## Symptomatic stall: On the Go First crisis and the aviation industry <br> The aviation industry needs policy changes and regulatory overhaul

Go Airlines, the Wadia Group's low-cost carrier, this week became India's first domestic airline since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic to go into a mid-air stall and seek bankruptcy protection. For an airline that rebranded itself as Go First less than two years ago in a bid to make a fresh start, with CEO Kaushik Khona declaring at the time "our consumers come first" and "...our confidence in the brighter tomorrow", the carrier's abrupt announcement of a suspension of operations is rich in irony. While it has laid the blame squarely on "the ever-increasing number of failing engines" supplied by Pratt \& Whitney, which it claimed had resulted in half its Airbus fleet being grounded, the engine problems could at best be termed the proximate cause. Go First's financial woes predate the fleet troubles and the pandemic and are largely symptomatic of the malaise afflicting the wider industry. Given the high capital and operational costs, the commercial air transport industry operates with wafer thin margins. Added to this, the swelling competitive intensity in India's budget airline sector a decade and a half ago saw rivals adopt aggressive pricing strategies to gain market share that stretched balance sheets and made companies more vulnerable to shocks.

If the lockdowns announced in India in March 2020 and the tight travel curbs to combat the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus dealt a deeply bruising blow to all contact intensive sectors, last year's surge in crude prices in the wake of the Ukraine invasion combined with the rupee's depreciation against the dollar sent aviation turbine fuel (ATF) costs soaring for domestic carriers. And when air travel demand rebounded last year as the pandemic-linked restrictions were lifted, Go First found itself already hobbled with almost a third of its fleet having been grounded by December 2020, ostensibly due to engine issues. With the airline now moving the National Company Law Tribunal for initiation of insolvency proceedings and an accompanying moratorium on outstanding credit, aircraft lessors have opposed the carrier's resolution plea and instead sought aircraft deregistration and repossession. The outcome in the NCLT notwithstanding, the developments hold a mirror to the industry's systemic infirmities. Rival carrier SpiceJet is simultaneously facing an irate overseas lessor who has moved the insolvency tribunal over unpaid lease rentals. The government knows the issues dogging the industry including a tax structure that keeps ATF costs prohibitive and a regulatory apparatus that is outdated. The onus is on the Centre to find long-term policy solutions if it wants India's struggling airlines to reach cruising altitude.
[Practice Exercise]

- Red/blue coloring of words in the sentence indicates subject verb relationship; where 'red' denotes 'subject' and 'blue' denotes 'verb'.


