



# GOVERNMENT REMINDER TO PHASE OUT EX-PAT PILOTS

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## **Government reminder to phase out ex-pat pilots**

The Government has again in May reminded airlines of the 2013 deadline to phase out ex-pat pilots. The Government reminder comes in light of the recent weakening of the rupee and the continued reliance on import of ATF which is proving to be a great burden on profitability. This is also an effort to raise the standards of Indian pilots and since more and more Indian pilots are now available, the government wishes utilization of local talent rather than hiring expensive foreign pilots.

**PSA's view:** While we have covered the basic outlook and implication of the government's decision in an earlier Flash, it appears that this decision is under criticism from the airline industry. Additionally, such a decision will not impact the recently inducted pilots, of which there is an overwhelming number in India. The decision will primarily benefit Indian pilots awaiting an upgrade to the designation of Captain. Considering the dearth of Captains in India, it may not be surprising if this deadline is extended further.

## **Training school in Jakkur to be closed**

Due to the recent decision to construct an elevated highway from Bangalore International Airport to Hebbal, the runway of the adjoining Government Flying Training School ("GFTS") has been cut short to one third of its size. According to DGCA reports, the runway has been unsafe for quite some time and can only accommodate smaller aircrafts. The GFTS announced that it would be shifting its training facility to Mysore or Hubli to accommodate bigger aircrafts.

**PSA's view:** While it may be prudent to close the existing facilities of the GFTS, it may be a good opportunity for the school to tie up with international partners which would lead to better recruitment of pilots and better training standards and facilities for students.

## **Investigation launched due to helicopter landing on building**

Recently, a chopper used by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for training rookie pilots crash landed on top of a civilian structure. While the pilots have escaped with minor injuries, the company as well as the DGCA has launched an investigation into this incident. The incident involves a US made Schweizer helicopter which is used to train rookie pilots for light and rescue missions.

**PSA's view:** The recent crash is one of the many incidents involving Schweizer helicopter all over the world. While many investigations reveal that the primary fault in most helicopter crash lie with the pilot, the increasing number of mishaps not only call into question the efficacy of the DGCA's safety guidelines but also the quality of aircrafts. It will be interesting to see the report on the investigation, and also whether the same is completed in a timely fashion.

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