

Revue de presse du 15 au 30 avril 2020

Montréal, 15 April 2020 – ICAO issued new advice to national governments on repatriation flights designated as State aircraft, humanitarian flights, or commercial repatriation flights.

The move comes as restrictions on air traffic continue to be introduced by many States to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The latest recommendations from the UN agency for civil aviation encouraged countries to ensure efficient authorizations for the entry, departure, and transit access of aircraft being operated to repatriate nationals and other eligible persons from foreign countries.

“Flights organized by States for the sole purpose of repatriating their nationals and other eligible persons from other States, with no embarkation or disembarkation of other passengers for ‘remuneration or hire’, can be designated as repatriation flights,” noted the ICAO State Letter, which was issued by ICAO’s Secretary General Dr. Fang Liu.

“This would ensure that necessary authorizations for the entry, departure and transit of aircraft carrying out such flights whether as State flights, humanitarian flights or chartered commercial flights, are granted expeditiously.”

Regarding repatriation flights carried out on a commercial basis, ICAO reminded States of their obligations with respect to the privilege of foreign aircraft engaged in non-scheduled commercial flights to carry passengers to/from their territories, and it also called on them to review their authorization procedures and ensure speedy approvals.

To-date ICAO has issued seven Electronic Bulletins and four State letters to countries relevant to the global response to COVID-19, and it is also producing regularly-updated global air traffic impact forecasts which are revealing the extent of the shutdown now taking place across the worldwide air transport network.

In addition to its regular advisories on COVID-19 to national governments, ICAO also serves as the key facilitator for State and other members of the the Collaborative Arrangement for the Prevention and Management of Public Health Events in Civil Aviation (CAPSCA) programme.

Bruno Le Maire a indiqué mercredi que le gouvernement prendrait "dans les prochains jours" une décision sur le soutien public à Air France, dont la plupart des avions sont cloués au sol à cause du coronavirus.

"Nous prendrons la décision dans les prochains jours d'un soutien à Air France sous une forme que nous sommes en train de déterminer avec le Premier ministre et le président de la République, mais c'est une affaire de jours", a déclaré le ministre de l'Economie au micro de RTL.

Vendredi, le secrétaire d'Etat aux Transports Jean-Baptiste Djebbari avait précisé que l'Etat, qui détient 14,3% de la compagnie aérienne, pourrait recapitaliser Air France mais sans en prendre le contrôle.

Bruno Le Maire avait pour sa part déclaré il y a une semaine qu'Air France bénéficierait d'un "soutien massif" de la part de l'Etat alors que la compagnie perd "des milliards par mois".

"Nous voulons à tout prix préserver cette compagnie aérienne qui est un fleuron industriel français", avait-il assuré.

Le Journal de l'Aviation 15/04/2020

L'IATA est de plus en plus pessimiste. L'association a de nouveau revu à la hausse le manque à gagner de ses compagnies membres en raison de la crise liée au covid-19 et estime désormais qu'il atteindra 314 milliards de dollars, ce qui le rendra inférieur de 55% au chiffre d'affaires dégagé en 2019, avec un trafic divisé par deux lui aussi sur l'année. « En d'autres mots, la moitié de notre activité disparaît. C'est catastrophique », résume Alexandre de Juniac, son directeur général.

Cette révision est due à deux facteurs. Tout d'abord, la précédente estimation, réalisée à la fin du mois de mars, se basait sur une réduction de trafic de 65% et une reprise au second semestre. Cependant, depuis début avril, l'immobilisation générale des flottes a provoqué une baisse de trafic de 80%. Seuls les marchés domestiques américain et asiatiques (principalement chinois) restent opérationnels.

Le deuxième critère qui a changé est la confiance des économistes, qui s'est altérée. Se basant sur les prévisions d'Oxford Economics, l'IATA souligne que la chute du PIB mondial était estimée à 1% pour l'année lors de la dernière prévision en mars et que le cabinet jugeait désormais qu'elle serait de 6%. Le FMI est moins pessimiste et a indiqué hier qu'il prévoyait une chute de 3% du PIB mondial (et de 7,5% du PIB européen), ce qui reste plus sombre que le point de référence considéré pour l'étude de mars de l'IATA. Et dans les deux estimations, l'impact de la crise devrait être plus important que celui de la crise financière de 2008 (qui a vu une chute de 2% du PIB mondial).

En revanche, la reprise économique pourrait être très rapide et exceptionnelle en 2021 : Oxford Economics anticipe une reprise en V avec une croissance du PIB pouvant atteindre 8% l'année prochaine. Un schéma que le transport aérien a peu de chances de suivre puisque l'IATA constate que les mesures de déconfinement progressif engagées jusqu'alors dans quelques pays ne se sont pas accompagnées d'une levée, même partielle, des restrictions de voyage. L'association estime ainsi qu'il n'y aura pas de reprise de la demande avant le troisième trimestre et que le trafic international au quatrième trimestre ne dépassera pas 50% de celui de l'année dernière.

La région qui sera la plus touchée par la réduction du chiffre d'affaires sera l'Asie Pacifique, qui enregistra un manque à gagner de 113 milliards de dollars, suivie de l'Europe, dont les compagnies perdront 89 milliards de dollars de CA.

Le Journal de l'Aviation 15/04/2020

NEW DELHI: Vistara chief Leslie Thng on Wednesday announced that senior employees will be going on compulsory leave without pay for up to three days between April 15 and 30 as a measure to further conserve the airline's cash flow amid lockdown to combat the COVID-19 threat.

On March 27, the airline had also introduced compulsory leave without pay for up to three days between April 1 and April 14 for the same set of senior employees.

The compulsory no-pay leave will affect around 1,200 employees in senior grades. The remaining

2,800 employees of the airline such as members of cabin crew and ground handling services will be unaffected.

The Vistara chief said in an email to employees, which has been accessed by PTI, that the airline is planning to restart flight operations in a phased manner whenever the government allows it to do so.

"With the announcement by the government of India on extending the lockdown, we continue to suspend all our domestic and international operations till May 3, 2020 and this further impacted significantly on our cash flow with no revenue being generated over an extended period of time," Thng said.

He said the airline has made "some progress" with a few of its key partners and suppliers in "reducing and/or deferring" some of its immediate operating expenditures.

Thng added the airline continues to pursue similar measures "aggressively" with other partners and suppliers.

He mentioned the airline has to take a "tough and difficult decision" on reducing staff costs with the objective to preserve jobs.

"Therefore, for the period April 15 to April 30 we will continue with Compulsory No Pay Leave (CNPL) for all staff, except for staff in Level 1A and 1B, as follows: Staff in Level 4 and 5 to go on three days CNPL, Staff in Level 2 and 3 to go on two days CNPL, Staff in Level 1C to go on one day CNPL," he said.

The above CNPL is in addition to what Vistara had implemented for the period of April 1 to April 14, Thng noted.

"While the situation remains fluid, we are planning to resume flight operations in a phased manner whenever authorities allow us to do so," the CEO stated.

"For the initial period, we may not be able to fully restore our suspended network and therefore our financials will continue to be adversely impacted. We must continue our focus on cutting expenditures, including continuing some of the measures that we have implemented in April," he said.

Reacting on the decision, Vistara spokesperson said, "The extension of lockdown and suspension of our services till May 3, 2020 further impacts our cash flow significantly. As part of a number of steps we are taking to conserve cash and save costs, we had to make the difficult decision of further reducing our staff costs with the objective of preserving jobs.

"For the period between April 15-30, 2020, about 30 per cent of Vistara's workforce will take compulsory no-pay leave of one to three days, depending on employment grades (three days for senior-most employees). This decision does not impact the remainder 70 per cent of Vistara staff," he added.

India is under lockdown till May 3 to curb the spread of coronavirus, which has infected more than 11,000 people and killed over 350 people in the country till now.

### The Economic times of India 15/04/2020

Le redémarrage du transport aérien sera lent. Au-delà des conséquences de la récession économique sur la demande, la crainte des passagers à prendre l'avion constitue un obstacle majeur. Des mesures de protection sanitaire doivent se prendre de manière coordonnée. Ce sera long et c'est pour cela que la reprise se fera par étapes en commençant par les marchés domestiques au troisième trimestre. En France, les vols pourraient reprendre en juin.

Si plusieurs pays d'Europe comme la France ont pris ou s'apprêtent à prendre des mesures de déconfinement de leur population, la perspective d'un redémarrage du transport aérien n'est pas encore pour demain. La reprise sera longue et progressive. Les obstacles aux voyages seront en effet trop nombreux pour une reprise en "V" (avec un rebond immédiat aussi fort que n'a été la crise), comme l'espéraient il y a encore récemment les compagnies aériennes en se basant sur les courbes de trafic qui avaient suivi certaines crises précédentes.

#### Récession et restrictions de voyages : un cocktail explosif

A l'impact très lourd de la récession économique sur la demande de transport, va s'ajouter la défiance des passagers pour les voyages en avion, mais aussi les craintes des Etats à ouvrir leurs frontières, même quand l'épidémie sera vaincue. Résultat : le redémarrage sera plus lent que prévu il y a encore trois semaines. Et il se fera par étapes. **"D'abord les marchés domestiques, ensuite régionaux, puis intercontinentaux"**, a expliqué ce mardi Alexandre de Juniac, le directeur général de l'association internationale du transport aérien (IATA), lors d'une conférence de presse téléphonique.

"Nous prévoyons désormais une ouverture des marchés domestiques au troisième trimestre 2020 (juillet-septembre), mais l'ouverture des marchés internationaux sera plus lente car il semble probable que les gouvernements maintiendront ces restrictions de voyage plus longtemps", a précisé Brian Pearce, le chef économiste de IATA.

#### Dégringolade de 55% du chiffre d'affaires du secteur

Conséquence : la perte de chiffre d'affaires prévue pour l'ensemble du secteur du transport aérien en 2020 sera encore plus lourde que prévu. Evaluée à 252 milliards de dollars il y a trois semaines, elle est désormais estimée à 314 milliards de dollars, en chute de 55% par rapport à l'an dernier.

"Les prévisions du secteur s'assombrissent de jour en jour. L'ampleur de la crise rend une reprise en "V" peu probable. La courbe sera plutôt en "U" (une chute suivie d'une stagnation avant la reprise, Ndlr)", a déploré Alexandre de Juniac, en prévoyant néanmoins une forte reprise en 2021.

En France, les compagnies aériennes pourraient néanmoins réamorcer la pompe à partir du mois de juin. Encore faut-il qu'il y ait des passagers.

"C'est davantage une problématique de demande que d'offre. Nous pouvons redémarrer en juin pour autant qu'il y ait des passagers prêts à prendre l'avion", explique Alain Battisti, le président de la Fnam, la fédération nationale de l'aviation marchande.

La confiance sera un élément clé pour le redémarrage du trafic aérien mais la restaurer reste un défi pour tous les acteurs du transport aérien. Comment faire en effet pour que les passagers remontent à bord des avions sans craindre d'être contaminés par le Covid-19 (ou d'être placés en quarantaine à l'arrivée), mais aussi que les pays soient convaincus d'ouvrir leurs frontières sans craindre de relancer une seconde vague d'épidémie liée à l'importation de cas contaminés ?

Ces deux questions appellent une multitude d'autres interrogations aux réponses aussi complexes les unes que les autres.

Faut-il prendre la température des passagers au départ et à l'arrivée et, si oui, de quelle manière? Doivent-ils disposer d'un passeport sanitaire garantissant leur bonne santé? Devront-ils porter un masque à bord des avions? Et si oui, lequel? Faudra-t-il, par ailleurs, laisser un siège vide entre chaque passager pour respecter la distanciation sociale? Et sur ce point, comment l'organiser dans les aéroports où les files d'attente se succèdent? Ou faut-il tester tous les passagers comme vient de commencer de le faire la compagnie de Dubaï Emirates.

#### Politique coordonnée

Une chose est sûre. Les réponses devront être coordonnées et harmonisées, d'abord au niveau régional, puis au niveau mondial. Cela prend du temps et c'est pour cela que la reprise sera graduelle et commencera d'abord par les marchés domestiques. En Europe, la France cherche à fédérer les pays de l'espace Shengen sur un certain nombre de pratiques qu'elle entend proposer la semaine prochaine, avant de les généraliser ensuite à l'ensemble de l'Union européenne.

"La levée des contrôles aux frontières internes de l'UE doit se faire de façon coordonnée, et la réouverture des frontières extérieures, dont la fermeture doit être prolongée jusqu'au 15 mai, doit se faire dans un deuxième temps", préconise la Commission.

#### Hausse des coûts liée aux mesures de protection sanitaire

Comme ce fut le cas pour le renforcement considérable des mesures de sûreté après les attentats du 11 septembre 2001 aux Etats-Unis, les mesures de protection sanitaire qui se profilent auront un coût économique pour les compagnies aériennes. Le réaménagement des aéroports devra en effet être financé et risque de passer par l'instauration de nouvelles redevances. Laisser un siège vide entre deux passagers d'une même rangée sera également lourd de conséquence pour les compagnies aériennes. Il reviendrait à ne pas commercialiser un tiers de la capacité de l'avion sur des avions court et moyen-courriers de type A320 ou B737. Aussi, si cette pratique semble nécessaire pour rassurer les passagers, elle aura du mal à s'installer dans la durée pour des raisons de rentabilité. L'équilibre économique d'un vol est en effet généralement atteint avec un coefficient d'occupation de 75 à 80%. Sauf à augmenter les prix. Ce qui est possible sur les lignes à fort potentiel de clientèle affaires, mais beaucoup moins sur les lignes touristiques.

#### La Tribune 15/04/2020

Le SCARA a publié une liste de propositions pour un soutien efficace de l'État au transport aérien dans la sortie de crise du Covid-19, incluant un moratoire de douze mois sur la totalité du coût des infrastructures de navigation aérienne et aéroportuaires. Et il précise que ce soutien ne devra pas bénéficier qu'au seul groupe Air France, tandis que la privatisation d'ADP devrait être abandonnée.

Le Syndicat des Compagnies Aériennes Autonomes (SCARA), un syndicat professionnel regroupant 47% des compagnies aériennes françaises basées en métropole et dans les territoires ultra-marins, ainsi que des sociétés d'assistance aéroportuaire et de formation, a publié le 14 avril 2020 une tribune proposant de « repenser totalement le rôle de l'État dans le transport aérien français ». « Dans l'urgence », l'État a paré au plus pressé pour aider nos compagnies aériennes », rappelle le syndicat : mesures élargies de chômage partiel, report de dates de validité des agréments et des licences, moratoires sur les charges fiscales et sociales notamment. « Si les mesures destinées à

alléger les charges de personnels inoccupés sont louables », les moratoires appréciables pour nos trésoreries à court terme ne font que reporter les difficultés financières à un moment où les compagnies aériennes auront besoin d'encore plus de soutien pour asseoir leur redémarrage. Un point de vue déjà évoqué au début du mois.

Le SCARA propose donc une série de mesures « à court terme simples et efficaces », l'État devant selon lui reprendre à sa charge le financement de missions d'intérêt général « qu'il a abandonné au cours du temps » :

- La taxe d'aéroport, qui finance la sûreté et la sécurité en aéroports, est acquittée par les compagnies aériennes pour chaque départ et a représenté en 2019 un montant d'1,1 milliards d'euros.

- Le coût du contrôle aux frontières automatisé (PARAFE) qui ne cesse de croître.

- La taxe de solidarité sur les seuls billets d'avion, dite « Taxe Chirac », pour financer l'aide à l'achat de médicaments pour les pays en voie de développement a représenté en 2019 un montant de 252 millions d'euros.

- L'écotaxe sur les billets d'avions mise en œuvre cette année au profit notamment du développement du transport ferroviaire aurait dû représenter un montant de 182 millions d'euros.

L'État devrait aussi également prendre à sa charge, au moins pendant une période 12 mois après la fin de la période d'urgence sanitaire, « la totalité du coût des infrastructures de navigation aérienne et aéroportuaires ». Le budget de l'Aviation Civile a représenté 2,2 milliards d'euros en 2019, rappelle le SCARA, dont 1,6 milliards pour la seule navigation aérienne, et l'ensemble des redevances aéroportuaires acquittées en France par les compagnies aériennes en 2019 est estimé à plus de 1,5 milliards d'euros. Après cette période transitoire de 12 mois durant laquelle « l'État prendrait en charge directement ces taxes et redevances », des discussions devront être menées pour en étudier une plus juste répartition entre l'État et d'autres acteurs économiques. « S'agissant de la contribution de ces acteurs économiques », le SCARA propose d'élargir l'assiette des taxes relevant de la solidarité, de la transition écologique et de la sûreté, à d'autres que les seules compagnies aériennes.

« Si on peut comprendre l'intervention de l'État auprès du groupe Air France en sa qualité d'actionnaire, celle-ci ne doit pas se limiter aux seules compagnies aériennes qui le composent », souligne le syndicat pour qui il est « primordial que toute aide dans ce domaine soit transparente et puisse bénéficier de manière équitable à l'ensemble des compagnies aériennes françaises ».

#### Une réforme profonde du financement des aéroports

Lors de l'ouverture des Assises du Transport Aérien de 2018, Elisabeth Borne déclarait que les Aéroports de Paris sont « un actif vraiment stratégique pour les connexions entre la France et le reste de la planète ». Il en est de même de tous les aéroports français, qui participent à l'aménagement du territoire. Le SCARA estime donc nécessaire que l'État « reprenne pied dans les aéroports et renonce à toute nouvelle privatisation, voire redevienne majoritaire dans les privatisations déjà réalisées à Lyon, Toulouse ou Nice ». Il pourra ainsi être mis fin au système de double caisse « aussi néfaste pour les compagnies aériennes que pour l'intérêt général », comme l'ont démontré tous les experts économiques et l'étude commanditée par le SCARA et la Chambre Syndicale du Transport Aérien (CSTA). Un retour à la caisse unique pour ADP « permettrait de faire baisser les redevances acquittées par les compagnies aériennes de 400 millions d'euros, qui

représentent le profit réalisé par ADP sur les commerces », précise le syndicat ; « le temps n'est plus à la seule protection des intérêts financiers des investisseurs dans les aéroports ».

Il y a trois ans, le SCARA publiait une réflexion intitulée « Pour une réaffirmation du rôle de l'État dans le développement équitable du transport aérien français ». A un moment où l'État va devoir intervenir massivement pour aider nos compagnies aériennes à sortir de la crise Covid-19, « les propositions que nous faisons à l'époque sont plus que jamais d'actualité ».

Air Journal 15/04/2020

**NEW DELHI :** The Indian civil aviation industry, which is already facing a debilitating cash crunch, is expected to lose more money with the government's decision to extend the countrywide lockdown from 14 April to 3 May.

The grounding of flights has dried up revenue for the sector and the domestic aviation industry will lose millions of dollars more in the coming days because of the continuation of the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"The revenue loss of the aviation industry spread across airlines, airports and retail is estimated to be \$1-1.5 billion per month of lockdown," said Jagannarayan Padmanabhan, practice leader and director, transport and logistics, at CRISIL Ltd. "About 70% of this will be borne by the airlines."

All international and domestic scheduled airline operations will remain suspended till 3 May, the ministry of civil aviation said on Tuesday after Prime Minister Narendra Modi conveyed the extension of the lockdown in his televised address.

India's aviation industry is expected to post losses of \$3-3.6 billion in the June quarter because of covid-19, with airlines sharing the bulk of the hit, aviation consultancy firm Capa India had said in a report last week. The sector, battered by the pandemic, is also expected to see sharp declines in both domestic and international passenger traffic, it said.

However, the lifting of the lockdown will only make sense for airlines if states also lift local lockdowns and allow free access to and from the airports, said a senior official with a private airline.

"Airlines will continue to struggle to meet the direct costs of operation as long as every other seat has to be kept empty for social distancing. However, most of all, airlines will not be able to regain their footing until public confidence to travel is back and that is not expected until the fear of the virus itself dies down," the official said requesting anonymity.

"Government financial support is essential as otherwise the entire industry, which drives 3% of gross domestic product, may collapse. A collapse of the industry will have much larger ramifications as it is an essential infrastructure industry," added the industry official mentioned above.

Meanwhile, airlines, which had already started taking bookings for travel after 14 April, are preparing to keep operations suspended for longer.

"Following orders from the ministry of civil aviation issued to all airlines, we have extended the suspension of our operations until 3 May. We are cancelling the affected bookings and will offer customers free of charge rescheduling to another date until 31 December. Fare difference, if any, will be applicable," said a Vistara spokesperson.

"We will restart flight operations on vital corridors of air traffic from 4 May. We will begin operations for domestic only and then gradually ramp it up further, to commence operations on some international routes as well," said Ronojoy Dutta, chief executive officer, IndiGo.

"We look forward to resuming our operations soon, once we receive approvals," said an AirAsia India spokesperson.

"We are cancelling reservation of those who booked themselves for travel till 3 May. Upon cancellation, your entire amount will be maintained in a credit shell, and the same may be used to make fresh booking and travel till 20 February 2021," SpiceJet said in a statement.

GoAir and Air India did not comment.

"Significant funds of passengers are already locked with Indian carriers as a result of advance bookings prior to the lockdown and the decision to allow bookings post 14 April without any decision of the lifting of lockdown will increase the risks, which needs to be avoided," Capa India had said last week.

"Giving credit vouchers for all advance bookings prior to the lockdown was expected and is reasonable, but not for bookings after 14 April," the consultancy firm added.

#### Live Mint Aviation 15/04/2020

Commercial flight services have been suspended till May 3 as the government has extended the nation lockdown in continuing efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus infection, which has already affected more than 11,000 people in the country

More than 20 lakh jobs are at risk in India's aviation space and dependent sectors in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic, according to global airlines' grouping IATA.

Commercial flight services have been suspended till May 3 as the government has extended the nation lockdown in continuing efforts to curb spreading of coronavirus infection, which has already affected more than 11,000 people in the country. Faced with challenging business conditions, some domestic airlines have resorted to leave without pay and layoff of expat pilots.

Against the backdrop of the current situation that has also resulted in substantial economic disruptions, the IATA said airlines in India are also not spared.

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) on Wednesday said that airlines globally are now facing an existential crisis as a result of the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Airlines in India are not spared. Passenger revenue is expected to fall by more than USD 8.8 billion and passenger demand decline by 36 per cent This puts over 2 million (over 20 lakh) jobs at risk,



including sectors that are dependent on aviation," Albert Tjoeng, Assistant Director for Corporate Communications (Asia Pacific) at IATA, said.

He told PTI that the priority for the Indian government is to ensure that airlines have sufficient cash flow to tide them over this period, by providing direct financial support, facilitating loans, loan guarantees, and support for the corporate bond market.

"Taxes, levies, and airport and aeronautical charges for the industry should also be fully or partially waived," he added.

The IATA is a grouping of around 290 airlines, including Air India, Vistara, IndiGo and SpiceJet.

Airlines are facing a liquidity crisis, burning USD 61 billion of their cash reserves in the second quarter of 2020, he added. On Tuesday, IATA Director General and CEO Alexandre de Juniac said the industry's outlook grows darker by the day.

"The scale of the crisis makes a sharp V-shaped recovery unlikely. Realistically, it will be a U-shaped recovery with domestic travel coming back faster than the international market. We could see more than half of passenger revenues disappear. That would be a USD 314 billion hit," he had said.

He had also said that airlines could burn through USD 61 billion of cash reserves in the second quarter alone. "That puts at risk 25 million jobs dependent on aviation. And without urgent relief, many airlines will not survive to lead the economic recovery," he had said.

#### Business Today 26/04/2020

As many as 377 of India's districts have been identified either as Covid-19 hotspots (red zones) or potential hotspots, as the total number of positive cases in the country jumped to 11,933, with 392 deaths. While 170 have been identified as hotspots, 207 were dubbed "non-hotspots" with a limited number of coronavirus cases. As many as 353 districts haven't reported any such case and thus are in the green zone.

The Union health ministry has asked states to identify areas showing a high number of absolute cases or a higher rate of doubling of positive cases as hotspots and those with a limited number of cases as "non-hotspots". This exercise of identification of hotspots has to be done on a weekly basis by states. "As normative guidance, we presume that a district with less than 15 cases will be treated as a cluster and if an area has multiple clusters, it will be treated as an outbreak," Lav Aggarwal, joint secretary, health ministry, told reporters at the daily press briefing on Covid-19.

Strict containment measures will be followed at the hotspots. States, where there are no confirmed cases, have also been asked to undertake effective surveillance for severe and acute respiratory illnesses and influenza-like illnesses, besides ensuring dedicated Covid hospitals.

In a letter to chief secretaries of all the states and Union Territories, the government has said containment operation will be deemed over when there is no case reported in 28 days from an area after the last case tests negative.

"Hotspots (red zones) will be assumed to be undertaking effective containment activities." If no case is reported for the next 14 days, they will be considered orange zones and will be deemed successful in containment, the letter stated, adding, if no case is reported for 28 days, they will be green zones.

There are around 22 districts in Tamil Nadu which have been declared as hotspots. There are 14 such districts in Maharashtra, 11 in Andhra Pradesh, and 12 Rajasthan. Within the 170 red zones, there are 123 districts with large outbreaks and 47 with clusters.

The health ministry has issued detailed guidelines to states for containment in areas where there is an outbreak. Only essential services will be allowed in these areas and entry and exit points will be strictly defined.



The health ministry has issued detailed guidelines to states for containment in areas where there is an outbreak

PHOTO: PTI

### KEY UPDATES

**India to sell 89,000 tablets** of HCQ to Malaysia

**Over 2 million jobs** at risk in Indian aviation, dependent sectors, says IATA

**UK minister hails India-UK ties** as the first consignment of 2,800,000 packets of paracetamol from India hits shelves

**Bandra chaos:** Activist, reporter who cited an internal railway ministry note arrested

Special teams, comprising health workers, municipal corporation staff, and volunteers, will conduct door-to-door surveys to check for Covid-19 symptoms, such as cold, fever and breathlessness. Contact tracing and health surveillance will be an important part of the containment strategy. They will also conduct sample-based testing for those with influenza-like sickness and severe and acute respiratory illness. Such testing will also be extended into the buffer zone -- which extends a few km beyond the epicentre.

"We have told states not to wait for cases to rise but act in advance. Those not in the red zone have to work on a similar strategy," Aggarwal said.

Through the data gathered, the government will define focus areas for intervention.

Business Standards 16/04/2020

NEW DELHI: Aircraft are designed to fly. Which is why, when they are grounded for weeks together, different parts of the flying machines start whining.

The workload goes up, especially for the undercarriage that rests on wheels. When life was normal, an A320 aircraft for instance would be at work 14-15 hours a day, flying passengers to domestic

destinations. But after the coronavirus rendered it temporarily jobless, its tyres were suddenly left to bear—24/7—the over-75,000kg that the behemoth weighs.

If parked in one position for days together, tyres tend to develop a flat spot. “To avoid that, the aircraft should be moved every three days. Towing tractors move them forward and backward in order to rotate the tyres so that a different point is left in contact with the ground,” said a senior Air India aircraft maintenance engineer requesting anonymity.

Indian carriers operate a fleet of around 650 aircraft; of this, a few have been operating charter flights and repatriation flights. In the past three weeks then, tow tractor operators across airports would have moved the rest, say about 620 aircraft, to and fro at least seven times each to prevent flat spots. With the lockdown extended, the aircraft will need to “stretch their legs” till May 3.

Keeping an aircraft flying is work, but keeping it on the ground is work too. “With the grounding, the workload of aircraft engineers and technicians has only gone down by 35-40%,” says the engineer, listing the maintenance routine around an aircraft, even when it’s left parked for the long haul.

Last week, the US aviation regulator ordered airlines to switch their Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft on and off every 51 days to prevent “potentially catastrophic failure scenarios” in the future. For all other aircraft, once every month the engine needs to be switched on and left to run for about 15 minutes—to allow oil to wash through the engine parts and prevent corrosion.

Then there is the “A check”, which for an A320 for instance, has to be carried out every 90 days or after 750 flying hours. “It takes about 250-400 man hours to complete an A-check,” said an A320 engineer, adding that an airline fleet goes through time-bound checks, irrespective of whether flying is banned or not.

D Anand Bhaskar, CEO of Air Works, a major aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul company, said that they are currently maintaining and preserving aircraft as per a guidance of “parking period of less than 1 month and in flight-ready condition”. “If the parking period is further extended, we may need to perform additional tasks on engines— to protect the external surface from climate conditions; the engine fuel system, to avoid corrosion and contamination in pumps, gear box, etc; the fuel system, to avoid microbiological contamination; landing gear, to prevent corrosion and ensure smooth operation; water and toilet system, to avoid formation of contamination, corrosion, and to ensure cleanliness,” said Bhaskar. Besides, all open ports exposed to the atmosphere have to be blanketed to prevent deterioration due to environmental factors and to discourage birds from building their nests, he added.

An Air India engineer said: “The maintenance plan is followed rigorously, else the regulator might cancel the airworthiness certificate granted to the aircraft.” After all, unlike a car or a bus, an aircraft cannot be halted and pulled aside if it develops a problem mid-air.

The Economic times of India 16/04/2020

NEW DELHI: Vistara chief Leslie Thng on Wednesday announced that senior employees will be going on compulsory leave without pay for up to three days between April 15 and 30 as a measure to further conserve the airline's cash flow amid lockdown to combat the COVID-19 threat.

On March 27, the airline had also introduced compulsory leave without pay for up to three days between April 1 and April 14 for the same set of senior employees.

The compulsory no-pay leave will affect around 1,200 employees in senior grades. The remaining 2,800 employees of the airline such as members of cabin crew and ground handling services will be unaffected.

The Vistara chief said in an email to employees, which has been accessed by PTI, that the airline is planning to restart flight operations in a phased manner whenever the government allows it to do so.

"With the announcement by the government of India on extending the lockdown, we continue to suspend all our domestic and international operations till May 3, 2020 and this further impacted significantly on our cash flow with no revenue being generated over an extended period of time," Thng said.

He said the airline has made "some progress" with a few of its key partners and suppliers in "reducing and/or deferring" some of its immediate operating expenditures.

Thng added the airline continues to pursue similar measures "aggressively" with other partners and suppliers.

He mentioned the airline has to take a "tough and difficult decision" on reducing staff costs with the objective to preserve jobs.

"Therefore, for the period April 15 to April 30 we will continue with Compulsory No Pay Leave (CNPL) for all staff, except for staff in Level 1A and 1B, as follows: Staff in Level 4 and 5 to go on three days CNPL, Staff in Level 2 and 3 to go on two days CNPL, Staff in Level 1C to go on one day CNPL," he said.

The above CNPL is in addition to what Vistara had implemented for the period of April 1 to April 14, Thng noted.

"While the situation remains fluid, we are planning to resume flight operations in a phased manner whenever authorities allow us to do so," the CEO stated.

"For the initial period, we may not be able to fully restore our suspended network and therefore our financials will continue to be adversely impacted. We must continue our focus on cutting expenditures, including continuing some of the measures that we have implemented in April," he said.

Reacting on the decision, Vistara spokesperson said, "The extension of lockdown and suspension of our services till May 3, 2020 further impacts our cash flow significantly. As part of a number of steps we are taking to conserve cash and save costs, we had to make the difficult decision of further reducing our staff costs with the objective of preserving jobs.

"For the period between April 15-30, 2020, about 30 per cent of Vistara's workforce will take compulsory no-pay leave of one to three days, depending on employment grades (three days for senior-most employees). This decision does not impact the remainder 70 per cent of Vistara staff,"

he added.

India is under lockdown till May 3 to curb the spread of coronavirus, which has infected more than 11,000 people and killed over 350 people in the country till now.

The Economic Times of India 15/04/2020

NEW DELHI: FMCG major Godrej Consumer Products (GCPL) on Thursday said **the new guidelines would help the companies restore the supply chain in the second phase of the lockdown.**

**However, availability of labour for the industry is still the biggest challenge in scaling up production, and the government should encourage people to come back to work in a "graded manner",** it added.

Terming the availability of labour as critical in scaling up production, it has suggested the government to have tripartite dialogues with worker associations/unions and industry to allay the health and safety concerns of the workers and a Covid-19 insurance scheme.

**"We are hopeful that the recent guidelines issued by the government will help restore supply chain operations in this second phase of the lockdown, in a staggered manner.**

"It will be critical to ensure that these guidelines are uniformly and speedily implemented on the ground to avoid stock shortages and to ensure availability of essential items," GCPL Managing Director and CEO Vivek Gambhir told PTI.

According to him, the government is attempting to strike the "delicate balance between lives and livelihoods" through a gradual revival of economic activity.

"A gradual ramp up of manufacturing in key sectors, while ensuring that the appropriate safety standards and hygiene protocols are in place is a welcome step," said Gambhir.

He also said that it was important for the government to encourage people to come back to work, in a graded manner.

"Labour availability continues to be one of the biggest challenges in scaling up production. Bringing back workers to their workplaces through compassion and care would be critical," he said.

Gambhir has also said that concerted efforts are also necessary to support farmers, daily wage earners, migrant workers and MSMEs, particularly, who have suffered greatly from this crisis.

"Rural growth has been significantly impacted over the last few quarters, and we hope for some impetus from allowing agricultural and horticultural activities to resume for the harvest," he said.

**The government on Wednesday issued new guidelines for the second phase of lockdown and allowed functioning of industrial units located in rural areas from April 20 although all kinds of public transport continue to be suspended till May 3.**

India is presently going through an unprecedented lockdown since March 25 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Economic times of India 16/04/2020

This is the single most challenging time for aviation in the world, SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said today.

Talking about the current Covid situation in the country and the complete lockdown imposed by the government, Singh, in an interview to ET Now, said that **even though the crisis has brought the country's aviation sector to a complete standstill, this is the perfect time to bring about structural reforms in the sector.**

"People say that India only reforms in a crisis and if that is true, we should certainly use this crisis to bring about the reforms that we have sought for so long," he said.

**Talking about reports about flights being allowed to function with only limited capacity, the co-founder of the budget airline said that such a system may not be sustainable in the long-run.**

**Flying with a 60-65% passenger load is not viable and if the restrictions are in place for long, many of India's airlines will find it difficult to fly profitably,** Singh noted.

"Airlines are in a situation where sometimes 85% or 90% load factors also do not make us money because of the structure that we have around us," he said.

**Emphasising on the need for government stimulus, Singh said, "government will have to find a way to reduce on the cost side some of our costs if a situation like this continues."**

On the government's requests to India Inc to avoid layoffs at this time, Singh said it would be very difficult to adhere to. "There is a huge amount of short-term pain, especially for those people who are not getting their salary, getting reduced salaries, getting delayed salaries, that we can never minimize," he said.

**The aviation industry has been the hardest hit industry in this crisis, he said, "but in all of this there is an opportunity for the aviation sector to re-look at the way we do our business."**

**Many airlines in India are close to bankruptcy as their cash reserves are running out amid the nationwide lockdown. Almost all the Indian airlines, including SpiceJet, have introduced cost cutting measures such as pay cuts and leave without pay to deal with the coronavirus crisis.**

The airline, on March 31, had announced that it would cut the salary of its top and mid-rank employees by 10-30 percent for the month of March.

India had imposed a 21-day lockdown from March 25 to curb the coronavirus pandemic, which was then extended till May 3rd. Consequently, all domestic and international commercial passenger flights were suspended for this time period.

The Economic Times of India 16/04/2020

NEW DELHI | MUMBAI: "Wish I could go back in time", yearns a pilot who was in the cockpit of a Jet Airways plane that landed little past midnight at Mumbai airport on April 18, 2019. Not many thought it will be the last flight of the once-storied carrier, where scores of pilots and other staff served for at least two decades.

As the grounding of the cash-starved Jet Airways nears one year, many dreams have been shattered but there is optimism of an insolvency resolution-led new birth.

The airline announced temporary suspension of services on April 17 last year and the last flight S2-3502 that took off from Amristar at around 10:30 pm touched down at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport at 12:22 am on April 18.

Jet Airways' low-cost arm JetLite operated the flight with a Boeing 737-800 aircraft, which was later taken on lease by no-frills airline SpiceJet.

From a sense of belonging to disbelief to lingering hopes of revival, a few former staff spoke to have myriad emotions when they recalled Jet Airways days.

For Nidhi Chaphekar, the Jet Airways cabin crew member who was injured in a terror attack at Brussels airport in 2016, the closure of the airline is more tough than the terror incident.

Chaphekar, who was with the airline for nearly 24 years, is now a motivational speaker and has also released a book.

There are lot of troubles for many former employees. Some are even under depression and some are doing part time jobs, including taking tuitions, she said.

"I worked with Jet Airways for 21 years and everything looked like a dream. For many like me, the clock has come back to a standstill," a senior pilot who flew Airbus 330 plane told .

Requesting anonymity since he is now working with an overseas airline, the pilot said like him, many of his colleagues have also got jobs with foreign carriers but there are issues to deal with.

