



Aviation Watch

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Promoting Consumer Awareness in Civil Aviation

MONTHLY e-NEWSLETTER

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FOCUS

RAYTHEON: AUTOTRAC AIR TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

AutoTrac is a fully integrated open-architecture system that evolved from over 30 years of ATC experience.

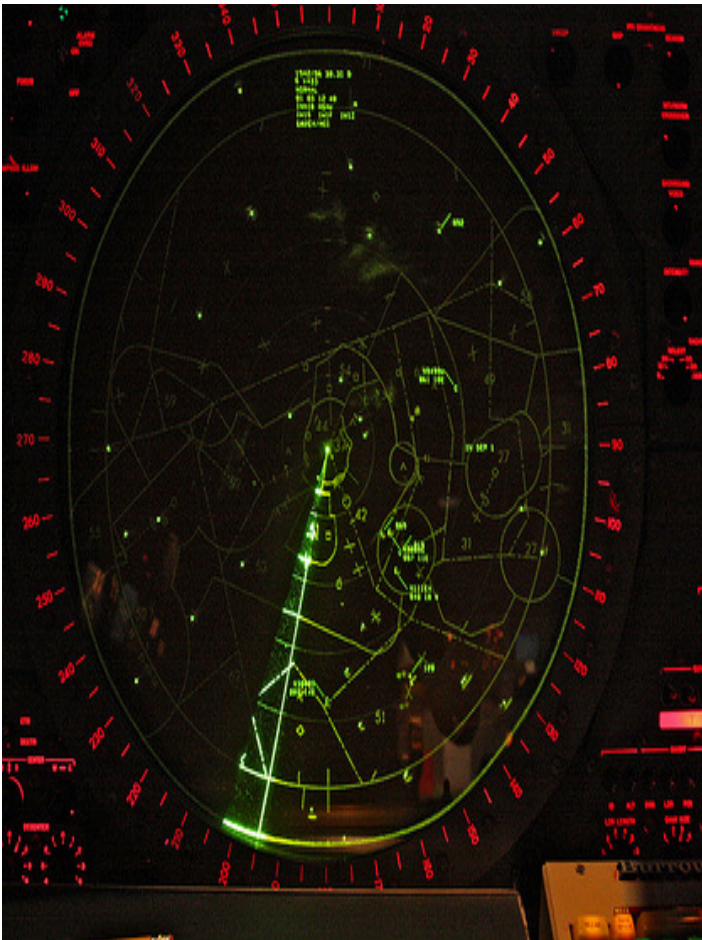
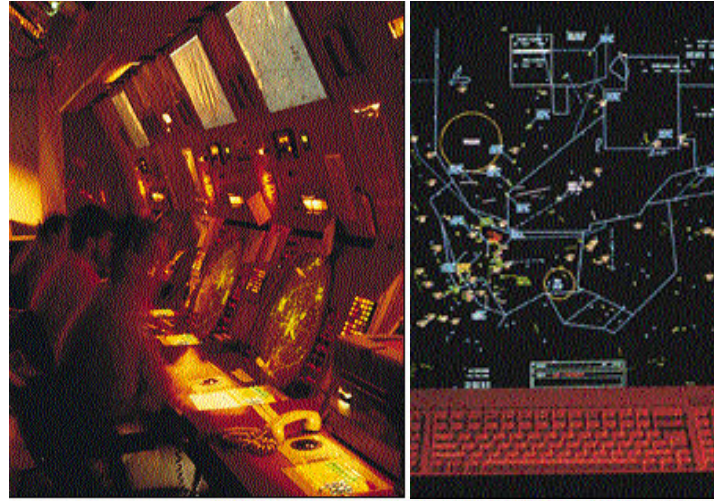
The system uses industry standard hardware and software. It uses commercial hardware and a non-proprietary operating system (UNIX). It offers reduced risk while assuring software portability and future expansion.

It uses a fully functional flight data processing system that evolved from the Spanish SATCA system, as well as a fully functional radar processing system that evolved from Canadian and German systems.

AutoTrac uses the accurate Kalman filter multi-radar tracker.

The system integrates radar and flight plan data and displays the most accurate information to air traffic controllers in a logical, easy-to-read manner increasing controller productivity.

It also reduces fatigue and stress and improves reliability.



CUSTOMER SAFETY

Compiled by: H.Zothantluangi (Mimi)

INTRODUCTION:

Customers are the most important people for any Organization. Customer, by extension includes any entity that uses or experiences the services of another. A customer may also be a viewer of the product or service that is being sold despite deciding not to buy them. So, in this report we are focusing more on the Airline Customers and their Safety. In fact, the first priority should be given to Customers' Safety when dealing with Air Transportation.

AIR SAFETY:

It is a term encompassing the theory, investigation and categorization of flight failures, and the prevention of such failures through regulation, education and training.

In the 2nd Global Aviation Safety Conference, Abdul Wahab Al Roomi, director general of the Department of Civil Aviation, Government of Sharjah has stated "Aviation safety is a very important issue around the world," says "As a civil aviation body; aviation safety is amongst our top priorities here at Sharjah International Airport. In fact, as a top priority, we have made a significant amount investment from our overall budget and even brought in international consultants in order to become the first airport in the UAE to have a GCAA approved Safety Management System. Such an approval was given to us only after a series of strict audit procedures by the GCAA.

"Furthermore, the Sharjah Department of Civil Aviation is committed to developing, implementing and improving appropriate strategies, management systems and processes to ensure that all our aviation activities uphold the highest level of safety performance that is required in accordance with national and international standards.

Airside safety and city side safety are equally important; the goal of airside safety is to maintain a secure and efficient environment for aircraft which includes personal safety, Safety around the Aircraft, Aerodrome Operations officers, vehicles, and the personnel. It focuses on the arrival and departure of aircraft which includes the runway safety, safety on aprons, control towers, hangars, and refueling facilities. The city-side constitutes safety on commercial facilities around the airport, safety on the building and car parking and cargo operations.

There are a lot of chances of being injured, harm and a chance of accident or danger in the Aviation sector which includes all the air safety hazards like misleading or lack of information, weather problems like ice and snow, lightning, structural failure of the aircraft, bird strike, fire, ground damage, criminal acts and military action like terrorism, deliberate air crew action, attack by a hostile country, the airport design and airplane evacuations etc.

Different kinds of safety measures are conducted to prevent injury or avert danger. They have their own importance in each field. Safety measures are conducted through regulations, education and training. The Air Traffic Control, a Flight Data Recorder, emergency exits, Pre flight demonstration are some of the examples for safety measures in the Airport.

India has established the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council. The Council will work directly with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and recommend steps for Air Safety. The Council will constitute of pilots, air traffic controllers, airport operators, the air force and medical specialists. Also representatives from manufactures like Boeing, Airbus and Bombardier will be special invitees to the Council.

SAFETY POLICY ISSUED BY AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Airports Authority of India had formulated and circulated its Safety policy in 2004 vide Aviation Safety Circular No. 2/2004 dated 8 March, 2004. Gaining the practical experience of last five years, we have updated our Safety policy indicating more clearly "How we do business here?" as mentioned in ICAO doc. 9859 chapter 12 page Nos. 138-139.

The Airports Authority of India states its safety policy as below:
Establishment: AAI shall conceive, design, develop and effect changes to the Aerodromes, CNS systems, ATS systems, airspace and air traffic management and procedures involving all the stake holders for safe Air Navigation in the sky and for safe aerodrome operations.

Safety Plans: AAI shall make its country wide Safety Plans, and revise periodically throughout all its operational activities for enhancement of safety.

Safety Management System: AAI shall establish SMS - the safety levels of airspace and all aerodromes, identify hazards and lay down methods of risk assessments, risk mitigation, safety measurements, reporting, monitoring and reviewing and shall endeavor to maintain the safety levels of all aerodromes, ATS and safety standards of CNS facilities even if the traffic grows.

Safety reviews: AAI shall carry out safety reviews regularly at the specified periods of the ATS and Aerodrome operations, CNS standards involving the management at station level, region level and corporate level.

Responsibilities and accountabilities: AAI shall involve all its wings (Engg., CNS, Operations, ATM, etc.) by documenting explicit safety responsibilities and shall evolve a procedure of accountabilities from top management to the line managers.

Safety culture: It shall also involve the other stake holders, the regulator in the safety promotion in the sky and ground operations by practicing the laid down procedures leading to a safety culture.

CUSTOMERS SAFETY MANUAL:

Air travel is so safe you'll probably never have to use any of the advice we're about to give you. But if you ever do need it, this information could save your life. Airline passengers usually take safety for granted when they board an airplane. They tune out the crew's pre-flight announcements or reach for a magazine instead of the cards that show how to open the emergency exit and what to do if the oxygen mask drops down. Because of this, people may be needlessly hurt or killed in accidents they could survive. For example, on the Aug 29, 2011 (AFP) - Terrified passengers jumped out of a plane in India on Monday



after it skidded to halt on landing, trying to escape before emergency ladders were put in place, officials said.

Seven passengers were injured in the pre-dawn incident when the Gulf Air flight from Bahrain to Kochi in the southern Indian state of Kerala landed badly in wet weather conditions and veered onto muddy grassland.

"The Bahrain-Kochi Airbus 320 shot 10 metres (30 feet) off the runway. Some passengers in panic jumped out of the emergency exit before the ladders were brought," A.C.K. Nair, Kochi Airport director, told AFP.

"Because the nose of the plane was damaged the emergency (inflatable) ladder did not work, so a rescue team started bringing ladders to the site. But before they arrived, people began to jump."

"All those injured were injured because they jumped out too soon."

One passenger remained in hospital and the runway was closed for several hours, Nair said.

"The preliminary investigation revealed bad weather and poor visibility caused the accident," another airport official who declined to give his name told AFP.

Nair said 137 passengers were on board the flight. Every time you board a plane, here are some things you should do:

* Carry-on bags must be properly stowed in overhead bins or under the seat in front of you. Be careful about what you put into the storage bins over your seat. Their doors may pop open during an accident or even a hard landing, spilling their contents. Also, passengers in aisle seats have been injured by heavy items falling out of these compartments when people are stowing or retrieving belongings at the beginning or end of a flight.

