



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE STATESMAN

KOLKATA

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

AAI GETS AWARD AT NORTH-EAST SUMMIT



Airports Authority of India (AAI) participated in the Vibrant North-East Summit 2024, which was organised from 19 to 21 September, 2024 at Guwahati, Assam with the theme "UNLEASHING THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF AAI NER". was adjudged with the award for Best Stall for Government of India's initiative display which was presented by Minister of Fisheries, government of Assam, KeshabMahanta.

Anti-cow slaughter campaigners not allowed to land in Shillong airport



Activists of KSU and other NGOs staging a protest at the airport in Umroi in Ri-Bhoi district on Saturday. – UB Photos

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

SHILLONG, Sept 28: The chartered plane of Swami Avimuktेश्वरानन्द Saraswati was denied landing permission at the Shillong airport following which the flag of the anti-cow slaughter campaign was hoisted symbolically over the skies of Meghalaya.

“Shankaracharyaji Maharaj hoisted the Gau Prathistha flag as soon as he touched the skies of Meghalaya, as per his res-

olution and determination. In other States, we could fly the flag at 21 feet, but in Meghalaya, you gave us the opportunity to fly the flag at 21,000 metres,” a Hindu monk said in a video statement.

In the morning, Avimuktेश्वरानन्द Saraswati and his followers were at Agartala, where he was informed that his chartered plane would not be allowed to land in Shillong.

The Meghalaya Government wrote to the Airport Au-

thority of India not to allow landing permission to Saraswati and his followers at the airport.

Several protesters were at the Shillong airport in anticipation of the Hindu monk’s proposed anti-cow slaughter rally in the State capital to demand declaration of the cow as the mother of the nation and enactment of a Central law to stop cow slaughter.

Ri-Bhoi SP Jagpal Singh Dhanoa assured the protesters that Saraswati and his fol-

lowers would not be allowed to come out of the airport even if he landed there.

The district administrations of East Khasi Hills and Ri Bhoi also promulgated Section 163 of the BNSS, prohibiting holding of such cow protection rallies in the respective districts.

Meanwhile, the followers of Saraswati said that they would take legal action for denial of permission to land at the Shillong airport.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK BHASKAR

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

सूरत: एयरपोर्ट पर जल्द ही यात्रियों को मिल सकेगी ई-वीजा की सुविधा

सूरत | एविएशन कमेटी के उच्चस्तरीय प्रयासों के बाद विदेश से सूरत आने वाले यात्रियों को अब एयरपोर्ट पर ही ई-वीजा की सुविधा मिल सकेगी। वर्तमान में सूरत इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर ई-वीजा सेंटर की व्यवस्था नहीं है, जिसे यात्रियों को मुंबई, अहमदाबाद या दिल्ली एयरपोर्ट पर उतरना पड़ता था। विशेष रूप से, डायमंड इंडस्ट्री से जुड़े विदेशी व्यापारी ई-वीजा के साथ यात्रा करते थे और उन्हें सूरत पहुंचने में कठिनाई का सामना करना पड़ता था। स्थानीय संस्थाओं और चैंबर ऑफ कॉमर्स ने इस मुद्दे को उठाते हुए सरकार को पत्र लिखा था। अब सरकार ने ई-वीजा सुविधा के लिए सूरत एयरपोर्ट को सैद्धांतिक मंजूरी दे दी है। अगले एक-दो महीने में इमिग्रेशन कार्टर पर ई-वीजा के लिए स्टाफ और सुविधाएं उपलब्ध कराई जाएंगी।

PM inaugurates Pune Metro extension, airport at Solapur



Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde with deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnis during the inauguration of the southern extension of Pune Metro Phase 1 on Sunday

FE BUREAU
Pune, September 29

PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA Modi on Sunday dedicated projects worth ₹11,200 crore in Maharashtra to the nation. This included laying the foundation stone of the ₹2,954 crore extension project of the Pune Metro from Swargate to Katraj.

The PM also virtually inaugurated a 3.62 km underground section from the Pune District Court to Swargate, built with investments of ₹1,810 crore. This marks the completion of the first phase of the Pune Metro. The PM will also inaugurate the ₹65 crore Solapur Airport.

Code-B type of aircraft will be operated from this airport. He also dedicated the Bidkin Industrial Area in Sambhaji Nagar (earlier Aurangabad). The PM also participated in laying the foundation

stone for a Memorial for Savitribai Phule's first girls' school at Bhide-wada in Pune.

The PM said the launch of various projects in Maharashtra will boost urban development and add to ease of living for people. They were focusing on creating future-ready infrastructure in the state. Modi pointed out that discussions about Pune Metro began in 2008 but its foundation was laid only in 2016 because of the quick decisions and removal of obstacles by his government.

The Auric City at the Bidkin Industrial area located on the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial corridor had faced obstacles and was revived by the double-engine government, he said. Thousands of crores will flow into the Bidkin Industrial Area across 8,000 acres and create thousands of jobs, the PM said.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

PM launches projects worth ₹ 11,200 crore in Assembly poll-bound Maharashtra

T N RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

In a slew of development initiatives aimed at giving a boost to prospects of the BJP-led MahaYuti (grand alliance) in the forthcoming Maharashtra Assembly polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday laid the foundation stone, inaugurated and dedicated to the nation various projects, including the inauguration of the Pune Metro Rail Project (Phase-1) and the revamped Solapur airport —worth more than Rs 11,200 crore in western Maharashtra. Through video-conferencing, Modi — who was to visit Pune and launch various projects on September 26 but cancelled his trip to Maharashtra due to inclement weather — inaugurated the Pune Metro section from District Court to Swargate, laying the foundation stone for Swargate-Katraj Extension of the Pune Metro section.



The Prime Minister also inaugurated the Solapur Airport which would significantly improve connectivity, making the western Maharashtra city more accessible to tourists, business travellers and investors. The existing terminal Building of Solapur airport has been revamped to serve around 4.1 lakh passengers annually. Modi dedicated the nation to Bidkin Industrial Area, a transformative project covering an expansive 7,855

acres under the National Industrial Corridor Development Program of Govt. of India, situated 20 km south of Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar in Maharashtra. The Bidkin Industrial Area project — developed under Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor - holds immense potential as a vibrant economic hub in the Marathwada region. The Central Government has approved this project with an overall project cost of over Rs 6,400 crore for development

in 3 phases. The Prime Minister also laid the foundation stone for the Memorial for Krantijyoti Savitribai Phule's First Girls' School at Bhidewada. Even before the announcement of the schedule for the Maharashtra Assembly by the Election Commission of India (ECI), Modi has reached out to people in four regions in the state. On August 25, Modi addressed "Lakshpati Didi Sammelan" at Jalgaon in north Maharashtra on August 25, laid a foundation stone for Rs 76,000 crore Vadhvan Port at Palghar in coastal Konkan region August 30 and participated in the first anniversary function of the Pradhan Mantri Vishwakarma Yojana at Wardha in Vidarbha region. Today, he launched projects worth Rs 11, 200 crore meant for western Maharashtra. Speaking on the occasion, Modi said: "Today,

Maharashtra needs big goals with new resolutions. We need to make cities like Pune a center of progress and urban development. Keeping in view Pune's progress and the pressure of the growing population, We need to take steps to augment development and capacity of the city. To achieve this goal, the Prime Minister said that the our government in Maharashtra is working with the approach of modernizing Pune's public transport and giving a boost to connectivity as the city expands". He underscored the importance of development-driven governance in ensuring Maharashtra's progress, emphasizing that any disruption in this continuity leads to significant losses for the state. He highlighted various stalled projects, from Metro initiatives to the Mumbai. Recalling the discussions about Pune Metro began in

2008 but its foundation stone was laid in 2016 when quick decisions were taken by his government, the Prime Minister said: "Today, Pune Metro is gaining speed and expanding. On one hand, Pune Metro section of District Court to Swargate has been inaugurated while on the other hand foundation stone for Swargate to Katraj line has also been laid". Lauding the work done for the expansion of Pune Metro from 2016 till now, Modi said: "The present government in Maharashtra has prepared a modern network of metro in Pune while the previous government could barely construct a single Metro pillar in 8 years". Modi underscored the importance of development-driven governance in ensuring Maharashtra's progress, emphasizing that any disruption in this continuity leads to significant losses for the state.

Part Of T3's Domestic Pier Likely To Handle International Traffic

Terminal 3 May Get A New Int'l Pier In 3 Years To Cater To Massive Growth

Photo: Saurabh Sinha

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New Delhi: Come next summer, a part of Delhi Airport T3's domestic pier could be handling international traffic to manage the massive growth of the latter. GMR Group-backed Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL) has sought govt clearance for various aspects like security to begin this work, which could take up to six months from when started. "Their request is being considered," said highly placed officials. T3 can currently handle 2.2 crore international passengers annually, and this capacity needs to grow quickly given the demand for travel, as domestic has been taken care of for the next few years with the new T1 (when fully operational).

DIAL is also learnt to be considering adding a new pier at T3 for international flights. This plan has been discussed with top aviation authorities. "The airport operator is looking at having the new pier (Pier E) ready in about three years. If that happens, T3 will have two international piers and one domestic pier," said officials. So, late 2027 or early 2028 may see India's busiest airport — the only one in the country with an elevated taxiway and

READY TO TAKE MORE LOAD



Why focus on int'l
Enough domestic capacity for next few years with T1 (when fully operational) + T2 + T3

BY NEXT SUMMER

Part of T3 domestic pier to be converted to int'l

IN 3 YEARS

A new pier may be added at T3 | Have air train ready for T1-T2/3 transfers

- T2 to be demolished based on how Noida Airport impacts IGIA traffic
- Could be around for 4-5 more years
- T2 will then make way for new T4

four runways — get the much-awaited air train and a 33% bigger T3.

