

IGI Airport: a hotspot for touts to fleece tourists, headache for Delhi Police

Arnabjit Sur
NEW DELHI

On September 16, Matthias van Stee, a Dutch national, landed at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport here on a trip to the national capital and parts of Rajasthan.

However, his travel was cut short when a tout he met outside the airport led him to several travel agencies and hotels that duped him of over ₹20,000, forcing him to leave for home a few days later.

According to a mail he wrote to Delhi Police before flying back, Mr. Van Stee was approached by a person at the airport's pre-paid taxi booth. The man offered him a ride to a hostel for just ₹200. Over the next few hours, he was offered low-cost hotel rooms and cheap travel fares, which Mr. Van Stee accepted, only to realise later that he had been duped.

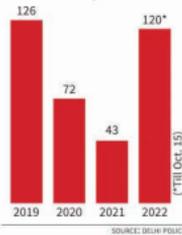
On October 5, he sent another email to the Delhi Police Commissioner, asking that the money he lost be returned and that strict action be taken against the accused. An officer said they were trying to get in touch with him for more details about the case.

Modus operandi

Mr. Van Stee is among the hundreds of people who have been conned at the IGI Airport by touts this year.

According to the police, the touts lure their victims on the pretext of cheap cab rides and hotel rooms in connivance with pre-paid taxi drivers and hoteliers, all of whom share the money fleeced from the victim.

Touting cases at IGI Airport



Explaining the modus operandi, a senior officer said: "Once passengers start walking out of the terminal, the touts target them, claiming to represent pre-paid taxi services with offers to take them to their destination for a cheap fare. During the ride, the accused mislead their victims by claiming to know cheaper hotels and tour operators offering better packages. The tourist is often lured by the offer and ends up being cheated."

'Lack of paper trail'

"Due to the lack of a paper trail, it is difficult to trace all the persons who are part of the network. But a lot of hotels in Paharganj and nearby areas are involved," a senior officer said.

While foreign tourists are more gullible, around 80% of victims are domestic travellers as most foreign tourists now pre-book their hotels and taxi services online from trusted travel companies, the officer added.

Another policeman said most foreign tourists who are duped send emails detailing their ordeal, not

wanting to go through the legal process of filing a complaint in India.

Nab touts 'red-handed'

Of all such cheating cases involving touts in the city's 18 districts till October 15, most of the cases – 120 – were reported from the airport. The accused in such cases are booked under the Delhi Prevention of Touting and Malpractices against Tourists Act, 2010, which attracts a maximum punishment of one-year imprisonment or a fine of up to ₹10,000 or both.

To catch the suspects red-handed, policemen masquerading as tourists are deployed at the airport.

So far, the police have identified eight touts as habitual offenders. "We may write to the Delhi Transport Department requesting them to cancel the registration of cars of these touts. It is a bailable offence and the accused return to this racket after getting bail," said another officer.

An official at Delhi International Airport Limited said CCTV cameras are fixed at the arrival gates to catch these touts in action on video. "Whenever we notice such activities, we inform the police."

DCP (IGI Airport) Ravi Kumar Singh said efforts were under way to restrict touts from entering airport premises and verify the credentials of pre-paid taxi drivers.

"We inform passengers not to fall for cheap offers made by such fraudsters and train our officers to identify and prosecute any person indulging in any illegal activity," he added.

'Hisar int'l airport's runway to be functional soon'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH: The construction of the runway at Hisar International Airport is almost complete and a large aircraft will soon be landed on the runway for trial.

Along with the speedy construction of Hisar airport, the government is working on a special plan to make Hisar the biggest manufacturing cluster of Haryana. This information was given by Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala.

He said that with the construction of Maharaja Agrasen International Airport in Hisar, new avenues for development will emerge, and both the city's residents and the state will benefit enormously from this airport.

Dushyant Chautala said that the runway work of Hisar airport will be completed by March 2023. He said that on December 12, a trial run of a big aircraft will be taken on the runway of the airport.

Chautala said that he himself will come in an 18-seater Dornier aircraft to Hisar along with officers of the aviation department and concerned departments to inspect the runway.

Along with this, technical aspects will be discussed in detail in the direction of starting air services from other states from Hisar Airport. He said that he is frequently reviewing the work from time to time to ensure that all the works are completed on the stipulated time frame.

हिसार एयरपोर्ट पर जल्द उतरेगा बड़ा एरोप्लेन, स्लैब का निर्माण लगभग पूरा : दुष्यंत चौटाला

चंडीगढ़, 3 दिसम्बर (ब्यूरो) : हिसार इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर स्लैब के निर्माण का कार्य लगभग पूरा हो चुका है और ट्रायल के लिए जल्द ही स्लैब पर बड़ा हवाई जहाज उतारा जाएगा। हिसार हवाई अड्डे का तेजी से निर्माण करने के साथ-साथ हिसार को हरियाणा के सबसे बड़े मैन्यूफैक्चरिंग कालस्ट्रक्चर के तौर पर तैयार किया जाए, इसके लिए सरकार द्वारा विशेष योजना पर कार्य हो रहा है। यह जानकारी प्रदेश के उपमुख्यमंत्री दुष्यंत चौटाला ने दी।



उन्होंने कहा कि हिसार में महागंगा अभियान इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट बनने से हिसार में उन्नति के नए द्वार खुलेंगे और हिसार के साथ-साथ प्रदेश के लोगों को इसका पूरा लाभ मिलेगा। हिसार एयरपोर्ट के स्लैब का काम मार्च 2023 तक पूरा हो जाएगा। इस 12 दिसम्बर को ही हवाई अड्डे के स्लैब पर एक बड़े जहाज का ट्रायल लिया जाएगा।

वे खुद एग्रीकल्चर विभाग और संबंधित विभाग के अधिकारियों के साथ हिसार में 18 सीटों वाले बोयिंगर जहाज में आरोरी और स्लैब का निरीक्षण करेंगे। साथ ही हिसार एयरपोर्ट से अन्य रुत्यों से हवाई सेवाएं शुरू करने की दिशा में तकनीकी पहलुओं पर विस्तार से चर्चा की जाएगी। उन्होंने कहा कि एयरपोर्ट से संबंधित सभी कार्य समय पर पूरे हों, इसके लिए वे समय-समय पर समीक्षा कर रहे हैं।

Kochi's luxe business jet terminal is ready for ops

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Flying to and from Kochi in a chartered or business jet will get a lot more luxurious from this month after Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan launches Kochi airport's dedicated Business Jet Terminal – the largest of its kind in the country – on December 10. The terminal will be operational before the Indian Premier League (IPL) auction in Kochi on December 23.

