



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

3 OCTOBER 2024

AAI plans helicopter rides to tourist spots

S. Sundar

MADURAI

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is planning to introduce helicopter services from Madurai to help passengers travel quickly to important tourist spots and pilgrimage centres in southern districts, AAI Chairman M. Suresh has said.

Mr. Suresh, who was in Madurai on Tuesday to declare its airport operational 24x7, told *The Hindu* that Madurai had immense potential to attract pilgrims and tourists from far-off cities.

Madurai, which is already well-connected with Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bengaluru, is expected to get more domes-

tic flights to cities such as Varanasi, Pune, Goa, and Kolkata.

“Even if these flights are operated two or three days a week initially, it will help people from northern States to plan short trips, especially to pilgrimage spots,” Mr. Suresh said.

The availability of helicopter services would further help tourists and pilgrims to quickly reach places like Kodaikanal, Kanniyakumari, and Courtallam, he added.

Simultaneously, efforts would be made to introduce seaplane services, he said. “We are trying to connect the coastal cities like Chennai and Puducherry to promote tourism. We can extend the services up to Rameswaram,” he said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

3 OCTOBER 2024

एयर इंडिया से मर्जर के बाद भी विस्तारा की 'सेवाएं' जारी रहेंगी

बिजनेस संवाददाता | मुंबई

एअर इंडिया ने कहा कि अगले महीने 12 नवंबर को मर्जर के बाद भी विस्तारा के विमान, कू और सेवाएं पहले की तरह ही बनी रहेंगी। 'विस्तारा' के विमानों से संचालित उड़ानों के नंबरों की शुरुआत 'एआई2' से होगी। लेकिन एआई2एक्सएक्सएक्स उड़ान संख्या एयरइंडिया.कॉम के माध्यम से बुक

की जा सकेंगी।" दरअसल कुछ लोगों में इस बात को लेकर चिंता है कि क्या विस्तारा के यात्रियों को विलय के बाद भी अभी जैसी ही सेवाएं मिलती रहेंगी। क्योंकि एयर इंडिया को हाल ही में सेवा संबंधी समस्याओं से गुजरना पड़ रहा है। एअर इंडिया ने कहा कि हम यह सुनिश्चित करने के लिए एक साल से कड़ी मेहनत कर रहे हैं कि विलय ग्राहकों और कर्मचारियों दोनों के लिए सहज हो।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

3 OCTOBER 2024

नोएडा एयरपोर्ट पर 17 अप्रैल से शुरू होंगी उड़ानें

नई दिल्ली | दिल्ली-एनसीआर में बन रहे नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट के पहले फेज का काम दिसंबर में पूरा हो जाएगा। 3.9 किमी लंबा रनवे तैयार है। टर्मिनल बिल्डिंग का ढांचा भी बन चुका है। यहां अगले साल 17 अप्रैल से घरेलू और अंतरराष्ट्रीय विमान सेवा का ऑपरेशन एकसाथ शुरू हो रहा है। टिकट बुकिंग फरवरी से होगी। शुरुआत में एक दिन में 60 से ज्यादा विमानों की आवाजाही हो सकेगी।



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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

3 OCTOBER 2024

Rs 20 lakh fine on Shivamogga Airport

DAVANGERE, DHNS: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a fine of Rs 20 lakh on Shivamogga Airport for failing to adhere to proper maintenance, technical considerations, and aerodrome standards.

A DGCA team inspected the airport in August and issued a notice to the Karnataka State Industrial & Infrastructure Development Corporation. The Corporation responded to the notice on behalf of the airport. Due to inadequate response, DGCA listed charges and imposed a fine of Rs 20 lakh.



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DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

3 OCTOBER 2024

New electric taxis to airport

BENGALURU, DHNS: Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Wednesday launched a new set of electric airport taxis operated by Refex eVeelz, a private company.

The company has added more than 170 electric cars to its existing fleet of 200 cars as a part of its 'Airport Taxi' service in collaboration with the airport operator.

With a range of car models, passengers can pre-book their e-cabs for Rs 699 (limited-time offer only on the app) for any distance.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

CHENNAI

3 OCTOBER 2024



Caesar gets a fond farewell from CISF at Chennai airport

Nine-year-old labrador sniffer dog Caesar bade adieu to the K-9 squad of CISF at Chennai airport on September 30. From flowers to cake, CISF personnel gave Caesar a heartfelt farewell.

“Caesar will be dearly missed by all of us at the airport. Airport is one place where we see numerous challenges on a daily basis and Caesar has been an excellent companion to its handler and the CISF team at the airport, especially while handling issues of suspicious or unclaimed baggage. During many such instances, Caesar has helped us tackle it with minimal disruptions to passengers,” a CISF personnel said. He has been with us after retirement and is now looking for a good home. Anyone who wishes to take him in can reach out to the CISF team at the airport.

LONG-AWAITED METRO ROUTE WILL ENHANCE CONNECTIVITY

Gr Noida West residents rejoice as new Metro line approved to Jewar Airport

DIPIKA KIROLA

NOIDA: The residents of Greater Noida West have reason to celebrate as the new route of the Greater Noida West Metro has been approved, providing direct connection to Jewar Airport via Ghaziabad.

The residents have been demanding a Metro line on this route for a long time. "The metro rail project, which was stalled, has finally received approval from the Central government, and people living in the area can expect relief from connectivity issues," said Arunvir Singh, CEO of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) on Thursday.

Singh further informed that the project involves extending the Metro line from Noida Sector-51 to the Char Murti roundabout and connecting Knowledge Park-V to the Aqua Line. "This will provide a direct



'Residents can expect relief from connectivity issues' REPRESENTATIVE IMAGE

connection from Ghaziabad to Noida International Airport via Greater Noida West, due to which the distance of the route will be reduced from 15 km to 10 km," the CEO said.

According to officials, a detailed Metro network will be prepared, starting from Ghaziabad and going to Noida

International Airport in Jewar via Greater Noida West. Officials believe that this will significantly contribute to the overall development of the region and provide millions of people with a smooth transportation facility.

