

Aviation supports 6.2 million jobs in Africa

The aviation industry supports \$55.8bn of economic activity and 6.2 million jobs in Africa, according to Raphael Kuuchi, special Envoy on Aero-Political Affairs at the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

“While this is impressive, we are only scratching the surface of what aviation can contribute to building Africa’s future,” he said on Monday at a stakeholders’ convention hosted by the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) in Mauritius.

“To enable aviation to be an even bigger driver of prosperity across the continent, we must work together and with governments. We must improve competitiveness; develop effective infrastructure; modernise the regulatory framework with a focus on global standards; and ensure a well-trained and diverse workforce.””

Kuuchi said aviation is still a tough business as the airlines in Africa, on average, lose \$1.55 (about R22) for every passenger carried.

He explained that there are many reasons for the poor performance of African airlines. Africa is an expensive place for airlines to do business. Jet fuel costs are 35% higher than the rest of the world; aircraft departure fees are 30% above the global average; and taxes and fees are among the highest in the world.

“Too many African governments tax aviation as a luxury rather than a necessity. We must change that perception. The value of aviation for governments is not in the tax receipts that can be squeezed from it. It is in the economic growth and job creation that aviation supports,” said Kuuchi.

Another important element of competitiveness for airlines is the ability to reliably repatriate earnings—in line with international treaty obligations.

The African countries blocking over \$1.0bn of airline funds are, therefore, a big concern for him.

“Many of these countries are facing severe economic challenges but blocking airline funds puts connectivity at risk. And that invites even broader economic problems,” cautioned Kuuchi.

“It is in everybody’s interest to ensure that airlines are paid on-time, at fair exchange rates and in full. And when problems are on the horizon, urgent dialogue is the first step.”

As for infrastructure, sufficient runways, terminals, airspace capacity to meet demand, technical and commercial service quality aligned with airline needs and affordability are what largely lacks in Africa, in his view.

IATA is putting a resolution into practice in some countries where governments are considering a private-public partnership in the future development of airports to provide guidance to the governments, including the economic regulation that will be needed to make them a success for all stakeholders and provide the connectivity that the countries need to develop.

IATA has also been promoting the concept of smarter regulation, aiming to solve real problems through dialogue and partnership between the industry and governments.

Kuuchi further pointed out that the low density of the African intra-continental network makes it impossible to realise the potential benefits of a connected African economy. Currently, intra-African travel is 45% more expensive than world averages. [Amazon.in Widgets](#)

US Warns Airlines Risk Being 'Misidentified' Flying over Persian Gulf

US diplomats in Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates communicated the order from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) on Saturday, The Associated Press reported. The original FAA Notice to Airmen, published on Thursday in the US, notified the commercial planes flying over the waters of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman that they must be aware of "heightened military activities and increased political tensions."

These activities present "an increasing inadvertent risk to US civil aviation operations due to the potential for miscalculation or mis-identification," the notice stated. It added that aircraft could experience GPS interference and other communications jamming "with little to no warning."

Emirates, the Middle East's largest airline, said it had been staying in contact with authorities worldwide but that "there are no changes to our flight operations" at this time, according to the AP. Qatar Airways and Etihad, who also operate in the region, said their flights were unaffected.

Tensions between Tehran and Washington have been simmering since last May when Trump announced the withdrawal of the US from the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), while also reinstating harsh sanctions against the Islamic Republic. The situation escalated earlier this month when the US imposed more anti-Iranian sanctions and sent an aircraft carrier strike group, a

squadron of B-52 bombers and a battery of patriot missiles to the Middle East.

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On the map: Muscat International Airport crowned best in region

Muscat: Muscat International Airport has made the country proud once again by winning the title of Middle East's Leading Airport 2019 at the World Travel Awards.

Oman Airports took to their official Twitter account to make the announcement, congratulating the Sultanate for this great achievement. "We are proud to announce Muscat International Airport as the Middle East's Leading Airport in 2019.

"Congratulations to our beloved country for this honourable achievement, which came due to the efforts of the whole airport family," the officials said.