The luxe experience will begin the moment you drive up to the new terminal. "The main highlight of the terminal is that it ensures the shortest distance from car to aircraft," Cochin International Airport Limited (CIAL) managing director S Suhas told TOL. "The distance from car porch to airside is less than 100m, and a passenger can cover it in two minutes after completing all security and immigration formalities. There will be chauffeur-driven luxury cars for the movement of passengers to and from the aircraft."

The new terminal, which will cater to both domestic and international private jets, resembles a seven-star hotel lobby with five spacious and opulent lounges offering plush seating, private dining areas, meeting rooms, etc. It is also the first private jet terminal in India to offer safe houses in 10,000 sqft, with dedicated entry points from the airside for security-privileged passengers. Delhi, Mumbai and Ahmedabad are the only other Indian airports with dedicated private jet terminals.

Ready For The Good Times

CIAL built the 40,000 sq-ft business jet terminal in just 10 months at a cost of Rs 30 crore. It occupies the departure portion of the 1 lakh sq-ft old domestic terminal T-2, that had not been used since domestic operations were shifted to the new Terminal 1 in 2019.

The launch of the business jet terminal is well-



FLYING IN STYLE: Kochi's Business Jet Terminal will be the largest of its kind in India and will feature lounges, private dining and meeting areas

timed as Kerala's aviation sector has registered 74.9% growth in 2021-22, compared with 2020-21. CIAL has already overcome the economic impact of the pandemic by logging a profit of Rs 37.7 crore in FY 2021-22. Its air

traffic is at 85% of pre-pandemic levels, and with reports saying Kochi could be the venue of the 2023 G20 summit and other major events, business jet operations to the city are likely to grow tremendously.

Suhas said the business jet terminal will be a gateway for promoting 'brand Kerala', especially when Kochi has become a hot venue for international events and conferences.

INDIA'S MOST LUXURIOUS TERMINAL

► Kochi airport is the world's first fully solar-powered airport and India's fourth busiest airport in the international sector. Its dedicated business jet terminal will offer 7-star luxury

► It has five spacious and opulent lounges – Ginger, Cardamom, Tamarind, Cinnamon and Pepper – with concierge services

► Each lounge has plush seating, private dining areas, meeting rooms, video conference facilities, shower rooms, prayer hall, etc

► On the functional side, the terminal offers queue-less CIQ (customs, immigration, quarantine), easy access to the jets, parking for private jets and cars, etc

► There's a dedicated duty-free shop and a foreign exchange counter inside the terminal. A bar will be launched soon

► The car porch is less than 100m from the airside. Luxury cars will be available to ferry passengers to and from the aircraft

First Charter Gateway

The Kochi business jet terminal will be India's first 'charter gateway'. Explaining the concept, Suhas said a charter gateway terminal serves as a platform to integrate business jet services, tourism, business conferences and the movement of high-net-worth individuals. "It's a concept that will revolutionise the chartered flight sector in India." CIAL has kept its terminal tariffs, including aircraft landing and parking charges, low to make chartered flying more affordable and tap the potential in the private jet sector.

"Per AAI statistics, Kerala, with its four airports, served more passengers than Mumbai in 2021-22. There is a huge potential for private jets – be it for tourism, destination weddings, business meets and conferences. Within a year CIAL witnessed operations of over 1,000 business jets. It will increase in the coming years and we wish to be ready for meeting their requirements," Suhas said.

Hisar airport to be ready by March

CHANDIGARH, DECEMBER 3

The construction of the runway at Hisar airport is almost complete. A big aircraft will soon be landing on the runway for trial. This information was given by Deputy Chief Minister (CM) Dushyant Chautala today. He said with the construction of Maharaja Agrasen International Airport in Hisar, new avenues for development would open.

He added that the runway work of the Hisar airport would be completed by March 2023. He said on December 12, a trial run of a big aircraft would be held on the airport's runway.

Dushyant said he would come in an 18-seater Dornier aircraft at Hisar with officials to inspect the runway. — TNS

AMAR UJALA

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

विमानन सुरक्षा में 54 पायदान चढ़ा भारत

नई दिल्ली। अंतरराष्ट्रीय नागर विमानन संगठन (आईसीएओ) की वैश्विक विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में 54 पायदान तरक्की के साथ भारत 48वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है। डीजीसीए अधिकारियों ने शनिवार को यह जानकारी दी। चार साल पहले भारत 102वें स्थान पर था। अधिकारियों ने कहा कि जारी रैंकिंग में सिंगापुर शीर्ष पर है, जबकि संयुक्त अरब अमीरात और दक्षिण कोरिया दूसरे और तीसरे स्थान पर हैं। इस रैंकिंग में चीन 49वें स्थान पर है। अधिकारियों के मुताबिक, कोऑर्डिनेटेड सैलिडेशन मिशन 9 से 16 नवंबर तक चलाया गया था। डीजीसीए प्रमुख अरुण कुमार ने कहा कि भारत की सुरक्षा रैंकिंग को

सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में 102 से 48वें स्थान पर पहुंचा



क्या है आईसीएओ इंटरनेशनल सिविल एविएशन ऑर्गेनाइजेशन संयुक्त राष्ट्र की एक स्पेशल एजेंसी है, इसका प्रमुख उद्देश्य अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हवाई परिवहन को योजना एवं विकास को बढ़ावा देना है ताकि दुनिया भर में अंतर्राष्ट्रीय नागरिक विमानन को सुरक्षित तथा व्यवस्थित वृद्धि सुनिश्चित हो सके।

चीन से बेहतर है भारत का प्रदर्शन-आईसीएओ के शीर्ष अधिकारियों का कहना है कि 2018 में भारत का स्कोर 69.95% था, जिसे देखा अंदाजा लगाया जा सकता है कि भारत ने कितने बेहतर किया है। यहाँ, नेपाल (101वां स्थान), पाकिस्तान (100वां स्थान), बंगलादेश को (94वां स्थान) स्थान मिला है। स्विट्जरलैंड ही नहीं, भारत का स्कोर चीन (49), इराक (50), तुर्की (54), डेन्मार्क (55) और पोलैंड (60) जैसे देशों से भी बेहतर है।

उन्नत करने का काफी प्रयास किया गया और परिणाम सामने हैं। आगे भी सुधार करेंगे। अधिकारियों ने 85.49 प्रतिशत हो गया है। एजेंसी

कहा कि प्रमुख सुरक्षा तत्वों के मामले में देश का स्कोर सुधार कर

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में भारत 48वें स्थान पर

नई दिल्ली: अन्तरराष्ट्रीय नागर विमानन संगठन (आइसीएओ) की वैश्विक विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में भारत तेज उछाल के साथ 48वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है। नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) ने बताया कि चार वर्ष पहले भारत इस रैंकिंग में 102वें स्थान पर था। इस रैंकिंग में सिंगापुर पहले स्थान पर है। इसके बाद यूएई और दक्षिण कोरिया का नंबर है। चीन इस रैंकिंग में 49वें स्थान पर रहा है। (भद्र)



Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN HERALD

BANGALORE

03.12.2022

Air India resumes B'luru-San Francisco direct flights

BENGALURU, DHNS: Air India on Friday resumed the operation of its non-stop flights between Bengaluru and San Francisco.

The flight will operate thrice a week on Friday, Sunday, and Wednesday with the Boeing 777-200LR aircraft.

The first flight AI 175 left

Bengaluru on Friday and the first return flight AI 176 left San Francisco at 9 pm (LT) on Friday.

The distance between Bengaluru and San Francisco is approximately 13,993 km and the cities are at diametrically opposite ends of the world with a time zone change of approx-

imately 13-and-a-half hours.

The total flight time on this route will be more than 17 hours depending on the wind speed on that particular day.

With the resumption of the flight, Air India's India-US frequency has gone up to 37 non-stop flights per week.

SpiceJet flight makes emergency landing at Kochi

KOCHI, PTI: A SpiceJet flight from Jeddah bound for Kozhikode with 197 passengers, including six crew, onboard had an emergency landing at the Cochin International Airport Limited on Friday evening following hydraulic failure, an airport spokesperson said here.

An emergency was declared in the airport at 6.29 pm after the SpiceJet-SG 036 flight, which was scheduled to land at Kozhikode airport, was diverted to Kochi, he said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में भारत 48वें स्थान पर

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INDIA PLACED HIGHER THAN MANY OECD COUNTRIES

UN Aviation Body Upgrades India's Air Safety Score

ICAO'S move to
make overseas
expansion easier
for Indian airlines

Arindam Majumder
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New Delhi: The United Nations' aviation watchdog, International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), has upgraded India's score in aviation safety, a development which will make overseas expansion easier for Indian airlines as they will be able to get permissions and forge commercial arrangements more swiftly.

Following an audit by the watchdog last month, India's effective implementation score now stands at 85.49% compared to 72.93 after the 2018 audit, placing India higher than many OECD countries such as China, Israel, Turkey, Poland and Denmark.

The audit, Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme, seeks to identify whether countries have effectively and consistently implemented



practices in aviation safety. The audit was conducted in the areas of legislation, organisation, personnel licensing, operations, airworthiness and aerodromes. As part of the audit, low-cost airlines like SpiceJet, and Delhi Airport, were audited by the ICAO team to check on-ground implementation.

"India has done extremely well in all respects which has resulted in substantial improvement of our scores, putting us in the company of nations with best safety standards and oversight systems," Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) head Arun Kumar told ET. "DGCA is a team of highly committed officials, who work tirelessly to improve aviation safety. Happy to note that it is acknowledged. The challenge is to maintain the newfound status."

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL

MUMBAI

03.12.2022

Air India first batch of cabin crew graduates

Air India on Friday announced that its maiden batch of cabin crew trainees and significant batch of new pilots since privatisation have graduated. The batch of 215 cabin crew and 48 pilots, all Indian nationals, received their wings following extensive training, and are now cleared to operate as fully-qualified crew.

Civil aviation ministry notifies guidelines for drone PLI scheme

PTI / New Delhi

The civil aviation ministry has notified the operational guidelines for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for drones and drone components.

The government has approved the PLI scheme with an outlay of Rs 120 crore and the scheme is to be implemented during the 2022-23 to 2024-25 period.

In a communication dated November 29, the ministry said the guidelines have been finalised after consultations with stakeholders, including industry representatives.

The PLI will be extended only to companies engaged in the manufacturing of drones and drone components in India.

The total PLI per manufacturer is capped at Rs 30 crore which is 25 per cent of the total financial outlay of Rs 120 crore.