* As soon as you sit down, fasten and unfasten your seat belt a couple of times. Watch how it works. In an emergency you don't want to waste time fumbling with the buckle.

* Before take-off, there will be a briefing about safety procedures, pointing out emergency exits and explaining seat belts, life vests and oxygen masks. Listen carefully and if there's anything you don't understand ask the flight attendants for help.

(Aircrafts are equipped with life jackets and seat cushion as floatation device. The cabin crew demonstrates the proper use of these during the Safety Demo before the flight takes off. The cabin crews are thoroughly trained to handle any situation and

we request you to follow their instructions in case of any problems on board.)

The plastic card in the seat pocket in front of you will review some of the safety information announced by the flight attendant. Read it. It also tells you about emergency exits and how to find and use emergency equipment such as oxygen masks. As you're reading the card look for your closest emergency exit, and count the number of rows between yourself and this exit. Remember, the closest exit may be behind you. Have a second escape route planned in case the nearest exit is blocked. This is important because people sometimes head for the door they used to board the plane, usually in the front of the first class cabin. This wastes time and blocks the aisles. If the oxygen masks should drop, you must tug the plastic tube slightly to get the oxygen flowing. If you don't understand the instructions about how the mask works, ask a flight attendant to explain them to you.

When the plane is safely in the air, the pilot usually turns off the "fasten seat belt" sign. He or she usually suggests that passengers keep their belts buckled anyway during the flight in case the plane hits rough air. This is a good idea; there have been a number of instances of unexpected turbulence in which unbelted passengers were seriously injured and even killed when they were thrown about the cabin. Just as seat belts should always be worn in cars, in airplanes they should always be fastened when you are in your seat, as shown in fig.1.2



Fig1.2: Picture of Fastening of Seat-belt



Fig1.1: Picture of a seat-belt in Aircraft

Example:

The following are recent jet airliner mishaps from around the world. In each event, at least one passenger/flight attendant was injured during an unexpected turbulence encounter.

- During a flight from Singapore to Sydney with 236 passengers and 16 crews, the airplane encountered turbulence over central Australia. The plane hit an "air pocket" which caused it to drop 300 feet. Nine passengers including one pregnant woman and three crew members suffered various neck, back and hip injuries, with one of the passengers requiring surgery. Those who were injured were not wearing seat belts.
- During a flight from Japan to Brisbane 16 passengers were injured when a large aircraft encountered turbulence. Passengers had been advised to keep their seatbelts fastened while seated. The pilot in command reported that

flight conditions were smooth prior to encountering the turbulence. The weather radar did not indicate adverse weather, so the crew did not turn on the seatbelt signs. A number of the passengers who were not wearing their seatbelts were injured when they were thrown from their seats.

If you are ever in an aviation accident, you should remember these things:

- * Stay calm.
- * Listen to the crew members and do what they say. The cabin crew's most important job is to help you evacuate safely.
- * Before you try to open any emergency exit yourself, look outside the window. If you see a fire or anything blocking the exit outside the door, don't open it or the flames may spread into the cabin. Try to use your alternate escape route.
- * Remember, smoke rises. So try to stay down if there's smoke in the cabin. Follow the track of emergency lights embedded in the floor; they lead to an exit. If you have a cloth, put it over your nose and mouth.

Never smoke in airplane restrooms. Smoking was banned there after an accident killed 116 people in only 4 minutes, apparently because a careless smoker left a burning cigarette butt in the trash bin. There is a steep fine for disabling a lavatory smoke detector.

AIRPORT SAFETY TIPS IN INDIA

Airports in India can be extremely chaotic, which provides a perfect opportunity for touts, thieves and conmen. As you would anyway, don't trust strangers and stay alert. Also remember a few safety tips.

- Never leave your luggage, briefcase or other items unattended. When you set them down, place them between your feet or against your leg.
- Avoid currency exchange windows if possible or exchange only a small amount. Do not let others see how much currency you are carrying.
- Be wary of imposter porters or guides. Assure they are properly uniformed or identified.
- Pre-paid taxis and auto rickshaws (3 wheelers) are available from the airport. Use only authorized, properly identified taxis. If you have a lot of luggage, it is advisable to pre-book a private car transfer with your travel representative.
- Assure all your baggage is placed inside the taxi trunk and the lid is closed before entering the taxi.
- Don't accept an offer to share a taxi to your hotel unless you know the individual.
- Beware of touts offering cheap accommodation or deals. They are usually cheats and conmen.

TOP 10 AIRLINE SAFETY QUESTIONS:

1. Where is the safest place to sit on an airplane?

The short answer is there is no safest seat. In an aircraft accident where the plane is seriously damaged or one or more occupants are injured or killed, the severity of the injuries depends on many factors, some of which may not be apparent until an accident occurs. For example, there have been many accidents involving heavy smoke or fire where survival depended on the ability of the passengers to not panic and to quickly remove themselves and others from the aircraft after landing. Dr. Todd Curtis of AirSafe.com answered the question about the safest seat on an airplane more fully in an article at AirSafeNews.com. The safest place in case of an accident is the rear of the aircraft.

2. Which is the safest airline to fly?

Clearly there are some major airlines such as southwest of the USA which have not had a passenger die in an accident and others such as United Airlines and Korean Air which have had several fatal events. Those facts don't make one airline automatically safer than the other although it does affect the public's perception of safety. The most important indicator of the overall safety of an airline is how it is regulated by its nation's civil aviation authority. Airlines operating large capacity passenger aircraft in the major industrialized countries have to follow the strictest safety regulations. While the airlines operating smaller capacity aircraft have the choice of operating under the same rules, these smaller aircraft are not certified to the same standards as larger ones. Just as importantly, the airports and air traffic control system have to adhere to similarly high standards. Beyond that, use your good common sense. If an airline is notorious for poor on time performance, lots of passenger complaints, and severe financial problems, then perhaps it is time to find an alternative airline. While there are some airlines with no fatal plane crashes, it doesn't mean that these airlines are safe, since fatal crashes are very rare for airlines of every size.

3. Which aircraft model is the safest?

In general, all aircraft in a particular class have to adhere to the same set of standards. When safety concerns arise because of one or more accidents associated with a particular model, the civil aviation authorities of the major industrialized countries will usually require that the issue be addressed in all relevant aircraft models. For example, fatal airline accidents due to wind shear in the 1970s and 1980s in the U.S. led to a number of innovations in aircraft and ground wind shear detection systems and also in flight crew training which has led to a reduction in the risk of accidents from that weather issue. While accidents of any kind are rare, you can get a better idea of how safe an aircraft model is by comparing how often passengers die in a plane crash involving that particular aircraft model.



4. What kind of emergency am I most likely to face?

For every accident, there are dozens, even hundreds of unusual circumstances that can happen during a flight. For a passenger, the most likely emergencies that you will face where you will have to do something is an evacuation of the aircraft using the emergency slides or using the emergency oxygen system. In most cases, the evacuation is ordered as a precautionary measure, not because the passengers face imminent danger. Emergency oxygen masks may be deployed automatically or be deployed manually by the flight crew. In most cases, deployment of the masks does not indicate that the passengers are in imminent danger. For an example of an emergency evacuation that went very well, you can check out this 2005 Air France crash in Toronto where all the passengers escaped from a burning aircraft.

5. How should I prepare to face these two situations?

In the case of evacuation by the emergency slides, the best preparation is to be familiar with the location of the exits, be ready to follow the commands of the flight and cabin crew, and to wear slide friendly clothes. Specifically, high heeled shoes may cause the slide to rip, so if you have them on, take them off before leaving your seat. In the case of deployment of emergency oxygen, your first priority is to put on your own mask. If the cabin is depressurized, you face the risk of loss of consciousness. Putting on your mask first decreases the risk of your passing out before having the opportunity to help your children or other passengers with their oxygen masks.

6. If the plane crashes, don't most people die?

One can argue this question several ways. Based on a review of accidents between 1978 and 1995 with at least one fatality to a passenger, there were a total of 164 fatal accidents involving large jet transports designed in Western Europe or the U.S. In 68 cases, all passengers died and in 15 others between 90% and 100% of the passengers died. In 37 cases less than 10% of the passengers died. Among propeller driven aircraft, there were 178 events involving aircraft designed outside of the former Soviet Union and eastern Europe. Of those, all were killed in 108 cases, between 90% and 100% in six cases, and less than 10% in nine cases.

Another way to look at this is through the AirSafe.com method for evaluating plane crash survivor rates, where the estimated fatal crash rate is reduced if there are surviving passengers. For example, a crash where all passengers die is counted as one event, and if there were 50% survivors, it counts as half of an event.

7. Who decides on what changes are made for safety?

In general, the civil aviation authorities of several key countries, primarily the United States, the United Kingdom, and France, take the lead on making changes in areas such

aircraft design, aircraft operation, and pilot training. Other major industrial nations have civil aviation authorities that have regulations and requirements similar to the leading countries. In the rest of the world, the International Civil Aviation Organization plays a similar influential role. You can check out some of the other organizations responsible for airline and aviation safety.

8. Who investigates airline accidents?

In most cases, formal airline accident investigations are the responsibility of either the nation where the accident occurred or by the nation where the aircraft was registered. Depending on the accident, any number of organizations has a major role in the investigation. Typically in the United States, an accident in U.S. territory involving a U.S. registered aircraft would have the following groups directly involved in the accident investigation and analysis: the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board, the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration, the airline operating the accident aircraft, the aircraft manufacturer, and the engine manufacturer. If the accident involved sabotage or hijacking, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation would also be involved. The NTSB is focused on more serious events, and they have detailed regulations that define what an aircraft accident is.

9. Is flying getting safer or less safe today compared with 10 or 20 years ago?

In the last fifteen years or so, the fatal accident rate for passenger aircraft has not significantly changed. What has changed is the number of flights performed around the world, more than doubling during that same time. If you look at the accident rate, things haven't changed much. If look at the number of accidents, the amount of media coverage, and level of public concern, then flying may seem either more or less safe depending on how much attention is paid by the world media. For example, over a period of about seven weeks in August and September 2005, there were a total of eight events that resulted either in significant numbers of fatalities or were spectacular events that involved no fatalities but that generated intense worldwide media attention. Overall, 2005 had an average number of fatal events, but during those two months there were a heightened awareness of safety on the part of the general public.