"The start of this metro line will accelerate real estate activ-

Key Points

- » The project involves extending the Metro line from Noida Sector-51 to the Char Murti roundabout and connecting Knowledge Park-V to the Aqua Line: YEIDA CEO Singh
- » A detailed Metro network will be prepared, starting from Gzb to Noida Int'l Airport via Greater Noida West

ities and attract new investments" a senior officer said.

The Central and the state government will each contribute 20 per cent to the project, while the National Capital Region Transport Corporation will bear 60 per cent of the cost. If the Transport corporation is unable to cover

the expenses, Greater Noida Authority, Yamuna Development Authority, Noida International Airport and GDA will jointly bear the cost.

The extension of the Aqua Line from Sector-52 to Knowledge Park-V, which will be connected to the Namo Bharat line going from the airport, will benefit lakhs of residents in Greater Noida West. This will enhance connectivity between cities and provide a smooth traffic path for both Noida and Ghaziabad, said officials.

"The metro project will largely benefit office goers, students and daily commuters. At present there is no means of public transport in the area. The metro project was awaited from years.

"The authorities should also focus on effective traffic management plan for the area," said Dheeraj Sharma, a resident of Greno West's Stellar Jeevan society.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

4 OCTOBER 2024

Delhi airport to run air trains between terminals



ASHISH SRIVASTAVA @NewDelhi

First of its kind

With planes taxiing above on elevated taxiways, passengers will be ferried between the terminals and key airport hubs below the taxiways via air trains. The air trains will blend effortlessly with the flow of vehicles and aircraft, marking a feat never before seen at any Indian airport.

IN the next four years, passengers at the Indira Gandhi International Airport will experience an engineering marvel that will be the first in India. By 2028, the Delhi airport will start running an Automated People Mover (APM), commonly referred to as an air train, to carry passengers between the terminals of its vast complex.

According to the airport officials, the project is expected to revolutionise how passengers navigate the airport's vast expanse.

Much like air trains seen in global hubs such as those in Dubai, New York and Hong Kong, Delhi's APM will be designed to provide fast, efficient and sustainable transfers between airport terminals, they added.

With planes taxiing above on elevated taxiways, passengers will be ferried between terminals below the taxiways via air trains, providing seamless transit across key airport hubs. The APM will pass directly under the elevated taxiway blending effortlessly with the flow of vehicles and aircraft, marking a feat never before seen at any Indian airport.

This innovative transport solution will span a 7.7 km route, linking Terminal 1 with Terminals 2 and 3, while also stopping at Aerocity and Cargo City.

The Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL) has floated a tender for this project.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

4 OCTOBER 2024

Airlines avoid Iranian airspace, flight times up

Reuters
London

Airlines are largely avoiding Iranian airspace in their flights over the Middle East, according to flight tracker FlightRadar24, lengthening flight times and hiking up fuel costs as worries over a retaliatory attack from Israel targeting Iran grow.

Turmoil in the Middle East in the past year has led to confusion and upheaval for aviation, prompting airlines to frequently change routes as they reassess the safety of airspace in the region.

REROUTED FLIGHTS

“Most airlines have rerouted flights away from Iran, with the northern route taking flights through Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India on their way to Asia and the southern route flying over Egypt and Saudi Arabia,” said FlightRadar24 spokesperson Ian Petchenik.

OPERATIONS RESUMED

Some airlines have said they have resumed most of their operations across the Middle East since Iran hit Israel with a ballistic missile attack on Tuesday, leading to flight cancellations and delays.

Petchenik said most strategic changes to flights to avoid parts of the Middle East have been lifted in direct connection with the Tuesday attack.

IRAQI AIRSPACE

Late on Wednesday, German group Lufthansa said it would resume flights to Erbil in Iraqi Kurdistan using a limited amount of Iraqi airspace, and will resume using Jordanian airspace on Thursday.

It added that flights to Tel Aviv, Beirut and Tehran will remain suspended for the time being.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

JAIPUR

3 OCTOBER 2024

बिना पायलट उड़ान संभव ये है दुनिया का पहला एआई पैसेंजर प्लेन



फ्लोरिडा। यह दुनिया का पहला आर्टिफिशियल इंटेलिजेंस (एआई) प्लेन है। यह बिना पायलट उड़ान भरेगा और यात्री कॉकपिट में बैठकर आसमानी नजारों का आनंद ले सकेंगे। विमान का कॉन्सेप्ट एयरस्पेस कंपनी एम्ब्राएर ने फ्लोरिडा में आयोजित नेशनल बिजनेस एविएशन एसोसिएशन इवेंट में पेश किया। कंपनी ने इसके लिए बॉम्बर्डियर से भी साझेदारी की है।

Diversions, disruptions: Aviation grapples with Middle East escalation

Travel and airline shares down on Wednesday morning

LONDON, REUTERS

Rising tensions in the Middle East have created air travel chaos, with global airlines diverting or cancelling flights on Wednesday and regional airports, including Lebanon, Israel and Kuwait, showing long delays, according to FlightRadar24 data.

Concern over travel disruption as the conflict intensifies also knocked shares in the travel and airline sectors, with shares in Europe's largest travel operator TUI down over 5% at 1227 GMT and Lufthansa down more than 4%.

Iran launched its largest

missile attack against Israel on Tuesday in retaliation for Israel's campaign against Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon, prompting a threat from Israel of a "painful response".

On Wednesday morning, a few flights were seen over Iranian airspace, according to a FlightRadar24 map, including from carrier flydubai, after Iran said its ballistic missile attack on Israel was over.

However, flights across the entire region were diverted or disrupted with little sign of broader normalisation, with some changing their routes to avoid certain airspace.

"All planes - mainly flights



to India - are avoiding Iranian airspace until further notice," said a spokesperson for Polish flag carrier LOT.

Europe's aviation safety regulator EASA issued two conflict zone information bulletins at the end of September advising airlines not to use Israeli or Lebanese airspace "at all flight levels". It has not recently issued such a bulletin

for Iranian airspace.

Carriers around the world have cancelled flights to Israel and Lebanon in the wake of the escalating conflict, with many saying they won't resume until at least mid-October, depending on the security situation.

Both British Airways and Air France-KLM said their flight cancellations to Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion airport remained in

place until at least early next week, including the October 7 one-year anniversary of Hamas' attack on Israel.