While the recently built T1 (when fully operational after the currently closed portion is repaired), along with T2 and a part of T3, are sufficient to handle domestic traffic for the next few years, augmenting international capacity (handled only from part of T3) is be-

coming imperative as traffic is growing. Air India and IndiGo are adding foreign flights rapidly and have hundreds of planes on order.

After T3's Pier E is ready, the final phase of IGIA's expansion will see one big development — the 1986-era T2 being razed to make way for a new terminal. The actual timing of T2's demolition will

be decided after gauging the impact of Greater Noida Airport, which opens next summer, on traffic trends at IGIA, say people in the know. While it is estimated the existing T2 may be around for 4-5 more years before it's pulled down, how long it lives will depend on how things shape up at NCR's other airport.

Noida International Air-

port (NIA) will open with one terminal with an initial capacity of handling 1.2 crore passengers annually (CPA) next summer. Its T1 will subsequently be expanded to handle 1.8 CPA, taking its total capacity to 3 CPA. The second phase is expected to kick in quickly. Then, the second runway and T2 will be built, which in two phases of development will see NIA's capacity go first to 5 CPA and then 7 CPA.

Depending on IGIA's traffic requirements in the next few years — whether domestic grows faster or international — DIAL has three terminals to juggle with. As of now, T1 is seen as remaining only domestic (IndiGo wants it to handle international traffic too) for the foreseeable future and T3 as the only one for international flights. T2 will remain adaptable as the need arises before it is demolished.

T2 had become operational in 1986 as a purely international terminal and remained that way till T3 opened in 2010. After being mothballed for a few years, it was again kicked into service, this time as a domestic terminal. DIAL had, in fact, mulled two short-term options for augmenting IGIA international capacity — converting T2 or part of a domestic pier at T3 — before opting for the latter.



Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Air India, SpiceJet duopoly ends, airports can now provide security service to foreign airlines

Aneesh Phadnis
Mumbai

Foreign airlines can now contract airport operators for security functions, opening up competition and reducing service disruption risks.

Until now, only domestic airlines' staff could carry out tasks such as manning aircraft or frisking passengers in secondary checks. These functions can now be done by airport employees too with Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) relaxing its norms.

The move comes in the backdrop of the recent financial crisis at SpiceJet, a major provider of security services to foreign airlines within In-

dia. SpiceJet took up security service contracts after closure of Jet Airways in 2019.

Eighty foreign airlines operate scheduled flights to India and account for 55 per cent market share of the country's international air traffic.

Airports with majority foreign holding such as Bengaluru (where Fairfax holds 64 per cent stake), however, will not be permitted to provide security services to foreign airlines as per the BCAS circular of September 13.

SECURITY SERVICES

Cargo terminal operators approved by BCAS can perform relevant security functions, the circular said.

Until now, only domestic airlines' staff could carry out tasks such as manning aircraft or frisking passengers

Currently Air India and SpiceJet provide security services to foreign airlines across the country. As per industry sources, 6-8 personnel need to be assigned per flight to carry out various security related functions. These also include overseeing baggage loading and aircraft checks before departure.

Earlier this year, International Air Transport Associ-

ation (IATA) had highlighted the challenges of having limited number of security service providers. IATA had requested BCAS to expand the pool as it would bring in healthy competition and improve service quality.

Foreign airline executives also expressed fears about possible disruption to their services over salary delays and attrition in SpiceJet. SpiceJet, which completed a ₹3000 crore stake sale earlier this month, claimed, "there have been no significant delays or issues related to staffing shortages".

"SpiceJet has ensured that all contractual obligations with our foreign airline partners are met without any disruptions. Our security staff-

ing at airports, including those in Delhi, has been maintained at the required levels and there have been no significant delays or issues related to staffing shortages. We continue to monitor our operations closely to ensure flawless service delivery," the airline said in a statement.

Air India did not respond to a query. Adani group-run Mumbai International Airport Ltd declined to comment. "Delhi International Airport Ltd is actively developing a plan to implement these security services and discussions are underway with certain foreign airlines to explore the potential collaboration," said a GMR spokesperson.



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BUSINESS STANDARD

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

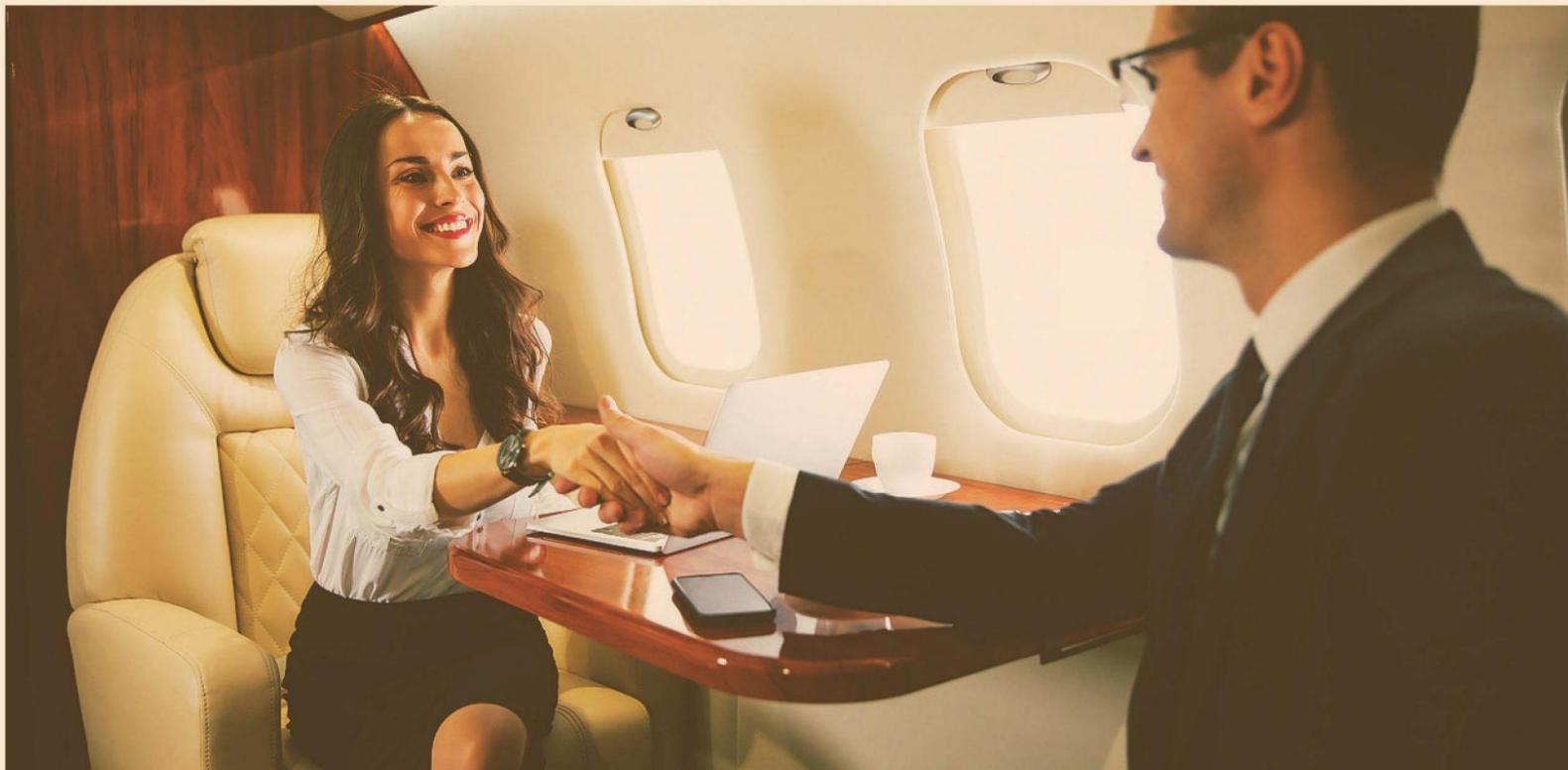
AI Express-AIX Connect merger on track for October takeoff



AIX Connect as well as airline designator code 'I5' will fly into the past in the first week of October as the merger of the no-frills carrier with Air India Express becomes a reality. "Everything is on track," a senior airline official said earlier this week about the merger process. Currently, Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the operations are set to expand in the coming months.

PTI

LEAVING ON A JETPLANE



“COMPANIES UPGRADING TO LARGER JETS”

AeroSource India has been a pioneer in aviation consultancy services for the last 24 years and earned laurels for its expertise in purchasing and selling new and pre-owned aircraft and helicopters. Its regulatory knowledge, understanding of market conditions and aircraft availability has seen it executing 58 projects from its inception. **VINOD SINGEL**, AeroSource’s Founder and Managing Director, tells **SHOBHA JOHN** that from 2022, there has been a significant increase in aircraft sales in India



VINOD SINGEL Managing Director, AeroSource

AeroSource India has been in the business of aviation consulting for 24 years. How has the trajectory of business aviation in India changed over the years in terms of clientele and the kinds of planes preferred?

AeroSource India began its journey in 2001-2002, inducting a turbo-prop aircraft, the King Air B200, for a large conglomerate. Following this, similar types of aircraft were provided to various corporate clients. Since then, the market has changed drastically. Corporates who initially invested in turboprops around 2003-2005 began upgrading to larger business jets capable of international travel.