## Vocabulary

1. Symptomatic (adjective) - Indicative, suggestive, revealing, demonstrative, telling लक्षणात्मक, सूचक
2. Stall (noun) - Standstill, deadlock, impasse, halt, stalemate गतिरोध, ठप
3. Aviation (adjective) - Aeronautical, aerospace, airborne, air travel, flightrelated विमानन, हवाई
4. Regulatory (adjective) - Supervisory, controlling, directive, authoritative, managerial नियामक
5. Overhaul (noun) - Revamp, reorganization, restructuring, reform, modernization सुधार
6. Outbreak (noun) - Eruption, upsurge, flare-up, epidemic, burst प्रकोप
7. Seek (verb) - Ask for, call on, solicit, मांगना
8. Bankruptcy (noun) - the state of being bankrupt. दिवालियापन
9. Rebrand (verb) - Reposition, repackage, revamp, update, refresh ब्रांड का पुनर्निर्माण करना
10. In a bid to (phrase) - In an attempt to, in an effort to, aiming to, with the intention of प्रयास में
11. Abrupt (adjective) - Sudden, unexpected, unanticipated, unforeseen, hasty अचानक
12. Suspension (noun) - Discontinuation, interruption, halt, stoppage, cessation स्थगन, निलंबन
13. Irony (noun) - Paradox, incongruity, sarcasm, mockery, contradiction व्यंग्य, विडम्बना
14. Lay the blame on (phrase) - Accuse, hold responsible, point the finger at, charge, indict दोष लगाना, आरोप लगाना
15. Squarely (adverb) - Directly, unambiguously, straightly, candidly, forthrightly सीधे, स्पष्टता से
16. Claim (verb) - Assert, maintain, argue, declare, state दावा करना
17. Result in (phrasal verb) - Lead to, bring about, cause, produce, generate परिणामस्वरूप
18. Fleet (noun) - Group, squadron, armada, flotilla, convoy बेड़ा, जहाज़ों का समूह
19. Ground (verb) - Stop from flying, immobilize, restrict, prevent, halt उड़ान रोकना, ठहराना
20. Term (verb) - Designate, label, call, name, describe कहना
21. Proximate (adjective) - Immediate, nearest, closest, direct, adjoining निकटतम
22. Cause (noun) - Reason, basis, motive, justification, grounds कारण
23. Woes (noun) - Troubles, problems, difficulties, hardships, misfortunes कष्ट
24. Predate (verb) - Antedate, precede, come before, exist before, be earlier than से पहले होना
25. Malaise (noun) - Unease, discomfort, discontent, dissatisfaction, uneasiness अस्वस्थता
26. Afflict (verb) - Plague, torment, trouble, burden, beset कष्ट देना, विपदा में डालना
27. Given (preposition) - Considering, taking into account, in view of, with regard to, in light of देखते हुए
28. Capital (noun) - Funds, assets, resources, wealth, investment पूंजी
29. Wafer-thin (adjective) - Small, extremely thin, paper-thin, razor-thin, slight, slender नाकाफ़ी
30. Margin (noun) - Profit margin, Net profit लाभांश
31. Swelling (adjective) - Growing, expanding, increasing, enlarging, escalating बढ़ता हुआ
32. Intensity (noun) - Force, strength, power, potency, fierceness तीव्रता
33. Decade (noun) - Ten years, 10-year period, tenner, decennium दशक
34. Rival (noun) - Competitor, contender, opponent, adversary, challenger प्रतिद्वंद्वी
35. Stretched balance sheet (noun) - A company which has high-burdened to pay loan.
36. Vulnerable (adjective) - Exposed, at risk, susceptible, defenseless, weak कमजोर
37. Curb (noun) - Restraint, control, check, constraint, limitation रोक
38. Combat (verb) - Fight, battle, confront, counter, oppose से लड़ना
39. Deal a blow (phrase) - Inflict damage, cause harm, have a negative impact, undermine, weaken नुक़सान पहुँचाना
40. Bruising (adjective) - Damaging, harmful, injurious, painful, hurtful जोरदार, दर्दनाक
41. Contact-intensive sector (noun) - It includes the tourism industry, transportation service, entertainment industry, hospitality sector, etc.
42. Surge (noun) - Increase, growth, escalation, upswing, expansion बढ़ोतरी
43. In the wake of (phrase) - Following, after, in the aftermath of, as a consequence of, resulting from के परिणामस्वरूप
44. Invasion (noun) - Incursion, attack, assault, intrusion, aggression आक्रमण
45. Depreciation (noun) - Devaluation, decline, decrease, reduction, loss of value मूल्यह्नास
46. Soar (verb) - Skyrocket, shoot up, escalate, surge, rise rapidly तेजी से बढ़ना
47. Rebound (verb) - Recover, bounce back, rally, improve, regain strength पलटाव होना
48. Pandemic-linked (adjective) - Pandemicrelated, pandemic-associated, pandemicconnected, pandemic-tied, influenced by the pandemic महामारी-संबंधित
49. Lift (verb) - cancel, remove, revoke हटाना
50. Hobble (verb) - Impede, hinder, hamper, handicap, obstruct लड़खड़ाना
51. Ostensibly (adverb) - Seemingly, apparently, outwardly, superficially, on the surface प्रकट रूप से
52. Initiation (noun) - Commencement, inception, beginning, start, launch प्रारंभ
53. Insolvency (noun) - Bankruptcy, financial failure, indebtedness, liquidation, financial collapse दिवालियापन
54. Proceedings (noun) - Actions, measures, steps, processes, legal actions कार्यवाही
55. Accompanying (adjective) - Associated, related, connected, linked, concurrent संगत, साथ
56. Moratorium (noun) - Suspension, pause, halt, freeze, embargo विराम, स्थगन
57. Outstanding (adjective) - Unpaid, unresolved, overdue, unsettled, remaining बक़ाया
58. Credit (noun) - Borrowing, financing, loan, debt, financial trust उधार
59. Lessor (noun) - Landlord, owner, property owner, renter, lease giver किरायेदार
60. Resolution (noun) - Solution, settlement, conclusion, समाधान
61. Plea (noun) - Appeal, request, entreaty, petition, supplication अपील
62. Deregistration (noun) - Delisting, removal, cancellation, annulment, revocation पंजीकरण रद्द् करना
63. Repossession (noun) - Seizure, taking back, recovery, retrieval, return पुनराधिग्रहण
64. Outcome (noun) - Result, consequence, effect, aftermath, end product परिणाम
65. NCLT (noun) - a quasi-judicial authority incorporated for dealing with corporate disputes that are of civil nature arising under the Companies Act
66. Notwithstanding (pre./adv) - Despite, in spite of, regardless of, even with फिर भी
67. Development (noun) - Event, happening, occurrence, change, घटनाक्रम
68. Hold a mirror to (phrase) - Reflect, reveal, expose, show, illustrate दिखाना
69. Infirmity (noun) - Weakness, vulnerability, frailty, deficiency, shortcoming दुर्बलता
70. Simultaneously (adverb) - Concurrently, at the same time, together, in unison, side by side इसके साथ ही
71. Irate (adjective) - Angry, infuriated, incensed, enraged, fuming क्रोधित
72. Overseas (adjective) - Foreign, international, abroad, external, nondomestic विदेशी
73. Insolvency tribunal (noun) - Bankruptcy court, financial failure court, debt resolution court, liquidation court, financial collapse court दिवालिया न्यायाधिकरण
74. Unpaid (adjective) - Unsettled, due, outstanding, owing, past due बक़ाया
75. Lease rental (noun) - Rent payment, leasing fee, rental charge, hire cost, lease expense किराया भुगतान
76. Dog (verb) - Plague, haunt, beset, trouble, torment सताना, कष्ट देना
77. Prohibitive (adjective) - Exorbitant, excessive, unaffordable, steep, unreasonable अत्यधिक
78. Apparatus (noun) - System, machinery, structure, framework, organization यंत्र, प्रणाली
79. Outdated (adjective) - Obsolete, antiquated, outmoded, old-fashioned, archaic पुरानी
80. Onus (noun) - Responsibility, burden, obligation, duty, liability दायित्व
81. Struggling (adjective) - Floundering, faltering, grappling, laboring, striving संघर्षरत
82. Cruising altitude (noun) - the height in the sky at which an airplane stays for most of a flight