After Jet Airways shuttered with no money to fly last year, thousands of staff came together for public meetings, silent protests and made representations to the government and other authorities. Candle light marches were also organised in various cities, including the national capital and Mumbai.

Some drivers who had worked with Jet Airways are now driving Ola, Uber and auto rickshaws, according to the pilot.

Jet Airways, which began its journey as an air taxi operator with service from Mumbai to Ahmedabad, had about 1,300 pilots and a total of about 20,000 employees at its peak.

Captain Mohit Dagar said memories are still fresh when he joined the airline as a trainee first officer more than 11 years ago.

He was the pilot-in-command of the last flight that operated on April 17.

"Some days I wish I could go back in time. Not to change anything but to feel a few things again," he told from Dubai.

Sounding nostalgic about his Jet Airways days, Dagar said there were so many great memories such as in getting command, becoming trainer, flying to so many wonderful and challenging airports.

"One thing I am really grateful (for) is the kind of training I received. You realise this only when you go out in the world to a new company. Wherever I go, whichever aircraft I fly, there will always be a Jet pilot deep down in my heart," he said.

A senior executive, who was privy to most developments during the final months of Jet Airways, said the airline was a vibrant place to work and there was always a sense of belonging.

"The D-day (April 17) was not expected by anyone at the airline... It was a disbelief when the operations were suspended on April 17," he said on condition of anonymity.

According to him, Jet Airways brand has outlived the airline's operational presence and it was the loss of a national brand rather than just an airline.

At the peak of its operations, Jet Airways had little over 120 planes. When the operations came to a halt due to mounting debt woes and unpaid salaries, the airline had around 16 own planes.

Amit Kelkar, who worked with Jet Airways for 23 years as an aircraft maintenance engineer, said many employees had to make huge compromises in salaries and designations at new companies.

He was also the vice president of Jet Aircraft Maintenance Engineers' Welfare Association.

Irrespective of operations, Jet Airways' work of maintaining planes in an airworthy condition was on till May 31, 2019. After that, approval for maintenance and training was suspended, he noted.

Sharing sentiments of many others, he said payment of EMIs was a big issue for most even as he added that a substantial number of former Jet Airways staff are still waiting patiently in the hope of revival.

Kelkar, who is also actively involved in the insolvency resolution process, said that many questions about Jet Airways reaching the current situation remain unanswered.

Released in February, Chaphekar's book is about her experience after Brussels airport terror attack. The book is about how she faced the negativity and about grit, she noted.

Her photograph taken soon after the terror attack on March 22, 2016, was widely carried.

**On June 20, 2019, the National Company Law Tribunal admitted the insolvency petition filed against Jet Airways.**

**While some entities expressed their interest in the airline, no concrete proposals have come up so far. On March 18, 2020, the tribunal allowed 90 days' extension for the corporate insolvency resolution process of Jet Airways.**

The Economic times of India 15/04/2020



Dubai: Aviation giant Emirates has launched a 10-minute coronavirus blood test for passengers departing from its Dubai home base, in what it claimed Wednesday as a first for the industry. The airline resumed limited passenger flights earlier this month after the United Arab Emirates grounded all commercial aircraft.

**The flights are open to foreign citizens who wish to leave the country, but no incoming passengers are allowed.**

**"Passengers on today's flight to Tunisia were all tested for COVID-19 (respiratory disease) before departing from Dubai," the airline said in a statement. "Emirates is the first airline to conduct on-site rapid COVID-19 tests for passengers."**

The blood tests were conducted by the Dubai Health Authority in the check-in area, with results coming out within 10 minutes.

"We are working on plans to scale up testing capabilities in the future and extend it to other flights," said Chief Operating Officer Adel al-Redha.

**"This will enable us to conduct on-site tests and provide immediate confirmation for Emirates passengers travelling to countries that require COVID-19 test certificates." Emirates, the largest carrier in the Middle East, has also said that cleaning and disinfection of planes will take place in Dubai after each flight.**

The UAE, which groups seven emirates including Dubai, has declared almost 5,000 coronavirus cases and 28 deaths.

It has imposed a sweeping crackdown, including the flight ban and closure of borders, shopping malls, entertainment centres and markets.

A two-week curfew was imposed in Dubai on April 4 following a big jump in the number of cases in the UAE, where some 10 million people live, 90 per cent of them expatriates.

The Economic times of India 16/04/2020

India's largest airline IndiGo is ready to restart operations in a curtailed manner from May 4 and will temperature screen all passengers before boarding.

Chief operating officer (COO) Wolfgang Prock-Schauer, in an internal memo, asked staff to maintain 1 metre distance from each other and prevent assembling of two people at the same time.

**According to a plan shared, the airline will gradually increase capacity in the following months and re-start international routes, depending on government restrictions.** The government has extended the lockdown by 20 days, which means airlines will have to stay grounded till May 3. **This means zero revenue and creeping fixed costs like salary and lease rentals.** All airlines are eager to restart operations.

**"We will begin domestic operations only on May 4.** At present, our singular focus will be preserving health of our customers and employees," IndiGo Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Ronojoy Dutta said in a public statement.

The internal memo by Prock-Schauer, soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement to extend the lockdown, laid out a detailed procedure of restarting operations. **"Any customer suspected to have fever will not be allowed to board and refund will be given,"** Prock Schauer wrote.

**The airline will also follow strict zonal boarding process to prevent grouping of passengers at the same time.**

**Indian aviation regulator DGCA is framing a set of protocols to ensure that distancing is measured in confined places like aircraft and airport once air services resume. The steps include measures by keeping middle seat and the last three rows empty. This will decrease the capacity of an aircraft significantly.**

**IndiGo also has also decided to disinfect aircraft after every arrival and deep-clean planes every night. "Special focus should be given to touch points like tray tables, arm rests, overhead nozzles, crew call button, lavatories, and door and sink taps during cleaning,"** Prock-Schauer added.

**A longer procedure of disinfection after arrival will increase turnaround time and the airline will have to reduce number of flights significantly to maintain operations on time.**

**On March 24, the last day before the lockdown when other airlines had cut flights significantly, IndiGo operated 850 flights and carried 120,000 passengers. The airline has shifted its entire training system online, including ongoing training at its academy – Ifly. All cabin crew and airport operations team are being trained through a pictorial online programme.**

Lead cabin attendants are undergoing telephonic announcement training through videoconferencing app Zoom.

**DGCA has also extended the window to renew licences and conduct recertification tests as well as exams by 90 days for airlines and airports.**

**IndiGo and SpiceJet have also decided to fill its airport buses at 50 per cent capacity when services resume. IndiGo will also discontinue on-board meal services.**

Business Standards 14/04/2020

**Domestic and international flights will be suspended till May 3 as the central government has extended the lockdown. Passenger associations and experts want airlines to stop advance bookings until resumption is certain.**

"The railway ministry has ruled that there will be no advance bookings on trains until further notice. The civil aviation ministry should similarly instruct airlines to halt unfair practice of taking advance bookings until resumption is certain and an interim transition schedule has been established," aviation consultancy CAPA said in a tweet on Tuesday evening.

The first phase of the 21-day lockdown ended on Tuesday. All airlines except Air India were accepting bookings for domestic flights beyond April 14 but now those would be cancelled as the government has extended the lockdown.

Airlines, however, are not offering a full refund for cancelled flights and instead are holding the ticket amount in a credit shell for future bookings.

IndiGo has announced limited resumption of flights from May 4 while GoAir has extended its 'Protect Your PNR' scheme offering free rescheduling of tickets.

“Some carriers have opened full schedule for sale from May 4. Even if flights resume from that date, which is not certain, it is highly unlikely that full operations will resume from Day One. Moreover, flight cancellations are almost inevitable, resulting in more passenger funds in credit,” CAPA said. D Sudhakara Reddy, president of Air Passengers Association of India, said in a tweet that inquiry should be carried out and action taken against airlines for not giving refund to passengers for flights after April 14. Airlines have pocketed the ticket money and are only offering credit shell or vouchers to flyers, he added.

Business Standards 14/04/2020

The country's two largest private airports, in Delhi and Mumbai, are taking different routes to seek a waiver from revenue payment to the Airports Authority of India (AAI) as the nationwide lockdown continues.

While GVK group-owned Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) has invoked the force Ltd (DIAL) has opened a dialogue with the AAI for the same. A MIAL spokesperson didn't respond to a query on the matter.

**The AAI has not yet agreed to give a waiver and has instead asked the two entities to defer the payment by three months. “We took legal opinion from the Solicitor General of India and have decided to defer their payment for April-June. But as of now, we have not agreed to a force majeure event and haven't given any waiver,” said a senior AAI official.**

DIAL and MIAL under concession agreements with the AAI, signed during the privatisation process in 2006, have to pay part of their revenue to the authority.

**DIAL pays 45.99 per cent and MIAL 38.7 per cent of its revenue as fees to the AAI. This forms the bulk of the AAI's revenue, making it one of the few profitable public sector units in the country. A complete waiver, said AAI officials, would force the authority to increase its external borrowings.**

The difference in opinion represents **the difficulty Indian corporations are set to face to invoke force majeure against their liability, especially to government entities.** “Force majeure is not an Indian law concept and therefore corporates are facing huge liabilities on account of disruption caused by Covid-19. This may lead to a long-drawn litigation,” Mohit Saraf, senior partner at law firm Luthra & Luthra, said.

Sources aware of the development said **DIAL had decided against invoking the force majeure clause as it wanted to avoid a legal route, which could possibly land in arbitration.**

**Instead DIAL, sources said, may approach the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) for an increase in airport charges to help adjust the losses caused by the coronavirus outbreak and the subsequent lockdown. The AERA has the mandate to fix airport tariff for a period of five years and is in the process of fixing tariff for 2019-23.**



“We have been making representations to the government for various support measure to enable sustenance during this crunch period. Overall traffic got badly impacted in Q1 and will take time to recover. We expect serious impact in FY21,” a DIAL spokesperson said.

**Among the relief measures sought by DIAL are a waiver on revenue share, income tax and a sanction of grant which will cover fixed expense of the airport.**

**The extension of the lockdown, stretching the no-flight period to 40 days, has grounded not just the airlines but also the airports.** Major airports like Delhi and Mumbai are staring at a steep 40-60 per cent fall in passenger volume this financial year.

Senior executives of airport operators said a bilateral negotiation, rather than invoking the force majeure clause, was a much safer way to seek a waiver. “Invoking force majeure will also mean that the other party has the right to terminate the contract as the airport operator is basically saying it cannot honour the contract signed during the said period,” said an executive.

**“The revenue shortfall due to the dip in air traffic could be trued up for all the airports on account of the regulatory nature of the sector. With a tariff order yet to be released for all airports, the impact of the same can be factored in and adjusted in the tariff for the subsequent control period,”** noted Vishal Kotecha, associate director at India Ratings.

Business Standards 17/04/2020

Jet Airways rivals have taken its aircraft and routes, but employees and creditors continue to wait for their dues one year after the airline's closure.

The airline operated its last flight between Amritsar-Mumbai on April 17 last year as lenders turned down its demand for an emergency funding. **The Naresh Goyal-founded airline, among the first private carriers to take to the skies in 1993, collapsed under a mountain of debt and a cash crunch. It is under insolvency since last June with admitted claims to the tune of Rs 16,000 crore. Now, the Covid-19 crisis has dashed its revival prospects.**

**Before the nationwide lockdown, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) granted an additional three months to the airline's resolution professional to find a suitor on the grounds that lenders**

**would get better value for their assets if these were sold via a formal resolution plan, instead of the liquidation route.**

Till last month, the Russian Development Fund and Prudent ARC were in the fray to revive the airline, but did not submit a concrete plan.

**“In view of the order passed by the NCLAT in suo moto appeal, the period during which there is a lockdown will be excluded while calculating the period of resolution process,” said Ashish Pyasi Associate Partner Dhir and Dhir Associates.**

“By giving extension, the NCLT gave additional life to the process so that viable resolution plan can be explored. It is pertinent to note that the nature of assets is such that in liquidation these assets may not fetch the same value and may become obsolete. Therefore, for maximisation of asset value it is important that some viable resolution plan is explored,” Pyasi added.

However, **bankers believe given the current situation, a revival for Jet looks very difficult.**

"Overall aviation industry is in a crisis and airlines have cash flow problem. **Expecting a company to submit a revival plan for Jet Airways looks out of question.** Even realising good value from liquidation would be difficult as globally airlines are grounding planes," said a bank executive.

**Jet Airways has 12 aircraft including three fully owned Boeing 737s, six Boeing 777s and three Airbus A330s including one leased to Air Serbia. In January it decided to sell one of its Boeing 777 aircraft to KLM to settle pending aircraft loan and meet insolvency process costs in the Netherlands but the deal is yet to fructify.**

**While several pilots, engineers and cabin crew have found jobs in other airlines in India and abroad, about 4000 employees are still on the rolls of Jet Airways.**

"It has been difficult for employees to sustain without a regular income. Many have sold their ornaments or broken their fixed deposits to run household. Some have even gone to the native places," said Nidhi Chaphekar, Jet's cabin manager turned motivational speaker. Chaphekar and a few of her colleagues are still optimistic about Jet's revival. "The Jet brand is still alive. The aircraft have been preserved. All we are hoping is that government support revival and pay us at least one month salary," she added.

"I have exhausted all my savings and my sister is helping me pay my home loan EMIs. In the absence of regular income I have been forced to put up my house in Mumbai for sale and move to Orissa with my children," said Geetanjalee Parelkar, a Boeing 777 pilot in the airline.

**As of March 2020, more than 20,000 claims have been made totaling to over Rs 37,000 crore. The workmen and employees have claimed more than Rs 1,400 crore and financial creditors have claimed over Rs 11,000 crore from the defunct airline company.**

Business Standards 16/04/2020

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, and senior policymakers in the Prime Minister's Office and finance ministry met on Thursday to finalise a second stimulus package for those worst affected by the Covid-19-related nationwide lockdown.

An announcement is imminent. **The Centre is unlikely to announce one “big-bang” stimulus package and instead will come up with smaller, targeted announcements**, Business Standard has learnt.

This means that over the coming months, there will be a series of stimulus packages to revive the economy.

Additionally, the fiscal situation of the Centre and the states has been discussed at the highest levels of government, and **there are deliberations going on regarding relaxations to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act.**

The upcoming package could be roughly similar in size to the Rs 1.7-trillion package, announced by Sitharaman in late March. **That package was around 0.8 per cent of GDP, much smaller than that of most other G20 nations.**

The United States’ stimulus package was pegged at 11 per cent of GDP, Australia’s at 9.7 per cent, and Brazil’s at 3.5 per cent, according to data portal Statista.

**Industry bodies like Assocham and the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry have been asking for big-bang packages, ranging from Rs 9 trillion to Rs 23 trillion.**

Senior government officials are saying the Centre has decided to have smaller, targeted announcements rather than one big package.

**“Our approach is not one grand plan but repeated responses. Unlike other countries, there will be no single package worth 5 or 10 per cent of GDP, but rather a step-by-step approach. In times of uncertainty, we cannot expend all our resources in one go,” said an official aware of the deliberations within the government.**

## BOOSTER DOSE

Size of Covid-19 packages announced by some G-20 nations so far



The upcoming package will again be aimed at the urban and rural poor, including migrant labourers stuck in places away from their homes; other disadvantaged sections of society; micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs); and **likely some of the worst-affected sectors as well.**

On Wednesday, the government allowed economic and industrial activity to resume in rural areas, where the harvesting season for Rabi crops has begun. This has been done primarily with the intention of “rural and agricultural development and job creation”. Prohibition will not be entirely lifted in commercial and manufacturing but production units in rural areas, industrial estates, and export zones can reopen if workers stay on their premises or nearby.

The measures being finalised could include easier access to credit for MSMEs and further cash and food transfers. There is a proposal for another hike in payments under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, and disbursements under the PM-KISAN scheme could be further expedited.

Some decisions the Union Cabinet took on Wednesday but have not made them public may find their way into the package.

Meanwhile, sources say given the revenue crunch that the Centre is facing, and in the light of states seeking more funds to battle the pandemic, the Centre and states' existing fiscal commitments have also been discussed at top levels of government. The Centre is looking at multiple options, including relaxing the FRBM Act or whether the Reserve bank of India should monetise the fiscal deficit or not.

According to the FRBM target, the Centre's fiscal deficit is slated to be 3.5 per cent of GDP. Multiple experts, including former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian, have said **the Centre should provide immediate clarity for itself, the states, and the markets, on relaxing the budgetary, borrowing, and fiscal targets.**

Business Standards 16/04/2020

**New Delhi: The Civil Aviation Ministry on Thursday said the passengers who had booked flight tickets during the first phase of lockdown for travel up to May 3 must get a full refund from the airlines without any cancellation charges if they ask for it.**

Several passengers have been complaining on social media as domestic airlines have decided not to give refunds in cash for cancelled flights due to the lockdown and instead issue credit for future travel.

India imposed the first phase of lockdown from March 25 to April 14 to curb the spread of coronavirus. The second phase of lockdown is from April 15 to March 3.

The Economic Times of India 16/04/2020

New Delhi: The collapse of Jet Airways was a reflection of the challenging environment in the country, including high operating costs and a regulatory regime that restricts the ability of airlines to operate as normal commercial businesses, according to the IATA.

The full-service carrier, which flew for nearly 26 years, suspended flights on April 17 last year after running out of cash for its daily operations. Apart from creating a significant capacity shortage in the country's aviation sector, the grounding of the airline impacted thousands of jobs.

**"The collapse of Jet Airways was a reflection of the challenging environment in India - high operating costs, including infrastructure and fuel, a highly competitive domestic airline market, and a regulatory regime that restricts the ability of airlines to operate as normal commercial businesses," Albert Tjoeng, Assistant Director for Corporate Communications (Asia Pacific) at IATA, said.**

His comments came in response to queries from related to Jet Airways completing one year of closure.

Jet Airways was a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA). Currently, it has around 290 airlines as members.

**Undergoing the insolvency resolution process at present, a concrete bid is yet to be submitted for Jet Airways even though some entities had expressed interest in the airline.**

**Shares of Jet Airways have plunged 88 per cent since suspending operations in April last year.**

According to Albert Tjoeng, a lot has happened in the last one year.

**"Airlines globally are now facing an existential crisis as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We are now expecting a revenue loss of USD 314 billion and passenger demand to fall by 48 per cent compared to 2019. Airlines are facing a liquidity crisis, burning USD 61 billion of their cash reserves in Q2 2020," he said.**

The Economic Times of India 16/04/2020

**Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Civil Aviation announced that the Aviation Ministry has taken no decision to open up domestic or international operations.**

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation clarifies that so far no decision has been taken to open domestic or international operations," Puri said. "Airlines are advised to open their bookings only after a decision in this regard has been taken by the Government."

This announcement has come even after several airlines already announced their separate plans to open up ticket bookings.

Air India yesterday announced that it will open up bookings for select domestic routes on May 4 and bookings for international flights will start from June 1.

Earlier Indigo Airlines had announced that it has made preparations to for a phase-wise commencement of flights from May 4.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 14 announced that the nationwide lockdown would be extended till May 3. The government also released an advisory lifting up several restrictions so that the country can slowly turn back to normalcy.

18/04/20 Business Today

**Amidst global financial crisis in the aviation industry, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has urged the government to waive off interests and delayed charges and accruals to airport operators along with loan guarantees to the airlines to make up for the gap.**

In a communication to Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola on Friday, the industrial body claimed that the aviation industry is facing a crisis of unimaginable proportion due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and with prolonged travel restrictions in place around the world, aviation sector will face a massive plunge in cash reserves as fleets remain grounded for almost a month now. **Many airline companies are on the brink of bankruptcy and almost 30 lakh jobs are at risk in the Indian aviation-dependent sectors.**

**"In addition to cutting down flights, airlines are putting aircraft in storage, moving forward fleet retirement dates and deferring delivery of new aircraft. What the Indian aviation industry needs to survive is an immediate bailout from the government," said Anand Stanley, Chairman, FICCI, Civil**



### Aviation Committee.

India's aviation industry is expected to post losses of \$3-3.6 billion in the June quarter because of COVID-19, with airlines sharing the bulk of the hit. While making recommendations related for fund manage, the **FICCI said that the government may immediately give a direction under Section 7(1) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934 (RBI Act) in order to ensure continued provision of air travel services to passengers (which are recognised as essential services under the Essential Services Maintenance Act, 1968) and to ensure the survival of airline operators who are incurring substantial losses on account of the outbreak.**

"Therefore, it is recommended 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 India airlines operators/their banks are **suspended with immediate effect for a period of 90 days,**" **FICCI stated in its recommendations.** It also urged the government to not remove the grounding until and unless the states also remove their lockdowns, so that people can actually travel. Demand will not return unless lockdowns are fully removed, it observed.

18/04/20 Pradip R Sagar/The Week

**The Indian airline, IndiGo today operated country's first-ever international flight with cargo on seats from Kochi to Abu Dhabi.** Willy Boulter, Chief Executive Officer, IndiGo notes that the aircraft transported fresh vegetables and other supermarket supplies for Indian expatriates in the United Arab Emirates in his LinkedIn post.

IndiGo's operated its inaugural cargo-on-seats flight domestically on April 16 from Delhi to Kochi carrying medical supplies for the Indian government. **Besides this, SpiceJet is the only Indian airline that has transported cargo in the passenger cabin.**

**The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on April 1, 2020, allowed Indian airlines to use their passenger flights and even their main cabin to move freight.** But it also came with some stringent guidelines about what to carry on seats. The guidelines ask not to carry dangerous goods or marine products on the seats, while perishables including vegetables and fruits are allowed.

18/04/20 STAT Trade Times

New Delhi: **With the government direction coming in, the online air travel aggregators have started giving cash refund to passengers who booked tickets between March 25 and April 14 for their travel plan between April 15 and May 3.**

Taking the first move in this direction travel aggregator Easy Trip Planners ("EaseMyTrip") has started refunding the money in cash to the customers from the company's own account during the time of nation-wide lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

As per the prevailing practice, in India, online travel aggregators had to deposit advance amounts with the airlines including Indigo, SpiceJet, Go Air, Air Asia against which they issue air tickets to aggregators for further booking by end users.

The airlines have now been providing money in the virtual wallet of travel aggregators, which does not reflect directly on their bank accounts, said an official adding that aviation sector is a cash flow business and the airlines are not able to refund directly to customers. "This virtual money with aggregators will be adjusted with fresh bookings," he said.

18/04/20 Tribune

**New Delhi: The Centre on Saturday said that under the Lifeline Udan initiative, 274 flights have transported around 463.15 tonnes of medical supplies across the country till April 17.**

**"274 flights have been operated under Lifeline Udan by Air India, Alliance Air, IAF and private carriers. 175 of these flights have been operated by Air India and Alliance Air. Cargo transported till date is around 463.15 tonnes," the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) said in a statement.**

**Besides Air India, Blue Dart, SpiceJet and IndiGo are also operating cargo flights on a commercial basis.**

On its part, SpiceJet operated 393 cargo flights from March 24 to April 17. Out of these, 126 were international cargo flights.

Similarly, Blue Dart has operated 134 domestic cargo flights from March 25 to April 17, while budget airline IndiGo has operated 29 cargo flights from April 3-17 carrying 31 tonnes of cargo.

18/04/20 IANS/daijiworld

Three lakh more Rapid Antibody Test kits used for the quick detection of the coronavirus have been dispatched to India from Guangzhou, the Indian envoy here said on Saturday, as India ramped up the global hunt to procure more kits to tackle the rising cases of the infection.

The kits were airlifted to Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu, Vikram Misri said. Great work on ground by our team, Mr. Misri tweeted.

This is in addition to the 6.50 lakh antibody and RNA Extraction Kits China sent earlier this week.

India is procuring the medical supplies from China in recent weeks to ensure availability of adequate supplies.

The Rapid Antibody Test Kits deliver results in 15 minutes and work on blood samples instead of nasal swabs to tell whether a patient has ever been exposed to the virus.

Two major consignments of the medical kits were reported to have been sent to India from China earlier as part of the efforts to step up testing especially in hotspots during the lockdown.

India has been facing severe shortage of personal protection equipments and testing kits in view of the rising cases.

By Saturday evening, the toll due to the infection rose to 488, while the number of cases climbed to 14,792, according to data provided by the Centre.

On Tuesday, Mr. Misri told the media here that India has placed orders for 15 million personal protection gear from China for medical personnel treating the Covid-19 patients, besides three million testing kits.

The orders are being placed with bona fide firms with the help of the Chinese government.

18/04/20 PTI/India Today

**The coronavirus pandemic has brought air travel to a screeching halt around the globe. Government restrictions and stay-at-home orders have stopped passengers from crossing borders or even leaving their homes, sapping demand for flight bookings. In the wake of these unprecedented changes, experts are beginning to look ahead to how the airline industry will restart once the outbreak is mostly behind us. When can we travel again, and what will it take to get air travel going again after so many different aspects of aviation have been put on months-long lockdown? There are countless moving pieces that need to be put in motion by organizations, airlines, and governments around the world to get air travel up and running in a post-coronavirus world.**

Our experts looked at the **four biggest barriers** we'll need to cross before we get back in the skies.

#### **Travel restrictions have to be rolled back, globally**

One of the major hits to air passenger demand has been the widespread travel restrictions in every corner of the world. Before international air travel can start to rebound, those will need to be rescinded.

"Regulatory restrictions will take longer to lift internationally," says Jay Shabat, senior analyst at travel industry publication Skift. In China, for instance, "they're not even taking international passengers at Beijing Airport right now. That kind of stuff may take longer to unravel and to get back to normal."

Airlines that are still operating a scant few international flights—usually to transport protective gear like masks back to their home nations—are finding themselves stuck in a web of constantly changing international regulations. "They're already seeing the challenge of regulations changing every two minutes," says Lauren Uppink, head of aviation, travel, and tourism at the World Economic Forum. "You might be flying somewhere and 10 minutes before landing you learn there's a new rule on whether crew can actually enter the country or not. That's already happening and will continue until everything is back to normal."

Organisations like the World Economic Forum, Uppink says, are trying to broker larger agreements with governments, airlines, and airports to implement a smoother transition to opening up travel than the piecemeal way that nations closed their borders and airlines cut routes. That effort will take time, and meanwhile, airlines with a more robust domestic market could start to bounce back first.

"You're going to see China and the U.S. are able to better balance domestic markets whereas [with] European carriers it's much more difficult," Uppink says. "They don't have a big enough domestic market to carry their operations." Small nation-states like Singapore and Hong Kong with extensive long-haul route networks will be in the same boat. "They've got many more restrictions to try and navigate—also much tinier domestic markets, so you are going to see that kind of disparity in terms of ability to rebound or length of recovery time," she says.

#### **Fleets need to come out of storage—and airplanes re-certified**

About half the world's fleet is grounded due to the coronavirus, estimates Helane Becker, an airline analyst at Cowen investment bank. [In India, nearly all aircraft are parked, except the few that are ferrying cargo or operating the rare relief flight.] Some of those are in long-term storage, with the engines preserved and all fuel and oil removed. When it's time for all those planes to start flying again, it will take time to get them back into flying mode.

"Every aircraft has to be certified and tested for ongoing operations," Uppink explains. "If you've got a number of aircraft parked off in the desert or in a storage yard somewhere, you might be keeping a portion of those, like 10 percent, checked up on weekly so they can be redeployed pretty quickly. But others, if they're being parked and not run or the engines aren't being turned on, it's going to be a process to reinstate them."

**The fastest timeframes for planes to be deployed is between 48 hours and five days, depending on how they're stored,** Uppink says. Each plane will have to meet certification standards set by the UN's International Civil Aviation Organization.

Many of the grounded planes won't ever fly again: US airlines will collectively retire between 800 and 1000 aircraft this year, according to Becker.

Conversely, a handful of carriers have continued flying most of their planes just to keep them ready to go when demand starts coming back, even if it means losing money. "Southwest is a good example," Shabat says. "They're losing money on every single flight that they operate." Why doesn't the airline ground all of its planes until the worst is over? "They said 'we can't just do that because we want to be ready to get going again when the time comes,'" he says.

**As far as which routes airlines will begin ramping back up as the number of coronavirus cases improve, experts again expect for carriers to focus on domestic routes first.** "People will be more reluctant to fly abroad at first," Shabat says. "Their first time back on an airplane after all this might be, 'I'm going to visit mom and dad in New York,' rather than 'I'm going to take a vacation in Paris.'"

As the outbreak begins to pass in China, and the nation's air travel starts to recuperate, trends show that domestic markets are starting to recover. "China is now returning to work and relaxing domestic travel restrictions," Brian Pearce, chief economist for the International Air Transport Association, said in a statement. "We've seen a slow resumption of domestic air services. Load factors of 60 percent show that passenger confidence is returning too, albeit slowly."

### **Airline crew and airport workers have to be brought back in large numbers**

It's not just planes that are currently grounded: thousands of flight attendants and pilots around the world have either been furloughed or have taken voluntary leave as fewer and fewer routes are operational. Bringing those critical staffers back into the fold post-outbreak must happen before airlines can restart their flights.

"It does take time, if you're a pilot and you haven't been flying for two months or three months, you have to get a certain number of [flying] hours," Shabat says. These rules are called recency requirements. Any pilot whose recency has lapsed due to the outbreak will need to make up time in a flight simulator before hopping back into an actual cockpit.

**For crew on carriers, we have to make sure pilots are having their accreditation rechecked depending on how long they've been off,"** Uppink says. But there's also the challenge of staff who have been redeployed somewhere else, she says. In places like Sweden and the U.K., flight attendants have been asked to become medical assistants in field hospitals on the front lines of the pandemic. Other crew members have been recruited into temporary military service, according to Uppink. Airlines will focus on "building up [their] staff again in a smart and efficient way," and then work on their employees' certifications, she says.

**Airport workers—who have been hard hit by furloughs as well—will also have to be brought back.** “In airports, you’re going to have the consideration of all your ground handling and security,” Uppink says. “And even just security clearance for airport staff that will have to be reactivated. All considerations that of course take time and are dependent on other things.”

Unfortunately, it’s not likely that all airline employees will be coming back on the job. Becker estimates that carriers will be about 30 percent smaller after this, and that there will be between 100,000 to 200,000 fewer workers employed at airlines worldwide by the end of the year than there were at the start of 2020.

### **Airports will need to adapt to new health measures**

**To help regain travelers’ trust after the pandemic abates, the air travel industry will need to implement new health regulations, especially in airports.** “The first thing that’s probably going to look different in airports, in particular, is health screening,” Uppink says. “Trying to understand what the rules are for the health screening—that’s going to be top of mind for a lot of people to build that trust again.”

**In order for operations to restart smoothly, airports around the world will need to agree upon uniform health measures.** “If new screening measures are going to be put in place in a number of different airports, that’s going to take different ways of operating” for airlines, Uppink says. A European airline, for example, might have three neighboring countries with different rules on wearing masks in airports, she explains—far more difficult for a carrier to follow than one uniform rule around the world.

Airports that are now reopening might offer some clues as to what fliers can expect. “Some people are looking to China as a possible template for what might happen,” Shabat says. “They’re taking temperatures three or four times for every passenger as they pass through the airport and board the planes.”

Large international airports, like New York JFK or Newark, will probably need to redesign some of their operations for a post-social-distancing world, too. “These are very, very busy, very populous airports, and after this you’re going to find that you’re not going to be able to use the same kind of square footage for the same processing of passengers,” Uppink says. **“So you’re going to have to consider airport redesign that adheres to whatever the governments are saying.”**

**Another change that could be coming down the pike? More technology, specifically biometrics. Facial recognition, fingerprint or eye-scan technology might become more common at security checkpoints and for check-ins,** according to Uppink. “That was a really increasing technology we were seeing in airports anyhow, so there’s a lot of opportunity to involve any biometric or digital identity programs in a way that would enable touchless or faster processing of passengers through airports,” she says.

**But mostly, air travel’s recovery will depend on striking the right balance between relaunching flights so passengers can book fares and reassuring fliers that it’s safe to be on a plane or in an airport again. Tackling that fear of going out in the world will be one of the key elements of restarting air travel,** says Uppink: “You’ve got to convince governments, institutions, and travelers to overcome the fear.”

The skies are eerily empty these days, presenting a new challenge for the world's embattled airlines as they work to safeguard thousands of grounded planes parked wingtip to wingtip on runways and in storage facilities.

**More than 16,000 passenger jets are grounded worldwide**, according to industry researcher Cirium, as the coronavirus obliterates travel and puts unprecedented strain on airline finances. **Finding the right space and conditions for 62% of the world's planes and keeping them airworthy have suddenly become priorities for 2020.**

Aircraft can't simply be dusted back into action. They need plenty of work and attention while in storage, from maintenance of hydraulics and flight-control systems to protection against insects and wildlife — nesting birds can be a problem. Then there's humidity, which can corrode parts and damage interiors. Even when parked on runways, planes are often loaded with fuel to keep them from rocking in the wind and to ensure tanks stay lubricated.

"Nobody thought this magnitude of preservation would need to be done," said Anand Bhaskar, chief executive officer of New Delhi-based Air Works, a plane repair and maintenance company. "Parking space is a problem. These are logistics nightmares which we're trying to work around."

#### Mass Grounding

**The number of passenger jets in service is the lowest in 26 years**, according to Cirium. Managing such large-scale storage is a challenge for an industry already in crisis, with airlines worldwide slashing capacity to close to zero or not flying at all. **The International Air Transport Association has warned that revenue from flying passengers could drop by nearly a third of a trillion dollars this year and that 25 million jobs are at risk.**

Airlines are hunting for space on the ground at airports or in longer-term storage facilities in arid places such as Australia's outback and the Mojave Desert in the U.S. At Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, **KLM Group has more than 200 aircraft at gates and on a runway, arranged according to size and type, and ensuring enough space for them to be towed if maintenance is required, according to a post on the company's website.**

“Schiphol is packed,” KLM Community Manager Annemiek Cornielje wrote. “Not with passengers, unfortunately, but with the many aircraft parked on the ramp and even on a runway.

Choreographing this sad and unique sight is quite a parking-puzzle,” she said, adding that Schiphol isn’t charging parking fees.

Charges differ from airport to airport. **In India, parking alone can cost \$1,000 a day for a large aircraft, according to Mark Martin, founder of Dubai-based Martin Consulting LLC.** For an airline with a fleet of more than 250 jets, even heavily discounted rates may mean expenses of \$12.5 million for a six-month grounding, without taking into account maintenance costs, he said.

Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways PJSC said its engineers are working around the clock maintaining its grounded fleet, a process that includes running engines and powering up aircraft, checking flight controls, and covering sensors and engines to protect inner workings from sand and dust. About 200 staff per shift clean plane cabins in hangars, from replacing seat covers to shampooing carpets, according to a video on the airline’s official Twitter account.

“I’ve never seen anything like this before in my aviation career,” Etihad’s Head of Technical Operations Gary Byrne said. The aircraft “are very intricate, complex pieces of machinery — it’s not like parking a car.”

Tires also need attention. Qantas Airways Ltd. said all planes from Boeing Co. 737s to Airbus SE A380s need to have their wheels rotated — by being towed on the tarmac or jacked into the air to be spun — every one to two weeks, while hydraulic fluid is put on landing gear to protect against rust. Giant silica moisture absorption sachets are also put inside engines to keep them dry, while all external holes on the fuselage are covered to block insects and nesting birds.

Qantas said it has more than 200 aircraft, including Jetstar’s Boeing 787 Dreamliners, parked at airports around Australia. The country’s climate makes it more suited for storage, especially compared with much of Asia, which has high levels of humidity as well as the threat of typhoons. Near Alice Springs in the Northern Territory, Asia Pacific Aircraft Storage Pty is holding aircraft for the likes of Singapore Airlines Ltd. and Fiji Airways.

The storage firm is expanding capacity to about 70 aircraft and considering raising that to more than 100, according to Managing Director Tom Vincent. “There is a scramble for proper storage facilities,” he said. “We have a large number of deliveries over the next coming weeks and months.”

**Asia Pacific has been a rapidly growing aviation market, with a slew of budget carriers from Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, India and elsewhere ordering thousands of planes, buoyed by an emerging middle class embracing flying. That expansion came to a screeching halt because of the coronavirus, which has also hit orders for manufacturing giants Boeing and Airbus.**

Finnair Oyj has parked aircraft at its Helsinki hub and has capacity if needed to use airports in Tampere and Rovaniemi, the capital of Lapland province. Work includes reconnecting aircraft batteries every 14 days, the airline said on its website. Once a month, a more extensive check is carried out that involves removing protective covers, starting engines and inspecting air-conditioning and anti-ice systems.

One big challenge with parked planes is brakes, which can fade within 24 hours, according to Finnair Vice President of Ground Operations Jukka Glader. Each of its jets requires 10 to 12 chocks behind the wheels to keep them in position. With so many aircraft grounded, Finnair ordered 500 wooden “corona chocks” from a local carpentry shop.