From early 2022, there has been a significant increase in aircraft sales in India, surpassing the levels seen in 2019-2020. Post the Covid-19 pandemic, a niche market emerged with new customers acquiring small business jets who had not previously chartered planes. Aircraft such as the Citation CJ2, Premier 1 and Phenom 300 saw a surge in demand and catered to the needs of new entrants to the business aviation market.

How many aircraft has AeroSource helped clients buy since it began?

Since inception, AeroSource has executed around 58 projects, including a few inductions. Around 46 were actual sale purchases. We have worked with many large corporates, assisting them in buying and selling of aircraft/helicopters.

What is the time period when a client wants to buy an aircraft and till he actually gets it?

As per the latest regulations, the time period from when a client decides to buy an aircraft to when he actually receives it in India typically ranges from 4 to 8 months. This duration depends on the category of acquisition, whether private or Non-scheduled Operator’s Permit (NSOP). For NSOP acquisitions, the process tends to be longer, but a timeframe of 6-8 months is generally considered reasonable even for these cases.

What are the avenues whereby AeroSource

acquires pre-owned jets for its clients? Do you have a large consultancy network abroad which tells you when an aircraft is available for sale?

AeroSource acquires pre-owned jets for its clients through multiple channels. We remain engaged in the market by maintaining relationships with brokers around the world, who regularly provide us with their inventory lists. We select aircraft that meet the needs of our Indian customers from these lists. Additionally, when a client makes an inquiry, we release advertisements through various channels to seek the right aircraft, prompting brokers and owners to present planes that fit our criteria. This proactive strategy allows us to stay informed about available aircraft and offer timely solutions to our clients.

Which business jet is the most sought after and why?

Light to mid-size, super mid-size and large jets are valued for their unique features and benefits. In the light to mid-size category, Citation CJ2/+, Premier 1A, Citation XLS+ and



AS PER THE LATEST REGULATIONS, THE TIME PERIOD FROM WHEN A CLIENT DECIDES TO BUY AN AIRCRAFT TO WHEN HE ACTUALLY RECEIVES IT IN INDIA TYPICALLY RANGES FROM 4 TO 8 MONTHS.

Gulfstream G150 are highly sought after. These models are appreciated for their efficiency, versatility and relatively lower operating costs. For the super mid-size category, Challenger 300/350, Legacy 600/650, and Gulfstream G200/G280 are in high demand. These jets are favoured for their additional space, longer range and enhanced comfort, making them well-suited for longer flights and more demanding missions.

In the large jet category, Global 6000 and Gulfstream G550 are prominent choices. They are preferred for their exceptional range, luxurious interiors and advanced technology, catering to clients who seek top-tier comfort and performance for international travel.

Are the regulatory approvals needed different for planes and choppers? And does AeroSource have different teams to handle both?

Yes, the regulatory approvals for both can be quite different due to the distinct operational and safety considerations for each type of aircraft. AeroSource generally handles these different regulatory requirements through specialised teams. While the specific structure may vary, AeroSource has a dedicated team of experts focusing on each type of aircraft to ensure compliance with all regulations and to manage the acquisition processes effectively.

AeroSource also advises on charters. How popular is this mode of transport and what all occasions are they used for?

Business Aircraft Management Services (BAMS), a group company of AeroSource, specialises in the operations and management of aircraft and charters. BAMS collaborates with its long-term clients for both domestic and international charter requirements. It handles group charters, including for weddings, pilgrimages and special events. It has chartered aircraft such as Boeing 737, Airbus 320 and ATR 72 for these events. Since the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a surge in charter flights from the film industry, including Bollywood and South Indian cinema, which often use charter flights for quick and efficient travel to various cities for film promotions and major events.

NBAA: Focusing on Business Aviation's Future

The Association is working on several levels to help identify ways for making progress on job growth

BY **ED BOLEN**

A united investment in a highly trained and dedicated workforce is an industry imperative and NBAA is working on multiple levels – in Washington and beyond – to help identify innovative ways to make meaningful progress on job growth.

Among the factors driving our always-changing business aviation landscape are the troubling projections forecasting a significant shortage of skilled workers to lead the industry in the years ahead.

We've all seen the data, and we know what it tells us. In a nutshell, we will need hundreds of thousands of aviation professionals, with a diversity of skill sets, in the workforce of tomorrow. Of equal concern, a series of bottlenecks – including financial and cultural barriers, limited access to information and other hurdles – are impeding the workforce growth required to meet the coming demand.



ED BOLEN
President & CEO, NBAA

Clearly, a unified investment in a highly trained and dedicated workforce is an imperative for the industry. NBAA is working on several levels, in Washington and beyond, to help identify

innovative ways for making meaningful progress on job growth.

For example, this past July, Jo Damato, CAM, NBAA's senior vice president of education, training and workforce development, testified before a key House aviation subcommittee hearing focused on the workforce challenge. Specifically, she pointed to important provisions contained in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2024 that are aimed at lowering barriers to aviation careers, improving training standards and expanding the workforce pipeline.

The FAA bill's provisions, developed in part with NBAA's guidance, set forth a roadmap for talent development. A host of initiatives would raise awareness and engagement with young people, increase access to career information, create a national strategic workforce development plan, provide financial support for training and education, and meaningfully address factors that



“NBAA IS WORKING ON SEVERAL LEVELS, TO HELP IDENTIFY INNOVATIVE WAYS FOR MAKING MEANINGFUL PROGRESS ON JOB GROWTH.”

negatively impact recruitment and retention of women and other underrepresented groups.

Of course, NBAA's work to foster the development of future business aviation leaders goes beyond legislative advocacy to include support for your own flight operation. This year, the Association rolled out a fully updated Management Guide, NBAA's highly popular resource for helping flight department leaders develop a culture of career growth and inclusion for professionals at any stage of their careers. Similarly, this Management Issue of Business Aviation Insider offers insights from experts about ways managers can attract and retain promising new talent.

From the halls of Congress to the hallways of your workplace, you can count on NBAA to continue supporting innovative ways to address the workforce challenge. After all, a redoubled focus on having a large, qualified and diverse cohort of future industry leaders is not only good for our industry; it's essential to ensure that our nation remains the world's leader in aviation.

LEAVING ON A JETPLANE



4 | Business Standard
A COMMERCIAL FEATURE



THE DGCA HAS ISSUED GUIDELINES FOR VERTIPTS FOR EVTOL AIRCRAFT. THESE INCLUDE INFRASTRUCTURE, VISUAL AIDS FOR LANDINGS AND EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS.

BY SHOBHA JOHN

As cities get more and more congested and commuters get stuck in jaw-dropping traffic jams for hours, the prospect of quieter, greener air taxis seems tantalising. Imagine flying around nonchalantly like the Jetson family in an air taxi and thereby saving time and headache.

This revolutionary idea for air travel works best in urban areas and remote rural places. It is early days yet and could take a few more years before it fructifies, but NASA is already researching this so that air taxis can be introduced in US cities. NASA is using flight simulators and human test subjects so that not only is the ride comfortable as it lifts off vertically, but safe. This is part of the Agency's Advanced Air Mobility Mission and it will work with the Federal Aviation Administration to introduce these vehicles, hopefully by 2030.

In India, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) issued guidelines for vertiports to support the operation of eVTOL (electric Vertical Take Off and Landing) aircraft. These include infrastructure, visual aids for landings, battery charging requirements and emergency preparedness.

The DGCA had earlier set up internal working groups for studying various aspects related to electric air taxis. On July 22, Minister of State for Civil Aviation Murlidhar Mohol told the Rajya Sabha that these groups would study regulations published by other countries/civil aviation authorities and develop appropriate criteria for enabling eVTOL operations in India. However, no budgetary provisions for eVTOLs have been allocated for indigenous research, he added.

HUGE INVESTMENT

Air taxis may sound like science fiction, but they could become a reality as billions of dollars are being invested in this technology which has less environmental impact than commercial aviation as these are run on electricity or



BEAT THE TRAFFIC IN AN AIR TAXI

Billions of dollars are being invested in the technology of air taxis which are quieter and greener than commercial planes or choppers

even hydrogen. These eVTOL aircraft are different from small electric planes and are meant for smaller distances. Aviation behemoths such as Boeing and Airbus, and startups such as Joby, Archer, Wisk and Lilium are developing eVTOL aircraft.

Already, Joby has purchased Uber Air to eventually pair its air taxis with Uber's ride-hailing technology. It recently flew its eVTOL aircraft on liquid hydrogen and fuel cells. It modified its battery-operated aircraft for hydrogen-electric propulsion. Joby founder and CEO JoeBen Bevirt reportedly said that 90%

of the systems on the aircraft stay the same after the fuel cell and liquid hydrogen system are added and after modifying the batteries. This gives the aircraft more range and endurance.

However, one should not forget the Hindenburg disaster of May 6, 1937, in New Jersey. It was a German commercial passenger-carrying airship which was filled with hydrogen and caught fire. It was destroyed as it tried to dock with its mooring mast at Naval Air Station Lakehurst. It killed 13 passengers and 22 crewmen among the 97 people on board, and brought an abrupt

end to the airship era.

Meanwhile, United Airlines has plans to test Archer's eVTOLs on short hops from Chicago to O'Hare International Airport and Manhattan to Newark Liberty International Airport. And in Dubai, one company has a contract to launch an air taxi service as early as 2025. Already, infrastructure such as vertiports is being built there. Another company wants to fly participants at the 2024 Paris Olympics in air taxis. But how feasible would this be when there are numerous hurdles such as technical knowhow, regulatory issues and infrastructure issues? Of

course, air taxis have to be cost-effective to be accepted by people.

