à qui la faute si ce n'est aux acteurs de cette industrie ? Alors, lorsqu'un coup de tabac aussi fort et imprévisible s'abat sur cette activité, tous les acteurs sont au tapis car à l'exception de quelques rares compagnies vertueuses, comme par exemple Air Caraïbes en France, les transporteurs ne disposent pas des réserves suffisantes pour passer cette période oh combien difficile.

Il faudra bien tirer les leçons de cette épreuve. Il paraît d'abord plus qu'urgent de tisser des relations de confiance entre les agents de voyages et les transporteurs. Cela ne peut passer que par la réforme de « IATA ». Cette organisation est pour le moment la **représente exclusive d'une seule partie du transport aérien : les opérateurs. Elle doit accueillir en son sein l'autre versant du transport aérien, ceux qui amènent la clientèle, je veux parler des agents de voyages. Ainsi IATA peut devenir l'instance où se règlent tous les aspects commerciaux de cette activité, tout comme l'OACI le fait pour la réglementation opérationnelle.** Le transport aérien ne pourra se redresser que par l'action conjuguée de tous les acteurs. Pourquoi alors les représentants des agents de voyages de chaque pays n'auraient pas un siège chez IATA avec une voix équivalente aux compagnies aériennes, en particulier lorsqu'il s'agit de régler les relations entre les compagnies et leurs distributeurs ?

Il est infiniment plus dangereux de ne rien changer que de procéder non pas à des ajustements, mais à une reconstruction de cette activité dont tout le monde vante, à juste titre, la valeur essentielle pour la paix et le développement de la planète.

Déplacements Pro 30/03/2020

Jean-Baptiste Djebbari a confirmé dimanche, au micro de Radio J, la possible nationalisation d'Air France. Cette éventualité avait déjà été abordée le 17 mars dernier par le Premier ministre Edouard Philippe.

« L'Etat actionnaire aura tout son rôle à jouer dans l'après crise, il est actionnaire à hauteur de 14% du groupe Air France-KLM », a indiqué le secrétaire d'Etat. Ajoutant que « le marché sera très probablement en très grande consolidation avec des défaillances probables d'acteurs intermédiaires. L'Etat dira alors la stratégie qu'il entend mener auprès d'Air France-KLM notamment ».

Une très forte réduction de l'offre pendant 2 mois

Dans ce contexte, une nationalisation est-elle envisageable ? **« La nationalisation d'Air France est une hypothèse parmi d'autres que l'on n'écarte pas », a répondu Jean-Baptiste Djebbari. « Dans les moments de crise, il faut disposer de tous les moyens, de tous les outils d'intervention publique, y compris celle-là ».**

Sur le site airfrance.fr mis à jour le **30 mars** à 10h30, la compagnie précise que **face aux «restrictions croissantes sur la possibilité de voyager, et face à une demande fortement orientée à la baisse, nous allons supprimer jusqu'à 90 % de nos capacités de vol au cours des prochains jours ».** Cette réduction de l'offre **« est actuellement programmée pour 2 mois ».**

Quotidien du Tourisme 30/03/2020

L'UE a adopté lundi la suspension des règles sur les créneaux horaires aéroportuaires jusqu'en octobre afin d'aider les compagnies aériennes durement affectées par la crise du coronavirus et d'éviter les vols à vide. Le Conseil, institution représentant les Etats membres, a adopté cette dérogation aux règles qui obligent les compagnies à utiliser au moins 80% de leurs créneaux de décollage et d'atterrissage pour pouvoir les conserver l'année suivante.

Cette mesure *«contribuera à atténuer le lourd impact économique que subissent les compagnies aériennes et leur apportera une certaine sécurité pendant toute la saison d'été»*, a déclaré le ministre croate des transports, Oleg Butkovic, dont le pays assure la présidence semestrielle de l'UE, dans un communiqué. **Cette suspension, proposée par la Commission, a été votée le 26 mars par le Parlement européen.** Elle était réclamée par les compagnies aériennes, confrontées à une chute spectaculaire du trafic en raison de la pandémie de coronavirus, afin d'éviter d'avoir à faire voler des avions à vide pour garder leurs créneaux.

La dérogation s'appliquera du 1er mars au 24 octobre et, de manière rétroactive, du 23 janvier au 29 février pour les vols entre l'UE et la Chine ou Hong Kong, précise le Conseil. Le 23 janvier correspond à la date de fermeture du premier aéroport par les autorités chinoises. Le Conseil précise

que si la situation perdure, *«la mesure pourra rapidement être prolongée par un acte délégué de la Commission»*. L'UE avait déjà eu recours à de telles dérogations après les attentats du 11 septembre 2001, lors de l'épidémie de Sras en 2003 et la crise financière en 2009.

Le Figaro 30/03/2020

Le président et le secrétaire général du Conseil de l'OACI ont salué dans un communiqué du 27 mars la déclaration des dirigeants du G20 relative au Covid-19, y compris sa mise en évidence de la façon dont cette pandémie sans précédent sert de «puissant rappel de notre interconnectivité et de nos vulnérabilités».

« J'ai été encouragé de voir les **engagements financiers solides que le G20** a désormais pris pour aider à la reprise mondiale après COVID-19, et que les secteurs les plus gravement touchés par les mesures d'atténuation de la pandémie actuelles seront prioritaires à l'avenir, a affirmé le président du Conseil de l'OACI, Salvatore Sciacchitano. **Le transport aérien international souffre clairement de manière très aiguë alors que la mobilité personnelle et mondiale continue d'être restreinte, et compte tenu de son rôle déterminant dans la réponse mondiale en temps de crise, je suis très encouragé par le fait que les secours pourraient bientôt arriver.** »

Le Secrétaire général de l'OACI, M. Fang Liu, évoque de son côté la nécessité d'un «soutien budgétaire audacieux et à grande échelle», et l'espoir que «l'ampleur et la portée de cette réponse ramèneront l'économie mondiale sur ses pieds et jeter des bases solides pour la protection de l'emploi et la reprise de la croissance. » Les deux dirigeants ont également réitéré que l'OACI se joint au Sommet des dirigeants du G20 pour se tenir prête à prendre toutes les mesures nécessaires et à continuer de travailler sur la base de la solidarité et d'une coopération internationale efficace avec les Nations Unies (ONU), l'Organisation mondiale de la santé (OMS) et d'autres organisations internationales et industrielles.

Air Journal 29/03/2020

A United Nations report on trade has said that the world economy will go into recession this year due to the coronavirus pandemic, with a predicted loss of trillions of dollars of global income. This will spell great trouble for developing countries, with the possible exception of India and China.

The United Nations has called for a \$2.5 trillion (Rs 188.22 lakh crore) bailout package for developing countries, where two-thirds of the world's population lives, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development said on Monday. UNCTAD said this package will "turn expressions of international solidarity into meaningful global action".

“The economic fallout from the shock is ongoing and increasingly difficult to predict, but there are clear indications that things will get much worse for developing economies before they get better,” UNCTAD Secretary General Mukhisa Kituyi said.

UNCTAD said that in the two months since the coronavirus spread beyond China, developing countries have taken an “enormous hit” in terms of capital outflows, growing bond spreads, currency depreciations and lost export earnings. It said that commodity prices have fallen and tourist revenues have declined, and the impact of the 2020 economic crisis will be worse than that of the 2009 crisis.

UNCTAD said that commodity-rich exporting countries will face a \$2 trillion to \$3 trillion drop in foreign investments in the next two years. The report added that in recent days, **advanced economies and China have put together massive government packages which, according to the Group of 20, will pump \$5 trillion (Rs 376.44 lakh crore) into their economies.**

“This represents an unprecedented response to an unprecedented crisis, which will attenuate the extent of the shock physically, economically and psychologically,” the UN body said. **These package will inject a demand of \$1 trillion (Rs 75.37 lakh crore) to \$2 trillion (Rs 150.74 lakh crore) into the global economy, and a 2% rise in global production. Even so, the world economy will descend into recession, the report said.**

However, the report did not say exactly why India and China will be exceptions to the global recession and loss in income that will impact other developing countries. “The economic fallout from the shock is ongoing and increasingly difficult to predict, but there are clear indications that things will get much worse for developing economies before they get better,” Kituyi said.

The Covid-19 pandemic has so far thrown up over 7,86,000 cases, and killed more than 37,800 people as of Tuesday morning, according to an estimate by Johns Hopkins University.

Scroll.in 31/03/2020

Amid the lockdown imposed to help curb the spread of coronavirus, **domestic airlines and cargo operators along with the Indian Air Force have transported 15.4 tons of medical supplies in 62 flights between March 26 and March 30**, said Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Tuesday. “The cargo essentially included COVID-19 related reagents, enzymes, medical equipment, testing kits

& personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, gloves & other accessories of HLL & cargo requisitioned by State/union territories governments & postal packets," Puri said.

The Civil aviation ministry has formed a committee to facilitate movement of cargo across the country during the 21 day-lockdown period. The ministry is facilitating the cargo movement using hub and spoke model. **"Cargo hubs have been created at Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Kolkata. Hubs feed to spokes at Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Agartala, Aizwal, Imphal, Coimbatore, Thiruvananthapuram,"** it said in a press release. As India is under a 21 day-lockdown till April 14 to curb the spread of coronavirus, international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period.

However cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and flights that have got special approval from aviation regulator DGCA are permitted to operate. **"Domestic airlines & cargo operators along with Indian Air Force have so far transported 15.4 tonnes of medical supplies on 62 special flights between 26 and 30th March,"** said the minister on Twitter. A total of 32 people have died in India and more than 1300 people have been infected by the virus till now, according to Union health ministry.

The Economic Times of India 31/03/2020

Budget airline SpiceJet has announced a pay cut for all employees, after the state-mandated lockdown grounded airlines in India for 21 days.

Employees will take 10-30% deductions in their March pay. SpiceJet chairman Ajay Singh will take a 30% pay cut.

IndiGo, India's largest airline, had announced **similar cuts** a couple of weeks ago. **GoAir**, owned by the Wadia group, **has asked employees to go on a rotational leave without pay.**

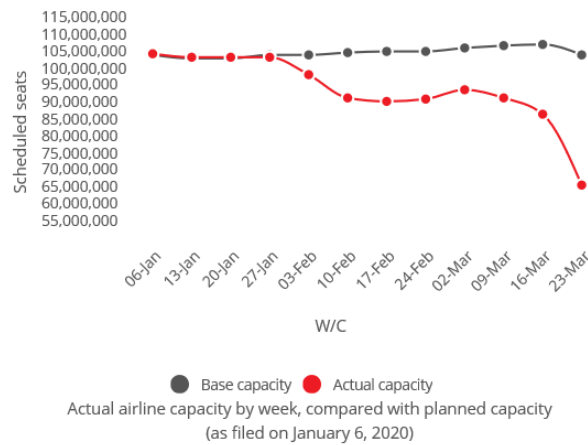
Air India, as part of cost-cutting measures, **reduced crew allowance and fuel reimbursement limit by 10 per cent for all officers.**

India suspended all commercial domestic flight operations from midnight of March 24th

The Economic Times of India 31/03/2020

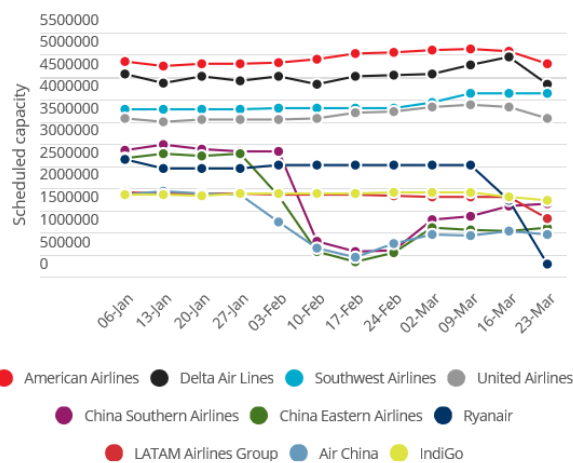
As airlines and airports around the world respond to the challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, Routes looks at the current state of the global aviation

Global scheduled weekly airline capacity:



market.

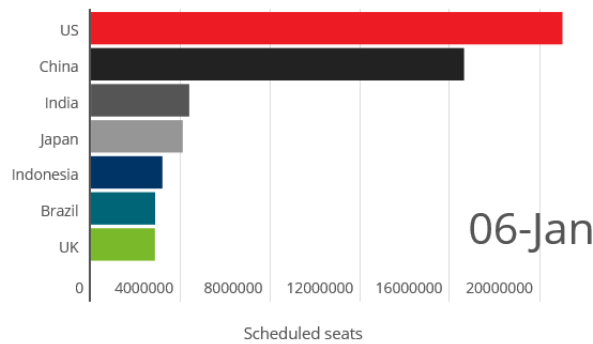
Weekly scheduled capacity of world's top 10 largest airlines in 2019:



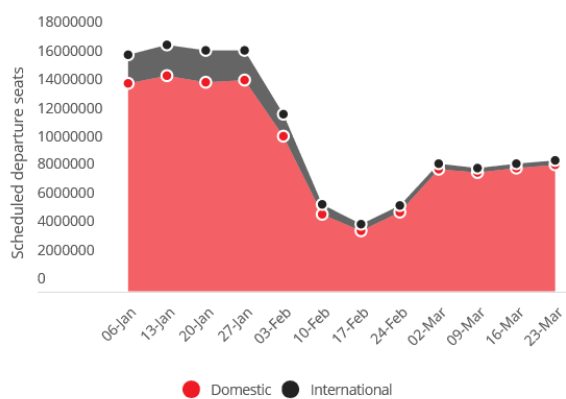
Top 5 largest weekly scheduled airline capacity reductions by region:

Region	2-Mar	9-Mar	16-Mar	23-Mar	% change (09-Mar vs 16-Mar)
North Africa	1047047	1030491	899522	324464	-63.9%
Central Asia	341365	332839	325627	129181	-60.3%
Western Europe	19989391	19043668	16125062	7595264	-52.9%
Upper South America	1774935	1788530	1748136	1011930	-42.1%
Eastern/Central Europe	3805672	3752638	3455236	2176139	-37.0%

World's top 10 largest aviation markets by weekly scheduled capacity:



The Chinese market by weekly domestic and international capacity:



Routes Online 31/03/2020

The airlines are faced with refunding USD 35 billion of sold but unused tickets in the April-June period as governments across the world have imposed travel restrictions to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus pandemic, according to a global airlines' body. India has imposed a 21-day lockdown to contain the spread of the COVID-19 (coronavirus disease 2019), and domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period. Many other virus-affected countries have taken similar measures.

"On top of unavoidable costs, airlines are faced with refunding sold but unused tickets as a result of massive cancellations resulting from government-imposed restrictions on travel. The second quarter liability for these is a colossal \$35 billion. Cash burn will be severe," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said on Tuesday.

The industry group has also estimated that the airlines are expected to burn USD 61 billion of their cash reserves in the April-June period.

Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Italy and the Netherlands have decided to allow airlines to issue vouchers in place of refunds.

"This (permitting voucher instead of refunds) will enable airlines to preserve the cash that they need to keep cargo operations running and preserve their ability to be fully operational when we can safely re-start the industry," IATA director general Alexandre de Juniac said.

"These governments have taken an extraordinary measure in extraordinary circumstances," de Juniac said. "And it will provide a vital buffer period for airlines to keep operating. I cannot stress how important that is."

The IATA is a body of around 300 airlines, which comprise of approximately 82 per cent of air traffic globally.

In India, cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and flights, which have got special approval from aviation regulator Director General of Civil Aviation, are permitted to operate during the flight ban.

Total 32 people died in India and more than 1300 people have been infected by the virus till now, according to Union health ministry.

Thirty-two people have died in the country due to the infection and over 1,250 confirmed cases have been reported, according to the Union Health Ministry.

The contagion has claimed over 38,000 lives and infected more than 7.91 lakh people worldwide.

The Economic times of India 01/04/2020

Airports Council International (ACI) has urged the government to defer aviation specific taxes till December 31 to safeguard airports' operational and business continuity amid COVID-19 pandemic. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, ACI Director General Angela Gittens has said COVID-19 has drastically impacted the airport business and is posing a serious threat to survival of the industry in many countries.

"Airports are the engine of your national economy in terms of jobs created and GDP growth. The airport industry in Asia-Pacific employs more than 63 per cent of aviation industry jobs, providing a variety of services. This unique resource for the society and the economy should be fully preserved and supported to prepare for its revival, as soon as the negative effect of the COVID-19 starts to decrease," the ACI DG said in the letter, dated March 31.

ACI's Asia Pacific arm had on March 27 estimated that the airport industry in the APAC region is expected to report USD 5.6 billion loss in the first quarter following a traffic volume loss of about 1.5 billion passengers at the airports in the region due to prolonged duration of coronavirus outbreak.

Besides, it also revised the revenue forecast for 2020, according to which the revenue impact on the aerodromes in the APAC region is expected to the tune of USD 23.9 billion, and USD 5.75 billion for the airports in the Middle-East region.

"The airport industry is equally impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak. Every passenger lost by an airline is equally a passenger lost by an airport. We would urge your authority to provide relief measures for the aviation sector to benefit all affected parties of the aviation sector and which will be strategic for the relaunch of the economy as soon as the crisis is over," the global airports grouping said.

It requires "urgent measures -- immediate suspension of national, regional, local taxes specific to the aviation sector, including passenger departing taxes, which will also incentivise passenger confidence to travel, and moratorium on new national and local aviation specific taxes until December 31, 2020," ACI added.

Airports are reliant on revenue from charges on airlines, passengers and commercial activities, ACI said in the letter, adding, "any global alleviation of airport charges or introduction of blanket discounts, therefore, will place airport operators in greater financial distress. Any discount in charges in favour of airlines should be decided by the airport operator on a voluntary basis".

The group has also sought from the government exceptional and time-limited waiver of the slot 80/20 rule until June-end.

The rule stipulates that airlines could lose their slots at congested airports if they did not use them at least 80 per cent of the time.

Dynamic aviation markets such as Singapore and UAE are offering dispensation of the slot 80/20 rule only for certain markets. Other countries such as the US, China, South Korea and Japan have introduced a waiver for a shorter period than the entire summer season, it said.

From an operational perspective, the aviation system would benefit from the introduction of a mandatory requirement to airlines to notify flight cancellations, resulting from structural capacity adjustments due to COVID-19 under a specific timeline in advance, and hand back to coordinators/slot pools unused airport slots within 24 hours of flight cancellations within booking systems, the letter said.

The body also urged the government to consider, on a case-by-case basis, waiving airport rents and concession fees applicable to airport operators, irrespective of ownership status, given the financial stress they are experiencing.

Such waiver could be a one-time waiver for a period of time, without the requirement for airports to pay-back the waived amounts at a later stage. This will allow airports to re-deploy these funds to continue operations and support recovery strategies, according to ACI.

It has also sought loans and secured lending facilities at preferential rates to meet fixed expenses of airports for at least the next six months and ad-hoc facility to issue additional bank guarantees besides the ability to renegotiate existing covenants.

The Economic Times of India 01/04/2020

India's aviation industry has urged the government to take steps for financial aid, including funds infusion into airlines and airports, as covid-19 paralyses the sector.

The aviation industry needs an urgent bailout from the government, FICCI Aviation Committee chairman Anand Stanley said in a letter on Tuesday to civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri. A copy of the letter has been reviewed by Mint.

The industry body has sought tax relief, deferment of payment of goods and services tax (GST) for airlines, bringing jet fuel under GST, reduction in airport charges and overflight fees, a temporary cut in excise duty on jet fuel, as well as other financial aid.