#### Parking Spots

British Airways has parked half of its fleet of 12 Airbus A380 superjumbos in Chateauroux, France, for longer storage. Tarmac Aerosave SAS, which has storage sites in France and Spain, is working to handle higher volumes of requests, while ComAv LLC is also experiencing increased demand for its facility at the Southern California Logistics Airport in Victorville, to the northeast of Los Angeles.

**At crowded airports like in New Delhi, which doesn’t have spare parking spots, a runway has been converted into a temporary storage area, like at Schiphol.**

“Whether it’s the multiple control surfaces or avionics or hydraulic systems, prolonged storage effectively means an impact to airworthiness,” said Satyendra Pandey, an independent consultant and former head of strategy at Go Airlines India Ltd. **“Long-term storage is a specialized skill and ideal in dry and hot environments. This aspect will have to be revisited as currently airplanes are parked at airports and runways across the globe.”**



Among other carriers, United Airlines Holdings Inc. expects to park about 400 aircraft, mostly at its hubs like Newark and Chicago, a spokeswoman said, while Delta Air Lines Inc. has sent planes to Pinal Airpark near Tucson, Arizona. American Airlines Group Inc. is using a maintenance base in Tulsa, Oklahoma, and facilities elsewhere.

“It might seem a simple task, but there’s some nuance to it,” APAS’s Vincent said. “It doesn’t just stop, there are the continuous, periodic checks.

Bloomberg for Time 17/04/2020

**New Delhi: India's fuel consumption slumped by a record 50 per cent in April as all petroleum products except LPG saw massive demand erosion following a nationwide lockdown halted economic activity and travel.**

According to provisional industry data for fuel consumption in the first half of April, petrol sales were down 64 per cent, while diesel slumped by 61 per cent. **Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) consumption collapsed by 94 per cent as most airlines have stopped flying.**

The only fuel that showed growth was LPG as the government dole of free cooking gas cylinders to poor households fired up consumption by 21 per cent during April 1 to 15, the data showed. Overall the decline in petroleum product sales was 50 per cent, it said.

The data pertains to sales made by three public sector (PSU) oil marketing companies. Private firms such as Nayara Energy do not share mid-month sales trend and their numbers get reflected only in the monthly consumption numbers released by the oil ministry in the second week of every month.

Industry officials said this is the biggest ever drop in sales and the first data for the complete lockdown period. March sales numbers were released last week but this included consumption in the pre-lockdown period as well.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had announced a 21-day lockdown beginning March 25, shutting offices and factories, barring those involved in essential services. Also, flights were suspended, trains stopped plying, vehicles went off the road and cargo movement stopped as most people were asked to stay home to help check the spread of coronavirus.

The lockdown was earlier this week extended till May 3. India had consumed 2.4 million tons of petrol and 7.3 million tons of diesel in April 2019. As much as 6,45,000 tons of ATF was used in that month last year.

In March 2020, the country's petroleum product consumption fell 17.79 per cent to 16.08 million tons. Diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country, saw demand contract by 24.23 per cent to 5.65 million tons.

17/04/20 PTI/New Indian Express

Hyderabad: **GVK Group-operated MIAL continues to relentlessly operate its cargo handling activities to cater to the greater need of mobilising and supplying essential commodities.** Since March 23, CSMIA air cargo exported 5,200 tonnes of medicines, medical equipment, vaccines, diagnostic reagents, dangerous goods, engineering goods and chemicals while 3,324 tonnes of freight including high volumes of commodities such as pharmaceuticals, dangerous goods, engineering goods and chemicals, imported.

On an average, the airport witnesses 8 to 9 cargo flights per day and the export flights majorly operate to countries such as USA, Germany, South Africa, France and the UK. Also, scheduled freighters and ad-hoc cargo charters continue to remain operational. Furthermore, CSMIA air cargo has traded a total of 3,788 tons of pharma products within India and globally.

17/04/20 Telangana Today

New Delhi: **The Government of India has suspended all existing visas granted to foreigners and all incoming passenger traffic into India through Immigration Check Posts (ICPs) till May 3.**

The rules will be applied to all except certain categories, an order issued by the foreigners' division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said.

**The ministry decided to extend the suspension of all existing visas granted to foreigners, except to those belonging to diplomatic, official, UN or international organisations, and employment and project categories, till May 3 in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.**

The ministry further directed that **all incoming passenger traffic into India through any of the 107 ICPs shall remain suspended till May 3**, which is the last date of the second phase of countrywide lockdown imposed to break the chain of transmission of Covid-19.

Similar restrictions were earlier issued by the Home Ministry when the first 21-day lockdown was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the midnight March 24.

Modi extended the lockdown for another 19 days on Tuesday as the pandemic is still growing in India, claiming 452 lives and the number of active cases going beyond the 11,500-mark.

17/04/20 IANS/daijiworld

**The coronavirus pandemic is expected to wipe out two-fifths of the global air passenger traffic in 2020, with volume across Asia-Pacific airports logging an estimated 42.1 per cent negative growth,** a report said. Besides, the traffic estimates for the first quarter of 2020 portray a distressing picture. **Airports in all regions will lose passenger traffic at double-digit rates and Asia Pacific (APAC) appears to be the most affected, with an estimated negative 38.9 per cent loss in volume for the first three months of the year,** followed by Europe (-23.9 per cent) and North America (-20.7 per cent), the Airport Council International (ACI) said in its report.

**The latest estimates show the reduction in global passenger traffic volumes as a result of the pandemic progressed from (-) 6.9 per cent in January to (-) 22.9 per cent in February and (-) 53.1 per cent in March, totalling to (-) 28.3 per cent decline in Q1 2020, it said.**

Terming any projections for the Q2 as a challenge amid general uncertainty about air travel, it said "for one, we are not able to foresee when the outbreak will be considered under control and wide-scale restart of air transportation would imply coordinated efforts of various national governments;

we have no indication that this will happen."

Total revenue of the airports across the world is expected to drop by as much as 45 per cent, with the highest decline (49 per cent) likely to be reported in North America followed by APAC region (48 per cent), as per the ACI.

**Altogether, the COVID-19 outbreak will wipe almost half of airport revenues in 2020, it said.**

**Amid these passenger revenue losses, the ACI said there is a need for the protection of airport charges and revenues as airports will need to ensure the continuity of basic services.**

17/04/20 PTI/India TV

**Pune: SpiceJet recently operated its cargo freighter on the Chennai-Singapore-Chennai and Singapore-Bengaluru routes carrying critical medical equipment and COVID-19 related medical supplies.**

The airline has transported **over 1500 tons of cargo carrying essential supplies** since the nation-wide lockdown began and has been extending all possible support to the Government, medical and pharma companies and international retailers to fight this war against the global pandemic.

Ajay Singh, Chairman & Managing Director, SpiceJet, said, "SpiceJet is putting its freighter and passenger aircraft to maximum use to carry medical and other vital supplies in these difficult times and is firmly committed and honoured to be a part of the government's 'Lifeline Udan' initiative."

He said, "SpiceJet's freighters have been flying non-stop carrying vital supplies to and from Hong Kong, Abu Dhabi, Kuwait and host of other places including South-East Asia. Since the lockdown began, we have operated around 200 domestic and international cargo flights transporting more than 1500 tons of cold chain medical supplies, medicines, medical devices for various state governments, medical and pharma companies along with essential supplies."

**The airline operated the country's first cargo-on-seat flight carrying vital supplies in the passenger cabin on April 7.** Since then, the airline has been regularly using its Boeing 737 aircraft to carry cargo in the passenger cabin.

**SpiceXpress, SpiceJet's dedicated cargo arm, has been regularly transporting surgical supplies, sanitizers, face masks, etc.** and providing 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.

17/04/20 Joy Sengupta/Times of India

**Kuala Lumpur: Low-cost carrier AirAsia is set to resume its scheduled domestic flights on April 29.**

**It said this would be followed by resumption of domestic flights in Thailand and the Philippines on May 1; India (May 4) and Indonesia (May 7), subject to approval from the authorities.**

**The resumption of services will initially be for selected key domestic routes, which will increase gradually to include international destinations around the network, once the situation improves and governments lift borders and travel restrictions.**

President (Airlines) of AirAsia Group, Bo Lingam said they were very pleased to be able to fly again and to serve their guests starting with domestic routes, and were hopeful of resuming full operations as soon as possible.

"We have undertaken a thorough review of our guest handling procedures both on ground and onboard in light of the Covid-19 pandemic," he said in a statement, here, today.

He added that AirAsia has been working closely with the airport authorities to ensure that all the relevant precautionary measures were in place to ensure a safe, pleasant and comfortable journey for everyone.

17/04/20 New Straits Times

**Private airlines are preparing to resume operations from May 4 after the end of the second phase of the nationwide lockdown. The airlines will adopt social distancing measures on ground and on board the aircraft as part of a new protocol against Covid-19.**

**GoAir and Vistara on Wednesday announced plans to resume operations from May 4. A SpiceJet executive, too, confirmed plans to restart service after end of lockdown, while IndiGo made an announcement on resumption of service on Tuesday. Air India, however, is yet to take a call in this regard.**

**"Check-in counters to open 3 hours prior to flight, and close one hour prior, to allow more time for sanitized processing of customers and baggage,"** GoAir said in a statement. Currently, check-in counters for domestic flights close 45 minutes before departure.

**GoAir said it will minimise crew interaction with passengers and suspend all on board sales. Only water will be provided, there will be no meals or snack service, it said.**

A Vistara spokesperson said "While the situation remains fluid, we plan to resume services in a phased manner starting May 4. **We will ensure social distancing across all touchpoints and continue with our stepped up cleaning measures.**"

Both GoAir and Vistara said that aircraft undergo **deep cleaning every day**. "Any passenger showing symptoms of fever and/or respiratory illness will undergo a precautionary check-up with the airport medical support team. We will also make temporary adjustments in some of the aspects of our onboard service purely to minimize interaction between cabin crew and customers," Vistara said.

16/04/20 Aneesh Phadnis/Business Standard

**It's the toughest time for the global aviation industry. With the suspension of international and domestic flights in a large number of countries, including India, due to lockdown, the global airlines industry is staring at losses of \$314 billion - as estimated by global body IATA. In India, the situation with domestic carriers is pretty grim with just three months of losses being pegged at \$3.6 billion (as per CAPA). The problem with the coronavirus crisis is that it has caught the entire airline industry unawares. Even the best-placed airlines like IndiGo (in terms of cash reserves) are now preparing to post record losses, and to witness a complete wipe-out of their reserves.**

But did airlines actually have a chance to be better-prepared to deal with a crisis of this magnitude? Experts say that domestic airlines would have been in a marginally better situation if they had

outsourced their ground handling operations to professional agencies.

**Back in 2016, the government developed a framework for new ground handling policy, and last year, the policy was implemented at the private airports. Following which, airlines like IndiGo, SpiceJet and GoAir started hiring ground handlers on their rolls because the policy prohibits the use of third-party contractors which was the norm back in 2016. Air India too manages its ground handling part with its own captive subsidiary - AIATSL (Air India Air Transport Services Limited).**

"Once the self-handling was allowed, most domestic carriers made a quick move. These airlines kept the ground handling close to themselves instead of handing it over to an outside agency," says a large ground handler. But there's a problem with self-handling. Globally, the airlines don't typically do self-handling. They focus on their core business of flying, and leave this aspect to outside agencies for a simple reason. Instead of hiring a lot of workforce, engaging an outside agency, which has expertise in the business, costs much less. How? A specialised agency uses shared resources and brings economies of scale that bring down the costs for everyone.

**"The airlines don't realise a large number of costs associated with self-handling. Most importantly, the cost benefit of not employing hundreds of people on their own rolls.** This factor keeps outside agencies at a variance when it comes to costs," says Murali Ramachandran, CEO (India) of Turkish agency Celebi Aviation Holding.

16/04/20 Manu Kaushik/Business Today

**The Air Navigation Services provider certificate issued by the Director-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to Airports Authority of India (AAI) certifying the GPS-Aided GEO Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) system for a period of 60 months (five years) from the date of issue being April 21, 2015 is about to lapse soon.**

**The certificate authorizing the holder AAI, to provide the facility to operate as navigational aids to support air traffic services for all users on equal terms and conditions is on the verge of expiry.** This certificate will be suspended, modified or withdrawn in case of any violations of the provisions of the Aircraft Act, 1934 and the Aircraft rules, 1937.

**In 2019, the ministry of Civil aviation postponed the requirement for aircraft registered in India to be equipped with GPS Aided Geo Augmented Navigation system (GAGAN) compatible avionics from January 2019 mandated earlier to June 30, 2020.** "All the aircraft being imported for registration on or after 30.06.2020 shall be required to be suitably equipped with GAGAN

equipment," the public notice published by the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said. GAGAN stands for GPS Aided GEO Augmented Navigation system. It is a system of satellites and ground stations that provides GPS signals to provide better position accuracy. GAGAN is a Space-Based Augmentation System (SBAS) jointly developed by ISRO and AAI to provide the best possible navigational services over Indian FIR (Flight Information Region) with the capability of expanding to neighboring FIRs.

**With the certification of GAGAN for approach and landing operations (APV 1) on 21st April 2015, India has become the third country in the world to have such capabilities.** GAGAN is the first system in the world to have implemented in the equatorial Ionospheric region. The GAGAN system is designed to help pilots navigate successfully under all-weather conditions by the accuracy of up to three meters, this capability would enable aircraft landing even on tough terrain and extreme weather. It will allow an aircraft to reduce fuel burn by flying on a specific path on straight routes and between two three-dimensional defined points.

16/04/20 Savita V Jayaram/IBTimes

NEW DELHI : **India is banning medical evacuation flights on concern the super-rich may falsely claim they need treatment so they can jet around the nation during lockdown**, people with knowledge of the matter said.

**Air ambulances and other medical evacuations are no longer allowed unless treatment can't be provided at the point of origin, and even then permission to fly is needed from local authorities, the federal aviation ministry and the aviation regulator, the people said, asking not to be named as the decision isn't public. The move aims to prevent the misuse of medical flights and ensure enough aircraft are available for emergencies.**

The government has already indefinitely banned all domestic and international commercial flights, and asked airlines not to take bookings. India's health-care infrastructure is widely criticized as inadequate and treatment often isn't reliable even if local doctors are qualified to attend to patients. That's driven demand for air ambulances among the more affluent.

Authorities will allow medical flights if they determine treatment isn't available locally and if the patient's condition is serious, the people said. The federal government will also allow the flights if India's states request them, and it is reviewing the guidelines to see if they can be relaxed, one of the people said.

"Air ambulance and medical evacuation services are essential services and defined as part of a humanitarian effort," said Mark Martin, founder of Martin Consulting LLC. "The government should allow flights keeping in view that India's most competent hospitals aren't situated in smaller towns."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week extended India's nationwide lockdown until May 3. The country has reported 17,615 virus cases and 559 deaths, according to data from Johns Hopkins University, but infectious diseases experts say the number is likely much higher given that India has only tested about 0.03% of its 1.3 billion population. Thousands of patients from overseas, including from the US and war-torn Afghanistan, visit India every year looking for cheaper health-care alternatives at its private hospitals. These hospitals often have tie-ups with air ambulance companies for transport. The medical tourism market was expected to be worth \$9 billion in 2020, according to a report from industry body FICCI last year.

Live Mint Aviation 20/04/2020

NEW DELHI: **Dassault Reliance Aerospace Ltd (DRAL) on Monday re-started operations at its Mihan special economic zone (SEZ) in Nagpur, in line with the government's plan to lift the nationwide lockdown in a phased manner, according to a company statement.**

The company will operate with **25-30% of its total strength in the first phase, and plans to scale up operations as per the directives of the district administration and local authorities.**

Dassault Reliance Aerospace supplies aero structure assemblies for Falcon 2000 business jets and components for Rafale aircraft, as part of the global supply chain for Dassault Aviation.

Anil Ambani-led Reliance Infrastructure Ltd holds 51% stake in DRAL, a joint venture with Rafale fighter jet manufacturer Dassault Aviation which owns the remaining.

The company said it will take all covid-19 related precautions to ensure the safety of its employees.

"All precautionary measures have been taken to ensure safe working environment under the prevailing circumstances," it said.

The government has allowed lifting of the nationwide lockdown in a phased manner from today. It released guidelines for some sectors that can resume activities, while taking all necessary steps to curb the spread of coronavirus.

The government had initially imposed a 21-day national lockdown, effective 25 March and till 14 April. With the rise in the number of covid-19 cases in the country, it decided to extend the lockdown until 3 May but allowed some sectors to resume operations.

While announcing the extension of the lockdown on 14 April, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said areas that show an improvement in reducing the number of cases will also see relaxations in the lockdown.

Live Mint Aviation 20/04/2020

**Restrictions on domestic and international flights will be lifted when the government is confident that spread of coronavirus has been controlled, and poses no danger to Indians, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Monday**, amidst reports of some airlines doing open bookings.

In a series of tweets, the minister also said a directive was issued on Sunday to airlines, restraining them from doing open bookings since they did not heed to government's advice in the matter.

"I want to once again say that flight restrictions that are in place as a result of India's fight against COVID-19 will be lifted once we are confident that spread of the virus has been controlled and it poses no danger to our country and people," he tweeted.

The minister said, "since some airlines did not heed our advisory and opened bookings, and started collecting money from flyers, a directive was issued to them on 19th April restraining them from doing so. They were also informed that they will be given sufficient notice and time to commence bookings."

While government-run Air India stopped the bookings after the government's advisory, private carriers ignored it and continued taking bookings for travel after May 3, prompting the aviation regulator **DGCA to issue a circular on Sunday**.

**"All airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets... Further, the airlines may note that they shall be given sufficient notice and time for restarting operations," the circular said.**

All domestic and international commercial passenger flights have been suspended for the lockdown period. However, cargo flights and special flights, permitted by the DGCA, can fly during the duration of the lockdown.

The Economic Times of India 20/04/2020

Informing airlines that the announcement on restarting of flights will be made separately, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) today issued an order asking airlines to not book tickets beyond May 3, 2020.

After the government extended the lockdown period by three weeks till May 3, 2020, airlines had started booking tickets beyond that day assuming flight operations will resume once the lockdown is lifted.

**"...There was no direction/clearance, which allows the airlines to start bookings for the journeys to be undertaken wef the 4th of May 2020. Further it has been noted that airlines have started booking tickets for journeys wef from 4th of May 2020. In this respect, it is brought to the notice of all concerned that no decision to commence the operation of domestic/international flights wef the 4<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 has been taken yet. In view of this, all airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets as described above," the DGCA said in an order today.**

The authority also said that airlines will be informed about restarting of flight operations separately. "Further the airlines may note that they shall be given sufficient notice and time for restarting of operations," the order said.

The DGCA order follows an advisory tweeted by aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri asking airlines to not take bookings beyond May 3, 2020.

While the tweet by the minister was not binding on airlines, the airlines continued with their bookings. However, it was not clear whether the order by the DGCA is binding on airlines or not.

The national carrier Air India had stopped bookings after the minister's tweet but private carriers continued with their booking schedule.

This recent ban on bookings will ensure that passengers do not end of bookings tickets on flights beyond, which may get cancelled if the government extends the lockdown period further or decide against resuming flight operations despite lifting the lockdown.

The government, on Thursday, had also ordered airlines to refund passengers, who had booked during the dates India was under lockdown in the first phase till April 14, 2020 – the lockdown was further extended till May 3, 2020.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi put the entire nation in a state of lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. All flights were suspended. The original lockdown period



was till April 14 and airlines kept bookings open after that date, irrespective of apprehensions that the lockdown would be extended.

The Economic Times of India 19/04/2020

**MUMBAI: Low-fare carrier GoAir has put most of its employees on leave without pay to cut costs as the all airline operations in India remain suspended until May 4.**

India, which declared a lockdown from March 25 has extended it to May 3 from the earlier date of April 14.

The move to implement leave without pay was communicated by the GoAir's HR head Nakul Tuteja on Saturday in an email.

On April 1, GoAir deferred paying a part of the March salaries of many of its employees to April in addition to pay cuts implemented earlier. He said it is till May 3 but may be extended.

**The airline had cut salaries by 50% by for its top leadership last month and then extended pay cuts to other employees barring those in the junior level of D grade.**

India's aviation industry, like its global peers, has been the worst hit by the novel coronavirus crisis, which led the government to close the country's borders and then implement a 21-day nationwide lockdown, prohibiting all travel. It was then extended.

**GoAir's peers IndiGo, SpiceJet and Vistara have taken similar steps to cut salary expenses.**

The Economic Times of India 18/04/2020

**MUMBAI: SpiceJet on Sunday said a limited number of staff from its engineering team have been put on leave without pay for a month each on a rotational basis and that no decision has been taken on salary cut across the company.**

Earlier, sources said that the airline has decided to send employees earning more than Rs 50,000 per month on leave without pay on a rotational basis. The salary for April is likely to be paid to staff for the days they were on duty, they said.

Commercial flight services have been suspended till May 3 in the wake of the nationwide lockdown to prevent spreading of coronavirus infections.

An airline spokesperson clarified that no company-wide decision has been taken on the issue of salary cuts or leave without pay at SpiceJet for April.

"A limited number of staff from the engineering team have been put on leave without pay for a month each on rotational basis," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Last month, SpiceJet announced an up to 30 per cent cut in salaries, with airline chairman and managing Director Ajay Singh opting for the maximum pay cut of 30 per cent.

Other carriers, including IndiGo, GoAir, Vistara and Air India, have also taken various steps amid the

financial distress due to the coronavirus pandemic. The measures include salary cuts, leave without pay and reduction in allowances.

**In a communication to certain employees, SpiceJet said staff are being sent on LWP (leave without pay) for one month on a rotational basis. The LWP policy is to "avoid" job losses, it added.**

**"This will initially be implemented for next three months (16 to 15 of every month) and may be extended /modified depending on the situation," as per the communication, accessed by PTI.**

The rotational policy of LWP is for staff having salary of more than Rs 50,000, the communication said.

The management is working on calculation of salary for April but has not yet decided on the issue. Most probably, "it will be based on the number of days you have been called for duty. Frontline staff will be given priority for credit of salary," the communication said.

Commercial flights remain suspended since March 25 due to the nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of the coronavirus. The lockdown has been extended till May 3.

The Economic Times of India 19/04/2020

**MUMBAI: Low-fare carrier GoAir has put most of its employees on leave without pay to cut costs as the all airline operations in India remain suspended until May 4.**

India, which declared a lockdown from March 25 has extended it to May 3 from the earlier date of April 14.

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India's aviation industry, like its global peers, has been the worst hit by the novel coronavirus crisis, which led the government to close the country's borders and then implement a 21-day nationwide lockdown, prohibiting all travel. It was then extended.

GoAir's peers IndiGo, SpiceJet and Vistara have taken similar steps to cut salary expenses.

The Economic Times of India 19/04/2020

**NEW DELHI: Post the order by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), IndiGo has closed its bookings till May 31, 2020.**

All other private airlines are also set to abide by the order and with that flights operations within the country are likely to be suspended till the end of May, unless the government decides to allow it.

Air India has already stopped bookings till the end of May on Saturday.

After the government extended the lockdown period by three weeks till May 3, 2020, airlines had started booking tickets beyond that day assuming flight operations will resume once the lockdown is lifted.

The DGCA ordered on Sunday evening to stop bookings.

“...There was no direction/clearance, which allows the airlines to start bookings for the journeys to be undertaken wef the 4th of May 2020. Further it has been noted that airlines have started booking tickets for journeys wef from 4th of May 2020. In this respect, it is brought to the notice of all concerned that no decision to commence the operation of domestic/international flights wef the 4th of May 2020 has been taken yet. In view of this, all airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets as described above,” the DGCA said in an order today.

The authority also said that airlines will be informed about restarting of flight operations separately. “Further the airlines may note that they shall be given sufficient notice and time for restarting of operations,” the order said.

The DGCA order follows an advisory tweeted by aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri asking airlines to not take bookings beyond May 3, 2020.

While the tweet by the minister was not binding on airlines, the DGCA order is binding on airlines. The national carrier Air India had stopped bookings after the minister’s tweet but private carriers continued with their booking schedule.

This recent ban on bookings will ensure that passengers do not end of bookings tickets on flights beyond, which may get cancelled if the government extends the lockdown period further or decide against resuming flight operations despite lifting the lockdown.

The government, on Thursday, had also ordered airlines to refund passengers, who had booked during the dates India was under lockdown in the first phase till April 14, 2020 – the lockdown was further extended till May 3, 2020.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi put the entire nation in a state of lockdown from March 25 to curb the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. All flights were suspended. The original lockdown period was till April 14 and airlines kept bookings open after that date, irrespective of apprehensions that the lockdown would be extended.

The Economic Times of India 19/04/2020

**Mumbai: AirAsia India has cut the April salary of its staff by up to 20 per cent to tackle the airline's finances amid the suspension of all commercial services till May 3 due to the lockdown, a source has said. Those drawing Rs 50,000 per month or less have been spared from the wage cut.**

**The Bengaluru-headquartered budget carrier is the latest to join the other domestic airlines such as IndiGo, SpiceJet and Vistara, who have already taken similar measures to cut fixed cost amid grounding of their fleet.**

"AirAsia India has cut the April salary of its employees by up to 20 per cent. The senior management will take a pay cut of 20 per cent while the wages of the executives falling in others categories have been reduced by 17 per cent, 13 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively," the source who is privy to the development told .

However, employees who are earning Rs 50,000 per month or less have not been given any pay cut as of now, he said.

AirAsia India spokesperson refused to comment on the developments when contacted.

The Economic Times of India 20/04/2020

**Hyderabad: Infrastructure major GMR on Monday said its subsidiary GMR Airports Limited (GAL) has received the letter of award (LoA) from the AP government for the development and operations of the greenfield international airport at Bhogapuram.** The first phase capacity of the airport is slated to be six million passengers per annum.

GAL had emerged as the highest bidder for the public private partnership (PPP) project in February 2019 with a fee of Rs 303 per passenger offered as a share of revenue to the government. The other two bidders — Doit Smart Infrastructure India Pvt Ltd and GVK group — had offered Rs 261 and Rs 207 per passenger, respectively.

**The PPP project involves design, build, finance, construction, development, upgradation, modernization, operation and maintenance of the greenfield international airport at Bhogapuram for a period of 40 years, which is extendable by an additional 20 years through international competitive bidding process, with GMR having RoFR (right of first refusal) of 10%.**

The first phase of the project is slated to be completed in 36 months after commencement of work at a cost of around Rs 2,300 crore, as per estimates. Though initially the airport was to be developed on nearly 2,700 acres of land, the AP government in March this year decided that it will give GMR group only 2,200 acres for the project, with the remaining land to be developed by the state government.

**In calendar year 2019, the existing civil enclave at Vishakapatnam Naval Airfield handled 2.78 million passengers and 4,400 tonnes of cargo. Over the past five years the passenger traffic at Vizag airport has grown at a rate of 21%, while it ranks fifth among the custom airports in India in terms of cargo traffic, GMR said.**

14/04/20 Times of India

**Thiruvananthapuram: A pilot landing a flight at Thiruvananthapuram International Airport gave a high risk alert to air traffic control tower after spotting a group of kites in the sky.** The air traffic control authorities immediately asked the terminal manager to take necessary actions.

The manager informed the police control room. Following this, special police force tracked the children who were flying the kites.

The incident happened on Sunday morning. The Air India Express flight was returning from Sharjah

after dropping off 40 tons of vegetables and fruits there, before the pilot complained to the air traffic control. The pilot informed that **the disturbance was created by more than 25 small and big kites near the Poonthura- Paruthikkuzhi Muttathara area.**

**The kites had touched the engine of the flight. The pilot told the control tower that the flight was landed with a lot of difficulty.**

20/04/20 Mathrubhumi

In aviation, air cargo always plays second fiddle to passenger traffic. The situation is no different in India, where local players have a miniscule share in air freight transportation, a space they have almost completely ceded to foreign players.

**But the Covid-19 crisis, while shutting down passenger transport, has shown the important role air-cargo operations play in keeping critical supply chains open.**

India has been forced to operate passenger aircraft to haul critical cargo, including test kits and other medical equipment. This situation has triggered a call for an Indian air-freighter fleet.

**“When I see the complete focus of the aviation industry worldwide on cargo for its very survival today, it makes me wonder, does it take a pandemic to demonstrate its importance?” Keku Bomi Gazder, CEO, AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Co Ltd, a subsidiary of Airports Authority of India, tweeted.**

IATA, on its part, said that second-quarter 2020 revenue for aviation, expected to fall 68 per cent year-on-year, would have been far worse but for cargo operations.

It is not that India never had a serious cargo play. According to B Govindarajan, Chief Operating Officer, Tirwin Management Services (P) Ltd, an aviation consultancy firm, Air India had freighter and combi-aircraft operations for cargo even before many of today’s global airlines came into being. “But we failed to build its national air cargo capacity and began depending totally on foreign carriers. This lockdown situation should open our eyes to build cargo capacity,” he said.

20/04/20 TE Raja Simhan/Business Line

**Mumbai: AirAsia India has cut the April salary of its staff by up to 20 per cent to tackle the airline's finances amid the suspension of all commercial services till May 3 due to the lockdown, a source has said.**

Those drawing Rs 50,000 per month or less have been spared from the wage cut. The Bengaluru-headquartered budget carrier is the latest to join the other domestic airlines such as IndiGo, SpiceJet and Vistara, who have already taken similar measures to cut fixed cost amid grounding of their fleet.

"AirAsia India has cut the April salary of its employees by up to 20 per cent. The senior management will take a pay cut of 20 per cent while the wages of the executives falling in others categories have been reduced by 17 per cent, 13 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively," the source who is privy to the development said.

20/04/20 New Indian Express

New Delhi: **IndiGo closed all its bookings till May 31, shortly after the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Sunday prevented all airlines from taking bookings till a final decision on lifting or easing restrictions on resuming air travel is announced.** "It is brought to the notice of all concerned that no decision to commence flights on May 4 has been taken. All airlines are directed to refrain from booking tickets," the DGCA order said.

A formal ban on forward bookings from the aviation regulator came after a tweet from Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri. It was only government-owned Air India which closed bookings after the minister's tweet, while private airline executives said it was mere "advisory" and not a "binding order".

On Sunday, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar made it clear that the central government has so far not taken any decision on starting train or airline services for passengers, asserting that any discussion on the issue is futile.

20/04/20 Arindam Majumder/Business Standard

Mumbai: **Air passenger traffic is expected to log a 30 per cent negative growth during this fiscal from earlier estimate of a 20-25 per cent negative growth amid coronavirus pandemic, ratings agency CARE Ratings said on Tuesday. The agency also expects the airfare to rise in the wake of the social distancing norms.**

All domestic and international commercial passenger flights are suspended since March 25 for the lockdown till May 3, as of now.

"CARE Ratings earlier had given a call of negative 20-25 per cent growth during FY21 in terms of airlines passenger growth rate, but given the increase in cases, its rapid spread and with more undetected clusters getting converted into corona hotspots, the tenacity of the end of the pandemic is uncertain and is showing no signs of abating," the agency said in a note.

Noting that even as a vaccine is yet to be found, lockdowns remain the only way to slow its spread, CARE Ratings said, "we would be revising our earlier estimate and bringing it further down to a negative 30 per cent growth in air passenger traffic during FY21."

The passenger volume growth stood at 13.7 per cent in the fiscal ended March 31, 2019, while it spiked 3.7 per cent during the April-February period of the last fiscal, it said.

Metros, which are the worst-affected and account for more than half of the passengers handled, the note stated, adding that Delhi Mumbai, Bangalore, Chennai, Kolkata and Hyderabad airports accounted for 63 per cent of the passengers handled in the April-January period of the previous fiscal.

Airfares are also expected to increase as aircrafts may accommodate only one passenger per row in order to maintain social distancing, the note stated.

**With the extension of the lockdown, the government has directed domestic airlines, most of whom had announced resumption of services in phased manner from May 4 and also started bookings, not to take any booking for domestic or international flights until further notice.**

"The lockdown which is supposed to end by May 4, is most likely to get extended as the number of

cases is on the rise and certain states are unable to flatten the curve of transmission.

"Even post the lifting of lockdown, passenger growth will face a sharp contraction considering the inhibitions of travelling anywhere till the pandemic scare has been settled fully in the domestic regions and internationally especially on certain routes," CARE Ratings said in the note.

Moreover, with the containment of the virus in the near future, countries including India will not be issuing visas soon fearing the rise of any exigency with the entry of foreign nationals, it said, adding the Covid-19 has put a halt on major business operations which means there will be a considerable fall in income which will also discourage incurring of discretionary expenses like travelling for leisure and tourism.

The Economic Times of India 21/04/2020

**Mumbai: Country's largest airline IndiGo is working with aircraft lessors for deferring lease rental payments by at least six months, a source said on Tuesday as suspension of flight services is adversely impacting its financial position.** IndiGo has 259 planes in its fleet comprising A320s, A320Neos, A321s and ATRs.

Airlines are grappling with acute financial woes as commercial services remain suspended in the wake of the nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.

Against this backdrop, the source said IndiGo is looking to defer payment of aircraft lease rentals to lessors.

**The Gurugram-based carrier largely finances its aircraft through sale-and-lease back mode. Under this arrangement, an aircraft is sold and then taken back on lease by an airline. Generally, this arrangement helps in reducing maintenance costs related to an aircraft.**

**"IndiGo has been seeking to defer payment of aircraft lease rentals by at least six months. It is working towards this with its lessors," the source told.**

When contacted, an airline spokesperson said, "we don't comment on speculation".

As per IndiGo's December quarter earnings presentation, the net outgo towards aircraft and engine rental payments during the three months at Rs 134.30 crore.

**Lease rentals and maintenance expenses, among others, are part of an airline's fixed costs. These costs accumulate irrespective of whether flights are operating or not.**

At the end of December 2019, IndiGo had a total of 257 planes.

On March 26, aviation consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA) estimated USD 3-3.6 billion losses for the Indian aviation industry in the first quarter of this fiscal. CAPA's report came a day after the nationwide lockdown was implemented. The lockdown, which was to initially end on April 14, has been extended till May 3.

Commercial flight services remain suspended since March 25 and only certain flight operations,

including those for ferrying cargo, are allowed.

The Economic Times of India 21/04/2020

India is quickly running out of space to store a swelling stockpile of fuel as every possible container - including those in the 66,000 pump stations nationwide - threatens to overflow.

Refiners in India, the world's third-biggest oil consumer, have filled 95% of about 85 million barrels of fuel storage capacity, according to officials at three state-owned processors. The virus-inflicted lockdown of more than a billion people has pummeled India's appetite for key transportation fuels as travel and movement remains restricted in large swaths of the world's second-most populated country.

Options to stash away unwanted barrels are fast running out globally. The world's biggest independent oil storage company, Royal Vopak NV, said it has leased out almost all available space to store crude and refined fuels due to the still-expanding glut that drove oil prices negative for the first time in history.

"Demand does not seem to be coming back fast," said R. Ramachandran, director of refineries at Bharat Petroleum Corp. "Major consumption centres like Mumbai, Delhi and Calcutta are in trouble now because of increasing coronavirus cases" as the nation struggles to contain the spreading pandemic.

Apart from BPCL, major state-owned refiners and fuel retailers include Hindustan Petroleum Corp and Indian Oil Corp. Spokespersons at the three companies did not immediately respond to emails and calls seeking comment on Wednesday.

India's refiners slashed runs to less than 50% at some units to counter a record slump in fuel demand in April as the world's biggest lockdown emptied roads, halted flights and brought most economic activities to a screeching halt. Consumption for diesel and gasoline, which account for more than half of India's oil demand, dropped by more than 60% in the first half of April. Prime Minister Narendra Modi extending the lockdown until May 3 has dashed hopes of a sharp recovery.

**Besides retail stations, Indian refiners also store petroleum fuels at more than 300 depots and terminals, as well as 250 aviation fuel stations.** More than two-thirds of total capacity is used for storing diesel and another 20% for gasoline.

Overflowing tanks have forced Indian refiners to sell very prompt cargoes of oil products with some tenders offering loadings in about a week, compared with normal loading range of a three-four weeks ahead.



**State-owned processors aside the country's biggest private refiner Reliance Industries Ltd. is probably sending cargoes to leased storage outside India, according to industry consultant FGE, which estimates India's total oil product demand will plunge by 1.4 million barrels a day this current quarter from a year earlier.**

State-owned giant Indian Oil Corp. has slashed run rates across its 10 refineries by almost half. Other refineries are likely operating at minimum utilization rates of about 35%, said Senthil Kumaran, an oil markets consultant at FGE.

**"Both national oil companies and private refiners are sharply reducing crude throughput as they see product tanks filling to the brim soon," Kumaran said.**

Live Mint Aviation 22/04/2020

**An employee of the Union civil aviation ministry, who had recently attended the office, tested positive for covid-19 on 21 April.** Employees who came in contact with the infected person have been asked to go into self-isolation, the ministry said on a twitter post on Wednesday.