BATTERY LIFE

The first hurdle is the use of batteries itself. They are no match for traditional hydrocarbon fuels used in aircraft presently and therefore, electric air taxis cannot fly as far as these counterparts. eVTOL aircraft can mainly be used for intra-city hops unless batteries with longer life cycles and faster charging are invented. This naturally means that they cannot be used for long-haul flights.

There also needs to be a network of charging stations for air taxis if they have to be feasible. The payload capacity, weight of the batteries and desired range of eVTOLs too will have to be worked out. In addition, air traffic management will have to be factored in. And for safety reasons, these taxis cannot be fully autonomous to begin with. It was only recently that a man died after a crash of Air Taxi Vanuatu near Port Vila. These are islands near Australia. In August last year, British air taxi developer Vertical Aerospace said that a crash earlier that month of its air taxi prototype was due to "a fault with a propeller".

According to In Flight USA magazine, the difference between helicopters and air taxis is that while the former has one single powerful rotor, the latter has

multiple, smaller rotors around the airframe. So if one fails, the others can stabilise the aircraft and enhance safety. However, rotors cause vibrations and can be uncomfortable for passengers, so seats will have to be designed specifically to reduce this.

INDIAN PICTURE

Coming to India, there are reports about InterGlobe Enterprises, the parent company of IndiGo, joining hands with Archer, the California-based firm backed by Boeing, to introduce air taxis in the country. The proposed routes include: Delhi and Gurgaon, Bengaluru's city centre and its international airport and Mumbai's Bandra to Colaba. However, while India's burgeoning and price-conscious middle class is a captive market, the costs of air taxi rides will have to be reasonable. In addition, vertiports for landing and takeoff will have to be developed.

It waits to be seen if all this is mere talk. However, Amit Dutta, MD of Hunch Mobility, an urban air mobility company, reportedly said that when eVTOL aircraft start services in India, their operations will create disruption as the fares will be much lower than helicopters as they work with batteries and not oil.



eVTOL AIRCRAFT CAN MAINLY BE USED FOR INTRA-CITY HOPS UNLESS BATTERIES WITH LONGER LIFE CYCLES AND FASTER CHARGING ARE INVENTED. THIS NATURALLY MEANS THAT THEY CANNOT BE USED FOR LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS.

Rohit Kapur, President of Sales, Asia Pacific for JethQ, a leading global aircraft sales and acquisitions company, wondered if the DGCA would tie itself in knots trying to regulate the air taxi sector. "And the infrastructure? Who's planning for it, the ministry of civil aviation or the ministry of road transport and highways?" he asks. Nonetheless, a beginning has been made with the DGCA setting up internal working groups for studying various aspects of air taxis.

If this technology takes off, it will be a dream come true for many.

GAMA Releases Aircraft Shipment and Billing Report

The first six months of 2024 show increased deliveries across the piston airplane, business jet and piston helicopter segments

Earlier this month, the General Aviation Manufacturers Association (GAMA) published the Second Quarter 2024 General Aviation Aircraft Shipment and Billing Report. The general aviation aircraft manufacturing industry's results for the first six months of 2024, when compared to the same period in 2023, show increased deliveries across the piston airplane, business jet and piston helicopter segments along with an increase in the overall value of aircraft shipments.

"Through the first half of 2024, we continue to see robust demand for new aircraft, as indicated by the impressive backlogs and plans for facility expansion by many of our OEMs. Our constraints continue to be ongoing supply chain and workforce recapitalization issues, which are routinely compounded by unacceptable turn times in terms of responsiveness and lack of decision making by the FAA specialists on such things as issue papers, certification plans and regular correspondence. Our industry is the incubator of safety enhancing and aviation sustainability technology, which in-turn serves as a catalyst for economic growth and exemplary employ-

ment for millions around the globe. It is vital that our regulators continue to improve effectiveness and efficiency of certification and validation processes, appropriately apply the safety continuum across the spectrum of general aviation products and respond to applicants in a timely manner. For the continued vitality of our industry and to facilitate all the great innovations that are taking place, it is imperative that we tackle these ongoing challenges," said Pete Bunce, GAMA President and CEO.

Aircraft shipments through the second quarter of 2024, when compared to the same period in 2023, saw piston airplanes increase 7.3% with 761 units, turboprops decrease 3.4% with 280 units, and business jets increase 8.8% to 322 units. The value of airplane deliveries through the second quarter of 2024 was \$11.3 billion, an increase of 24.2%.

Helicopter shipments through the second quarter of 2024, when compared to the same period in 2023, saw piston helicopter deliveries increase 2.7% with 115 units, and turbine helicopter deliveries decrease 7.7% with 313 units. The value of helicopter deliveries was \$1.7 billion.



AIRCRAFT SHIPMENTS THROUGH THE Q2 OF 2024, WHEN COMPARED TO THE SAME PERIOD IN 2023, SAW PISTON AIRPLANES INCREASE 7.3%, TURBOPROPS DECREASE 3.4% AND BUSINESS JETS INCREASE 8.8%.

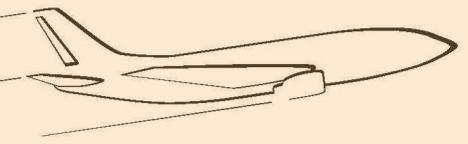


Aircraft Shipment and Billing Report

2023 2024



LEAVING ON A JETPLANE



Falcons are known to fly high, but one particular Falcon has grabbed attention like no other—French Dassault Aviation's Falcon 6X. And it has garnered numerous accolades, the most notable being the International Yacht and Aviation Awards of 2021 by British magazine *Designetel* where it was awarded for its innovative interior. The 6X is as close as one can come to yacht-sized comfort in a business jet.

Some of 6X's other outstanding features include the biggest cabin cross-section (see box) in a business jet, the ability to operate into shorter fields and being able to fly higher than an airliner. This makes the air smoother and with much better pressurisation, passengers feel a lot fresher after a long flight. Incidentally, the 6X can fly for more than 10 hours and cover 5,500 nautical miles.

SPACIOUS CABIN

The 6X's cabin is the most talked about feature, and why not. Dassault's in-house design team enhanced the feeling of spaciousness with a contemporary design, including more rounded surfaces and flowing lines. In addition, passengers have more individual space, allowing even very tall passengers to stand up straight. They can also have individual sleeping compartments, known as Falcon Privacy Suites, each with a fully reclining, flat seat.

The galley is equipped to churn out multiple meals over a maximum range flight. It also has a crew rest area to one side and a skylight, a first in business aviation. The 6X's interiors are also brightly and pleasantly illuminated, thanks



SOARING IN THE SKY WITH FALCONS

Dassault's Falcon 6X combines the best features of its business and fighter jets and is known for its innovative design and comfort

to 30 windows, each larger than on predecessor Falcons. At night, the lighting colour palette can be adjusted in such a way as to simulate sunrises and sunsets through the Ambiance cabin management system.

To date, on the demo tour, the 6X has flown more than 300 missions and 600 hours, sometimes conducting four demo flights a day and on one occasion, flying nearly 11 hours from Paris to São Paulo covering more than 5,600 air miles and landing with higher than needed fuel reserves.

FAST CONNECTIVITY

Being a business jet, connectivity is very important for businessmen. The 6X is equipped with high-speed internet capability,

enabling videoconferencing and streaming of news and entertainment. What's more, the aircraft is extremely quiet, just like the Falcon 8X, the quietest business jet in the sky. Both have sound levels below 50 dB, equivalent to a suburban living room.

What distinguishes the 6X from other business jets is also the fact that it is not a stretched or re-engined version of existing models. It is an all-new airplane and Dassault has heavily invested in the technology for it. Carlos Brana, SVP of Dassault's Civil Aviation division, reportedly said: "If you have the financial and engineering resources, you want to start with a clean sheet of paper. Then you can apply all the latest technology to create something dramatically better. And you can deliver to the customer an airplane that will be modern and

capable for decades into the future."

Dassault, the only company to build fighters and business jets, pioneered fly-by-wire technology more than four decades ago. This allows precise and easy handling with "Smart Sidesticks" that interpret pilot inputs and set the aircraft on a precise flight path.

PILOTS' DELIGHT

Falcon pilots do not need to manually trim off control pressures, resulting in lower workload and improved precision. In fact, Falcon pilots can set a bank and climb angle and simply let go of the stick. The plane will continue on a stable trajectory. The combination of fly-by-wire precision and Dassault's unique wing with high lift slats and flaps allows for remarkably short landings.

At the same time, the plane can be used by a newbie as all he has to do is push the throttles full forward, release brakes, pull stick full aft at rotation speed and climb steadily.

That is flying like a Falcon.

FALCON 6X

Best of the Best

The Falcon 6X has some of the best features from Dassault Aviation's business and fighter aircraft expertise

- It received FAA and EASA certification on August 22, 2023, and entered service on November 30, 2023.
- The 6X has the widest cross-section of any purpose-built business jet. It is 6 feet 6 inches high, 8 feet 6 inches wide and 40 feet 4 inches long.
- It can take up to 16 passengers, with individual seating in three separate lounge areas.
- It has extra-large 30 windows with a total of nearly 5,000 square inches and the highest percentage of window area in its class.
- Interior sound levels are below 50 dB.
- Cabin air is refreshed continuously and processed through hospital-grade HEPA filters to provide added protection against airborne pathogens.
- Cabin altitude pressurisation is maintained at a comfortable 3,950 feet when cruising at 41,000 feet, making passengers comfortable and refreshed.
- It has high-speed connectivity system, ensuring seamless in-flight communications and high-speed access to Internet.
- The Falcon 6X will fly a maximum range of 10,186 km at Mach .80, connecting an impressive list of city pairs such as Los Angeles to Geneva, São Paulo to London and Beijing to San Francisco.
- It has an ultra-efficient wing with advanced structural architecture and curved trailing edge. This increases the lift/drag ratio and reduces the impact of turbulence.