Indian MSMEs and startups manufacturing drones and having annual sales turnover of Rs 2 crore will be eligible for the scheme. In the case of drone component makers, the eligibility threshold will be Rs 0.5 crore.

For Indian non-MSMEs that are into making drones, the annual sales



turnover requirement will be Rs 4 crore for claiming the PLIs. The minimum level will be Rs 1 crore in the case of non-MSME drone component makers, as per the ministry.

Subject to the norms, developers of software for drones and drone components will also be eligible for PLI.

Excess incentive paid to any applicant (due to any reason like sales return in the subsequent year or some other reason) will be adjusted in the incentives payable in the next year(s).

If there are no incentives payable in the next year(s), the applicant has to return the incentive along with interest calculated at 3 years SBI MCLR prevailing on the date of disbursement, compounded annually for the number of days of holding the excess incentive,' the ministry said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDUSTAN

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

विमानन सुरक्षा में भारत 48वें स्थान पर

नई दिल्ली। अंतरराष्ट्रीय नगर विमानन समूह (आईसीएओ) की वैश्विक विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में भारत 48वें स्थान पर पहुंच गया है। चार साल पहले देश 102वें स्थान पर था। डीजीसीए ने कहा कि रैंकिंग में सिंगापुर शीर्ष पर है, उसके बाद यूएई और दक्षिण कोरिया का स्थान है।

IndiGo digitises pilot logs, will help flag pilot fatigue issue

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Low-cost carrier IndiGo has become the first Indian airline to implement the 'Digital E-logbook' for its pilots, which will provide a direct flight data transfer from IndiGo systems to regulator DGCA's digital governance initiative, eGCA. This will bring in transparency in operational logs and improve safety and efficiency.

The carrier, which operates over half of India's domestic flights, began implementing the initiative from December 1. "We are proud to partner with DGCA in this leap towards digitalisation in Indian aviation," said Captain Ashim Mitra, Senior Vice-President, Flight Operations, IndiGo.

The automated process will ensure that the flying hours entered in the eGCA e-logbook have consistency in data and format for all stakeholders. It will also offer real-time availability of flying hours data for pilots in compliance with air-

craft rules, and timely issuance of pilot licences and renewals by removing duplication of manual processes.

The more important aspect of the digital e-logbook concerns pilot safety and the problem of pilot fatigue.

Pilots have repeatedly complained of airlines stretching their duty hours across time zones, ignoring the fatigue factor which can endanger pilot and passenger safety.

They have accused airlines of covering up safety information by cooking log books containing duty hours, and also accused the regulator of being lenient towards airlines violating the mandated regime of Flight Duty Time Limitations.

Capt Mohan Ranganathan, Chennai-based aviation safety consultant, told HT that the digital e-logbook was a very good move. Asked if it would help bring up the issue of pilot fatigue transparently and compel the authorities to address it, Ranganathan said it would, provided things were programmed

genuinely. "Any programme can be manipulated," he said. "IndiGo claims that it logs everything electronically. All simulators too have an e-log but we have seen several cases of fudging of data. Ideally, they should give pilots electronic swipe cards for an electronic record of duty hours."

The eGCA section was created by DGCA last year exclusively for pilots. Earlier, for issuing a pilot licence, the pilot had to interact with three directorates in DGCA, all of whom verified pilot records.

Each had a different process and there was no common platform linking the three, so pilots had to approach all separately with the same set of documents. Similarly, for issuing an Air Operator Certificate, the basic certificate required for an airline to fly, the latter had to deal with multiple directorates with the same set of documents. All these processes have now been integrated into a single digital window, eliminating delays and duplication of information.

Civil aviation min notifies guidelines for drone PLI scheme

Press Trust of India

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NEW DELHI: The civil aviation ministry has notified the operational guidelines for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for drones and drone components. The government has approved the PLI scheme with an outlay of ₹120 crore and the scheme is to be implemented during the 2022-23 to

2024-25 period.

In a communication dated November 29, the ministry said the guidelines have been finalised after consultations with stakeholders, including industry representatives.

The PLI will be extended only to companies engaged in the manufacturing of drones and drone components in India.

The total PLI per manufacturer is capped at ₹30 crore

which is 25% of the total financial outlay of ₹120 crore.

Indian MSMEs and startups manufacturing drones and having annual sales turnover of ₹2 crore will be eligible for the scheme. In the case of drone component makers, the eligibility threshold will be ₹0.5 crore.

For Indian non-MSMEs that are into making drones, the annual sales turnover requirement will be ₹4 crore for claim-

ing the PLIs. The minimum level will be ₹1 crore in the case of non-MSME drone component makers, as per the ministry.

Subject to the norms, developers of software for drones and drone components will also be eligible for PLI.

Excess incentive paid to any applicant (due to any reason like sales return in the subsequent year or some other reason) will be adjusted in the

incentives payable in the next year(s). If there are no incentives payable in the next year(s), the applicant has to return the incentive along with interest calculated at 3 years SBI MCLR prevailing on the date of disbursement, compounded annually, for the number of days of holding the excess incentive," the ministry said.

The Project Management Agency (PMA) appointed by the

ministry will appraise the applications. A committee chaired by the civil aviation secretary will consider the applications as recommended by the PMA.

Further, an Empowered Group of Secretaries, chaired by the Cabinet Secretary, will monitor the scheme and take appropriate action to ensure that the expenditure is within the prescribed outlay as approved by the Union Cabinet.

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE INDIAN EXPRESS

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

A LOT IS RIDING ON THIS MERGER STRATEGY, NOT JUST TATA GROUP BUT FOR INDIAN AVIATION

New Air India Light Path

Vistara's short legacy may help give wings to Air India to rekindle its lost glory

MIHIRMISHRA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3

"The genesis of Vistara goes back to years of 1932 and 1947, when Tata Airlines and Malayan Airways each respectively entered the aviation space. Their journeys have converged, leading to the formation of Vistara," the cover page article of Vistara's first flight magazine published in January 2015 announced. The magazine cover had two aaps—one had PDI's SIA image and the other had a Singapore Airlines' cabin crew member at it, which opened to the picture of a gleaming new Vistara aircraft.