"An employee of the ministry who had attended office on 15 April 2020 has tested positive for COVID19 on 21st April. All necessary protocols are being stringently followed on the premises," the ministry said in a tweet.

"All colleagues who came in contact are being asked to go into self-isolation as a precaution," it added.

An aviation ministry spokesperson didn't offer comments.

**The infected person worked in the coordination section of the ministry, said a person with direct knowledge of the matter.**

"The person has been coming to work during last few days. Everyone he came in contact with has been asked to go into self-isolation," the person added, requesting anonymity.

Globally, over 177,602 people have died due to covid-19, while the number of those infected crossed 2,573,143 cases, according to the latest data by Johns Hopkins University.

According to government data, there have been 15,474 covid-19 related cases in India, of which 640 people have succumbed to the deadly virus.

"We stand by our colleague at @MoCA\_GoI (ministry of civil aviation) who has tested positive for COVID19 & have extended all possible medical help & support. Those in contact have also been asked to follow the laid down procedures. I wish him strength & speedy recovery," civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri said in a twitter post.

Live Mint Aviation 22/04/2020

**A day after Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri advised airlines to open bookings only after the government takes a decision on resuming passenger flight services, Vistara and AirAsia India said on Sunday they have not received any notice from the aviation ministry on this matter.**

All Indian airlines, including Vistara and AirAsia India, are currently taking bookings on select flights from May 4.

"We shall await the ministry's notice in this regard. We have suspended operations and sales until May 3, following the last circular," Vistara spokesperson said.

"Once there is clarity on steps to be taken beyond that date, we will comply accordingly," the spokesperson added.

AirAsia India spokesperson told PTI that the lockdown issued by the government is till May 3 and hence flights are available for bookings May 4 onwards.

Flight bookings have been made available as passengers need to make travel and associated purchase decisions in advance. This also helps them get cheaper fares, the Air Asia India spokesperson clarified.

**"We have not received any formal notification from MoCA (Ministry of Civil Aviation)/ DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation) specifying any future period beyond May 3 for which airlines need to stop accepting bookings," the spokesperson stated.**

The spokesperson also noted that as there is uncertainty following the coronavirus pandemic, travellers are cognizant of the possibility of the lockdown getting extended in which case they can always reschedule their flights for free.

On Saturday night, Civil Aviation Minister Puri said on Twitter the government has not taken any decision to open domestic or international flight operations so far.

**"Airlines are advised to open their bookings only after a decision in this regard has been taken by the government," he said.**

Several passengers have complained on social media that Indian airlines are not giving refunds for flights cancelled due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown and instead issuing credit vouchers for future travel.

On April 16, the Ministry of Civil Aviation stated that travellers can ask airlines for full refunds if the bookings were done during the first phase of the lockdown for travel up to May 3.

The first phase of the lockdown imposed in the country in view of the coronavirus outbreak was from March 25 to April 14. The second phase started on April 15 and will end on May 3.

**All domestic and international commercial passenger flight operations have been suspended during the lockdown period. However, cargo flights and special flights authorised by aviation regulator DGCA have been permitted during this period.**

The death toll due to COVID-19 rose to 507 and the number of cases to 15,712 in the country on Sunday, according to the Union Health Ministry.

[Business Today 19/04/2020](#)

**With coronavirus pandemic having a 'deep impact' on Indian businesses, jobs are at risk over the coming months as firms are looking at some reduction in manpower, says an industry survey.**

The Covid-19 crisis has already caused an unprecedented collapse in economic activities over the last few weeks, it adds.

The survey, jointly conducted by industry body Ficci and tax consultancy Dhruva Advisors by seeking responses from about 380 companies across sectors, also said that businesses are grappling with "tremendous uncertainty" about their future.

Almost 72 per cent of the respondents said that the present situation is having a "high to very high" level of impact on their business.

A substantial majority of the respondents do not foresee a positive demand outlook for their business in this fiscal, with 70 per cent of the surveyed firms expecting a degrowth in sales in the fiscal year 2020-21.

Moreover, a vast majority of companies also foresee a reduction in their business cashflows and company's order book.

"The survey clearly highlights that unless a substantive economic package is announced by the government immediately, we could see a permanent impairment of a large section of industry, which may lose the opportunity to come back to life again," Ficci said in a statement.

The industry body further stated that the COVID-19 pandemic is having a deep impact on the Indian economy and members of Indian industry.

The magnitude and speed of collapse in economic activity that India has seen over the last few weeks is unprecedented and there is tremendous uncertainty about what the future holds for businesses and enterprises, Ficci said.

Sangita Reddy, President, Ficci, said, The Covid-19 pandemic is causing deep economic harm and could reverse the gains made in the industrial economy over many decades. There is a need to render immediate and sizable support to industry to protect people, jobs and enterprises."

"Industry members are reeling under severe financial stress and are in urgent need of ample liquidity to ensure business continuity. We are hopeful that the government will introduce a series of measures in quick succession to support demand ensure business continuity. This would be a confidence booster and we hope sentiment will improve following the economic package.

Dinesh Kanabar, CEO, Dhruva Advisors, said **there is a significant expectation from the government for a financial stimulus and providing liquidity, including by way of tax refunds and cheaper credit, so that the economy returns to normalcy faster.**

The survey also found that in respect of approved expansion plans, 61 per cent of the respondents expect to defer such expansions for a period upto 6 or 12 months, while 33 per cent expect to defer approved expansion plans for more than 12 months.

Further, while 60 per cent of the surveyed firms have deferred their fund-raising plans for the next 6-12 months, nearly 25 per cent of the firms have shelved the same.

Besides, while 43 per cent of the surveyed firms reported that they do not foresee an impact on exports, nearly 34 per cent said that exports would take a hit by more than 10 per cent.

**Global business leaders are preparing for a drawn-out U-shaped recession due to the impact of coronavirus and many fear their companies won't survive the pandemic, a survey of thousands of chief executives showed on Wednesday.**

The pandemic sweeping the world has killed nearly 170,000 people, routed financial markets and could trigger the worst economic meltdown since the 1930s Great Depression.

Around 60 per cent of chief executives are preparing for a U-shaped recovery—a long period between recession and an upturn—compared with 22 per cent who predict a double-dip recession, according to an April 15-19 poll of 3,534 chief executives from 109 countries conducted by YPO, a business leadership network.

The survey found that 11 per cent of chief executives see coronavirus as a risk to the survival of their firm, while a further 40 per cent say the pandemic poses a severe threat.

"We have not seen a crisis like this for over a hundred years, and some household names will not survive," said Glenn Keys, Executive Chairman of Aspen Medical, a Singapore-based health services firm and YPO member.

**Business leaders in the hospitality and restaurant sectors were the most vulnerable with 41% of executives saying their firms were at risk of not surviving, while 30 per cent in aviation and 19 per cent in wholesale and retail sales feared they may go under, the survey found.**

Almost two-thirds of business leaders forecast a negative impact on earnings to continue for more than a year, while a quarter expect their workforce to be down by more than 20 per cent a year from now.

"Across the globe, the mindset of the business leader is clearly that the world has changed in a very short space of time," said Scott Mordell, YPO's chief executive.

"We are in uncharted waters, filled with an unprecedented number of pitfalls that are challenging some businesses' very existence."

Business Standards 22/04/2020

**Si les compagnies aériennes sont en première ligne dans la crise actuelle, les sociétés de maintenance doivent elles aussi s'adapter à cette situation inédite dans laquelle la majorité de la flotte mondiale est clouée au sol. Les opérations d'entretien ont logiquement fondu, cependant il reste des travaux à réaliser pour entretenir la portion de la flotte qui reste en vol mais aussi maintenir en condition opérationnelle celle qui reste au sol. Dans le cas d'Air France, 180 appareils sont immobilisés sur une flotte de 224 avions. Pour Air France Industries, cela nécessite le maintien d'un millier de mécaniciens sur le terrain (sur les 8 000 salariés que compte la division).**

En accord avec les recommandations constructeurs et les autorités, le groupe Air France a en effet opté pour un « **stockage actif** » de ces **180 appareils, qui correspond à une immobilisation d'un à trois mois**. « Ceci nous permet de garder une certaine flexibilité si nous souhaitons remettre un avion en vol et de maîtriser les coûts associés à ces opérations », nous explique Géry Mortreux, directeur général adjoint en charge de la maintenance d'Air France. Mais qui dit stockage ne dit pas abandon,

loin s'en faut.

**Cette opération représente 150 heures de travail par appareil sur la période d'immobilisation.** Une partie est représentée par la protection de l'avion : « nous devons appliquer des protections autour des ouvertures, des sondes, de différents systèmes, pour éviter l'intrusion de corps étrangers, notamment des insectes », précise Géry Mortreux.

Contrairement à Finnair (dont le stock de cales de roues était insuffisant au début de l'arrêt des opérations), Air France Industries n'a pas rencontré de problème majeur de pénurie dans le matériel de protection. « Nous avons été en situation de gérer l'arrêt de la flotte. Nous avons à peu près tout dans nos propres stocks et nous avons passé commande pour ce qui nous manquait ou avons opté pour des mesures alternatives. Le point visible est sur les protections d'entrée d'air des moteurs : généralement, il y a un cache rouge très identifiable mais parfois nous avons dû la protéger par l'application d'un film plastique. »

Passées ces opérations de protection, viennent les opérations d'entretien. « Nous avons des points réguliers de lubrification et de fonctionnement de plusieurs systèmes qui sont d'habitude utilisés tous les jours, notamment les commandes de vol et ce qui touche aux roues. Nous avons besoin de les actionner régulièrement pour éviter qu'ils ne sèchent ou s'endommagent du fait de la non opération. » En parallèle, les équipes interviennent sur « les risques d'humidité, de développement des bactéries, de corrosion : nous activons les drainages, nous installons des déshumidificateurs, des protections anti-corrosion sur des zones qui ne sont pas peintes... »

Géry Mortreux souligne également que les réservoirs carburant restent remplis à 10% ou 20%, là encore pour éviter des phénomènes d'assèchement des joints et des fuites à venir mais aussi parce qu'il faut allumer les moteurs toutes les semaines pour éviter un endommagement des systèmes internes de cet équipement conçu pour être utilisé tous les jours.

**Air France Industries a pris la décision de limiter ses opérations aux tâches essentielles : le soutien des avions en vol et le stockage.** La première raison avancée est la protection des équipes sur le terrain. Tous les équipements nécessaires au respect des gestes barrière leur ont été fournis (masques, gants, gels, lingettes...) et l'organisation a été adaptée pour « avoir des équipes étanches, qui ne se croisent pas », avec également une adaptation des lieux de travail. Par ailleurs, le groupe est très vigilant sur l'état de sa trésorerie. « Nous avons arrêté les gros chantiers, de modification avions ou les grandes visites, pour des raisons sanitaires mais aussi pour protéger la trésorerie sur le court terme », résume Géry Mortreux.

« En revanche, lorsque nous aurons une vision un peu plus précise sur le rythme de reprise des activités et maintenant que nous pouvons mieux déterminer les conditions sanitaires, nous recommencerons ces grands chantiers. Mais pour cela, il faudra que nous ayons répondu à toutes les questions de sécurité pour les équipes et de besoin de remise en service progressive de la flotte d'Air France. »

**La sortie de stockage actif des avions peut être un processus très rapide.** « Lorsqu'on a bien réalisé les opérations récurrentes durant la période d'immobilisation, c'est l'affaire de quelques heures à quelques jours. Cela varie en fonction de la taille et du constructeur de l'appareil : les protocoles se ressemblent mais ne sont pas tout à fait superposés. Et il peut y avoir des opérations

**réglementaires, des échéances calendaires à vérifier.** » Géry Mortreux précise toutefois **qu'il y a aussi une question d'organisation et de mobilisation des équipes à gérer, en fonction du rythme de reprise.**

Il prévient également que si la date du début du déconfinement a été fixée au 11 mai, la flotte devra attendre plus longtemps avant d'être remise en service, notamment la flotte long-courrier qui est beaucoup plus tributaire de la réouverture des frontières. Ce qui peut avoir une incidence sur certains appareils immobilisés. « L'activité devrait hélas reprendre en pente douce pour l'activité commerciale et il n'est pas impossible qu'on doive dépasser les trois mois de non utilisation pour certains avions et les basculer en stockage prolongé. Pour le moment c'est prématuré mais on ne l'exclut pas. »

Journal de l'aviation 22/04/2020

**Cela fait maintenant un petit peu plus d'un mois que quelques avions du groupe Air France sillonnent encore le ciel pour participer à un autre effort sanitaire : le rapatriement des voyageurs bloqués hors de leur pays. Sur cette période, Air France et Transavia ont transporté plus de 270 000 personnes dans le cadre de ses opérations exceptionnelles organisées depuis le 14 mars, dont 150 000 ressortissants français et 44 000 ressortissants communautaires.**

Avec la multiplication des fermetures de frontières, les restrictions mises en place sur l'hébergement des équipages et vu l'ampleur du problème dans le monde entier, l'opération n'a pas été une mince affaire. En lien constant avec le ministère des Affaires étrangères, le secrétariat d'Etat chargé des Transports et les ambassades, le groupe a mis en place une cellule de crise spécifique, opérationnelle en continu, chargée de coordonner les opérations et obtenir les autorisations nécessaires.

**Plus de 1 800 vols ont ainsi été assurés au départ de 132 aéroports et 82 pays jusqu'à aujourd'hui. Des tarifs spéciaux et plafonnés ont été mis en place pour ces rapatriements et Air France « n'a réalisé aucun profit » sur ces opérations, volant plutôt à perte puisque les vols allers étaient vides.**

Les opérations touchent désormais à leur fin mais se poursuivront vers les régions où la demande reste importante, notamment l'Afrique du Nord.

Journal de l'aviation 22/04/2020

**Air France souhaite prolonger de trois mois le recours au chômage partiel mis en place fin mars dans l'entreprise, alors que la reprise dans le secteur aérien s'annonce lente, a appris mardi l'AFP de sources syndicales.**

**Pour répondre à l'effondrement du trafic aérien en raison de l'épidémie de Covid-19, la compagnie française a adopté le 23 mars un dispositif dit d'activité partielle, ou chômage partiel, pour une période de six mois maximum.**

**Cette mesure devait concerner en moyenne 50% du temps de travail de ses 45.000 salariés, avec un pic possible de 80%.**

Selon plusieurs sources syndicales interrogées par l'AFP, **Air France souhaite demander à l'Etat la possibilité d'utiliser ce dispositif sur une période plus longue, de neuf mois maximum à compter de la date initiale, et que le chômage partiel puisse concerner jusqu'à 70% en moyenne du temps**

## de travail.

Cette demande, évoquée lors d'un comité social et économique (CSE) mardi, doit être présentée par la direction aux organisations syndicales lors d'un CSE central jeudi.

Environ 9,6 millions de salariés sont actuellement au chômage partiel en France, soit près d'un salarié du privé sur deux. Ce dispositif, qui nécessite l'aval du ministère du Travail, permet au salarié d'être indemnisé à hauteur de 70% du salaire brut et 84% du salaire net.

"Augmenter le chômage partiel permet d'avoir de la flexibilité", a estimé Farid Slimani, secrétaire général adjoint de l'Unsa-Aérien Air France interrogé par l'AFP, en évoquant "la survie de l'entreprise".

SUD-Aérien a demandé un maintien de salaire pour les plus bas revenus chez Air France.

Autre annonce de la direction, **"le port du masque de protection recommandé jusqu'à aujourd'hui va devenir obligatoire pour tous les salariés en contact avec les clients et pour lesquels la distanciation ne serait pas possible"**, indique l'Unsa-Aérien dans un communiqué.

"Le port obligatoire du masque est une évidence", relève Jérôme Beaurain, de SUD-Aérien, qui regrette toutefois l'absence de masques FFP2.

Sollicitée par l'AFP, la direction d'Air France a indiqué être en processus d'information et de consultation de ses instances représentatives du personnel sur ces sujets.

Journal de l'aviation 22/04/2020

**Si les règles de distanciation sociale prises pour lutter contre la pandémie de Covid-19 sont correctement appliquées dans les avions, les compagnies aériennes devront augmenter leurs prix de 50% ou faire faillite, selon l'Iata (l'association internationale du transport aérien).**

L'époque des voyages aériens bon marché fera bientôt partie du passé si les compagnies aériennes sont obligées d'introduire des mesures d'éloignement physique dans les avions en raison de la pandémie de Covid-19, avertit l'industrie.

Alexandre de Juniac, le directeur général de l'Iata, a déclaré que **si les gouvernements ordonnaient aux compagnies aériennes d'adopter des mesures d'éloignement physique à bord des avions, au moins un tiers des sièges resteraient vides et les compagnies aériennes devraient augmenter le prix de leurs billets d'au moins 50 % ou faire faillite.**

« Soit vous volez au même prix, en vendant le billet au même prix moyen qu'auparavant, et vous perdez d'énormes sommes d'argent, de sorte qu'il est impossible de voler pour n'importe quelle compagnie aérienne, surtout à bas prix ; soit vous augmentez le prix des billets d'au moins 50 % et vous êtes en mesure de voler avec un profit minimum. Cela signifie donc que si la distanciation sociale est imposée, les voyages à bas prix sont terminés » .

Iata a déclaré que le trafic aérien intérieur avait chuté de 70 % depuis début janvier en raison de la pandémie et a averti que **toute reprise mondiale serait probablement lente.** Bien que les liaisons

intérieures soient ouvertes plus tôt que les vols long-courriers, la faible confiance des consommateurs compromet une reprise rapide, toujours selon l'Iata.

Iata organise des sommets régionaux avec les gouvernements cette semaine et a appelé à des mesures de confiance. Alors que plusieurs pays européens commencent à assouplir les mesures de verrouillage de leur territoire, « un rebond immédiat de la chute catastrophique de la demande de passagers semble peu probable », a indiqué M. de Juniac.

**L'Iata s'attend à ce que les revenus mondiaux des passagers en 2020 diminuent de plus de moitié par rapport à l'année dernière, soit une perte de 314 milliards de dollars (290 milliards d'euros).**

#### Déplacements pro 21/04/2020

Le transport aérien était sûr de lui-même avec sa croissance moyenne de 5 % par an, il doublait en volume tous les 12 ans pendant que le nombre d'accidents était en diminution constante sous l'effet des politiques très volontaristes de l'OACI. Pendant le même temps il s'est ouvert à toutes les couches sociales en diminuant ses tarifs de manière constante. Bref il allait allègrement vers les 8 milliards de passagers transportés et vers les 1 600 milliards de dollars de chiffre d'affaires, le tout avec un résultat net en très forte progression au cours des 10 dernières années. Mais ce temps est révolu. Le Covid-19 est passé par là. 80 % des appareils ont été mis au sol car la clientèle a été priée de rester chez elle. Autant dire qu'il faudra repartir de zéro et tout reconstruire. Reste à savoir si ce renouveau, certes inéluctable, se fera sur les bases anciennes ou sur des concepts innovants.

En clair la grande question consiste à savoir si la guerre tarifaire et la course aux prix bas va continuer ou est-ce que l'on va revenir à un transport aérien élitiste, comme celui que l'on a connu avant la dérégulation, c'est-à-dire avant les années 1980.

En première analyse, on peut imaginer que, pour récupérer leur clientèle et ramasser un maximum de cash, les transporteurs vont assaillir le marché de promotions plus alléchantes les unes que les autres. **La crainte majeure des compagnies mais également de tous les autres acteurs du transport aérien : aéroports, constructeurs, motoristes, agents de handling et même les agents de voyages, est de constater une désaffection du public envers ce mode de transport.**

Beaucoup d'analystes prédisent même un fort ralentissement des voyages d'affaires remplacés par des **Visio conférences** le tout sur la **forte incitation des entreprises** soucieuses de couper drastiquement dans leurs coûts.

D'autres pointent également la **peur de la contamination dans des espaces confinés comme les aéroports ou les cabines des avions**. Donc le premier levier que les transporteurs auront tendance à manier c'est le prix. Il ne serait donc pas surprenant de voir fleurir des tarifs très compétitifs dès la remise en service des appareils.

Seulement ce n'est pas si simple. D'abord **nombre de transporteurs ne remettront pas en service la totalité de leur flotte**. Ils laisseront au sol les appareils les plus anciens, lesquels sont les plus coûteux à opérer.



Il faut également prendre en compte la **position des Etats. Ces derniers vont soutenir massivement leurs principales compagnies aériennes, mais ils vont alors exiger des contreparties.**

Celles-ci seront sans doute de deux ordres. D'abord assurer la **sécurité sanitaire des passagers** et pour cela, les compagnies seront peut-être tenues de neutraliser un certain nombre de sièges dans leurs appareils, ainsi finie la très haute densité.

Et puis les **Etats** seront alors **soumis à la pression des écologistes** qui ne vont surtout pas manquer l'occasion de freiner l'expansion du transport aérien. Il n'est d'ailleurs pas impossible que pour limiter le nombre de mouvements, l'allocation des slots sur les grandes plateformes soit revue sérieusement à la baisse.

Alors pour s'en sortir, les compagnies n'auront pas d'autre choix que d'arrêter la spirale infernale à la baisse des tarifs et de **revenir à un « yield management » beaucoup plus simplifié**. Les tarifs d'appel qui ne couvrent pas les prix de revient devront être supprimés.

Chaque pays dispose d'une législation sur la vente à perte et celle-ci doit être facile à prouver à partir du moment où une étude sérieuse des prix de revient est mise à la disposition des acteurs.

IATA pourrait le faire, l'organisme dispose des données et des capacités d'analyse, mais il est peu probable qu'il se lance dans cette direction par peur des réactions de certains gros transporteurs. Mais le sujet peut largement être traité par l'un des grands cabinets internationaux : Le Boston Consulting Group, EY, ou Roland Berger par exemple. A partir du moment où les banques de données seront mises sur le marché, nul doute que les Tribunaux seront ravis de sanctionner les délinquants.

Et puis il y a une autre voie, plus incitative celle-là. Elle consiste à s'appuyer sur le réseau des agents de voyages en retrouvant le bon sens, c'est-à-dire le commissionnement significatif des tarifs les plus rémunérateurs pour les compagnies. Tout le monde y gagnera et naturellement les tarifs remonteront.

**Le transport aérien futur en a fini pour un bon bout de temps avec le transport de masse. Il devra revenir aux fondamentaux : une rentabilité raisonnable et un niveau de produit sans cesse amélioré.**

Et personne ne s'en portera plus mal.

La Quotidienne 21/04/2020

**C'est le 11 mai, date du déconfinement progressif hexagonal qu'Air France débutera son plan de reprise jusqu'à atteindre 30 % de ses vols en juillet.**

Le plan de vol très réduit que la compagnie française avait présenté le 20 avril et qui cloue au sol 90 % de sa flotte devait être valable jusqu'à la fin mai. L'annonce par Emmanuel Macron d'un déconfinement progressif à partir du 11 mai change les choses.

C'est à cette date, en effet, qu'Air France compte faire monter son programme de vol en puissance pour atteindre 30 % de son trafic habituel en juillet, contre 5 % aujourd'hui. **Dès le 11 mai, les trois destinations françaises qui bénéficient toujours d'une liaison quotidienne au départ de Roissy –**

**Marseille, Nice, Toulouse – verront leur desserte améliorée. D'autres destinations hexagonales, interrompues depuis le début du confinement, rouvriront.**

Le calendrier, les destinations rouvertes, et le détail des dessertes ne sont toujours pas connus. Seule certitude : **la période du 11 mai à la fin juin consistera en un plan de reprise lent et progressif. C'est surtout en juillet que le plan de vols s'amplifiera.**

Le déploiement de lignes internationales dépendra bien sûr de l'ouverture des frontières des pays destinations. Côté européen, la Norvège et le Danemark sont déjà entrés dans un processus de réouverture progressif de ses frontières. Ce sera prochainement le cas la Suisse (27 avril), l'Autriche (fin avril), le Portugal (1er mai), l'Allemagne, l'Italie et la Belgique (3 mai), ou encore l'Espagne (9 mai).

**Concernant les longs courriers, le retour à la normale sera plus lent puisque les frontières de l'espace Schengen seront fermées jusqu'au mois de septembre selon les autorités françaises.**

#### Déplacements Pro 21/04/2020

Faudra-t-il forcément porter un masque quand on prendra l'avion en France ? En tout cas, la directrice générale d'Air France, Anne Rigail, en a fait la demande lors de l'audition des dirigeants du groupe Air France-KLM devant la commission développement durable du Sénat. Depuis ce lundi, **la compagnie française s'est engagée à en distribuer aux passagers qui n'en auraient pas si la distanciation sociale dans l'avion (le siège du milieu laissé vide) n'est pas possible.** Cette mesure a été prise suite à des images qui ont fait polémique d'un vol Air France Paris-Marseille samedi où des passagers sans masque se retrouvaient côte à côte.

Par ailleurs, alors que la reprise s'annonce plus lente que prévu, **Anne Rigail a reconnu réfléchir à recourir au chômage partiel plus longtemps que les six mois envisagés initialement.** De façon plus stratégique, la présidente non exécutive du groupe, Anne-Marie Couderc, est revenue sur la situation financière très tendue d'Air France-KLM, pointant du doigt « un besoin de liquidités attendu au troisième trimestre ». En clair, la nécessité que les États français et néerlandais viennent très vite au secours du groupe. « Nos discussions avec les États sont très suivies et intenses, a-t-elle expliqué. **Il s'agirait de prêts bancaires garantis par l'État et de prêts d'État.** » Les négociations pourraient aboutir dans les prochains jours côté français pour Air France, dans les prochaines semaines côté néerlandais, car la situation est moins tendue pour KLM.

**Ce plan de secours se monterait à 10 milliards d'euros. La majorité des fonds iraient à Air France. Selon des informations de La Tribune confirmées par Reuters, Paris est prêt à garantir au moins 90 % des prêts bancaires accordés à Air France contre 70 % à l'origine.**

#### Le Figaro 22/04/2020

**Two lessors to Indian carrier SpiceJet Ltd are in talks to terminate contracts and repossess planes via mutually agreed deals with the airline over missed payments,** according to two sources directly involved in the discussions.

**One of the leasing companies started to pull out a few planes earlier this year after SpiceJet failed to pay maintenance fees due since late last year and lease rentals since last month,** said one source, adding that talks were continuing over other jets.

**The second lessor began discussions, which are ongoing, last month just as the coronavirus pandemic started crippling the airline industry,** according to the second source.

About **10 planes in total have been or could be repossessed, with leases terminated with the airline's agreement,** according to the sources, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter.

**A SpiceJet spokesman described queries related to the discussions with lessors as "speculative, misleading and baseless".**

"We share excellent relationships with all our partners and lessors and our agreements with them are confidential," he added.

"Our fleet structure and exits have been planned at our option to cater to the demand requirements," he said, adding SpiceJet was taking various steps to re-align its operations with current travel restrictions worldwide.

The carrier did not comment on specific queries about dues owed to lessors or delays in making payments.

SpiceJet is not alone in wrestling with the impact of the coronavirus crisis, which has seen airlines worldwide seeking delays in rent and deliveries or state help. Estimated global airline losses from the coronavirus pandemic have climbed to \$314 billion, trade body IATA said last week.

Avolon, a leading global lessor, said this month it had received requests from more than 80% of its customers for relief from payment obligations.

**The two sources said the lease talks were instigated by the lessors but early termination deals would be mutually agreed with SpiceJet. The second leasing company is in talks with the carrier to repossess a handful of Boeing 737 planes, also citing delayed payments,** said the second source.

**SpiceJet had a 119-strong fleet at the end of 2019. Its two-dozen lessors include Carlyle Aviation Partners, Aircastle and Avolon,** according to industry data provider Cirium.

Carlyle and Avolon declined to comment, while there was no response from Aircastle.

**SpiceJet's challenges in the pandemic crisis come on the heels of a rapid expansion early last year, when it took on around 30 leased planes from bankrupt Jet Airways and became India's second-largest airline by market share.**

India's fast-growing airline market is also one of the most competitive. Weak economic growth over the past year hurt airlines even before the coronavirus outbreak led to a ban on commercial passenger flights until at least May 3.

**Airlines including SpiceJet's bigger rival IndiGo and state-run Air India, have idled over 650 planes. India is working on an aviation rescue package for all airlines that could be worth as much as \$1.6 billion.**

SpiceJet on Sunday said a limited number of staff from its engineering team have been put on leave without pay for a month each on a rotational basis and that no decision has been taken on salary cut across the company. Earlier, sources said that the airline has decided to send employees earning more than Rs 50,000 per month on leave without pay on a rotational basis. The salary for April is likely to be paid to staff for the days they were on duty, they said. Commercial flight services have been suspended till May 3 in the wake of the nationwide lockdown to prevent spreading of coronavirus infections. **An airline spokesperson clarified that no company-wide decision has been taken on the issue of salary cuts or leave without pay at SpiceJet for April.** "A limited number of staff from the engineering team have been put on leave without pay for a month each on rotational basis," the spokesperson said in a statement. **Last month, SpiceJet announced an up to 30 per cent cut in salaries, with airline chairman and managing Director Ajay Singh opting for the maximum pay cut of 30 per cent. Other carriers, including IndiGo, GoAir, Vistara and Air India, have also taken various steps amid the financial distress due to the coronavirus pandemic. The measures include salary cuts, leave without pay and reduction in allowances.**

Business Standards 23/04/2020

**New Delhi: Lifeline Udan flights cover over 3 lakh km of aerial distance to transport around 507.85 tons of essential medical cargo. 301 flights have been operated under Lifeline Udan by Air India, Alliance Air, IAF and private carriers. 184 of these flights have been operated by Air India and Alliance Air. 'Lifeline Udan' flights are being operated by MoCA to transport essential medical cargo to remote parts of the country to support India's war against COVID-19.**

Helicopter services including Pawan Hans Ltd have been operating in J&K, Ladakh, Islands and North East region transporting critical medical cargo and patients. **Pawan Hans till 19 April 2020 have carried 1.90 tons of cargo covering a distance of 6537 kms.** The domestic Lifeline Udan cargo includes COVID-19 related reagents, enzymes, medical equipment, testing kits, Personal protective equipment (PPE), masks, gloves, other materials of HLL and ICMR; cargo requisitioned by State/UT Governments and postal packets etc.

**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.**

20/04/20 Orissadiary.com

**Struggling in the face of the coronavirus outbreak, the domestic ground handling industry has sought stimulus package, including moratorium on interest on borrowings, waivers on certain fixed costs and deferment of statutory taxes, among others.**

**The ₹4,000-4,500 crore ground handling industry, which heavily depends on the airlines operations, has lost as much as 90 per cent of the business amid suspension of all commercial air passenger services due to the lockdown to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.**

However, cargo and special flights have been kept away from the lockdown.

"For a business which is already impacted over a year, we need at least a one-year moratorium on our cost to the banks," ground handling industry leader and Celebi Aviation-India CEO Murali Ramchandran told PTI in an interaction.

Celebi, which commands 25% market share of the domestic industry, has the mandate to carry out ground handling business at Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Cochin, Ahmedabad and Kannur airports.

Pointing out that not many businesses can continue paying to their employees with no revenue coming in, he said at a point of time it becomes imperative to have some sort of stimulus.

Global aviation consultancy, Centre for Pacific Aviation, in one of its reports released on March 25, had estimated USD 3.3-3.6 billion losses for the domestic aviation industry with the losses for the ground handling segment pegged at \$80-90 million.

"As an association for ground handlers and cargo warehouse operators we have asked for 6-7 (relief) measures. What we wanted is whatever possible support is provided by the bank or the government towards employees payroll costs, which is very critical for us. Many governments (abroad) have done it," he said.

Stating that his industry needs some substantial support to be able to continue paying salaries, he said the business cannot run on its own unless there is cash flow.

**"We have asked for complete waiver of our fixed costs to the airports for at least six months,** which is based on the hope that recovery will happen in the next three months or so. Therefore, the rent and utilities cost that is being imposed on us should be waived for us. We are not seeking postponement as it will not help us," Ramchandran said.

**The ground handling industry has also asked for deferment of the settlement of statutory taxes payment for managing the cash flows, he said, adding, the GST payment which is done at present on an accrual basis should be done on realization because airlines are not paying to the companies.**

"And we are expected to pay GST upfront based on what we have accrued. So we need a dispensation on that on real realization rather than accrued business. I don't know how much of this may become bad debts as well for us because the airlines are going bust as we see," he said.

Business Standards 23/04/2020

**Global manufacturers have initiated talks with Indian firms to explore the possibility of shifting a part of their supply chains from China as they seek to diversify their operations following the covid-19 outbreak.**

Most of these multinationals have suffered widespread disruptions to their businesses as authorities enforced strict lockdown measures to contain the pandemic, which originated in Wuhan city in China's Hubei province. Wuhan is one of China's so-called "motor cities", housing several automotive factories.

**First of the lot are companies interested in sourcing automobile components and electronic products from India, according to industry executives.**

Pankaj Munjal, chairman and managing director of Hero Motors Co., said the auto parts maker has received several enquiries from companies who have operations in China, but now want to de-risk their supply chain.

"A lot of supply chain was coming from China and today when we meet these customers and large OEMs (original equipment makers), some of them will migrate to countries like India, Vietnam and others. So, I believe, that will be a growth opportunity and we will see a migratory growth in supply chain," Munjal said.

Part of the demand is also coming from Indian companies who were heavily reliant on China for sourcing components, but suffered because of the novel coronavirus-induced disruption in China, which, over the years, has emerged as a manufacturing powerhouse.

To be sure, the government has still to announce new measures to woo firms planning to move operations from China. Earlier this month, Japan earmarked \$2.2 billion to help its companies shift production out of China following the coronavirus pandemic.

In March, India's cabinet announced a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the electronics sector with an outlay of over ₹40,000 crore. "There is a clear negative sentiment against China. We have received requests for supply from India," said Amrit Manwani, president of Electronic Industries Association of India. "If we play our cards right, we could double our exports (of electronic products) in three years' time."

India exports electronic products worth \$9 billion each year, while its domestic market is estimated at \$120 billion. "We don't see so much interest from Europe, but definitely from US, there is a shift since the beginning of the year," Manwani said, adding that Japanese and South Korean firms are also interested in developing supply chains from the country.

Among global firms that have shown interest in India are US-based makers of medical electronics products Teledyne and Amphenol, and medical equipment makers such as Johnson and Johnson, Manwani said.

Vinod Sharma, managing director of Deki Electronics and chairman of electronics national panel at Confederation of Indian Industry, said his company is in talks with a South Korean firm for a tie-up to make electronic parts. Sharma, however, said government guidelines on threshold investment levels in electronic component manufacturing are proving to be an irritant.

At home, most local firms are actively looking for alternative sources to China and are bound to reduce imports from there though the process is expected to be gradual.

Most auto firms import parts like fuel-injection systems for the latest engines and other electronic parts from China. "In the next few months, we will see most of these Indian vehicles makers localize manufacturing of such parts or sourcing them from a different location with a foreign partner," said the executive requesting anonymity.

Business Standards 23/04/2020

Les compagnies aériennes européennes vont devoir mettre les bouchées doubles si elles ne veulent pas perdre trop de plumes. L'ensemble du calendrier d'été doit être rempli en l'espace d'une à trois semaines, ce qui implique une forte réduction des tarifs. Les analystes de l'entreprise financière Citigroup avertissent que l'on doit s'attendre à l'une des plus grandes guerres des prix de l'histoire des compagnies aériennes.

**D'après les analystes de Citigroup, toute compagnie aérienne dont la base de coûts est faible et le bilan sain se dirigera tout droit vers une guerre des prix estivale dès que les restrictions de voyage liées au coronavirus seront assouplies et que les passagers commenceront à réserver leurs vacances.**

« Les investisseurs des compagnies aériennes sont pris au piège dans un cycle apparemment sans fin de discussions sur les analyses rétrospectives de la consommation de trésorerie, les risques liés au fonds de roulement, les positions de couverture alambiquées et la menace à moyen terme de la chute des budgets de voyage des entreprises », explique Mark Manduca, directeur associé de la recherche sur l'Europe, le Moyen-Orient et l'Afrique chez Citi, dans une étude publiée mercredi 22 avril.

Dans cette analyse, le groupe financier estime que **le marché ignore une menace importante**. « Le programme d'été doit être rempli en l'espace d'une à trois semaines et la seule façon pour les

compagnies aériennes de faire voyager les gens sur de courtes distances est de réduire fortement les prix. En termes simples, **toute reprise de la demande sera déclenchée par l'une des plus grandes guerres des prix de l'histoire.**

Le document Citi rappelle les récents commentaires du patron de Ryanair, **Michael O'Leary**, qui a déclaré que la compagnie aérienne à bas prix irlandaise suppose que les **vols européens resteront au sol jusqu'à une reprise « limitée » en juin, après quoi elle s'attend à une reprise des voyages intra-européens, alimentée par de fortes réductions sur les vacances de dernière minute entre juillet et août.**

« Qu'il s'agisse de 9,99 €, 4,99 €, 1,99 € ou 99 cents par siège, nous nous en moquons presque – notre objectif essentiel à court terme n'est pas de gagner de l'argent, mais de faire en sorte que nos pilotes et notre personnel de cabine reprennent le vol et que l'avion reprenne son vol », a déclaré M. O'Leary à l'agence de presse Reuters.