Airport impact

Traffic over the Istanbul, Cairo and Antalya hubs remained dense as flights continued to avoid parts of Middle Eastern airspace.

All of the flights departing Abu Dhabi Zayed International Airport were delayed, while 56% of flights set to depart Ben Gurion airport in Tel Aviv were cancelled, according to the airline tracker.

At Amman's Queen Alia International Airport in Jordan, around 38% of arriving flights were cancelled.

The latest disruptions are expected to deal a further blow to an industry already facing a host of restrictions due to conflicts between Israel and Hamas, and Russia and Ukraine.

GE Aerospace Developing More Efficient Engines to Weather Extreme Conditions

GENx performing well in South Asia, and the company continues to learn, says exec

Arindam Majumder

New Delhi: GE Aerospace is developing more robust engines to withstand extreme operating conditions including in South Asia which experiences humid and dusty conditions. The US aerospace giant will take its learnings from the GENx engine which powers the Boeing 787 aircraft, along with the GE9X engine that will be used in the upcoming 777x jetliner, Mahendra Nair, group vice-president for commercial program at GE Aerospace told ET.

The GENx has been popular with airlines across the world winning more than half of all orders against the Trent 1000 of Rolls-Royce, the only other option on the 787 jetliner.

The GENx engine has completed over two million flight hours in South Asia. With customers like Air India, Vistara and Biman Bangladesh, GE has 90 engines flying in the region where hot and dusty conditions have been notorious to reduce dura-

Clean View

GENx Has over **50%** of all airline orders

Trent 1000 of Rolls Royce is the other option on the 787 aircraft

2 million Flight hours completed in **South Asia** with **GENx** engine

GE has **90 engines** flying in the region (South Asia)

GE first won its order for the **GENx** engine in **2012**

VIJAY P

bility of aircraft engines.

Recently, issues with the geared turbofan engine of Pratt & Whitney forced the grounding of more than 100 aircraft in India and the company has even been blamed for the bankruptcy of budget airline Go First.

“Our engines today are performing at all of the extreme temperatures that we see in the Middle East. 90% of the 787 in the region are powered by the GENx engine. So, our engines

today are not impacted, whether it's hot temperatures, whether it's dusty or sandy environments, or if it's altitudes, because the engines are built to manage that envelope. But it's a learning curve. As these engines fly longer, there is going to be continuous evolution as the environment changes, and we will continue to learn from that,” Nair said.

GE first won its order for the engine in 2012 but Vikram Rai, CEO, South

Asia said the key win came in 2018 when Vistara selected the engines for its aircraft.

“Singapore Airlines is a shareholder in Vistara and their 787 is powered by a competing engine (Trent 1000). So, for Vistara to select us was a great certification for our technology, reliability and cost efficiency,” said Rai who was also instrumental in GE securing Air India's record order in 2023. A senior Vistara official who worked on the engine and aircraft order said the airline opted for GE due to the company's stronger maintenance facilities and network.

Nair said lessons from the GE90 used by Gulf airlines like Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways proved valuable in developing the GENx. “Before that, as these airlines were small, we didn't have much learning on what hot temperature, severe and sandy environments do to the engines. We developed our analytics based maintenance, our initial algorithms from the GE 90, all of that made it to the GENx,” he said.

BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 30 AND OCTOBER 1

Gangwal Buys 3.6m Shares of SW Airlines Valued at \$100m+

Move likely to give businessman more heft in deciding company's road map

Our Bureau

Mumbai: Rakesh Gangwal, a director of Southwest Airlines, bought more than \$100 million worth of stock of the US budget carrier in a move that is likely to give the billionaire businessman more heft to steer the company's road map. Shares of Southwest rose on the news.

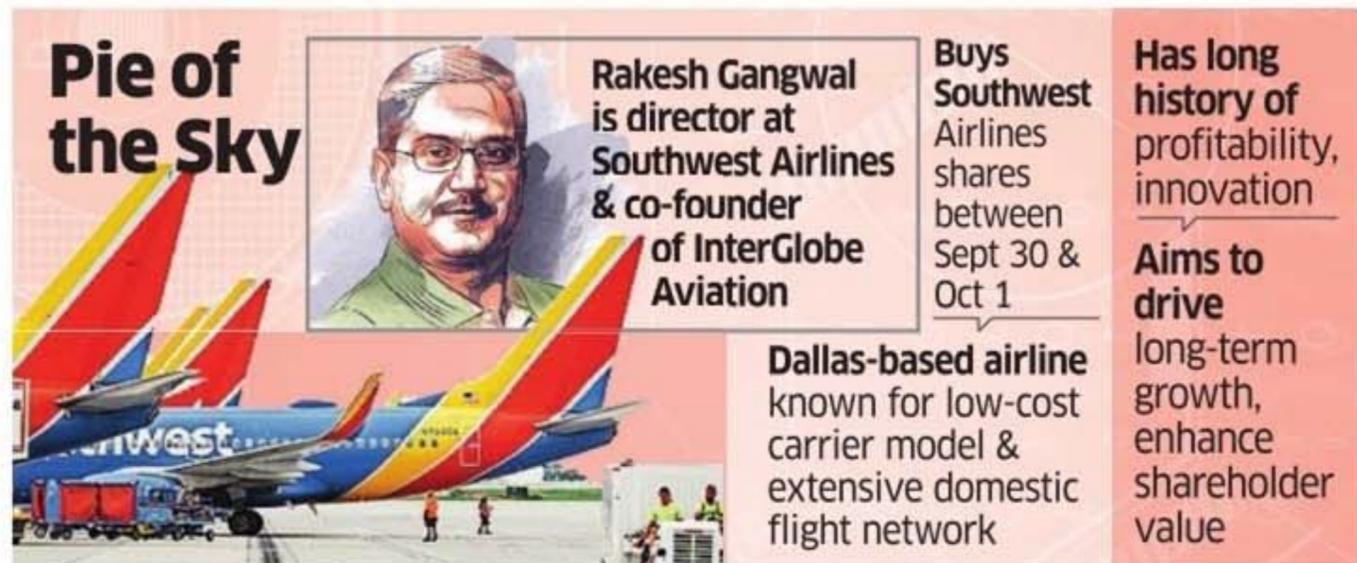
Gangwal, who cofounded InterGlobe Aviation, which runs India's largest airline IndiGo, purchased 3.6 million shares at \$29-30 apiece between September 30 and October 1, showed filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. Gangwal couldn't be immediately reached for a comment.