"The government may immediately provide direct cash support to Indian carriers, so that airlines can meet their fixed costs, at least for the period where loss of revenues and liquidity is directly attributable to the government's directive to cease operation," Stanley said, referring to India suspending flights till 14 April amid a three-week nationwide lockdown to arrest the spread of covid-19.

"The government could undertake some policy measures for at least 20% contribution towards the total salary bill of employees with a gross salary of ₹30,000 or less per month," he said. These steps will help airline companies retain employees, despite the headwinds, he said.

The development comes even as several airlines, including state-run Air India, have been forced to trim salaries and perks. On Wednesday, GoAir chief executive officer Vinay Dube informed employees in an email that a portion of the March salary will be deferred to April. Others such as IndiGo, Vistara and SpiceJet have initiated pay cuts for sections of their staff.

India's aviation industry is expected to post losses of \$3-3.6 billion in the June quarter with airlines sharing the bulk of the hit because of the travel curbs and falling air travel demand because of covid-19, aviation consultancy Capa India said in a report last week.

Domestic carriers are forecast to post losses of about \$1.75 billion next quarter, followed by airports and concessionaires with losses of between \$1.5 billion and \$1.75 billion, Capa India said.

"The government needs to intervene as the aviation sector is at the tip of the spear and an economically critical industry," said a senior airline official, requesting anonymity.

"Countries all over the world have announced bailout packages or announced measures to help the aviation industry," the official added.

Live Mint Aviation 02/04/2020

NEW DELHI: The government is likely to extend the April 30 deadline to bid for Air India as the COVID-19 fallout has disrupted economic activities globally, an official has said.

This would be the second extension in the deadline to submit bids for Air India since the government initiated the process of stake sale in the debt-ridden national carrier on January 27.

Initially, the bid submission deadline was March 17, which was extended to April 30 in view of the requests from interested bidders (IBs) and situation arising out of coronavirus.

"There is a case to extend the bid submission deadline for Air India given the current global and domestic situation," the official said.

COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted economic activity globally with many countries announcing lockdown to contain the virus spread.

The aviation sector has been hit hard by COVID-19 with airlines cancelling international flights and announcing pay cuts for employees.

After an unsuccessful attempt to sell Air India in 2018, the government in January 2020 restarted the divestment process and invited bids for selling 100 per cent of its equity in the state-owned

airline, including Air India's 100 per cent shareholding in AI Express Ltd and 50 per cent in Air India SATS Airport Services Private Ltd.

In 2018, the government had offered to sell its 76 per cent stake in the airline.

Of the airline's total debt of Rs 60,074 crore as of March 31, 2019, the buyer would be required to absorb Rs 23,286.5 crore, while the rest would be transferred to Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL), a special purpose vehicle.

For the 2020-21 fiscal year, the Union Budget has pegged disinvestment proceeds at Rs 2.10 lakh crore. This includes Rs 1.20 lakh crore from CPSE share sale and Rs 90,000 crore from share sale in public sector banks and financial institutions, including listing of insurance behemoth LIC.

The Economic times of India 02/04/2020

<http://ficci.in/sector/report/20574/moca-apr1.pdf>

A bill that seeks to convert Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and two other existing bodies under the Civil Aviation Ministry into statutory bodies was passed by Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was passed by a voice vote after a reply by Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. The bill seeks to amend Aircraft Act, 1934. The audit conducted by the International Civil Aviation Organisation in 2012 and 2015 indicated a need to amend the Act to **give proper recognition to the regulators, to enhance the maximum quantum of fines and to empower the departmental officers to impose financial penalties for violations of the legal provisions.**

The bill adds air navigation services to the list for which the central government can make rules.

Apart from DGCA, two other bodies to get statutory status will be the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) and the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB).

The Print 17/03/2020

- The Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2020 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Mr. Hardeep Singh Puri, on February 4, 2020. The Bill seeks to amend the Aircraft Act, 1934. **The Act regulates the manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of civil aircrafts, and licensing of aerodromes.**

Key provisions of the Bill include:

- **Authorities: The Bill converts three existing bodies under the Ministry of Civil Aviation into statutory bodies under the Act.** These three authorities are: (i) the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), (ii) the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and (iii) the Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB). **Each of these bodies will be headed by a Director General who will**

be appointed by the centre.

- The **DGCA** will carry out **safety oversight and regulatory functions** with respect to matters under the Bill. The **BCAS** will carry out **regulatory oversight functions** related to civil **aviation security**. The **AAIB** will carry out **investigations related to aircraft accidents and incidents**. The central government may issue directions to these authorities on matters related to their functions, if considered necessary in public interest.
- Power of centre to make rules: Under the Act, the **central government may make rules on several matters**. These include: **(i) registration of aircraft, (ii) regulating air transport services, and (iii) prohibition of flight over any specified area**. The Bill adds the **regulation of air navigation services** to this list. It also allows the centre to empower the **Director General of BCAS** or any authorised officer to issue directions and make rules on certain matters. These matters include: **(i) conditions under which an aircraft may be flown, (ii) inspection of aircrafts, and (iii) measures to safeguard civil aviation against acts of unlawful interference**.
- Adjudicating officers: The Bill provides for the appointment of designated officers, not below the rank of Deputy Secretary to adjudicate penalties under the Bill. Persons aggrieved by an order of a designated officer may appeal to an appellate officer. Appeals must be filed by the aggrieved person within 30 days from the day the order is received.
- Offences and Penalties: **Under the Act, the penalty for various offences is imprisonment of up to two years, or a fine of up to Rs 10 lakh, or both**. These offences include: **(i) carrying arms, explosives, or other dangerous goods aboard aircraft, (ii) contravening any rules notified under the Act, and (iii) constructing building or structures within the specified radius around an aerodrome reference point**. The Bill raises the maximum limit on fines for all these offences from Rs 10 lakh to one crore rupees.
- Under the Bill, **the central government may cancel the licences, certificates, or approvals granted to a person under the Act if the person contravenes any provision of the Act**. Such licences include those given for: **(i) the establishment of an air transport service, (ii) the establishment of aerodromes, and (iii) the operation, repair, and maintenance of aircraft**.
- The Bill allows for the compounding of certain offences under the Act or rules under the Act. These include: **(i) flying to cause danger to any person or property and (ii) the contravention of any directions issued by the Director General of any of the three**

bodies. Offences may be compounded by the Director General as prescribed by the centre. Compounding of offences is not allowed in case of repeat offences.

- **Courts will not take cognizance of any offence under this Act, unless a complaint is made by, or there is previous sanction from the Director General of Civil Aviation, BCAS, or AAIB.** Only courts equivalent or superior to a Metropolitan Magistrate or a Magistrate of the first class may try offences under the Act.
- **Exemption for Armed Forces: Aircraft belonging to the naval, military, or air forces of the Union are exempted from the provisions of the Act.** The Bill expands this exemption to include aircraft belonging to any other armed forces of the Union. However, aircrafts belonging to an armed force other than the naval, military, and air forces which are currently regulated under the Act will continue to do so until specified otherwise by the central government.

PRS India 17/03/2020

File No DGCA-21012(07)/1/2020-AW du 1^{er} avril 2020 Navigabilité des aéronefs

Autorisation d'utiliser les avions de transport de passagers en avion cargo pour convoier du matériel médical et des biens pendant le confinement imosé en Inde à l'heure de la crise sanitaire du Covid-19, une fois la clearance obtenue de la DGCA.

LONDON: The world is almost certainly ensnared in a devastating recession delivered by the coronavirus pandemic.

Now, fears are growing that the downturn could be far more punishing and long lasting than initially feared — potentially enduring into next year, and even beyond — as governments intensify restrictions on business to halt the spread of the pandemic, and as fear of the virus reconfigures the very concept of public space, impeding consumer-led economic growth.

The pandemic is above all a public health emergency. So long as human interaction remains dangerous, business cannot responsibly return to normal. And what was normal before may not be anymore. People may be less inclined to jam into crowded restaurants and concert halls even after the virus is contained.

The abrupt halt of commercial activity threatens to impose economic pain so profound and enduring in every region of the world at once that recovery could take years. The losses to companies, many already saturated with debt, risk triggering a financial crisis of cataclysmic proportions.

Stock markets have reflected the economic alarm. The S&P 500 in the United States fell more than 4% Wednesday as investors braced for worse conditions ahead. That followed a brutal March, during

which a whipsawing S&P 500 fell 12.5%, in its worst month since October 2008.

“I feel like the 2008 financial crisis was just a dry run for this,” said Kenneth S. Rogoff, a Harvard economist and co-author of a history of financial crises, “This Time Is Different: Eight Centuries of Financial Folly.”

“This is already shaping up as the deepest dive on record for the global economy for over 100 years,” he said. “Everything depends on how long it lasts, but if this goes on for a long time, it’s certainly going to be the mother of all financial crises.”

The situation looks uniquely dire in developing countries, which have seen investment rush for the exits this year, sending currencies plummeting, forcing people to pay more for imported food and fuel, and threatening governments with insolvency — all of this while the pandemic itself threatens to overwhelm inadequate medical systems.

Among investors, a hopeful scenario holds currency: The recession will be painful but short-lived, giving way to a robust recovery this year. The global economy is in a temporary deep freeze, the logic goes. Once the virus is contained, enabling people to return to offices and shopping malls, life will snap back to normal. Jets will fill with families going on merely deferred vacations. Factories will resume, fulfilling saved up orders.

But even after the virus is tamed — and no one really knows when that will be — the world that emerges is likely to be choked with trouble, challenging the recovery. **Mass joblessness exacts societal costs. Widespread bankruptcy could leave industry in a weakened state, depleted of investment and innovation.**

Households may remain agitated and risk averse, making them prone to thrift. Some social distancing measures could remain indefinitely. **Consumer spending amounts to roughly two-thirds of economic activity worldwide.** If anxiety endures and people are reluctant to spend, expansion will be limited — especially as continued vigilance against the coronavirus may be required for years.

“The psychology won’t just bounce back,” said Charles Dumas, chief economist at TS Lombard, an investment research firm in London. “People have had a real shock. The recovery will be slow, and certain behavior patterns are going to change, if not forever at least for a long while.”

Rising stock prices in the United States have in recent years propelled spending. Millions of people are now filing claims for unemployment benefits, while wealthier households are absorbing the reality of substantially diminished retirement savings.

Americans boosted their rates of savings significantly in the years after the Great Depression. Fear and tarnished credit limited reliance on borrowing. That could happen again.

“The loss of income on the labor front is tremendous,” Dumas said. “The loss of value in the wealth effect is also very strong.”

When the pandemic emerged, initially in central China, it was viewed as a substantial threat to that economy. Even as China closed itself off, conventional wisdom held that, at worst, large international companies like Apple and General Motors would suffer lost sales to Chinese consumers, while manufacturers elsewhere would struggle to secure parts made in Chinese factories.

But then the pandemic spread to Italy and eventually across Europe, threatening factories on the continent. Then came government policies that essentially locked down modern life, business

included, while the virus spread to the United States.

“Now, anywhere you look in the global economy we are seeing a hit to domestic demand on top of those supply chain impacts,” said Innes McFee, managing director of macro and investor services at Oxford Economics in London. “It’s incredibly worrying.”

Oxford Economics estimates that the global economy will contract marginally this year, before improving by June. But this view is likely to be revised down sharply, McFee said.

Trillions of dollars in credit and loan guarantees dispensed by central banks and governments in the United States and Europe have perhaps cushioned the most developed economies. That may prevent large numbers of businesses from failing, say economists, while ensuring that workers who lose jobs will be able to stay current on their bills.

“I am attached to the notion that this is a temporary crisis,” said Marie Owens Thomsen, global chief economist at Indosuez Wealth Management in Geneva. “You hit the pause button, and then you hit the start button, and the machine starts running again.”

Worldwide, foreign direct investment is on track to decline by 40% this year, according to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development. **This threatens “lasting damage to global production networks and supply chains,”** said the body’s director of investment and enterprise, James Zhan.

“It will likely take two to three years for most economies to return to their pre-pandemic levels of output,” IHS Markit said in a recent research note.

The Economic Times of India 03/04/2020

NEW DELHI: A senior resident doctor of AIIMS, Delhi has tested positive for COVID-19, official sources confirmed on Thursday.

The doctor from the Physiology Department has now been admitted to the new private ward of the hospital and all those who had come in contact with him are being screened and advised home-quarantine accordingly.

The family members of the doctor will also be screened and their samples will be tested, official sources said, adding further contact-tracing has been initiated.

The source of the infection is yet to be ascertained but official sources said the doctor does not have any foreign travel history so far.

Two resident doctors of the Centre-run Safdarjung Hospital in Delhi also have tested positive for COVID-19, besides two doctors of two Delhi government-run hospitals who have also tested positive for the coronavirus infection, they said.

One of the Safdarjung Hospital doctors, who is part of the team treating COVID-19 patients at the hospital, is believed to have contracted the disease during the course of duty, the sources had said.

The other medico, a female resident doctor who is a third-year post-graduate student of Biochemistry Department, had recently travelled abroad, they had said.

Both of them showed symptoms of COVID-19 and their test results came out positive two days ago. **They are now undergoing treatment at the isolation ward of Safdarjung Hospital.**

"All doctors and staff who had come in contact with them have been tested and so far nobody else has been found positive for coronavirus infection," said sources.

At Sardar Patel Hospital and Delhi State Cancer Institute (DSCI) too, a doctor each has tested positive for the coronavirus infection, the sources had said.

The DSCI has been shut for a day to disinfect the premises, an official had said.

The Economic Times of India 02/04/2020

GENEVA: The head of the World Health Organization's office in Europe says figures show that more than 95% of people who have died of coronavirus on the continent have been aged over 60.

But Dr. Hans Kluge said age is not the only risk factor for severe disease, adding: "The very notion that COVID-19 only affects older people is factually wrong."

In an online news conference Thursday in Copenhagen, Kluge said "young people are not invincible" - echoing similar recent comments from WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The U.N. health agency says 10% to 15% of people under 50 with the disease have moderate or severe infection.

"Severe cases of the disease have been seen in people in their teens or 20s with many requiring intensive care and some unfortunately passing away," Kluge said.

He said recent statistics showed 30,098 people have been reported to have died in Europe, mostly in Italy, France and Spain.

"We know that over 95 percent of these deaths occurred in those older than 60 years," he said, with more than half aged over 80.

Kluge said more than four in five of those people had at least one other chronic underlying conditions, like cardiovascular disease, hypertension or diabetes.

"On a positive note, there are reports of people over the age of 100 who were admitted to hospital for COVID-19 and have now - since - made a complete recovery," he said.

The Economic times of India 02/04/2020

NEW DELHI: Air India on Thursday temporarily suspended the contracts of around 200 pilots, who were re-employed after retirement, as all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended in the country till April 14 to curb the COVID-19 pandemic, a senior official said.

"Since almost all the planes have been grounded and the carrier's revenues have taken a significant fall during the last few weeks, the airline has decided to temporarily suspend the contract of around 200 pilots who were re-employed after their retirement," said the official.

The national carrier has already cut the allowances of all employees, except cabin crew, by 10 per cent for the next three months in order to save money amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The Economic times of India 03/04/2020

India will approve international flights on a case by case basis post lockdown, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said today.

Terming the situation arising due to the spread of novel coronavirus as "unprecedented," Puri said that the airlines and airports are working in innovative ways whether it is about handling thousands of passengers at airports before lockdown or transporting cargo material during lockdown.

In a presser via video conference, **Puri said that the ministry is working with the understanding that lockdown will end by mid-April and then, flights will resume but international flights will be resumed on a case by case basis.**

India banned all scheduled International passenger flights to land in India from March 23 and the ban has now been extended till the completion of the lockdown period, i.e. April 14.

As per a DGCA order, the government had barred all scheduled International passenger aircraft to depart for India after 5.30 am IST of March 22 and had given them travel time of 20 hours.

Domestic flights were also suspended from March 25 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown for India until April 14.

In the case of domestic flights, the government said that it has not issued any new directive to the airlines and it is working ahead with the understanding that lockdown period will end by mid-April.

"It is all up to the airlines. Airlines should judge the situation. If passengers make bookings and lockdown ends by mid-April, then those bookings will be honoured. **If there is a situation of lockdown extension, then the airlines will have similar arrangement as they had for bookings made till April 14,**" aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said.

02/04/20 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

New Delhi: **The corona crisis is proving to be such an existential crisis for airlines that they, in perhaps a first, are unable to give refunds for flights cancelled.** Over the years, the thumb rule had been passengers get a cancellation fee deducted in their refunds if they choose to not take the trip. But if a flight is cancelled not by them, passengers get a full refund. Both schedule domestic and international flights were suspended after the third week of March and are supposed to resume on April 14-15 midnight, as of now unless the lockdown is further extended.

The corona epidemic has changed that with airlines facing a run on the bank situation. They are only getting demands for refund (withdrawals) with hardly any new bookings (fresh deposits, in banking equivalence). As a result to avoid running out of cash, almost all Indian carriers are telling passengers the fare they have paid for the cancelled flights is being converted into a pre-paid voucher that can be used for travel at any later date upto a year (varying periods for different airlines). Fare difference, if any of the future date chosen, will need to be paid.

And passengers who insist on a refund are being asked to take hefty deduction as cancellation charges. Travellers are furious as they say the flight they booked on has not been cancelled by them and are asking why should they suffer. "There was a wedding in the family that I needed to attend in March-end for which I booked five tickets for self and family. The Delhi-Bengaluru-Delhi flights I booked for Rs 68,000 have been cancelled and I want a refund. The airlines is deducting almost 30% as cancellation fee and giving me the option of travelling later by using this Rs 68,000. The wedding has taken place and I don't need to go again," said Delhi-based businessman Aman Varma.

Given the massive and unprecedented uncertainty, government agencies have not intervened in this issue so far. The government has got SOS from aviation stakeholders — airlines and airport operators — to continue operations.

Indian carriers, on their part, say they are fighting an unprecedented battle for survival. Very few like Vistara and IndiGo have paid March salaries to staff. GoAir and SpiceJet have paid only a fraction of March salary to most employees. Air India, whose crew is being applauded for operating dozens of evacuation flights to corona hotspots, has not even paid January's flying allowance to crew members — which accounts for 70% of a pilot's pay.

02/04/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Chennai: Air India's charter flights from Chennai, Mumbai and Delhi to evacuate stranded foreign nationals have led to a renewed demand from several Indians stranded in the UK, Singapore, Malaysia and Europe for rescue flights to bring them home.

Air India operated a flight from Chennai to Frankfurt via Hyderabad on Tuesday. The evacuation continued on Wednesday, when a Qatar Airways aircraft landed in Chennai to pick up 295 French nationals.

Though international commercial flights have been suspended, special flights by Air India and also foreign airlines have begun to evacuate foreign nationals in the country because of the shutdown.

Seeing the tweets about these flights being operated though India has banned international commercial flights, many have taken to Twitter asking the Union government to rescue them.

A tweet in response to Chennai airport's post on Air India flight to Frankfurt said: "India is keen on sending passengers who are stranded in India. That too in AirIndia flights. And we Indians stranded around the world are ignored. Use rapid tests for Indian citizens on arrival and put us on quarantine rather than shutting the doors for us. This too shall pass!"

In other tweets, two people have asked about rescue flights for students stranded in France and for Indians in Singapore.

An airport official said that foreign nationals are returning by ferry flights - planes that come to pick

up only the stranded - based on the arrangement with those countries.
02/04/20 Times of India

New Delhi: **An Air India hostess who last operated a New York-Mumbai scheduled flight on March 20 has tested positive for coronavirus.** The Mumbai-based cabin crew member is currently admitted to the city's Kasturba Hospital and the airline's crew union is trying to get her shifted to Raheja Hospital.