One problem with talking about safety is that different people use different definitions. At AirSafe.com, safety can't be measured with numbers, but risk can be measured. Check out this description of the differences between risk and safety to get a better understanding of how this site deals with safety questions.

10. How often do airliners crash?

Serious airline crashes that kill passengers are rare. Since AirSafe began tracking these kinds of events in 1996, there

have been as few as seven events with passenger fatalities in 2008, and as many as 19 crashes and other events with passenger fatalities in 1997. These numbers include deaths due to deliberate actions such as airliner hijackings, or acts of sabotage or terror, and crashes involving small airliners in all parts of the world.

Crashes are much less common in the largest industrialized countries. For example, for the five years from 2005 to 2009, AirSafe.com lists 43 crashes and other events that killed at least one airline passenger. Airlines from the US, Canada, the European Community, Australia, and Japan were responsible for about three quarters of all airline traffic, but less than one quarter of the fatal events (9 of 43) took place in those countries or involved an airline based in those countries.

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<http://airconsumer.dot.gov/publications/flyrights.htm>

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<http://www.aai.aero/departments/aviation.jsp>

NEWS

AIR INDIA / INDIAN AIRLINES

Air India plane lands under emergency conditions

1st September 2011

Mumbai: An Air India plane from Jeddah with 286 passengers and crew on board today landed under emergency conditions at the airport here following suspected hydraulic failure, the second such incident in as many days involving the state carrier. All the passengers on the Jeddah-Mumbai flight were safe, an airline spokesperson.

"The AI-390 flight, carrying 286 people, including over 260 passengers, had to make a precautionary landing at the Mumbai airport due to a suspected hydraulic failure at around 1345 hrs. All the passengers deplaned safely," the spokesperson told PTI. Though the airline described the incident as a "precautionary" landing, a Mumbai airport spokesman said emergency services were activated at the airport at 1258 hrs and the Airbus 330 aircraft landed safely at 1348 hrs. The alert was withdrawn at 1413 hrs.

AI Express flights tail dips during take-off at Kochi

1st September 2011

Kochi: An Air India Express flight bound for Abu Dhabi had to land back in Kochi after its tail dipped during take-off on Sunday night. The flight was carrying about 190 passengers including four infants, and the Air Traffic Control (ATC) had noticed the incident soon after the take-off. The pilot was

asked to immediately return, after jettisoning off portion of the fuel. It took about an hour and a half to finish the fuel jettisoning process and to landed back normally, an Air India spokesman told TOI here. The passengers were then lodged in a nearby hotel and the aircraft was declared AOG (Aircraft On Ground) for carrying out the repairs.

Mix of old & new for AI Dreamliner crew

3rd September 2011

New Delhi, Aug. 31: Air India is on a recruitment drive for its Dreamliners. The airline hopes to receive the first batch of the 27 Boeing 787s by November-end. Besides experienced crew staff, the national carrier is looking to bring in freshers. Aviation experts said Air India would need a minimum of 1,000 new cabin members for the Dreamliners. "We want to change the face of the airline. A fresh young crew will be one of the highlights of the Dreamliners, although experienced crew will also be recruited. We will try and have a whole new cabin crew set-up. The existing crew on our other aircraft might not be used at all but we are still chalking things out," said a senior Air India official. The crew members for B777 and B787 Dreamliner fleet, to fly mostly on international routes, will be appointed on a fixed-term contract for three years and will be based mainly out of Delhi. Delay in the delivery of aircraft, however, has affected plans. "We would have been able to train our staff better if the aircraft were delivered on time but as it is not possible we will have to manage somehow," added the official. Dreamliners will be an integral part of Air India's turnaround plan and will be part of the operations as soon as they land in India. The national carrier has already suffered a loss of Rs 6,000 crore in revenues because of continuous delays in the delivery of the aircraft. "A committee is in place and is in talks with Boeing over the issue of compensation. It is a long-drawn process and we are not going to back down from our demand of compensation," the official said. Air India, which is trying to get its act right under new chairman and managing director Rohit Nandan, has appointed S. Venkat as its new director (finance) with a position on the board. As part of the airline's restructuring exercise, the management is undergoing a overhaul with the government recently appointing Nandan, joint secretary in the civil aviation ministry, as the new chief.

DIAL, HIAL threaten to snap credit line to AI

3rd September 2011

New Delhi: GMR group companies Delhi International Airport (DIAL) and Hyderabad International Airport (HIAL) have told the aviation ministry that they would start charging Air India on cash-and-carry basis as the government-owned airline had not paid airport charges on time for the last several months.

Air India owes about R350 crore to the two airport companies. The airport operators have continued to give credit line to the



cash-starved airline since last September on instructions from the aviation ministry to go soft. "We have informed the aviation ministry that we cannot now further give credit to Air India. We share revenue with Airports Authority of India (AAI) on the basis of projections and not on cash received. So, we have already shared almost R170 crore with AAI by market borrowings even as if we have not received payment from AI," said a GMR official.

AI does away with senior pilots in top management jobs September 03, 2011

New Delhi: After changing the top guard at the national carrier Air India, the airline management is doing away with the practice of appointing senior airline pilots at top administrative positions.

A senior airline pilot, Captain MP Sharma has been removed as the officiating General Manager, in charge of operations department in Mumbai, said sources. He has now been transferred back to his parent department as a captain to undertake flying duties. "This in keeping with the ministry's direction that airline's pilots should not be appointed to administrative positions barring those where their expertise may be needed like training etc," said a top ministry official. Earlier, the new CMD Rohit Nandan had removed two senior pilots who were appointed as Officer on Special Duty to his predecessor from that post.

Burst tyre delays Air India's Kuwait-Goa-Chennai flight September 6, 2011

Passengers of Air India's (AI) Goa-Chennai flight got delayed on September 6 as the plane that was to carry them to Chennai had a tyre-burst. The airline gave them accommodation rather than make them wait as the spare tyres were yet to be flown to Goa from other station. On Tuesday, around 128 passengers of AI's 917 Goa-Chennai flight had to wait for more than nine hours to take a 1.55 hours flight Chennai. Reason – the airlines Airbus 320 which was on its way to Goa from Kuwait and was to further take passengers to Chennai had a tyre burst after it landed at Dabolim airport. "The plane landed at Dabolim runway at 8am when tyre number 3 and 4 on the left side(rear) burst. The pilot took the plane to a nearest taxiway and all the passengers were deplaned safely," says an AI official. There were 105 passengers on board the flight and out of them 68 were from Goa and 60 more were to take the plane to Chennai. "All passengers are safe and they have been taken care off," said a spokesperson for AI. As the airline had to transport spare tyres to Goa to replace those which had burst, the airline gave hotel accommodation to passengers rather than make them wait. "We are getting spare tyres from other stations probably Delhi and fly them down to Goa with our engineers who will replace them. Passengers who were in transit as well

as those who were to board the plane from Goa to Chennai have been given hotel accommodation," she said. However, AI was not sure till what time the tyres would reach Goa and till the time of going to the press there was no confirmation on when was the flight scheduled to leave for Chennai.

Air India doesn't have money for 27 Boeing 787 Dreamliners: Vayalar Ravi 14 september, 2011

ELHI/MUMBAI: The ministry of civil aviation is having second thoughts on plans by Air India to take delivery of 27 Boeing 787 aircraft, better known as the Dreamliner, as it would aggravate the debt burden of the financially stressed national carrier. "Air India does not have the money to pay for the 27 Boeing planes. Air India will not increase its debt burden right now," said civil aviation minister Vayalar Ravi Tuesday at a public event in Delhi. Air India had ordered 27 Dreamliners in 2005 from US aerospace giant .Boeing was part of a massive fleet programme in which the state-owned airline decided to acquire 68 aircraft worth Rs 30,000 crore. This plan was questioned by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in a report submitted last Thursday on the ground that the orders were based on unrealistic assumptions about growth. Air India, which faces the daunting task of repaying debt of Rs 43,000 crore, may have to bear an additional debt burden of Rs 17,000 crore to finance the Dreamliners, the newest aircraft from Boeing. The delivery of these aircraft has been delayed by over three years, with Boeing recently announcing that the first Dreamliner will be delivered in December. Boeing (International) V-P and (India) President Dinesh Keskar said he was unaware of any move by Air India not to take delivery of the Dreamliner. "As far as Boeing is concerned, the Dreamliner for Air India is ready for deliveries in the fourth quarter of 2011. That's the stated position and will remain so." Nothing new has been conveyed to him by the airline's management, he added. "Air India is looking for a turnaround and there will be no aircraft like the Dreamliner available, which can offer this kind of fuel efficiency. This aircraft will be a game changer. They are looking at the Dreamliner as a replacement for the A-310, a 200 seater plane and this will give lots of options to the airline," Keskar said.