THE 6X'S CABIN FEELS SPACIOUS WITH A CONTEMPORARY DESIGN INCLUDING MORE ROUNDED SURFACES AND FLOWING LINES. PASSENGERS HAVE MORE INDIVIDUAL SPACE.

The Dawn of Fractional Ownership for Aircraft in India?

If the challenges, including taxation, are overcome, we could see a defining reform that will change the face of non-scheduled aviation in India

BY **JAYANT NADKARNI**

The most successful and proven aircraft operating model globally (non-scheduled) that allows the largest aircraft fleets is Fractional Aircraft Ownership. Globally, the industry leader is NetJets, which has over 750+ business jets, all in this model (while all of India has just 160+ jets). There are many other such foreign companies.

MODEL WORKING

An aviation company wanting to conduct fractional ownership business invests in the aircraft, imports, operates and maintains it, and sells part shares in the aircraft asset to a few interested co-owners (1/8th, 1/4th, and so on). It's like joint or fractional ownership of the asset, where the co-owners may not be in aviation business, but get 'preferred right to use' the aircraft. All



along, the aircraft's possession and control remains with the aviation company, and if it is a NSOP, it can be chartered out to 3rd parties as well. The main advantage is that capital costs are spread across many owners. It allows the aviation company to grow to higher fleet sizes. This fractional model is well suited for capital constrained countries like India. It will attract huge investments into the sector. It will leapfrog India from our small fleet size (relative to advanced countries). It is good for safety and asset quality.

CURRENT POSITION

The fractional model described above is not permitted in India. The Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) is apprised of the matter and has studied it in depth for nearly two years with the DGCA and Industry experts. Draft policy guidelines are lying ready in

MoCA, but have not been released, due to specific challenges outlined below.

HURDLES

(a) DGCA part- As on date, the DGCA does not register more than one owner for an aircraft in India, as no policy guideline allows for it. What's good is that draft policy guidelines have been drawn out to allow this outlining how to dovetail the model into existing regulatory provisions, with nil disruptions. To be clear, they haven't been released yet. But this is the lesser challenge.

(b) Taxation part- In the working of the model, when the fractional sale of aircraft occurs (from NSOP to fractional buyers), the present GST treatment is based on the status of the buyer upon sale. Since, the buyer does not hold an NSOP license (as it's not his business), taxation will be @28% IGST, that too with no ITC and the model will not work.

The likely solution is that the model

will work — provided GST treatment is based on aircraft End Use being NSOP as then taxation will be @ 5% IGST. The supporting logic is that the aircraft was imported under NSOP license and continues to remain in NSOP's possession and control regardless of fractional sales, and further, it is chartered out to 3rd parties also, and only preferential right of use is given to the co-owners.

So, will 2024 see any major announcements in this regard?

If it does happen, it could be a defining aviation reform that will change the face of non-scheduled aviation in India. It has worked so well abroad. Why will it not in India? What we need is a guiding policy framework coming from the government. A framework that sets in motion operative and taxation changes.

Let's see what the last few months of 2024 hold in store.

The writer MD, Flightshares Private Limited.

Giving Wings to Women

Women in Aviation India are re-writing history by spreading awareness about the opportunities that exist in this sector for girls

A clarion call, "Beti Ki Udaan, Desh Ka Swabhimaan", has been the inspiration and guiding light for Women in Aviation India (WAI), a group of dynamic women who are determined to re-write the history of women in aviation. During this path-breaking journey, Girls in Aviation Day (GIAD) has been celebrated every year, touching the lives of thousands of girls across 35 cities in India.

WAI has networked, collaborated and received invaluable support from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, its associated organisations, state governments, airport operators, airlines and other stakeholders.

Flying on the wings of a surging economy, these women embarked on a mission in 2015 to spread awareness about the opportunities that exist in aviation and the huge demand in it.

BRINGING EQUITY

Inspired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision, "Beti padao, beti bachao", WAI under the leadership of its president, Radha Bhatia, made it their mission eight years ago to bring equity in a hitherto male dominated industry. This was especially so in remote towns and cities where education may have paved a way, but there was a noticeable lack of skill development and awareness. Bhatia always tells these students, "Dream big! Set your

goals high and don't stop till you achieve them!"

Through the Girls in Aviation Day programmes, WAI members reach out to girls through curated events held in schools, colleges and mostly at airports in order to provide them a glimpse of an aviation ecosystem.

A mission like this is fuelled by the support of stakeholders who believe that change is possible when all forces unite, especially the Union and state ministries. This year, GIAD programmes are being celebrated with the support of Delhi International Airport Ltd., GMR; Airport Authority of India; Kempegowda International Airport; Cochin International Airport; Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad; Thiruvananthapuram International Airport; Make My Trip; Blue Dart; Millennium Aerodynamics; Directorate General of Training, National Skill Training Institute, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship; Confederation of Indian Industry and Bird Group.

CURATED BOOKLETS

Girls in Aviation Day 2024 celebrations recently culminated at the General Aviation Terminal, IGI Airport and Chandigarh, Thiruvananthapuram, Agra and Srinagar Airports. As part of signature merchandise, WAI presents all students, curated booklets of career opportunities in aviation.

Forthcoming programmes include Mumbai, Ladakh, Dehradun, Odisha, Varanasi, Allahabad, Kanpur, Cochin, Hyderabad, Bangalore, Goa, Ahmedabad, Lucknow and other stations. WAI invites stakeholders and corporate entities in aviation to join their endeavours as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility missions. GIAD programmes will culminate with a grand awards ceremony this November, celebrating the achievements of women in aviation – "Giving Wings to Dreams".

Without doubt, when all forces align, magic happens. And when women progress, a nation progresses.



"LET YOUR DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT, AND NEVER LET ANYONE CLIP YOUR WINGS."

KIRAN JAIN

Vice President, Treasurer, WAI





Corporate Communications Directorate

DECCAN CHRONICLE

HYDERABAD

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

AI PASSENGER FINDS COCKROACH IN FLIGHT FOOD

New Delhi, Sept. 28: An Air India passenger has reported finding a cockroach in an omelette served during a flight from Delhi to New York on September 17, 2024.

The airline acknowledged the complaint, stating that it has been raised with the catering service provider for investigation.

The passenger, who shared her experience on X, noted that her two-year-old child had eaten part of the meal before they discovered the cockroach, resulting in food poisoning. She posted a video and photos of the food, tagging Air India, the DGCA, and civil aviation minister K. Rammohan Naidu.

An Air India spokesperson expressed concern for the customer's experience and assured that necessary actions will be taken to prevent future incidents.



Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN

KANPUR

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

एअर इंडिया उड़ान में आमलेट में काकरोच

नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर: एअर इंडिया की दिल्ली-न्यूयार्क उड़ान में एक बड़ा लापरवाही का मामला सामने आया है। यात्रा के दौरान एक यात्री को परोसे गए आमलेट में काकरोच मिलने की शिकायत सामने आई है। इसे खाने के कारण मां-बेटे को फूड प्वाइजनिंग हो गई। एयरलाइन के प्रवक्ता ने कहा भविष्य में ऐसी घटनाओं की पुनरावृत्ति रोकने के लिए हम आवश्यक कार्रवाई करेंगे।

एक यात्री ने इंटरनेट मीडिया पोस्ट में शिकायत की है कि 17 सितंबर 2024 को उड़ान एआइ 101 में दिए गए भोजन में काकरोच मिला। हमें जब वह दिखा तब तक इसका आधा हिस्सा खा लिया था। मेरे दो वर्ष के बच्चे ने भी इसमें से कुछ हिस्सा खाया था, जिसके कारण दोनों को फूड प्वाइजनिंग हो गई। महिला ने परोसे गए खाद्य पदार्थों की एक वीडियो और तस्वीरें भी साझा कीं। उन्होंने पोस्ट में एअर इंडिया, विमानन नियामक डीजीसीए और नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्री को भी टैग किया। एअर इंडिया के एक प्रवक्ता ने कहा कि यात्री की ओर से किए गए इंटरनेट मीडिया पोस्ट के बारे में उन्हें जानकारी है।

Debate Erupts Over AI Panel Reviewing Fatigue Requests

Move to curb abuse of policy: Airline exec; it will discourage genuine reporting: Pilots

Our Bureau

New Delhi: A new policy by Air India where an internal committee will examine fatigue requests by pilots and cabin crew has triggered a debate on whether the step would discourage self-reporting even in genuine cases due to fear of retribution.

However, a senior airline executive managing flight operations said the move was necessary to curb abuse of the current no-question-asked fatigue policy. He said this will help differentiate a genuine issue of fatigue caused by airline operations from those due to personal reasons.

The Tata-owned airline, in a fresh memo issued on Friday, said it will initially mark all fatigue calls by pilots as fatigue in the system. However, these reports will be later reviewed by the airline's department of flight operations, cabin crew data and the medical department. "After further review by the department, in case of unsubstantiated reporting, fatigue will be replaced as sick on crew portal," read the memo, a copy of which was seen by ET.

Air India's latest policy mirrors that of market leader IndiGo where all fatigue reports are marked as sick. The reports are then evaluated by a team of flight operations, and if found to be genuine, the sick leaves are credited back at a later stage.