In 2015, Vistara was not just seen as an airline venture of the Tata Group. It was an attempt by the diversified Tata Group to create a product, in partnership with Singapore International Airlines, that carried forward the legacy of IRI Tata Vistara, the name that came from a Sanskrit word Vistara meaning limitless expanse, was living up to its name and rapidly expanding itself.

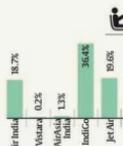
The Tata Group won the bid to kick the Indian government's 100% state in Air India last year. The promoters had put in about Rs.400 crore in Vistara in 2015. The government, after more than one deadline extension and in its second disinvestment attempt, was successfully able to sell the state-owned airline to the Tata Group, which paid Rs.18,000 crore, including Rs.2,700 crore as cash payment, to the government. The airline was formally transferred to the group in January this year.

For the Tata Group, this acquisition was projected as a homecoming of sorts and Air India was chosen as the merger partner. It will carry forward the JRD legacy—JRD was the founder of Tata Airlines that was later renamed Air India and he flew the first Tata Airlines flight from Karachi and Mumbai via Ahmedabad to London on October 1932. From there on, it was clear that Vistara's days may be numbered, as a merger with Air India was seen as a foregone conclusion.

With the November 30 announcement of SIA getting 25.1 per cent in Air India, the combined group will embark on a journey that would eventually lead to a



JANUARY 2015
VISTARA'S FIRST FLIGHT



OCTOBER 2022
VISTARA MERGER ANNOUNCED IN NOV



NEW AIR INDIA

- Tata Group acquires 100% stake in Air India in 2022 from government
- Group now has Air India, Air India Express, Aurisa India & Vistara
- Vistara to merge with Air India, Air India to merge

VISTARA

- Merge of Air India Express/Aurisa India likely to conclude by next year
- Merge of Vistara/Air India likely to conclude by March 2024

NEW AIR INDIA

- TATA SONS: 51%
- SIA: 25.1%
- TATA SONS & SIA: 76.1%

airlines drinking to—Air India and Vistara as Air India and Air India Express and Aurisa India as a low-fare carrier. The two main challenges are likely to be human resource synergies and network integration.

HR Integration

During the due diligence process of AI, it became clear that the people for Air India and Air India Express were not required for operational purposes. There were far too many people stationed at airports and in departments for coordination purposes. It is a lot of processes with respect to aircraft spares were not compromised, thus requiring a lot of people. To be fair to Air India, the airline company did require coordination with the govern-

ment on every major decision since it was owned by the state. It is clear that the current CEO & MD Campbell Wilson had expressed disappointment with the quality of work force in Air India and expects Vistara's workforce to set a benchmark and help improve the situation. "The skills, people, systems and processes that have driven Vistara's success will complement, strengthen and accelerate Vistara's V1bhan AI transformation programme, an undeniable the new Air India to more quickly attain the state, reach and quality befitting of a world class airline proudly representing India around the globe," Wilson was quoted in a statement issued by Air India on Thursday.

V1bhan AI is a five-year plan of the Tata Group that aims at increasing domestic market share to 30 per cent and considerably increasing international market share. A similar sentiment was echoed by Vistara CEO Vinod Kannan in his email to its employees. A senior executive, in the know, explained that the merger of Air India and Vistara will become much more clear in a year's time, when the airline lays off people through retirements and Voluntary Retirement Scheme (VRS).

Through retirement, Air India was to lose 5,000 of the over 50,000 permanent employees up by 2027—this has been advanced by the airline seeing about 3,000 people opt for VRS. "Barring pilots, crew and engineering staff, the active people remain," said an executive condition of anonymity.

To put things in perspective, Vistara has about 4,700 employees. Any integration of two culturally dissimilar organisations is fraught with hurdles, just like the earlier merger of Air India and Spiritjet. Only time will tell whether this strategy could bring back glory days for Air India, but one thing is for certain—Vistara's short legacy could help give wings to Air India and also providing the brand to its former glory.

Going ahead, the aviation industry in India and across the globe would keenly track the flight path of the Air India and Vistara combine—with a lot riding on the turnaround strategy for not just the Tata Group, but for Indian aviation too.

Network integration: Full service push, synergies with SIA key

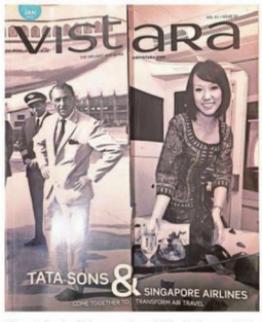
ACCORDING TO the plan, the Air India Group will have two airlines by the end of March 2024—full service carrier under the Air India brand and a low-cost carrier by merging Air India Express and Aurisa India.

"The low-cost carrier under Air India will have a new brand name," said an official source in the know. The Group has already applied to the government for the merger of AI Express and Air India under one Air Operator's Permit or AOP. Air India Express AOP will be kept and the new low-cost subsidiary will be developed. The Indian domestic market has become a low-fare market with 80 per cent of passengers flying low-cost carriers with leader IndiGo alone ferrying 56.7 per cent of the total market, according to October data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

The low-cost unit will operate domestic flights on routes that do not require full-service flights and also operate flights on short-haul international routes, which are currently controlled by Air India Express that operates profitable flights to the Gulf and southeast Asia.

Air India will focus mainly on long-haul international routes as well as losses on operating flights on routes, where there is a demand for full-service capacity, say Delhi-Mumbai for instance. "There is clarity: Not all premium class flights and those routes will be left for the AI Express and Air India combine. On the other routes, Air India will offer premium class capacity," said a source, who did not want to be identified.