Air India Express crash averted in Mangalore September 16, 2011

New Delhi: More people could have lost their lives in June, in a replay of the events that led to India's worst air crash in a decade in Mangalore last year that killed 158 people. On 25 June, an Air India Express flight (IX-208) from Mumbai landed deep into the table-top runway located on a mountain in Mangalore. The captain decided to take off and land again after circling the airport, but the co-pilot overruled him in the nick of time and applied the brakes, bringing the aircraft to a



stop at the edge of the runway. A 300-ft gorge stared below. Pilot error: Air India Express continues to run without a qualified flight safety chief even a year and four months into the crash in Mangalore. Courtesy: Mohan Ranganathan "It

was actually a miracle that they survived," said Mohan Ranganathan, an air safety expert and a member of the government-appointed Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council. "If the runway was even slightly wet there was no way they could have stopped before the runway ended. But if they had tried to take off they would have certainly ended up like the last Mangalore crash." The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is investigating the incident, said two government officials familiar with the matter, declining to be identified. Air India Express, the low-fare arm of Air India Ltd, continues to run without a qualified chief of flight safety even a year and four months after the ill-fated crash in Mangalore. Incidents such as the ones described earlier are increasing. One of the government officials mentioned above said the landing of the IX-208 flight was of a magnitude of 2.9 G (acceleration due to gravity). The maximum allowed for a Boeing 737 aircraft, like the one Air India Express was flying, is 2.1 G. A 2.9 G magnitude means landing an aircraft weighing 70 tonnes would be like landing an aircraft of 200 tonnes. The impact could have broken the belly of the aircraft. An Iberia A 340-600 made a similarly hard landing of 3 G magnitude in 2007 in Quito, Ecuador. Its landing gear sensors got damaged, and that prevented normal deceleration of the aircraft due to the failure of thrust reversers and spoilers. The aircraft was damaged beyond repair. The Air India Express IX-208 was operated by commander Saravjit Singh Hothi, 62, and co-pilot Manish Chimurkar, 34. Air India Express chief operating officer S. Chandrakumar confirmed the incident. "After the Mangalore crash, the standard of co-pilot training has been improved; so the co-pilot (Chimurkar) was more aggressive in taking over control of the situation," he said. "Hothi has been grounded." In the Air India Express flight that crashed in May 2010, the co-pilot could not overrule the commander's decision to land. The co-pilot had wanted to go around and land again, according to investigation reports. The flight overshot the runway and crashed. Ranganathan said Air India Express has not learnt lessons from the Mangalore crash and the latest incident shows poor training standards. The incident was not the only one in recent months. On 28 August, another Air India Express flight that took off from Kochi suffered a tail strike because its commander R. Sobti chose a speed suitable for an aircraft 20,000 kg lighter than the one he was flying. In a tail strike, the rear end of the aircraft hits the ground during take-off. "Instead of take-off weight he used zero-fuel weight to calculate take-

off speed," said the first government official mentioned earlier. "Worryingly, the investigation shows that the ex-Indian Air Force pilot had a tendency to have a tail strike. Why did Air India Express ignore this?" Sobti, too, has been grounded, Chandrakumar said. Till an audit is done, DGCA should ground Air India Express and let Air India run those flights, said Ranganathan and the second government official. Air India is certified by International Air Transport Association's IATA Operational Safety Audit (IOSA), the global benchmark for airline safety; but Air India Express, despite committing to go through an IOSA audit last year after the Mangalore crash, hasn't done so. The aviation regulator has, meanwhile, started a base inspection of the airline. "The situation is so bad at the airline that you can't imagine," said the second government official.

Cracks in windscreen, AI flight makes priority landing Sunday, September 18, 2011

Kolkata: A Port Blair-Kolkata Air India flight made a priority landing in Kolkata on Sunday after its windscreen developed cracks shortly before touching down, airport sources said.

Air India's flight AI-788 with 59 passengers on board took off from Port Blair on scheduled time at 8.15 am.

The aircraft landed safely at 10.30 pm, the sources said.

Air India may hire new COO next January after Gustav Baldauf's resignation September 26, 2011

NEW DELHI: State-run Air India will pick a new chief operating officer (COO) by January and prefer someone from the domestic industry, according to a top executive. The airline's board has also created a post of COO for its low-cost arm, Air India Express. Cash-strapped Air India has been operating without a COO since February when expatriate Gustav Baldauf, who held the post with a hefty pay package, resigned following difference with the government. "We are looking for professionals from the Indian aviation industry this time and would not prefer to have a foreign national, mainly because you can't pay them anything below Rs 3 crore," Air India chairman and managing director Rohit Nandan said, adding that the new appointment would happen within four months. The carrier has a debt of Rs 43,000 crore and accumulated losses of over Rs13,000 crore. It has not posted a profit since 2007. "We expect an Indian professional to understand both the milieu and the market better," Nandan said. Experts say the airline desperately needs someone with business acumen at the management level. "Fifty percent of CEOs of Asia Pacific airlines don't belong to the industry, but they are people who know how to make profits in any business. This is the quality that should be looked in for an Air India COO," Jitendra Bhargava, a former Air India ED and now a commentator on the airline said. The new appointees will report to Nandan. "The



government should abstain from interfering with the work of this person for the desired results," Bhargav said. A panel working on a turnaround plan for the airline is expected to meet next week to give its recommendations. AI had appointed three professionals in 2010 — COO Baldauf, chief training officer Stephan Sukumar and Air India Express CEO Pawan Arora — on salaries ranging from Rs1-3 crore to help turn around the organisation. While Arora was asked to go last November, Baldauf exited early this year followed by Sukumar. But the move evoked resentment among its employees as none of the old company insiders was made a part of the team and the appointees were being paid exorbitant salaries at a time when there was uncertainty over payment of employee wages. Bhargav had earlier pointed out how Air India had lost maximum market share when Baldauf was COO. In November last year, low-cost carrier IndiGo, with a fleet of 39 aircraft, overtook the Maharaja, which has 124 aircraft. The airline's market share kept dwindling to touch a low of 13.2% in May this year. The market share has since improved to 16.5% in July and over 17% in August

INDIAN AVIATION NEWS

SpiceJet pays most in compensation to passengers

1st September 2011

New Delhi: Budget carrier SpiceJet had to shell out over Rs 31 lakh as compensation to over 17,000 passengers in July. This is the highest among all the airlines. According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), all the airlines had to spend, on compensation and facilities, over Rs 66 lakh for over 47,700 passengers. This amount was spent on account of denied boarding, cancellation and delay beyond two hours. Interestingly, SpiceJet's competitor and leader in the budget airline space, Indigo, did not report any case for compensation or facilities on account of denied boarding and cancellation during July. Even another budget carrier Go Air had mentioned 'Nil' under the head 'denied boarding'. DGCA data show that Jet Airways and Go Air had the maximum number of complaints while Air India and Indigo had the least. During July, 1,055 passenger-related complaints were received. Jet Airways and Indigo had 3.6 complaints per 10,000 passengers carried and for Air India and Indigo, the number was 1.4 each. Go Air had the best record in terms of 'on time' performance during July. 93.1 per cent of its flights were on time. 'On-time' means flights that departed within 15 minutes of the schedule time of departure. Here, the national carrier Air India scored very poorly and came last with only 75 per cent flights on time. However, Air India performed much better in terms of passengers carried in July. All, except Air India, showed decline in the number of passengers carried. Air India carried 8.33 lakh passengers in July in comparison to 7.93 lakh in June.

Bomb Hoax on Mumbai-Chandigarh Kingfisher Flight

1st September 2011

Mumbai/Chandigarh: Security agencies went into a tizzy Tuesday following a bomb scare on a Kingfisher Airlines Mumbai-Chandigarh flight, but it turned out to be hoax, officials said. Police sources said that staff of the Kingfisher flight IT-3185, which had landed in Chandigarh Tuesday evening from Mumbai, found a used tissue paper with a message scribbled that there was a bomb on the flight. The security agencies at the Chandigarh airport were alerted and a thorough inspection of the aircraft was carried out. "However, nothing was found. It was a hoax. The flights were resumed after some time," a police officer said in Chandigarh.

Turkish Airways plane still stuck in mud, Mumbai runway closed

2nd September



Mumbai: The main runway at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport has been shut till 8 pm after a Turkish Airways flight arriving from Istanbul veered off a rapid exit taxiway at around 4 am this

morning. The aircraft is still stuck in mud. All flights coming in and going out of Mumbai are now operating from the secondary runway. There is an approximate delay of 20-40 minutes in arrivals and departures. The incident also caused two flight diversions in the morning. Flight TK-720 had 97 people on board; no casualties or injuries have been reported. Mumbai International Airport Pvt. Ltd. said all emergency procedures were immediately activated and passengers were disembarked safely and taken to the terminal. The incident happened close to the main runway so it was closed as a precautionary measure. Airport authorities maintain that the ground staff had carried out a thorough inspection before the landing so there was nothing wrong with the runway or the taxiway. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a probe into the incident. "We have categorised this as a serious incident," DGCA Director General Bharat Bhushan told NDTV. Operations were suspended at the airport briefly this morning - between 8.40 am and 8.52 am - due to low visibility. They have resumed now.

Diversions due to the incident:

G9 0407, Sharjah-Mumbai, diverted to Ahmedabad at 0414 hrs. It later landed back at 0733 hrs
SQ 7955, Freighter, Chicago-Brussels-Mumbai diverted to Chennai at 0521 hrs.

IndiGo begins international operations

2nd september 2011

Low-cost carrier IndiGo on Thursday launched its maiden international flight from the national capital to Dubai, becoming only the fourth Indian low-cost carrier to operate overseas services.

"Dubai is a key market for us and holds a lot of promise. We hope to provide the much needed avenue for countless Indians and overseas travellers," IndiGo President Aditya Ghosh said. The new service will be operated from Terminal-3 (T3) of the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) at Delhi. "IndiGo will operate daily direct flight services between Dubai-Delhi and Delhi-Dubai at an affordable return fare of Rs 9,999 inclusive of all taxes," the firm said in a statement. The airline added that it plans to operate Mumbai-Dubai-Mumbai flight from October 2. The airline got the permission to fly overseas after it fulfilled the regulatory requirements of five years of operations and a fleet of at least 20 aircraft. It is the fourth low-cost carrier after Air India Express, JetLite and SpiceJet to be given the permission to run overseas services. According to officials of civil aviation watchdog, the Directorate General for Civil Aviation (DGCA), IndiGo's international rights will allow operations from many cities in India to Singapore, Bangkok, Dubai and Muscat, to begin with. The budget airline had stunned the Indian aviation space in January when it announced a \$15 billion deal with the European aircraft manufacturer Airbus for buying 180 A-320 aircraft.