People aware of the matter said Air India's decision is prompted by a sharp increase in fatigue reports over the last few months. Many of these were later found to be caused by personal problems rather than professional ones.

"Our new fatigue protocol is a positive step in preventing fatigue and is followed by leading airlines globally. It is compliant with the regulations and is non-punitive. We will continue to use scientific tools to protect our crew from potentially fatiguing rosters," said a spokesperson for Air India.



MIRRORING INDIGO

AI policy mirrors that of IndiGo where all fatigue reports are marked as sick & then evaluated by team of flight operations

"A no-question-asked fatigue policy when abused leads to genuine cases getting overlooked and the scope to reverse the system. For instance, if there are multiple reports about a single flight schedule, the system alerts the airline and that schedule is changed," said an Air India official.

The International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), a United Nations agency for regulating aviation safety, encourages self-reporting of fatigue by crew.

"Fatigue reports should be analysed regularly by the Fatigue Safety Action Group and feedback provided as appropriate to about any actions taken, or why no action was considered necessary," according to ICAO.

Many senior crew personnel at Air India said if the airline transparently analyses the data, then it can lead to forming a fatigue risk management policy where the airline can adopt policies and eliminate flight patterns that result in fatigue.



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Boeing strike: Airlines not panicking just yet

SUKALP SHARMA
New Delhi, September 29

TALKS BETWEEN AMERICAN aerospace major Boeing and the union representing some 33,000 of its striking workers collapsed on Friday with no further talks scheduled for the time being. This has left Boeing's customer airlines globally—among them India's Akasa Air and Air India Express—disconcerted and anxious to some degree, though they may not be pressing the panic button just yet.

The strike over wage revision, which has now entered its third week, has brought to a grinding halt the production of Boeing's best-selling 737 narrow-body aircraft, which currently have nearly 5,000 outstanding orders. So, how worried are Akasa Air and Air India Express, which have 300-plus Boeing 737 MAX aircraft on order between them?

According to sources in the two

airlines and industry watchers, the strike is unlikely to impact the carriers' planned operations in the immediate-to-near term. The key concern is the impact that a potentially long-drawn-out strike could have on deliveries over the subsequent months and even the next few years.

The key concern for Indian carriers is the impact that a potentially long-drawn-out strike could have on deliveries in the long term

There could also be additional headaches like inability to acquire and hold additional slots due to slow capacity addition, being forced to extend leases on older and less efficient aircraft (in Air India Express's case), and difficulty in

retaining pilots (for Akasa Air).

"We continue to provide technical support and stay in close contact with our customers during this time," Boeing said in response to queries.

"The strike at Boeing...from a longer-term perspective, it could become a problem," said a source at Air India Express. "How this plays out over time is something we would be looking at..." an Akasa Air official said.

Qatar Airways, EL AL planes come within 1 minute of each other over Arabian Sea

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 29

INDIA'S AIRCRAFT Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) is investigating a serious incident of "airprox" or aircraft proximity—aircraft coming closer than the mandated minimum separation while airborne—in which two wide-body aircraft belonging to Qatar Airways and Israel's EL AL were involved. The incident occurred on March 24 at 35,000 feet over the Arabian Sea and the two aircraft came as close as 9.1 nautical miles, or around one minute of each other, even as the regulation separation for the area was 10 minutes.

The AAIB has released a preliminary report with details of the incident and the investigation process. The final investigation report is likely to be released within a couple of months, per sources in the know.

Airprox is a situation in which the distance between aircraft as well as their relative positions and speed have been such that the safety of the aircraft involved may have been compromised. It is not clear yet whether the aircraft involved in this incident were on a collision course. Airprox incidents are classified into three categories—serious risk of collision, safety of the aircraft may have been compromised, and no risk of collision.

Although both the aircraft were not headed to or from India, the AAIB is conducting the investigation as the area where the incident occurred falls under the Mumbai Flight Information Regions (FIR) where air traffic services are managed by the Mumbai air traffic control (ATC).

INCIDENT OCCURRED ON MARCH 24

INDIA'S AIRCRAFT Accident Investigation Bureau has released a preliminary report with details of the incident and the investigation process. The final investigation report is likely to be released within a couple of months, per sources in the know

THE INCIDENT occurred on March 24 at 35,000 feet over the Arabian Sea and the two aircraft came as close as 9.1 nautical miles, or around one minute of each other, even as the regulation separation for the area was 10 minutes

While the probe is underway, two air traffic controllers on duty at the time of the incident were off-rostered as per the protocol in such cases and sent for corrective training, per sources.

EL AL's Boieng 777-200 aircraft was operating a scheduled flight from Israel to Thailand's capital Bangkok, while the Qatar Airways Boeing 777-300ER aircraft was operating a flight from Doha to Male in the Maldives.

"Both aircraft were on their designated flight route and were at the same flight level F350 (35,000 feet). ELY081 (EL AL flight) was following Airway L875 and QTR8E (Qatar Airways flight) was following Airway L894. The airway L875 and L894 intersect each other at a Waypoint 'GOLEM' in Mumbai FIR. The breach of standard separation took place between the aircraft, at waypoint 'GOLEM' in Mumbai FIR. NO TA/RA alert (alerts generated by Traffic Collision Avoidance System, or TCAS) was generated in aircraft," the AAIB noted in a preliminary report on the incident.

According to experts, the TCAS alerts are sounded only when two aircraft come in close proximity and there is a threat of

collision. The fact that the alerts were not generated in either aircraft cockpit could possibly mean that while the planes did come too close for comfort, there was no risk of collision, a source said, but added that details will only be clear once the final probe report is out.

The AAIB investigation team has visited the Oceanic Control Centre, South Subsector—which handles air traffic in Mumbai FIR—to assess the situation and to collect evidence. ATC tapes and recordings of the automation system have been examined, and initial statements of various officials have been recorded.

"Based on the statements, initial phase of interviews of three involved ATCOs (air traffic control officers) have been conducted. One of the concerned trainee's statement was also recorded by the Investigation team. Another of the concerned trainee's statement has been recorded by the Investigation team at Delhi," the preliminary report said on the progress of the investigation.

The AAIB has also received documents and data for the two flights from both the airlines, and these are being analysed as part of the probe.



Restless in Seattle: Boeing workers' strike has Indian airlines concerned, but not panicked yet

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, SEPTEMBER 29

TALKS BETWEEN the American aerospace major Boeing and the union representing some 33,000 of its striking workers collapsed Friday with no further negotiations scheduled for the time being. This has left Boeing's customer airlines globally—among them India's Akasa Air and Air India Express—disconcerted and anxious to some degree, although they might not be pressing the panic button just yet.

The strike over wage revision, which has now entered its third week without a resolution in sight, has brought to a grinding halt the production of Boeing's best-selling 737 narrow-body aircraft, which currently have nearly 5,000 outstanding orders. Boeing's aircraft delivery schedules, which were already delayed due to other problems, could be hit further in the event of a protracted strike.

So, how worried are Akasa Air and Air India Express, which have 300-plus Boeing 737 MAX aircraft on order between them?

According to sources in the two airlines and industry watchers, the strike is unlikely to impact the carriers' planned operations in the immediate-to-near term as they



A strike sign hangs near the entrance to a Boeing production facility in Renton, Washington. *Reuters File*

are assured of aircraft deliveries till the end of this year, and their network and capacity expansion plans in the short term are already tuned to that schedule. The key concern is the impact that a potentially long-drawn-out strike could have on aircraft deliveries over the subsequent months and even the next couple of years. But any clarity on that front is contingent upon the resolution of the strike.

Additional delays could directly hinder the airlines' capacity and network expansion plans over the medium term, sources indicated. Then there could be additional headaches like inability to acquire and hold additional slots

at airports due to slow capacity addition, being forced to extend leases on older and less efficient aircraft (in Air India Express's case) that were to be replaced by the new jets, and difficulty in retaining pilots who are on the bench and not released for flying due to aircraft delivery delays—more relevant for Akasa Air.

The airlines are in regular touch with Boeing but with no real progress in negotiations with the workers' union, the aircraft manufacturer has not given the carriers any guidance on the agitation's likely impact on delivery timelines, it is learnt.

"We know our business chal-

lenges cause disruption for our customers and we deeply regret the impact on them. We continue to provide technical support and stay in close contact with our customers during this time," Boeing said in response to *The Indian Express's* queries. Air India Express and Akasa Air did not respond to requests for comments.

"The strike at Boeing is not of immediate concern for us as we are already ahead of our projected timelines in terms of capacity and network plans. Of course, from a longer-term perspective, it could become a problem if the strike is not resolved within a reasonable timeframe and production and deliveries get delayed significantly. We will have to see how this unfolds," said a source at Air India Express, who did not wish to be identified.

The Air India group had ordered a total of 190 737 MAX planes in 2023, and most of these are going to its budget airline Air India Express. The airline has already received 35 aircraft, with another 15 expected by the end of the year. But such prompt deliveries have been possible because 50 of the 190 aircraft ordered were "white-tails" or remarked planes, which were manufactured for other airlines but remained unsold as the original or-

ders were cancelled. Often, airlines are quick to buy such aircraft as they are readily available off the shelf with the manufacturer, while planes manufactured based on their orders can take years to be delivered.

The remaining 140 made-to-order 737 MAX aircraft for Air India Express were expected to start coming in sometime next year. Air India Express and AIX Connect (formerly AirAsia India), which is in the process of being merged into the former, currently have a combined fleet of 86 aircraft, over 50 of which are older Boeing 737s and Airbus A320s. By 2028, the merged Air India Express aims to have a fleet of 180 aircraft.