On the international routes, Air India is likely to work in tandem with SIA, which would mean focusing more on flights to the west of India that includes Europe and America, SIA. On its part, will continue to operate and further strengthen flights to the east of India that includes Australia, Japan and the west coast of the US. Together, these two airlines will provide an alternative for not just people flying out of India but also flying to the west from the east of India. This could well become an alternative to carriers from the Middle East, about 80 per cent of their total passengers out of India fly to Europe and the Americas through their airports.



Vistara's first in-flight magazine published in January 2015.

LOKSATYA

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

एयर इंडिया ने तीन प्रॉसिस्को के लिए शुरू की डाइरेक्ट फ्लाइट

नई दिल्ली, एजेसी। भारतीय वाहनपत्र बेगलूर से अब अमेरिकी शहर तीन प्रॉसिस्को की सीधे फ्लाइट से सके हैं। टाटा ग्रुप की कंपनी एयर इंडिया ने यह सेवा शुरू की है। कंपनी ने मुंबई और बेगलूर से तीन प्रॉसिस्को की रोजी उड़ान सेवा फिर से शुरू कर दी है। इसके साथ एयरलाइन की विभिन्न भारतीय और अमेरिकी शहरों के बीच हर सप्ताह 37 डायरेक्ट फ्लाइट्स हो गए हैं। टाटा समूह ने इस साल जनवरी में एयर इंडिया का अधिग्रहण किया था। उसके बाद से यह लगातार अपने नेटवर्क और बेड़े का विस्तार कर रहा है। एयरलाइन ने बयान में कहा कि यह बेगलूर से तीन प्रॉसिस्को की रोजी उड़ान फिर शुरू कर रही है। इस उड़ान का परिचालन सप्ताह में तीन दिन मुंबई, रविवार और बुधवार को होगा। इस फ्लाइट रूटिंग के लिए एयरलाइन ने बोर्डिंग 777-200 एलआर विमान का इस्तेमाल करने का फैसला किया है। यह फ्लाइट मुंबई से शुरू हो गई है। एयर इंडिया ने इससे पहले बेगलूर-तीन प्रॉसिस्को फ्लाइट का संचालन 20 मार्च, 2022 को किया था। इधर खबर आई है कि टाटा ग्रुप ने एयर इंडिया की री-ब्रांडिंग को अंजाम देना शुरू कर दिया है। री-ब्रांडिंग के लिए टाटा ने लंदन की ब्रैंड एंड डिजाइन कंसाटेन्सि कंपनी को चुना है।

India jumps to 48th place in ICAO aviation safety ranking: DGCA officials

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India has jumped to the 48th position in the global aviation safety ranking by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), according to DGCA officials.

Four years ago, the country was ranked at the 102nd position. In the ranking, Singapore is at the top, followed by the UAE and South Korea at the second and third positions, respectively, the officials said. China is at the 49th place,



they added. Under its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme (USOAP) Continuous Monitoring Approach, an ICAO

Coordinated Validation Mission (ICVM) was undertaken from November 9 to 16.

On Saturday, DGCA chief Arun Kumar told PTI that the regulator has worked tirelessly to upgrade India's safety ranking and the results are there. "Hopefully, we continue to remain vigilant and improve further".

The country's score in terms of effective implementation of key safety elements has improved to 85.49 per cent, the officials said.

विमानन सुरक्षा रैंकिंग में भारत की ऊंची छलांग, 48वें स्थान पर पहुंचा

नई दिल्ली (भाषा)।
अंतरराष्ट्रीय नगर
विमानन संगठन
(आईसीएओ) की
वार्षिक विमानन सुरक्षा
रैंकिंग में भारत 48वें
स्थान पर पहुंच गया है।
बार साल पहले देश

■ आईसीएओ की ग्लोबल
रैंकिंग में बार साल पहले
देश 102वें स्थान पर था
■ इस सूची में चीन 49वें
स्थान पर है



102वें स्थान पर था। डीजीसीए के एक अधिकारी ने यह जानकारी दी। उन्होंने कहा कि रैंकिंग में वियतनाम शीर्ष पर है, उसके बाद यूएई और दक्षिण कोरिया का स्थान है। इस सूची में चीन 49वें स्थान पर है। नगरिक उड्डयन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) प्रमुख अरुण कुमार ने शनिवार को पीटीआई-भाषा को बताया कि नियामक ने भारत को सुरक्षा रैंकिंग को बेहतर बनाने के लिए अधिक ध्यान दिया है और इसके परिणाम सामने हैं।

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE SUNDAY STANDARD

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

Air-Vistara merger: Challenges ahead

Aviation experts say the merger indicates the sector is heading towards a duopoly

ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

THE merger of Vistara with Air India marks the beginning of consolidation phase in the Indian aviation sector where nearly half a dozen small and big airlines have ceased operations in the past one decade in a market which is price sensitive and excessively regulated.

According to some aviation experts, the merger indicates that the sector is heading towards a duopoly and is very positive for the overall ecosystem. "Indigo and consolidated Air India will account for more than 80% of the market share indicating that Indian aviation is headed towards a duopoly," said Anil R. Bhasin, analyst at Geojit Financial Services. Aviation consultancy firm CAPA India also said that competitive dynamics in India are moving towards a two-pillar system around the Air India Group and Indigo.

The two carriers combined are in due course expected to achieve a domestic market share of 75-80% and in the international market they are expected to grow from 37.8% in the second quarter of the current fiscal to over 50%. CAPA stated, Singapore Airlines (SIA) and Tata Sons this Tuesday announced the Air India-Vistara merger wherein SIA would own a 25.1% stake in the enlarged Air India group. SIA and Tata aim to complete the merger by March 2024. Post this, brand Vistara will cease to exist.