Opened on March 20, 2018, Muscat International Airport is built over a floor area of approximately 580,000sqm and has the capacity to serve 20 million passengers per year, with an expansion potential of up to four times that number.

The Muscat airport has won several awards since its operations began, including the prestigious 'World's Leading New Airport' prize at the World Travel Awards 2018. It saw an increase in the passenger traffic by 5.7 per cent to 16.1 million.

According to the report by Oman Aviation Group for 2018, the

new Muscat International Airport is operating at a lower cost than expected despite its size being six times that of the old terminal.

Oman Airports, represented by Saud Nasser Al Hubeishi, Senior Vice President, accepted this prestigious award at the award ceremony, which was attended by a wide spectrum of professionals in the aviation, airports and travel industry across the world with a network of senior representatives of more than 200 companies from all sectors of the airports, aviation, travel, tourism and hotel industries.

Oman Air

Meanwhile, Oman Air has been crowned the Middle East's best airline in both business and economy class.

Additionally the national carrier was also awarded best in-flight magazine. The awards were given at the World Travel Awards 2019.

In a statement, Oman Air said: "An unprecedented achievement for Oman Air, winning three prestigious awards in one night: Middle East's best airline in both Business and Economy Class, and best in-flight magazine at the World Travel Awards 2019. We thank you for your incredible endorsement and support."

Commenting on the award, Chief Executive Officer of Oman Airports, Sheikh Ayman bin Ahmed Al Hosani, said: "On behalf of the Executive Management of Oman Airports, I would like to congratulate all the employees of Muscat International Airport and all the official and commercial companies and airlines operating at the airport as well as all our strategic partners who contributed directly to this achievement. This award recognises the exceptional efforts and services by all our staff and partners who demonstrate outstanding dedication to the betterment of Muscat International Airport as well as all the other airports of Oman.

He added, "We are proud of this new achievement, which represents a valuable addition to our national success stories and which is the result of our endeavour, at Oman Airports, to continuously expand our global presence as a primary way to help the various actors operating at our airports achieve their strategies through state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities and record level of services to all our customers. He concluded: "May God bestow success on us and guide us along the path of achievements and expansion at international level. Congratulations to all of us."

On his part, Saud Al-Hubeishi, Senior Vice President at Muscat International Airport said: The exceptional efforts exerted by the airport family have set us on the road of achieving an exceptional travel experience for the airports users. Muscat airport redefines the passenger experience through its state-of-the-art infrastructure and facilities housed within its exceptional terminal characterised by its modern architectural design, along with the efforts of many colleagues who worked hard to secure the mobilization of the best trademarks and partners to deliver greater and better results through our airports, which have certainly led to an ideal experience for airport users, and reinforced our dedication to raising our aspirations, ambitions and expectations to attain to the very highest echelons of services and achievements. We are committed to sparing no effort to consolidate all aspects of partnership with all the parties working at the airport and to bring together our efforts as one family towards attaining the best in delivering impressive services to all travelers through our airport."

"It is our aim to expand our global presence and to increase the international visibility of Muscat International Airport, the Jewel of Oman airports, and position it as a leading player in the innovation and uniqueness scene.

The report also highlighted that Oman Airports has reached a 95 per cent Omanisation rate and hired 115 nationals in 2018.

Additionally, 364 locals were hired at Oman Air, including 234 fresh graduates and 48 pilots which means a total of 2,683 Omani employees, with an Omanisation rate of 75.9 per cent (excluding female cabin crew). However, the female workforce ratio makes up 35.1 per cent of staff at Oman Air. Passengers travelling through Muscat International Airport rose by 8.7 per cent in March 2019 to 4 million, compared to the same time period last year, according to the National Centre for Statistics and Information (NCSI).

The monthly statistical report by NCSI also revealed that the total number of flights at Muscat International Airport rose 1.5 per cent to 28,775 flights in March 2019, compared to 28,346 flights for the same period in 2018.

The number of international flights at the Muscat International Airport increased by 2.1 per cent to 26,334 flights during the three-month period of 2019, up from 25,789 flights for the same period of the previous year.