AI's pilots and cabin crew have complained about the poor quality of personal protective equipment (PPE) given to them as the airline has since January 31 been operating flights to evacuate Indians from corona epicentre Wuhan and then other hotspots like Japan, Italy and Germany. It has also operated flights to Tel Aviv to fly out Israelis from India.

The airline is likely to operate evacuation flights to US and UK in coming days to fly out foreigners stranded in India. AI pilots are yet to get their flying allowance of January, which comprises almost 70% of their total pay.

Given the high risk of exposure, AI's crew recently complained of poor quality of PPE. Crew members there have been occasions when hazmat suits have got ruptured on these flights. Indian Pilots' Guild, union of erstwhile Air India (before with Indian Airlines), wrote to airline chairman Rajiv Bansal last Saturday (March 28), saying: "During our recent rescue flights, the protective equipment being provided to the flight crew has been failing with an alarming frequency or has been plagued with other issues. For example, shoe covers have failed in as little as 10 minutes, gloves in 3 hours, hand sanitisers on board have not been provided in sufficient quantity, hazmat suits have been ill fitting and (are) available only in limited quantity increasing the risk of rupture."

02/04/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

Ahmedabad: Railways says train ticket bookings were 'never stopped except for the lockdown period' **After a clear indication from the Centre that there would be no extension of the 21-day lockdown, passengers can plan their air and train travel from April 15.**

Notably, reservations on the website of IRCTC, the online ticketing subsidiary of Indian Railways, were already open as per the 120-day advanced reservation period (ARP).

The Union Ministry of Railways has clarified in a statement on Thursday saying that "the booking of reserved train tickets never stopped except for the lockdown period i.e. March 24 to April 14."

"Since, advance reservation period for taking reserved ticket is 120 days, ticket bookings for April 15, and beyond were made open much prior to lockdown period," the Statement clarified.

"If there are passengers who wanted to cancel their Passenger Reservation (PRS) tickets but could not do it due to the lockdown, the Railways has relaxed the rules to allow cancellation and refund till June 21, 2020," Pradeep Sharma, PRO of the Ahmedabad division of Western Railway, told BusinessLine.

Travel operators say they were seeking inquiries from their clients about resumption in rail and air travel. Manish Sharma of Akshar Travels said that the agency has been receiving inquiries mostly from business travellers. "Our office is closed due to the lockdown. But we are getting travel booking

inquiries mostly from business, corporate groups and those having urgent travel requirements. It looks like leisure or social purpose travelling will take some time to pick up," said Sharma.

02/04/20 Rutam Vora/Business Line

SpiceJet has terminated the contract of 13 expat pilots flying its Bombardier Q400 planes that were used on UDAN routes.

UDAN is the government's regional connectivity scheme that aims to bring air connectivity to smaller towns.

The move follows a day of similar steps to reduce its salary costs. The budget carrier earlier announced a pay cut for its employees, with Chairman AjaySingh taking the highest trim of 30 percent.

It also said some staff, who are entitled to a flying or performance allowance, would be getting their salaries in two parts.

Responding to a query on the development, a company spokesperson told Moneycontrol: "SpiceJet has not sacked any pilot. **We have served a 'one-month notice' to 13 expat Q400 captains, as per their official contract. They have also been paid a month's salary as per their contract.**"

02/04/20 Moneycontrol

Mangaluru: A number of Indian trainees who are undergoing commercial pilot licence training at CAE-Phoenix Aviation Academy at Mesa in Arizona, USA, under the IndiGo air cadet pilot programme of IndiGo Airlines, are now unable to move out. They have now become panicky about their future.

Out of 350 trainees, about 150 are Indians. Two each among them are from Bengaluru and Mangaluru. Their parents have appealed to the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and other officials through letters to ensure that the children are safely brought back to India as they have no security at the training institute.

Balvinder Viridi, a Punjabi businessman from Mangaluru says that his son Prabhjot Singh, had left for the USA in December 2018 to undergo the 54-week training programme. The training was to conclude in January this year, but it is unfinished. Coronavirus has been spreading fast in the USA but lockdown has not been enforced there, he claims. He is apprehensive that if lockdown is declared there, the trainees will find it difficult to get scholarship and residential facility. Because the course period has been extended, the parents are facing additional financial burden, Viridi rues.

02/04/20 daijiworld

New Delhi: The suspension of flights in India due to the coronavirus outbreak has led to a 60 per cent decline in the availability of meteorological data relayed by aircraft, Ministry of Earth Sciences Secretary M Rajeevan said on Thursday.

He told PTI that due to the reduction of air traffic across the world, the **crucial meteorological data shared with air traffic controls by planes has gone down by 50-60 per cent globally. The air traffic controls in turn share data with meteorological organisations.**

A scientist dealing with the aircraft relay data said the information is run in two models in India – the UK Met office model and US' Noaa model – for coming out with forecasts.

"It does affect the quality of forecast, but then there are other sets of data that are used to forecast to bridge the gap," the scientist, who works with one of the institutions under the Ministry of Earth

Sciences, added.

India Meteorological Department (IMD) Director General M Mohapatra said the data shared by the flights is used in forecast models, especially in the medium range in predicting weather over the span of 10 days.

02/04/20 PTI/Economic Times

Singapore: An Indian-origin Singaporean was sentenced to two months' jail on Thursday for shouting corona, corona and spitting on a hotel floor at the Changi Airport, the first conviction of its kind in the country related to the coronavirus outbreak, according to a media report.

Jasvinder Singh Mehar Singh, 52, pleaded guilty to one count each of committing a rash act and being a public nuisance on March 3, 2020, The Straits Times reported.

Singh smashed a plate and spat onto the floor of the Azur Restaurant at the Crowne Plaza Changi Airport hotel after a waitress told him that the eatery was closed.

Still unhappy, Singh spat onto the floor two more times and yelled: "Corona, corona."

This is the first conviction of its kind related to the current coronavirus outbreak, according to the Singapore daily.

Singh must also spend an additional 55 days behind bars, as he had breached a remission order after his early release from prison in February. He was sentenced to jail in January to six months and five weeks' jail over offences including harassment.

As part of the order, he was not supposed to commit any more offences between February 28 and April 26 this year.

02/04/20 PTI/India Today

New Delhi: As commercial flight services remain suspended, hundreds of planes across the country seem to be jostling for space at airports with some of them even being parked on runways and bays near them, according to industry officials.

With the country under a 21-day lockdown in the fight against the coronavirus outbreak, domestic and international flights have been banned till April 14.

Cargo flights and special flights approved by aviation regulator DGCA are operating in the Indian airspace.

The country's commercial fleet of aircraft is around 650 in number and most of them have been grounded.

A few are being used to ferry cargo to and from different parts of the country, and some to operate special flights.

The Indira Gandhi International Airport in the national capital is the country's largest aerodrome and has 194 parking stands for planes.

This excludes stands available for "general aviation" purpose.

General aviation refers to use of planes for recreation and chartered services, among others.

The airport, operated by DIAL, handled 69.8 million passengers and 1.04 million metric tonne of cargo in 2019.

01/02/20 New Indian Express

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Cabinet on Wednesday decided to slash the tax on aviation turbine fuel to 1 per cent from the current 5 per cent for domestic airlines operating from the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport.

The tax reduction on aviation fuel for all domestic airlines will come into effect from Wednesday and it will be for the next 10 years, an official release said.

01/04/20 UNI

The Director General of Civil Aviation on Wednesday allowed airlines to carry cargo within passenger cabin and on seats, apart from the aircraft belly, in order to enable them to accommodate more freight in view of the lockdown and manage cost-efficient operations.

Airlines will have to obtain permission from the DGCA and ensure that the cargo is restrained and will not interfere with emergency evacuation. Aircraft manufacturers such as Airbus and Boeing allow their airplanes to be used in this manner and have detailed guidelines to ensure safety.

In order to stow consignments on and below passenger seats, airlines will have to obtain additional permission

"Operations without passengers and with cargo in the passenger compartment will require suitable number of crew member/ personnel to survey and access all areas of the cabin during all phases of flight," says the latest DGCA advisory.

So far, 74 cargo flights have been operated in the past one week by Air India, Alliance Air, IAF, Pawan Hans, IndiGo and SpiceJet. Passenger airlines like Air India, SpiceJet and IndiGo have conducted a total of 64 flights among them.

01/04/20 The Hindu

As cash reserves of aviation sector companies are "running down quickly" as planes are grounded amid the coronavirus pandemic, industry body FICCI on Wednesday recommended several measures to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri to help the firms.

FICCI stated in its letter that **the government needs to give appropriate directions to the Reserve Bank of India to ensure that the operation of existing "stand-by letters of credit, other foreign guarantees and bank guarantees etc. issued by Indian airlines operators or their banks" are suspended with immediate effect for a period of 90 days.**

In its letter to both the ministers, the industry body stated that **interests, penalties, delayed charges and accruals to airport operators should be waived for the airlines, and subsequently, airport operators could be adequately supported by the government to make up for the gap.**

"One of the major challenges faced by the aviation industry is that **cash reserves are running down quickly as fleets are grounded and flights are not operational in the past few days. Many airline companies are almost at the brink of bankruptcy,**" stated the letter written by Anand Stanley, Chairman, FICCI Aviation Committee.

01/04/20 PTI/Deccan Herald

New Delhi: The government is likely to allow domestic and international flight operations in India in a staggered manner after the 21-day lockdown is lifted on April 14 midnight, officials said on Sunday. The aviation sector has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

On Sunday, Air Deccan became the latest casualty of the crisis as it announced indefinite suspension of flight operations and asked all employees to go on sabbatical without pay.

"As the virus is still spreading in India, we are thinking to permit domestic and international flight operations post April 14 in a staggered manner. Airlines are free to take bookings for any date post April 14," a senior Civil Aviation Ministry official said.

"However, if the lockdown is extended post April 14, airlines will have to cancel the tickets booked

for that time period," the official noted.

All major airlines except Air India are taking domestic bookings for dates post April 14. Air India is taking bookings for dates post April 30 only.

As it has sent all employees on sabbatical without pay, Air Deccan is not taking any bookings and it is not clear when it would restart operations.

As revenues have fallen significantly, IndiGo has announced a pay cut of up to 25 per cent for its senior employees and Vistara has announced a compulsory leave without pay of up to three days for its senior employees in March.

05/04/20 PTI/Outlook

Panaji: The British government will charter special flights to rescue its citizens stranded in India, including Goa, from next week onwards, the British high commission said on Saturday. While the exact dates and flight timings are yet to be declared, the announcement will bring relief to the several hundred British nationals stranded in the state.

The announcement comes even as European Union nations and Russia continue to operate special flights to repatriate their citizens. On Saturday, the US government hired three buses to shift 63 US nationals stranded in Goa to Mumbai from where they would be flown to the US.

"I recognise that this is a worrying time and you are desperate to get home. Special charter flights from India to UK organised by the British government will start next week. We are still in the process of finalising the details with the Indian government and airlines," said acting British high commissioner Jan Thompson.

Thompson said that once the dates are confirmed, the details would be made public, but in the same breath said that they would not be able to rescue all UK nationals stranded in India at once.

"Next week is just the start. We will not be able to get everyone out immediately," Thompson said in a video message.

UK foreign secretary Dominic Raab and UK transport secretary Grant Shapps continue negotiations with India's external affairs ministry to get a series of charter flights to help the most vulnerable stranded UK nationals, many of them elderly and suffering from ailments.

Meanwhile, many EU nations have allowed British citizens on rescue flights to Frankfurt, Zurich, Dublin, Helsinki and Rome from where they could take onward flights to UK.

Alitalia flew a special flight from Goa to Rome on April 3 and a few seats were offered to UK nationals. On Saturday, a plane filled with Irish and European tourists took off from Goa International Airport for Dublin. The passengers included 100 British tourists.

05/04/20 Newton Sequeira/Times of India

The COVID-19 unleashed headwinds which have deeply impacted the airline and hospitality sector, now pose a major risk to the job security of over 2,00,000 workforce employed with the country's private airport operators. Accordingly, the Association of Private Airport Operators (APAO) has

urged the Centre to come out with an economic relief package not only to stop downsizing but also to maintain the key infrastructure assets that the sector maintains.

At present, approximately 2,40,000 people employed on airport sites, including airport operators' employees jobs are at stake. The downsizing impact will be felt across the country as New Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore and Hyderabad are some of the major airports which are handled by private entities.

Currently, no foreign or domestic passenger flight operations are allowed till the deadline of April 14. Only cargo operations are taking place there by hitting the bottom lines of these companies. **Not only is the income low but these entities are also in stress for paying up a huge chunk of the revenue to the government under the various management deals of respective airports.**

05/04/20 IANS/Business Insider

Tiruchy: High drama took place at the Tiruchy International Airport on Saturday morning as a Malaysian couple tried to commit suicide after they were not provided seats in the special flight.

The couple identified as Lalitha (55) and Subramaniam (65) came to the airport to board the flight to Malaysia. However, they came to know that their names were not included in the list.

Also, disappointed with response of embassy officials, they tried to consume sleeping pills. However, police prevented them. Sources said that airport officials and police held talks with the airline and arranged seats for them.

"We do not know how their names were not included in the list. We have raised the issue with the airline and concerned officials and arranged seats for them," an officer said. Later, the flight with 152 passengers, including the couple, took off at 10:35 am. This is the third rescue flight from Malaysia to take its citizens in Tiruchy, in this week.

05/04/20 New Indian Express

Mumbai: Post the 21-day coronavirus lockdown was announced on March 24, over 5,751 stranded foreign nationals were repatriated to their country of origin from the Delhi International Airport.

Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has handled a total of 29 flights between March 25 and April 2.

Commercial flight operations came to a halt at the Delhi Airport on March 25, following the 21-day lockdown announced by the government to contain the spread of coronavirus pandemic.

"Delhi Airport is operational 24x7 despite the suspension of commercial operations, due to the 21-day lockdown following the coronavirus outbreak. At present, Delhi Airport is handling cargo and evacuation flights, operated by various countries," CEO-DIAL Videh Kumar Jaipuria said.

Several foreign nationals were stranded in different parts of India post the lockdown. The Indian government and several embassies were coordinating to escalate the repatriation process for the said nationals.

Delhi Airports is one of the hub airports for several international flights.

According to a statement, between March 25 and April 2, "It has handled a total of 29 flights in which about 5,751 stranded foreign nationals flew to their country of origin from here."

The biggest aircraft used for evacuation was an Airbus 380, operated by Lufthansa, which flew around 500 German nationals to Frankfurt.

04/04/20 Business Line

Dibrugarh: The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been consistently devoting resources towards CSR endeavours at various stations in the north-eastern region under the leadership of its Regional Executive Director, Sanjeev Jindal. The Corporate Social Responsibility programmes are focused to connect underprivileged families with the privileged one and AAI is continuously working in this effort apart from developing aviation infrastructure in the north-eastern region.

Supporting the Dibrugarh district administration in the fight against COVID-19, **Airports Authority of India, Dibrugarh on Saturday provided funds amounting to Rs. 8 lakh under CSR scheme to procure various materials for combating novel coronavirus (COVID-19).** The district administration Dibrugarh along with Police and Health Department have prepared comprehensive plan to combat possible cases of corona virus in the district and since a large number of police personnel are also engaged in COVID-19 duty, hence to prevent spread of the epidemic among the police personnel, **funds provided by Airports Authority of India Dibrugarh under CSR scheme will be utilized to procure protective materials,** AAI, Dibrugarh Airport, the press release added.
05/04/20 Sentinel

Air India, which has been actively involved in evacuation of Indians and relief efforts around the world during the coronavirus pandemic, has found an admirer in the Pakistan Air Traffic Controller.

The Pakistan ATC welcomed Air India flights engaged in relief efforts into its airspace, and went on to say that they were proud of the work the airline was doing during these trying times. "As-salamu alaykum (Peace be upon you). This is Karachi Control welcoming Air India for relief flights," the ATC said to the pilots. After confirming that the flight was enroute Frankfurt for relief efforts, the ATC said, **"We are proud of you that in a pandemic situation you are operating flights. Good luck!"**

The Air India pilots thanked them for their words. They added that the Pakistan ATC saved them precious time by allowing the flight to fly closer to Karachi. In addition, the ATC also got in touch with Iran when the Air India flight entered its airspace and tried contacting the authorities, thereby saving time taking a shorter route.

The national carrier operated two flights from Mumbai to Frankfurt on April 2, carrying materials and European national stuck in India amid the nationwide lockdown.
05/04/20 The Week

Air India on Sunday issued advisories for passengers of four flights, urging them to go into self-quarantine after a COVID-19 positive passenger was detected in each of the routes. The Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme of the Directorate of Health Services in Goa and Disaster Management Department of Bihar had informed Air India about the cases. In a series of tweets, Air India said, "As appealed by Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme, Goa, passengers of this flight are required to follow for necessary isolation/quarantine as applicable."

A passenger from **AI661** which flew from Mumbai to Goa on **March 19** has tested positive.

A passenger on **AI883**, which flew from Mumbai to Goa on **March 22**, has tested positive for COVID-19.

A passenger who travelled on **AI101** from Mumbai to Delhi on **March 22** and was also on board the **AI 415** which flew from Delhi to Patna on **March 23** was tested positive for COVID-19 on March 31, informed Air India.

05/04/20 Jay Pandya/Republic

Air India today operated its Boeing 777 to Shanghai from Delhi full of critical medical supplies thus creating air bridge between the two countries fighting Covid-19 pandemic. Though there is no fixed schedule for the route, Air India will be flying as and when there is a demand.

B777-300ER has a cargo capacity of 25 tonnes and 58 tonnes payload capacity in the non-USA routes.

Nirbhik Narang executive director, cargo, Air India, said "We operated the B777 passenger flight full of critical medical consignments in the belly hold in the Mumbai- Delhi- Shanghai route to fight against Covid-19 which will be coming back tomorrow early morning. We will operate through the route as and when there is any demand to move essential supplies between the two cities."

Till date, Air India has already flown 42 passenger flights just with the belly space cargo full of essential and medical consignments across the country since Covid-19 pandemic has begun. As DGCA has already given permission to use the passenger cabins to move cargo, the airlines have only used the overhead bins.

04/04/20 ITLN

New Delhi: **Air India is busy in evacuating foreigners who are stranded in India to their destinations and winning accolades but the Congress has raised the issue of safety of the crew and alleged that "Govt is risking our pilots and crew and why foreign countries are not using their airlines."**

Jaiveer Shergill, who himself is a trained pilot, raised fingers and said, "Germany, Canada, France is chartering Air India to fly their nationals"

He asked why is Germany not using Lufthansa, Canada not using Air Canada & France not using Air France?

"Why is Govt risking our pilots crew who have anyways complained of sub-standard protective gear?" said Shergill.

The Air India in its mission has evacuated Indian Citizens from China which was the epicentre of Covid-19.

Meanwhile, Air India has said in a statement, "All these flights are being operated adhering to all safety protocols laid down by the DGCA."

05/04/20 daijiworld

New Delhi: **Regional airliner Air Deccan announced on Sunday that it is ceasing its operations until further notice and all employees are being put on sabbatical without pay, the first Indian aviation company to succumb to the coronavirus crisis that has led to a 21-day lockdown and virtually paralysed the sector.**

In an email to his employees, Air Deccan CEO Arun Kumar Singh said, "In view of the recent global and domestic issues and subsequent directive by the Indian regulator (to suspend all commercial passenger flights till April 14), Air Deccan has no choice but to cease its operations until further notice."

"With heavy heart, I am also compelled to inform that all existing employees of Air Deccan (permanent, temporary and contractual) are being put on sabbatical without pay with immediate effect," he added in the email, which has been accessed by PTI.

Air Deccan has a fleet of four 18-seater Beechcraft aircraft to fly on regional routes in western India, focusing on Gujarat.