"We are not worried currently. Considering the problems Boeing has faced in recent years, they have still been good partners to us. For now, we are alright but how this plays out over time is something that we would be looking at...our patience will depend on how circumstances evolve," an Akasa Air official said, speaking on the condition of anonymity.

Akasa Air, which ordered a total of 226 Boeing 737 MAX aircraft through two separate orders, has received 25 planes and is confident of two more deliveries this year.

FULL REPORT ON
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MINT

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024



Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the ops are set to expand.

Air India Express, AIX merger in Oct

AIX Connect as well as airline designator code '15' will fly into the past in the first week of October as the merger of the no-frills carrier with Air India Express becomes a reality.

"Everything is on track," a senior airline official said earlier this week about the merger process that has been in progress for nearly one year. AIX Connect, which was earlier known as AirAsia India, will cease to exist after flying for 11 years.

The aircraft registered under its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will be transferred to the AOC of Air India Express under the legal merger that is to come into effect in the first week of October, another official said.

Currently, Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the operations are set to expand in the coming months.

PTI

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

'15' AIRLINE DESIGNATOR CODE TO FLY INTO SUNSET

Air India Express-AIX Connect merger in October first week

The merger of Vistara with Air India is scheduled in November

OUR CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: AIX Connect as well as airline designator code '15' will fly into the past in the first week of October as the merger of the no-frills carrier with Air India Express becomes a reality.

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Currently, Air India Express and AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and the operations are set to expand in the coming months.

It has a fleet of 88 planes, including 61 Boeing 737 NGs and MAXs, and 27 A320 ceos and neos.

With the legal merger, all flights of erstwhile AIX Connect will be operated with the airline designator code of Air India Express — 'IX' and the code '15' will not be there, the official said.



The aircraft registered under its Air Operator Certificate (AOC) will be transferred to the AOC of Air India Express under the legal merger that is to come into effect in the first week of October, an official said

A war room has been functioning for the last three months to ensure a smooth merger as the process involves multiple stakeholders, including lessors and airports, the official said and added that the process will also be a template for the future.

The merger of Vistara with Air India, both part of the

Tata Group, is scheduled in November.

With the legal merger of Air India Express and AIX Connect, there will also be a single rostering system for the crew of both carriers, a senior pilot at Air India Express said.

Already, the two airlines have a common website, distribution system and customer

Highlights

» Currently, AI Express & AIX Connect operate around 400 flights daily and operations are set to expand in coming months

» It has a fleet of 88 planes, including 61 Boeing 737 NGs and MAXs, and 27 A320 ceos and neos

» With the legal merger, all flights of erstwhile AIX Connect will be operated with airline designator code of Air India Express — 'IX' and the code '15' will not be there, the official said

care, among others.

In July 2023, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) approved operations of AIX Connect under the Air India Express brand. And in October last year, the airline unveiled a unified brand.

Over the last many months, the integration process has covered various areas, including

human resources and flight network. All said, certain challenges, including those pertaining to a section of cabin crew of Air India Express, remain.

In terms of manpower, there are around 6,000 employees, including 1,500 cockpit crew. The cabin crew strength, including about 1,000 from AIX Connect, will be more than 4,000.

AirAsia India, that took off as a budget carrier jointly owned by Tatas and Malaysia's AirAsia Berhad in 2014, was rechristened as AIX Connect in December 2022 following the exit of the Malaysian carrier from the venture.

Air India Express, which commenced operations in 2005, was earlier steered by the government and is now a subsidiary of Tata Group-owned Air India.

After the name change, the tails of aircraft of erstwhile AirAsia India was painted red and going forward, those tails will slowly embrace Air India Express's tail art whose theme is patterns of India.

And the merger too will leave a unique trail of consolidation in the fast growing Indian civil aviation market.



Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLENNIUM POST

KOLKATA

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

AI passenger finds cockroach in food served on Delhi–New York flight

NEW DELHI: An Air India passenger has complained of finding a cockroach in an omelette served onboard the flight from the national capital to New York, with the airline saying the matter has been taken up with the catering service provider for further investigation.

“We are aware of a social media post by a passenger regarding a foreign object in the onboard meal offered to them on AI 101 operating from DEL to JFK on 17 September 2024,” an Air India spokesperson said in a statement and also

expressed concern over the incident. In a post on X, the passenger said a cockroach was found in the omelette served on the flight from Delhi to New York.

“My 2 year old finished more than half of it with me when we found this. Suffered from food poisoning as a result,” she said.

The passenger also shared a short video and pictures of the food items served during the flight. She tagged Air India, aviation regulator DGCA and Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu in the post.

In the statement, the spokes-

person said the airline is concerned about the experience of the customer in the said instance and has taken it up with the catering service provider to investigate further.

“We will take necessary actions to prevent any recurrence of such instances in future,” the spokesperson said.

Further, the spokesperson said Air India works with reputed caterers who supply to leading airlines globally and have stringent SOPs and multiple checks to ensure quality of meals served to the guests. PFI



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE PIONEER

DELHI

30 SEPTEMBER 2024

Can the Tata's pull off their aviation plan?

KUSHAN MITRA ■ NEW DELHI

At midnight between 11-12, November Air Vistara will cease to function as an independent entity as the merger of Air India and Air Vistara will be solemnised. While it is certain that several of the 60-plus aircraft in Air Vistara's fleet will continue to operate in the airlines' famous aubergine livery for a few years, the Vistara flight code UK will be retired and it is certain that Air India will rationalise routes and services between the two airlines, a process that will not be easy.

To be fair, Tata Sons has already managed an airline merger, that of the former Air Asia India and Air India Express. However, that was much easier as both airlines were low-cost single-class operators, even though they operated different aircraft, Air Asia India, the Airbus A320 and Air India Express, the Boeing 737. But as the leases on older Airbus aircraft end, it is likely that the airline will move to a single fleet of Boeing 737 MAX aircraft. Things are much more



complex for the Air India and Vistara merger even though there is largely a single-type, the Airbus A320-family of aircraft. This is because of different aircraft configurations as well as different service and training standards. Many frequent flyers, including this writer, particularly on routes out of Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru are unhappy about small things like Air India's new domestic catering options. On a recent flight between Delhi and Kochi at lunchtime, the meal provided was wholly inadequate with a sandwich and stuffed bread roll, unlike Vistara's continuing proper meal service.

There is no need for airlines to offer a meal service, but if they claim to be 'full-service' carriers they should offer a proper meal or at least offer a decent 'Buy on Board' service. The largest airline in India does not pretend to offer 'full service'; but has a 'Buy on Board' service. However, as a frequent flyer, I sincerely recommend that flyers either bring their own food onboard or eat at an airport, no matter how overpriced the latter option is.

That said, consolidation of Air India and Vistara into one large airline is a huge opportunity for Tata Sons and Indian aviation to develop India into a proper global aviation hub and compete

with middle-eastern airlines such as Emirates and Qatar Airlines. Particularly as the Indian diaspora across the world grows and will travel back to their home, as well as growing the international inbound tourism market. India is also going to grow domestic aviation at an incredible rate with an estimated 250 million flyers annually by 2028.

But if the merger stalls for any reason, Tata Sons ought to be worried as IndiGo which has built themselves up into a massive presence in India, controlling half the domestic market, will certainly make an international and premium passenger play. On the latter front they have already announced that they will be starting a 'premium' class offering from later this winter as well as a new Frequent Flyer program called 'Blu-Chip'. And with an order for 30 new Airbus A350-900 wide-body aircraft and the new Airbus A321XLR entering service next year, IndiGo can potentially threaten Air India's global expansion plans as well.

Cockroach in meal shocks Air India passenger

STAFF REPORTER ■
NEW DELHI

In a shocking mid air discovery, an Air India passenger has complained of finding a cockroach in an omelette served onboard the flight from the national Capital to New York, with the airline saying the matter has been taken up with the catering service provider for further investigation. The incident occurred on flight AI 101 on September 17, 2024, and was reported by the passenger on social media platform X. The incident has raised concerns about food safety standard prompting Air India to review its catering protocols.

This is the second incident of a potentially dangerous foreign object being discovered by passengers in meals served on Air India flights over the past four months.

In the statement, the spokesperson said the airline is concerned about the experience of the customer in the said instance and has taken it up with the catering service provider to investigate further. "Air India works with reputed caterers who supply to leading airlines globally and have stringent SOPs (standard operating procedures) and multiple checks to ensure quality of meals served to our guests. We are concerned



about the experience of the customer in the said instance and have taken it up with our catering service provider to investigate it further," the spokesperson said in a statement.

"We will take necessary actions to prevent any recurrence of such instances in future," the spokesperson said.

In a post on X, the passenger said a cockroach was found in the omelette served on the flight from Delhi to New York. "My 2 year old finished more than half of it with me when we found this. Suffered from food poisoning as a result," she said. The passenger also shared a short video and pictures of the food items served during the flight. She tagged Air India, aviation regulator DGCA and Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu in the post. In June, a passenger flying to San Francisco from Bengaluru on an Air India flight had found a blade-like metal piece in one of the meals served to him.