Shares of Southwest were trading 3.26% higher at \$30.54 apiece on the NYSE on Thursday.

Experts said the move aligns Gangwal's interests closely with those of other Southwest shareholders, strengthening his role in influencing the airline's strategic direction. Gangwal joined the board of Southwest this July.

Southwest, based in Dallas, Texas, is known for its low-cost model and its extensive domestic flight network. The company has a long history of profitability and innovation in the airline industry.

Gangwal's step comes at a pivotal moment for Southwest as the carrier is ai-



Pie of the Sky

Rakesh Gangwal is director at Southwest Airlines & co-founder of InterGlobe Aviation

Buy Southwest Airlines shares between Sept 30 & Oct 1

Has long history of profitability, innovation

Aims to drive long-term growth, enhance shareholder value

Dallas-based airline known for low-cost carrier model & extensive domestic flight network

ming for driving long-term growth and enhancing shareholder value, experts said.

Last week, the company hosted an Investor Day in Dallas, where president and CEO Bob Jordan presented Southwest's "Southwest. Even Better." transformational plan.

Jordan outlined the airline's strategy to achieve a return on invested capital (ROIC) of at least 15%, well above its weighted average cost of capital (WACC). The plan is projected to drive about \$4 billion in incremental EBIT contribution by 2027.

The plan is built on four key pillars: optimising the business with tactical initiatives such as network improvements and evolving revenue management practi-

ces; monetising customer value proposition through new products and services like premium seating and partnerships with international carriers; increasing operational efficiency through cost-saving measures and better aircraft utilisation; and optimising capital allocation, including a \$2.5 billion share repurchase programme, according to Jordan.

Southwest also introduced new leadership with the recent appointments of Bob Fornaro, former CEO of AirTran and Spirit Airlines, in addition to Gangwal. These along with other board changes reflect the company's commitment to bringing fresh perspectives and industry expertise to help execute its growth strategy.



Corporate Communications Directorate

FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

3 OCTOBER 2024

Fog disrupts air travel, over 10 morning flights delayed

A flight going from Delhi to Surat also landed here this morning due to the fog in Surat.

According to the information received from the airport, the dense fog covered the airport this morning as well, where usually the visibility remains up to 6 kilometres in the morning, but today it decreased to 100 meters.

Officials said that the first flight in the morning comes from Hyderabad at 6.25 am, but today due to fog it landed here at 7.25 am. Similarly, two flights coming from Delhi, one each from Ahmadabad and Mumbai also arrived one to one and a half hours late

Our Staff Reporter
INDORE

For the second day, the city's Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport remained engulfed in fog in the morning hours. It resulted in a delay of over 10 morning flights by about 2 hours. On the other hand, a flight going from New Delhi

to Surat also landed here this morning due to the fog in Surat.

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than the scheduled time. Due to the delay in the incoming flights, the outgoing flights were also delayed and the passengers had to face trouble. If the officials are to

be believed, the effect of the disrupted schedule in the morning will remain till night.

Officials informed that IndiGo Airlines flight 6E-2272

departs from Delhi at 6.20 am and reaches Surat at 8 am. The flight departed from Delhi on time, but there was dense fog when it reached Surat airport. On this, the Air

Traffic Control (ATC) tower suggested the pilot not to land. While circling in the air for some time, the pilot found that the fuel in the plane was also about to end. In such a situation, the pilot immediately decided to divert the plane toward the city airport.

After getting permission from ATC the flight landed here at 8.32 am. There were 135 passengers in the plane. After reaching Indore, the plane was refuelled and waited for the weather to clear in Surat.

The flight departed at 9.31 am after the weather in Surat got clear.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE HINDU

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

AI cabin crew raise concerns about shared hotel rooms

Jagriti Chandra

NEW DELHI

Air India's announcement that most of its cabin crew must share hotel rooms during layovers has sparked concern over their need for rest and privacy, especially during long-haul flights.

In a mail on Tuesday, the airline said "cabin crew" and "cabin seniors" will be assigned rooms on twin sharing basis and only senior cabin crew such as "cabin managers" and "cabin executives" will be allotted single rooms. The policy will be effective from December 1 for all airlines in the group.

"With the merger of Air India and Vistara formalising, there is a need to harmonise these policies for employees of both the organisations," a spokesperson said in response to a query, adding that these were part of compensation and benefits announced that are "competitive and benchmarked to industry standards".

VISTARA TO GET AI2 FLIGHT NUMBER AFTER MERGER WITH AIR INDIA

Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Passengers will be able to identify Vistara flights even after its merger with Air India at least till March, with all flights operated by the airline on its original to be assigned flight numbers with the prefix "AI2", said a spokesperson.

"Air India and Vistara teams have been working hard for over a year to ensure that the merger of the legal and regulated entities is seamless for both customers and staff. Though the legal entities and Air Operator Certificates will become one on 12 November, the Vistara experience will remain. Vistara aircraft, crew and service will continue to operate as before, but with AI2XXX flight numbers bookable via airindia.com. In parallel, Air India's narrowbody fleet continue to be upgraded with new aircraft being delivered, legacy aircraft being refitted with entirely new interiors and Vistara's catering now also extended to Air India. We look forward to drawing upon the proud legacies and best practices of both airlines as we form a new airline group of which India can be proud," the Air India spokesperson said.

This means a Vistara flight currently called UK123 will, from November 12, be called AI2123.

However, it is not clear if this arrangement will continue even when key operational changes come into effect next year.

Airline officials said though Vistara will cease to exist from November 12, but its aircraft, routes and crew will operate as they do at least till March. "The two airline schedules have been filed separately in the winter schedule that starts from October last week up till March," said an official. "Vistara aircraft will operate to all its original destinations at least till March. It may even be extended up to May," he added.

A second official said that Air India's legacy narrowbody fleet has begun retrofitting from September and is expected to be completed by mid-May.