## Practice Exercise: SSC Based

1. Which factor has contributed to Go First's financial woes, reflecting the wider issues in the aviation industry?
[Editorial Page]
A. Reliance on Pratt \& Whitney engines
B. High capital and operational costs
C. Rebranding as Go First
D. CEO Kaushik Khona's management style
2. Based on the passage, Which of the following are/is not true about the situation with Go First and the aviation industry?
i. Go First blamed their problems on failing engines provided by Pratt \& Whitney.
ii. The aviation industry struggles with high capital and operational costs and thin margins.
iii. Go First's financial issues only started during the COVID-19 pandemic.
iv. The surge in crude oil prices and the depreciation of the rupee increased ATF costs for domestic carriers
A. Only i
B. Only ii
C. Only iii
D. I, ii, iii,iv
3. Which of the following best describes the tone of the passage?
A. Optimistic
B. Critical
C. Neutral
D. Humorous
4. What is the main theme of the passage?
A. The growth of low-cost carriers in India
B. The success story of Go First
C. The challenges faced by the aviation industry and the need for policy changes
D. The importance of customer service in the airline industry
5. Based on the passage, which factor contributed to the financial difficulties faced by Go First and the aviation industry in India?
A. A lack of aircraft for the airlines
B. A surge in crude prices and rupee's depreciation
C. An increase in air travel demand
D. A decrease in air travel demand
6. Which of the following phrases best describes the situation of the aviation industry as illustrated in the editorial?
A. Smooth sailing
B. The sky's the limit
C. Flying high
D. Wafer thin margins
7. What is a synonym for "proximate" as used in the passage?
A. Immediate
B. Distant
C. Separate
D. Disconnected
8. What is an antonym for "vulnerable" as used in the passage?
A. Exposed
B. Resilient
C. Susceptible
D. Defenseless
9. Which of the following words is a synonym for "overhaul" as used in the passage?
A. Reform
B. Neglect
C. Ignore
D. Deteriorate
10. Which of the following words is an antonym for "infirmities" as used in the passage?
A. Strengths
B. Weaknesses
C. Flaws
D. Deficiencies