Ratan Tata readies plan to enter aviation business

2nd September 2011

MUMBAI: Ratan Tata may have given up plans to get into civil aviation but the chairman of the \$72 billion Tata Group is putting pieces together to be a major player in the general aviation space. Tata, a trained pilot, is working out deals with international players for business jets, helicopters as well as for aircraft management and maintenance services. Investments in this space are being driven by the group's two main holding companies, Tata Sons and Tata Industries. The group is in talks with Florida-based Avantair to establish a partnership in India, where use of private planes by companies is on the rise. Avantair's business model is of fractional ownership, giving individuals and businesses the benefits of whole aircraft ownership at a fraction of the cost. The firm intends to emulate its US programme here, said sources familiar with the plans. "Discussions including the equity structure of the venture are at an early stage," they added. If things work out as planned, it will be the salt-to-software conglomerate's second investment in a fractional jet operator after Singapore's BJETS in February 2008. The group's hospitality arm Indian Hotels (Taj chain) holds about 62% stake in BJETS, which has a fleet of four aircraft comprising of Cessna and Hawker jets. The Tata Group is also

set to form a 50:50 joint venture with Hong Kong's Metrojet to offer aircraft maintenance services to the growing Indian corporate aviation market. The country has some 130 private jets, accounting for 12% of global market that analysts expect to double in the next ten years. The group plans to separate its small aircraft management services unit housed under Taj Air into the new JV company, sources explained. Until a few years ago, the Tata Group had a small presence in air charter services. Through Taj Air it had forayed into business aviation in 1993 and had just one aircraft. The main purpose was to fly Taj guests to various Taj properties within the country. Last year, Taj Air increased its fleet size to four aircraft comprising of Falcon and Avanti jets, and also started offering aircraft maintenance service. Ratan Tata, said sources, is himself spearheading the initiative and putting the building blocks in place for the group to emerge as a significant player in the business aviation space. Last year, Tata Sons acquired a one-third stake in Italy's Piaggio Aero Industries, manufacturer of the Avanti II turboprop twin, marking the group's entry into aircraft manufacturing. Though the group, that pioneered commercial airlines business in India through Tata Aviation which after nationalization became Air India, it has almost buried its desire to enter the civil aviation sector after a couple of failed attempts. In mid-1990s, it planned to float an airline with Singapore Airlines and then it looked to buy a 40% stake in Air India, when the government was talking of divesting its stake in the national carrier.

Capt Gopinath to sell Deccan 360

3RD September 2011

Bangalore/Mumbai: A final effort is on to salvage whatever little is left of Deccan 360, the air & ground cargo service launched by low-cost aviation pioneer G R Gopinath. Discussions have been initiated to sell the company to a Mumbai-headquartered, highly diversified, multi-billion dollar corporate group which has interests in retail and logistics, among various others.

Since early May, Deccan 360 had stopped its services because the volumes did not pick up to service the lease for the three Airbus 310s. The aircraft has since been taken back by the lessors. Deccan 360 now has only two ATRs, which is grounded as the company is not taking any orders. Close to 1,000 employees have been asked to look-out for jobs and the majority have left the company in the past couple of months. Deccan 360, launched during May 2009, had raised Rs 115 crore equity investment from Reliance Industries early last year, with a commitment to invest further as the operations expand. With operations of Deccan 360 not going according to plans, RIL stopped investments and is understood to have expressed willingness to exit or pare down its stake. According to investment bankers close to RIL, Reliance Industries has since structured a transaction to move its investment in Deccan 360 to RIL's CMD Mukesh Ambani's personal investment portfolio. Ever since May 2011, Capt Gopinath has been trying in vain to



raise resources from various private equity funds and other global players to raise fresh investment through companies which would buyout RIL's stake and invest further to take the operations further. The search seems to have led him to the large corporate house and talks are understood to have progressed well.

Take off to coastal destinations

3rd September 2011

AHMEDABAD: Get ready to fly to Dwarka and Somnath soon. The Tourism Corporation of Gujarat Limited (TCGL) will start an amphibian air service connecting all coastal destinations in the state. TCGL has completed all formalities and will soon sign an MoU with Maritime Energy Heli Air Services (MEHAIR) for amphibian aircraft services along the Gujarat coast. In the initial phase, said sources, these flights will provide air link to tourists for Dwarka, Somnath, Mandvi, Porbandar, Bhavnagar and Surat. Siddharth Verma, CEO of MEHAIR, said the firm was in talks with Gujarat Tourism Department. MEHAIR also want to connect Saputara and Sardar Sarovar Dam with amphibian aircraft. "All we need is a lake or a dam for landing and these are available at all places along the coast in the state. Our surveys reveal the service may also be extended to the Sardar Sarovar dam at Kevadia," said Verma. MEHAIR has launched India's first floatplane in Andaman & Nicobar Islands and have already signed MoUs with Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra governments. MEHAIR operates a Cessna 208 amphibian aircraft with a capacity of nine passengers. Verma said, "Once all formalities are completed we will require three months to start operations." "Gujarat has a huge coastline of 1,600 km and when the service was proposed, we agreed. MEHAIR has carried out the survey before proposing," said Vipul Mitra, principal secretary tourism. No runway or airstrip is required for these flights. Only small wooden jetties and speed boats are needed to take passengers to the aircraft. He said that MEHAIR has also carried out a survey for starting this service from Sardar Sarovar Dam also. "We are yet to take a final call for starting the services from Narmada dam." He said according to the presentation given by the company it would take just 45 minutes to fly to Surat from Mandvi. A senior officer of TCGL said they have got an approval from the Director General of Civil Aviation as the operator for non-scheduled operations.

Plane skid due to speeding pilot: DGCA

September 03, 2011

Mumbai: According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Friday's incident is the second in the last four days in which the pilot was found to have made an error of judgement. "On the basis of preliminary findings, we can tell that this has not happened because of rain but as a result of error in judgement by the pilot. The first mistake was that the flight headed towards the taxiway at a high speed, and the second

was the application of emergency brakes at that speed due to which the plane veered off and got stuck in the mud," a senior DGCA official said. Officials from Turkish Airways said there were no casualties. But the skid partially blocked the runway and caused it to be closed, which delayed flights. An airport official said the runway would remain closed till 8 pm yesterday. Joint DG, DGCA, AK Sharan, said, "We have constituted a three-member investigation team that is investigating all the aspects related to the incident." The airport operator, MIAL, issued a statement saying they had carried a runway check at 3.58 am and "all infrastructure and facilities were found functional". A landing and takeoff took place after that. A statement released by Turkish Airlines blamed the skid on the rains.

Delhi airport has one of the lowest operating costs

September 03, 2011

New Delhi: The Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL), a special purpose vehicle that operates the Delhi airport, has one of the lowest operating costs among the 16 airports of its size across the globe, according to an analysis by LeighFisher India Private Ltd — an aviation advisory services firm. "Our analysis indicates Delhi's (airport's) operating costs are very low in relation to those of its peers in the sample, particularly when expressed in terms of terminal capacity," says the advisory firm's report. "Even as our costs are one of the least, we are losing Rs 2 crore every day. The discontinuation of airport development fee has also impacted our revenue by Rs 56 crore a month," said a GMR spokesperson. Delhi airport charged Rs 200 for every domestic passenger and Rs 1,300 for every international passenger leaving the airport. These charges were discontinued after a court order. Of the 70,000 passengers catered to by the airport daily, around half are departures. The airport is run by a consortium led by the Bangalore-headquartered GMR Group and comprising state-owned Airports Authority of India, Germany's Fraport and Malaysian Airport Holdings. Delhi airport would take three more years to break even. DIAL had mandated LeighFisher to provide benchmark data for its talks with the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority.

Mumbai Airport's main runway re-opens after four days

September 05, 2011

Mumbai: The main runway of the Mumbai International Airport was re-opened on Monday after four days. The runway was shut for four days after a Turkish Airlines flight had veered off the runway and got stuck in the mud near the runway. Airport authorities said that the Turkish Airlines flight was removed at 1.17 a.m. on Monday and the runway was re-opened at 6.51a.m.

A combined team of engineers from Larsen & Toubro, Mumbai International Airport Ltd (MIAL), Air India as well as Turkish

Airlines were working together with 200 labourers in shifts since Friday to tow away the aircraft. The aircraft was taken to the Air India hangar for repairs.

India Inc looks to fly its biz jets below the radar

September 05, 2011

New Delhi: Business jets and chartered flights have been an unlikely victim of the recent corruption scandals involving India Inc. Businesses' reluctance to splurge and show off has taken a heavy toll on general aviation, which includes aircraft not flown by the government or private airline companies (called scheduled operators) or the military. According to figures from the Airports Authority of India (AAI), the growth of general aviation in terms of movements went into the red in the first quarter of this financial year. The sector saw a fall of 12.9 per cent in April-June this year, compared to a growth of 36.6 per cent during the same period last year. Traffic movements (landing and take-off by planes) during the first quarter of this financial year fell to 63,000 from 72,000 during the same period last year. The sector saw a decline of 17.7 per cent in April, 15.6 per cent in May and 5.7 per cent in June. "People who take chartered flights are mainly corporate personalities and politicians. Both sections have stopped taking chartered flights after the 2G scam, as everyone is under scrutiny by various intelligence organisations," says Pradip Thampi, director, Executive Airways, a Mumbai-based aircraft charter company that rents out planes. He says the fare for an eight-seater Mumbai-Delhi-Mumbai chartered flight is Rs 14 lakh — a seat cost of around Rs 175,000 — much higher than a return business class ticket between Delhi and Mumbai that costs Rs 18,000. "No one wants to be seen paying so much for such short trips, which is why people are avoiding chartered flights," says Thampi. Subash Goyal, chairman, Stic, which provides chartered aircraft, feels the scam could be one of the reasons behind the fall in demand. "The scams in the recent past are one reason, but there are other factors too, such as the slowdown in the economy."

Aviation ministry counters CAG's charges

Saturday, September 10, 2011

New Delhi: A day after the government watchdog's report slamming aircraft acquisition, the civil aviation ministry defended the Rs 41,000 crore aircraft deal for Air India, its bilateral policy and blamed the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) for lack of understanding of the complexities of the aviation sector. "The decision to acquire aircraft for both Air India, Indian Airlines and Air India Express was based on an urgent need to replace the ageing fleet (almost 20 years) and building capacity for future growth in view of fierce competition both domestic and international carriers," top ministry sources told The Indian Express. They called the CAG report contradictory as on one hand it said the process took unduly long time from 1996 onwards and on the other it said the process was speedily concluded. "All due processes for

acquisition were followed by AI and government," said the source. The government, fully aware of the negative net worth of both the airlines, had agreed to provide sovereign guarantees at the time of acquisition, the source said. The ministry debunked charges that a large number of aircraft have been acquired by the carrier.