Singh said in his email: "Next week, the management will hold meetings with department heads for continuity of certain key personnel (with continuity of employment terms) to ensure that when the

right time arrives, the airline can be restarted with nominal efforts."

"I personally assure you as and when Air Deccan recommences the operations under conducive circumstances, all existing employees will be offered first right of refusal for their current positions," he added.

India has imposed a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this time period.

However, cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and special flights permitted by Indian aviation regulator DGCA are operating during this lockdown.

Many airlines in India are close to bankruptcy as their cash reserves are running out amid the lockdown, industry body FICCI had told Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman through a letter last Wednesday.

While other airlines have introduced various cost cutting measures such as laying off pilots, leave without pay and salary cuts, Air Deccan is the first casualty of the coronavirus pandemic.

05/04/20 Deepak Patel/PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: The grounding of the country's civilian aircraft has strangled a key source of weather data that the India Meteorological Department (IMD) uses for its forecasts. Officials, however, clarified that India's annual monsoon forecast system was on track, with the first forecast scheduled to be issued in mid-April.

Aircraft relay data about temperature and wind speed in the upper atmosphere to meteorological agencies the world over and this is used in the dynamical models, the ones which are run on super computers and relied on to give weather forecasts three days, or even two weeks ahead. "Inputs from aircraft are important for the dynamical models as it determines the initial conditions for these models," D.S. Pai, chief forecaster, IMD Pune, told The Hindu. "However for the monsoon forecast, which is a long-term forecast, this isn't significantly affected."

Beginning mid-March, India began restricting incoming international flights into the country and by March 24 had imposed a total shutdown on domestic air travel as well.

This year, the IMD will likely rely on its traditional statistical forecast system — the workhorse, developed on the basis of historical data. India had begun to move away from this system and started to rely on its dynamical models as it better captures developing changes in the atmosphere. However, India's dynamical models are still not as adept as meteorologists want them to be, for warning of a drought or extreme changes in monsoon rainfall. That, and limited data from aircraft as well as a general decline in land-based observations because of a shortage of manpower to send observations are forcing the agency's hand.

04/04/20 Jacob Koshy/The Hindu

New Delhi: Budget passenger carrier AirAsia India on Saturday said that passengers can continue to make their bookings for flights that will be operated from April 15 onwards.

"If at all there is any change based on the direction provided by the regulator, we will abide to the policies and notify guests accordingly," a spokesperson of the airline said.

At present, no foreign or domestic passenger flight operations are allowed till April 14.

On Thursday, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said that domestic airlines are free to accept ticket bookings for flights that will be operated post the current lockdown deadline.

According to the senior official, the current lockdown period is till the midnight of April 14 and if this is not extended then these bookings will be honoured.

05/04/20 daijiworld

New Delhi: National carrier Air India has stopped bookings for domestic and international flights till April 30 as it awaits a decision from the government on the lockdown that ends on April 14, according to a spokesperson.

No-frills carriers IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir said they are taking bookings for domestic flights starting April 15. In the case of SpiceJet and GoAir, they have started selling tickets for international flights from May 1.

An IndiGo spokesperson said bookings for international flights remain suspended.

Full service carrier Vistara said it has started bookings for travel from April 15.

Commercial flights on domestic and international routes have been suspended till April 14 amid the nationwide lockdown to prevent spreading of coronavirus infections.

The Air India spokesperson said bookings have now been closed till April 30 from Friday.

"We are awaiting a decision post April 14," he added.

Spokespersons for SpiceJet and GoAir said bookings are open for travel on domestic flights from April 15 and for international flights from May 1.

"We continue to take bookings from April 15 onwards as of now. We will take action otherwise if there is any new notification from the (civil aviation) ministry," a Vistara spokesperson said.

There was no immediate comment from budget carrier AirAsia India.

On Thursday, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said airlines are free to take ticket bookings for any date after April 14.

The 21-day nationwide lockdown began on March 25.

04/04/20 PTI/Bangalore Mirror

New Delhi: Aviation regulator DGCA on Friday announced that it is temporarily extending the validity of airworthiness review certificate (ARC) of all aircraft, which are permitted to operate during the 21-day lockdown imposed by the government to contain the spread of coronavirus, till July 3.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in a circular, said while no domestic and international commercial passenger flight is permitted till midnight on April 14, aircraft can fly if they are being used for cargo operations, medical evacuation flights, off-shore helicopter operations and flights, especially permitted by the regulator.

"Some of the aircraft intended for such operations may have their ARC expiring. This circular provides the procedure for extending the validity of ARC of these aircraft for a limited period," the circular added.

The regulator said if the ARC of such planes has expired on or after March 23, the operator should send an email to its regional office to get the validity extended.

"The circular is a temporary measure and is valid till July 3, 2020, or till the normal functioning of the concerned RAO (Regional Airworthiness Office)/ Sub Regional Airworthiness Office (SRAO) is resumed, whichever is earlier," the DGCA noted.

The aviation regulator clarified that once the normal functioning of RAO or SRAO is resumed, the operator of the aircraft must apply for regular extension of the ARC within a period of 15 days.
03/04/20 PTI/New Indian Express

International seat capacity has dropped by almost 80% from a year ago and half the world's airplanes are in storage, new data shows, suggesting the aviation industry may take years to recover from the coronavirus pandemic.

Carriers including United Airlines Holdings Inc and Air New Zealand Ltd have warned they are likely to emerge from the crisis smaller, and there are fears others may not survive.

"It is likely that when we get across to the other side of the pandemic, things won't return to the vibrant market conditions we had at the start of the year," said Olivier Ponti, vice president at data firm ForwardKeys.

"It's also possible that a number of airlines will have gone bust and uneconomic discounts will be necessary to attract demand back," he said in a statement.

ForwardKeys said the number of international airline seats had fallen to 10 million in the week of March 30 to April 5, down from 44.2 million a year ago.

Data firm OAG said several years of industry growth had been lost and it could take until 2022 or 2023 before the volume of flyers returns to the levels that had been expected for 2020.

Cirium, another aviation data provider, said around half of the world's airplane fleet was now in storage.

"While many of these will be temporary storage, many of these aircraft will never resume service," Cowen analyst Helene Becker said in a note to clients. "We believe the airline industry will look very different when we get to the other side of this."

Planemakers are looking at drastic cuts in wide-body production amid a slump in demand for the industry's largest jetliners, manufacturing and supplier sources said.

Deliveries of long-range jets like the Boeing Co 777 or 787 and Airbus SE A350 or A330 have been particularly badly hit as airlines seek deferrals and many withhold progress payments.

FLIGHTS CUT, STAFF FURLOUGHED

Vasu Raja, American Airlines Group Inc senior vice president of network strategy, told Reuters that U.S. domestic demand will remain weak into May, citing the lack of bookings.

The airline is cutting between 70% and 75% of domestic flights in April and about 80% in May. For both months it is cutting nearly 90% of its international flights.

Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd said on Friday it would further cut passenger capacity after carrying just 582 passengers one day this week, a load factor of 18.3%, compared to 100,000 customers on a normal day.

Air New Zealand carried just 165 passengers on its 89 flights on Thursday, underpinning its decision to make further cuts to its schedule while the country is in lockdown due to the virus, Chief Revenue Officer Cam Wallace said on Twitter.

Southwest Airlines Co said on Thursday it intends to apply for U.S. government aid to help it ride out the sharp drop in travel demand.

"We still don't know the severity of this situation. We still don't know how long it will last,"

Southwest Chief Executive Gary Kelly said in a video message.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin on Thursday confirmed investment bank PJT Partners Inc will advise the Treasury on negotiations with passenger airlines over a stimulus package worth up to \$50 billion, half in loans and loan guarantees and half in payroll cash grants.

Many Democrats and airline labour unions are urging Mnuchin not to exercise the right to demand equity or warrants in return for the grant portion, as they seek to ensure carriers take the funds and pay workers.

"We need to get this done quickly," Mnuchin said. "We'll make sure that we strike the right balance ... taxpayers get compensated."

"We want to keep our airlines intact."

Business Today 04/04/2020

On April 5, the first medical cargo flight from India will leave for China. This special Air India flight will be used to bring medical cargo from China, including novel coronavirus test kits. The governments of both countries are hoping that more such flights will operate between India and China in the near future.

Going by reports, the flight on Sunday will bring back **antibody rapid tests** which serve as an alternative to RT-PCR tests for confirmation of Covid-19. The Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) has already placed an order for 10 lakh test kits, however, it is unclear how many of these will be imported from China.

Since the outbreak of Covid-19, authorities in both India and China have been coordinating efforts to reduce the spread of the disease. Chinese official media on Saturday revealed that 95 police officers and 46 medical workers in the country died while battling the surge in novel coronavirus cases that originated from Wuhan city in Hubei province.

04/04/20 Poulomi Saha/India Today

A special Air India flight from Kerala's Kochi on Saturday morning, took a total of 112 French nationals, stuck in the state since the 21-day lockdown began to arrest the flow of Coronavirus pandemic.

The special Air India flight arrived from Bengaluru with passengers and took off at 08:13 today from Cochin international airport. The flight will go to Mumbai and then depart for Paris, where more of them are waiting to travel to France.

Similar flights were operated to ferry German and Omani nationals from the state in the past few days. These people came to the state either as tourists or for health checkups and ayurveda treatments and got stuck here due to the flights cancellation because of the lockdown.

Cochin airport officials expressed their intent that they are ready to do similar operations to fly out other nationals who are stuck in the state.

04/04/20 Statesman

New Delhi: The Ministry of Civil Aviation is undertaking continuous efforts at policy level and ground level to add substantially in the country's fight against Covid-19. The cargo delivered to various parts of the country includes COVID-19 related reagents, enzymes, medical equipment, testing kits & PPE, masks, gloves & other accessories of HLL & cargo requisitioned by State/UT Governments and also postal packets.

With the delivery of essential medical supplies to various states and ICMR centres across the country, the following has been achieved:

Delivery of reagents/ medical kits enables testing of patients on time and hence further steps are taken accordingly

Doctors as well as other people can protect themselves and others with the use of masks and gloves delivered through these flights

Medical supplies delivered to NE and remote areas ensures that no region of the country is left behind in this fight against Covid-19.

04/04/20 Orissadiary.com

Mumbai: As the nation is under a 21-day lockdown causing a commercial transportation ban ending on April 14, Vistara Airlines has announced that they would start taking flight bookings from April 15 unless a new directive from the Ministry of Civil Aviation is issued.

The airline spokesperson said in a statement, "We continue to take bookings from April 15 onwards as of now. We will act otherwise if there is any new notification from the ministry."

On the other hand, even though no decision has been taken to extend the duration of the nationwide lockdown, national carrier Air India has announced that all ticket bookings will be closed from Friday onwards till April 30.

However, this decision will be reviewed after April 14, the last day of the nationwide lockdown. Currently, all domestic and international flight operations in India have been suspended till April 14. Earlier, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri had revealed that no call had been taken yet on revoking the suspension of air travel after the lockdown period.

04/04/20 Pritesh Kamath/Republic

Thiruvananthapuram: Around 1,000 kits for rapid testing of Covid-19 have been flown into the city, which is among the virus hotspots identified by the central government, while more kits are on their way. The testing kits will be handed over to the district collector.

Announcing the arrival of the first batch of the testing kits, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor also thanked **SpiceJet** for helping transport the kits.

Tharoor's office said Rs 57 lakh from the Congress leader's MPLAD funds were used to procure the kits. "The MP has also given Rs 1 crore to Sree Chitra Institute for developing their testing kits, which will be sent to the ICMR for approval. An order for 3,000 kits has been placed at My Labs, a Pune-based company which has permission from the ICMR to produce the kits," his office said.

It added that orders have been placed for 9,000 personal protection equipment from Ernakulam of which the first lot of 500 has been delivered and another 500-1000 will be delivered by next week.

The need for rapid testing kits was also expressed by chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan during a video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and counterparts of other states. Vijayan had sought the Centre's help in procuring kits from Hong Kong.

03/04/20 Neethu Reghukumar/CNN-News18

New Delhi: Despite Indian industries, especially aviation and tourism, being hard hit by the Coronavirus, Former Niti Aayog Vice-chairman, Arvind Panagariya is convinced that India will overcome the hurdles caused by COVID-19 lockdown.

In a conversation with ET NOW, talking about the economic repercussions of the 21-day nationwide lockdown in India, Panagariya said, **"I have absolutely no doubt in the resilience of India. We have come out of very severe poverty and the prosperity we see around it relatively new. So, we know how to deal with adversity."**

"With the growth we have had in the last 20 years, we do have some social safety nets and resources. The government's ability to deal with such adversity and its effects today is a lot better than it was 30 years ago. So, I am quite convinced that we can overcome these hurdles," he added.

It is worth mentioning that Rating agency Fitch on Friday cut its GDP growth forecast for India to 2 per cent for the fiscal year ending March 2021 after lowering it to 5.1 per cent previously. This will make it the slowest growth in India over the past 30 years.

Talking about this Panagariya said, "There is a lot of uncertainty right now as to how the phasing out of the lockdown will play out, how the external trade will be opened, how the flights and transportation etc will be opened. So, today because everything is closed down, it looks overly pessimistic."

04/04/20 ETNowNews.com

The Indian aviation market could suffer estimated losses of up to \$8,838 million due to the pandemic, warned International Air Transport Association (IATA). In a report released on Friday, the apex body representing 290 global airlines said the impact could result in 22.47 lakh people losing their jobs.

The IATA report released its country-specific projection of the pandemic's impact on Asia-Pacific states including India for the first time. According to the report, **India is expected to suffer a drop of 36 per cent in passenger demand and a reduction of 6.85 crore in passenger volume at origin destinations. This could result in revenue losses to the tune of \$ 8,838 million which could impact the national GDP in losses of \$ 12,709 million.**

The report projected that the Indian aviation sector could suffer potential job losses of 22.47 lakh personnel, which was the highest among 27 Asia-Pacific countries. The list includes Australia, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam among top aviation markets. In comparison with India, Japan was projected to suffer a passenger demand drop of 38 per cent resulting in revenue losses to the tune of \$17,765 million and potential job losses of 4.48 lakh personnel. IATA said Sri Lanka would face a 44 per cent reduction in passenger demand, revenue losses of \$ 562 million and job losses to the tune of 3.13 lakh. Pakistan was projected to suffer a 40 per cent drop in passenger demand, revenue losses of up to \$ 1,438 and job losses to the tune of 1.98 lakh.

Urging governments in Asia-Pacific region to take urgent steps to provide financial stimulus packages to the airline industry, IATA said major Asia-Pacific states could see a drop in passenger demand in 2020 by 34 to 44 per cent and could suffer revenue loss of \$88 billion.

04/04/20 Satish Nandagaonkar/Mumbai Mirror

New Delhi: India's top six airports, including the two biggest hubs of New Delhi and Mumbai, are now home to about 80% of the civilian aircraft that have had to remain on the ground since the authorities enforced a blanked flying ban last week to help contain the Covid-19 outbreak in the country.

"Indian carriers have around 650-odd planes in their fleet and parking for these airplanes is not a problem. All airports together, including the government-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI) airports, can handle many more planes," said a senior AAI official, who did not wish to be named. Airport officials said that Delhi airport itself has parking bays for about 196 aircraft and Mumbai has place for about 100 aircraft. Data sourced from industry sources and flight tracking portals show that **at top six airports — Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Chennai — 538 of the total 650 aircraft are parked.**

Sources, however, added that planes are also parked at one of the runways at Delhi airport, which is the only facility in India that has three runways. "During operations, planes are used for domestic operations during the day and same planes are then used for international operations at night. So, at any given time, the number of parked planes is not high, as airlines would also want to keep flying these planes," said an airline executive. The executive added that there is enough space to park planes in the country.

"Airports like Delhi have allowed parking of planes at one the runways, thus creating space for parking," said the executive. A Delhi airport executive said that parking on the runway was a temporary arrangement after a large number of planes flying domestic routes came in to park in the facility. India closed itself to international flights starting last Sunday and grounded all domestic

flights starting Tuesday, causing planes to be parked at various airports.

04/04/20 Mihir Mishra/Economic Times

According to reports, airlines are having a hard time trying to refund passengers for their cancelled flights. All major domestic and international airlines are currently grounded due to the nation-wide lockdown. Passengers usually get a full refund when a flight gets cancelled; if they cancel the flight themselves, a cancellation fee gets deducted from their refund.

Now with the Corona epidemic spread all over the world, airlines are facing a hard time because there are hardly any bookings anymore. While, on the other hand, they are actually constantly getting requests for cancellations and refunds.

This is leading to a whole different scenario **as most Indian carriers are converting the refund amount into pre-paid vouchers that can be used in the future, the period for this varies from one airline to another. Passengers would be required to pay for the fare difference during that time.** However, there are passengers who are insisting on a refund, so you could probably do that at the cost of a hefty cancellation charge. This means that you will not be getting the full refund on your cancellation. This has, of course, caused travellers to get annoyed, but these are extraordinary times, and such hiccups are bound to happen.

04/04/20 Times Travel

Mumbai: At least 11 Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel have contracted novel coronavirus at Panvel near Mumbai, a local civic official said on Friday.

It is suspected that they caught the infection while on duty at the Mumbai International Airport, the official said.

"Five of the CISF personnel had tested positive earlier while six more tested positive on Friday," he said.

Panvel which comes under Navi Mumbai has a total of 14 coronavirus cases at present.

The infected CISF personnel were posted at Kharghar in Navi Mumbai.

"At least 146 CISF personnel including officers were tested," a senior official from the Konkan Divisional Commissioner's office told PTI.

After five personnel tested positive, samples of others were collected, the official added.

03/04/20 PTI/India Today

Bengaluru: The Bengaluru International Airport Limited, which managing the operations of Kempegowda International Airport, said on Saturday that it has launched called Namma Chethana, an initiative, to provide **3,500 meals along with a host of other corporates located on the airport premises.** "As a responsible corporate citizen, BIAL, working together with other corporates located on the BLR Airport campus HMS Host, Satis Dining, Taj Bangalore and TFS has launched a joint initiative to provide 3,500 meals each day for affected people amid the lockdown following the COVID-19 outbreak," the BIAL said in a statement.

With the support of district administration, the food is distributed to those in need, the BIAL said adding that approximately 3,500 daily meals, include 2,000 packages for lunch and 1,500 for

dinner.

These are packed at on the airport premises and delivered to stranded migrant workers, daily wage earners, villagers, policemen, and those working in the unorganised sector across Chikkaballapura district, the BIAL said.

04/04/20 PTI/Outlook

Hyderabad: The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (AERA) has issued Tariff Order for the second control period (01.04.2016 – 31.03.2021) for GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL), a step down subsidiary of the Company.

The new tariff order will make flying out of Hyderabad cheaper for both domestic and international travelers.

The regulator AERA has considered 30% Hybrid Till, to be implemented from April 1, 2020 and to be effective for upto March 31, 2021 after which new tariffs would be applicable for next control period of 5 years, the diversified infrastructure company informed BSE.

Upon implementation of this Tariff Order, the user development fee (UDF) on domestic and International departing passenger shall be levied at Rs 281 and Rs 393 respectively.

Earlier flyers from Hyderabad had to pay up more. While international travelers had to pay Rs 1700, the domestic travelers were paying up Rs 393.

04/04/20 V Rishi Kumar/Business Line

New Delhi: Multiple flights from New Delhi to San Francisco will be arranged to repatriate US citizens stranded in northern and eastern India due to a lockdown in the country to combat the coronavirus outbreak, the American embassy here said on Friday.

The flights will begin operating from April 4, the embassy said. US Ambassador to India Kenneth Juster lauded the government's efforts to fight coronavirus.

"The U.S. Mission supports the Government of India in the fight against #COVID19. Impressive to see the public support for the lockdown and social distancing, with no sign of civil unrest. #USIndia," Juster said in a tweet.