A VISTARA FLIGHT CURRENTLY CALLED UK123 WILL, FROM NOVEMBER 12, BE CALLED AI2123

New flight duty time rules in works for airline crew

Neha LM Tripathi

neha.tripathi@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: The Union government is working to revise the flight duty time limitations (FDTL) for airline crew, with an aim to make it practical for both the crew and the airlines, two officials close to the development said.

The move comes months after a previous revision of FDTL, which was to come into effect from June 1 this year, had to be withdrawn amid concerns from the industry. Officials cited above said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was reworking to revise the FDTL after industry experts raised concerns over crew fatigue and its impact on flight safety.

"The draft FDTL that was



The proposed norms drafted by the aviation regulator in January had evoked mixed opinions from industry experts.

MINT

introduced in January this year could not be implemented as scrutiny revealed that they were not practical for the industry to implement them," one of the officials said, requesting anonymity. "They were introduced with an aim to de-stress the

crew."

A second official, also declining to be named, said: "The DGCA is re-working on the duty time limitations in a way that it brings in relaxed duty hours for the pilots while not making it challenging for the industry to

execute it."

The proposed norms drafted by the aviation regulator in January had evoked mixed opinions from industry experts, with some calling those much needed for the betterment of crew while others maintaining airlines would find it taxing to enforce them.

Airlines had claimed that the revised norms, which enhanced a pilot's weekly rest period from 36 to 48 hours, would require them to hire around 20% more pilots, thereby increasing the cost for them besides impacting their flight operations.

The draft rules had also redefined the night duty for pilots and brought in restrictions on the number of landings that could be made if a pilot's duty began or continued at night. The number of landings was

brought down to two from the maximum permissible limit of six under regulations during night operations.

DGCA, however, rolled out a copy of the revised Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) on March 26 which postponed the move for an indefinite period.

Commenting on the development at the time, aviation expert Captain Shakti Lumba had alleged that DGCA reversed its stand, "thereby giving precedence to operator commercial interest over flight safety and public safety."

The government's aim, according to a third official, is to transition towards a new Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS), which will be a data-driven approach to enhance monitoring of flight crew fatigue.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN TIMES

MUMBAI

3 OCTOBER 2024

VISTARA TO GET AI2 FLIGHT NUMBER AFTER MERGER WITH AIR INDIA

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{ KEY MYTHS }

Lessons for aviation sector from IndiGo's new financial results

Anjali Bhargava



India's largest private airline declared impressive profits of ₹1,894 crore for the fourth quarter of FY 2024 and for the first quarter of the present financial year, busting two myths that surround the airline business in India while establishing a couple of maxims.

Myth One: Airlines are a loss-making business in India

ModiLufthansa, Damania, East West, MDLR, Paramount, Kingfisher, Sahara, Jet Airways, Go First — by no means is this a comprehensive list — are among the airlines that have run into financial trouble ever since India permitted private airlines to operate.

It is widely believed that running an airline is a bad business, not one to deliver strong returns on investment. This is widely believed globally as well, with many quoting Richard Branson's oft repeated statement: the best way of becoming a millionaire is to start off as a billionaire, and go into the airline industry.

The Center for Asia Pacific Aviation (CAPA), a consultancy

operating in India, has in its reports over the past 15 years been consistently reporting every year's losses and the picture they have recorded over the years is that the airline business in India is mostly a loss making proposition, with red ink all over the books.

And while all of the above is true, the quarter after quarter of profits by the market leader IndiGo have put paid to this constant refrain one hears in India's aviation circles: that the airline business is mostly loss making.

A detailed analysis of IndiGo's performance will debunk this myth. The airline has made profits for much of its 17-year existence (albeit, very small ones in the initial years).

The airline launched flights in August 2006 and as is to be expected made losses in that and subsequent years of flying. In 2009-10, the airline earned a profit of around ₹80 crore and all the way from then to 2019-2020, the airline was profitable. The large losses during and after the pandemic wiped out a large portion of the accumulated profits. In FY 2020-21, the airline recorded a loss of ₹5,500 crore followed by a further loss of ₹5,800-odd crore in FY 2021-22.

Things began to look up in 2022 and the year ended with a small loss of ₹300 crore for the carrier but by March 2023, air travel was back with a bang. India's largest private airline by market share made bumper profits amounting to ₹8,100 crore for the year ended March 2024. The present financial year too is expected to be handsomely profitable.

Against IndiGo's bumper profits, the combined losses of the remaining airlines — Air

India, Vistara, AirAsia India, Air India Express, Akasa, SpiceJet et al — are in excess of ₹11,000 crore (US\$ 1.4 billion by one estimate). Naturally, this leads most to conclude that this is a bad business per se but clearly

the market leader is defying this maxim.

Some analysts disagree, as does this writer, who has tracked the industry for over 25 years: there is nothing wrong with the airline business per se, barring badly run companies and poor management and execution. Although the market leader has its own set of present problems presently, the fact that it is aggressively profitable speaks volumes for the airline business in India. As experts and analysts of the sector argue,



The airline has made profits for much of its 17 years, albeit, very small ones in the initial years. HT PHOTO

many of the players are unable to make profits for reasons that go beyond the general market conditions with poor management being the biggest culprit.

Myth Two: The govt is not doing its bit to help Indian airlines thrive

This also debunks this myth that has been built over the years by a struggling sector. No matter which aviation forum, conference, discussion or meeting one attends or reads about, there is a constant refrain or rather complaint that one hears from the Indian carriers: the government does not provide a level playing field and this is the primary reason why airlines in India have

either shut down or have been making losses consistently.

The performance of at least two airlines in India — the late Jet Airways and IndiGo — proves this is a fallacy.

For a long time and well before the Ukraine war wreaked havoc on oil prices, the industry has been asking that the government bring aviation turbine fuel (ATF) under GST. The sector has been seeking parity for the fuel with petrol and diesel, so that such that the tax rate on ATF is fixed and not ad valorem as at present. Even though international flights are exempt from excise and VAT, they argue that the current regime makes them uncompetitive vis a vis the

global carriers as they typically make losses at home.

But former and present government and ministry of civil aviation officials say that this is only a partial truth. One of the reasons why the government remains quite unmoved by the pleas of the sector is that they are not convinced that the industry is as "loss making or beleaguered" as it claims. These officials believe that most of the airlines that have gone bust in the past have done so more because of mismanagement by the founders/promoters/management, mal-intent or even a hostile operating environment. They point to IndiGo's success to buttress their point. Jet operated in virtually a no competition era so taking its example might not be ideal but IndiGo has amply demonstrated how an airline can make money and build a strong business even when there are reasonably strong competitors.