The total number of international passengers at airport rose by 9.4% at the end of March 2019, reaching 3.72 million passengers. This included 1.86 million passenger arrivals, 1.85 million passenger departures, and 9,969 passenger transits.

Meanwhile, domestic flights at the airport fell by 4.5 per cent to 2,441 flights at the end of March 2019, against 2,557 flights during the same time in 2018. The arrival and departure of domestic flights also dropped by 4.4 per cent and 4.7 per cent respectively. However, the total number of domestic passengers at the airport rose by 0.1 per cent to 278,052 passengers in March 2019, against 277,799 passengers for the same period of the previous year. This included 137,362 passenger arrivals and 140,690 passenger departures, the NCSI report highlighted.

According to the report, the total number of passengers at

Salalah International Airport increased by 2.7 per cent to 339,706 passengers at the end of March 2019 compared to 330,725 passengers for the same period of 2018. The total number of flights at Salalah International Airport rose by 5.6 per cent to 2,794 flights in March 2019 compared to 2,647 flights in March 2018.

The total number of international flights at Salalah International Airport surged by 21.9 per cent to 1,217 flights till the end of March 2019 while the number of domestic flights fell by 4.4 per cent to 1,577 flights in March 2019. The total number of international passengers recorded a rise of 11.2 per cent to reach 135,773 passengers while the number of domestic passengers fell by 2.2 per cent to 203,933 passengers.

However, there was a drop in the total number of passengers at Sohar International Airport by 42.5 per cent to 48,716 passengers at the end of March 2019 compared to 84,717 passengers for the same period of 2018. The total number of flights at Sohar International Airport also fell by 26.4 per cent to 524 flights in March 2019 compared to 712 flights in March 2018.

Duqm Airport saw a rise in the total number of passengers by 26.8 per cent to 14,075 passengers at the end of March 2019 compared to 11,103 passengers for the same period of 2018. The total number of flights at Duqm Airport till the end of March 2019 reached 148, which is a drop by 3.9 per cent compared to 154 flights in March 2018, the report showed.

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Jet Airways cancels flights on international routes

Jet airways has proactively cancelled all west bound long haul flights from India from tonight until tomorrow morning

- Jet Airways fights for survival
- Jet is saddled with more than \$1.2 billion of bank debt,
- It owes money to lessors, suppliers, staff and oil companies.

Mumbai: The crisis deepened at Jet Airways on Thursday even as the bid process to get new owners for the debt-ridden airline elicited good response from investors.

In a regulatory filing, Jet Airways said 10 more of its aircraft have been grounded over non-payment of lease rentals, taking the total number of grounded planes to 79.

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The airline has cancelled all international flights for Thursday amid reports that the government is likely to review Jet Airways' eligibility to continue its international operations. The Civil Aviation Ministry is awaiting a report from the regulator DGCA on the issue.

Jet Air has also grounded its services to and from the East and Northeast regions.

The airline has reduced its fleet to just 14 planes as of Thursday noon, way down from 123 planes in operations at the peak.

Sources said private equity firms TPG Capital and Indigo Partners, National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Ltd (NIIF) and Abu Dhabi-based Etihad Airways are among the four firms that have submitted their expressions of interest (EoIs) for picking a stake in Jet Airways.

Former Jet Airways chairman Naresh Goyal is also expected to submit initial bids for a stake in the airline, sources said.

SBI Caps, which invited Expression of Interest (EoI) for stake sale in Jet Airways on April 8, has already extended the date for submission of bids to April 12 from April 10.

Sources said lenders are expecting EoIs from international airlines like Air Canada and Delta Airlines.

SBI Caps has the mandate for Jet Airways' sale on behalf of the SBI-led consortium of domestic lenders to the private carrier.

It has put between 31 per cent and up to 75 per cent in the airline for investors.

An agency report quoting a source said, "Jet Airways flights to London, Amsterdam and Paris from Mumbai, New Delhi and Bengaluru scheduled for April 12 are cancelled for operational reasons."