**Ce scénario pourrait fonctionner pour des compagnies aériennes comme Ryanair et la compagnie hongroise à bas prix Wizz Air dont les bilans semblent mieux placés que certains de leurs rivaux pour résister à la crise.**

Wizz Air, qui n'exploite que 3 % de sa capacité, a déclaré disposer de 1,5 milliard d'euros en espèces à la fin du mois de mars 2020. Alors que les analystes de Davy Research ont récemment déclaré que **Ryanair** avait « l'un des bilans les plus solides du secteur, citant sa trésorerie de fin d'année de 3,8 milliards d'euros et le fait que **77% de la flotte appartenant au groupe est sans dette.**

« Les compagnies aériennes se comportent désormais comme un secteur de commodité. Le prix le plus bas doit être atteint avec le coût le plus bas et Ryanair a le plus de garanties sur sa courbe de coûts pour inonder le marché de sièges et s'emparer de parts de marché », selon Citigroup. « Mais comme nous l'avons déjà dit, prévient le rapport, tout optimisme à l'égard du secteur aérien européen à ce stade est prématuré.

**La Lufthansa semble la plus mal placée pour faire face à une guerre des prix estivale.** Le transporteur allemand a immobilisé au sol environ 700 des 763 avions de sa flotte et ne fonctionne qu'à **5 % de sa capacité normale** en sièges. Le directeur général Carsten Spohr a averti le mois dernier que « plus cette crise durera, plus il est probable que l'avenir de l'aviation ne puisse être garanti sans aide d'État ». L'Association internationale du transport aérien a déclaré, il y a quelques jours, que jusqu'à 200 milliards de dollars pourraient être nécessaires dans le monde entier pour sauver les compagnies aériennes.

Les investisseurs ont également exprimé un certain nombre **d'inquiétudes sur la manière dont les compagnies aériennes pourront reprendre leurs vols tout en respectant les mesures de distanciation sociale.**

La semaine dernière, easyJet a déclaré qu'elle envisageait de laisser le siège du milieu vide dans un geste visant à encourager les passagers à reprendre l'avion. Mais pour les analystes de Citi, les compagnies aériennes pourraient avoir du mal à gagner de l'argent si leurs avions ne sont remplis qu'à 66%.



Parmi les autres freins à une reprise, de nature à dissuader les passagers de réserver des vols, il y a **les niveaux d'humidité et les systèmes de climatisation des avions qui constituent « un terrain parfait pour la reproduction du virus. »**

Enfin, il y a la **question clé des frontières** et, surtout, savoir s'il y aura des directives claires et limitées de Bruxelles sur la manière de les ouvrir à travers les 27 pays de l'Union européenne à mesure que les restrictions de verrouillage seront levées. La question posée dans cette étude est pour le moment sans réponse : « les différents gouvernements auront-ils des politiques et des règles de quarantaine différentes à l'arrivée et au départ ? »

#### Déplacements pro 22/04/2020

**La pandémie de coronavirus pourrait réduire de 1,2 milliard le nombre de passagers dans le ciel d'ici septembre, comparé à une année traditionnelle, a déclaré mercredi l'Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale.**

"Le nombre total de passagers aériens internationaux pourrait diminuer de 1,2 milliard d'ici à septembre 2020", a indiqué l'institution onusienne dans un communiqué.

**"La réduction la plus importante du nombre de passagers devrait se situer en Europe, surtout pendant la saison haute en été, suivie par l'Asie-Pacifique", a-t-elle précisé.**

La capacité des compagnies aériennes pourrait également être fortement réduite, ce qui entraînerait **une baisse des revenus de ces compagnies de 160 à 253 milliards de dollars au cours des neuf premiers mois de l'année.**

En février, lorsque la pandémie semblait encore se concentrer en Chine, l'Organisation avait estimé que l'épidémie du nouveau coronavirus avait projeté une "réduction potentielle de 4 à 5 milliards de dollars" de revenus pour les compagnies aériennes du monde.

#### Boursorama 23/04/2020

Confronté à la pandémie de Covid-19, le groupe Air France-KLM voit l'aide d'état promise se rapprocher, et promet que tous les prêts seront remboursés. Mais la restructuration lancée l'année dernière va s'accélérer, probablement aux dépens du réseau domestique d'Air France.

Le groupe franco-néerlandais vit « une crise d'une extrême gravité », a rappelé le 22 avril 2020 son CEO Benjamin Smith, auditionné avec d'autres dirigeants par le Sénat français. Et si aucun chiffre sur le montant des aides d'Etat n'a été officialisé (la rumeur parle toujours de 10 milliards d'euros pour l'ensemble du groupe), la présidente non-exécutive d'Air France-KLM Anne-Marie Couderc a confirmé que les besoins de liquidités se feront sentir « d'ici au troisième trimestre » – avant l'été donc. Et si elle a précisé que le soutien massif promis par le gouvernement à la compagnie aérienne française interviendra « dans les prochains jours », KLM devrait de son côté être fixée « dans les semaines à venir » ; la présidente aurait pourtant préféré un « calendrier commun ».

**L'aide financière sera constituée de prêts garantis par l'Etat, à hauteur de 90% selon des sources de Reuters, ainsi que de prêts directs des Etats qui seront « tous remboursés », a insisté Anne-Marie Couderc. La recapitalisation du groupe qui perd 25 millions d'euros par jour, un temps évoquée, semble ne pas être à l'ordre du jour.**

Mais le sauvetage du groupe de l'alliance SkyTeam ne se fera pas sans une accélération du plan de restructuration lancé en juin dernier par Ben Smith, particulièrement chez Air France. Il prévoyait

initialement une **réduction de 15% de l'offre sur le réseau intérieur d'ici la fin 2021, le passage sous code AF au lieu de A5 de tous les vols de la filiale régionale HOP, avec à la clé une réduction de sa flotte à 51 avions (tous ses ATR sont déjà partis), mais tout cela va être « accéléré et accentué », a prévenu le CEO.** Une « refonte sans précédent » du réseau court-courrier d'Air France devrait être annoncée rapidement, avec en cible de mire les lignes intérieures déficitaires ; et aucune option ne serait écartée sur la place respective d'Air France, de HOP et de la low cost Transavia sur ce réseau intérieur. « Il faut avoir en tête de maintenir certaines destinations » notamment celles sous obligation de service public, a cependant souligné Anne Rigail, directrice générale d'Air France ; « nous regarderons au cas par cas, il faut que ces lignes d'aménagement du territoire soient soutenables économiquement », le réseau intérieur ayant perdu 220 millions d'euros l'année dernière.

Côté emploi, Anne Rigail a expliqué que la reprise « est plus longue que ce nous imaginions il y a un mois », et confirmé devant le Sénat **qu'Air France « réfléchit » à demander à l'Etat la possibilité d'utiliser le dispositif de chômage partiel jusqu'à neuf mois au lieu de six.** Ben Smith a de son côté souligné qu'un « **impact social** » était **inévitabile**, sans le détailler : « Nous avons tellement perdu d'argent. Nous sommes confrontés à la concurrence du train et des low cost », a-t-il rappelé. Le CSE central d'Air France ce jeudi devrait permettre d'en savoir plus sur la restructuration – et sur le point de vue des syndicats.

Un autre point a été abordé hier au Sénat, celui de l'écologie et du conditionnement des aides d'Etat à des objectifs climatiques : si aucune promesse n'a été faite, **Ben Smith a souligné être prêt à « accélérer notre transformation » malgré la crise sanitaire, Air France-KLM ayant déjà pris des engagements forts sur le développement durable, dont les investissements dans le biocarburant ou la réduction de 50% des émissions de CO2 par passager-kilomètre d'ici à 2030 par rapport à 2005.** « La moitié de cet objectif » a été atteint dès l'année dernière, a rappelé le dirigeant. Côté renouvellement de la flotte, l'arrivée des Airbus A220 à partir de septembre 2021 dans la flotte d'Air France est mise en avant par Anne Rigail, soulignant « **la sortie anticipée des avions les plus polluants et l'entrée d'avions moins polluants** » tels que le monocouloir canadien.

Air Journal 23/04/2020

Auditionnés en visioconférence par le Sénat, ils ont tous les quatre répondu le 22 avril aux questions des sénateurs : Ben Smith, le directeur général d'Air France-KLM, Anne-Marie Couderc présidente non-exécutive du groupe et du Conseil d'administration d'Air France, Anne Rigail, la directrice générale d'Air France, Anne-Sophie Le Lay, la secrétaire générale du groupe.

Concernant la crise sanitaire, « qui a violemment agressé l'économie et l'activité de la compagnie » selon Anne-Marie Couderc, les dirigeants ont rappelé qu'elle avait engendré 290 milliards de dollars de pertes pour les compagnies, dont 82 milliards en Europe, selon Iata. **Avec 5 vols long-courriers et 15 vols moyen et court-courriers par jour (36 destinations), Air France opère désormais seulement 5% de son trafic normal, et KLM moins de 10%.**

Des problèmes de liquidités au troisième trimestre

S'agissant de son avenir, notamment financier, même si Anne-Marie Couderc a rappelé que les discussions actuelles étaient secrètes, de nouveaux éléments ont été apportés. Sans aide, la société aura « besoin de liquidités au troisième trimestre 2020 », c'est-à-dire dans un avenir très proche. A la question de savoir si cette aide de la part de l'Etat allait intervenir via un prêt garanti ou une recapitalisation, Anne-Marie Couderc a insisté sur la notion de **prêt et de remboursement, sans non plus jamais vraiment exclure la recapitalisation.** Les modalités de cette aide devraient être connues dans les « prochains jours pour Air France et un peu plus tard pour KLM ». Les agendas des deux pays n'ayant « malheureusement » pas pu se coordonner.

Air France souhaite un avoir de 12 mois remboursable

Interrogé sur la mise en place d'un avoir, Anne Rigail a rappelé que les clients des vols annulés sont remboursés. Mais **l'instauration d'avoirs remboursables au bout de 12 mois s'ils ne sont pas utilisés, est soutenue par la compagnie française.** « Cette mesure me semble juste et c'est celle qui est soutenue par la France, les Pays-Bas, et un certain nombre d'autres pays membres de l'Union européenne », a assuré la directrice générale. L'absence de bons d'achat coûterait environ « un milliard d'euros » à Air France d'ici le 30 septembre.

S'agissant de la reprise après le 11 mai, si « faire des prédictions aujourd'hui relève d'un exercice assez peu scientifique » d'après Anne Rigail, quelques éléments ont été apportés par les dirigeants. **Le pourcentage avancé il y a peu de 30% du trafic d'Air France en juillet n'a pas été remis en cause. Les Etats-Unis seront la destination ciblée en premier, avant le Brésil, le Japon puis l'Afrique.**

Sans doute alertés par les images dans les médias d'un avion Air France rempli avec des passagers sans masque, beaucoup de sénateurs ont questionné l'équipe dirigeante sur les moyens qu'elle allait mettre en place pour limiter la propagation du virus lors de la reprise. « En ce moment, les vols affichent un remplissage de 40% en moyenne, a précisé Anne Rigail. La distanciation sociale est possible. Quand elle ne sera pas possible, l'entreprise distribuera des masques à tous ceux qui n'en ont pas. »

Des parcours ont été imaginés au sein des aéroports parisiens avec de nouveaux balisages, les salons resteront fermés encore quelques temps, **les personnels porteront des masques et des gants et seront équipés de lingettes nettoyantes. Enfin, en plus du filtrage, qui a lieu toutes les trois minutes à bord, le personnel d'Air France utilisera des sprays virucides et rémanent 10 jours.**

Le réseau domestique d'Air France va être revu

Enfin, Ben Smith a détaillé la stratégie d'après cette crise Covid-19, que les dirigeants voient comme un catalyseur pour accélérer la transition du modèle économique d'Air France-KLM. **Le groupe prévoit de baisser de 50% ses émissions de gaz à effet de serre d'ici 2030, poursuivre ses efforts en matière de recherche et développement, travailler en collaboration avec les autres moyens de transports « qu'il ne faut plus opposer ».**

**Le réseau domestique d'Air France, qui a entraîné 200 millions d'euros de pertes en 2019, risque d'être une des premières victimes de la crise.** Ben Smith a encore annoncé une baisse de 18% de l'activité en France, ce qui induira la réduction de 450 postes dans les escales françaises. Le plan de restructuration qui était à l'origine prévu en l'espace de 5 ans est désormais prévu sur 2 ans.

[L'Echo touristique 22/04/2020](#)

**Green Cross International a publié 10 propositions pour un financement raisonné du transport aérien.**

Green Cross International, ou Croix verte internationale, est une organisation non gouvernementale internationale à but environnemental, fondée le 20 avril 1993 à Kyoto, à la suite du Sommet de la Terre qui a réuni les Nations unies à Rio de Janeiro en 1992

Ces 10 propositions recouvrent plusieurs thématiques.

L'un des premiers items concerne **l'accélération et le renouvellement de la flotte pour des avions plus responsables.** Autre thème : **développer l'efficacité opérationnelle et la responsabilité écologique aérienne du secteur aérien** (favoriser l'éco-pilotage, rendre obligatoire la certification

Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) niveau 3).

Green Cross évoque également **la fiscalité du transport aérien avec d'une part l'instauration une taxe carburant, d'autre part la défiscalisation temporairement des carburants alternatifs durables et enfin la mise en place d'une compensation carbone pour tous les trajets intra-France.**

Enfin, Green Cross milite pour impliquer l'ensemble de la filière du transport aérien (depuis le constructeur jusqu'au voyageur) dans une approche globale.

Dans ce cadre, l'organisation formule 3 propositions : obtenir de l'ensemble des **voyagistes** (physiques et en ligne) proposant des voyages à des voyageurs français qu'ils consacrent **10% de leurs commissions à des projets de compensation à haute valeur écologique et sociale**, obliger à la mise en place sous 24 mois d'une **politique écologiquement responsable appliquée de manière opérationnelle** (0 plastique jetable à usage unique au 15 juin 2021, gestion des déchets de bord 5 flux, accessibilité aux personnes à mobilité réduite...) et enfin **généraliser une approche sanitaire et de santé irréprochable**, sur l'ensemble du parcours voyageur (mise à disposition de masques, gel et gants), prise de température voyageur, présence d'un cabinet médical en aéroport ayant des capacités de test rapide – cf. Corée du Sud, Australie..., gestion des eaux propres et usées, recyclage et valorisation des équipements usagés...).

Tourmag 22/04/2020

**NEW DELHI: IndiGo, India's largest and richest airline in terms of cash reserve, today announced that it has reversed the pay cut of up to 25% announced earlier and all its employees will get their full salary for the month of April.**

However, top level employees have volunteered to take a pay cut and will forego their salaries till the situation improves.

"Let us now turn our attention to the immediate issue of April pay. In deference to our Government's wishes of not not reducing pay during the lockdown, we have decided not to implement the previously announced pay cuts during the month of April. However, your Excom (executive committee) members and SVPs (senior vice presidents) have volunteered to take pay cuts this month. For everyone else, you can expect your April salaries to be paid without the pay cuts," read an email to its employees from its CEO Rono Dutta.



In an email last month, IndiGo had announced a pay cut of up to 25% from April 1. While other executives above the senior vice president level would take cuts of 20%; vice presidents and pilots would take a 15% cut, while others including cabin crew would take a 5%-10% deductions.

**Following IndiGo's announcement, other airlines had also announced pay cuts. It is, however, unlikely that other airlines will reverse their pay cut decisions, as they are not as cash rich as IndiGo.**

**Airlines -which are grounded since the lockdown announced by the government to control the spread of Corona virus- have been under financial stress since they are not operating flights.**

The Economic Times of India 24/04/2020

**MUMBAI: Vistara Wednesday said it has deployed its Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner aircraft to transport relief material, medical supplies and essential commercial goods during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.**

Vistara started operating the cargo flights on Sunday, 19 April 2020 between Delhi and Mumbai, and will operate more such flights over the next two weeks, it said, adding it will fly to cities such as Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Vistara started operating the cargo flights on Sunday, 19 April 2020 between Delhi and Mumbai, and will operate more such flights over the next two weeks, it said, adding it will fly to cities such as Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata and Mumbai.

**The aircraft have a capacity of 20 tons, the airline said.**

The Economic Times of India 22/04/2020

**NEW DELHI: The Delhi airport has been handling 20-22 cargo flights per day during the coronavirus lockdown and it has also created a dedicated facility for logistics, aggregation and distribution of medical supplies, its operator DIAL said on Thursday.**

The GMR group-led DIAL said the Ministry of Civil Aviation has designated the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) as a major hub for import and distribution of medical supplies related to COVID-19.

India has been under lockdown since March 25 to curb the spread of coronavirus, which has infected more than 21,300 people and killed 680 people till now. All commercial passenger flights have been suspended for the lockdown period.

**"A 3,800 square meter unique dedicated distribution facility has been made operational at the Delhi airport by the DIAL within a record time of seven days,"** it mentioned in a press release.

**This facility performs logistics, aggregation and distribution of large consignments of medical supplies, which are being imported to India, the DIAL noted.**

At this facility, the first shipment consisting of 24 metric tons cargo arrived on Tuesday having 70,000 protective suits, it said.

The same is getting processed and aggregated at this distribution facility after sanitisation of each box. Further, the same will be distributed to various parts of the country," the DIAL stated.

Several such consignments are scheduled to flow in and get processed through the Delhi airport in the coming days comprising bodysuits, masks, hand gloves and goggles, the operator mentioned.

The Delhi airport has been handling around 20-22 cargo flights per day (including non-scheduled operations), with freighters operating between various destinations like Doha, Hong Kong, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Incheon, the DIAL stated.

Videh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO, DIAL, said, "**We are honoured to be designated as the major hub for import and distribution of medical essentials at this time of crisis by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.**"

The Economic Times of India 23/04/2020

**NEW DELHI : Travel, especially aviation, has been one of the hardest hit by the global outbreak of covid-19, which has left thousands dead and millions sick globally. Cash-strapped Indian airlines have sought for a bail out package from the government, as the sector stares at job losses and closure. Most Indian airlines have not structured their business models to withstand even regular shocks, such as elevated fuel prices or economic downturns, let alone once-in-a-century events (like covid-19), aviation consultancy firm CAPA India said in a recent report.** As things stand, aviation sector in India remain grounded as the country battles to contain covid-19. We tally some of the numbers that stand out.

**₹75 - ₹90 crore per day losses: Indian airlines are losing about ₹75-90 crore daily during the shutdown.** All Indian major carriers have already started undertaking salary cuts for their employees to cut costs. However, until the cash inflows resume, the airlines will require funding support to meet their expenses.

"Considering the **operating expenses** of the Indian aviation industry in FY2019, and that about 35-**42% of their expenses are fixed in nature**, it is estimated that the industry will report a net loss of about Rs. 75-90 crore per day of shutdown of operations." said Kinjal Shah, Vice President, ICRA.

**\$3.3- 3.6 billion loss incurred by the Indian aviation industry:** Total losses to be incurred by Indian aviation sector, including airlines, airports, and ground handling industry during April- June 2020 quarter. While airlines are expected to lose \$1.75 billion during the quarter, airports and concessionaires are expected to lose \$1.50-1.75 billion during the period and ground handling companies are expected to lose \$80-90 million.

**Airports to operate below 50% capacity 50%:** Indian airports are likely to operate below 50% capacity till June due to travel restrictions to contain the spread of covid-19. Even post the lift off the nation-wide lockdown passenger growth will face a sharp contraction considering the inhibitions of travelling anywhere till the pandemic scare has been settled fully in the domestic regions and internationally.

**30-50% decline in domestic traffic:** Estimated decline in domestic and international traffic during FY 21, as compared to the previous year. **Domestic traffic is expected to decline from an estimated 140 million in FY2020 to around 80-90 million in FY2021. International traffic is expected to fall from approximately 70 million in FY2020 to 35-40 million in FY2021,** and possibly less. "Even if the operation resume in the coming month, the travel appetite is expected to remain muted for much of the calendar year. Hence, airlines will be forced to lower capacity," said an official of a no-frill airline.

**65% decline in occupancy at hotels:** In the third week of March 2020, since the the imposition of lockdown, the hotels' sector witnessed a decline of more than 65% in occupancy levels countrywide as compared to the same period of the previous year, global real estate services JLL India in a recent report. The July-December 2020 period is also expected to see weak room occupancies due to intensification of travel restrictions around the world to contain covid-19.

**66.8% decline in aviation activity: Based on the number of daily flights tracked by Flightradar24, global aviation activity during April has declined by 66.8% over the last month.** Mosts countries globally have stopped international flights while grounding or limiting domestic flights. India has grounded both domestic and international flight operations. While domestic flight operations could resume next month in India, international flights could re-start only after July.

\*Data credit- CAPA India, FlightRadar24, ICRA, JLL India, CARE Ratings

Live Mint Aviation 26/04/2020

**NEW DELHI : The Indian foriegn ministry in coordination with its missions abroad besides the civil aviation ministry and state governments, is drawing up plans to bring back Indians stranded abroad,** two people familiar with the development said on Sunday.

**Though the consultations are on, the stranded Indians will be flown back only after the nationwide lockdown to control the spread of the novel coronavirus is lifted,** the two people said separately.

Prime minister Narendra Modi has announced that the lockdown will be in place still 3 May.

The evacuations were discussed at a meeting of state chief secretaries chaired by cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba on Saturday. They will also depend on the lockdown situation in the host country, one of the two cited above said. Those being evacuated will have to pay for their tickets, the person cited above said.

There are thousands of Indians stranded abroad, especially in the Gulf with many of them appealing by posts on Twitter to airlift them home. Since the nation wide lockdown, Indians from a few locations like covid-19 hotspot Iran have been brought back by special flights arranged with the help

of the Iranian government. Air India operated special flights to China and Japan in January and February to bring back Indians stranded there.

So far, India has recorded more than 26,000 coronavirus cases including more than 800 deaths.

Live Mint Aviation 26/04/2020

**India's private airline companies have restarted taking bookings for both domestic and international travel**, their websites showed. A source told Mint airlines again began taking bookings on Saturday. **Spicejet and GoAir are taking bookings with departures from 16 May while Indigo and Vistara are doing so for travel from 1 June. State-owned Air India is yet to restart bookings for any travel.**

**The move by the companies comes exactly a week after they were rapped by the civil aviation ministry for taking bookings even as restrictions on movement of people, imposed to prevent the spread of covid-19, remained in force. They were told not to do bookings till further instructions as the pandemic continued to spread.**

In the first instance, while private airlines had restarted taking bookings for only a few days and then restarted, it was Air India's move on 18 April to join their ranks that had upset the authorities. They were then forced to tell all airlines to stop bookings. It is not clear if the airlines have got the ministry's approval to restart bookings.

A 16 May Spicejet flight from Delhi to Bengaluru is currently available at ₹3,500. Indigo is charging the same price for the route for 1 June travel. A 1 June Delhi-Kolkata Vistara flight is available for ₹3,800 while Indigo is charging ₹3,400 for the same. A 1 June Delhi-Mumbai flight is available on Vistara for ₹4,400 while Go Air is charging ₹2,500 for a 16 May flight on the same route.

**The central government eased some restrictions for some businesses on Saturday and it is possible airlines took that as a signal to restart their business activities**, not coming a day too soon for them as they struggle with high fixed costs in a highly competitive sector. All airlines responded by effecting job or pay cuts or sending their staff on leave without pay.

Airlines had received much flak for taking bookings even as they were not allowed to and thus locking people's money. In many cases, the money wasn't refunded with airlines creating a 'credit shell' for their customers and agents for booking later. The customers were thus left in a peculiar situation, locked by the airline to fly with it the next time too even if they didn't want.

This had hurt agents like MakeMyTrip and EaseMyTrip too since they pay advance money for bulk bookings but had no access to the 'wallet' that received the refunds when customers cancelled their tickets.



Live Mint Aviation 26/04/2020

**The Home Ministry Saturday said the bodies of Indian nationals and OCI cardholders, who died abroad due to COVID-19, can be brought back, but with strict adherence to relevant guidelines. In an official communication, the ministry said airport authorities have to follow the protocols laid down by different government agencies in this regard.**

It is clarified that "immigration functions in respect of the arrival of dead bodies and mortal remains of the Indian nationals/ OCI cardholders are permitted subject to strict adherence to the guidelines/ instructions issued by various ministries and departments related with management of COVID-19 and submission of no objection, approval and concurrence from the Ministries of Health and External Affairs in this regard," the communication said.

The Home Ministry also said the Standard Operating Procedures issued by the health ministry in this regard must be strictly adhered to.

According to the SOP, the human remains mean the dead body and the exhumed body of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 patients. It says the importation of the human remains of confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case into India is not recommended.

The MHA said if, contrary to the above recommendation, human remains of the suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 arrive at Indian airports, the concerned Airport Health Officer (APHO) has to follow certain procedures. The APHO will verify the the death certificate mentioning the cause of death as confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19, it said.

It will also verify the no-objection certificate (NOC) for the transportation of human remains of the deceased issued by the Indian Embassies or High Commissions or Consulates. Embalming certificate issued by an authorised agency, the ministry said.

On the examination of packaging or human remains, it said the concerned airline shall ensure that the external packing of coffin is undamaged.

The APHO will verify the required documents and inspect the packing in accordance with the provisions under the Indian Aircraft (Public Health) Rules. 1954, the MHA said.

If there are any obvious signs of damage to the coffin, the handlers shall use full PPE, cover the coffin in plastic sheets to avoid any contact with the body or body fluids before hand-over of the human remains to the concerned authority for final burial or incineration.

The personnel handling the human remains should follow the laid down procedures for donning and doffing of Personal Protective Equipment and follow other protective measures for COVID-19 like hand-washing with soap and water, etc. to ensure that they remain protected during the procedure, it said.

The coffin shall be buried or incinerated following the norms for burial or incineration for human remains with high risk pathogens, the MHA said, adding the handlers would be monitored for 28 days and the designated vehicle disinfected as per the norms.

In all such cases, the APHO must direct the concerned airline (carrying the damaged packing containing human remains) to carry out the disinfection of the aircraft as per the norms, it said.

In addition, the staff handling the cargo (human remains in question) shall be quarantined for 28 days.

**The MHA said the ashes remaining after the cremation pose no risk to the relatives who handle such mortal remains and will be cleared in accordance with the provisions under the Indian Aircraft (Public Health) Rules, 1954.**

Live Mint Aviation 25/04/2020

**U.S. President Donald Trump's suggestion that ultraviolet light could be inserted into coronavirus patients was widely panned on Friday, but a California company thinks it's a perfect solution for decontaminating airplanes.**

**Dimer UCV Innovations created a UV-C-emitting cleaning machine called GermFalcon for the airline industry in 2014 - but it's only with the coronavirus that demand has really taken off.**

"We didn't want it to take a pandemic to create the demand in this industry. That's the situation we're in and we're building our units as quickly as we can," said Elliot Kreitenberg, president and cofounder of Dimer UCV Innovations.

He did not give details on sales of the unit, but said use of the machine had been offered to the industry for free during the pandemic.

GermFalcon is a food cart-sized robotic tool that is pushed down the aisle of the plane. Mechanical wings expand and emit UV-C light onto cabin surfaces.

A protective barrier shields the operator from the ultraviolet light, which can be harmful.

Kreitenberg said the GermFalcon can clean a typical narrow body aircraft in three minutes.

UV-C can damage the nucleic acids within an organism and prevent it from replicating. Its use as a disinfectant is fairly common in hospital and laboratory settings, experts have said.

But elsewhere, such as in aviation, it is uncommon.

There are three types of ultraviolet light: UV-A, UV-B and UV-C, and UV-C is the most damaging.

About 95 percent of the UV radiation from the sun comes in the form of UV-A.

While UV light is known to kill viruses in air-borne droplets, health professionals said it could not be introduced into the human body to target cells infected with the novel coronavirus.

Organizations like CHEO Research Institute in Canada have looked at using UV-C to disinfect personal protective equipment such as N95 masks, but not surfaces.

**According to University of California Santa Barbara, Seoul Semiconductor Co Ltd has been working on UV LEDs for the purpose of decontaminating surfaces. That company reported "99.9% sterilization of coronavirus in 30 seconds."**

Live Mint Aviation 25/04/2020

**New Delhi: Air India chief Rajiv Bansal has been promoted to the secretary-level rank, according to a Personnel Ministry order issued on Sunday.**

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has approved in-situ upgradation of a total of 10 officers to the level of special secretary in the rank and pay of secretary by temporarily upgrading the posts held by them. Bansal, a 1988 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer of the Nagaland cadre, has been given the rank and pay of secretary to the government of India, the order said.

He was appointed the chairman and managing director of Air India in February this year at the rank of additional secretary.

**Besides him, Airports Authority of India (AAI) chairman Arvind Singh has also been promoted to the top rank.**

Praveen Kumar Srivastava will be special secretary, Department of Home. He is at present additional secretary in the same department.

Apurva Chandra has been made special secretary and Director General (Acquisition) in the Defence Ministry. He is currently additional secretary and Director General (Acquisition).

Senior bureaucrat Ali Raza Rizvi, additional secretary and financial adviser in the Information and Broadcasting Ministry, has been promoted as special secretary and financial adviser in the same organisation.

Gujarat-cadre IAS officer Bidyut Bihari Swain will be special secretary in the Department.

The government has also approved promotion of Indevar Pandey as special secretary, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region. He is working as the additional secretary in the same department.

The ETI 26/04/2020

**MUMBAI: In the wake of COVID-19 crisis, GVK MIAL managing Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has put together measures to curb the spread of coronavirus.**

The airport has formulated **standard operating procedures for post-lockdown safety of the passengers, which include social distancing, stringent thermal screening, positioning temporary**

**quarantine centres and also continues to sanitise and disinfect the airport to ensure safety and well-being of the passengers when operations resume.**

"To enable safety precautions at the airport, CSMIA plans to maintain social distancing through distinctive markings at both the terminals, maintaining 1.5 metres distance between each passenger," GVK MIAL said in a statement on Saturday.

The special markings will be spread across the entry gate, check-in counters, self-check-in kiosks, security checkpoints, food courts, lounge area and the boarding area among others. Furthermore, the seating arrangements at the food court as well as in the terminal building are reshuffled in a manner that promotes social distancing. Besides, CSMIA has also created quarantine centres at both the terminals of the airport in case any passenger shows symptoms of the deadly virus during screening which will be conducted before entering the terminal building.

The airport will be assigning their personnel to assist travellers at the self-check-in kiosks to help with the boarding copy and other details along with stationing hand sanitisers at all the touchpoints. CSMIA said it puts special emphasis on the need for passengers to wear masks and gloves during the entire course of their travel. It encourages passengers to check-in online from the comfort of their home or office, the use of card payment transaction and contactless payment at the airport restaurants and retail shops.

GVK Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL) is a public-private partnership joint venture between a GVK-led consortium and the Airports Authority of India (AAI). The new integrated Terminal 2 at CSMIA enhances the airport's capacity to service 40 million passengers and 1.6 million tonnes of cargo annually.

The ETI 25/04/2020

**New Delhi: Eight employees' unions of Air India on Friday requested Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri to ask the airline to roll back its COVID-19 lockdown-triggered decision to cut 10 per cent pay of its employees.**

Air India raised the demand, while commending the IndiGo's decision on Thursday to roll back pay cuts, which were announced last month for senior staff members, for the month of April in deference to the government's wishes.

The joint letter by eight AI employees' unions to Puri on Friday stated, "We request you to countermand Air India committee's decision on COVID-19 pay cut which is against the government's directives and also treat us at par with other PSUs (public sector units) during the lockdown."

Air India has decided to cut salaries of all employees by 10 per cent for three months.

On March 23, the Modi government had asked public and private sector companies not to cut salaries or lay off employees amid the COVID-19 lockdown.

"This pay cut by Air India is mere optics, unnecessary and will hit the morale of the employees which will have a cascading effect on the Indian economy," the unions' letter stated.

"In spite of instructions from the Government of India concerning the welfare of the employees and directions to make payment of wages on due date, the management of Air India defaulted on timely payment of salary which was paid on 18th April, 2020, with a 10 per cent pay cut," it stated.

The flying crew are yet to receive 70 per cent of their wages for the work done in the month of February, the letter added.

As India has been under a lockdown since March 25 to curb the coronavirus pandemic spread, all commercial passenger flights have been suspended for this period. Consequently, revenues of aviation sector companies have been hit hard.

"We admire the decision by the top management of a private airline not to implement the previously announced pay cuts in deference to the government's wishes of not reducing pay during the lockdown," the letter noted.

While IndiGo had announced on March 19 that it is cutting salaries of senior employees by up to 25 per cent, the budget carrier rolled it back on Thursday for the month of April "in deference to our government's wishes".

However, the private airline clarified that few senior employees -- the members of the Executive Committee and senior vice presidents -- have voluntarily taken the pay cut in April.

While a private airline is honouring the directions of the government, it is of "great consequence for Air India to follow suit and also lead by example", the letter by Air India unions stated.

Any pay cut with regards to COVID-19 lockdown has to be voluntary in nature as followed by the senior management of the private airline, the letter noted.

The eight unions that wrote to Puri are: Indian Commercial Pilots' Association, Indian Pilots' Guild, Air Corporations Employees' Union, All India Cabin Crew Association, All India Aircraft Engineers' Association, Air India Employees' Union, All India Aircraft Engineers' Association and Indian Aircraft Technicians' Association.

The ETI 25/04/2020

**HYDERABAD: GMR group managed Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) has announced gearing up for the post-lockdown days and preparing itself to make social distancing a new normal.**

In a statement here on Friday, the airport said it was constantly engaging with all its stakeholders and key partners to strategize and work in collaboration to provide a safe and sanitized environment for the passengers at the airport.

These stakeholders include Airport Health Organization, Airlines, CISF, Customs, Immigration, Ground Handlers, Security, Concessionaires, Service Partners, among others.

The GHIAL chief executive SGK Kishore said the airport and its stakeholders were working through the lockdown period to ensure that right measures were in place to ensure passenger safety once commercial flight operations resume. "While the airport is geared up with a high level of hygiene and new operational procedures, passengers' role in keeping the airport safe would also be equally important."

At all check-in counters, the boarding card and bag tag dispensers were made directly accessible to passengers to avoid any need for the physical exchange of these documents with the airport staff.

Transparent shields are being installed at all counters serving passengers such as check-in counters, cash counters at all commercial outlets to ensure safe separation between passengers and frontline staff.

Apart from making it mandatory for all airport staff, service partners, concessionaires to undergo thermal screening before entering the premises, the airport is also providing the staff with adequate protective equipment, including masks and gloves.

Regular sanitization of high contact surfaces such as desks, chairs, elevators, railings, trolleys, handles, trays, baggage belts, etc. inside the terminals is being carried out that will continue when the airport reopens.

Sensor-based automatic hand sanitizer dispensing machines were being placed strategically across the terminal building for use by passengers and airport staff.

The airport has taken measures to sanitize the terminal buildings and ensure strict compliance of social distancing norms by the passengers and staff to minimize the human contact in the post-lockdown days.

At present, the airport on a daily basis is taking up deep sanitization and fumigation of the entire airport building spread out across 7 levels with a total area of 1.27 lakh square meters for which a team over 100 professionals was deployed.

The ETI 25/04/2020

**The coronavirus pandemic is expected to impact more than 29 lakh jobs in the Indian aviation and dependent industries, global airlines' grouping IATA said on Friday.**

Commercial flight services in the country remain suspended till May 3 amid the nationwide lockdown to curb spreading of coronavirus infections.

**Besides, the pandemic and subsequent lockdown have significantly impacted economic activities, with aviation and tourism among the worst affected segments.**

**The International Air Transport Association (IATA) said its latest estimates indicate a worsening of the country impact from the COVID-19 crisis in the Asia-Pacific region.**

**About India, IATA said the pandemic is expected to potentially impact 29,32,900 jobs in the country's aviation and its dependent industries.**

**The passenger traffic has declined 47 per cent.**

**Besides, the grouping noted that the revenue impact for airlines operating to and from the Indian market would be USD 11.221 billion (over Rs 85,000 crore)**

This refers to the fall in passenger revenue compared to 2019.

The "passenger demand impact (origin destination volumes)" is a fall of more than 8.97 crore. All the figures are for the period of 2020 so far compared to the whole of 2019.

IATA is a grouping of nearly 290 airlines, including Air India, Vistara, IndiGoNSE -4.34 % and SpiceJet.