The embassy has asked US citizens to share their location and other details by filling out the form at <https://tinyurl.com/uscit-indiaso> and also register for the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) at <https://step.state.gov/> to receive critical information concerning flight opportunities. For US citizens in northern and eastern India, multiple flights from New Delhi to San Francisco are being arranged, the mission said in a statement.

"Based on prioritization, we will reach out to you directly via email to offer a seat on a flight. Please respond within the time frame specified in the email. We will not be able to accommodate requests for specific flight preferences," the statement said. The embassy said it is planning to facilitate transportation to Delhi from some cities in northern India and will share the via STEP once the arrangements are finalised. **"Currently, we are planning flights from Kolkata, Dehradun, and Amritsar to Delhi for onward flights to San Francisco. We are also planning for bus transportation from Jaipur and Dharamshala to Delhi for onward flights to San Francisco,"** it said.

03/04/20 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi: **Indian domestic passenger traffic saw a growth of 8.4 per cent in February as compared to the corresponding month in 2019, global airlines body IATA said on Thursday, indicating that the novel coronavirus had a minimal impact on the country's aviation sector.**

"RPKs (revenue passenger kilometres) picked up in India (up by 8.4 per cent year-on-year) as local carriers boosted air travel demand by lowering airfares in the typically weak travel season," the International Air Transport Association (IATA) said in a statement.

The IATA, which represents around 300 airlines accounting for 82 per cent of the global air traffic, measures passenger growth in terms of RPKs, **which is calculated by multiplying the number of passengers with the distance travelled by them.**

02/04/20 PTI/Economic Times

New Delhi: **Airlines are free to take ticket bookings from passengers for any date after April 14, said aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola on Thursday, suggesting that those bookings may have to be cancelled in case the 21-day lockdown is extended.**

India is under a lockdown from March 25 till April 14 to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, and consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this time period.

"The government direction is very clear that the lockdown has been announced, and the lockdown is up to April 14. That is what has been said so far," Kharola told reporters in a press conference.

"As far as post that (April 14) is concerned, it is all up to airlines. Airlines have to judge the situation and they can take the bookings. In case the lockdown gets extended, then the same process has to be followed, and if the lockdown is not extended, then the bookings will be honoured," said the secretary.

Till now, more than 1,900 people have been infected and 50 people have died due to the novel coronavirus in India, according to the Union home ministry.

As far as the civil aviation ministry is concerned, it is proceeding on the basis and on the understanding that the lockdown is till mid-April, said civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri at the press conference.

02/04/20 PTI/Times of India

Although domestic airlines have opened online ticket bookings for flights starting from April 15, it seems they are barely getting any response. Travel agents are saying that a lot of people who had planned to take out a trip or group tour have suddenly dropped their plans because of the outbreak of coronavirus in the country and abroad. Travel agents further said that the 21-day countrywide lockdown imposed by the Government has scared the customers and put fear in their minds to go out and interact with other people.

The lockdown will be ending on April 14 and airlines want to get the passengers on board and restart flights as early as possible. In the current panic-stricken situation of coronavirus, there are not many takers for the air tickets due to several factors said sources in the industry on the condition of anonymity. **Rumours are flying among the people that the Government may extend the lockdown period for another 15 days or a month. Due to this uncertainty, customers are not ready to book air tickets,** sources said. Furthermore, customers who had booked air tickets earlier when the Government banned international and domestic travel faced big problem of air ticket refunds.

Till date there are still a large number of customers who have not received their refunds. Airlines are saying that they will reschedule tickets without charging extra fees. Even with these offers, people are not intimating future dates or rescheduling their tickets with the airlines. Most airlines have blocked their refund gateways to agents which is delaying the refund process, sources said. Similarly, **Qatar Airlines has opened its booking window from May 31.** It is also not getting any response from customers, said sources.

03/02/20 Ravi Chandpurkar/Hitavada

People are quarantined in the four walls of their homes during this lockdown phase. Unable to even move out of their houses, travelling seems a farfetched dream currently. **The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted businesses and economies globally, with travel and hospitality business bearing the maximum brunt.**

This bleak period has created a catastrophic situation for the travel and hospitality industry. Experts believe that even after the lockdown, **it will take at least 12 months for the industry to bounce back to pre-COVID times.**

During these unprecedented times, the role of corporate communications has become more essential than ever before. Crisis communication is the need of the hour for brands and industries to combat the situation and build great credibility and lasting relationship with the stakeholders and consumers.

National and international flights have completely shut down, and Indian railway services are also at a standstill for the first time in history. Talking about the measures taken to fight the distressful times, Alok Bajpai- CEO & Co-founder at ixigo.com said that they had anticipated the lockdown coming and rapidly started working on plans for the unfolding crisis.

He further informed, **“We started working on a plan that could potentially let us survive even if revenues were to remain zero for 3 to 6 months, and give us 12–18 months of runway in case the lockdown ends within 3 months”.**

Talking about the aviation industry, Rashmi Soni- VP & Head of Corporate Communications at Vistara Airlines feels that **the aviation industry is one of the sectors directly hit by COVID-19 and arguably also the most affected one.** She informs, “Vistara has seen a significant impact on business. We are exercising stringent cost control and are evaluating all avenues for reductions”.

[13/02/20 Nafisa Shaheen/exchange4media](#)

Budget carrier SpiceJet, which has grounded its fleet amid a three-week lockdown in India, could face a monthly bill of over \$20 million for 100 leased aircraft – most of which are in storage.

Cirium fleets data shows that 13 of the aircraft are Boeing 737 Max jets, which have been grounded globally since March 2019, but most are of other aircraft types and have been placed in storage within the last 60 days. 84 of the aircraft entered storage within the past two weeks.

Only seven of the airline’s 113 aircraft remain in service as of 3 April. These are three Boeing 737-700s, three 737-800s and one Bombardier Q400.

The indicative lease rental total, which is based on Cirium data, does not take into account any rental payment reductions, deferrals, or other measures the airline may have negotiated with its lessors. At the current monthly rate, its lease payments would amount to at least \$180 million from now till the end of the year.

SpiceJet would not comment on any negotiations with lessors, saying only that because of India’s three-week lockdown, which started on 25 March, all domestic and international passenger flight operations are suspended.

The airline is a darling of India’s fast-growing low-cost market, having orchestrated a successful turnaround after difficulties in 2014. But now SpiceJet is facing another threat to its business as the coronavirus causes what many are calling the biggest disruption to global aviation in history.

[03/04/20 FlightGlobal](#)

With Cabinet Minister Rajiv Gauba announcing that the centre has no plans to increase the duration of the lockdown, Indian railways and domestic airlines are accepting reservations from April 15 (the 21- day lockdown announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is due to end on April 14).

The Ministry of Railways has mentioned that reservations for post April 14 were never stopped, according to news reports. Since the reservation time for early booking is 120 days in advance, there was no requirement to stop the booking for trains functioning after the lockdown.

Domestic airlines such as SpiceJet, Indigo, and GoAir are showing open reservations on online mediums, however the airlines have not addressed the issue in any announcements.

Since the lockdown has completely banned travel for a few weeks, reservations for April 15 have already been filled, and are extending into waitlists.

Bus services are also going to resume soon, with tickets getting booked quick, even with a hike in the prices.

On March 23, the Indian Railways had announced that they will be ceasing operations till March 31, which was later extended to April 14. International and domestic flights were also stopped on account of the pandemic till March 31, and now till April 14.

02/04/20 Outlook Traveller

Airlines in India are all set to resume flights post the lockdown period, however, the issue of refunds for flights cancelled between March 25 and April 14 remains unresolved.

While passengers are demanding cash refunds for cancelled bookings during the lockdown period, airlines have refused to meet such request owing to cash shortage. Fliers have been left in the lurch with some airlines not even offering clarity on refunds.

The government suspended all domestic flights starting on March 25 midnight to curb the spread of coronavirus but for the passengers of airlines who had booked tickets to fly during the lockdown period, it has hit them hard.

First, they can't travel to their hometowns or other destinations they had booked tickets to and second, the refund policies of airlines is resulting into heavy monetary losses.

Twitter is full of arguments between airlines and furious passengers as airlines are offering a reservation credit for the full amount which can be used to make another booking in future but the catch here is that a flier has to pay the fare difference for the future date ticket.

"I had to attend a conference this month in Goa. With the conference getting cancelled, my tickets are not going to be used now. I don't want a credit voucher as it is not sure I would be flying in future or not", said Sanjeet Kumar, a daily based businessman.

The confusion has multiplied with many fliers making bookings through travel agents or online travel portals. Fliers also complain about the call centre phone lines of airlines are constantly busy.

Indian carriers say there is little they can do on refunds as they are staring at a dark future and it is an existential crisis for the airlines.

The thumb rule generally is that if passengers cancel the bookings, they get back refunds, but airlines levy a cancellation charge, as high as 40-50 per cent, on the other hand if an airline cancels the flight, the passengers get a full refund.

Airlines insist this particular rule can't be applied during the lockdown period as it is beyond their control.

While the uncertainty over the status of scheduled flights due to the coronavirus outbreak looms large, most airlines seem helpless about the situation and are not waiving off the domestic flight cancellation charges.

03/04/20 Wion

Lifeline Udan: As part of India's war against the novel Coronavirus pandemic, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched "Lifeline Udan". Under this initiative, flights are being operated for the movement of essential and medical supplies across the nation. According to the Ministry of Civil Aviation, as many as 62 Lifeline Udan flights have been operated under this initiative during the five day period from 26 March 2020 to 30 March 2020, transporting more than 15.4 tons of essential medical supplies. Out of the 62 flights, as many as 45 flights have been operated by Air India and Alliance Air. Take a look at some of the major steps taken by the ministry under the Lifeline Udan initiative:

- **The flights, under Lifeline Udan, are being coordinated by a control room set up under the direct supervision of the Ministry of Civil Aviation leadership.**
- **The cargo of Lifeline Udan includes COVID-19 related medical equipment, reagents, enzymes, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing kits, masks, gloves as well as other accessories required by Corona Warriors.**
- **The carriers involved in this initiative include Alliance Air, Air India, Indian Air Force (IAF) and Pawan Hans. Also, Airports Authority of India (AAI), AAICLAS, AIASL, PPP airports as well as private ground handling entities are providing excellent support. Moreover, flights on a commercial basis, private carriers such as Spicejet, IndiGo and Blue Dart are operating medical cargo.**
- **The flights under Lifeline Udan are planned using a hub and spoke model. Cargo hubs have been set up at Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Bangalore. The flights connect these hubs and therefrom to different parts of India.**
- **The North East Region, island territories and the hill states are being given special focus. Lifeline Udan connects North East Region through regional hubs in Kolkata, Guwahati and Bagdogra. These, in turn, are linked to cities such as Shillong, Aizawl, Imphal, Agartala, Dibrugarh and Dimapur using helicopters and turboprops.**
- **To enable seamless coordination between various agencies, the National Informatics Centre and Ministry of Civil Aviation had developed a website for Lifeline Udan flights in a record span of three days. The newly launched website enables state governments as well as airlines to upload the details of their consignment and flight services respectively, in advance. The control room of the ministry then assigns the cargo consignments to different flights and till the**

consignment reaches its destination, coordinates with multiple stakeholders. No service fee is levied on the website.

- **On the international front of this initiative, Air India has established a cargo air-bridge between China and India.** From 3 April 2020 onwards, regular cargo flights are likely to be operated by Air India for transporting critical medical equipment and supplies between the two countries. To support India's war against COVID-19, the Ministry of Civil Aviation and all aviation stakeholders will be transporting essential medical supplies by air in the most efficient, seamless as well as cost-effective manner.

Financial Express 02/04/2020

Chennai: With importers facing difficulty in clearing cargo from airports across the country due to the lockdown, the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has waived 50 per cent of the demurrage charges payable to the airport cargo terminal operator till the end of the lockdown.

However, trade members are unhappy, and want 100 per cent waiver as announced by the Shipping ministry for imports through the ports.

Half of the demurrage charges will be waived if the goods are cleared and removed from the airport by 23:59 hours on April 16, said an order issued by Dinesh Kumar, Deputy Director (ER), MoCA.

The waiver of demurrage charges payable is for utilising storage facility at cargo terminals for storage of import cargo, goods, unaccompanied baggage, stores, courier bags, express parcels, postal mail for extended period beyond the stipulated free storage period for clearance or removal from the airport.

Imported air cargo that landed on or after March 20 could not be cleared from the airports, and this created congestion at cargo terminals. The lockdown caused impediments in removing the imported materials, including relief materials required for handling Covid-19.

To clear the backlog, airport operators/cargo terminal operators need to extend their support to the air cargo industry, the order said.

"It would be appropriate if the Ministry of Civil Aviation extend the waiver to all imports for 100 per cent of the demurrage without any conditions," said G Raghu Sankar, Executive Director, International Clearing & Shipping Agency (India) Pvt Ltd, which is in to clearing of both sea and air cargo.

02/04/20 TE Raja Simhan/Business Line

India will approve international flights on a case by case basis post lockdown, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said today.

Terming the situation arising due to the spread of novel coronavirus as "unprecedented," Puri said that the airlines and airports are working in innovative ways whether it is about handling thousands of passengers at airports before lockdown or transporting cargo material during lockdown.

In a presser via video conference, Puri said that the ministry is working with the understanding that lockdown will end by mid-April and then, flights will resume but international flights will be resumed on a case by case basis.

India banned all scheduled International passenger flights to land in India from March 23 and the ban has now been extended till the completion of the lockdown period, i.e. April 14.

As per a DGCA order, the government had barred all scheduled International passenger aircraft to depart for India after 5.30 am IST of March 22 and had given them travel time of 20 hours.

Domestic flights were also suspended from March 25 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown for India until April 14.

In the case of domestic flights, the government said that it has not issued any new directive to the airlines and it is working ahead with the understanding that lockdown period will end by mid-April.

"It is all up to the airlines. Airlines should judge the situation. If passengers make bookings and lockdown ends by mid-April, then those bookings will be honoured. If there is a situation of lockdown extension, then the airlines will have similar arrangement as they had for bookings made till April 14," aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola said.

02/04/20 Anu Sharma/CNBC TV18

Amid a nationwide lockdown to slow the spread of covid-19, companies are reworking cost structures to survive, as remote work and lower discretionary spending have become the new normal.

Companies in the worst-hit sectors such as aviation and hospitality have announced immediate pay cuts. **IndiGo, India's most profitable airline, was the first to announce a 25% cut in senior staff pay.**

Rival airlines SpiceJet and GoAir too have announced similar pay cuts. GoAir has retrenched its entire workforce of expat pilots, who are considered expensive. It has also introduced leave without pay and up to 50% pay cut for its top leadership.

On Thursday, SoftBank-funded budget hotel chain Oyo reduced salaries for senior and top-level executives. Founder and CEO Ritesh Agarwal decided to forgo his entire FY21 salary while the company's executive leadership took a voluntary pay cut beginning at 25%.

Many companies are also revisiting organizational structures to manage costs. Headhunters who spoke to Mint requesting anonymity estimated that C-suite hiring is already down by 50%, worse than during the economic slowdown in 2008-09. Many companies are trying to fill critical roles internally even if the person does not tick all the boxes.

Many companies are also revisiting organizational structures to manage costs. Headhunters who spoke to Mint requesting anonymity estimated that C-suite hiring is already down by 50%, worse than during the economic slowdown in 2008-09. Many companies are trying to fill critical roles internally even if the person does not tick all the boxes.

E-commerce and online delivery companies have struggled to keep operating, and some have tapped technology solutions to keep going. Ashish Jhina, co-founder of Jumbotail, an online wholesale marketplace for food and grocery products, said the company is working to reduce delivery touch points by artificial intelligence-driven delivery promise, and route optimisation. These have resulted in 50-60% increase in productivity within the last week itself, he said. "We are working with non-essential services companies to utilise their workforce to ramp up delivery capacity. Our fully automated in-house supply chain is designed for quick on-boarding with just one-two hours of training and we are leveraging this to bring in more pickers and delivery executives into our system," Jhina said.

Some companies have stopped or delayed payments to suppliers to conserve cash, by invoking force majeure clauses. One of them is commercial vehicle maker Volvo Eicher Commercial Vehicles, which has decided to temporarily delay payments to some suppliers by invoking the force majeure clause. The company, though, will continue to pay its permanent and contractual employees. Hero MotoCorp Ltd, India's largest two-wheeler maker, also invoked the clause to stop payments, but later reversed its move and decided to extend the bill discounting facility to its suppliers till 15 April. Premium motorcycles manufacturer Royal Enfield, owned by Eicher Motors Ltd, has also intimated its suppliers about a possible delay in payments.

Amid the turmoil, experts said that some of the practices adopted such as remote working could extend beyond the pandemic if employers see value, especially in the IT sector which has moved up to 90% of its employees to work from home. "We've already initiated the same in most support departments whose roles can be easily shifted and some business processes, where clients have allowed us to move to a work-from-home model. A large amount of our focus now is centred around finding the optimum balance between business continuity and social distancing norms, without at any time compromising on the health and safety of our biggest asset, which is the people that make up our organisation," Rajiv Ahuja, chief operating officer at outsourcing firm Startek said

Live Mint Aviation 03/04/2020

New Delhi: The government may consider allowing flight operations in a staggered manner after the 21-day nationwide lockdown ends on April 14, officials said on Sunday.

Except Air India, all other airlines have been taking bookings for commercial passenger services from April 15.

Officials said the government may consider allowing operations of passenger flights from April 15 in a staggered manner, at the same time suggesting that flights may not be allowed to operate on all sectors.

Reacting to reports on likely resumption of flights, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri called them "mere speculation".

He referred to a tweet by him on April 2 stating that a decision on resumption of flights after the end of the lockdown period remains to be taken.

India suspended domestic and international commercial passenger flight operations from midnight on March 24 for 21 days in sync with the nation-wide lockdown.

However, cargo flights, medical evacuation flights, offshore helicopter operations and flights permitted on special ground by the aviation regulator DGCA were allowed to operate during the period.

"News about resumption of passenger flights in a staggered manner from 15 April is mere speculation. The correct position is spelt out in my tweet of 2nd April 2020," Puri tweeted on Sunday. On April 2, he had tweeted: "The current lockdown on both domestic and international passenger flights is till April 15. A decision to restart the flights after this period remains to be taken. If required, we will have to assess the situation on a case by case basis."

Asked at a press conference on April 2 about resumption of international flights, Puri had said: "Air India had first cancelled the flights to China, then the other carriers stopped flying. "

"So far as the lockdown is concerned, the lockdown is till April 15. And, we can start considering the resumption of flights on a case-by-case basis depending on where they are coming from after that," he said.

When asked about resumption of passenger flight services, Civil Aviation Secretary P S Kharola's statement at the briefing indicated that the government direction is very clear that the lockdown is up to April 14.

"As far as post that (April 14) is concerned, it is all up to airlines. Airlines have to judge the situation and they can take the bookings," he had said on April 2.

In case the lockdown gets extended, then the same process (of cancellation) has to be followed, and if the lockdown is not extended, then the bookings will be honoured," said the secretary.

Like many other countries, civil aviation sector has been hit hard in India too following restrictions of flight operations due to the coronavirus pandemic.

On Sunday, Air Deccan became the latest casualty of the crisis as it announced indefinite suspension of flight operations and asked all employees to go on sabbatical without pay.

As revenues have fallen significantly due to the coronavirus crisis, IndiGo has announced a pay cut of up to 25 per cent for its senior employees.

Another airline, Vistara, too has announced a compulsory leave without pay of up to three days for its senior employees.

