

Jet Airways pilots look to join SpiceJet, IndiGo pilots see injustice

The harried pilots of crisis-ridden Jet Airways, which is on the brink of closing operations, have now approached SpiceJet as job seekers.

Jet Airways pilots had earlier been welcomed by IndiGo with compensation for their pending salaries and other advantages. IndiGo's original pilots remained mute spectators. Eventually, they voiced their protest. In IndiGo, this led to murmurs of uneasiness within IndiGo's pilots. IndiGo did purchase a number of additional airplanes, but it forgot to enhance its manpower especially in the critical areas, ie., operations and engineering where highly skilled personnel are needed. IndiGo became the largest airline in India but it faced acute shortage of labour because it had not done its homework well. As a thumb rule, at least two cadets could have been trained and groomed under one senior pro. Given the number of planes at its disposal, given the hours of flight it undertakes, IndiGo could have produced a battery of young pilots during the last ten years or so. Such a rich pool of talent could have served not only IndiGo but other airlines of the world too.

Although, shortage of manpower in non-critical areas can be somehow managed, shortage of cockpit crew is the one which can not be tolerated. This finally leads to cancellation of hundreds of flights. This has been IndiGo's experience last month.

According to IndiGo, all job offers are in line with its current terms and conditions.

But IndiGo pilots differ. They have called the move as

“injustice” and “unacceptable”:

- IndiGo Management takes us lightly.
- Offer to Jet Airways pilots is sheer injustice to us
- Jet Airways pilots are being offered a two-month bonus along with same designation-salary
- They have also been allowed to choose their operational base.

“The management is saying it is not bonus but it is compensation for their (Jet pilots) delayed salaries. Are we also not entitled to similar bonuses?” IndiGo pilots ask.



Also, Jet pilots are joining with designation protection. So, basically if a non-type-rated examiner is joining us, she/he will be joining with a pay protection of the IndiGo examiner, pointed out the IndiGo pilots.

Alleging that the IndiGo pilots have not been given a hike since the last three-four years, the pilots say that after joining, the Jet pilots will again get a hike when Indigo revises the salaries of its existing pilots.

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Jet pilots along with engineers and senior management have not been paid for more than three months now as the airline is facing its worst existential crisis since its inception a quarter of a century ago. It can be noted that pilots at Jet,

being a full-service carrier, get higher pay and other benefits.

The Gurugram-based SpiceJet, which has all its 12 Boeing Max planes grounded following the crash of an Ethiopian Airline plane early this month, is looking to hire pilots for its expansion plans, and has also conducted walk-in interviews here.

Unlike IndiGo, which flies majorly Airbus 320s, SpiceJet has Boeing 737s in the fleet. On the other hand it can be noted that majority Jet Airways pilots are trained and type-rated for Boeing planes.

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With no assurance on the payment of their pending salaries, Jet pilots had Tuesday warned that they would stop flying from April 1 if the management failed to provide clarity on the revival plan along with a deadline to clear their salary dues by March 31.

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