On April 14, IATA said COVID-19 crisis would see global airline passenger revenues drop by USD 314 billion this year, a fall of 55 per cent compared to 2019.

**Airlines in the Asia-Pacific region would record the largest revenue drop of USD 113 billion in 2020 compared to last year.**

**These estimates are based on a scenario of severe travel restrictions lasting for three months, with a gradual lifting of restrictions in domestic markets, followed by regional and intercontinental, as per IATA.**

The ETI 24/04/2020

**HYDERABAD: GMR Hyderabad International Airport (GHIAL) on Sunday announced that it got connected to the African markets with the touchdown of the maiden cargo flight of Ethiopian Airlines from the Ethiopian capital city Addis Ababa to Hyderabad.** This takes place amidst the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown.

In a statement, GHIAL said the Ethiopian flight landed at Hyderabad International Airport on Sunday evening and scheduled to depart by night to Ethiopia.

“This new direct connection between Hyderabad and Ethiopia throws open new opportunities to reach out to the markets in Africa and beyond leveraging the robust cargo network of the Ethiopian Airlines,” said the GMR operated airport.

The Ethiopian Airlines will operate Boeing 777-300 aircraft with a capacity of 50 metric tons per flight in a frequency of once a week.

**The latest addition of Ethiopian Airlines takes the total number of freighters the GHIAL is handling to 12 a week along with some special cargo charters, connecting Hyderabad to all major international destinations in the US, Europe, Middle-East, Africa, Far East, moving emergency supplies. The key scheduled freighters operating from Hyderabad International Airport include Cathay Cargo, Turkish Cargo, Qatar Cargo, Lufthansa Cargo, SpiceXpress Cargo and Blue Dart Cargo.**

The ETI 27/04/2020

**Higher fares, fewer routes, pre-flight health checks and less free food: The coronavirus pandemic is ushering in a new era of air travel.**

A seismic shift is underway as the world’s airlines reassess their operations and how they will look emerging from the crisis. At eerily empty airports, mask-wearing and social distancing already show a behavioural change among the few staff and travellers left. **A long shakeup lies ahead that is set to touch almost every aspect of flying after limits on movement unwind.**

“We should be prepared for a choppy, sluggish recovery even after the virus is contained,” Delta Air Lines Inc. Chief Executive Officer Ed Bastian said in a letter to employees this week. “I estimate **the recovery period could take two to three years.**”

**In a matter of months, the coronavirus reset the clock on a decades-long aviation boom that’s been one of the great cultural and economic phenomena of the postwar world. The explosion in air travel shrunk the planet, created jobs and hundreds of millions of first-time fliers, and dispersed**

**families rich and poor over continents. Now it's all on hold, with airlines slashing seat capacity by more than 70% since January, according to analytics firm Cirium.**

There's no knowing when people will be willing to pack into enclosed cabin spaces again, though an International Air Transport Association survey found 40% of recent travellers anticipated waiting at least six months after the virus is contained before flying again. Budget carrier EasyJet Plc is among those planning to keep middle seats empty, at least initially, to reassure customers about personal spacing. At Korean Air Lines Co., cabin crew now have goggles, masks, gloves and protective gowns.

Cabins post-fever

**Configurations are likely to change as carriers try to squeeze more money from customers. Some will upgrade premium cabins while their fleets are grounded, resulting in an even starker difference between higher-class sections and ever more spartan economy seating,** said Volodymyr Bilotkach, a lecturer in air-transport management at the Singapore Institute of Technology.

**In Asia, one of the last strongholds for all-inclusive fares, airlines might also increasingly charge economy passengers separately for things like baggage check-in, legroom and meals,** said Bilotkach, who wrote the book "The Economics of Airlines," published in 2017. Even before the virus struck, carriers there typically made only \$3 of profit from each customer, according to IATA. In Europe and the U.S., where ancillary charges are already going up, the figures were \$5 and \$17, respectively.

Cheap flights can be found for now as airlines compete for a handful of passengers, while inklings of a recovery show traffic on China's busiest routes is up at least 7% from February lows. **IATA's chief executive, Alexandre de Juniac, said the wearing of face masks might reassure passengers, but keeping middle seats empty would be challenging and reduce maximum seat capacity to below break-even levels.**

The industry has weathered storms before, but none as rough as this. Nearly two-thirds of the world's 26,000 passenger aircraft are grounded, and some 25 million jobs are at risk. IATA has warned that carriers face a \$314 billion shortfall in ticket sales this year, and half of them face bankruptcy in two to three months without government help. EasyJet, based in Luton, England, has data-science teams modelling various scenarios for how soon demand returns, at what levels, what prices people will pay and how much to charge to make a profit on a given flight, CEO Johan Lundgren said on a conference call last week. No one knows the answers.

Passenger tests

**A concern is that customers will be put off by health-related entry rules that may differ from country to country, especially during an uneven opening-up process.** Just as airport security tightened after the September 2001 terrorist attacks in the U.S., travellers could be subject to tests like temperature checks, or they may even need health certificates to fly, according to consulting firm BCG. That could be time-consuming and complicate flying schedules.

"It needs to be quick and secure. Something that is a relatively minor burden," said Dirk-Maarten Molenaar, Amsterdam-based head of BCG's travel and tourism practice in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

Business Standards 26/04/2020



**Indian airports are preparing to resume business in a scenario where they know business will be unusual. While counting their losses and strategising on how to protect revenue, India's major private airports and state-owned Airport Authority of India (AAI) are ramping up sanitisation. They are also implementing procedures to comply with social distancing measures which will become a norm when air travel resumes in a controlled manner after lockdown.**

Airports expect passenger footfall to drastically reduce for the entire year. This will harm the revenue of airports and the vast retail ecosystem that serves their customers at airports.

But fewer footfalls will make it easier to prevent crowding in the immediate days after travel begins. The Airport Council International (ACI) a group of world's largest airport estimates that due to the pandemic, footfall to reduce by 40 percent in 2020 at Asian airports.

**"Several airports have already started marking various contact points for making zones for social distancing," AAI Chairman Arvind Singh said.**

Delhi Airport, India's largest in terms of passenger capacity, said it has deployed a team of 500 professionals to carry out frequent disinfection every hour. There will be additional queue managers at entry, exit, boarding point, check-in halls, security check areas and boarding gates, with social distancing markers and reminders.

"We are conducting training and assessments of key service personnel, check on major facilities and performing risk evaluations to prepare for resuming operations. We will leave no stone unturned when it comes to the well-being of its passengers, said Videh Kumar Jaipuria, CEO at Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL).

**The airport which pays 47 per cent of its revenue as rental to state-owned AAI has started negotiations for a waiver on that till business returns to normal level.**

**Mumbai airport has formed quarantine centres at both the terminals if a passenger develops symptoms during screening which will be compulsory before entering the airport. It advises travellers to carry less luggage and wear masks and gloves.**

**Hyderabad airport will aggressively promote its digital entrance facility which allows self check-in, self bag-tag and travel without a printed boarding card.**

"We are disinfecting the entire airport premises during this closure with high-grade disinfectants and will increase the frequency of sanitising and deep cleaning once operation resumes," said Hari Marar, MD & CEO at Bangalore International Airport.

**CISF, the paramilitary force that guards airports, said measurement of body temperature at the airport entrance will be made mandatory. M A Ganapathy, special DG (airport security) said the closure of check-in time for passengers may have to be increased to 120 minutes from the current 45 minutes to prevent queueing and make time for multiple checkings.**

The airports' business will be severely impacted by a government recommendation to keep business outlets closed for a certain period. The rents or concession fees from such stores, which has become zero over the last one month form a large part of the private airports' revenue. **"To avoid crowding and breaching of distancing norms all outlets except pharmacy shops and ATMs may not be allowed to operate till situation is normal."** Bureau of Civil Aviation Security has proposed.

## THE NEW NORMAL

- **Check in early to make time** for multiple checks and avoid crowding
- **Travel light to reduce** your waiting time
- **Avoid cash payments;** shop online from duty-free stores
- **Wear masks and gloves** for the entire duration of travel
- **Sanitise and wash** your hands
- **Thermal screening** before entry

## BIG LOSSES LOOM

Projected loss in Q1FY21		
\$ <b>1.75</b> billion Airlines	\$ <b>1.50-1.75</b> billion Airports	\$ <b>80-90</b> million Ground handlers

Source: CAPA

**MoCA has formed a committee headed by Joint Secretary on the procedure to finalise guidelines on how to resume air travel. CEOs of private airports along with airlines are part of the committee.**

Sources said that multiple global chains are discussing to invoke the Force Majeure clause saying that they will be unable to pay rentals to airports for FY 21. **"We are accounting for zero non-aeronautical sale for the rest of the year, this will be damaging for sustenance,"** said an executive of a private airport.

Hence, airports does not want blanket ban on stores and assure that strict crowd control measures will be implemented there too.

"We are even changing the store layout plans and making clear demarcation signs and will encourage customers for no-contact purchase options," says P K Thimmaya, CEO of Flemingo Travel Retail which operate duty-free stores at Mumbai Airport. "They can shop on our website and just collect their purchase from a pre-designed counter," he says pointing out that they provide livelihood to almost 1,000 families.

Business Standards 25/04/2020

**Here is a selection of articles on Covid-19 from across Indian publications. From the aviation sector workers resting stranded Indians, to on-and-off lockdowns till we discover a vaccine, and how coronavirus affects our kidneys – read these and more in today's India dispatch.**

Expert Speak

Use of war metaphors for Covid-19 divides people, spreads fear: Experts have repeatedly warned against use of military language as it is dangerous and distorts reality. Soumitra Pathare, director of the Pune-based Centre for Mental Health for Law and Policy at the Indian Law Society, agrees with the view. In this interview, he explains the many problems and unintended consequences of using war metaphors.

## Citizens Under Lockdown

What's on their plate? For many migrants stuck in camps amidst the lockdown, home is often hundreds of kilometres away, a separation made worse by the lack of familiar food. There have been protests over food in Surat, Kochi and elsewhere.

How the Indian Railways is reinventing itself in the times of Covid-19: Indian Railways, the world's fourth largest rail network, seems to be responding snappily to the times. It has been busy reinventing itself so that its massive infrastructure — spread across a staggering 64,000 km, with 7,000 stations, and 1.2 million employees — can be honed into a valuable tool during the pandemic.

**Aviation sector workers rescuing stranded Indians: In these unprecedented times, one of the sectors brutally hit by the pandemic is the aviation industry. They have been grounded, literally and financially. With a blanket ban on international and domestic flights, revenues have seen a freefall, yet national carriers like Air India continue to bring in stranded Indians from the epicentres of infection, help foreigners stuck in the country reach their homes, and also transport essential supplies.**

## Opinion

Phasing out India's lockdown is essential, but with more nuance than what's done so far: A market economy is not an automobile that can stop and restart at the touch of a button. The more severe the lockdown, and the longer it lasts, the more complete is the disruption of the economy, and the slower the recovery. By the same token, the more the economy is protected, the sooner it will bounce back when the lockdown ends.

Sewage surveillance can estimate coronavirus spread in the community: Sampling sewage for viral particles is a time-tested method of environment surveillance and is routinely resorted to for understanding circulation of several viruses in the community. Now, researchers in France have found that sewage surveillance can help understand the circulation of the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) in the human population.

## Managing Covid-19

You or someone you know tests positive for coronavirus. What happens next? You wake up one morning with a headache and fever. You are coughing as well, but you are not sure if you have difficulty breathing. You wonder if you have the new coronavirus. What can you do next? .

Under strict lockdown, Indore is deploying its Swachh Bharat machinery to deliver groceries: Indore has been under a strict curfew since March 29, with residents not allowed out even to buy food. The Indore Municipal Corporation has been doing home delivery of essentials since the first week of April 2020. Every day, a team comprising a driver, a helper and a volunteer from an NGO set out to collect garbage and also hand out and collect grocery order forms. Health workers on Covid-19 duty say working in protective gear leaves them drained: Necessary though they are, PPEs, especially the complete kit, add to the physical strain of gruelling schedules. With summer already here and temperatures soaring across India, hazmat suits and gloves grow even more uncomfortable.

How the Karnataka government is handling food distribution during the lockdown: While rations from the government's public distribution system is usually only for those who hold ration cards,

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa had promised that people who didn't have ration cards were also welcome to avail of free food grains through PDS shops. However, on the ground, this is not the case. Understanding Covid-19

How coronavirus may affect the kidneys: Kidney damage is common in severe cases of Covid-19. However, it is not yet clear if the virus directly attacks the kidneys, or if kidney failure or damage is a part of multiple-organ failure.

Convalescent plasma's success against Covid-19 continues in new study: Convalescent plasma could shorten the duration of a Covid-19 illness or render it less dangerous. The therapy can be administered at different stages – after exposure to a known carrier but before infection to boost immunity, and to critically and non-critically ill patients to improve their outcomes.

**Lockdowns on and off likely till vaccine hits the market:** As we move towards the May 3 deadline for the second lockdown to be lifted, the question being asked is, what next? Has India achieved the purpose of the lockdown? Or will the cases surge in the absence of restrictions?

Business Standards 27/04/2020

Chennai: **In these unprecedented times, one of the sectors brutally hit by the pandemic is the aviation industry. They have been grounded, literally and financially. With a blanket ban on international and domestic flights, revenues have seen a freefall yet national carriers like Air India continue to bring in stranded Indians from the epicentres of infection, help foreigners stuck in the country reach their homes while also transporting essential supplies.**

From the massive Kuwait operation to the one in Wuhan, Air India has a diligent crew ready to respond to national exigencies. **With the announcement of the lockdown, domestic and international flights were suspended and only important cargo and charter flights with approval from the Directorate General of Civil Aviation were allowed to fly.**

The skies are empty and the airports resemble parking lots but the frontline workforce at every rung in nodal Indian airports, from the ones flying to the loader who checks the cargo, is tirelessly working.

The security in-charge of Operation Wuhan

On January 29, Devdas Natesan Pillai, the deputy manager at the Air India Security Wing received a call from the regional head of the national carrier regarding a rescue operation to bring in stranded Indians from Wuhan, China. "We go where no one goes. Wuhan was not an exception," said the security in-charge of the Air India Boeing 747 which undertook the medical evacuation of 324 Indians from the COVID-19 epicentre. His wife Mini Pillai had only one query, "Of all the places in China, why are you going to Wuhan?"

On January 31, they reached New Delhi where the director of operations, Captain Amitabh Singh was waiting for them along with a team of medics, ground engineers and the rest of the crew. Everyone was briefed of the risk and told that the PPE was now akin to a life jacket. After Devdas undertook a complete security check of the flight, they took off for Operation Wuhan in the afternoon. "We were

going to a country afflicted with a novel virus. We couldn't afford any lapse in security," said the aviation security official with over 27 years of experience in the national carrier.

At 7 pm, Devdas looked down from the landing flight. He saw a breathtakingly beautiful city below, well-lit and manicured. But the eerily deserted city sent a chill down his spine. When the flight landed at the gigantic Wuhan Tianhe International Airport, the official was slightly on edge, for before them was an airport with not a single soul in sight.

The city looked lifeless – a strange sight for Devdas who would have hardly guessed that India was just two months away from this very moment. "It looked very unusual at that time. It was a relief when we sighted a few Chinese officials at the far end of the airport. Captain Amitabh Singh made some quick calls to the Indian embassy informing them about our arrival who then set out to get the evacuees at the airport."

Donning the heavy PPE, Devdas set out from the flight into the aerobridge and walked slowly but steadily towards the terminal building. He was now on-guard at Wuhan, ground zero. The passengers had arrived by then. The next few hours had him completely occupied, checking and loading their baggage, methodically and cautiously. Fear and anxiety was writ all over their faces which soon turned into welled-up eyes that reflected gratitude. When the evacuees entered the aircraft, the food packs, water bottles and nausea bags had already been dutifully placed in the front trays of their seats by the flight crew.

The crew had instructed them to not engage in any conversation with each other and leave their seats only to use the restroom. The security officer clearly remembers the complete silence in the flight during the five and a half hours journey.

In Delhi, Devdas and his team were screened at the airport and sent off to check-in at a hotel and maintain mandatory quarantine. The very next day, Air India flew yet another flight to Wuhan, which rescued 320 persons. Devdas and his team had briefed them on what to expect once they landed in China.

Once back in Mumbai, he was amused when his colleagues ducked instead of shaking his hand. He was called the 'Wuhan return'. But the officer wore the badge with pride – not every day does one earn the sense of immense contentment and a treasured letter from the Prime Minister of India.

The nursing officer who went to Wuhan

On January 29, 33-year-old Ajo Jose, a nursing officer at Dr RML Hospital, New Delhi also received a call from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for Operation Wuhan.

Ajo, who went on a day's notice for the rescue efforts during the Nepal Earthquake and Kerala floods, knew that time was of the essence. He, along with his colleague Sarath Prem, immediately undertook a thorough research on the COVID-19 defence mechanism in China and prepared an all-inclusive procurement list of what they would need for the mission.

The next day, they were ready with the list of items to be procured by the authorities for the massive operation – PPE kits, N-95 masks, triple-layered masks, disposable gloves, sanitisers, infrared thermometers, stethoscopes, general medicines, stationeries, hypochlorite solution, labels and tags to tie bio-medical waste bags for 350 persons. At the last minute, the nursing officer decided to add pulse oximeters in case any of the evacuees suffered breathlessness. In an unknown zone of infection, what they miss could make a big difference.

On January 30, the team had a briefing in New Delhi, where they were informed that the Chinese government would do core level check-ups and Indian medics would have a window of 18 hours to wrap up screening and get Indian citizens back home. The rescue team was advised to exercise caution and that if any of them showed symptoms, they would have to be quarantined in Wuhan.

The flight journey in the double-decker Boeing 747 to Wuhan just whizzed by with meticulous planning and preparation. “The first thing Captain Amitabh did was to turn the air circulation inside the aircraft from circular to laminar which meant that the air would flow from front to back and the chances of getting infected would be low. The medical team and engineers would be seated in the first-class cabin and the passengers would be seated in the economy class leaving the first four rows empty. The remaining crew would be seated in the upper deck,” said Ajo.

Ajo who was in the frontline during the Swine flu outbreak knew the importance of a hazmat suit. “Wearing it is difficult and when you remove it, you have to avoid touching the outer layer, as that could be infected. You cannot wear it beyond six hours as the sweat causes contamination. You should also know what to do if it gets torn,” he said.

When Ajo got out of the flight in his PPE, he realised it was freezing as the temperature was two degree celsius. Then he set out with the medical team to prepare for the passengers at the entry point in the terminal building.

“The passengers had to take the escalator to come down to the screening point. We kept a biohazard bag right next to the escalator, to dispose of the masks and gloves that they were using. We disinfected them after which they proceeded for screening, we enquired about their stay in Wuhan and gave them a fresh pair of N-95 masks, checked their temperature and, after sanitisation, asked them to proceed towards the flight. Six symptomatic persons were deboarded,” said Ajo.

After the long process, Ajo disposed of his PPE in a biohazard bag along with other discarded items into the Indian aircraft and got into a fresh pair before boarding the flight. Worn out, Ajo had a sandwich, munched some peanuts and caught a quick nap. So did many on that flight, who were tired and sleep-deprived, he recalled.

At the Delhi airport, the airline landed on a deserted runway where a troop of army personnel was waiting. They were screened by a medical team and the Wuhan evacuees were taken to the ITBP facility at Manesar and Chhawla for 14 days quarantine. Ajo also completed his quarantine before joining duty at the medical emergency department in the hospital. Ajo encountered the next wave of the virus in India as a part of the COVID-19 screening team in Dr RML Hospital, New Delhi where he has been working for the past seven years. He also makes educational videos on the pandemic.

The pilot who carried out rescue operations in Abu Dhabi

On March 20, fear found no place in Captain Dushyant Kamath's itinerary while he evacuated 150 Indians from Abu Dhabi. "There were a lot of excited kids and labourers, who would rather get home than be stuck. Social distancing is easier said than done when you are in an aircraft. I just remember sanitising my hands a lot," says the captain who remained in the cockpit till the evacuees arrived.

Once back home from the rescue mission, Dushyant had a tough time self-quarantining with his four-year-old daughter wanting to see him, while his 8-year-old daughter stayed away. His wife was glad meanwhile, that he didn't develop any symptoms.

Kamath also flew a couple of flights to bring in crucial medical supplies like masks and hand-sanitisers. "I just wish people would stay home and follow government regulations as those in the essential services cannot afford that luxury," he said.

Captain Dushyant said that he couldn't wait to get back to full-time flying. "As pilots we cannot work from home and we don't like being grounded," said the 43-year-old pilot, who has been flying with Air India for over 16 years.

The aviation veteran who ensures aircraft are in shape

**"Everything else can be shut, but airports cannot. Our work is ongoing," said H.R. Jagannath, the 64-year-old CEO of Air India Engineering Services Limited (AIESL), and the man responsible for maintaining the aircraft in good shape.**

Aircraft maintenance is hardwork and no one knows it better than this aviation veteran who has over 35 years of experience. His team of engineers have to ensure that the flights are fit to fly when the lockdown is lifted. Right now, aircraft are being sanitised, fuel tanks drained, surfaces protected from exposure to harsh weather and wheels rotated at regular intervals, to keep the plane parts unaffected. The ground staff constantly checks exteriors and tests the aircraft management software. "Our focus is on maintaining airworthiness, in preparation of return to service," he said.

"We are working with less than 50% of staff as from flying 450 flights, now it is only around 30 flights per day. Air India's role in the pandemic is crucial. We only operate chartered and cargo flights now. Our crew has flown all over the world to rescue people. They are our heroes supported by the ground staff who toil in the background," he said.

A day's work for Jagannath who manages over 6000 personnel across the country also involves exhaustive discussions and planning with the state heads on the status and availability of aircraft for crucial operations and allotment of specific time slots. Every plan requires foresight too. "If we fly to China, we have to send along our engineers as local agencies there can't certify our flights. Aircrafts have to be inspected, management informed, immigration done, and everything has to be planned, keeping in mind the finer details. The commercial department in Air India gets the demand from the ministry, who then intimate us, and we plan further. We also have to take care of the business

interests,” says Jagannath who goes to work as usual at the office in Old Airport, Santa Cruz East, Mumbai.

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Stephen Moses and his wife work at the Kempegowda International Airport, in Bengaluru. His wife, a customer service personnel at Indigo’s domestic operations, continued working until the lockdown was announced.

But for the 33-year-old technician in-charge at Airworks (an aircraft maintenance and repair service provider), it is work as usual. “I lead a team of 24 persons but at present there are just nine of them. I sent those staying alone in the city to their hometown,” said the empathetic team head who got them travel passes to get home.

Stephen and his team continue to attend to international cargo and rescue operations. “We recently handled Oman as well as Japan Airlines, which took home their nationals stuck in the city. Regular supplies of fruits and vegetables are also being exported to Qatar and medical supplies continue to be imported,” he adds.

“We also ensure the safe arrival and departure of flights with a thorough inspection, rectification and refuelling. For every flight that takes off, there are at least 20-25 persons involved in various capacities, including engineers, technicians, loading supervisors, loaders, trim staff, push back and equipment operators apart from those involved in the desk jobs,” said Moses.

“We generally come to work once in two days, depending on the shift and many times we continue to work for days at length. Last week, I had inspected a flight that had arrived from Madrid. In this age, COVID-19 has become more challenging as flights fly from one hotspot of infection to the other. Cargo loaders face the highest risk. They have to stay well-protected as they touch multiple surfaces,” he said.

The quintessential cargo loader

Jawahar Yadav, a 39-year-old who has been loading cargo for over ten years at the Kempegowda International Airport in Bengaluru supports his mother, father, wife, four daughters and a son back home in the Ballia district in Uttar Pradesh with his meagre salary. During the lockdown, he continued his work of uploading and unloading cargo from flights.



The loader works eight hours per day though there are no fixed timings. “We stay half an hour away from the airport in a shared accommodation and leave home atleast two hours before the flight lands. Around 8 of us are engaged in unloading cargo for one flight.”

“My wife wants me to come home but who will feed us? I am glad that there is work available to keep me occupied. They do medical check-ups at the airport and I trust them,” he said.

The Wire 26/04/2020

- Private airlines IndiGo, GoAir, Vistara and SpiceJet have opened bookings from mid-May onwards
- Airlines also opened bookings for select foreign destinations such as Singapore and Dubai from June
- Aviation Ministry yet to allow bookings
- In its April 19 order, DGCA said airlines would be given sufficient notice and time to restart bookings
- Air India holds on but miffed over peers opening bookings
- Airlines may have to refund tickets if lockdown is extended or air transport remains suspended

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Private airlines IndiGo, Spicejet, Vistara and GoAir have re-opened passenger bookings for flights starting mid-May in violation of aviation regulator DGCA's explicit order.

**"...all airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets... Further, the airlines may note that they shall be given sufficient notice and time for restarting of operations. This is for strict compliance by all airlines," DGCA Deputy Director General Sunil Kumar wrote to all domestic and foreign airlines on April 19.**

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CIVIL AVIATION  
OPPOSITE SAFDARJUNG AIRPORT, NEW DELHI-110003

No. 4/1/2020-IR  
Dated: 19-04-2020

CIRCULAR

**Sub: Booking of Airlines ticket for journey post lockdown during the current Covid-19**

Reference to DGCA Circular No. 4/1/2020-IR dated 14.04.2020 disseminating the Order no. AV.11011/1/2020-US(AG) Office-MOCA dated 14.04.2020 issued by MOCA through which the prohibition on operation of domestic passenger flights has been extended up to 2359 hrs IST on the 3rd of May 2020 and DGCA Circular No. 4/1/2020-IR dated 14.04.2020 through which the suspension on operation of Scheduled International commercial passenger services was extended up to 1830 hrs GMT on the 3rd of May 2020.

In these Circulars, there was no direction/clearance, which allows the Airlines to start ticket bookings for the journeys to be undertaken w.e.f the 04<sup>th</sup> of May, 2020. Further it has been noted that Airlines have started booking tickets for journeys w.e.f the 04<sup>th</sup> of May 2020. In this respect, it is brought to the notice of all concerned that no decision to commence the operation of domestic/ International flights w.e.f the 04<sup>th</sup> of May 2020 has been taken yet.

In view of this, all Airlines are hereby directed to refrain from booking tickets as described above. Further the Airlines may note that they shall be given sufficient notice and time for restarting of operations.

This is for strict compliance by all airlines.

  
(Sunil Kumar)  
Deputy Director General

To  
All scheduled domestic and foreign airlines.

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri later in a tweet said that "since some airlines did not heed our advisory and opened bookings and started collecting money from flyers, a directive was issued to them on 19th April restraining them from doing so."

As per online travel portal MakeMyTrip, low-cost carriers SpiceJet and GoAir have offered flights on various routes, including the busiest Delhi-Mumbai route, starting May 16. The other two major carriers IndiGo and Vistara have started selling tickets from June 1.

The airlines have also opened bookings for select foreign destinations such as Singapore and Dubai from June.

IndiGo, Vistara and SpiceJet did not respond to e-mail queries on the issue till the time of publishing. National carrier Air India is, however, waiting for government's directive on selling tickets. Many of its officers are miffed over delay in permission as it puts the state-run carrier at a significant disadvantage over private peers. "Our bookings, both international and domestic, are closed till further notice. We wouldn't like to make any further comment on the issue," Air India said in response to a BusinessToday.In query.

**Following public uproar and complaints of airlines not giving refunds for flights cancelled due to Coronavirus-lockdown, aviation regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) advised the carriers to desist from the practice and also not start forward booking till a decision on resuming air passenger services is taken.**

**"...it has been noted that airlines have started booking tickets for journeys with effect from the 4th of May, 2020. In this respect, it is brought to the notice of all concerned that no decision to commence the operation of domestic/international flight with effect from the 4th of May, 2020 has been taken yet," DGCA wrote to airlines.**

An executive at a private airline said that there was no revenue for the last 35 days but government wanted all bills to be paid. Moreover, the travel demand had plummeted and was unlikely to pick up anytime soon.

Airline executives speaking on condition of anonymity said that it takes time to fill flights and hence they cannot indefinitely wait for government permission on booking tickets. One of the officials said that in case the government decided to extend the lockdown beyond May 3, refunds would be given to passengers as earlier.

India announced a nationwide lockdown from March 25 for 21 days but later extended it to May 3. The airlines had taken bookings for flights from April 15 assuming that the lockdown would be lifted and air transport would be allowed.

But following the government order to continue with the travel restrictions during lockdown, airlines had to refund for cancelled flights.

With relaxations given for various economic activities, there is expectation that lockdown will be lifted from May 3 but a final decision would be taken only after Prime Minister Narendra Modi consults chief ministers in a video-conference scheduled on April 27.

Aviation is among the worst-affected sectors due to coronavirus pandemic and lockdown. SpiceJet and GoAir have cut salaries of employees in absence of cash flow. IndiGo too had announced a cut in salaries but rolled it back.

#### Business Today 27/04/2020

The economic crisis created by the Coronavirus pandemic, which has killed over nearly two lakh people globally, has severely impacted the day-to-day operations of key sectors that contribute to a large part of India's GDP. From real estate to aviation, every sector has been hit hard. Thus, coping with the pandemic and finding a sustainable solution requires concerted efforts of all and major policy support is required to prevent job losses and bankruptcy.

Indian government has announced various fiscal and monetary stimulus packages to maintain market confidence and preserve market stability. But is this sufficient? Currently, Indian economy is entering deep recession. While we don't know the exact number of migrant labourers out of work and unable to get home, the entire transportation sector is in a lock-in. Therefore, the choice before us is either to continue with the lockdown or slowly open various sectors of the economy where potential threat to further spread of COVID-19 is likely to be minimal.

Aviation is among the worst-affected sectors. According to International Air Transport Association (IATA) estimates, the coronavirus pandemic is expected to impact more than 29 lakh jobs in the Indian aviation and dependent industries. Therefore, there is an urgent need that the government takes specific steps to re-open certain sectors, including aviation.

Here are a few issues in the aviation sector that need urgent attention.

- **Aviation sector is easiest to open in a gradual manner. This is because aviation sector is the most regulated amongst its peers – Railways and Roadways.** Right from purchase of tickets to entry into an airport, embarkation and disembarkation from aircraft to leaving the airport, the control is total. **It is proposed that passenger's entry into an airport should be subject to producing a recent**

**negative COVID-19 test report from an authorised laboratory.** The normal temperature check, of course, should also be carried out. Compared to Railways and Roadways as well as passenger cars, this is easiest to implement in Aviation. **Therefore, it is proposed that domestic air travel be opened immediately between cities unless a particular city has been put completely under quarantine.**

- **The decision to allow international flights from certain countries should be implemented in the second stage as more than 80 countries have imposed travel bans and the history of travel of an incoming international passenger needs to be studied.**

- **Besides massive losses to airlines, airports are also bleeding as their revenue depends on passenger numbers which has also adversely impacted both aero and non-aero revenues.** Unlike airlines which have grounded their aircraft, the airports are still in full gear as they have to maintain the Air Traffic Management as well as other essential facilities like terminals, runways and other allied services in readiness. They are also in full compliance with government health advisories. However, at the same time, various concessionaires, airlines, and other stakeholders at the airport are invoking force majeure clause under respective concession agreements and relaxation of applicable payments including revenue share and minimum guaranteed clause. All these are affecting the cash flow of the airport operators. **It is, therefore, necessary at this stage not only to open domestic aviation in a gradual and controlled manner but help the industry which was the fastest growing and at the same time contributing hugely to government revenues unlike the railways or Roadways.**

- **Further, there is hardly any government investment in aviation sector. While airlines and private airports raise funds, even Airport Authority of India (AAI) hardly gets any budgetary support.** They get huge revenues from Air Traffic Management fees and from share of revenue airports like Delhi and Mumbai. **The Government will do well to encourage one of the fastest-growing sectors by looking into their grievances like payment of licence fee to AAI, allowing increase in passenger charges and direct the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) to grant a quick alleviating package. Many other countries have already announced award of grant to Aviation Sector. Government of India will do well to rise to the occasion of ensure that this goose that gives the golden eggs is not allowed to go down under its own weight.**

Outlook India 25/04/2020

**NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Monday sought responses from the Centre and DGCA on a plea seeking directions to airlines operating domestic and international flights in India to refund full amount collected for tickets due to cancellation of flights in wake of the lockdown and restrictions imposed to contain COVID-19 pandemic.**

A bench of Justices N V Ramana, S K Kaul and B R Gavai, which heard the matter through video-conferencing, issued notices to the Centre and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on the plea which has urged the court to declare the alleged action of airlines of not refunding entire value of cancelled air tickets as violative of the civil aviation requirement issued by the authority.

**"It is submitted that the airlines instead of providing the full refund of the amount collected for the tickets due to cancellation, are providing a credit shell, valid up to one year, which is clear in violation of the Civil Aviation Requirement of May 2008 issued by the DGCA which clearly states that 'the option of holding the refund amount in credit shell by the airlines shall be the prerogative of the passenger and not a default practice of the airline,' said the plea, filed by the NGO, 'Pravasi Legal Cell'.**

Referring to the earlier prevalent practice, it has said in case of credit card payments, refund shall be made by the airlines within seven days of the cancellation to account of the credit-card holder and in case of a cash transaction, the refund shall be "made immediately" by the airline office from where the ticket was purchased.

**The Civil Aviation Requirement of May 2008 sets a limit of 30 working days for airlines to complete the refund process for tickets booked through travel agents/portals, the plea has said.**

The plea has referred to the April 16 office memorandum of the Ministry of Civil Aviation which deals with refund of ticket amount collected without levy of cancellation charge.

**It has claimed that the April 16 office memorandum directing airlines to provide full refund of amount paid to only those people who booked tickets during the lockdown period and "leaving out people who booked tickets prior to lockdown but the flights cancelled due to lockdown amounts to treating equals unequally and thus the same is in clear violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed under the Constitution."**

"It is clear from the Office Memorandum that directs the airlines to refund only those tickets that were booked during the lockdown period, leaves out the vast majority of passengers who had booked tickets before the flights were banned.

Which indirectly approves to the practice of the Airlines providing Credit Shell for booking effected before the lockdown, though the same clearly violates the refund rules of the DGCA," the plea has alleged.

There was no question of anyone booking a ticket during the lockdown knowing that schedule passenger flights were cancelled for period of travel and this made Office Memorandum of the Ministry of Civil Aviation "ambiguous and devoid of any logic", the plea has claimed.

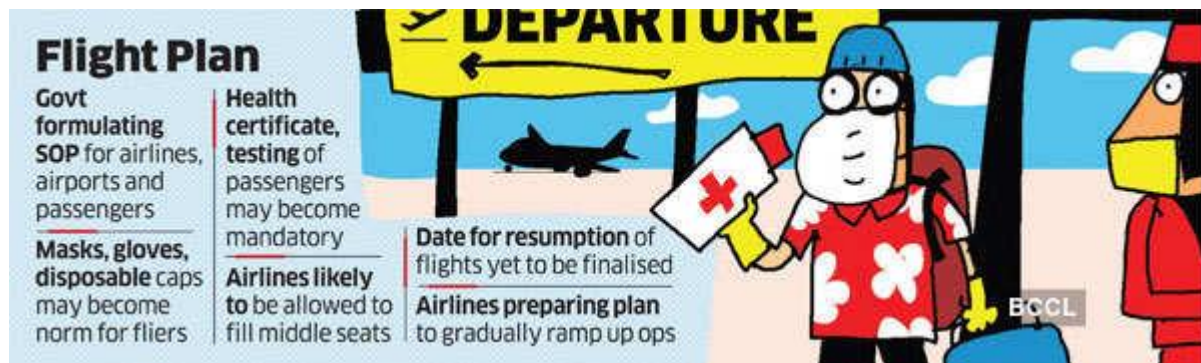
The ETI 27/04/2020

New Delhi | Mumbai: **An appointment with the doctor may soon become mandatory** for you or your family members to board a flight after the lifting of the lockdown and resumption of normal life, which is expected sometime in June. **You may also have to buy gloves, face masks and disposable caps for your next flight.** Sounds surreal? Not really!

**A technical committee comprising doctors, bureaucrats and airport and airline officials will soon discuss these and other measures to ensure passenger safety midair after normal life resumes. It is formulating standard operating procedures (SOP) for passengers and flight staff and will soon come out with its recommendations.**

**Airlines in India and abroad are reassessing pricing and passenger safety issues as they try to recover from the worst slump in aviation history. The ongoing lockdown is unlikely to be fully lifted across the country before June, but airlines have started evaluating measures that they may have to take once normal flight operations resume.**

Some global airlines like budget carrier EasyJet are planning to keep the middle seats empty, at least initially, to reassure passengers, while flight crew at Korean Air Lines are wearing full protective gear including goggles, face masks and gowns etc.



#### **Middle Seat Booking may be Allowed**

Some airlines are also evaluating higher fares amid fears that short-haul routes would disappear.