SpiceJet has stated that its employees' salaries would be reduced between 10 to 30 per cent while the Air India has announced a 10 per cent cut in allowances for every employee, except cabin crew, for the coming three months.

GoAir has cut salaries of its employees, laid off its expat pilots and introduced leave without pay for employees on a rotational basis.

Live Mint Aviation 06/04/2020

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said that the government is yet to take any decision on resumption of flight services both on domestic and international sectors. In a tweet, he described the reports of flight resumption after April 14 as mere speculation. The aviation sector has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

All major airlines except Air India are taking domestic bookings for dates post April 14. Air India is taking bookings for dates post April 30 only. Government has imposed a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

Consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this time period. However, cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and special flights permitted by Indian aviation regulator DGCA are permitted to operate during this lockdown.

News Air 06/04/2020

The outbreak of pandemic COVID-19 has reignited the debate of term 'force majeure' in contractual businesses particularly in civil aviation business. The outbreak has brought the world to a near standstill and as a result the commercial businesses are at their low. The companies across the world want the governments or the other businesses to invoke the clause of force majeure so as to save them from incurring losses and their collapse in these unforeseen circumstances.

One of the major industry suffering in India from this pandemic is the **airline industry**. It is **already suffering from low availability of credit to maintain their day to day operation and has been plagued by rampant corruption**. The Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has recommended that **the government should mandate that force majeure applies to all civil aviation contracts to save the domestic civil aviation industry from the COVID-19 induced crisis.**

The passenger airlines both domestic and international have been put on ground for an indefinite period to contain the spread of novel corona virus. In such an extraordinary situation **the airlines are seeking invocation of force majeure by the government to defer the payment of taxes, oil charges, aviation turbine fuel and salary to workers. Most of the airlines capital reserves would be wiped**

out if the situation persists for more than three months. FICCI also suggested that Oil Marketing Companies may be directed to extend unsecured interest-free credit terms to the aviation sector as the aviation turbine fuel is one of the three major costs for domestic airlines.

06/04/20 India Legal

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said that the government is yet to take any decision on resumption of flight services both on domestic and international sectors. In a tweet, he described the reports of flight resumption after April 14 as mere speculation. The aviation sector has been hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic.

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06/04/20 All India Radio

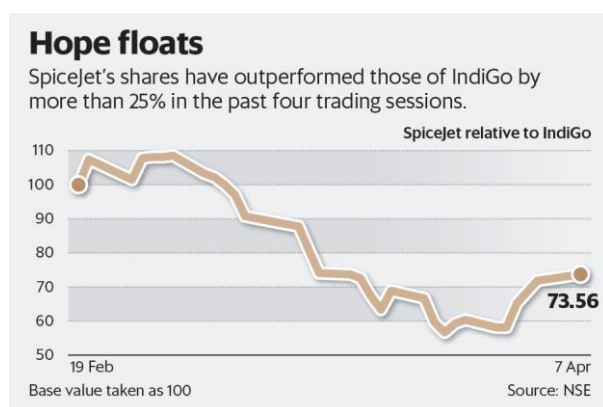
In the past four trading sessions, shares of SpiceJet Ltd have risen by more than 21%, even as shares of its much larger rival InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, which runs India's biggest airline IndiGo, have fallen about 4%. It does look like investors believe a bailout for the industry is on the way in some form.

As pointed out in this column earlier, **InterGlobe Aviation had cash of ₹9,400 crore on its books as of end-December, based on which analysts say it can meet fixed costs even if revenues are hit for about six months.**

SpiceJet has no cash to speak of, which means that any bailout will benefit it the most.

An analyst tracking the sector says on condition of anonymity, that help is likely to come in way of credit guarantees given by the government to lenders. This is unlike what some governments are doing.

In the US, for instance, aviation companies are being offered assistance in exchange for an equity stake. Some companies such as Boeing Co. have balked at the prospect of existing shareholders getting diluted, and have suggested they will look at alternative means to raise funds.



The fact that SpiceJet shares are rising on expectations of a bailout suggests its shareholders aren't quite worried about the government or a fund created by it getting a large equity stake.

However, even after the lockdown lifts, airlines will be operating at far lower load factors and generating cash will be a challenge. **Domestic air traffic is expected to fall from an estimated 140 million passengers in FY20 to**

around 80-90 million in FY21, consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation India Pvt. Ltd said in a report. As a result, losses and cash burn are expected to continue even after the lockdown lifts.

At some point, the government may need to go beyond providing guarantees to lenders and infuse equity, if it is really keen on the survival of the airline. Shareholders, then, need to price in the prospect of being massively diluted, or even face the prospect of their investments being written-off.

In the recent bailout of Yes Bank Ltd, existing equity shareholders were not only massively diluted, but also faced a lock-in on 75% of their shares. SpiceJet shareholders should realize a bailout needn't protect existing shareholders.

Live Mint Aviation 07/04/2020

NEW DELHI : Industry bodies FICCI and ASSOCHAM on Wednesday called for phased opening up of the economy and re-starting growth with a stimulus package of 200 billion to 300 billion dollars (about ₹15 lakh crore to 22 lakh crore).

COVID-19 is a global health and economic crisis with an abrupt halt of activity across nations which has deeply slowed down consumption, said FICCI's Secretary General Dilip Chenoy.

There is a massive loss of employment in certain sectors like hospitality, aviation, tourism, media and entertainment. A sharp fall in equity markets is combined with higher default risk and possibility of increase in non-performing assets, he said in a presentation.

"All industry sectors across the board are facing the heat. Experts estimate a combined loss of 1.13 billion dollars in hotel, aviation and tourism alone due to large-scale cancellations."

The residential real estate is expected to register an annual decline of 25 to 35 per cent. "The country's retail sector has faced losses of up to 30 billion dollars over the past fortnight with non-grocery and food retailers reporting 80 to 100 per cent reduction in sales," said Chenoy.

He called for bringing down the cost of funds further through reduction in policy rates by about 100 basis points besides providing special liquidity support for any companies, banks and non-banking finance companies that may come under strain.

ASSOCHAM Secretary General Deepak Sood called for a stimulus package of at least 200 billion to 300 billion dollars to thwart what he called is one of the deepest global recession expected in the world's history.

He said 50 billion to 100 billion dollars cash needs to be infused in the system over the next three months to arrest the loss of jobs and compensate for the loss of income.

"It will be critical to ensure we proceed with three objectives -- immediate assistance to employees and labour through direct transfers and through employers, ensuring that companies have enough cashflow to survive the downturn, and finally stimulating demand and investment to revive the economy through fiscal and tax measures."

Sood also recommended a reduction in Goods and Services Tax (GST) across the board by 50 per cent for three months and 25 per cent for the fiscal.

Meanwhile, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser at State Bank of India (SBI), said the government rightfully enforced lockdown in the country till April 14 but a very long period of shutdown can lead to other problems, including social unrest.

He said the economic exit strategy must account for how erosion in demand is restored in a quick time. For this, first preference must be given to agriculture and procurement as 50 per cent of the population is dependent on agriculture and allied activity.

There should be some relaxation in inland transport like road transport and railways keeping in mind the dependency of rural population on it. Ghosh said retail trade may be allowed for extended time as it supports over 25 crore households.

Live Mint Aviation 08/04/2020

IndiGo cancels all its flights till April, 30th.

New Delhi: **IndiGo on Tuesday said it has been authorised by the government to operate 30 emergency relief flights at its own cost to carry essential items such as medical equipment across the country.** India has imposed a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this time period.

However, cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and special flights permitted by Indian aviation regulator DGCA are allowed to operate during this lockdown.

"The airline has been allowed by the government to carry cargo in their planes, to fly food, medicine and medical equipment in the country's battle against the pandemic.

"These flights are being operated by the company at its own cost," the low-cost carrier said in its statement.

Ronojoy Dutta, Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo, said, "Our 27,000 employees are standing just a little bit taller, knowing that we are able to mobilize our resources to make a small contribution to the health and well-being of our nation.

"The employees of IndiGo would also like to salute our colleagues over at Air India, for the heroic work they have been doing in evacuating Indians and other nationals stranded in foreign countries," he added.

The Economic Times of India 04/04/2020

The magnitude of the unfolding trauma for India's airlines is now too severe to ignore.

The "Covid-19 & the State of the Indian Aviation Industry" report, released by Capa India recently, reveals that local air travel in the country will likely crash from 14 crore in 2019-20 to around 8-9 crore in the next financial year (2020-21).

It is worth noting that 8-9 crore was the level seen in 2015-16. A Tol report, citing data from Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), puts the the number of domestic air travellers in the country at 8.1 crore in 2015 and 9.9 crore in 2016.

So, the findings essentially means the unfolding novel coronavirus crisis is all set to take India's aviation sector back by at least four to five years.

The Capa India report had some more dire predictions to make. The most significant ones among them include:

- (a) The Indian aviation sector is likely to shrink significantly, even if some of the vulnerable airlines manage to survive.
- (b) For India to return to a pre-Covid operational fleet of 650 aircraft is likely to take up to 12 months from the time that restrictions are lifted, and this may be conservative.
- (c) As per current estimates, there could be 200-250 surplus aircraft for the next 6-12 months.
- (d) International traffic is expected to fall from approximately 70 million in FY 2020 to 35-40 million in FY 2021, and possibly lower.

Capa India added that these were only initial estimates and that they would be continually revised as the situation becomes more clear.

This comes amid blanket flight cancellations — a time when airlines are faced with the spectre of massive cash burn in the wake of having to refund sold but unused tickets.

A latest Bloomberg report outlined how the fight to survive the ongoing crisis has pitted airlines companies against grounded flyers the world over. Normal-time refund rules are not being followed now as rampant lockdowns have wrecked schedules for weeks, forcing airlines to park their fleets and guard their cash as revenue withers, said the report.

Some airlines, such as IndiGo, have opted for the credit shell strategy instead of refunds. India's biggest airline is creating credit notes for every cancelled ticket, which flyers can redeem later any time up to a year.

Air India won't levy no-show charges till the end of this month. It means passengers can use the fare to book a future flight even if they don't pro-actively cancel tickets.

Go Air is offering passengers of a cancelled flight the option to even change destinations at a future date. Passengers, however, will have to pay the fare difference, if any.

The Economic Times of India 07/04/2020

Mumbai: Domestic air traffic is expected to drop to 80-90 million passengers in the current fiscal and delivery of more than 200 planes to Indian carriers are likely to be deferred by up to two years, according to a report. "The combination of COVID-related travel restrictions and an economic downturn is likely to result in 1Q FY2021 being a virtual washout for the Indian industry.

"The second quarter is historically the weakest period for demand and hence airlines are only likely to limp back into recovery," aviation consultancy CAPA India said on Monday.

As a result, CAPA said the majority of the fleet is likely to be surplus to requirement during the first half of the current financial year.

In its report titled 'COVID-19 & the State of Indian Aviation Industry,' the aviation consultancy forecast domestic traffic to decline to around 80-90 million this fiscal from an estimated 140 million in FY2020.

International traffic is expected to fall from approximately 70 million in the previous financial year to 35-40 million passengers or may be even less in the current fiscal.

While giving the forecast, CAPA India said it is initial estimate and would be continually revised

Domestic and international flights have been suspended till April 15 amid nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.



A gradual path towards normalcy could be expected towards Q3 and Q4, CAPA India said.

According to the report, airlines that are offered concessions by lessors would need to take a strategic call on whether they require all of their aircraft.

The holding costs of maintaining a larger fleet may outweigh the concession available.

More than 200 aircraft -- scheduled for delivery over the next couple of years, including 56 MAX aircraft -- are likely to be deferred by 1-2 years, it said.

"Starting from the end of April-2020, Indian carriers are initially expected to seek to return up to 100 aircraft to lessors, especially older equipment and those that may be closer to the expiry of their terms.

"The number of returned aircraft will continue to increase significantly up until September-2020, possibly reaching 200-250, or even higher," the report said.

Since aircraft lessors would have limited customers to whom they can remarket returned aircraft, they may be willing to negotiate temporary rental holidays, CAPA India said.

[The Economic Times of India 07/04/2020](#)

New Delhi: In the past 14 days of the lockdown, budget carrier SpiceJet has emerged as a cargo major by transporting over 1,400 tonnes of goods, mainly medical supplies, across the country. It's almost double of all other airlines combined.

It operated around 200 domestic and international cargo flights, the largest number of trips, during the period. Most of these cargo flights were free of cost and as a part of efforts to aid the Centre's fight against Covid-19.

Ajay Singh, Chairman & Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, **"Since the lockdown, we have carried more than 1,400 tonnes of cargo by operating around 200 domestic and international flights."**

On Tuesday, the budget airline operated the country's first cargo-on-seat Delhi-Chennai flight, carrying 11 tonnes of essential supplies in the passenger cabin and belly space.

The airline deployed a Boeing 737 NG aircraft after approvals from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

"Today, for the first time in the country, we used a passenger aircraft to transport cargo where in addition to the belly space the passenger cabin was used to carry essential supplies," he said.

The aircraft will make five rotations on Tuesday, ensuring delivery of essential supplies in the shortest possible time.

"We have also put our five freighters to transport cold-chain medical supplies, medicines, medical devices for various states, medical and pharma companies," Singh said.

The Economic Times of India 07/04/2020

Mumbai: Around 30 planes of the more than 650-aircraft strong fleet of the country's eight scheduled carriers are in operations as these planes are utilised for ferrying cargo as well as operate special flights.

According to an analysis of data from flight tracking website Flightradar24, national carrier Air India and its regional arm Alliance Air are operating over 20 of the 30 planes that are currently operational.

Commercial flight services have been suspended till April 14 amid the 21-day nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections. Only special flights approved by aviation regulator DGCA, medical evacuation flights and those carrying cargo, including medical equipment, to and from different parts of the country are operating now.

Air India has 127 planes in its fleet and 111 of them are parked at various airports, while 16 are in service, as per the data.

IndiGo has 257 aircraft parked at different airports and only two of its Airbus 320 planes are in service. SpiceJet, which has 114 planes, is operating seven of its Boeing 737 aircraft, the data showed.

An Alliance Air spokesperson said around five of its ATR planes are operational to transport cargo across the country on a rotation basis. The carrier has a total of 19.

The entire fleet of full service carrier Vistara (41), no-frills airlines -- GoAir (56) and AirAsia India (30) -- are grounded. All the planes of Air India Express, the low-cost arm of Air India, are on the ground.

While IndiGo, SpiceJet and Alliance Air air have been conducting cargo flights, Air India has been operating both passenger rescue and chartered flights as well as cargo services.

In recent weeks, Air India has operated flights to Israel, Germany and London, using its wide-body Boeing 777s and B787s. These services were mainly to carry foreign nationals stranded in the country due to the lockdown,

which began on March 25.

It has also deployed B787 and Airbus A320 planes for cargo transportation.

The eight scheduled airlines have a combined fleet of 671 planes, as per the data. IAS RAM BA

The Economic Times of India 08/04/2020

New Delhi, Apr 7 (PTI) **The AAI-GMR group joint venture-run Delhi Airport on Tuesday said it has handled over 50 evacuation flights, transporting over 10,000 stranded foreign nationals to their respective countries, till date since the implementation of 21-days lockdown.**

Since the suspension of all commercial passenger aircraft operations, Delhi Airport has been operational 24x7 despite suspension of commercial operations, due to the 21-day lockdown following the coronavirus outbreak, said Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) CEO, Videh Kumar Jaipuria said.

In the last 14 days, the airport has remained functional to handle cargo and evacuation flights, operated by countries like Japan, Norway, Germany, Afghanistan, Poland, Russia and France to repatriate their nationals stranded in India due to lockdown, DIAL said.

At present, Delhi Airport is handling cargo and evacuation flights, operated by various countries. We have handled around 56 evacuation flights and helped over 10,600 stranded foreign nationals in reaching their homes in the last 14 days since the lockdown has come into force," he stated.

The biggest aircraft used for evacuation was an Airbus 380, operated by Lufthansa, which flew around 500 German nationals to Frankfurt, the airport operator said, adding that all these flights were operated after obtaining mandatory regulatory clearances.

Outlook 07/04/2020

NEW DELHI: The forward journey from here on is going to be very turbulent for Indian aviation firms, a sector that has probably taken the worst hit from the Coronavirus crisis.

Regional airline Air Deccan on Sunday announced ceasing of operations until further notice, becoming the **first Indian airline to succumb to the lockdown crisis**. The airline sent all employees on sabbatical without pay.

Travel bans globally as well as domestically have virtually paralysed the capital-intensive sector, and domestic airlines are staring at big losses in March quarter.

A delay in the much-anticipated government relief is only making matters worse, as it has made any fundraising difficult. A major oil price crash in international markets came as godsend, but the oil producers' bid to cut output and cushion the price fall may take away much of that advantage by the time the airlines are back in the sky again.

Analysts noted the 11-12 per cent interim drop in ATF prices since March 23 would have little impact as operations remainsuspended since March 25.

Besides, a 5.8 per cent fall in the rupee against the dollar during the quarter increased the outgo on dollar-based costs, said Centrum Broking, which expects steep forex mark-to-market (MTM) losses on operating lease liabilities.

The brokerage expects IndiGo to report loss of Rs 1,750 crore for March quarter, primarily due to Rs 1,010 crore forex MTM loss. SpiceJet 4.94 % is projected to report Rs 1,050 crore loss, led by a Rs 650 crore forex hit.

Year-to-date, shares of SpiceJet have lost 64 per cent of market value. Peer InterGlobe Aviation that runs India's largest airline IndiGo, is relatively better placed, with the stock falling just 30 per cent.

Edelweiss said in the event of a full shutdown, InterGlobe has the reserves to sustain cash burn for a year, but SpiceJet, even post the Boeing refund, will need a bailout.

SpiceJet reported Rs 120 crore loss for the first nine months of FY20. The airline had reported Rs 302 crore loss for FY19 and Rs 557 crore for FY18.

InterGlobe Aviation reported Rs 637 crore profit for the nine months ended December 31, 2019. Its bottomline number stood at Rs 157 crore for FY19 and Rs 2,242 crore in FY18. ..

In the first 11 months of the financial year ended on March31, domestic air traffic grew a mere 3.6 per cent year-on-year to 133.9 million amid a steady slowdown in the domestic economy.

Air traffic volumes weakened further in March due to travel advisories and then complete suspension of flights, said Emkay Global.

Care Ratings expects air passenger growth to fall sharply by 20-25 per cent in FY21.

So far, the government has suspended all international and domestic flights till April 14 amid a country-wide lockdown. Across the US and Europe, governments have come out with relief package for the beaten-down sector.

On Monday, the Union Cabinet and 11 empowered committees of bureaucrats discussed various possible scenarios for an exit from the lockdown, but there was a consensus to continue suspension of international travel.

[The Economic Times of India 07/04/2020](#)

The number of Americans getting on airplanes has sunk to a level not seen in more than 60 years as people shelter in their homes to avoid catching or spreading the new coronavirus.

The Transportation Security Administration screened fewer than 100,000 people on Tuesday, a drop of 95% from a year ago.

The official tally of 97,130 people who passed through TSA checkpoints exaggerates the number of travellers – if that is possible – because it includes some airline crew members and people still working at shops inside airport security perimeters.

Historical daily numbers only go back so far, but the nation averaged 97,000 passengers a day in 1954, according to figures from trade group Airlines for America. It was the dawn of the jet age. The de Havilland Comet, the first commercial jetliner, was just a few years old, and Boeing was running test flights with the jet that would become the iconic 707.

As air travel became safer and more affordable, the passenger numbers grew nearly every year. There was no commercial air travel in the U.S. for several days after the terror attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, and people were slow to get back on planes in following months.

It could be longer this time. Polling firm Public Opinion Strategies said that fewer than half the Americans it surveyed about 10 days ago say they will get on a plane within six months of the spread of the virus flattening. TSA, which was created after the 9/11 attacks, has been chronicling the plunge in air traffic, posting numbers on how many people its officers screen each day.