A senior MOCA official who asked not to be named points to three or four facts observed by them over the years. He argues that in good times, airlines can and do make good money and in a fairly debt-free and easy manner. For one, through sale and lease back, airlines that go in for large aircraft orders and straight away book a large profit

as there is almost a discrepancy of US \$ 5-8 million per aircraft between the price at which the airline buys the plane from the manufacturer and at which it sells to and leases back the asset from the leasing company. If the airline chooses to bring that money back into the company's books, it has a good buffer to begin with as IndiGo did with its very first 100 aircraft order at the time of launch. This is what many argue gave the airline a headstart over others to begin with.

Another reason why government officials say they are not convinced about the sorry plight of airlines is because unlike most other businesses airlines do not need working capital loans as once they open flights for bookings, fares are collected in advance.

Therefore, revenues flow in prior to the service delivery. This is a big advantage which few other businesses offer. Further, debt is usually not a concern for most airlines as aircraft financing is also well established and does not reflect on the airline's liabilities as such. Unlike debt of say infrastructure companies and other similar businesses, there is no real gestation period for the asset (the aircraft) to begin to offer returns. The moment the aircraft begins to fly, it delivers

returns.

Three, most airlines — both in India and globally — earn revenues through ancillary businesses and this can be a significant portion of their total revenues. In other words, as has been demonstrated by airlines such as IndiGo in the past, the business can be profitable and quite remunerative even when the macro environment is not wholly favourable. It is argued that even if the airline loses some money through its core operation of flying, it can in part be made up through other avenues.

The broader question the authorities ask is this: if the airline business is consistently loss making, why would many of the players continue in it since in most cases the sector has seen many pretty shrewd businessmen (the Wadias for instance)? Moreover, why would new entrants like Akasa and others continue to come in and start operations? After the initial losses of starting up are recovered, the entrants clearly expect to chart out a profitable course.

The officials argue that to make a business successful, the founders have to have the right intentions and not look to make quick money or enrich themselves, as has sometimes been the case with some of the airlines that have shut shop.



Corporate Communications Directorate

MINT

DELHI

4 OCTOBER 2024

Govt to revise flight duty time limits to help airline crews

FDTL is being revised after concerns were raised over crew fatigue and flight safety

Neha L.M. Tripathi
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NEW DELHI

The Union government is working to revise the flight duty time limitations (FDTL) for airline crew, with an aim to make it practical for both the crew and the airlines, two officials close to the development said.

The move comes months after a previous revision of FDTL, which was to come into effect from 1 June this year, had to be withdrawn amid concerns from the industry. Officials cited above said the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) was revising the FDTL after industry experts raised concerns over crew fatigue and its impact on flight safety.

"The draft FDTL that was introduced in January this year could not be implemented as scrutiny revealed that they were not practical for the

industry to implement them," one of the officials said, requesting anonymity. "They were introduced with an aim to de-stress the crew."

A second official, also declining to be named, said: "The DGCA is re-working the duty time limitations in a way that it brings in relaxed duty hours for the pilots while not making it challenging for the industry to execute it."

The proposed norms drafted by the aviation regulator in January had evoked mixed opinions from industry experts, with some supporting them saying the changes were much needed for the betterment of the crew, while others said airlines would find it taxing to enforce them.

Airlines had claimed that the revised norms,

which enhanced a pilot's weekly rest period from 36 to 48 hours, would require them to hire around 20% more pilots, thereby increasing the cost for them besides impacting their flight operations.

The draft rules had also redefined the night duty for pilots and brought in restrictions on the number of landings that could be made if a pilot's duty began or continued at night. The number of landings was brought

down to two from the maximum limit of six under regulations during night operations.

DGCA, however, rolled out a copy of the revised Civil Aviation Requirements (CAR) on 26 March which postponed the move for an indefinite period.

The move comes months after a previous revision of FDTL, which was to come into effect from 1 June 2024, had to be withdrawn amid concerns



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

3 OCTOBER 2024

Air India to use 'AI2' prefix for Vistara flights post-merger

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Air India on Wednesday said flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger next month while Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before. The Tata Group-owned full service carrier also emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post merger.

The merger of Vistara -- a joint venture between Tatas and Singapore Airlines -- with Air India is scheduled for November 12 that will mark a major consolidation in the Indian aviation space after the integration of AIX Connect with Air India Express.

There are concerns in certain quarters on whether Vistara passengers will continue to get the same services like now, post merger as Air India, which is in the transformation phase, has been facing certain service issues in recent times.

An Air India spokesperson on Wednesday said the teams of Air India and Vistara have



been working hard for over a year to ensure that the merger of the legal and regulated entities is seamless for both customers and staff.

"Though the legal entities and Air Operator Certificates will become one on 12 November, the Vistara experience will remain.

"Vistara aircraft, crew and service will continue to operate as before, but with AI2XXX flight numbers bookable via airindia.com," the spokesperson said in a statement to PTI.

Air India's airline code is 'AI' and that of Vistara is 'UK'. The latter will fly into the sunset after the merger.

Among other elements, Vistara's catering is being extended to Air India.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

LUCKNOW

3 OCTOBER 2024

Air India updates cabin crew policies, allowances

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Air India is introducing a revised policy for the cabin crew members of domestic and international flights, wherein certain sections of the members will have to share rooms during layovers, according to a source.

The revised policy will also be applicable for Air India Express, which has merged AIX Connect with itself.

Among other changes, the source in the know said the allowances for cabin crew of international flights will be increased from USD 75-125 bracket to USD 85-135 bracket.

There is no change in the allowances for the cabin crew of domestic flights.

An airline spokesperson said that with the merger of Air India and Vistara formalising, there is a need to



harmonise these policies for employees of both the organisations.

"As part of that exercise, we have communicated the changes applicable to Air India employees. The revised compensation and benefits

continue to be competitive and benchmarked to industry standards," the spokesperson told PTI in a statement.

Under the revised policy, cabin crew members, excluding in-flight managers

and executives, will have to share rooms during layovers, the source said.