**Health checkups, temperature checkups are likely to become common**, according to a Bloomberg report dated April 24.

**The technical committee in India, however, may allow airlines to book passengers on middle seats.** “Keeping the middle seat vacant will not help achieve the 6 feet social distancing norm between two people as it allows only two feet space between two passengers. Hence **the focus now is on mandating protective gear and certificates to ensure safe and coronavirus-free flights**,” said a senior official, who did not want to be identified.

A spokesperson at GoAir declined to comment while spokespersons of IndiGo and Vistara said plans were being discussed.

**Airlines in India had objected to the government demand to keep middle seats vacant before the lockdown.** “The safe flight occupancy in keeping with the new normal of social distancing is no more than 33%. Leaving the middle seats empty is an absolutely non-starter. The economics just do not work,” a airline executive said.

#### The ETI 28/04/2020

Partout aux États-Unis, les aéroports sont fantomatiques et silencieux, accueillant à peine 5 % du nombre de voyageurs qui y sont passés à cette époque l’année dernière. **Lorsque la pandémie du coronavirus se calmera, le retour à la normale pour l’industrie de l’aviation prendra du temps. De nouvelles mesures de contrôle sanitaire et de sécurité risquent de compliquer davantage les voyages, et les compagnies aériennes seront des versions réduites de ce qu’elles étaient auparavant, avec des réseaux de trajets réduits et une expérience en vol différente.**

Selon Helane Becker, analyste à la banque d'investissement Cowen, aux États-Unis, il faudra peut-être deux à cinq ans avant que le nombre de passagers ne revienne au niveau de 2019. Les compagnies aériennes réduisent leurs effectifs. Elle s'attend à ce qu'elles terminent l'année avec une réduction de 20 à 30 % par rapport au début. Les inquiétudes en matière de sécurité seront aggravées par une récession profonde et soudaine, mettant des millions de personnes au chômage et les endettant encore plus. « Si vous avez la chance d'avoir un propriétaire qui vous permet de reporter votre loyer, vous devez quand même le rembourser ainsi que vos factures de carte de crédit avant de pouvoir envisager d'aller à Disney World », dit-elle.

Voici la façon dont les voyages vont changer pour ceux qui pourront encore se les payer.

**Attendez-vous à des tarifs peu élevés pour commencer. Après ça, les choses pourraient se compliquer :** une fois le confinement terminé, les compagnies aériennes proposeront des offres alléchantes pour inciter les personnes prudentes à mettre de côté leurs craintes et à reprendre l'avion. « Vous allez vous pincer et vous demander pourquoi vous ne réservez pas un vol », déclare le consultant en aviation Robert W. Mann Jr. Les voyageurs de loisirs fortunés seront les premiers à tester les conditions de voyage, dit Mann, et « lorsque ils reviendront non infectés et non affectés », cela donnera aux entreprises des raisons d'assouplir leurs interdictions de voyager et d'envoyer leurs employés dans les avions, redonnant ainsi aux compagnies aériennes certains de leurs clients les plus lucratifs.

**Mais si les compagnies aériennes laissent des sièges vides pour permettre une distanciation sociale, soit volontairement, soit en raison de réglementations gouvernementales, pendant un certain temps, cela mettra la pression sur elles pour augmenter les tarifs.** L'année dernière, les compagnies aériennes du monde entier ont atteint le seuil de rentabilité lorsque l'avion était rempli à environ 66 %, selon le groupe industriel IATA. Si les sièges du milieu sont laissés inoccupés, cela signifie qu'au mieux 67 % des sièges seront disponibles.

**La réduction de la fréquence des vols vers les villes de deuxième et troisième rangs et la diminution de la concurrence pourraient également entraîner une hausse des prix vers certaines destinations.**

**Les déplacements seront plus contraignants : nous aurons moins d'options et certains itinéraires qui étaient autrefois sans escale nécessiteront désormais des correspondances, peut-être par un itinéraire détourné.** Les escales dans les grands endroits pourraient être plus longues. Même sur les itinéraires les plus fréquentés, les vols tôt le matin et tard le soir qui existaient avant la pandémie ne reviendront probablement pas avant des années, et les vols de midi qui ne sont pas aussi populaires auprès des voyageurs d'affaires pourraient être réduits.

**Attendez-vous à un dépistage de la maladie dans les aéroports et éventuellement à des files d'attente plus longues :** après le 11 septembre, les nouvelles mesures de contrôle de sécurité dans les aéroports et les inspections des bagages par l'Agence pour la sécurité des transports ont entraîné un allongement des files d'attente et des temps d'attente. Cela a permis de supprimer certains des itinéraires courts, faisant de la voiture une alternative moins chère et plus pratique. **Désormais, le dépistage du coronavirus deviendra probablement un élément standard de l'expérience de voyage, au moins jusqu'à ce qu'un vaccin soit mis au point et utilisé à grande échelle. Cela pourrait prendre des années.**

Emirates Airlines a annoncé la semaine dernière qu'elle avait testé ses passagers pour le coronavirus lors de l'enregistrement à Dubaï pour un vol vers la Tunisie, en utilisant un test sanguin de dix minutes. Cependant, ces types de tests ne sont pas encore considérés comme fiables. Les voyageurs qui se sont rétablis d'un coronavirus pourraient recevoir un passeport sanitaire attestant de leur immunité, ce qui leur permettrait de passer rapidement. **Il a été question de créer un processus de test et de documentation pour les équipages et les passagers qui doivent être**

**testés avant de se rendre à l'aéroport, mais la fiabilité des tests promet également d'être problématique.**

**Plus d'automatisation : l'adoption de l'identification biométrique et une utilisation plus large des scanners CT pour le contrôle des bagages pourraient permettre aux passagers de passer les points de contrôle sans interaction avec le personnel de sécurité.**

**La différence de prix pourrait disparaître entre les compagnies aériennes à bas prix et les grandes compagnies, et les compagnies à bas prix pourraient être exclues de certains marchés :** Par le passé, les grandes compagnies aériennes se contentaient souvent de proposer des tarifs réduits de 10 ou 20 dollars supérieurs à ceux des compagnies à bas prix comme Spirit ou Frontier. Sur des marchés compétitifs, elles seront probablement moins enclines à laisser les passagers se décharger sur les petits opérateurs, et elles auront des bilans plus solides pour absorber la douleur à court terme d'une guerre des prix, explique Henry Harteveldt, qui dirige le groupe de recherche sur l'atmosphère. « Certaines compagnies aériennes seront brutales dans l'utilisation de leur logiciel de tarification », dit-il. **Si les compagnies aériennes à bas prix se retirent, attendez-vous à ce que les prix augmentent.**

**La voie pourrait être ouverte à de nouvelles compagnies aériennes, ou non :** les grandes compagnies aériennes sont touchées et vont réduire leurs services. Les avions d'occasion seront moins chers et il y aura beaucoup de pilotes et de personnels au chômage. Cela pourrait faciliter la tâche de deux compagnies aériennes à bas prix en phase de démarrage : le fondateur de JetBlue, David Neeleman's Breeze Airways, et une compagnie aérienne sans nom de l'ancien Allegiant ALGT et du dirigeant de United UAL, Andrew Levy, qui ciblent tous deux les petites villes moins bien desservies. Mais cela suppose qu'ils puissent encore réunir les fonds, ce qui n'est peut-être pas évident compte tenu de la baisse de régime des investisseurs et des attentes d'une lente reprise de la demande de voyages, explique Mann.

Les passagers qui vous entourent seront peut-être plus âgés : les personnes de la génération Y et de la génération Z étaient très endettées et avaient peu d'économies au moment de la pandémie, et il est probable qu'elles auront moins d'argent pour voyager à l'issue de celle-ci, explique Harteveldt. C'est un coup dur pour une industrie qui s'adressait surtout aux jeunes consommateurs, qui ont eu tendance à dépenser plus que les générations précédentes pour des « expériences » comme les voyages plutôt que les produits.

Attendez-vous à plus de ventes croisées : Allegiant a créé une entreprise florissante en convainquant les voyageurs de réserver leurs séjours à l'hôtel et leurs locations de voiture sur son site web. D'autres compagnies aériennes sont susceptibles de faire de même, selon Harteveldt.

**Les privilèges pourraient être réduits pour les grands voyageurs :** les privilèges liés à l'enregistrement des bagages peuvent être supprimés et les avantages réduits pour la moitié inférieure des niveaux de vol fréquents. Les personnes qui bénéficient désormais d'un bagage enregistré gratuit peuvent se voir imposer un tarif réduit, et les surclassements qui étaient autrefois gratuits peuvent désormais coûter de l'argent, explique Harteveldt. Les voyages dans voiture de luxe ne peuvent plus être proposés, à la fois par mesure économique et en raison de la distanciation sociale. Mais toute tentative d'ajouter davantage de frais au voyageur ordinaire serait probablement mal accueillie après avoir reçu des aides du gouvernement.

Les salons des aéroports pourraient être moins luxueux : les services de spa comme les massages et les soins du visage pourraient être supprimés au moins dans un premier temps et réduits. Les buffets pourraient être fermés et les choix de nourriture et de boissons réduits.

**Des cabines plus propres, un service de restauration réduit et des hôtesses de l'air plus éloignées :** les compagnies aériennes intensifient les procédures de nettoyage afin de réduire les risques de transmission du virus. En Chine, les autorités réglementaires ont ordonné que les toilettes soient



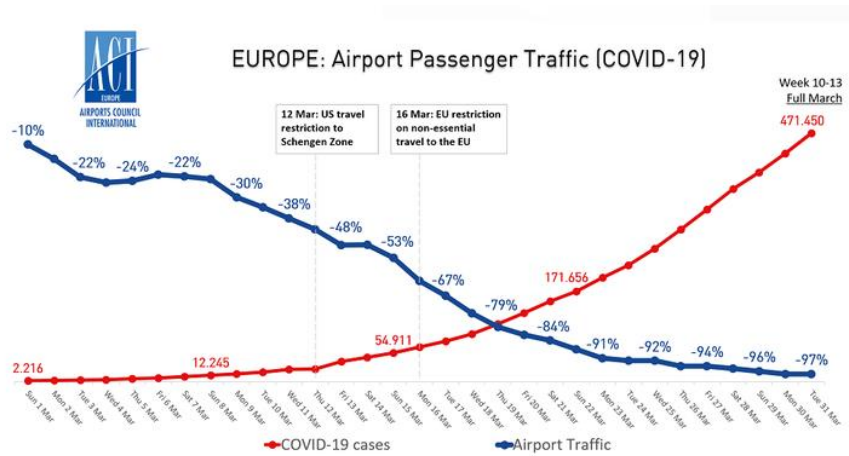
nettoyées en vol après avoir été utilisées par dix passagers, ou toutes les deux heures. Ils réduisent le service des aliments et des boissons, le Delta ne distribue que de l'eau en bouteille et des aliments emballés. Pour des raisons de sécurité et économiques, il faudra peut-être des années avant que les options pour voyager ne s'élargissent à nouveau.

Forbes 25/04/2020

Fin 2019, Alexandre de Juniac, le directeur général de l'Association internationale du transport aérien (IATA), qui représente les intérêts des compagnies aériennes, avait prévu des bénéfices de plus de 29 milliards de dollars pour 2020. C'était un autre monde, et anéanti quelques mois plus tard avec **des menaces sur 25 millions d'emplois et un plongeon attendu de 252 milliards de dollars, soit une baisse de 44 % par rapport au chiffre d'affaires de 2019 !**

L'aérien, facteur aggravant de la pandémie

Au-delà de ces chiffres, **les compagnies aériennes se sont en effet retrouvées en première ligne en raison de leur capacité involontaire et foudroyante à diffuser le virus.** Le boom du transport aérien, en Asie notamment, est venu aggraver la situation. Rappelons qu'en 1992, la Chine n'avait connu que 500 000 mouvements d'avions, mais 10 249 millions en 2017, dont 869 000 à l'international.



Baisse du trafic aérien en Europe corrélée à la propagation du coronavirus (en nombre de cas confirmés).

Airports Council International Europe

**Dans les années qui viennent, reviendra-t-on à la « normale », c'est-à-dire à une croissance du marché aérien selon les critères du seul libéralisme économique ? Si c'est le cas, ce retour au rythme de croisière d'avant-crise porterait le risque de nouvelles crises pandémiques mondiales.** De nombreuses souches de coronavirus ne demandent en effet qu'à s'activer. De manière structurelle, la pression anthropique sur les milieux naturels et ruraux rapproche les hommes et les animaux, et favorise ainsi le franchissement de la barrière des espèces par les virus.

En prendre conscience pourrait donc amener à une rupture, exactement comme les attentats du 11-Septembre l'ont été dans la réorganisation de la sécurité aérienne. Au minimum, un confinement radical et brutal du ciel mondial devrait être envisageable en cas de crise sanitaire. Au mieux, cela pourrait passer par la fin du statut particulier de l'aviation commerciale dans le droit international.

**La remise en cause de ce statut permettrait d'endiguer le risque de nouvelles pandémies, mais aussi d'engager la lutte contre la pollution grandissante générée par le transport aérien, qu'il s'agisse du dérèglement climatique comme des aéroports destructeurs des milieux « naturels » et problématiques en matière de santé publique.**

Une liberté subventionnée

Ce statut particulier a été mis en place au sortir de la Deuxième Guerre mondiale. En 1948-49, le pont aérien de Berlin avait en outre frappé les esprits par la capacité du fret avionné à défendre la liberté.

Les États-Unis avaient alors déjà mis en avant la liberté de voler avec un ciel régulé par l'Organisation des Nations unies (ONU). Dès 1944, les conventions de Chicago et de Montréal avaient posé les bases juridiques de ce principe. Ainsi, l'Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale (OACI) garantit le fonctionnement concret d'une circulation aussi libre que possible. Sur le terrain, l'IATA veille à l'application concrète des deux conventions.

**C'est ainsi que l'aviation civile a réussi, plusieurs décennies plus tard, à s'affranchir de la lutte contre la pollution. En 1997 à Kyoto, le lobbying de l'IATA avait été efficace puisque les « soutes internationales » avaient été exclues des calculs des émissions de gaz à effet de serre.**

L'argument avait été de dire qu'on ne saurait attribuer des quotas nationaux d'émission aux compagnies puisque celles-ci ont des activités principalement internationales : faudrait-il taxer le pays siège de la compagnie, celui de l'aéroport de départ ou d'arrivée, ou encore l'espace aérien du pays survolé ?

Depuis 1997, au gré des COP successives, les « soutes internationales » ont ainsi continué à se défendre avec succès. Mais cette exception apparaît de moins en moins tenable alors que la prise de conscience du risque climatique s'accroît.

**L'analyse des comptes des compagnies aériennes nous permet de dire que le prix du carburant représente entre le cinquième et le tiers des charges, en fonction de l'évolution du cours du baril de pétrole. Elles sont par conséquent opposées à la taxation du kérosène – un peu comme si les automobilistes payaient le litre entre 30 et 50 centimes.**

**En outre, les aides publiques sont une pratique courante. Les compagnies low-cost demandent des subventions et des aides diverses au prétexte qu'elles peuvent sauver de petits aéroports déficitaires, ce qui est vrai, et que la puissance publique récupérera la mise grâce aux activités ainsi induites (ce qui n'a jamais été prouvé).**

En France, les élus locaux poussent eux aussi dans ce sens, au nom de l'aménagement du territoire et de la défense de la ruralité. **Dans certains pays émergents, l'argent public ruisselle sur la compagnie nationale et sur les chantiers aéroportuaires.**

**Ailleurs, la collusion entre les milieux d'affaires et les élus conduit à sur dimensionner les infrastructures, voire à en construire inutilement.**

**C'est ainsi que la concurrence est faussée et que le prix d'un billet ne correspond pas nécessairement à ce qu'il coûte réellement. Supprimer les subventions, produire un prix du carburant « loyal », égaliser la fiscalité, voilà encore une utopie pour un monde post-libéral.**

Taxer, compenser ou plafonner ?

Ce n'est que très récemment, pendant l'été 2019, que la pression a commencé à monter avec par exemple **la taxe Borne, de 1,5 à 18 euros par billet d'avion, dont la mise en place est prévue l'année prochaine sur les vols au départ de la France**. En parallèle, le gouvernement néerlandais a appelé la Commission européenne à imposer une taxe sur l'aviation dans toute l'Union européenne.

**Certes, l'avion propre et silencieux existera un jour, probablement dans quelques décennies, et d'abord pour les liaisons court-courrier. D'ici là, si l'aviation civile veut porter sa part du fardeau de la lutte contre le dérèglement climatique, seul un plafonnement de l'activité apparaît comme une solution crédible, tout en poursuivant les progrès techniques permettant de limiter la consommation par passager transporté/kilomètre parcouru ; ainsi l'étau pourrait-il être progressivement desserré.**

**Dès à présent, les compensations carbone sont revendiquées par certaines compagnies aériennes. Mais ces compensations ne peuvent constituer qu'un pis-aller, car l'ampleur qu'il faut leur donner et les effets que l'on en attend sont difficiles à mesurer en toute objectivité puisqu'on ne connaît pas encore la quantité de biomasse globalement existante.**

Ainsi le choc entre le libéralisme défiscalisé mais subventionné et le monde de la jeune militante écologiste suédoise Greta Thunberg ne peut aboutir à ce jour à un consensus entre les deux parties. En 2020, lors du 40e Forum économique mondial de Davos, le président des États-Unis Donald Trump avait déclaré que « nous devons rejeter les éternels prophètes de malheur et leurs prédictions d'apocalypse ». Il avait souligné qu'il ne laisserait pas « des socialistes radicaux » s'attaquer aux énergies fossiles. En réponse, Greta Thunberg avait affirmé qu'il fallait « paniquer » et « cesser immédiatement tous les investissements dans l'exploration et l'extraction d'énergies fossiles » et cela « pas en 2050, pas en 2030 ou même en 2021, mais maintenant ». Bloc contre bloc.

Tour Mag 25/04/2020

Le secteur aérien vit son pire cauchemar depuis la mise en place des restrictions de frontières pour enrayer la propagation du Covid-19. Chaque journée perdue creuse à coups de milliards le trou béant du manque à gagner pour les compagnies aériennes. **Le secteur, amputé de 80% de son volume habituel de trafic a perdu près de 315 milliards de dollars - soit la moitié de son chiffre d'affaires prévisionnel, avec une perspective quasi nulle de l'équilibrer sur les deux prochains trimestres.**

D'autant que l'IATA (Association internationale du transport aérien) **table «sur une reprise significative» pour 2021 seulement** et redoute la frilosité des voyageurs dans les mois qui viennent.

**Air France ne voit pas de retour à la normal avant au moins «deux ans».**

Selon le président de la FNAM (Fédération nationale de l'aviation marchande) en moyenne, 200 millions de passagers transitent tous les ans à Roissy et Orly. «On peut diviser ce chiffre par quatre pour 2020», indique au Figaro Alain Battisti, soit une perspective revue à 60 millions.

Toutefois, il faut préparer la reprise à court et moyen terme même si celle-ci s'annonce douloureuse. Comment concilier les nouveaux impératifs sanitaires avec un modèle économique vertueux pour les compagnies? «Aucune compagnie ne peut gagner de l'argent avec 50% de remplissage», a soutenu Alexandre de Juniac cette semaine, en réaction à la décision d'American Airlines de bloquer 50% de ses réservations pour respecter les exigences de distanciation sociale. Ce modèle peut fonctionner à l'ère du confinement - il y a forcément moins de réservations - mais prouvera ses limites dès la reprise.

«Soit les avions resteront cloués au sol», a prévenu le patron de l'IATA, faute de marge tolérable avec 50% des sièges occupés, «soit le voyage en avion deviendra très exclusif et pour les plus fortunés». Si le secteur est dépendant des autorités sanitaires et du cadre de mesures qui sera tranché, les aéroports sont interdépendants. L'aérien est «un métier de connectivité», expliquait le patron d'ADP (Aéroports de Paris) sur BFM Business, jeudi dernier. **«Si aujourd'hui nous sommes prêts à exporter des passagers mais que tout le monde ne peut pas les accueillir, cela ne peut pas fonctionner», a-t-il expliqué en plaidant pour «un habeas corpus» planétaire pour harmoniser les mesures sanitaires.**

Cette demande est à l'étude au ministère des Transports, a assuré ce vendredi le secrétaire d'État Jean-Baptiste Djebbari. «Nous travaillons avec les pays voisins, car si nous posons un cadre de mesures qui n'est pas harmonisé, nous ne reprendrons pas de manière satisfaisante».

En France, les doutes se cristallisent aussi autour du déconfinement «territorialisé», avec des adaptations par territoires plutôt que par région. Comment relancer les vols intérieurs «si on ne peut pas se déplacer d'une ville à une autre ?», s'interroge un employé d'Air France. La compagnie opère en moyenne 1000 vols par jour «contre une douzaine aujourd'hui», poursuit le salarié qui, par conséquent, est au chômage partiel à 50% . «On suit l'actualité, il y a plusieurs plans en préparation en fonction de ce qu'on va pouvoir assurer comme activité. Mais dans l'immédiat il y a peu de chance pour qu'on assure des vols internationaux en juin».

Peu de chance aussi que le trafic reprenne «d'un coup de baguette magique le 11 mai», selon la formulation du patron d'ADP. Il est aussi peu probable que l'aéroport d'Orly, fermé depuis le 31 mars, rouvre ses aérodromes au jour J du déconfinement. «Nous n'envisageons pas un trafic d'un tel niveau qu'il nécessite de rouvrir Orly», a confirmé le ministère chargé des Transports.

Masques obligatoires ?

**Augustin de Romanet, le PDG d'ADP a dévoilé son plan de bataille, proposé dans le cadre du plan de déconfinement au gouvernement. Dans l'optique où des tests seraient accessibles et généralisés, Roissy et Orly envisagent de tester tous les passagers avant leur envol pour ainsi éviter**

**«d'embarquer des passagers fiévreux».** À nouveau, il n'est pas question de voler en mode dégradé avec un taux de remplissage au rabais, mais plutôt de requérir le masque obligatoire. «Le masque sera probablement obligatoire», a d'ailleurs appuyé Jean-Baptiste Djebbari.

«À l'intérieur d'un avion, la filtration de l'air toutes les trois minutes est meilleure que dans tous les autres modes de transport», assure Augustin de Romanet. À cela, il faut ajouter un renforcement «considérable des mesures de propreté dans les aéroports et du gel hydroalcoolique à toutes les étapes», mais aussi «un contrôle à l'arrivée». Ces mesures cumulatives pourraient assurer la sécurité sanitaire des personnels et passagers, selon le représentant d'ADP.

**De son côté le transport aérien cargo résiste mais s'inquiète avec une perte de 10% d'activité en mars et moins 30% estimés en avril,** selon le représentant de TLF Overseas (syndicat professionnel regroupant les entreprises organisatrices de transports aériens et maritimes), Florent Noblet. La reprise de l'activité en Europe exacerbe les inquiétudes : «Il risque d'y avoir un afflux de l'exportation au départ de l'Europe et nous n'aurons pas assez de capacité de soute». Pour le moment, la filière s'en sort car de nombreuses compagnies aériennes, faute de passagers pour cause de confinement, affrètent des vols charter.

**L'aérien cargo est dépendant à 70% des vols passagers, qui embarquent aussi de la marchandise dans leur soute. Et puisque tous les représentants de l'aérien se montrent pessimistes quant à la reprise des vols passagers à court terme, les commissionnaires de transport (gérants des cargaisons, Ndlr) redoutent «une chasse à la capacité».** À partir du moment «où les usines reprennent du service il y aura un besoin d'exportation beaucoup plus important et on peut redouter un manque de capacité de la France», explique Florent Noblet.

Selon l'Organisation de l'aviation civile internationale (OACI), les mesures de lutte contre le Covid-19 pourraient priver le trafic aérien mondial de 1,2 milliard de passagers d'ici à septembre, comparé à une période normale.

Le Figaro 24/04/2020

Le groupe Air France-KLM vient de décrocher une aide de l'État français pour un montant total de 7 milliards d'euros, une somme qui lui permettra de traverser la crise liée à la pandémie de coronavirus qui touche particulièrement le transport aérien. Ce soutien financier, qui devrait être disponible dès le début du mois de mai, s'articule autour de deux mécanismes en cours de finalisation.

Le premier consiste en un Prêt Garanti par l'État (PGE) d'un montant de 4 milliards d'euros octroyé par un syndicat de six banques à Air France-KLM et Air France. Ce prêt bénéficie d'une garantie de l'État français à hauteur de 90% et d'une maturité de 12 mois, avec deux options d'extension d'un an consécutives, si Air France-KLM le souhaite.

Le second est une avance de l'État français en tant qu'actionnaire d'Air France-KLM pour un montant de 3 milliards d'euros et d'une maturité de quatre ans, avec deux options d'extension d'un an consécutives exerçables par le groupe aérien franco-néerlandais. Pour rappel, l'Etat français détient une participation de 14,3% dans Air France-KLM.

Ce soutien « n'est pas un chèque en blanc », a souligné le ministre de l'Économie Bruno Le Maire. « Nous avons fixé des conditions à Air France. Des conditions de rentabilité, car c'est l'argent des Français donc il faut qu'Air France fasse un effort pour être plus rentable, et des conditions écologiques. Air France doit devenir la compagnie aérienne la plus respectueuse de l'environnement de la planète. C'est la condition à laquelle je suis le plus attaché », a-t-il affirmé.

« Au nom de notre Groupe et de ses personnels, je remercie l'État français ainsi que nos partenaires bancaires de leur soutien pour le futur du groupe Air France-KLM » a déclaré Benjamin Smith, le Directeur Général du groupe dans un communiqué. « Ce soutien et le plan d'actions du groupe nous permettront de traverser cette crise et d'aborder l'avenir d'Air France-KLM avec ambition et détermination » a-t-il poursuivi.

Air France-KLM rappelle aussi que l'État néerlandais a également affirmé son intention de soutenir le groupe et indique envisager « une opération de renforcement de ses fonds propres qui pourrait intervenir au plus tard à l'issue de l'assemblée d'approbation des comptes de l'exercice 2020 ».

#### Le Journal de l'aviation 24/04/2020

Le gouvernement néerlandais projette d'aider la compagnie aérienne KLM à hauteur de deux à quatre milliards d'euros, a indiqué le ministre des Finances vendredi peu après l'annonce d'une aide de Paris pour son partenaire Air France.

"Le gouvernement a l'intention de fournir une aide financière de deux à quatre milliards d'euros à KLM", a déclaré le ministre des Finances Wopke Hoekstra lors d'une conférence de presse à La Haye,

Si la forme et les détails de cette aide sont encore à l'étude, a-t-il précisé, l'ensemble ressemblera à "des prêts et des garanties".

Le groupe de transports national néerlandais a été durement touché par la crise dans l'industrie aérienne en raison de la pandémie de coronavirus, avec plus de 90% de sa flotte clouée au sol le mois dernier.

La survie de la compagnie est importante car d'elle dépend le maintien de la fonction de hub pour l'aéroport d'Amsterdam-Schiphol. Le site, qui avait vu passer 71 millions de passagers en 2018, a été sévèrement affecté par le maintien au sol de sa compagnie vedette, qui avait fêté l'an dernier son centenaire.

KLM a été "la première à tomber dans la rangée de dominos", a déclaré Wopke Hoekstra.

"Si KLM s'écroule, il y a aura des conséquences non pas seulement pour la compagnie et son personnel, mais aussi pour tous les autres dominos qui suivent", a souligné le ministre.

**Sans KLM, l'aéroport d'Amsterdam-Schiphol perdrait 40% de son trafic**, selon la ministre des Infrastructures Cora van Nieuwenhuizen

"Nous ne pouvons nous permettre de perdre un lien aussi essentiel", a-t-elle ajouté.

L'aéroport a généré plus de 100.000 emplois directs et indirects, selon elle.

**Le gouvernement néerlandais, qui possède 14% des parts d'Air France-KLM, va poser des conditions à l'octroi de ces aides, a précisé Wopke Hoekstra, comme le fait de ne pas verser de bonus, d'intéressement ou de dividendes.**

"Je sais bien que ce n'est pas un message facile à entendre pour KLM. Mais il s'agit de l'argent du contribuable, dont nous avons tous besoin, et qui sera consacré à renforcer la situation de KLM", a encore déclaré le ministre.

De son côté, la France a annoncé une enveloppe totale de 7 milliards d'euros pour Air France.

#### Le Journal de l'aviation 25/04/2020

Le président du directoire du Lufthansa Group, Carsten Spohr, estime que le groupe aérien allemand emploiera 10.000 personnes en moins et comptera 100 avions de moins dans sa flotte à l'issue de la crise économique due au coronavirus.

Selon lui, il faudra des années avant que la demande de transport aérien ne revienne à son niveau d'avant crise. Il s'attend ainsi à ce que son groupe ne soit pas en mesure de sortir du rouge avant 2023. **« Nous avons été le premier secteur à être touché par la crise mondiale et nous serons parmi les derniers à en sortir », estime-t-il dans un courrier interne adressé au personnel.**

Aussi, Lufthansa Group sera différent **une fois la pandémie du coronavirus maîtrisée**. Faute de demande, le groupe -qui comprend les compagnies Lufthansa, Eurowings, SWISS, Austrian Airlines et Brussels Airlines- comptera **probablement 10.000 employés et 100 avions de moins** à l'issue de la crise. Avant l'apparition du coronavirus, il comptait quelque 130.000 salariés et une flotte de 760 avions à travers le monde. En outre, plus d'un milliard d'euros de prêts devraient être remboursés chaque année, prévoit Carsten Spohr.

Lufthansa Group espère finaliser la semaine prochaine un plan de sauvetage qui pourrait atteindre 10 milliards d'euros accordés par les pouvoirs publics en Allemagne, en Suisse, en Autriche et en Belgique, pays où il est implanté. Au premier trimestre 2020, le groupe a affiché une perte de 1,2 milliard d'euros (contre -336 millions par rapport au premier trimestre 2019) et un chiffre d'affaires de 6,4 milliards d'euros (-18% par rapport au premier trimestre 2019). Rien que sur le mois de mars, ses revenus ont plongé de 47 %. Au deuxième trimestre 2020, la perte devrait être « significativement plus élevée », **Carsten Spohr affirmant que le groupe perd actuellement « 1 million d'euros par heure ».**

#### Air Journal 25/04/2020

Airbus a publié une sombre évaluation de l'impact de la crise du coronavirus, demandant aux 135.000 employés de la société de se préparer à des réductions d'emplois potentiellement plus importantes qu'annoncées et avertissant que sa survie est en jeu sans action immédiate.

Dans une lettre aux employés envoyée vendredi, le président exécutif de l'entreprise, Guillaume Faury écrit qu'Airbus «perd de l'argent à une vitesse inédite» et qu'une baisse d'un tiers ou plus des

taux de production ne reflète pas le pire des scénarios pour la compagnie et serait maintenue à l'étude.

L'avionneur européen s'est refusé à tout commentaire. **Airbus a commencé à mettre en place des mesures de chômage partiel assistées par le gouvernement concernant 3.000 personnes en France «mais il se peut que nous devions prévoir des mesures supplémentaires», a dit Faury.**

**«La survie d'Airbus est en jeu si nous n'agissons pas maintenant», a-t-il ajouté. Il a aussi annoncé que les nouvelles mesures de production pourraient rester en place le temps de réévaluer la demande, précisant que cela pourrait prendre entre deux et trois mois.**

**La compagnie doit publier dans les jours à venir ses résultats du premier trimestre dans le contexte d'une pandémie qui a mis les compagnies aériennes en difficulté et a pratiquement interrompu les livraisons depuis la mise en place de mesures de confinement mi-mars.**

Le Figaro 27/04/2020

Les compagnies aériennes françaises réclament à leur tour l'aide de l'État avec un fonds d'un montant d'un milliard d'euros, après le soutien de 7 milliards accordé à Air France pour faire face à la crise du coronavirus.

D'autres compagnies rencontrent les mêmes difficultés qu'Air France et sont tout aussi soucieuses de renouveler leurs flottes pour améliorer leur compétitivité et participer à la transition écologique, a affirmé le Syndicat des compagnies aériennes autonomes (Scara) dans un communiqué.

**Le Scara regroupe huit compagnies aériennes françaises, basées en métropole et dans les territoires ultra-marins, ainsi que des sociétés d'assistance aéroportuaire : les compagnies Air Tahiti, Ewa, Air Calédonie, Air Tahiti Nui, ASL, Air Saint Pierre, Air Corsica et Air Austral, et les entreprises Aerostravia, Groupe IGS et Alyzia.**

Une aide proportionnelle

**Pourquoi Air France est-elle la seule compagnie française à bénéficier d'un tel soutien ?, demande à l'État le syndicat.**

**Le soutien massif en faveur du groupe Air France pour un montant historique de 7 milliards d'euros représente près de 45 % du chiffre d'affaires annuel de la compagnie (16,6 milliards en 2019, NDLR), poursuit-il. Cette aide permettra à Air France non seulement de faire face à la crise Covid-19, mais aussi d'honorer ses commandes d'avions nouveaux.**

Elle lui permettra aussi de **restructurer son réseau aérien court/moyen-courrier pour affronter la concurrence étrangère qui sera encore plus vive au sortir de la crise**, poursuit le syndicat, précisant que le chiffre d'affaires global des autres compagnies aériennes françaises représente environ 15 % de celui d'Air France.

Le Scara demande donc qu'un fonds d'un montant d'un milliard d'euros, proportionnel à ce qu'Air France a obtenu de l'État, soit mis en place en urgence, poursuit-il.

Air France devra faire des efforts



Les gouvernements français et néerlandais ont annoncé vendredi des aides pour les deux branches du groupe Air France-KLM, dont l'activité est quasiment à l'arrêt – hors rapatriements et acheminement de fret – depuis plusieurs semaines après la fermeture des frontières partout dans le monde pour freiner la propagation du coronavirus.

**Air France bénéficiera de 4 milliards de prêts bancaires garantis à 90 % par l'État et de 3 milliards de prêt direct, avec en contrepartie des engagements sur l'amélioration de sa rentabilité et sur la réduction de ses émissions de CO2.**

**L'État n'accorde aucun chèque en blanc à Air France, a prévenu la ministre de la Transition écologique Élisabeth Borne, ce lundi.**

**Le gouvernement néerlandais projette pour sa part d'aider KLM à hauteur de deux à quatre milliards d'euros sous forme de prêts et garanties.**

Ouest France 25/04/2020

Air Journal 25/04/2020

**Le secteur aérien est à l'arrêt et les avions sont cloués au sol par l'épidémie, provoquant des pertes astronomiques, des faillites et des licenciements. A cela s'ajoute l'impossibilité de pratiquer pour les pilotes de lignes, qui risquent de perdre leur licence, menaçant une grande partie de la profession.**

Près de 300'000 pilotes de ligne sont enregistrés dans le monde. En Suisse, ils sont 2437, selon les chiffres de l'Office fédéral de l'aviation civile (OFAC).

Si la situation perdure, une partie d'entre eux arriveront inévitablement au bout de la validité de leur licence professionnelle. **Selon le règlement, les pilotes de ligne qui n'effectuent pas un minimum de trois décollages et trois atterrissages sur les 3 derniers mois, voient leur licence suspendue.**

**Remplacer cet exercice par des simulateurs de vol n'est pas non plus possible, en raison d'un espace trop restreint ne permettant pas de respecter les distances sociales.**

Délai prolongé

Confiné chez lui, Marc Vionnet est dans l'expectative. Cela fait plusieurs semaines qu'il n'a plus pris les commandes d'un avion. **"Ma licence reste suspendue jusqu'à ce que j'aie l'occasion de retourner au simulateur et de pouvoir faire les exercices qui me permettront de réactiver ma licence",** espère le commandant de bord.

Face à cette problématique, l'OFAC, comme l'ensemble de l'aviation européenne, a décidé **d'assouplir temporairement les mesures de renouvellement des licences. Les délais ont été prolongés de 4 mois,** affirme Antonello Laveglia, porte-parole de l'OFAC: "Nous attendons de voir comment la situation va évoluer par la suite".

Faillite des compagnies aériennes

**Mais l'incertitude sur le temps de prolongation des licences n'est pas le seul facteur qui inquiète les pilotes. Le risque est structurel et dépasse le seul commandant de bord. Le Covid-19 fait trembler**

**tout le secteur, avec des avions cloués au sol depuis plusieurs semaines. L'aviation traverse une crise sans précédent.**

**L'association internationale du transport aérien (IATA) parle d'une perte de 314 milliards de dollars en 2020 et prévoit de nombreux licenciements, tandis que la liste des compagnies en faillite ne cesse de s'allonger.**

Les dernières en date sont des compagnies low cost, comme Virgin Australia, qui s'est déclarée en cessation de paiement. Au Royaume-Uni, Flybe a cessé ses activités, tout comme Germanwings, filiale de Lufthansa.