On March 1, it was nearly 2.3 million — almost the same as a year earlier. The one-way roller coaster ride — a sheer downward scream — began in the second week of March and slowed only in the last several days, when there wasn't much more room to drop.

"The falloff is amazing to see," said Henry Hartevelt, a travel industry analyst. "The good news is that it shows people are taking shelter-in-place orders seriously."

Some of the people still traveling are health care professionals on their way to pandemic hot spots such as New York, where they will help in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. A few are travelling to be with family.

The nation's largest flight attendant union, which is worried about the safety of its members who are still flying, is demanding that the government ban all leisure travel. Representatives at several airlines said they don't know how many leisure travellers are left, since they don't routinely ask people why they are flying.

Airlines have drastically cut the number of flights to match demand and save cash, but even with far fewer flights, most seats are empty.

United Airlines says it is losing \$100 million a day. Delta Air Lines says it is burning through \$60 million a day. All the leading U.S. carriers have applied for federal grants to cover payroll costs through September and some are likely to seek federal loans or loan guarantees.

Even if they get taxpayer help, the airlines warn, they will be smaller on the other side of the pandemic.

The recovery in air travel — whenever it occurs — could depend on many factors including social-distancing rules and the state of the economy, which is staggering with 10 million people filing new claims for unemployment benefits in the last two weeks.

Air travel is much more affordable and accessible to the masses than it was in the 1960s. Still, both leisure and business travellers have above-average incomes.

"Theoretically, these consumers should be better-positioned financially to be able to travel again," Harteveltdt said, "but we are seeing people at all income levels and all ages affected by job loss or reduction in hours or working for companies that have closed."

Live Mint Aviation 09/04/2020

NEW DELHI : India's civil aviation industry, whose woes have intensified with a clampdown on travel to curb the spread of covid-19, needs a bailout from the government to stay afloat, said Anand Stanley, chairman of the aviation committee of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), and president and managing director of Airbus India and South Asia.

The industry chamber has written to civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri, seeking an urgent financial rescue package and tax incentives for airlines in line with those given by the US, China and Europe to let the domestic aviation sector continue its operations. These include bringing aviation turbine fuel under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and a deferment on GST payments by airlines.

In its letter, FICCI said the aviation industry's cash reserves are fast depleting as they had to ground aircraft. This has pushed many airlines to the brink of bankruptcy and forced many to ask their employees to proceed on leave with pay.

The bailout from the government could be in the form of a short-term loan, or equity infusion, or any other form, said Stanley. Edited excerpts of an interview:

Why have you sought a stimulus package from the government?

The industry has responded to the health and safety regulations put in place by the government. The travel sector is currently under a lockdown, as per the regulation of the government. It is very clear that governments worldwide are, on one hand, driving regulations and lockdowns, but on the other hand, they are also propping up their respective aviation industries (in terms of bailout and tax incentives).

Whether it is the bailout given by Singapore to Singapore Airlines, or by the Australian government or the US government to its airlines, governments globally have announced massive aid programme for their airlines. We (at FICCI) have also urged the government's urgent attention and intervention in the matter.

Why should the government bail out the aviation industry?

Worldwide, we have seen that the first round of aid packages have gone to the most critical sectors, which include transportation and, specifically, airlines. This is the same thing we are seeing in Europe, China, Singapore, Australia and many other regions around the world.

There is an issue of inability of revival of airlines and structural losses of jobs. So, government intervention is necessary. Globally, governments are in the process of considering additional financial packages for the aviation industry, which will enable them to sustain their operations and survive.

You wrote to the civil aviation minister last week seeking the government's urgent attention and intervention for the sector. Has the government responded?

No. We are yet to hear from the government.

What's the immediate amount of fund infusion required to keep the industry from being grounded?

An amount of at least \$1 billion should be infused into the industry, during the short term, which will keep it going for a few weeks. The industry will however need much more funds and government support in the longer term to turn around.

The bailout or fund infusion from the government could be in the form of a short-term loan, or equity infusion, or any other form. We have also in the past seen the government make regular fund infusion into Air India to keep it operational. This could be done for the sector too.

What relief measures have you sought from the government?

We have sought tax relief, deferment of payment of GST for airlines, bringing jet fuel under GST, reduction in airport charges and overflight fees, a temporary cut in excise duty on jet fuel, etc, as well as other financial aid. The sector could see structural job losses or airline closures if relief measures are not rolled out by the government.

Live Mint Aviation 09/04/2020

Mumbai: Budget carrier IndiGo on Saturday said one of its staff passed away due to coronavirus infection in Chennai.

While the airline did not provide details, a source told PTI that the employee was an aircraft maintenance engineer and he passed away on Friday.

The engineer was in his mid-50s and had been working with the carrier since 2006. He was posted in Chennai, the source said.

"We are extremely sorry and saddened by the demise of one of our beloved employees in Chennai due to infection of Covid 19 virus," an airline spokesperson told PTI on Saturday.

This is possibly the first case of death of an aviation personnel due to coronavirus infection in the country.

"This is a heartbreaking moment for all of us at IndiGo and in this time of sorrow we stand with his family and request that we respect the privacy of our employee and his family," the spokesperson said.

The number of infections in the country has crossed 8,000 and more than 260 people have died.

Live Mint Aviation 10/04/2020

New Delhi: Airport security Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has made a new necessary plan for air passengers post lockdown imposed to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

In the new plan submitted to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA), CISF said that when flight operation resumes "passengers reaching timing at the airport two hours before their flight timing with proper protective gear eg; mask, gloves, and sanitisers."

CISF also urged the civil aviation ministry that sanitiser bottles can be also placed at every exit and entry gates of the airports for passengers and employees.

Flying with a seat vacant between every two people could be the 'new norms' for air passengers when schedule commercial flights resume, CISF said in the new plan.

According to the officials, the plan is under consideration and the idea behind it is to seek staggering flights to avoid crowding at airports at any time.

"We have proposed a new plan incorporating necessary precaution in view of the change of circumstances due to COVID-19. This has been sent to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) for consideration," GA Ganapathy, Special Director (Airport) of CISF, told ANI.

Further, CISF advised all the airlines that, airlines make it clear for the passengers to whom so ever booking tickets they should give details of their home/self-quarantine history.

If any passengers flying after quarantine history, CISF will screening them in isolation checking point where CISF officers are covered full personal protective equipment (PPE) suit. Airlines crew will offer sanitisers to every onboard passenger, as per the plan.

Passenger flight operations in India are suspended from March 25, due to coronavirus.

As of now, there is no clarity from the government to resume flights operation. Minister of Civil Aviation (MoCA) Hardeep Puri tweeted, "The current Lockdown on both domestic & international passenger flights is till April 15. A decision to restart the flights after this period remains to be taken. If required, we will have to assess the situation on a case by case basis."

Civil Aviation Ministry, Airport Authority Of India (AAI), Director General Of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and other stakeholders are working together on how to resume the operation post lockdown.

Live Mint Aviation 10/04/2020

NEW DELHI : Air India may have deployed epic rescue flights from Wuhan to Milan to evacuate Indians stranded in the Covid-19 hit countries, but the pandemic has ensured that its financials reached a precarious position.

Rajiv Bansal, Chairman & Managing Director, Air India, in a note to employees said that the airline has been passing through a critical financial condition from much before the Covid-19 onslaught.

"The crippling effect of the pandemic, especially in the aviation sector, has further plummeted our finances to a precarious position. In spite of this, your airline has left no stone unturned to continue to remain afloat," Bansal said.

Bansal also applauded the airline's team for its heroic efforts. "It gives me great pride to acknowledge your selfless contribution towards serving the cause of India and humanity at large during this global pandemic. Each and everyone of you has put in your might -- braving the dark clouds of coronavirus to breathe in new life and hope to overcome this gigantic challenge before us," he said.

"As the airline is currently unable to utilise the fleet to operate commercial flights during the lockdown, it has diversified our operations to engage the aircraft by operating quick turnaround cargo flights.

"Air India is amongst the very few airlines in the world, which is providing hazmat suits and other protective equipment for our crew to equip them to face any covid-related safety concern on board.

"It is due to these precautionary measures that so far, only one of our crew members amongst so many, who have been flying our charter flights all over the world, has tested covid positive. I am relieved to inform you that she has also been discharged after full recovery under the watchful eyes of our medical department," he said.

As part of government's Mission Lifeline UDAN scheme, Air India and Alliance Air have over the last two weeks operated over 100 charter flights to ferry medical equipment and other items essential to fight back and contain the spread of the pandemic.

The flights, being operated regularly between the metro hubs of Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad and Chennai to the remote spoke destinations of the Northeast and other far flung areas of the country, have been serving as the lifeline of the nation.

"We are also operating cargo flights between Delhi and Shanghai and to Hong Kong transporting vital medical cargo," Bansal said.

"Air India had spread its wings to stand by the nation in its hour of crisis, ever since we took off to evacuate Indians stranded at Wuhan, the epicentre of this dreaded disease on 31st January, 2020," Bansal said.

The two epic rescue flights to Wuhan were followed by several other flights to Japan, Milan and Rome to bring back countrymen stranded in the affected cities. Air India also operated a number of flights to Jaisalmer and Jodhpur to ferry passengers coming from corona affected Iran for quarantine purposes.

"In spite of constraints, Air India has mobilised all our available resources to operate 18 charter flights ferrying German, French, Irish and Canadian nationals stranded in India as requested by the embassies. Others were flown up to London, Heathrow. Earlier, it had operated a special charter flight from Delhi to Tel Aviv with Israeli nationals," Bansal added.

Live Mint Aviation 10/04/2020

New Delhi: **A total of 180 flights have operated since the beginning of the 21-day lockdown under the 'Lifeline Udan' scheme carrying 258.24 tonnes of cargo as on Thursday,** the civil aviation ministry said on Friday.

The 'Lifeline Udan' scheme has been started by the ministry for transport of essential goods through aerial routes at a time when the country is under a lockdown till April 14 to combat the coronavirus pandemic.

"Over 180 flights have been operated under 'Lifeline UDAN' during COVID-19 lockdown, out of which 114 were operated by Air India and Alliance Air. Fifty-eight flights were operated by the IAF," the ministry said in a press release.

It said that on Friday, total 13 flights were operated under the scheme, carrying 10.22 tonnes of cargo.
The Economic Times of India 10/4/2020

New Delhi: **Delhi airport operator DIAL is assessing post-lockdown domestic air traffic demand along with the airlines and evaluating if consolidation of terminals is required,** it said on Friday.

Four days back, the Singapore government had announced that the Changi airport would close its Terminal 2 for 18 months from the beginning of next month, following a sharp drop in passenger traffic due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Delhi airport has three terminals while Singapore's Changi has four.

The GMR group-led Delhi Airport International Limited (DIAL) clarified in a statement that it had no immediate plans to defer any ongoing expansion works.

"DIAL is assessing the quantum of domestic demand along with the airlines, once the suspension of operations is lifted. Various options, including the potential of consolidating terminal operations, are being evaluated depending on the airline requirements as well as government notifications/advisories that may be issued from time to time," the airport operator said in its statement.

"Even during the ongoing suspension of commercial operations due to the lockdown, Delhi Airport continues to handle 25-30 operations per day - primarily cargo and evacuation flights. Also, as of now, there are no immediate plans to defer any ongoing expansion works," the DIAL added.

The Economic Times of India 10/04/2020

New Delhi: **Clampdown may soon be removed from the crucial aviation sector, sources said, with the matter being discussed in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with the Chief Ministers yesterday.** Passenger air traffic - domestic and international - was halted even before PM Modi announced the 21-day countrywide "curfew-like" lockdown on the evening of March 14. As of now, only cargo flights and special flights are operating.

Sources have now said even though the lockdown is likely to be extended for another two weeks, a recommendation has been made to ease it from the aviation sector.

When passenger operations do resume, airports as well as airlines will be under severe restrictions to ensure there is no transmission of coronavirus. Social distancing has to be followed on the airport premises and in flights, which is expected to hugely push up ticket prices.

Along with security checks, passengers would also be checked for fever and those running a temperature will not be allowed into the airport.

The aviation industry has been the worst hit in the global lockdown over the coronavirus pandemic. Fresh data from the International Air Transport Association showed that air passenger demand nosedived 14.1 per cent globally last month compared to February 2019. "This was the steepest decline in traffic since 9/11," global aviation association IATA said in a statement.

In India, airlines have grounded fleets, slashed salaries of employees or sent them on mandatory sabbatical. Cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and special flights, however, have been permitted by Indian aviation regulator DGCA.

12/04/20 Sunil Prabhu/NDTV

The Corona pandemic continues to wreak havoc across the aviation industry. Demand has evaporated overnight and is expected halve, entire countries have closed their skies, and governments are considering a host of measures when the skies are reopened. The situation is grave and the aviation industry is bracing for impact. There are tectonic shifts that will become the new normal post the pandemic. Chief amongst these is the obsolescence of the airline hub concept.

An airline hub is an airport that serves as a connecting point. Think London Heathrow, Singapore's Changi, Bangkok's Suranabhumhi or even Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. The use of a hub airport enables airlines to consolidate large volumes of traffic at a single location in turn enables airlines to significantly expand their networks. Global airline traffic continues to be dependent on hubs and of the 4.9 billion passenger trips that were flown in 2019, more than 70% of international traffic connected via hubs. These hubs are spread out across the globe and leverage their geo-strategic locations to their advantage. Dominant hubs till recently remained strong and grew from strength to strength. Newer airports like those in India and Dublin aspired to be hubs and worked towards that goal. There was no looking back.

From the first hub in the late 1970s started by Delta Airlines, airlines, airports and investors have used the hub concept to their advantage. Effectively airlines figured out that rather than flying routes on a point-to-point basis it was beneficial to fly to a central airport and then connect it to several cities. This enabled economies of scale, improved connectivity, the ability to consolidate passengers and cargo, cost advantages by amortizing costs over concentrated flight volumes and employment & output multipliers for the cities where the hubs were located. For investors, hubs offered higher returns due to higher traffic volumes, lower costs due to strategic locations where often the labour force was cheaper and monopoly positions in key markets where higher returns could be realized. Thus it is no surprise that hubs continued to be preferred by airlines, investors and governments alike.

And hubs continued to grow. Traffic volumes rose, cash-flows that are intrinsically linked to traffic volumes were strong and there was a challenge of capacity keeping up with demand. This was true across the globe. Particularly important was the fact that airports could handle traffic volumes that were far in excess of their own cities' population base. For city states like Singapore and Dubai the hubs became strategic assets and indeed the success of these cities can often be traced back to the success of their airline hubs coupled with a strong anchor airline. India also worked towards leveraging its ideal location and aspired to be a hub (while missing the element of a strong anchor carrier which continues to haunt the market till date).

Hubs were on the ascent path but in late 2000s some challenges had started to emerge. This included the advent of low-cost airlines (LCCs) where the business models were built on shorter point to point flights. Effectively the airlines would bypass hubs or use them to source traffic. The LCCs were a runaway success especially in Asian markets and led to passenger volumes showing exponential growth. Flying was no longer a luxury rather as prices dipped more travellers took to the skies. In India a term that was earlier unfathomable became reality. Namely "rail-air parity" where airline tickets were priced at or below rail tickets in the higher

end rail segments. And passengers took to the skies. For instance, India saw travel volumes more than double from 111 million passengers in 2008 to 255 million in 2016. From there it rose to 349 million in 2019.

Yet the truth was that this growth was across segments. And airports do not value all segments equally because of varying spending habits. These segments included the leisure traveller, the business traveller, the weekend traveller, labour flows, first-time fliers (who were taking to air because of ticket prices), traders, SMEs and students who could now visit home more than once given the price and convenience of air-travel. There was also a demand mismatch. For instance labour traffic will not go and spend at an Armani store, a student visiting home will not shop for retail at prices that are 3X that of Main Street, and not everyone took to the exorbitantly priced food offerings. As such revenue challenges were emerging but were made up by ever increasing non-aero revenues such as food outlets, retail shops and hotels. Lounges, large floor areas, artwork, expensive parking and the rupee 150 cup of tea were permanent fixtures. Indeed, the apt description for hub airports became “a 5-star mall with a runway attached.”

Concurrently new trends started to emerge. Chief amongst these was that of sustainability. And airlines were identified as main culprits. Movements such as flyskgag (literally meaning flight shaming – an environmental movement that encouraged folks not to take flights) and tagskryt (literally meaning train bragging – a movement that encouraged folks to take trains over flights) gained traction in Europe. And it was only a matter of time before these made their way to India. Governments too were looking at additional tax measures towards sustainability and to ensure that the aviation carbon footprint was minimized. If that wasn't challenging enough aircraft manufacturers started to produce smaller aircraft that were capable of flying greater distances. Overall the hub concept was facing several challenges. But for the most part these were manageable. That was until the corona impact. In one fell swoop, a contagion spread via a 120 nanometer particle (SARS-CoV-2 virus) that is not even alive in the first place, brought forward all these changes. **Along with a total evaporation of demand which is expected to fall by 50% in optimistic case scenarios. Those who fly will want to fly direct rather than connect via hubs. As such the pandemic is forcing a rethink of the entire hub concept.**

The corona impact for hub airports is best summarized in two words: health risk. Ironically, this adds to the most stressful part of the airport experience. For any airport, especially hub airports, the greatest risk has always been the security risk. And post the corona pandemic, health risks are likely to come under the security risk umbrella making the security process even more cumbersome. Health security is the new buzzword. And social distancing, masks and quarantines are the new normal.

As far as airports go, governments the world over are revisiting policies on health security. These may include new stringent health checks (a health tax or a virus tax is not out of the question), VISA caps, limitations on market access, rolling restrictions (including seasonal restrictions), mandated pre-travel test and even submission of health histories. The “green-corridors” that business travellers are used to for the most part are over. For hubs the impact is disproportionate and significant. Airports are well aware of this fact, and on March 31, the industry body Airports Council International sent a letter to the prime minister asking for a range of measures. Examined closely, the proposal indicates that airport revenues should not be impacted in any way, while there should be maximum relaxation on costs and funding. Much of these revenues stem from passenger flows.

As far as travel is concerned there is likely to be segmentation into essential travel and non-essential travel. Considering all the risks, the safest mode of transport may change from air-travel to rail to one's own vehicle. In the leisure segment one is likely to see road trips as opposed to mileage runs (a mileage run is a popular term where frequent travellers use their miles for leisure travel especially as the miles are about to lapse). Overall, the perception of air-travel is undergoing a change: from one of convenience to one of risk. Traffic volumes may take years to rebound.

For airlines this means revisiting entire network and fleet plans and adapting to the new reality. Above all, the hub concept will need to be adapted.

Business World 11/04/2020

New Delhi: **While the country is gearing up for the extension of coronavirus lockdown for another two weeks, the government is reportedly mulling to grant relaxation to aviation sector. Reports claimed that**

restrictions on flight operations likely to be lifted anytime soon, as the after matter was taken up in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's virtual meeting with the Chief Ministers yesterday.

Notably, aviation is among the worst-affected sectors amidst the Covid-19 crisis. The decision on removing restrictions from the passenger flights comes when the government is planning to come with certain relaxations to boost economic activities.

In India, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended ever since the country imposed a 21-day lockdown till April 14 to combat the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. However, cargo flights, offshore helicopter operations, medical evacuation flights and special flights permitted by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) are allowed to operate during this lockdown.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, earlier this month, had said that India will remove its suspension of domestic and international commercial passenger flights once it is confident that the spread of coronavirus has come under control.