14 cartridges seized from Sufi singer Wadali at airport

September 11, 2011

Amritsar: Fourteen cartridges of .32 bore pistol were today seized from the baggage of Sufi singer Pyare Lal Wadali at Rajasansi Airport shortly before he boarded a flight for Delhi from here.

The seizure was made by the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel during baggage screening at the airport, officials said. When Wadali was questioned, he instantly admitted that the cartridges belonged to him but said they were mistakenly brought in his baggage. He also produced his licence of .32 bore pistol. The CISF, customs and immigration officials besides intelligence sleuths present at the airport subsequently allowed him to take the Jetlite flight from Amritsar to Delhi. The cartridges were, however, confiscated by the CISF and Wadali was issued warning to remain careful in future.

Mahindras take to skies with 5-seater aircraft

September 14, 2011

Mumbai: In what is being described as a milestone for both the country's indigenous civil aviation and the public-private partnership programmes, the software-to-transportation Mahindra group in collaboration with CSIR National Aerospace Laboratories has successfully test-flown a five-seater aircraft. The project, which took three years to move from the drawing board to the skies, is billed to revolutionize Indian transportation over the next decade. The aircraft has completed five tests in the last ten days and it could take six months or more before it gets the FAR 23 certification, which guarantees the highest standards of safety. It could then go for commercial development. Once ready, each aircraft is expected to cost around \$400,000 (about Rs 2 crore) and would also be the first such commercial aircraft in the world which offers a five seat configuration. For the Mahindra group, it is the second leap into aviation after it acquired the Australia-based aircraft maker Gippsland Aviation about two years ago. The running cost of the aircraft (in terms of per seat km) would be only 30% more expensive than a car, Hemant Luthra, chairman of Mahindra Aerospace said. The market for small aircraft (20 seats and below) started to de-grow in 2007 and stands at roughly 2000 a year and is expected to turn the corner in 2011 with a small growth, he said. The main competitors for Mahindra in the segment include Cessna and Piper. The aircraft is ideal as an air taxi operator and for distances of about 300 km, Mahindra Aerospace CEO Arvind Mehra said.



Passenger opens emergency door, delays Kingfisher flight September 14, 2011

A New Delhi-bound Kingfisher Airlines flight (IT 4660) had to delay the take-off from Lucknow airport on Tuesday night after one of the emergency doors flung open while the aircraft was taxiing on the runway. Around 10.30 pm, the over 60 passengers on board had a scare as soon as the announcement about the delay was made just before the departure. According to the airline, the door was accidentally opened by a passenger. The cabin crew detected the problem in time and delayed the take off by three hours.

Mangalore Air Crash - Victims' Families Decide to Approach Supreme Court September 14, 2011

Mangalore: Feeling humiliated and harassed, Mangalore Air India Crash Victims Families Association has decided to appeal to the Supreme Court (SC) against a decision of Kerala High Court (HC). It may be recalled that a single-judge bench of Kerala HC, based on a petition filed by the association, had ordered Air India to pay compensation at the rate of Rs 75 lac per victim relating the above crash. Air India had questioned this decision in the division bench of the HC. The division bench not only stayed operation of the single-judge bench order, but also asked the victims to find a solution to the problem by entering into a process of dialogue with Air India. Aggrieved by the order, the association is thinking of approaching SC.

A meeting of victims of the crash is being held at Sahodaya Hall in the city at 11.30 am on September 18, for discussing the above decision. The meeting is proposed to be organized to hold detailed discussions on the pros and cons, cost, etc of approaching the SC, before taking a final decision.

Kingfisher flight makes harsh landing Monday, September 19, 2011

Bangalore: A Kingfisher Airlines flight from Delhi made a rough landing in Bangalore giving a jolt to the passengers late evening at the Bengaluru International Airport on Sunday.

Captain Salaluddin on the commercial flight (Airbus 8321) announced: "Sorry for the harsh landing ladies and gentlemen, I was training my under officer (Gaurav), he will get the hang of it soon." A senior IPS officer who was in the aircraft told Deccan Herald: "One could realise that the pilot was flying low and even the approach for landing was wrong. Finally, the pilot lost control of the aircraft and did a very harsh landing."

DGCA faults Jet's cabin crew training 20 september 2011.

A year after two dozen passengers of Jet Airways (India) Ltd were injured during an emergency evacuation, some of them

as they jumped from the plane's wing, India's aviation regulator has faulted the airline's crew and training standards in a report. On 27 August last year, Jet's cabin crew noticed what appeared to be an engine fire as its flight (9W302) was taxiing at Mumbai airport with 139 passengers onboard. It turned out to be a false alarm but the evacuation that followed led to some injuries. "In the process of evacuation, 25 passengers were injured and four of them were seriously injured with multiple fractures on the legs. There was neither smoke nor actual fire in the incident," the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said in an investigation report released on Monday. The regulator blamed the crew's handling of the situation, saying they did not have a "basic awareness of the external lights, especially the anti-collision lights of the aircraft," the regulator said. "During cabin crew SEP (safety and emergency procedure) training, crew were trained for emergency evacuation for fire depending on external situational assessment. However, they were not trained to recognize fire from the engine." Jet's crew also didn't have "training on over-wing exit evacuation", it added. The regulator said some crew members, without coordinating with the cabin crew in-charge, "opened the over-wing exit on right and left side, which (was) the main cause for the injuries to the passengers". DGCA in its report recommends action against the cabin crew involved for their lapses, a review of Jet's evacuation procedures as well as its SEP training based on the findings and contributory factors. An email to Jet Airways' spokesperson seeking the airline's comments on the report remained unanswered. An expert said the incident showed grey areas in training. "If they (crew) don't know the difference between the reflection of anti-collision light and actual fire that doesn't speak highly of the training standards," said Mohan Ranganathan, a Chennai-based safety expert and member of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Council. "They should seriously enhance the quality of safety and emergency procedure training." DGCA has labelled the Jet Airways episode a "serious incident" despite the Indian Aircraft Rules definition that says it is an accident if "any person suffers death or serious injury" or "the aircraft receives substantial damage." An "incident" does not warrant a rise in insurance premiums for an airline unlike the "accident" qualification, Ranganathan said. DGCA could not be immediately reached for comment.

Kingfisher Red to Shut Down in 4 Months: Mallya 28th September 2011

Low-cost carrier Kingfisher Red would shut down in four months with the airline group chief Vijay Mallya today saying several measures have been initiated to face financial problems caused by high interest burden and burgeoning fuel costs. "We are doing away with Kingfisher Red because we don't intend to compete in the low-cost segment ... (But) all is not doom and gloom as people like to report," Mallya told reporters after the Annual General Meeting of the Kingfisher Airlines here. "We believe there are more than enough guests who prefer to travel the full-service Kingfisher Class, and that shows through in our



own performance where the load factors in Kingfisher Class are more than in Kingfisher Red," he said. Mallya had bought over the erstwhile Air Deccan, the first Indian low-cost airline founded in 2003, and re-branded it as Kingfisher Red in August 2008. Air Deccan then had a fleet of 21 aircraft, all in economy-class configuration. "Clearly the margins of Kingfisher Class are better than Kingfisher Red as the yields are better", he said, adding that reconfiguration of aircraft have already started and should be completed over the next four months. A statement from the company later said Kingfisher is undertaking cabin reconfiguration "which will add significant number of seats and, hence, generate additional revenue at minimal cost." "All of Kingfisher's Airbus aircraft will have a first class with incremental seats in economy. At this time Kingfisher will be dropping the Kingfisher Red class of service. This effort will be concluded in the next four months." Mallya said that at the AGM, the shareholders unanimously approved a Rs 2,000 crore rights issue. The shareholders had earlier approved Global Depository Receipt (GDR) issue. But the GDR, a financial instrument used by private markets to raise capital in either US dollars or euros, could not be launched due to various external factors like the high crude oil price regime, he said. "But there are always opportunities that show up and we are obviously examining all options available to us including the rights issue that was approved today," he said. In the wake of reports of financial turbulence faced by Kingfisher, Mallya allayed apprehensions of his shareholders saying the airline would need to infuse more funds to remain afloat and efforts were being made in that direction. He also sent a communication to the shareholders. Elaborating on initiatives being taken to improve margins and reduce the interest burden, he said a debt recast package has been implemented, which includes Rs 1,300 crore loan from bankers. In addition, funds of promoters to the extent of Rs 745 crore were converted into share capital. Among the steps being taken were sale and lease-back of some aircraft and other assets to reduce loans and conversion of some rupee loans into low cost forex loans based on existing forex cash flows. The Kingfisher chairman said that aviation demand remains strong and Kingfisher has a market share of approximately 20 per cent. "Kingfisher is also India's most awarded airline, recognised for the quality of its product and service and its vast network," he said.

13 Kingfisher Flights Cancelled for 'Maintenance' September 28, 2011

Chennai: As many as 13 flights of Kingfisher Airlines were cancelled today owing to "scheduled maintenance". On reports that the cancellation was due to non-payment of fuel dues to oil marketing companies, the airlines said "There is absolutely no issue with fuel dues. We are in full compliance with the payments terms with oil companies as mutually agreed from time to time".

INTERNATIONAL AVIATION NEWS

Two small planes collide mid-air over Alaska 3rd September 2011



Anchorage, Alaska: Authorities say two single-engine planes have collided in midair over western Alaska. Each plane was reportedly carrying one pilot. National Transportation Safety Board investigator

Clint Johnson told the Anchorage Daily News that reports from the scene that the pilot of a Ryan Air Cessna 207 survived Friday's crash and is now near the village of Nightmute. He added that the other plane was reported to be in flames but there was no word on its pilot's status. Alaska State Troopers dispatched a helicopter carrying medics from Bethel, about 100 miles east of Nightmute, which is located on Nelson Island off Alaska's western coast.