#### Aides étatiques

**Lufthansa**, maison-mère de Swiss, a déclaré au début du mois perdre un million de francs par heure en raison du coronavirus et prévoit un plan de restructuration menaçant 7000 emplois. Ce plus grand groupe aérien européen **a affirmé jeudi être en discussions avec les gouvernements d'Allemagne, d'Autriche, de Belgique et de Suisse, où il est implanté, afin d'obtenir des aides financières pour ses compagnies Brussels Airlines, Austrian Airlines et Swiss. Elle espère ainsi finaliser la semaine prochaine un plan de sauvetage à 10 milliards d'euros.**

**Norwegian Air, qui était au bord de la faillite, pourrait être sauvée. Le parlement norvégien a voté cet après-midi une loi permettant un soutien économique. Alitalia, poussée à la faillite par la crise, sera elle sauvée par une nationalisation. Le gouvernement italien prendra le contrôle total en juin.**

#### Des paris optimistes

Reste enfin les compagnies low cost fortes en liquidités comme Easyjet, qui table sur un redémarrage d'ici deux semaines et vend déjà des billets. Certains vols affichent même complet au départ de Genève le mois prochain.

L'irlandaise Ryanair, plus prudente, fait des ventes flash pour le mois de septembre.

Un pari audacieux quand on sait que le modèle low cost consiste à rentabiliser au maximum l'espace dans les avions alors que l'on met en place aujourd'hui des distances de sécurité sanitaire à bord en laissant libre par exemple le siège du milieu.

RTS 25/04/2020

**Selon Christophe Hardin, président de l'Association des Cadres Navigant Commerciaux, il ne serait pas tenable pour les compagnies aériennes de réduire les taux de remplissage afin de mettre en oeuvre des mesures de distanciation sociale dans le cadre de l'épidémie liée au COVID-19. Il rappelle que les cabines d'avion bénéficient d'un système très sophistiqué doté de filtres identiques à ceux que l'on trouve dans les blocs opératoires, qui permet de renouveler l'air toutes les 3 minutes à bord.** Explications.

Les images d'un vol Marseille-Paris complet avec des passagers les uns à côté des autres et, pour certains d'entre eux, sans masque, a fait ces jours derniers un mauvais buzz pour la compagnie Air France.

Dans cette période où les avions sont plutôt vides, la compagnie s'est laissée surprendre et n'a pas

anticipé cette affluence soudaine sur l'un de ses vols.

Seulement voilà, avec à bord une équipe de journalistes de France 2, les images ont été largement diffusées et alimentent le débat sur les risques d'être contaminé si l'on se retrouve à voyager dans une cabine d'avion complète.

Air France a bien sûr rectifié immédiatement le tir avec la mise en place sans délai de mesures adaptées. Désormais et sur les vols où la distanciation n'est pas possible, les équipages distribuent à la porte de l'avion des masques aux passagers qui n'en possèdent pas déjà.

**Mais les compagnies aériennes craignent qu'à présent on leur impose de ne pas commercialiser la totalité de l'avion pour laisser un siège vide entre chaque passager.**

D'un point de vue économique et pour une compagnie comme Air France, ce n'est pas tenable.

Anne Rigail, la directrice générale de la compagnie, s'en est expliquée devant une commission sénatoriale il y a quelques jours.

**"Il y a une réalité incontournable. En temps normal, le coefficient de remplissage des avions est à plus de 85%, avec une marge de 1,7%. Avec des mesures nous obligeant à commercialiser aux deux tiers nos avions, notre marge serait de -25%."**

**La faiblesse des marges d'air France est un handicap, mais même pour des compagnies comme Lufthansa ou British Airways qui margent respectivement à 9% et 14%, l'équation est impossible. Et augmenter très fortement le prix du billet n'est pas une option.**

Y a-t-il un danger à mettre l'un à côté de l'autre deux passagers portant un masque dans un avion ?  
Pas forcément.

On ne peut pas comparer l'environnement à l'intérieur d'un avion à un train, un bus ou un cinéma. Une cabine d'avion est protégée de la même manière qu'un bloc opératoire.

L'air des cabines est totalement renouvelé toutes les 3 minutes

Elle bénéficie d'un système de recyclage de l'air. L'air extérieur prélevé au niveau des moteurs est distribué en cabine via des packs de conditionnement d'air. Il est ensuite évacué par des vannes de pressurisation.

**Le système est équipé de filtres HEPA « High Efficiency Particulate Air ». L'air des cabines est ainsi totalement renouvelé toutes les 3 minutes.**

Ces filtres très performants extraient plus de 99,999% des virus, y compris ceux dont la taille ne dépasse pas 0,01 micromètre, assurant ainsi la qualité de l'air en cabine et sa conformité avec les normes sanitaires.

Les virus de type coronavirus, dont la taille varie entre 0,08 et 0,16 micromètre sont, ainsi, systématiquement capturés, affirment les constructeurs.

Michael O'Leary, le patron de Ryanair, a de la chance. Ces filtres très haute qualité ne sont pas en option quand on achète un avion.

Ses Boeing 737 sont donc protégés et il pourra donc également mettre en avant cette technologie auprès du gouvernement irlandais qui étudiait la possibilité d'imposer des sièges vides en cabine.

**Voler avec des masques sera donc probablement et pendant quelques temps une obligation.** Il faudra s'adapter...

Comme, par exemple, pour les annonces de sécurité : "En cas de dépressurisation, des masques tomberont automatiquement à votre portée. Tirez sur le masque, retirez votre masque Covid, appliquez votre masque O2 sur le visage... et respirez normalement".

AirMag 26/04/2020

**Airlines in India have come together on an issue that seems to have otherwise divided the industry globally. It's about keeping middle seats in flights vacant, to maintain social distancing among passengers.**

EasyJet, the British low-cost airline is fine with it. But the CEO of its Irish peer Ryanair termed the proposal 'idiotic.' In the US, while United Airlines again is receptive of the idea, local peer American Airlines thinks otherwise.

So what is it about the idea that has evoked such sharp responses?

As airlines and airports prepare to resume operations, once the lockdown is lifted and the government gives the green signal, they have put in elaborate guidelines to ensure the safety of passengers.

One such rule is to maintain social distancing, at the terminals, buses that ferry passengers and flights. Well, the flight part is a question mark now.

**India's industry regulator DGCA has proposed that airlines keep the middle seat empty. But DGCA is not alone. Regulators in Thailand, China and other countries have done the same.**

**Michael O'Leary, the CEO, said the airline can't afford to keep the middle seats empty. The move, he said, neither ensures social distancing nor is it viable for an airline.**

If the Irish government does impose it, O'Leary warned, the airline will not fly, unless the administration pays for the loss.

Interestingly, EasyJet's Chief Executive Johan Lundgren said it will help the airline attract passengers, especially for a short period as flying resumes.

One may agree with the view, especially after going through this nervous account of flying a long haul flight that was full.

**Those against the idea including Indian carriers such as SpiceJet said keeping the middle seat vacant is not enough to ensure social distancing.**

**They reasoned the argument by factoring in the width of an average aircraft seat (about 45cm in Airbus 320 aircraft), which is clearly not enough to have a gap of 2 meters. Even if one were to maintain a distance of 1.5 meters - the gap that airports in India have proposed to maintain - it would probably mean that airlines can have only two seats occupied across a row of six seats, including the aisle.**

But this hasn't prevented United Airlines to ensure social distancing inside a flight. The airline said customers won't be able to select seats next to each other.

28/04/20 Prince Mathews Thomas/Moneycontrol.com

**Airlines have been grounded for over a month now, and as lockdown is here to stay, the sector has only bad news coming its way.**

The inkling that flying might remain affected for many months as Indians practice social distancing means — less earnings per flight. This gap might as well be filled by lower crude oil prices. A Credit Suisse report says that crude oil prices are 'so low' that airlines can break-even even at half the revenue even if they fly with empty middle seats.

Jet fuel constitutes a major chunk of airlines' expenses. As of now, Brent crude is at \$19.63 per barrel and the fact that US crude futures went into the negative territory offers hope to airlines.

"Crude has lowered the variable cost of flying, implying that airlines can start to make a contribution towards covering its fixed cost at a lower load factor of 50% also. We assume prices of 10% lower than FY20E levels. Airline can thus aim to fly with even a 50% load factor and start to make a contribution towards covering its fixed costs. This also enables airlines to fly with middle seats empty. Middle seats being empty may also help to push up prices, breaking the downward spiral of prices," cited the report.

Refunds, cash and bookings This could come as some relief especially after industry body CAPA predicted that most airlines globally will go bankrupt by May. Even the largest airlines in the world are seeking government aid, and are worried that they will ever see the light of day again.

28/04/20 Navdeep Yadav/Business Insider

**New Delhi: The Ministry of Civil Aviation on Tuesday said 403 flights had been operated under Lifeline Udan in the domestic sector and 748.68 tons of essential and medical supplies were delivered across the country till April 27.**

The Ministry of Civil Aviation, in a statement, mentioned that 235 of these flights were operated by Air India and Alliance Air.

Flights under Lifeline Udan initiative are being operated by the Ministry of Civil Aviation to transport essential medical cargo to remote parts of the country to support India's war against COVID-19.

Private operators SpiceJet, Blue Dart, Indigo and Vistara are operating cargo flights on a commercial basis.

"SpiceJet operated 633 cargo flights till April 27, covering a distance of 11,09,028km and carrying 4,637 tons of cargo. Out of these, 228 were international cargo flights," said the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

"Blue Dart operated 219 cargo flights, covering a distance of 2,38,928km and carried 3,636 tons of cargo till Monday. Of these, 10 were international cargo flights," the Ministry informed.

It further stated that Indigo operated 50 cargo flights, including 17 international flights, during this period. The airlines covered a distance of 77,996km and carried around 185 tons of cargo. "This also includes medical supplies carried free of cost for the government," pointed the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Vistara has operated 14 cargo flights covering a distance of 20,466km and carrying around 113 tons of cargo.

28/04/20 Tribune

New Delhi: **The government has extended the deadline to bid for Air India by two months till June 30, as the COVID-19 fallout has disrupted economic activity globally.**

This is the second extension in the deadline to submit bids by investors for Air India since it initiated the process of stake sale in the debt-ridden national carrier on January 27.

Issuing a corrigendum to the Expression of Interest for sale of Air India, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management said the deadline has been extended in view of the "request received from the IBs (interested bidders) in view of the prevailing situation arising out of COVID-19".

While issuing the EoI in January, the last date for bids was kept for March 17, which was later extended to April 30. This has now been further extended till June 30.

**Also the date for intimation to qualified interested bidders (QIB) has been extended by 2 months till July 14, the DIPAM said in the corrigendum posted on its website.**

**"Further changes with respect to the Important Dates, if any, will be communicated to the Interested Bidders subsequently," it added.**

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

28/04/20 PTI/Outlook

New Delhi: If there was one innovation that made the world so tiny that you could have your breakfast in New York, lunch in London and dinner a thousand miles away it is "Flying."

It truly changed the way we lived until about a month ago and everything was grounded. **Aviation is one of the few industries requiring a massive cash infusion and yet runs on slimmest margins. The biggest victim of COVID-19 pandemic is undoubtedly Airlines across the globe.**

**A renowned consulting group has also predicted that most Airlines globally will go bankrupt by May.** Even the biggest Airlines in the world are looking up to the Governments hopefully. Without government support, many won't be able to reinstate soon if they ever will.

What does it mean for the workforce?

COVID-19 has been spreading its heatwaves in over 194 countries already brining life to the state of inertia. Undoubtedly there is no bigger loss than the loss of life, but those who are fortunate enough to stay safe from the virus, have a bigger challenge to face.

The world's biggest financial agencies are predicting a bigger recession than what the world saw in 2008. **The catastrophe is far from over, at least financial in months to come. Especially in Aviation, where people are being laid off in large numbers.** While the virus did not give us a chance to prepare for the catastrophe, fortunately, we still can plan our lives for the near future.

28/04/20 IANS/Outlook

**By now, we have all come to realize that the post-COVID-19 world may look a little different from what we know. Especially the world of travel. While taking a flight out of the country is a distant dream for us right now, airlines are busy trying to figure out how to best ensure safe air travel once this crisis tides over.**

**Italian airplane interiors company Aviointeriors is rising up to the challenge of adapting economy class cabins to new social distancing rules.** The company has come up with two seat designs that ensure distance between passengers without compromising too much space on board.

Named after the two-faced Roman God of the same name, the Janus seat sticks to the standard three-seats-in-a-row design, but with a twist (no pun intended). The middle seat faces the opposite direction to that of the aisle and window seats. As a result, passengers sitting next to each-other do not share an armrest and avoid bumping shoulders and unnecessary contact as they enter and leave their seat.

**Additionally, each seat also has a three-sided transparent shield to prevent an exchange of respiratory droplets between passengers in adjacent seats.** While similar designs have been seen in business class cabins, it is uncertain whether this kind of seats can fill up an entire economy class cabin. Seats next to exits, however, cannot be replaced by this design due to the regulation that exit row seats require an extra seven inches of space in case of an evacuation.

Because backward-facing seats can sometimes be off-putting to passengers, Aviointeriors has also come up with the Glasssafe seat. This seat provides a simpler design solution for airlines- a protective shield fitted into existing seats to prevent contamination. The shields would provide a barrier between passengers sitting next to each-other, without requiring airlines to overhaul their cabins.

Interestingly, this is not the first time Aviointeriors has come up with unique and out-of-the-box seat designs. In 2019, the company introduced The Skyrider, more commonly known as the "standing seat" - a bicycle-like seat designed to accommodate more passengers into economy class. While that idea didn't exactly take off, airlines are showing interest in their new designs. The company believes that if they get the required approvals, they could roll out the new seats within eight to 11 months.  
28/04/20 Arundhati Ail/Conde Nast Traveller

**Mumbai: Aviation and gems and jewellery sectors face high credit risks due to the current business disruptions and prolonged recovery caused by the COVID-19 crisis, according to a report.**

Besides these two sectors, microfinance institutions (MFIs) and tourism and hotels industries also face high credit risks, according to the report by ICRA Ratings.

It said that because of the COVID-19 crisis, the credit profile of a large number of sectors and entities has become vulnerable.

**"The high-risk sectors -- aviation, gems & jewellery, tourism & hotels, microfinance institutions -- are the ones that face severe business disruption over the immediate term and where the recovery is more likely to be prolonged," the rating agency's Head (Credit Policy) Jitin Makkar said.**

The medium-risk sectors that include automobile OEMs (original equipment manufactures) and auto-ancillaries, construction, consumer durables and power, among others, face relatively lower degree of business disruptions and credit risks.

The rating agency, however, expects that the after-effects of the COVID-19 crisis on these sectors may not persist for long.

The sectors that face low risk are agri-products, education, fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) and telecom.

"These industries are unlikely to face material business disruption, or a material increase in credit

risks over the near term, triggered solely by the COVID-19 crisis," Makkar said.

28/04/20 PTI/Outlook

Kozhikode: The remains of seven people who died in the Gulf countries were airlifted from Dubai by a cargo flight which arrived here Tuesday, ending the uncertainty over bringing back the bodies of those who died following non-Covid-19 reasons. Airport sources said the flight reached the airport by around noon.

The bodies include natives of Kerala, one each of people from Goa and Sivaganga in Tamil Nadu.

"Karipur is among the few airports where cargo flights are operating in South India.

This is the reason why the bodies of those belonging to Goa and Sivaganga and other parts of Kerala have all been brought here for onward transport to respective destinations by road," an airport official said.

"As per information received from the airport, the bodies are of John Johannan of Kollam, David Shamy of Punnakkal, Kannur, Sathyan of Cheranelloor, Thrissur, O C Mathai and Sijo Joy, both of Pathanamthitta, Sreenivasan of Sivaganga and Henrick D Soza of South Goa," said Thomas, Assistant Sub Inspector, Special Branch CID, Malappuram.

Special passes have been issued to ambulances to transport the bodies to their destinations after the formalities at the airport are over, a senior police officer said.

There had been some confusion on bringing back the bodies from the Gulf region for about a week for want of clearance from the embassy authorities.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan had written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi last week seeking his intervention in ensuring that bodies of Keralites, who die in Gulf countries due to non-COVID-19 reasons, should be brought to the state without any delay forenabling family members to perform their last rites.

28/04/20 PTI/Outlook

**Singapore: Airlines in the Asia-Pacific face the largest revenue declines as Covid-19 impacts on countries in the region, according to the latest estimates from the International Air Transport Association (IATA).**

IATA released an updated analysis showing that the COVID-19 crisis will see global airline passenger revenues drop by USD314 billion in 2020, a 55% decline compared to 2019.

Airlines in the Asia Pacific will see the largest revenue drop of US\$113 billion in 2020 compared to 2019 (-US\$88 billion in 24 March estimate), and a 50% fall in passenger demand in 2020 compared to 2019 (-37% in 24 March estimate). These estimates are based on a scenario of severe travel restrictions lasting for three months, with a gradual lifting of restrictions in domestic markets, followed by regional and intercontinental.

**"The situation is deteriorating. Airlines are in survival mode. They face a liquidity crisis with a USD61 billion cash burn in the second quarter. We have seen the first airline casualty in the region (Virgin Australia)," said IATA's regional vice president, Asia-Pacific Conrad Clifford.**

**"There will be more casualties if governments do not step in urgently to ensure airlines have sufficient cash flow to tide them over this period."**

**He identified India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Philippines, Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and Thailand as priority countries that need to take action.**



IATA is calling for a combination of direct financial support loans, loan guarantees and support for the corporate bond market tax relief.

“Providing support for airlines has a broader economic implication. Jobs across many sectors will be impacted if airlines do not survive the Covid-19 crisis. Every airline job supports another 24 in the travel and tourism value chain. In Asia-Pacific, 11.2 million jobs are at risk, including those that are dependent on the aviation industry, such as travel and tourism,” said Clifford.

27/04/20 TTR Weekly

**New Delhi: US aerospace major Boeing has warned that air travel will take years to return to pre-pandemic levels. And even when the situation stabilises, the market for commercial aircraft will be smaller with airlines’ needs hanging drastically.** The Boeing Company CEO David Calhoun’s address at this year’s annual meet of shareholders make it clear that it is “preparing for the new reality.”

“The health (corona) crisis is unlike anything we have ever experienced. With fewer people taking to the skies, global airline revenues are set to drop by \$314 billion by the end of the year. In the US alone, more than 2,800 airplanes have been idled, and passenger volume is down over 95% compared to the prior year. It will be years before this returns to pre-pandemic levels,” Calhoun, 63, who became Boeing president and CEO in January 2020, said in his address delivered virtually in the US.

“And this has a direct effect on the products and services our customers will want and will need. Airlines are cutting back operations dramatically. As they assess their businesses, they are making difficult decisions that result in grounding fleets, deferring airplane orders, postponing acceptance of completed orders, and slowing down or stopping payments. They are also accelerating aircraft retirements and requiring fewer services. All of this adds pressure on our supply chain beyond what it is already experiencing because of the pandemic,” he said.

“We are in an unpredictable and fast-changing environment, and it is difficult to estimate when the situation will stabilise. But when it does, the commercial market will be smaller, and our customers’ needs will be different. We will need to balance the supply and demand accordingly as the industry recovers. But I remain confident in our industry and in Boeing — we will recover. We are already preparing for the new reality,” the CEO said.

“Currently, our team is focused on the best ways to keep liquidity flowing through our industry and to our supply chain until our customers are buying airplanes and related services again. Specifically, we have drawn down on a loan, reduced operating costs, suspended dividend payments, extended our existing pause on stock buybacks, de-prioritised some strategic investments, and accelerated some progress payment receipts with the help of our defence customers. Larry and I also are forgoing all pay until the end of the year,” he said.

“The recent \$25 billion support package agreed to by the airlines and the (US) government is a pivotal step toward maintaining the aviation pillar of the United States economy, even if full recovery will take years, not just months. Knowing that the US airline industry has critical financial support through the pandemic allows us to plan our production and services systems for the medium- and long-term impact on air travel,” the CEO said.

27/04/20 Saurabh Sinha/Times of India

As the aviation sector waits for the government's nod to resume operations, it is also going through a reset mode. From the way airlines buy aircraft, or how customers move around an airport, to even the salary structure of cabin crew and pilots, the sector may see a new normal.

How is it going to change the way passengers travel?

Apart from tickets and ID cards, you will also need to wear a mask and gloves, for the CRPF personnel to let you past the entry gate.

Once past, the customer will have to heed a host of new guidelines. This is what Delhi and Mumbai airports - the two busiest in the country - have requested:

**Carry minimal luggage, check in from home and use cards for transactions.**

Moreover, **expect restrictions on moving around the airport.** Hoping to hang around with friends or relatives, at a bar, or a restaurant? You may, but at 1.5 meters between each other.

"The seating arrangements at the food court as well as in the terminal building are reshuffled in a manner that promotes social distancing," said GVK MIAL, managing the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai.

And do not get irritated if washrooms are restricted, as these will now be cleaned every hour.

**Boarding will be slower**, so do not hurry. Both airline and airport executives are under strict instructions to maintain social distancing as customers queue up. Especially, do not rush towards the bus to grab a seat, it may be marked X, meaning it is unavailable. There will be few available, to ensure passengers do not sit too close to each other.

In-flight services will not be the same. Get used to cold sandwiches; **hot meals would be off the menu for a while to reduce interactions with the crew.**

**Suggestions that the middle seat should be kept empty have not been taken kindly by the airlines.**

Simply because that would steal airlines about one-third of their capacity, and that can be made up only by steep fares. But, fares may not climb north soon enough, with traffic expected to remain subdued because of COVID-19 worries.

Clearer picture will emerge as we get closer to resumption of services.

SLB model or outright buy?

**Most of the airlines all around the world, and in India, follow the sale and lease back model when it comes to expanding their fleet.** Airlines buy the aircraft from an Airbus or a Boeing, sell it to a leasing company, which in turn leases it back to the carriers.

The model was championed in India by IndiGo, which briefly flirted with the idea of buying its aircraft and then got back to the SLB mode.

Even though the model helped airlines save money, it has come to bite them during the present slump caused by COVID-19.

IndiGo, the country's largest airline that also has the biggest fleet, paid Rs 5,373 crore in aircraft and engine rentals in the 2019 financial year. SpiceJet paid Rs 1,296 crore.

That may change now. **"The smarter airlines will have achievable plans where they will buy aircraft instead of SLBs,"** says Nitin Sarin, Managing Partner of Sarin & Co, which specialises in aviation law.

**Not just that it saves money, adds Sarin, but they can use it as collateral to borrow money if they own the asset.**

"But if they do not own the planes at all, they cannot go to a bank and say ok, I will take a loan against this aircraft," says Sarin.

The first signs will come when airlines receive the next delivery.

Salaries, a downward shift

Nearly all airlines, including SpiceJet, GoAir and Vistara, have either cut salaries or sent employees on leave without pay.

Unfortunately, for employees, this is not the end to the trim in their pay.

SpiceJet has already changed the employment contract of its 'internal upgrade pilots' - possibly first officers and captain trainees. It has also restructured the salary of all cabin crew, from May 1.

"It is inevitable. But for a business owner, the reduction makes a big difference. As a business owner, I too would look at resetting all these fixed costs in my control," said a senior executive from the industry.

Lawyer Yeshwanth Shenoy pointed out on Twitter that other airlines could soon follow.  
Money Control 28/04/2020

**Bengaluru: With hopes of getting a bailout package for the airline industry diminishing, AirAsia India has increased its borrowing limit by Rs1,000 crore to ensure it continues to pay leasing and parking charges for its grounded aircraft.**

AirAsia India is learnt to be the first domestic airline to formally increase the borrowing limit. The decision to increase the limit from Rs 500 crore to Rs1,500 crore was taken at a recent meeting of the shareholders. AirAsia India is a joint venture between Tata Sons, which owns 51 per cent in the airline, and AirAsia Berhad. The special resolution was approved to carry out "existing and future financial requirements to support its business operations", according to a data intelligence platform paper.vc.

Following the lockdown, all domestic and international flights have been cancelled. According to CAPA, an aviation consultancy firm, domestic airlines are set to incur losses worth \$1.75 billion in the first quarter of the current financial year.

According to various reports, some lessors are in contact with domestic airlines to terminate the contracts and take back the leased aircraft following missed payments. AirAsia has 30 aircraft on lease, with 70 more on order.

According to the Q4 results (Oct-Dec, 2019), the airline's maintenance and overhaul charges were Rs174.35 crore.,

Leasing charges for the same period during 2018 ?116.4 crore in Q4 of the previous year.. No details have been given with regard to leasing charges for Q4 of 2019.

AirAsia India recorded fourth quarter net loss of Rs123.3 crore in FY19, which was 26 per cent lesser than the same quarter in the previous year. It recorded revenues of Rs1,057.6 crore, a 65 per cent increase from Q4 of FY18 on the back of a 38 per cent increase in capacity and a 19 per cent increase in average fare. Staff costs increased by 77 per cent due to additional operational staff for an increased number of aircraft and also forward hiring to cater to the additional aircraft to be inducted in the first half of 2020.

The 4Q19 share of results of AirAsia Berhad includes Rs 233.2 crore recognized for AirAsia India losses on injection of investment into AirAsia India.

27/04/20 K Giriprakash/Business Line

**International Air Transport Association (IATA) has released its latest estimates, which show that the impact of Covid-19 on the aviation industry in the Asia-Pacific region has worsened.**

Earlier this month, IATA released its updated analysis stating that global airline passenger revenues will decrease by \$314bn this year, which marks a decline of 55% compared to the previous year. As per the estimates, Asia-Pacific airlines will record a revenue decline of \$113bn compared to last year, which is the biggest drop of all the regions.

Asia-Pacific will also see a 50% decrease in passenger demand this year compared to last year. The estimate in March stated that there would be a 37% decrease in passenger demand this year. IATA states that the revenue and demand estimates are based on the travel restrictions put in place since the last three months, as well as the gradual lift in restrictions in domestic, regional and intercontinental markets.

27/04/20 Airport Technology

**Coronavirus crisis would result in the Indian aviation sector being the worst among the Asia Pacific countries, which may impact as many as 29,32,900 jobs.** Compared to 2019, the revenue of this sector in India is likely to fall by \$11,221 million this year.

The passenger demand may fall by 47 per cent in India. According to Conrad Clifford, IATA's Regional Vice President for Asia-Pacific, in the second quarter of 2020, airlines in the region face a liquidity crisis with a \$61 billion cash burn. "We have seen the first airline casualty in the region. There will be more casualties if governments do not step in urgently to ensure airlines have sufficient cash flow to tide them over this period," The Free Press Journal quoted him as saying.

25/04/20 The Logical Indian

**International passenger capacity for India plunged by a whopping 89 per cent so far in April due to the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to a "business-as-usual" scenario, according to the latest projections from the International Civil Aviation Organisation.**

The Montreal-based ICAO, the specialised agency of the United Nations, said that by September, the world could have 1.2 billion fewer international air travellers, compared to regular originally planned or business-as-usual. Estimates by the organisation show a dramatic reduction in international passenger capacity for countries across the world between January and April, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread globally.

In February 2020, international passenger capacity reduced by 13 per cent, mainly related to traffic from/to States experiencing an early outbreak and States deeply interconnected to China.

By March, global international passenger capacity reduced by 49 per cent, with significant reduction not only in States experiencing an early outbreak but also worldwide. In April 2020, global international passenger capacity so far experienced by unprecedented 91 per cent reduction.

For India, the international passenger capacity has reduced by 89 per cent so far in April or a negative 6,263,030 capacity change from originally planned or in a business as usual scenario. In January, there was zero reduction for India in international passenger capacity as the pandemic was in its nascent stages across most of the world, except China, and air travel was still not significantly impacted.

The passenger capacity reduction was about 2 per cent for India in February. However by March, when the World Health Organisation had declared COVID-19 a global pandemic and infection rates were soaring across the world, India witnessed a 29 per cent capacity reduction, with capacity falling 2,077,578 as compared to originally-planned.

ICAO estimates also show that international capacity globally could drop by as much as two-thirds from what had been forecast for the first three quarters this year, leading airline revenues to drop by as much 160 to 253 billion dollars for the January to September period.

It said Europe and the Asia-Pacific will be hardest hit by the capacity and revenue impacts, followed by North America. Similarly, the most substantial reduction in passenger numbers is expected to be in Europe, especially during its peak summer travel season, followed by the Asia-Pacific.

24/04/20 PTI/Financial Express

**The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has announced guidelines that will be implemented in airports after the lockdown is lifted in the country.**

India has been under lockdown since 25 March due to the ongoing global Covid-19 pandemic.

The new guidelines impose restrictions on the number of terminals that will be operational, as well as the food and beverage outlets.

According to the AAI guidelines, accessed by news agency PTI: "Initially, it is presumed that airline operations will be limited to Tier-I cities i.e. metros and some of the state capitals and major Tier-II cities."

According to the guidelines, airports with more than one terminal will have to initially operate only one terminal after the lockdown.

In addition, alternate baggage carousels should be used to ensure that social distancing is maintained.

The guidelines added: "Limited food and beverages and retail outlets to be made available to the passengers till operations of airlines gradually increases. Initially, they should serve tea / coffee etc, with takeaway snacks in boxes."

Bars and restaurants in airports will not be allowed to sell alcoholic beverages unless they receive permission from city or state administration.

The airports will also have to allocate different parking stands and baggage belts for aircraft that arrive from Covid-19 hotspots.

AAI manages over 100 airports in the country. However, airports in the key metro cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad are managed by private companies.

Previously, Delhi International Airport and Mumbai International Airport announced that they would implement stringent measures to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic.

The airports announced that they would install markings to ensure 1.5m distance in queues and will set up temporary quarantine centres.

Hyderabad International Airport has also planned to implement similar measures and ensure that social distancing is followed. Earlier this month, India planned to implement new rules at the airport to avoid crowding and restrict the spread of Covid-19.

Airport Technology 29/04/2020

**SpiceJet on Wednesday told its pilots that they will not be paid salaries for April and May, and said those who have been operating cargo flights will get paid for "block hours flown".**

SpiceJet's flight operations chief Gurcharan Arora told pilots through an email that "as of today, 16 per cent of our aircraft and 20 per cent of our pilots are flying".

"We are doing this by flying our five cargo aircraft and also flying more 'cargo on seat' on our passenger aircraft," he said.

The budget carrier has a total of 116 passenger planes and five freight aircraft in its fleet.

India has been under lockdown since March 25 to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. All commercial passenger flights have been suspended.

Arora told pilots: "We will not be getting any salary for April and May 2020. Those of us who have been flying cargo, will get paid for the block hours flown."

Block hours is the duration of a pilot operating the flight.

The email, which has been accessed by PTI, stated: "Over the coming weeks, we intend to increase the number of aircraft flying (cargo + cargo on seat) to more than 50 per cent and the number of pilots flying to 100 per cent."

India Today 29/04/2020

**New Delhi | Mumbai: Airlines and passengers stranded in India are likely to be informed 10 days before flight operations resume, government sources told ET. One of them suggested that services could commence early June. All commercial flights have been grounded since March 25.**

"Restarting operations will depend on the situation with respect to number of (coronavirus) cases but the expectations are that it should start by the first week of June," said a senior aviation ministry official.

"We plan to allow airlines to open booking 10 days prior to the restart of operations." **This only pertains to domestic services and there are currently no discussions about restarting international operations**, he said. While the government feels that 10 days are enough for airlines to restart bookings, industry executives were divided on whether it would give them time to put together a network, plan fleet deployment, implement safety guidelines and generate adequate bookings. "Airlines would need at least 15 days to plan," said a person close to the development.

Others said there is pent-up demand because people are stuck at various locations. Beyond that, the scenario could be bleak. "The first three four days of 10 days, we will see a lot of bookings because of people stuck in cities. Thereafter, it will fall off a cliff," said an airline executive.

To be sure, “booking curve is late in India. Not many book more than 14 days out,” said a senior airline executive. The biggest worry for airlines is demand for air travel in the post-Covid era, given the need to maintain physical distancing and other norms.

The ETI 29/04/2020

**Ground handling and cargo warehousing sector is heavily dependent on international flights and few domestic airline companies. Since the grounding of airline operations, business has dropped by over 95%, says Murali Ramachandran, chief executive officer-India, Celebi Aviation, a Turkish ground handling company which operates at all major international airports in India.** Edited excerpts from an interview.

**How has your sector been affected by the lockdown imposed to contain covid-19?**

Amongst the impacted industries, Aviation is in the forefront and probably the most affected. Our Ground Handling and Cargo warehousing sector is heavily dependent on international flights and a few domestic customers. Since the lockout, our business had dropped by over 95%. We have a very high fixed cost base which makes our position more precarious.

**Are you looking for some relief measures from the government? If so, what are your requests?**

We have made multiple appeals seeking intervention from the government and support from the airports. Some of these are as follows -- financial support for reimbursement of wage bill, deferment of employee related statutory dues like PF & ESIC without any interest, moratorium on banking related repayment and expenses for a period of one year. Also, the period is very short for GST payments to be made on realization instead of accrual. We have also sought a moratorium of 180 days on payments due going forward and collateral free borrowing at low interest rates for working capital.

**Should there be some stimulus package for your industry?**

**Yes, there should definitely be stimulus package for the industry as it's the need of the hour. We however, are very skeptical as to how such stimulus would flow through to industry stakeholders like us. The timing for providing relief is also very critical. Hope it's not too little – too late.**

**Do you think the country is staring at a recession? How severely will your industry be hit? Have you revised your sales growth?**

We are definitely staring at a recession, and this time a global one. The aviation industry too has evidently been hit severely. Though India is doing relatively better than other countries during this crisis, yet from our sectors perspective a global recession will spell doom for businesses like ours. Currently, we are literally operating on a month-on-month based plan to remain viable, as we also have employees to take care of. Our payment inflow (of our dues) from the airlines has got choked with no meaningful relief been received from the airports or the government.

Our cash flows have been severely impacted. We don't have any visibility on how soon and how many foreign carriers would re-start. Making any revised sales projections during such a time will be



challenging as things are unclear and pre-mature. However, we do foresee various possible scenarios as to how the industry will probably recover in near future.

### **How do you think consumer demand could be revived after the lockdown is lifted?**

Specifically speaking of aviation, the start point will be when people are less scared of coming out of their homes. Thereafter, I believe a lot will depend on how we build in safeguards and procedures to provide the necessary comfort to get people to fly again. From the international traffic stand point, this may be more complex. It seems like flying, as we knew, will go through some dramatic changes (just like after 9/11). All these changes will bring in new challenges in terms of how we handle planes, passengers, freight, immigration processes, employee handling etc. On the sector per say, it could probably take about three years for us to reach 2019 levels.

### **Will you be looking at either salary cuts or job cuts?**

That is not something we are planning as of now. We are instead discussing various other options. Most organizations are looking at a reduced work / pay scheme to be implemented in the short and medium term. Given that recovery may not be immediate and the industry will go through an imminent downturn, some difficult decisions will probably be unavoidable in times to come.

Live Mint Aviation 29/04/2020

**The government has extended the deadline for submitting bids for Air India Ltd to 30 June.** The earlier deadline to submit expressions of interest (Eoi) for the national carrier was 30 April.

The latest decision by the government comes amid the lockdown to contain the covid-19 outbreak, which has severely hurt the economy.

The changes were made following requests from interested bidders in view of the prevailing situation arising out of the pandemic outbreak, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) said in a notification.

A senior finance ministry official said that the government has time till 31 March 2021 for the privatization processes of public sector firms such as Air India and Bharat Petroleum Corp. Ltd (BPCL).

The government would prefer to extend the deadline of the privatization process rather than deferring it to a later date, the official added, requesting anonymity.

However, experts tracking divestment said that there are likely to be valuation and market demand concerns with Air India and BPCL divestments as aviation, oil and gas sectors have been severely impacted by the lockdown initiated by governments across the world to contain covid-19.

"What will be important for the government is receiving the right kind of bids which can lead to closing the deals once the economy and market dynamics show signs of stabilization," said Dipti Lavya Swain, corporate M&A lawyer and partner at HSA Advocates.

The government, which aims to sell its entire stake in Air India, had in January began the stake sale process by inviting offers from potential investors after a costly turnaround plan and an earlier effort

to sell a controlling stake in the flag carrier failed. To sweeten the deal, the Centre had reduced Air India's debt from about ₹56,334 crore to about ₹23,287 crore.

The Union cabinet recently approved an amendment to the foreign direct investment (FDI) policy to permit foreign investment in Air India by non-resident Indians (NRIs) up to 100% under the automatic route.

However, the spread of the coronavirus has cast a cloud over the divestment plans during the near future. The aviation sector has been heavily impacted and demand is expected to remain muted in the coming months.

Globally, over 211,894 people have died due to covid-19, while the number of those infected has crossed 3 million cases, according to the latest data by Johns Hopkins University.

Live Mint Aviation 28/04/2020