However, not every expert is

AVIATION SPACE LEADERS

Indigo Fleet Size:
280+ aircraft
Air India Group Fleet Size:
218 aircraft
Indigo Market Share:
56.7%
Air India Group Market Share:
26% (Approx)



jubilant that the merger would lift the country's aviation sector.

'Vistara a Failure Brand, Merger Was to Save Image'
Mark Martin, CEO of Martin Consulting, said that the sole intention of this exercise is to hide the failure that is Vistara. "The merger does not appear to be a great story and I don't think it would lead to creation of a very strong player. This was a desperate move by SIA to save its reputation," stated Martin.

Vistara, a 49:51 JV airline between SIA and Tata, has never made profits since starting operations in January 2015. Not only Vistara, Tata Group's other joint venture (JV) airline Air Asia India (now fully owned by the Tatas and now merged with Air India) has ever reported profit.

"So, what business sense does it make to dump Vistara into Air India which is already battered and bruised?" questioned Martin. While the Tata Group is known to turn around big businesses such as Tata

'Merger doesn't appear to be a great story'

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Steel and Tata Motors, turning around Air India would be a different challenge altogether.

"Unlike other businesses, success of an airline is dependent on many external factors such as jet fuel prices and foreign exchange rate. Both the factors at present are very hostile for airlines. I don't expect the Tatas to become a force to reckon with (like Indigo) anytime soon," said a senior analyst of a rating-agency requesting anonymity.

Martin also raised concern that Air India is now an employee-heavy group and soon there can be lay-offs. "Except for pilots and limited cabin

crew members, it does not make sense to have two or say three persons for a similar role... So a lay-off cannot be ruled out," he said.

Indigo to Remain Strong

Anil Rof Gouji said that given its 200-aircraft fleet and strong network, they believe Indigo will maintain its market leadership position in the short to medium term. "The intensity of competition will undoubtedly increase due to rapid expansion plans of the industry, imposing the position of Indigo. However, we don't expect a drastic fall in share... We like Indigo because of its market leadership, ability to leverage its network, cost-effective fleet, healthy cash position, and on-time performance," the analyst noted. In October, Indigo had a market share of 56.7% in the domestic market, more than twice of four AI airlines whose combined share stood at nearly 26%. Air India's combined fleet strength now stands at 218 aircraft as against Indigo's 280 plus aircraft.

Anil added that small players here is a pricing war in the industry. Cash starved budget carriers - SpiceJet and GoFirst - are going through a challenging period and have seen a decline in market share.

"Currently we don't see a possibility for price war due to ample growth opportunity and high ATF cost. In the medium to long-term such an issue will depend on the strength of the industry growth, moderation in ATF cost and capex plans," said Anil.

Govt issues guidelines for PLI scheme on drones

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, 3 DECEMBER

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has issued guidelines for the implementation of the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to support the indigenous drone industry.

These guidelines cover aspects like the definitions, qualification and eligibility application and online portal project management agency (PMA), empowered group of secretaries (EGoS) and competent authority.

To make India a global hub for research and development, testing, manufacturing, and operation of drones under the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, the liberalised Drone Rules, 2021 were released to create a growth-oriented regulatory framework for drones.

To facilitate further growth, the government has approved Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Drones and Drone Components in India.



The government has approved Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Drones and Drone Components in India

For the implementation

of this scheme during 2022-23 to 2024-25, a corpus of Rs 120 crore has also been allocated.

SpiceJet flight makes emergency landing

Kochi: A SpiceJet flight from Jeddah (Saudi Arabia) with 197 passengers, including six crew members, onboard made an emergency landing at the Cochin International Airport on Friday evening following hydraulic failure, an airport spokesperson said here.

The flight was bound for Kozhikode.

An emergency was declared at the airport at 6.29pm after the SpiceJet-SG 036 flight, which was scheduled to land at Kozhikode airport, was diverted to Kochi, he said.

“Full emergency was declared at Kochi airport at 18.29 hours,” the spokesperson said.

“The flight landed safely at 19.19 hours on the runway after an emergency landing situation,” he added.

PTI

Guidelines for drone PLI plan

New Delhi: The civil aviation ministry has notified the operational guidelines for the Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for drones and drone components. The government has approved the PLI scheme with an outlay of Rs 120 crore and the scheme is to be implemented during the 2022-23 to 2024-25 period.

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For Indian non-MSMEs that are into making drones, the annual sales turnover requirement will be Rs 4 crore



SCHEME RULES

for claiming the PLIs. The minimum level will be Rs 1 crore in the case of non-MSME drone component makers, according to the ministry.

Subject to the norms, developers of software for drones and drone components will also be eligible for PLI.

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Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TELEGRAPH

KOLKATA

03.12.2022

SpiceJet AGM on Dec. 26

■ **NEW DELHI:** SpiceJet will hold its annual general meeting on December 26 wherein the airline will also seek shareholders' approval for the re-appointment of Ajay Singh as a director. At the meeting, the company will also seek the nod of shareholders for the adoption of audited financial statements for the financial year ended March 31, 2022, according to a regulatory filing on Friday. PTI

India gets best-ever aviation safety rank

New Delhi: India's aviation safety oversight mechanism is now among the top 50 in the world at the 48th spot — a quantum leap from its 102nd rank four years ago, reports **Saurabh Sinha**.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) — the United Nation's aviation arm — had last month audited the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to check its effective implementation (EI) of critical safety elements and

had given India's aviation regulator its highest ever EI score of 85.4%, which is a vast improvement from the last audit score of 69.5% in 2018, where India was at the 102nd spot, with even countries like Nepal (90), Pakistan (100), Bangladesh (94) and Sudan (69) faring better. Now India's EI score and rank is above that of countries like China (49), Israel (50), Turkey (54), Denmark (55) and Poland (60).