Airliner Skids Off Canadian Runway September 05, 2011

A United Express regional passenger jet has skidded off a runway at Ottawa International Airport. Authorities said the 44 passengers and crew on the plane were not apparently injured, but the Sunday incident did result in a fuel spill. Ottawa fire services sprayed foam on the spilled fuel and around the disabled aircraft. Ottawa police report the Chicago to Ottawa flight skidded into a grassy area. A Reuters' photographer reported seeing a damaged wing. No cause for the mishap was reported.

U.S. warns on small planes, but says no plots known September 5, 2011

Washington (CNN) -- U.S. officials say terrorists could try to use small aircraft in attacks, but have no specific information that such a plot is in the works, according to a new notice distributed by federal officials. "Violent extremists with knowledge of general aviation and access to small planes pose a significant potential threat to the Homeland," according to an intelligence bulletin issued by the Department of Homeland Security and the FBI. But according to the alert, U.S. officials "do not have current, credible information or intelligence of an imminent attack being planned against aviation" by al Qaeda or its affiliates. In the alert, which was obtained by CNN, officials say as recently as early 2011, al Qaeda was considering options for targeting aviation "possibly believing such operations would have a greater impact than other types of attacks." Among the strategies al Qaeda members have discussed are using a private aircraft to carry explosives, finding a Western operative who could easily travel to the United States or Europe to get flight



training or renting private planes for attacks, "believing supervision would be lax due to the large number of private aircraft." The bulletin was issued to state and local law enforcement agencies on Friday, a little over a week before the 10th anniversary of the September 11, 2001, attacks on New York and Washington. Al Qaeda operatives killed nearly 3,000 people in those attacks by hijacking four commercial airliners and turning them into missiles, and some of the terrorists had received flight training in the United States. Matthew Chandler, a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security, said although there is no specific intelligence about a plot, alerts are regularly shared with law enforcement partners on "evolving tactics that could be used by violent extremists to carry out attacks against the United States." He noted al Qaeda and others have targeted aviation since the 1990s and persist in seeking aviation training. Chandler said the bulletin is intended to "highlight the need for continued awareness and vigilance." U.S. officials including President Barack Obama have expressed concerns about so-called lone-wolf attackers who do not belong to terror organizations and have no co-conspirators, but believe in a radical ideology. The intelligence alert says a lone wolf who engaged in an aviation attack would be particularly hard to detect, because "their plans to misuse or steal small aircraft would be difficult to monitor and predict." In the past, some members of Congress, including West Virginia Sen. Jay Rockefeller have expressed concern about possible security vulnerabilities in the general aviation sector. The bulletin lists several instances in which small planes had been stolen, including the 2002 case of a 15-year-old boy in Florida who crashed a Cessna into a Bank of America tower in Tampa. The teen, Charles Bishop, left behind a note indicating that he supported al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden and that the act was deliberate, "but there are no indications the boy had connections with terrorist organizations," the bulletin states. In addition, a man with an apparent grudge against the Internal Revenue Service crashed his own single-engine Piper Cherokee into a building that houses an IRS office in Austin, Texas, in 2010, killing himself and a worker in the building. That incident was not included in the most recent bulletin. The alert issued Friday lists several suggestions to prevent misuse of small planes such as securing aircraft to prevent misuse, verifying the identities of crew members and passengers, being aware of and reporting anyone who could be masquerading as a pilot, and reporting any planes that have been modified in an unusual or unauthorized way.

Security Changes at General Aviation Airports September 6, 2011

Major airports aren't the only aviation facilities to undergo a security overhaul in the nearly 10 years since September 11th, 2001. Smaller, general aviation airports, have also seen large-scale changes. Major airports aren't the only aviation facilities to undergo a security overhaul in the nearly 10 years since September 11th, 2001. Smaller, general aviation airports, have

also seen large-scale changes. Immediately after the attacks in 2001, the Wisconsin Bureau of Aeronautics mandated that all Wisconsin general aviation airports have a detailed security plan. Wausau Downtown Airport was one of the first in the state to respond. A perimeter fence was placed around the entire facility and restricted access security gates were built. The airport also houses a flight school. Shortly after the terrorist attacks, a Federal security program was put into place that requires the T.S.A. to audit all flight schools to make sure the students are legal. Despite the changes, the airport's first line of defense are the people who use it most. "It's very similar to neighborhood watch, so the tenants and the users of the airport are really the eyes and the ears of the security program. There's a list of things that could be construed as suspicious activity and when any of that suspicious activity is taking place, we have a chain of command that we go through to report it", said John Chmiel, Wausau Downtown Airport Manager.

Smoke on plane headed for UAE delays flight from India September 11, 2011

Emirates Airlines in Dubai said it will not be able to comment on an incident of smoke reported to have caused the delay of its flight to Dubai from Kolkata airport yesterday morning.

According to a report by Times of India the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport was put on alert after ground staff saw smoke coming out of the EK0571. Fire tenders were rushed to the parking bay and the 13-member crew were asked to disembark from the flight. Engineers later found a crack in the lubricant chamber of the plane's auxiliary power unit had caused a leak and the smoke, the report added.

Housewife & Two Indian Men Detained, Stripped Searched After 9/11 Flight Landed in Detroit September 14, 2011

Shoshana Hebshi will never forget where she was on the 10th anniversary of Sept. 11. She and two other airline passengers were handcuffed and strip-searched after flying into Detroit on Sunday. No charges were filed against Hebshi, a self-described "half-Arab, half-Jewish housewife living in suburban Ohio," or the two Indian men sitting next to her, who were flying in from Denver when the crew of Frontier Airlines Flight 623 alerted authorities that they were reportedly behaving suspiciously. In a blog post titled "Some real Shock and Awe: Racially profiled and cuffed in Detroit," Hebshi, an American citizen, told her tale of temporary detainment, which she had begun to share with Twitter followers in real-time - until handcuffs were placed on her wrists. Hebshi, a writer and editor and mother of twin sons, didn't know the other two passengers in Row 12. They were Indian men, she wrote. And they didn't know each other. But they got a lot closer when they were all crammed into the back of a squad car. What happened, according to Frontier spokesman Peter Kowalchuk, begins with a bathroom. "One of the males, who was not feeling well, got up to use the restroom



during the flight. The other male got up at approximately the same time to use the restroom. The female remained seated in her row," the FBI said in a statement. Crews reported the men sitting next to Hebshi were spending "an extraordinarily long time" in the plane's lavatory, Kowalchuk said. Amid heightened security fears on the tenth anniversary of the 2001 attacks, no one was taking chances.

- After the plane landed, far from any terminals, the captain told everyone to remain in their seats or "there would be consequences," Hebshi wrote. A group of officers had gathered outside. Hebshi tweeted from the plane before officers arrested her, instructing her to not bring her phone.
- "Before I knew it, about 10 cops, some in what looked like military fatigues, were running toward the plane carrying the biggest machine guns I have ever seen."

Hebshi sent one more tweet about armed officers as they stormed the plane.

They stopped at Hebshi's row, yelling at the three passengers to get up. Hebshi asked if she could bring her phone; one of the officers told her she couldn't as he yanked her out of her seat. "What a cliffhanger for my Twitter followers!" she quipped in her blog post. The three were asked if they had any explosives on them, and then put in the back of a squad car next to the plane. "The Indian man who had sat next to me on the plane was already in the backseat. I turned to him, shocked, and asked him if he knew what was going on," Hebshi wrote. "I asked him if he knew the other man that had been in our row, and he said he had just met him. I said, it's because of what we look like. They're doing this because of what we look like. And I couldn't believe that I was being arrested and taken away." "I heard the officers discuss my impending strip search. They needed to bring in a female officer. At least they were following protocol, or something to that nature. Still, could this really be happening?" she wrote. Hours later, after being strip-searched and interrogated by the FBI and Homeland Security, Hebshi was allowed to leave.

'Navigator was drunk' in north Russia air crash disaster September 19, 2011

Moscow,

A plane crash in northwest Russia in June that killed 44 people was partly caused by a 'slightly drunk navigator,' according to a flight safety investigation report.

The Interstate Aviation Committee (MAK) for Russia and other former Soviet states, said in its report that the crew decided "not to go round for a second approach" before landing, when the plane was already below a "minimum safety altitude." "The subordination of the captain to the navigator, who was in a

state of agitation and slightly intoxicated," was a contributing factor to the accident, the report says. It also cited poor crew resource management (CRM) by the captain as a contributory factor. The RusAir Tupolev Tu-134, with 43 passengers and nine crew on board, was flying from Moscow to Petrozavodsk, the main city in the Karelia region. It crashed and caught fire after landing on a highway just short of the airport.



Crashed plane in Yaroslavl gained max. altitude of 6 meters -MAK

Bombardier to cut production of CRJ regional jet 20 september, 2011

Bombardier Inc. plans to cut production of its flagship CRJ regional jet, a move that points to slowing demand in a rocky global market, but also larger strategic issues besetting the aerospace giant. The Montreal-based train and plane manufacturer said Tuesday it will reduce output of its CRJ commercial jets as it struggles to cope with a dearth of new orders for its workhorse plane in the 70- to 100-seat category. The decision to slow CRJ production comes as Brazilian rival Embraer SA enjoys robust regional jet sales. Bombardier's regional jet order backlog at the end of the second quarter stood at 61, compared with 261 for Embraer. Bombardier, which is credited with creating and then dominating the regional jet market starting in the 1990s, has fallen behind Embraer in cracking new emerging markets and in the larger-plane segment that has evolved to meet shifting demand from airlines. "This plane should be selling better than it is," even in a global downturn, said Richard Aboulafia, vice-president of analysis for Teal Group Corp. Bombardier Aerospace spokesman John Arnone said that while orders for the CRJ are "soft," long-term prospects for the company's regional jet program are positive. "Things will get better," he said. The production cuts will affect about 350 employees who work on the CRJ program in Mirabel, Que., north of Montreal. They will be transferred to other current or in-development programs. Bombardier, which warned a few weeks ago it might have to cut CRJ production if new sales failed to materialize, said Tuesday that the CRJ production cuts will come in January but did not specify by how much output will fall or how long it expects the slowdown to last. Meanwhile, the outlook has darkened for Bombardier's all-new C Series narrow-body jet that will compete directly with giants Boeing Co. and Airbus



SAS. Airlines have taken a "wait and see" approach to the new, unproven plane, threatening the company's target of getting 300 orders by 2013, a recent RBC Dominion Securities survey of 26 global carriers says. Bombardier has so far won firm orders for 133 planes, 119 options and 10 purchase rights for the C Series, scheduled to enter service in 2013.