एआई एक्सप्रेस में अगले हफ्ते होगा एयर एशिया का विलय

■ एआईएक्स कनेक्ट के नाम से 11 साल से उड़ान भर रही एयर एशिया हो जाएगी बंद नई दिल्ली/मुंबई (एजेंसियां)।

एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस (एआईएक्स) कनेक्ट के साथ-साथ उड़ान कोड 'आई5' अक्टूबर के पहले सप्ताह में इतिहास हो जाएगा क्योंकि किफायती उड़ान कंपनी का एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के साथ विलय हो जाएगा। कंपनी के एक वरिष्ठ अधिकारी ने इसी सप्ताह बताया कि विलय प्रक्रिया लगभग एक साल से चल रही है। उन्होंने कहा कि 'सब कुछ पटरी पर है।'

एक अन्य अधिकारी ने कहा कि एआईएक्स कनेक्ट (पूर्व में एयर एशिया इंडिया) 11 साल तक उड़ान भरने के बाद बंद हो जाएगी। इसके हवाई परिचालन प्रमाणन (एओसी) के तहत पंजीकृत विमान को कानूनी विलय के तहत एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के एओसी में स्थानांतरित कर दिया जाएगा, जो अक्टूबर के पहले सप्ताह में अस्तित्व में आ जाएगी। वर्तमान में, एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस और एआईएक्स कनेक्ट प्रतिदिन

लगभग 400 उड़ानों का परिचालन करती हैं। आने वाले महीनों में परिचालन का विस्तार करने की योजना है। इसके बेड़े में 88 विमान हैं, जिनमें 61 बोइंग 737 एनजी और मैक्स तथा 27 ए320 सीईओ और नियो शामिल हैं।

अधिकारी ने कहा कि कानूनी विलय के साथ, पूर्ववर्ती एआईएक्स कनेक्ट की सभी उड़ानें एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस के



एयरलाइन कोड- 'आईएक्स' के साथ संचालित की जाएंगी और कोड 'आई5' नहीं होगा। अधिकारी ने बताया कि विलय को सुचारू रूप से चलाने के लिए पिछले तीन महीनों से एक 'वॉर रूम' काम कर रहा है, क्योंकि इस प्रक्रिया में

पट्टेदारों और हवाई अड्डों सहित कई हितधारक शामिल हैं।

उन्होंने कहा कि यह प्रक्रिया भविष्य के लिए एक आदर्श भी होगी। टाटा समूह की दोनों कंपनियों- विस्तारा और एयर इंडिया का विलय नवम्बर में होना है।



Corporate Communications Directorate

SWATANTRA BHARAT

LUCKNOW

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

एयर इंडिया फ्लाइट के खाने में कॉकरोच

नई दिल्ली। नई दिल्ली से न्यूयॉर्क जा रही एयर इंडिया की फ्लाइट में यात्री को परोसे गए खाने में कॉकरोच निकला। यात्री ने इसकी शिकायत एयरलाइन के अधिकारियों से की। इसके बाद एयर इंडिया ने खाद्य सेवा प्रदाता कंपनी के साथ जांच शुरू कर दी है। यात्री ने एक्स पर पोस्ट किया कि दिल्ली से न्यूयॉर्क जा रही फ्लाइट में मुझे ऑमलेट परोसा गया। इसमें कॉकरोच निकला। मैंने और मेरे दो साल के बेटे ने आधा ऑमलेट खा लिया, तब यह नजर आया। इसे खाने से हमें फूड प्वाइजनिंग हो गई है। उन्होंने परोसे गए खाने के वीडियो और फोटो भी एयरलाइन अधिकारियों के साथ साझा किए।

Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

FLYING COLOURS

After tech & pharma, Hyderabad has now become a sought-after destination for international aviation players, who want to get their aircraft painted & branded

HYD GIVES THE SKIES A DASH OF COLOUR



OTHER CLIENTS

- Jazeera (from Kuwait), Fly Dubai (UAE), Indigo, Jet Airways, Go Air, SpiceJet, Vistara, Air India Express, Oman Air, Fly Bood (Maldives) etc

SOME ICONIC LIVERY

- JRD Tata livery on Air Asia Aircraft
- Special livery on AirAsia to commemorate release of Rajinikanth's movie, Kabali

• GMR Aero Technic MRO facility has till date completed livery work on 150 aircraft which includes Airbus A320 Family, Boeing 737 NG/MAX, ATR 72

Photo: Shankar Reddy @



Scan this QR code to know how Hyderabad is emerging as Global Aircraft Livery Hub

Work needs precision, patience'

Dressed in white overalls, Satish Kumar and his colleagues are busy giving final touches to a 737 Max parked within the 3,000 square meter space at the MRO. The Air India Express flight is almost ready for delivery and will soon be seen cruising through air, for its destination up north. "The job is fascinating but needs tremendous concentration," says Kumar who has been doing this work for the last 10 years. He made the shift to aviation from the shipping yard. Incidentally, the majority of this work is done at night as it gives painters a quiet environment to concentrate.

"The tail of the aircraft requires maximum time and effort. The technique is tough and there is no room for error," said Srihar Reddy, who joined the team about a year ago. Previously, he worked at an oil company in Qatar.

An entire wall at the MRO is adorned by the livery work completed by these painters over the years. They explain how every line, dot, pattern that appears like simple brush strokes to regular people, is measured and turned into engineering drawings before being painted onto the aircraft.

"Apart from patience, this work also needs tremendous precision because if the paint is not appropriately distributed on the aircraft it can adversely impact the flight's stability. So, every part is weighed post the livery work to ensure there's no excess anywhere," said Ashok Gopinath, adding how the paint for the work is imported from western countries that are also environment friendly.

Booked for 2 years

Such is the demand that the MRO is booked for the next 24 months, with about 35 to 40 projects scheduled per year. And this, despite it serving only narrow-body aircraft (small commercial planes) for now.

"Apart from the luxury of space, our USP also lies in having a dedicated team of skilled painters who have been hand-picked and trained at the facility. This work requires great precision," said Ashok Gopinath, president and accountable manager at GMR Aero Technic, adding, "Given the growing demand for livery work, we are now planning to start a similar painting facility for wide-body aircraft — adjacent to the existing unit — by 2025."

Eye on future markets

There are other plans as well. To tap into the markets in Africa and CIS countries, like Azerbaijan. "Though we are getting some work from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the market has tremendous potential which we wish to explore. We are also eyeing Africa and Europe and are even making our de-

but appearance at the MRO Europe trade show in Spain later this year," said Gopinath.

Along with the talent pool, what's also drawing many to the Hyderabad facility is the cost that's significantly lower than in the US and Europe — two other markets for this job. While livery work in Hyderabad ranges between \$150,000 (Rs 1.3 crore approx) and \$200,000 (Rs 1.7 crore approx), it is at least 40% to 50% higher in the West.

"We have been seeing 20% to 30% growth in livery work every year. Also, while we started with domestic airlines alone, currently 70% (approx) of our business comes from international aviation players," said the Aero Technic president.

WE ARE PLEASED our second aircraft is now entering service. Our new and returning customers will be impressed to see this stunning aircraft at their home airports

—Tero Taskila
CHAIRMAN AND CEO OF BEING, WORLD'S FIRST PREMIUM LEISURE AIRLINE FROM MALDIVES

IT TAKES AT LEAST 8-10 days (on an average) to complete each aircraft. At least 10 people are at work at the same time to complete it because it involves a lot of intricacies

—Satish Kumar

THE TAIL OF THE aircraft requires maximum time and effort. The technique is tough and there is no room for error

—Sridhar Reddy

WE HAVE BEEN SEEING 20-30% growth in livery work every year. Also, while we started with domestic airlines alone, currently 70% (approx) of our business comes from international aviation players

—Ashok Gopinath | PRESIDENT, GMR AERO TECHNIC



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

Cockroach in AI Delhi-NY flight meal; kid 'falls ill'

New Delhi: A passenger flying Air India from Delhi to New York complained about a cockroach in her meal on Sept 17, which led to her two-year-old son falling ill. The airline said it was investigating the matter and would "take necessary actions".

A post from the X handle of @suyeshasavant said: "Found a cockroach in the omelette served to me on the AI flight from Delhi to New York. My 2 year old finished more than half of it with me, when we found this. Suffered from food poisoning as a result (sic)."

The airline said it was aware of the matter. "Air India works with reputed caterers who supply to leading airlines globally and have stringent SOPs and multiple checks to ensure quality of meals served to our guests. We are concerned about the experience of the customer in the said instance and have taken it up with our catering service provider to investigate it further. We will take necessary actions." TNN



Corporate Communications Directorate

THE TIMES OF INDIA

CHENNAI

29 SEPTEMBER 2024

Cockroach in AI Delhi-NY flight meal

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5 baby crocs flown from Bangkok in bags, 2 flyers held

Ahmed.Ali@timesofindia.com

Mumbai: Two Kurla residents have been arrested for allegedly smuggling five baby crocodiles in their baggage from Bangkok, risking the lives of the baby crocodiles.

Customs officials arrested the two and, under the supervision of wildlife experts, sent the baby crocodiles back to Bangkok.

Early Saturday morning, on suspicion that the two passengers were carrying some dutiable contraband/goods, officials of Air Intelligence Unit intercepted the two passengers. The two were identified as Mohammed Rehan Madni (41) and Hamza Mansuri (30). On checking the baggage of one of the two, they found a surgical mask box kept on the luggage trolley.

While the officials were interrogating one of them, he received a call, and it was understood that a co-passenger was waiting for him outside the airport. The officials then detained both and carried out a thorough check, finding five reptiles kept in the surgical box. The officials then intimated the regional deputy director, Wildlife Crime Control Bureau, Western Region, at Navi Mumbai. The team in-



SENT BACK BY FLIGHT

timated that they were juveniles of the Caiman Crocodile (Caiman Crocodylus).

Officials said that the import of live crocodiles requires a licence, which they did not have, and hence they were booked. Officials also mentioned that the two accused, who were sent to judicial custody, had smuggled the crocodiles to sell them in the illegal market in India, and they are yet to arrest the kingpin.