[12/04/20 India.com](https://www.india.com/news/aviation-minister-hardeep-singh-puri-says-flight-restrictions-likely-to-be-lifted-anytime-soon-as-the-after-matter-was-taken-up-in-prime-minister-narendra-modi-s-virtual-meeting-with-the-chief-ministers-yesterday-1274441)

Chennai: The toll in coronavirus disease in Tamil Nadu went up to 12, with the death of a male employee of a private airlines and a 45-year-old woman last evening. The death of the male employee was confirmed by a spokesperson of the IndiGo airlines, while the woman's death was confirmed by the police and the health department on Sunday.

Reports received here said a man, in his mid-50s and working as an aircraft maintenance engineer with IndiGo airlines in Chennai airport since 2006, died late last night after he tested positive for COVID.

"We are extremely sorry and saddened by the demise of one of our beloved employees in Chennai due to infection of COVID-19 virus," reports quoting an airline spokesperson said. Police sources said the 45-year-old woman, a native of Pulianthope in North Chennai, tested positive for COVID-19 after she was admitted to the Omandurar Multispeciality Government hospital on April five, three days after her husband, who had participated in the Tablighi Jamaat meet in Delhi, tested positive.

[12/04/20 UNI](https://www.uninews.net/story/1444444/india-coronavirus-death-45-year-old-woman)

New Delhi: **Over 214 Lifeline Udan flights have been operated by MoCA to transport essential medical cargo to remote parts of the country to support India's war against COVID-19. 128 of these flights have been operated by Air India and Alliance Air. Cargo transported till date is around 373.23 tons. Smt. Usha Padhee, JS, MoCA said that the aerial distance covered by Lifeline Udan flights till date is over 1,99,784 km.** The Cargo load carried on 11th April 2020 was 108 Tons. The Ministry of Civil Aviation and the aviation industry is determined to support India's war against COVID-19 by transporting medical air-cargo within India and abroad in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Special focus has been on the North East Region, island territories and the hill states. Air India and IAF collaborated primarily for J&K, Ladakh, North-East and other island regions. Bulk of the cargo comprises light-weight and voluminous products like masks, gloves and other consumables, that consume relatively larger storage space on the aircraft. Special permission has been taken to store cargo in the passenger seating area and overhead cabins, with due precautions.

Public information related to Lifeline Udan flights is updated daily on the portal at https://esahaj.gov.in/lifeline_udan/public_info that was developed by National Informatics Centre (NIC) and MoCA in a record span of three days to enable seamless coordination between various stakeholders.

[12/04/20 Orissadiary.com](https://www.orissadiary.com/news/1274441)

Air India (AI) isn't a five-star rated airline. Skytrax, the London-based research and quality advisors to the global airport transport industry, gives it **just three stars**. Those who have flown AI aren't likely to argue with the evaluation either. **However, its service during the Covid-19 pandemic has ensured that India's flag carrier's worth can be measured beyond ratings.**

Consider how, over the last 90 days, AI has operated flights to evacuate Indians stranded in Japan, Milan, Rome, and China—it made two flights to Wuhan, the global epicentre of the pandemic. Also, March 31 onwards, it mobilised its resources and scheduled 18 charter flights to fly back German, French, Irish, and Canadian nationals stranded in India. Besides, a charter cargo flight was operated from Delhi to Shanghai on

April 4 to fly in vital medical cargo from China to India. AI continued to operate more such flights to Shanghai till April 9, ferrying in critical medical equipment into the country. Within India, from March 26 to April 4, AI and its regional subsidiary Alliance Air operated 86 charter flights to transport medical equipment and other essential items to areas in the Northeast and other far-flung places.

This is not a first, however. In times of crisis, AI has always risen to the occasion, says Jitender Bhargava, former executive director of Air India. "The airline has done it on a number of occasions for the last 30-odd years and it has always earned rich accolades from everyone," he points out. This time around, though, the personal risks for the crew members were significantly higher. "Carrying every passenger was a risk, travelling was a high risk," says Kapil Kaul, CEO and director of CAPA South Asia, an aviation consultancy firm, given the highly communicable nature of the Covid-19 virus.

11/04/20 Anshul Dhamija/Fortune India

New Delhi: As many airlines are either shutting operations or operating with truncated fleets, the grounded aircraft have to be taken care of.

Looking after aircraft is not easy. Referred to as 'aircraft preservation', it involves a number of steps. Firstly, the manufacturer of the aircraft lays down a storage plan and airlines draw up air maintenance plans based on their aircraft. This is done to ensure that the aircraft is kept in an air-worthy condition to be able to fly again when the ban is lifted. One of the most significant aspects that needs to be taken care of is the number of openings on an aircraft where small insects, birds or debris may get stuck.

A senior Air India Engineering Executive told BusinessLine that one of the openings that needs to be covered is in the landing gear. The landing gear is exposed as the aircraft is on the ground and is a potential opening which can be used by insects and birds as a nesting area. So, the opening is covered with pins, he added. The aircraft's engines are covered with thick plastic covers as well, as a part of aircraft preservation. In addition, chocks and studs are used to ensure that the aircraft's wheels do not slip.

Further, during extended periods of grounding, several systems are deactivated and, where appropriate, covers are placed. The standard procedure to be followed is given in the maintenance programme for each type of aircraft. The number of precautions and coverings that have to be done on an aircraft depends on how long the grounding is likely to last.

Senior Air India engineering executives told BusinessLine that preservation of an aircraft is similar to steps that a vehicle owner takes when the vehicle is not going to be used for an extended period of time.

12/04/20 Ashwini Phadnis/Business Line

New Delhi: It's back to square one for India's civil aviation industry. Not many would have thought that exactly one year after Jet Airways — one of India's largest full-service carriers — collapsed, other airlines would be staring at a similar fate. However, the reason this time is a pandemic that has crippled every airline in the world. Jet Airways, after struggling for months, had grounded its entire fleet of over 100 planes on April 17, 2019, after a consortium of lenders decided not to infuse anymore money into it.

While the decision had drastically reduced passenger growth and took away thousands of jobs, it turned a boon for other airlines in the following months. The remaining carriers leased much of Jet's aircraft, got lucrative slots and expanded overseas operations. Demand supply mismatch kept the fares relatively higher for months.

Two of India's listed carriers — SpiceJet and IndiGo — saw record profits in the succeeding quarters. IndiGo grew so fast that in October 2019, it placed orders for 300 Airbus aircraft in an estimated \$33 billion deal. SpiceJet, despite taking a blow when Boeing's controversial 737 Max aircraft was grounded in March 2019, turned the first Indian carrier to have a hub outside the country, in UAE. Three other private carriers — Vistara, Air Asia and GoAir — also expanded domestic and overseas operations. Excited with this success story, the government decided to privatise Air India again, after a failed attempt in 2018. A bid was floated earlier this year, which reportedly invited the interest of several big shots. Similarly, lenders and resolution professional of Jet Airways kept on extending the insolvency process, anticipating a better bid.

12/04/20 Arshad Khan/New Indian Express

Airfares may soar once the government-imposed 21-day lockdown is lifted. The first few days could even see fares shoot up to at least three times the pre-Covid ticket costs, TNN reported.

As India's airlines prepare to resume operations, they now must adhere to social distancing norms. Flights will now have to operate with only one-third occupancy to ensure maximum social distancing between on-board passengers.

According to the TNN report, authorities are evaluating the option of allowing only one person in a row of three seats, with another passenger in the row that is immediately behind, on the diametrically opposite seat — window-aisle-window-aisle configuration — during 'Phase I'.

The seating capacity of a 180-seater single aisle (six seats across 30 rows) will, therefore, fall by two-thirds to 60 (two persons on each row of six seats across 30 rows). To compensate for the loss of capacity, airlines will need to raise fares by anywhere between 1.5 to 3 times, ToI quoted officials as saying.

IndiGo has already come out with a post-lockdown plan. **The Budget carrier's CEO Ronojoy Dutta said that the airline will deep clean its aircraft and will stop on-board meal services for some time. He also added that only 50 per cent of the seats in airport buses will be filled.**

While there is no official word yet on what the second phase of the lockdown may look like, many private airlines resumed their booking for the period past April 14th.

India suspended domestic and international commercial passenger flight operations from midnight on March 24 for 21 days in sync with the nation-wide lockdown.

The Economic Times of India 13/04/2020

Charter aircraft companies are receiving requests to move essential commodities and conduct repatriation flights during the ongoing nationwide lockdown, but are unable to fulfil them due to lack of government permissions, said Sanjay Julka, chief executive officer, technical, Club One Air, one of India's oldest and largest air charter companies. After a brief setback, India will emerge stronger once the pandemic is over, Julka said in an interview. Edited excerpts:

How has your sector been affected by the lockdown imposed to contain covid-19?

Aviation across the spectrum has been badly affected. Flights are permitted for some special emergency services such as repatriation, transportation of medical supplies, etc. Overall, revenue is down by almost 80% and, in some cases, to nil.

Are you looking for some relief measures from the government?

The government has taken some initiatives in providing relief. Operational relief has been provided by giving extensions and waivers to aircraft, as well as crew, so as not to ground the aircraft due to disruption in their training and maintenance schedules. This must continue for a while, for at least six months after covid-19 is

over around the world. Other government relief measures include late payment of taxes or loan instalments, which are good and needs to continue further.

Should there be some stimulus package for your industry?

Our sector would need a special stimulus package in the form of low-interest loans, reduction of taxes, maybe a tax holiday for a few years. The government must not equate aviation, or for that matter, any industry which is also a means of communication, with other industries.

Do you think the country is staring at a recession? How hard will your industry be hit?

Although there will be loss of life, which is tragic for any country, I sincerely feel that India will emerge into a much better position than it was before covid-19. Look at the ingredients that are present—such as the comparatively very low infection rate, our acknowledgment by superpowers, China losing the trust of major economies, etc. I think if India plays the game well, there definitely will be a short period of recession, but this will be followed by double-digit growth. Our industry will also initially hit a recession, but Indian aviation is far away from realizing its potential and the sound leadership of the country should be able to exploit the silver lining in this pandemic. Sales growth for the short- and mid-term have been revised. Being temporary, our reserves coupled with the government's relief package should be able to get us through.

How do you think consumer demand could be revived after the lockdown is lifted?

Had it been a war or a normal recession-like situation, we would have expected a drop in charter demands. **The need for social distancing and personal hygiene is likely to continue for a while (even after the lockdown is lifted) and since business aviation is well-prepared and equipped to handle both requirements, I personally expect charter demands to rise.**

Will you be looking at either salary or job cuts?

This will depend on the duration of the pandemic. Presently, we are hoping to survive it without salary or job cuts. I am confident that all salary or job cuts in the aviation sector, if any, would be temporary.

Are you looking for loan moratoriums beyond the three months suggested by the Reserve Bank of India?

Should it be further relaxed?

Yes. **Not only do we expect a loan moratorium, we also expect a complete tax holiday for the aviation sector.**

The government has already announced a lot of stimulus in the economy and have made provisions for money to come out in the market.

Live Mint Aviation 13/04/2020

The government and airlines are in discussing to provide short-term help to the airlines in an attempt to bail them out from the COVID-19 crisis, as the government has further extended the ban on flight operations till May 3, 2020.

“As we say in India, crisis gives an opportunity to bring in structural reforms. We are speaking with government

daily for **short term help** and have urged the government to **include jet fuel in GST regime**," said Ajay Singh, CMD, SpiceJet

Also, current airport contracts increase cost of aviation," Singh said while speaking at a seminar organised by Bird Group.

The crisis for airlines has arisen after the Indian government had grounded flight operations till April 15, 2020, and now extended it till May 3, 2020.

The grounding has led to airline revenues falling to zero and the sector not being able to service their fixed cost and other liabilities.

The Economic Times of India 14/04/2020

Just after the national lockdown was extended, all domestic and international airlines have also been suspended till May 3.

This comes after the Railways also extended the suspension of passenger services till May 3 considering the extension of the national lockdown for another 19 days.

"All domestic and international scheduled airlines operation shall remain suspended till 11.59 pm of 3rd May 2020," the ministry tweeted.

The government had suspended all domestic flights from the midnight of March 24. Suspension of international flights had been announced before that.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while announcing the extension of lockdown till May 3, said that India has done a lot better than other countries in containing the damage done by Covid-19. He acknowledged the economic pain suffered by the country but said that it pales in significance when compared to the protection of lives of countrymen.

Airlines have been the worst hit due to the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown as the business has come to a grinding halt. Air Deccan had to shut its services owing to significant drop in business. Many airlines have asked their employees to take pay cut while other stringent measures could come into force once the airlines resume operations.

The Economic Times of India 14/04/2020

The finance ministry, in the next few days, will unveil interim measures for sectors that have been hit the most by the covid-19 outbreak. These measures will be an addition to the ₹1.7 trillion package already announced for the poor.

The Centre may announce measures for 'survival' of sectors including micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) as well as aviation. It is expected to make the announcement this week.

"The interim measures are expected to take care of the survival of businesses that have been hit the most by coronavirus," a senior government official told Mint.

"The government will ensure that no payment, or dues, are pending from its side. This will ensure there is no cash crunch," the official said.

While these interim measures will provide much needed support to some sectors, a larger economic stimulus package will be announced after the lockdown is lifted, the official said.

The government had first announced a 21-day lockdown, effective 25 March, to contain the spread of coronavirus that led to the suspension of most economic activities. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of the national lockdown till May 3 to continue its battle against the deadly virus. The industry has been pitching for a massive fiscal stimulus package to support people who have lost their sources of income and whose businesses are on the verge of collapse due to the lockdown.

Industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) had said there is an immediate need for a stimulus of as much as ₹9-10 trillion. According to a Business Standard report, former chief economic advisor (CEA) Arvind Subramanian said the government will have to spend ₹10 trillion--an amount equivalent to 5% of India's GDP--to deal with the disruption caused by the pandemic.
[Live Mint Aviation 14/04/2020](#)

10 AVR. 2020

AIR FRANCE-KLM indique que toutes les mesures de réductions des coûts qu'il a adoptées et les aides gouvernementales actuellement en place lui permettront de tenir jusqu'à la fin du deuxième trimestre. Un besoin de liquidités se fera ainsi sentir à partir du troisième trimestre en l'absence d'un soutien financier complémentaire.

PM Modi announced an **extension of lockdown till May 3**. Emphasising the importance of the next one week in the fight against coronavirus, he appealed to all the countrymen to stop the spread of the novel coronavirus disease to newer areas.

PM Modi said that **certain relaxations can be given in those areas that have shown promise in fighting the disease**. An assessment will be done for the next one week of all the blocks, districts and states based on which the relaxations can be given.

Most of the chief ministers favoured the extension of the lockdown. On their own, a number of states have already announced the extension. States like Maharashtra, Odisha, Delhi, Telangana, Punjab and Tamil Nadu have announced the extension till April 30.

The 21-day national lockdown was scheduled to end today on April 14.

The total cases of coronavirus in the country surged past the 10,000 mark today making it more important that the gains achieved so far in terms of containing the spread are not erased.

Calls of opening up select economic activities have been doing the rounds. The Uttar Pradesh government has allowed resumption of construction activity on government projects from April 15 with adequate precautions including practising social distancing among workers.

According to reports, the Centre is compiling inputs from various ministries and states on a graded relaxation so as to maintain the supply of essential items without any hindrances. Inter-linkages among various segments of the industry is one of the reasons behind partially opening up economic activity.

Here are the big takeaways:

1. Because of the sacrifice by countrymen, India has staved off the extensive damage which would have been caused by coronavirus.
2. I understand the pain and suffering of the people. But for the country you have carried out your duty and I thank you for your service.
3. The collective strength that the country has showed is a tribute to Dr B R Ambedkar on his birth anniversary.
4. The way people have respected the lockdown restrictions is inspiring.
5. We are well aware of the global situation on coronavirus.
6. We did not wait for the problem to increase and acted in advance to stop the crisis from getting worse. We started screening at airports even before there was a single case in the country. India had mandatory 14-day isolation even before the case count touched 100.
7. The country has 220 testing labs now, over 1 lakh beds arranged and over 600 dedicated hospitals for Covid-19.
8. If we look at the coronavirus count in other developed countries, India is in a much better position.
9. If we hadn't adopted a holistic and integrated approach, the situation in India would be unimaginable.
10. The path we chose is the correct path. Social distancing and lockdown have benefited the country immensely.

11. From an economic perspective, India has paid a lot but it pales in significance when compared to protection of lives.
12. States have played a responsible role in staying off a crisis.
13. But, the way it is spreading, it has made government world over more alert.
14. States and individuals have favoured an extension of lockdown.
15. Lockdown will have to be extended till May 3.
16. I appeal to all countrymen that we have to stop the spread of coronavirus in newer areas.
17. Have to be really careful in hotspots and also remain vigilant in those areas that could turn into hotspots.
18. **For next one week, till April 20 every town, district, state will be examined carefully and assess how the area has fared on tackling the coronavirus. Those areas, which have shown improvement and show promise, certain relaxations can be given.**
19. Government rolled out PM Garib Kalyan Yojana to take care of those who are most affected due to lockdown. States and Centre are working to minimise the difficulties faced by farmers as this is harvesting period for Rabi crops.
20. There is enough stock of essential items in the country.

The Economic Times of India 14/04/2020

MUMBAI : With the central government extending the lockdown to 3 May and subsequently the suspension of all commercial passenger services also till then, domestic airlines have again decided not to refund the customers in cash for their cancelled flights and instead offer them rescheduling of tickets for a later date without any additional fee.

India had imposed a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of the coronavirus pandemic. Consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights were suspended for this time period.

However, most of the airlines had been taking bookings except national carrier Air India for domestic flights for the period beyond April 14.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the extension of lockdown till May 3, the aviation regulator DGCA issued a circular stating all international as well as domestic flights will remain suspended during the lockdown.

"Following orders from the Ministry of Civil Aviation issued to all airlines, we have extended the suspension of our operations until May 3, 2020.

"We are in the process of cancelling the affected bookings and we will offer customers free of charge rescheduling to another date until December 31, 2020," a Vistara spokesperson told PTI in statement.

The customer, however, will have to pay the fare difference, if any, at the time of rebooking, the airline said.

A GoAir spokesperson said that it has already "factored in" these type of scenario and that the airline will review its earlier scheme of providing rescheduling free of cost at a later date while protecting their existing bookings for one year.

The airline had on Monday announced that it was extending the "Protect Your PNR" scheme till April 30, 2020.

Aviation consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation had last week termed the sale of tickets without a clarity on lockdown as "unfair to consumers".

"The decision to allow opening of advance bookings from April 14 without a decision on lifting of the lockdown and likely structure of the transition period post the lockdown needs to be immediately reviewed as this is unfair to consumers," Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) said in a statement.

Citing examples of erstwhile Kingfisher Airlines and now-defunct Jet Airways, CAPA said that the closure of these two carriers has "already resulted in massive losses to passengers as refunds couldn't be processed resulting in crores of losses to passengers".

It may be mentioned here that the then customers of the erstwhile Kingfisher Airlines and Jet Airways could not recover their money which the two airlines had amassed on account of advance bookings only after their going belly up.

CAPA in its March 18 report had stated that amid COVID-19 and in the absence of government support "several Indian airlines may shut down operations by May or June due to a lack of cash."

Announcing that all its flights are cancelled till May 3, IndiGo said, it is in the process of cancelling the reservations. "Your ticket amount is protected in the form of credit shell in the PNR, which can be utilised within one year of the issued date."

Gurugram-based spiceJet also said the amount from the cancelled ticket will be maintained in a credit shell.

"We are cancelling the reservation of those who booked tickets for travel till May 3, 2020. Upon cancellation your entire amount will be maintained in credit shell and the same may be used for fresh bookings and travel till February 28, 2021, for the same passenger," it said.

Live Mint Aviation 14/04/2020