Nepal plane crash kills 19 after Mt. Everest flight

Two Americans are among the tourists killed on the Buddha Air flight that tried to land in rain and dense fog, police say.
September 26, 2011

Two Americans were among 19 people killed Sunday in Nepal when a small plane carrying tourists to view Mt. Everest crashed as it tried to land in rain and dense fog, police said. The crash of the Beechcraft 1900D aircraft operated by Buddha Air went down in Kotdanda, about 10 miles from the capital, Katmandu, killing everyone aboard just minutes before its scheduled return to Tribhuvan International Airport. The \$140 Buddha Air "Everest Experience" package flies tourists from Katmandu around the world's tallest mountain and back. "The plane was flying very low," a witness told the local Avenues Television network. "We were surprised. It crashed into the hill and there was a huge explosion." Others reported seeing flames coming from the plane just before it crashed. Buddha Air said the names of the two Americans killed were Andrew Wade and Natalie Neilan. No other details were immediately available. The airline said the other 14 passengers were 10 Indians — many reportedly real estate developers from the southern state of Tamil Nadu — along with three Nepalis and one Japanese. The two dead pilots and one flight attendant were Nepali. The early morning flight reportedly had its last contact with air traffic controllers at 7:31 before crashing four minutes later. Officials said 18 of those aboard died immediately and the others died on the way to or shortly after arriving at the hospital. The bodies were brought to a local teaching hospital for postmortems, aviation authorities said. The Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal said that it had formed a three-member investigation team headed by a former director of the authority and that the flight data and voice recorders had been recovered. Kapil Kaul, an expert with the Center for Asia Pacific Aviation in New Delhi, said Beechcraft planes — manufactured by Raytheon — have a good reputation. But, as is always the case, a great deal depends on training, the conditions they are flown in and how well they are maintained. The crash comes at a bad time for Nepal, which is hoping to attract 1 million tourists this year to revive its flagging economy. Though it's too early to speculate on the cause, Kaul said, in general, aviation safety in Nepal should be a concern. Many foreign tourists don't realize this, he added, assuming the landlocked mountain nation maintains the same standards they enjoy at home. "I'm not sure Nepal has the resources to invest or the technical ability within the government to ensure the system is safe," he said. "Those who use mountain flights take for granted that the airline and the system are safe."

Nepal released wrong names of victims September 26, 2011

Kathmandu: Eight of the 10 Indians who perished in Sunday's air crash in Kathmandu worked with Tiruchirappalli Centre Builders Association of India. The other two Indians were Pankaj Mehta and Chhaya Mehta, with Pankaj working for the UN in Kathmandu. Adding to the chaos, Nepal's aviation authorities initially released a wrong set of victims names, reviving memories of another air crash last year when the victims, mostly Bhutanese pilgrims, were first declared Nepalese. The Indian embassy released the correct names of the 10 Indian victims after going through their identification papers. They (the Indian tourists) checked into our hotel on Saturday evening, said Furpa Sherpa, sales manager at Kathmandu Grand Hotel. They had come on a SpiceJet flight from Delhi and were to leave on September 27. We put them through to a travel agency, Losar Tours and Travels, and they booked a mountain flight for Sunday morning, Sherpa added. The dead included the three-member Nepalese cabin crew of Captain J B Tamrakar, co-pilot Padma Adhikari and airhostess Asmita Shrestha. The others killed were two American tourists, Andrew Wade and Natalie Neilan, Japan's Uejima Toshinori and two Nepalese, Sarda Karmacharya and Jagjan Karmacharya.

Chengdu builds 4th largest international aviation hub 26 september 2011

As disclosed by Sichuan Provincial Development and Reform Commission on September 19, Sichuan would spare no effort in building Chengdu into the fourth largest international aviation hub and gateway in western China. Currently, only Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou have international aviation hubs. Time is mature for Sichuan province to build a state-level international aviation hub. Located at the midpoint of the Europe-Asia aviation route, Chengdu is a golden transit hub for flights from Hong Kong, Macao and Southeast Asia to Europe and Middle Asia and that from the Middle East to East China and East Asia. From January to August 2011, the passenger and cargo throughputs of Chengdu Shuangliu Airport were both ranked fifth in China. Its annual passenger throughput is expected to reach 30 million, becoming one of the busiest airports in the world. The new 14 billion yuan terminal building will also begin operation at the end of this year. By then, it will have the capacity to land the largest aircraft in the world - the Airbus A380. The site selection plan for building a new airport in Chengdu will be decided and submitted. With an airfield level indicator of 4F, the new airport will boast the passenger throughput of over 80 million, cargo throughput of 6 million tons and, has the capacity for 850,000 planes to take off and land per annum.

China's jumbo jet equipped with 'Chinese Heart' engine September 26, 2011

A half-scale metal model of China's first jumbo jet engine, the CJ-1000A independently developed by the Aviation Industry

Corporation of China (AVIC), made its public debut at the 14th China International Aviation Exposition in the China National Convention Center from Sept. 21 to Sept. 24 and became the focus of attention at the exposition. A head of AVIC Commercial Aircraft Engine Co., Ltd. (ACAE) announced on Sept. 21 that the large aircraft engine CJ-1000A is the first high bypass ratio turbofan engine for civilian use in China. Its core engine test is expected to be finished in 2014, and its experimental engine will meet the performance standards by 2016. This engine is scheduled to get a airworthiness certificate and realize product delivery in 2020. Commercial aircraft engines are known as the jewel in the crown of the airline industry because of the great technology difficulty, high risk, huge investment and long development cycle. ACAE, general contractor of China's large aircraft engine project, was founded on Jan. 18, 2009 in Shanghai, which marked the start of the development of China's large aircraft engine. Besides the open model of a C919 jumbo jet's passenger cabin, ACAE also use 3D cinema technology to present the appearance, performance index and the design concept of this domestic airliner, which has become one of the highlights of the event. "The C919 jumbo jet is about to enter the project development stage and is expected to be reviewed at the end of this year." Said Tian Min, the chief accountant of ACAE, "The total number of C919 jumbo jet orders from home and abroad will surpass 50." The C919 project is a good platform on which Chinese and foreign enterprises cooperated with each other to gain mutual benefit. "We hope to provide the best products through association between strong enterprises rather than exchanging market for technology," said Wu Guanghui, the general designer of Chinese jumbo jet and deputy general manager of ACAE.

MILITARY AVIATION NEWS

Hercules may replace Gajrajs in Nagpur

3rd September 2011

Nagpur: The squadron of Russian IL-76 aircraft, dubbed Gajraj by IAF, has been shifted out of Sonogaon base in city. The 44 squadron which had the giant IL-76 transport planes has been moved to Agra for operational convenience.

The Gajrajs may be replaced by American C-130 Hercules at Nagpur. India has purchased six of these aircraft intended to be used for moving special forces. The C-130 is known for its capability to be used in anti-terrorist operations as it can land in improvised or short airfields even without lights. These are the latest addition to the fleet of IAF's transport aircraft which already had transport planes of the IL and AN series acquired from the erstwhile USSR. A final decision on placing Hercules here has not been made yet.

There is another possibility of IAF basing the airborne warning and control systems (AWAC), a hi-tech command and control

system mounted on the IL-76 platform, in city. The IAF will be making a choice between the two. The geographical location of the city is the key factor for placing both types of aircraft. Basing the Hercules at Nagpur will enable them to reach any corner of the country in a short time. It was on the same logic that the Gajraj squadron was based here.

The central location will also be beneficial for the AWACs as Nagpur will be a secure base. With this system, the aircraft can fly inside Indian airspace but still be able to see deep into the enemy territory with its radars and other surveillance equipment. Sonogaon already being an IL-76 base can be one of the considerations for bringing in the AWACs. However, given the size of land at Sonogaon, it may not be possible to base both the aircraft here, sources said.

Another MiG-21 crashes, pilot ejects safely

7 september 2011

NEW DELHI: In yet another crash in IAF, an upgraded MiG-21 'Bison' fighter went down near Shambu in Punjab's Patiala district on Tuesday morning. Fortunately, the young pilot Flight Lieutenant Arnav Ghosh managed to eject safely. "The MiG-21 had taken off from the Ambala airbase at around 9.40 am on a routine training sortie. While coming back to land, the jet developed some technical problem around 10.27 am...Ghosh ejected before it crashed in a paddy field close to the national highway (Delhi-Amritsar GT Road)," said an official. Though the court of inquiry will ascertain the exact reason for the accident, it comes close after another MiG-21 crashed at the Nal airbase in Rajasthan last month, killing another young pilot Flying Officer Suraj Pillai. MiG-21s, the first supersonic fighters to be inducted by IAF in 1963, have proved to be of great service over the years but have also been dogged by a horrific crash track-record. The majority of the over 1,000 crashes recorded since 1970 have involved MiG-21s. For instance, of the 793 MiG-21s inducted into IAF since 1963, over 350 have been lost in accidents, killing about 170 pilots. Most accidents of the single-engine MiG-21s, of the 1960s design vintage without modern systems like FADEC (full authority digital electronic controls) and mission computers, occur during take-off and landing. Inadequate training, shoddy quality control on supply of spares, poor servicing and maintenance, all add up to an explosive mix. Though IAF has been progressively phasing out older MiG-21 variants, it has moved slowly due to the huge delay in the development of the Indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft. IAF will continue to fly the over 100 MiG-21 "Bisons" till 2017, faced as it is with a shortage in the number of fighter squadrons. "The serviceability of the Bisons, which are mostly flown by young pilots, is very poor," admitted an official. Around 125 MiG-21s were slowly upgraded to "Bison" standards, with better avionics and armaments, under a \$ 626-million (\$472.85-million towards aircraft upgrade cost and another \$153.15-million for procurement of weapons) project sanctioned in 1996.



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