The airline will not operate on the Bengaluru- Amsterdam-Bengaluru route on April 13 as well, the report said.

"All Jet operations to and from the Eastern and Northeastern regions are suspended. Following this, there are no Jet flights to and from Kolkata, Patna, Guwahati and other airports in the region," said a travel industry source.

Jet Airways said its Mumbai-Kolkata, Kolkata-Guwahati and Dehradun-Guwahati via Kolkata stand cancelled for Friday due to "operational reasons."

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Aviation world faces moment of reckoning after 737 MAX crashes

“Every time something happens ... we learn from it,” a senior Boeing official told reporters, reflecting on lessons from the Lion Air and Ethiopian Airlines crashes, less than five months apart, that had killed nearly 350 people. “There are one-off occurrences that happen – accidents like we’ve just experienced.”

In the week-plus since that announcement, it has become increasingly clear that the two accidents were not unfortunate “one-off occurrences,” the software change Boeing touted would not be enough, and the industry is facing a serious test of its mettle. The challenges of crafting deeper, more expensive fixes, addressing structural deficiencies in the certification process, and reassuring shaken fliers around the world have become more apparent.

Boeing has said that its software change needs additional weeks of work, and has seemed to accept some responsibility for designing a system in need of improvement.

Fueled in part by damning preliminary reports that show how starkly similar the two crashes were, the moment of reckoning is challenging corporations, regulators, and investigators to take a critical look at the design and inspection of aircraft, and question whether decisions and long-standing methods – employed for practical reasons – put the flying public at risk.

"It's our responsibility to eliminate this risk," Boeing CEO Dennis Muilenburg said on Thursday. "We own it and we know how to do it."

His comments in a Boeing video followed the Ethiopian government's preliminary report describing the pilots of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 struggling on the morning of March 10 to control their 737 MAX 8 during the six-minute ill-fated flight. According to Ethiopian crash investigators, the pilots correctly followed procedures publicized after the Lion Air accident in October to disable a faulty computerized stabilization system that Boeing created to prevent planes from crashing, but the plane's speed and the clock worked against their efforts.

Peter Goelz, a former managing director of the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and a CNN aviation analyst, said he sees evidence Boeing is now no longer primarily focused on returning the MAX to the skies, but is working on regaining public trust in its latest, most fuel-efficient version of the workhorse jet that airlines had been lining up to buy.

"I think clearly it has got through to Boeing," Goelz said. The Ethiopian report contained two recommendations: First, that Boeing develop a remedy, and second, a call that regulators scrutinize the fix "before the release of the aircraft to operations."

Questions of trust lay with the Federal Aviation Administration, which has faced concerns from lawmakers of excessive coziness with Boeing. Due to the company's broad aerospace portfolio, the federal government is both the regulator of Boeing and hires it for sensitive military contracts and complicated space operations. The world's most famous aircraft, Air Force One, is, after all, a Boeing jet.

The FAA, created with the dual mission of regulating and promoting the aviation industry, has defended its decision to keep the 737 MAX flying while other aviation authorities around the world ordered it grounded. Acting Administrator Daniel Elwell bristled when members of Congress asked him why other countries had acted sooner by proactively pulling it from service. Elwell defended the US and Canadian authorities as awaiting evidence, calling them "the first countries to ground the aircraft with data."

The FAA's decisions have "shaken" confidence in the FAA, the "gold standard for aviation safety," said Transportation Department Inspector General Calvin Scovel.

While Ethiopian and Indonesian investigators continue to probe the circumstances of those crashes, multiple investigations in the United States are casting a wide net.

A long-standing practice that has allowed both plane- and part-makers to certify their own work as meeting airworthiness standards is coming under scrutiny.

House Transportation Committee Chairman Peter DeFazio said he has "many serious questions surrounding the Boeing 737 MAX and the FAA's certification process." He said the inspector general has opened a probe, and a special DOT advisory committee will review "the procedures ... for the certification of new aircraft." Prosecutors with the Justice Department have subpoenaed documents, including from former Boeing employees. The FAA has formed its own international review into "the 737 MAX automated flight control system."