## Comprehension

The decision of the Government of India to suspend the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA) licence of the country's premier think tank, the Centre for Policy Research (CPR)
$\qquad$ 1 $\qquad$ bad in optics and substance. The reasons that are being cited by the authorities include $\qquad$ in the income-tax paperwork of CPR's staff, lack of due process in the accounting process, and diversion of funds to publication of books, which the authorities allege is not part of the CPR's objectives. An eagerness to drag the prestigious institution into a quagmire of legal processes $\qquad$ 3 $\qquad$ writ large over this entire exercise. The CPR has been working on improving governance and enhancing state capacity among other things, in collaboration with governments, and the public and private sectors. There are many advocacy and campaign groups that have been facing the $\qquad$ 4 $\qquad$ of the government in the recent past, but the action against the CPR lowers the bar of tolerance for the political establishment to $\qquad$ 5 $\qquad$ abysmal level. This betrays an inexplicable hostility towards knowledge creation of all kinds. Fill in the blanks with the most appropriate combinations of words
11. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 1.
A. Is
B. Are
C. Was
D. Were
12. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 2.
A. Emergence
B. Essential
C. Paradox
D. Lapses
13. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 3.
A. Are
B. Was
C. Is
D. Were
14. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 4.
A. Insulate
B. Wrath
C. Ambition
D. Hostility
15. Select the most appropriate option to fill in blank 5.
A. A
B. Some
C. The
D. An
16. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.
P. Half of the accidents that took place in 2022 in areas under the Baddi police district jurisdiction have occurred on this highway.
Q. Exposing a worrisome lack of all-round attention to the safety of commuters in Himachal Pradesh is the high rate of accidents on its national highways (NH).
R. The four-laning of the Baddi-Nalagarh NH is illustrative of the sorry state of affairs.
S. Ever since the work began last year, the motorway has turned into a death trap.
A. QRSP
B.QRPS
C.SQPR
D.PRQS

## 17. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

P. Now, they can submit their applications till June 26.
Q. THE Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the deadline for the filing of applications regarding the 'higher pension' option, thereby giving a much-needed breather to lakhs of employees and retirees who were scrambling to do the needful by May 3.
R. Lack of clarity about the rules and the pension calculations has prevented many people from making an informed decision on a matter that impacts their long-term financial security.
S. The window provided by the extension needs to be optimally utilised to remove the stakeholders' doubts and apprehensions.
A. RSQP
B.QPSR
C.RSPQ
D.SPRQ

## 18. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

P. With this, the Ministry of Defence has set in motion the designation of military areas within most of the 62 cantonments in the country as military stations and merge the civil areas with the municipalities.
Q. The contention is that the bifurcation policy would be beneficial for all stakeholders.
R. Army and civilian pockets are intertwined in some cantonments, making segregation difficult.
S. THE picturesque Yol in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh has become the first to shed its cantonment tag.
A. SPQR
B.QRSP
C.SRQP
D.SPRQ

## 19. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.

P. In the 1950s and 1960s, if you belonged to North India and were referred to as a 'Simla Pink', that did not imply you had a rare and incurable skin disease.
Q. On the contrary, the phrase carried a high level of snobbery on part of the 'pink' and a fair level of envy on part of the 'non-pink'.
R. At the top of the 'Scale of Pink', you had a summer house in the hills.
S. Being a 'Simla Pink' meant you escaped the sweltering heat of the plains in summer and moved to the hills for several months till autumn brought the temperature down to a more comfortable level.
A. QRSP
B.PSRQ
C.QSRP
D.PQSR
20. Arrange the following sentences to form a coherent paragraph.
P. I appeared for the NDA exam in 2004 but couldn't clear the interview.
Q. My father was an Army officer.
R. I was sent from my village Jhojhu Kalan in Charkhi Dadri district of Haryana to Rashtriya Military School, Ajmer.
S. It was his dream that I should join the Indian Army.
A. QRSP
B.QSRP
C.PSQR
D.PRQS

## Answers

1. B
2.C
3.B
2. C
3. B
4. D
5. A
$8 . B$
.A
10.A
11.A
6. D
13.C
14.B
15.D
16.A
17.B
18.D
19.D
7. B
[Practice Exercise]

## Explanations

1. B) High capital and operational costs

The passage states that Go First's financial troubles are largely symptomatic of the malaise afflicting the wider industry, highlighting the high capital and operational costs that have led to wafer-thin margins in the commercial air transport industry. While the failing engines are mentioned as a proximate cause, it is the larger context of the aviation industry's struggles that is the main focus of the passage.
2. C) Option $\mathbf{C}$ is not true according to the passage. It states that "Go First's financial woes predate the fleet troubles and the pandemic and are largely symptomatic of the malaise afflicting the wider industry." This shows that Go First's financial problems started before the pandemic, contrary to what option C suggests.
3. B) Critical

The passage takes a critical tone, as it discusses the problems faced by Go First and the wider aviation industry. It highlights the challenges and failures of the industry, pointing out that the issues are systemic and require policy changes and regulatory overhaul.
4. C) The challenges faced by the aviation industry and the need for policy changes

The passage primarily focuses on the challenges faced by the aviation industry, specifically the financial troubles of Go First and the wider industry's struggles. It emphasizes the need for policy changes and regulatory overhaul to address the industry's systemic issues.
5. B) A surge in crude prices and rupee's depreciation