This is India's highest ever

ICAO EI score that measures compliance of all critical elements of aviation safety.

The strict enforcement action taken by the DGCA in the past few years reportedly went down well with the auditors. The improved safety ranking will make it easier for Indian carriers to expand their wings abroad. Tata Group's Air India and IndiGo have massive expansion plans. Airlines of countries with poor aviation safety re-

ports find their aircraft being subjected to more surprise checks at airports abroad.

DGCA chief Arun Kumar told TOI, "India fared extremely well in ICAO's recently conducted 'universal safety oversight audit programme (USOAP)' and is likely to be placed in the company of ICAO contracting countries that are known for their high levels of aviation safety. However, we are still awaiting a formal communication from ICAO."

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

04.12.2022

Air India should focus on flying experience rather than bindis and buns

POLITICALLY INCORRECT



SHOBHAA DE

Air India recently issued a staggeringly detailed 40-page circular to cabin crew spelling out the dos and don'ts of appropriate attire. Going through the instructions made me wonder who came up with this list. Not only are some of the guidelines bizarre, but many of them also seem painfully archaic and out of sync with today's requirements, especially since cabin crew need to be focused on the practicalities of flying and feeding hundreds of passengers rather than worrying about strict dress code requirements. For, despite the outward glamour associated with flight attendants, it is an arduous, high-stress job and not the swishing seductively through aisles as most people imagine.

Adhering to a dress code is one thing, but micro-managing assorted body issues and dictating ways to fix 'problems' like receding hairlines and bald patches for men, or mandatory foundation/concealer of an exact shade from the company shade card for women sounds downright unreasonable, even despotic. No blond streaks! That goes for men and women. No crew cuts, and strictly no 'volume' to go with short hair and side parting. Ladies, remember, top knots and low buns are forbidden, and if you wear your hair in a bob, it has to be blow dried at all times. Bobby pins to keep naughty strands from straying cannot exceed four in number and must be black. Greys showing? Banish the thought. Hair dyes of shades on the approved list are non-negotiable. And gentlemen with not much hair on their pates — bald is beautiful, and a clean-shaven head compulsory.

For saree-clad ladies, a show of midriff beyond the stipulated one inch is a strict no-no. As are bin-

dis exceeding 0.5cms. Nail point guidelines offer a choice of three shades only. The accessories allowed in flight are specific to the last detail — no pearls (what crime have poor pearls committed?), no fancy bangles and strictly no bracelets (this applies to both sexes). There is a paragraph on cardigans and blazers as well — how, where and when they can be worn. As for those rakish, stylish aviators one associates with dashing crew members striding through the airport before boarding their flights — forget it! No sunglasses even while walking through the terminal. The laundry list goes on and on in a way that sounds positively undemocratic and a violation of personal rights of professionals. Even off duty crew flying as passengers will not be permitted to board if they show up in torn jeans, flip flops, shorts, or miniskirts!

And to think it was Air India that introduced a galaxy of "air hostesses" (as they were called 76 years ago) for the first time in 1946, 14 years

after JRD Tata launched what was then known as Tata Airlines. Air India's flight attendants soon became perfect ambassadors for an emerging nation and were greatly admired across the world for their grace, efficiency and yes, courage, too. Some of the biggest names in the glamour industry during the '60s and '70s started their careers flying for the national carrier — women like Parmeshwar Godrej, Maureen Wadia, Sundari Khan, Nina Pillai, to name just a few. But it was Colleen Bhiladwala, as chief air hostess, who set the standards so much so that former Air India girls declare that they owe their disciplined approach to grooming, etiquette hygiene, etc to her.

The legendary Bobby Kooka, commercial director, credited with creating Air India's well-loved mascot — the maharajah — called the airline 'Your palace in the sky', which indeed it was. Though the maharajah's glory days may be behind it, Air India still has a domestic market share of around 9%

while its international market share is 12%. Ambitious plans are afoot to modernise the airline. But I'm wondering how a 40-page manual on managing balding pates and expanding midriffs is going to enhance the flying experience. It is demeaning and demoralising, for women in particular, to be forced to follow such diktats. Remember the rule which disallowed stewardesses from marrying and having children which was removed only after a hard-fought battle? More changes are needed in the work environment, and the management could do with a crash course in sensitivity towards their team. Surely pink nail varnish, and a doughnut bun, as recommended, are no substitutes for efficiency, alertness, courtesy and kindness on board. The cabin crew is not competing in an international beauty contest. Passengers will happily settle for better food, on time arrivals and departures, cabin cleanliness, scrupulous safety standards and friendly smiles — chipped nail paint be damned. ■

Snags force int'l SpiceJet, IndiGo flights to divert

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New Delhi: Two international flights operated by Indian carriers had to divert to alternate airports due to snags on Friday.

Hydraulic failure forced a Jeddah-Kozhikode SpiceJet Boeing 737 MAX to make an emergency landing at the Kochi airport, and a Kannur-Doha IndiGo Airbus A320 to divert to Mumbai. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation is probing both incidents.

Pilots operating the SpiceJet flight saw the anti-skid light get illuminated after takeoff at Jeddah. They carried out the required checklist actions and the aircraft continued further climb. Later, the Jeddah ATC told the pilots that tyre pieces were found on the runway. A little later, the

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hydraulic system low pressure light also turned on. "During further flight, a caution light was illuminated. The pilots then decided to divert to Kochi where three low passes were carried out to verify whether the landing gear lever was down and locked... The aircraft landed safely," a SpiceJet spokesperson said.

The IndiGo flight was diverted as one of the three hydraulic systems failed. The aircraft is now grounded at Mumbai for checks and repair. An IndiGo spokesperson said: "The operating crew noticed a technical issue and diverted the aircraft for necessary maintenance. The passengers are being accommodated on an alternate aircraft for their onward journey."