For all the reviews, some are wondering what will change.

When the public's attention moves on, the FAA will still be left with a mandate to delegate some certification decisions to the manufacturers, former FAA chief of staff Michael Goldfarb told CNN.

It's one thing, he said, for Congress to criticize the system it put into law, but another for it to fund enough FAA inspectors to oversee manufacturer decisions.

"It's been hard for the agency (FAA) to keep pace with pay" in private industry, Goldfarb said.

The NTSB, with power to recommend safety changes but not require them, is reviewing the organizational delegation authority, Chairman Robert Sumwalt said Friday.

"We would not really be doing our job if we weren't making sure that those aspects were being looked at," Sumwalt said. He said the board has the power to make conclusions separate from the Ethiopian and Indonesian investigations, of which it is a part.

Goldfarb said the FAA and its worldwide counterparts would be smart to assemble for a "regulatory summit" to evaluate the 737 MAX before it returns to service. Confidence in the agency has been hurt since its delayed decision to ground the MAX, he said.

Goelz, the former NTSB leader, sees signs – in Boeing’s latest comments and the decision to put more work into the software change – that Boeing and FAA are moving in the right direction.

“I think the top priority is to make sure that this aircraft is 100% safe, secondly to make sure that the pilots who fly it have the information and the skills to fly it safely even in difficult situations,” Goelz said. “Then thirdly to convince the public – prove to the public that they’ve done everything in their power to make this safe again.”

Convincing the flying public may be the most difficult task of all. Among the defenders of the MAX were the pilots who flew them – who, in some cases, reacted to the Ethiopian report by calling for additional review of what went wrong.

“In the wake of the tragic loss of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302 on Sunday, people around the world are jumping to conclusions about the Boeing 737 Max,” the Allied Pilots Association, which represents pilots of American Airlines, said on Thursday afternoon. “Federal and international authorities have just begun to look into Sunday’s accident. It is too early to determine possible causes.”

And then there’s those who sit behind the pilots.

In the weeks ahead, travelers will need to decide if they are comfortable walking onto a 737 MAX, buckling up, and taking off. [Amazon.in Widgets](#)

Bidding process for Jet Airways likely to begin from April 8

MUMBAI: The bidding process for stake sale in the cash-starved Jet Airways is likely to commence from Monday as the bid document is still to be given a final shape, a source said.

The SBI-led consortium of 26 lenders, which now has the

management control of the full-service carrier under a debt-recast plan, last Thursday said bid for the stake sale in Jet Airways airline would be issued on April 6.

“The expression of interest (EoI) for stake sale in Jet Airways will now be issued on Monday (April 8),” said the source.

Accordingly, the last date for submission of the bids, which was April 9 earlier, is also likely to be extended by a day to April 10, he said.

SBI is the lead lender to Jet Airways, which has a debt burden of Rs 8,000 crore.

Under the debt resolution plan approved by the Jet Airways' board on March 25, lenders have taken majority stake in the airline and are set to infuse Rs 1,500 crore funds. Besides, the carrier's founder and promoter Naresh Goyal as well as his wife Anita Goyal quit the board. The shareholding of Goyals have come down to 25 per cent from 51 per cent earlier.

Acute financial crunch has forced the airline to ground aircraft, cancel flights and delay payment of salaries, including to pilots.

Amid uncertainty over future of Jet Airways, the consortium of SBI-led lenders last Thursday said bids for selling stake would be invited on April 6 and other options would be explored in case the stake sale efforts do not result in an “acceptable outcome”.

After taking stock of the current situation at the airline, which is currently operating less than 30 planes, the lenders said they would pursue resolution plan for the carrier in a time-bound manner under the present legal and regulatory framework.

“The lenders are cognisant that the outcome of efforts of the

lenders will depend on the interest shown by the parties on sale of stake in the company," the statement issued by lenders last week said.

"Whilst all efforts will be made for the stake sale by lenders, other options may be considered by the lenders should these efforts not result in an acceptable outcome," it said.[Amazon.in Widgets](#)