In-flight managers and executives are generally senior people with at least 8-9 years of experience.

While room sharing for

cabin crew is already there at Air India Express and Vistara, this will be the first time such a practice will be introduced at the Tata Group-owned loss-making Air India.

The changes in the policy also comes against the backdrop of a section of Air India Express cabin crew members seeking redressal of their HR issues under the labour law. The case is in progress before the Central Labour Commissioner.

Meanwhile, the Air India spokesperson also mentioned about the airline introducing a performance-linked compensation and benefits policy for all employees in April 2023.

The merger of AIX Connect with Air India Express was completed on October 1 while the integration of Vistara with Air India will be completed next month.



Corporate Communications Directorate

RASHTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

4 OCTOBER 2024

एसबीआई कार्ड का करार

नई दिल्ली। सिंगापुर की राष्ट्रीय एयरलाइंस सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस लिमिटेड के साथ एसबीआई कार्ड ने क्रिसप्लायर एसबीआई कार्ड लॉन्च किया। एसबीआई कार्ड के एमडी और सीईओ अभिजीत चक्रवर्ती ने कहा कि इस अनूठे यात्रा केंद्रित सह-ब्रांडेड क्रेडिट कार्ड को सुपर-प्रीमियम कार्डधारकों की जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए डिज़ाइन किया गया है जिसका लाभ ग्राहकों को हवाईयात्रा और जमीनी यात्रा दोनों पर प्राप्त होगा। एसआईए के इस समूह में सिंगापुर एयरलाइंस, स्कूट एयरलाइन, क्रिसशॉप डॉट कॉम, क्रिस प्लस लाइफस्टाइल ऐप और पेलेगो शामिल हैं। नए लॉन्च किए गए क्रेडिट कार्ड दो रूपों क्रिसप्लायर एसबीआई कार्ड और क्रिसप्लायर एपेक्स में उपलब्ध होगा।

ईरान ने बंद किया अपना एयर स्पेस

भारत ने जारी की एडवाइजरी

तेहरान। इजरायल पर हमले के बाद अब ईरान में खौफ का माहौल है। ईरान ने अपने हवाई क्षेत्र को बंद करने का एलान किया है। इसी के साथ सभी फ्लाइट्स को भी रद्द कर दिया गया है। ईरान की तस्लीम समाचार एजेंसी के मुताबिक ईरान ने सभी उड़ानों को स्थानीय समयानुसार गुरुवार सुबह पांच बजे तक रद्द करने की घोषणा की है। मंगलवार की रात ईरान ने इजरायल पर 181 बैलेस्टिक मिसाइलों से हमला किया था। इस दौरान इजरायल ने अपने हवाई क्षेत्र को एक घंटे और बेन गुरियन हवाई अड्डे को कुछ समय के लिए बंद किया था। समाचार एजेंसी सिन्हुआ की रिपोर्ट के मुताबिक सुरक्षा कारणों से जॉर्डन और इराक ने भी अपने हवाई क्षेत्र को अस्थायी रूप से बंद करने



का फैसला किया है। सभी उड़ानों को अगले आदेश तक निलंबित किया गया है। भारतीय विदेश मंत्रालय ने ईरान में रहने वाले अपने नागरिकों के लिए एडवाइजरी जारी की है। विदेश मंत्रालय ने कहा कि ईरान में रहने वाले भारतीय सतर्क रहें। मंत्रालय ने लोगों को ईरान की यात्रा न करने की सलाह भी दी। वहीं तेहरान स्थित भारतीय दूतावास के संपर्क में रहने को कहा है। ईरान ने इजरायल पर ताजे हमले को

हमास और हिजबुल्लाह के खिलाफ की गई कार्रवाई का बदला बताया है। 27 सितंबर को इजरायल ने लेबनान की राजधानी बेरूत में हिजबुल्लाह के सरगना नसरल्लाह को मारा था। इससे पहले ईरान की राजधानी तेहरान में हमास प्रमुख इस्माइल हानिया को ढेर किया था। मंगलवार से पहले ईरान ने अप्रैल महीने में इजरायल पर 200 से अधिक ड्रोन और मिसाइलों से हमला किया था।



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

DELHI

3 OCTOBER 2024

Vistara experience to remain, flights will have 'AI2' prefix: Air India



STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, 2 OCTOBER

Ahead of the merger, Air India said Vistara experience will remain, and the flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2'.

Vistara's planes, crew and service will continue to operate as before.

After the merger next month, the Tata Group-owned full service carrier also emphasised that the Vistara experience will remain post merger.

Air India said the teams of Air India and Vistara have been working hard for over a year to ensure that the merger of the legal and regulated entities is seamless for both customers and staff.

Though the legal entities and Air Operator Certificates will become one on 12 November, the Vistara expe-

rience will remain."

Vistara, a joint venture between Tata and Singapore Airlines, is set to be merged with Air India in November. The process for the merger of the two full service carriers, announced in November 2022, is in progress.

This merger is part of Tata Group's larger strategy to strengthen its presence in the aviation sector.

By merging Air India and Vistara, Tata intends to create a more competitive airline capable of serving both domestic and international travelers effectively.

In July, Air India had said it had completed harmonising operating procedures across key functions for the four Tata Group airlines as a crucial step towards the merger.

Vistara is a joint venture between Tata Group (51%) and Singapore Airlines (49%).



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

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Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

3 OCTOBER 2024

Two pilots and engineer perish as chopper crashes in Pune; DGCA to probe

AGENCIES

PUNE, 2 OCTOBER

At least three persons including two pilots and an aircraft engineer were killed after a helicopter of Heritage Aviation, New Delhi, flying over the Bavdhan area, crashed in the hilly terrain, officials said on Wednesday.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a probe into the tragedy that left Capt Paramjit Singh and Capt G. K. Pillai, besides an aircraft maintenance engineer Pritamchand Bharadwaj, dead this morning in the chopper crash near Bavdhan.

According to officials the chopper, an Agusta 109-VT-EW, had taken off from the Oxford Golf Club in Pune for a flight to Juhu Airport in Mumbai, at around 7.15 a.m. without passengers on board.