The passage highlights that the surge in crude prices after the Ukraine invasion and the rupee's depreciation against the dollar led to soaring aviation turbine fuel (ATF) costs for domestic carriers, including Go First. The airline found itself hobbled when air travel demand rebounded, as nearly a third of its fleet was grounded due to engine issues. The passage does not indicate that a lack of aircraft, an increase in air travel demand, or a decrease in air travel demand directly contributed to the financial difficulties faced by Go First and the aviation industry
6. D) Wafer thin margins - the very narrow profit margins (in the commercial aviation industry) The editorial mentions that the commercial air transport industry, including Go First, operates with "wafer thin margins" due to high capital and operational costs. This is further exacerbated by aggressive pricing strategies adopted by airlines in the competitive budget airline sector, making companies more vulnerable to shocks.
7. The correct answer is A) Immediate.

Proximate (adjective) - most likely, nearby, close, immediate निकटस्थ (कारण)
Explanation: In the passage, "proximate" refers to something that is immediately preceding or causing something else.
8. The correct answer is B ) Resilient

Vulnerable (adjective) - weak, susceptible, helpless, defenseless कमजोर
Explanation: In the passage, "vulnerable" refers to a state of being susceptible to harm or easily affected by shocks. The opposite of this would be a state of being able to withstand or recover from harm.
9. Answer: A. Reform

Overhaul (noun) - Renovation, reform, refit, refurbishment सुधार
Explanation: In the context of the passage, "overhaul" refers to significant changes or reforms needed in the policy and regulatory aspects of the aviation industry. "Reform" is synonymous with "overhaul" as it also implies making changes or improvements to existing policies or regulations
10. Answer: A. Strengths

Infirmity (noun) - frailty, weakness, feebleness, enfeeblement, delicacy दुर्बलता
Explanation: In the context of the passage, "infirmities" refer to the weaknesses or vulnerabilities within the aviation industry. "Strengths" is an antonym for "infirmities," as it denotes positive or advantageous aspects.
11. Option A, "is," is correct because the subject " decision " is singular, and the present tense of the verb "to be" is required to match the tense of the sentence.
12. Lapse (noun) - failure, failing, slip, error, mistake, blunder चूक, भूल

- Emergence (noun) - appearance, arrival, coming उद्भव
- Essential (adjective) - Vital, indispensable, important, crucial, critical, necessary आवश्यक
- Paradox (noun) - Inconsistency, absurdity, irony, contradiction, enigma, puzzle विरोधाभास

13. Option C , "is," is correct because the subject "eagerness" is singular, and the present tense of the verb "to be" is required to match the tense of the sentence
14. Wrath (noun) - anger, rage, fury, annoyance, indignation क्रोध, रोष

- Insulate (verb) - protect, shield, cushion, screen बचाना
- Ambition (noun) - aspiration, goal, desire, objective महत्वाकांक्षा
- Hostility (noun) - antagonism, unfriendliness, bitterness, malevolence, malice शत्रुता

15. Option D, "An," is the correct choice because it is used before a singular noun (in this case, "abysmal level") that begins with a vowel sound. The use of the indefinite article "an" emphasizes that the level of tolerance is not specific or previously mentioned, but rather a general and new piece of information for the reader. The other options ( $A, B$, and $C$ ) do not provide the appropriate emphasis or grammatical correctness in this context.
16. QRSP

Exposing a worrisome lack of all-round attention to the safety of commuters in Himachal Pradesh is the high rate of accidents on its national highways (NH). The four-laning of the

Baddi-Nalagarh NH is illustrative of the sorry state of affairs. Ever since the work began last year, the motorway has turned into a death trap. Half of the accidents that took place in 2022 in areas under the Baddi police district jurisdiction have occurred on this highway.
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THE Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the deadline for the filing of applications regarding the 'higher pension' option, thereby giving a much-needed breather to lakhs of employees and retirees who were scrambling to do the needful by May 3. Now, they can submit their applications till June 26. The window provided by the extension needs to be optimally utilised to remove the stakeholders' doubts and apprehensions. Lack of clarity about the rules and the pension calculations has prevented many people from making an informed decision on a matter that impacts their long-term financial security
18. SPRQ

THE picturesque Yol in Kangra district of Himachal Pradesh has become the first to shed its cantonment tag. With this, the Ministry of Defence has set in motion the designation of military areas within most of the 62 cantonments in the country as military stations and merge the civil areas with the municipalities. Army and civilian pockets are intertwined in some cantonments, making segregation difficult. The contention is that the bifurcation policy would be beneficial for all stakeholders.
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