En route, barely 20 kms away and some four to five



minutes after the take-off, the chopper suddenly crashed at around 7.20 a.m. near the HEMRL-DRDO factory, said a police officer speaking from the site of the tragedy near Bavdhan.

Videos of the incident shot by some locals showed the helicopter apparently losing control and plunging almost headlong into a forested hilly region before going up in smoke. Despite repeated attempts by a news agency, officials of Heritage Aviation remained tight-lipped about the tragedy and stonewalled all questions on the victims and the possible causes of the tragedy.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

3 OCTOBER 2024

Vistara code

■ **NEW DELHI:** Air India on Wednesday said flights operated with Vistara aircraft will have numbers starting with the prefix 'AI2' after the merger next month. The flights can be booked from Air India's website. [rn](#)

IndiGo's Gangwal buys \$100mn stake in Southwest

New York: Rakesh Gangwal, who co-founded IndiGo, purchased 3.6 million shares of Southwest on Sept 30 and Oct 1 according to SEC filings. He paid between \$29 and \$30 a share — taking the investment value to over \$100 million. Gangwal said he made the purchases as soon as the so-called trading window — when directors and other insiders are permitted to buy and sell the stock — opened.



Southwest put Gangwal on the board in July as activist investor Elliott Investment Management increased pressure on the carrier, demanding leadership and strategy changes to improve financial performance. The company announced a board overhaul and other changes last month.

Last month, Southwest said executive chairman Gary Kelly will step down and six other directors will retire from its 15-member board. Elliott has held firm to demands for more changes in the top ranks, including the ouster of CEO Bob Jordan. Last week, it said it plans to request a special shareholder meeting to press for those changes.

Gangwal told Reuters on Wednesday that more upheaval in the executive suite and boardroom would hurt shareholders. REUTERS

How AI is changing airline & hotel businesses, our travel experiences

Sabre's India centre is driving many of these innovations

Akhil George & Sujit Jahn | TII

We got an opportunity recently to sit with Kurt Ekert, CEO of Sabre, and his senior-most technology leaders – Garry Wiseman, chief product & technology officer, and Joe DiFonzo, CIO, Sabre, alongside Amadeus and Travelport, is a leading technology provider to the global travel industry. Cloud and AI are now dramatically transforming this business, including travel experiences. And Sabre's Bengaluru development centre, home to about 1,200 employees, has evolved from a customer care centre to a powerhouse of innovation.

"This centre is key to what we want to do strategically," Kurt tells us.

Sabre's AI ambitions span the entire travel journey – from an airline dynamically pricing seats using machine learning, to a hotel using genAI-based chatbots for customer service.

In airline revenue management, the results are already stark. Sabre's product that allows airlines to dynamically price seats using machine learning and multivariate testing, has raised airline revenues by up to 3%. "This is significant when you think about the margins on airline tickets," Kurt says.

Earlier, pricing changes were based on set rules. Now, Garry says, machine learning understands how often people are searching for a particular ticket, how often people are buying it, etc, and updates prices far more regularly. "The manipulation of data through AI is getting to an exponentially different level," he says.

Hotels are benefiting too. One of Sabre's platforms uses AI to optimise hotel revenue, while another automates customer ser-



Sabre's techies in India with CEO Kurt Ekert

AI IS FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGING HOW CONSUMERS BUY TRAVEL

Bengaluru is one of the most strategically important centres for Sabre globally. It's an epicentre for our technology, product, and software engineering. The way consumers research and buy travel is fundamentally changing, with machine learning and AI as the pivot point. We've developed a retail intelligence suite infused with Google's Gemini AI technologies. This allows us to create real-time offers by analysing vast amounts of data, giving airlines and travel agencies a powerful toolkit to engage with consumers in a much more dynamic way.

Kurt Ekert | PRESIDENT AND CEO

Our Multi-source Content Platform integrates various forms of travel content into a single, unified system. It's like the evolution from cable TV to streaming for the travel industry. When you go through a traditional airline channel, you only see their offers. But through our platform, you can see all airlines' offers together, regardless of whether they come from traditional channels, NDC (new distribution capability), or even bespoke channels. It gives customers a comprehensive view and allows them to choose whatever they like.

Garry Wiseman | CHIEF PRODUCT & TECHNOLOGY OFFICER

We now have over a thousand developers using generative AI tools to help write software every day. We're using these tools to help us operate the business and manage the web of complex systems. It helps us identify faults quickly in our network and fix them. This is all enabled by our cloud migration – we've essentially moved more than 99% of our compute to the cloud environment. We couldn't have developed these capabilities internally or operated them in our old data centres.

Joe DiFonzo | CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER



(L-R) Joe DiFonzo, Kurt Ekert, Garry Wiseman in Bengaluru

vice. "We've seen two things – massive productivity improvement in our customer care opera-

tion, and an improvement in customer satisfaction scores," says Kurt.

Another AI tool helps corporate travellers understand the carbon footprint of their flights

and hotels. This helps particularly when a company has carbon emission targets to fulfil. Yet another uses vast amounts of data to predict which flights are more likely to be cancelled or delayed. "That can feed into online travel agencies, so that when an agent is going to book for a customer, they can give them a warning like, 'Would you rather have this flight instead?' Because this flight has some probability of being delayed?," says Garry.

The company is also using genAI tools internally to boost developer productivity. Joe says they now have over a thousand developers using these tools to help write software every day. "We're using these tools to help us operate the business and manage the web of complex systems. It helps us identify faults quickly in our network and fix them," he says.

India's central role

A lot of this work is happening in the Bengaluru development centre. "There's just an infusion of really excited young engineers that want to make a difference," Kurt says about the centre.

One of the centre's key projects is the development of Sabre Mosaic, a cloud-native, open-architecture platform that Kurt describes as "AI-infused." This platform aims to revolutionise how airlines manage their operations, from sales and reservations to airport logistics.

A robust internship programme acts as a talent pipeline for the centre, with over 100 interns joining each year from top engineering colleges. Kurt notes that the diversity is incredible – "In this year's group of interns, it was 50:50 male and female."

As Sabre looks to the future, Kurt is clear that the India centre will play an increasingly pivotal role. "We have leadership, both in technology operations and in software engineering here. In fact, our software engineering leader here runs half of our software engineers around the world."