

The Magic Carpet



VOL. 16 NO. 4 THE STAFF MAGAZINE OF AIR INDIA APRIL 1972

"EMPEROR RAJENDRA CHOLA" ARRIVES

"Emperor Rajendra Chola", our newest and the latest Boeing 747-237B arrived in Bombay on April 1, 1972. This is the third 747 jumbo jet to be added to our fleet.

The new 747 is named after the great Chola Emperor Rajendra (1014-44). One of the three ancient Tamil dynasties, the Cholas reached the height of their power under Rajaraja (985-1014) and his son, Rajendra. They not only controlled the whole of southern India and Ceylon but also were able to send a military expedition as far as the Ganges and to defeat the Pala king of Bengal. They were moreover the greatest naval power of the time, and under Rajendra a successful naval expedition was dispatched to Malaya and Indonesia.

INCREASE REVENUE, CUT COSTS

By
Air Marshal M. S. Chaturvedi
Managing Director



You must accept this target.....

RM's CONFERENCE

Meet your targets

-Urges MD

A wide range of subjects was discussed at the two-day Regional Managers Conference at the Headquarters in Bombay which concluded on April 4, 1972. Among the subjects discussed were the revenue targets for the various regions, effects of the new \$450 concessional fare from the US to India, in-flight and ground service, cargo, the performance of the Charter company and the working of Operation Europe and Operation USA.

Mr. J.R.D. Tata, Chairman, Air Marshal M.S. Chaturvedi, Managing Director, Mr. S.K. Kooka, Commercial Director and Mr. K.K. Unni, Assistant Managing Director addressed the Conference.

The main topic of discussion was the \$450 concessional fare from USA to India. It was generally agreed that the fare has been a marked success because it has developed for Air-India an entirely new segment of the American market.

Cargo and in-flight service were the two other important subjects which provoked long discussion. On Cargo, it was felt that even with the introduction of 747s, our ability to cope with the growing cargo traffic had not improved to any significant extent. On certain sectors such as Delhi-Beirut, because of high temperatures at Delhi, there was a severe payload limitation. Mr. M.A.S. Dalal, Regional Director-UK, felt there should be better load control in order to avoid the off-loading of cargo at enroute stations and emphasised we should be more selective in accepting cargo.

The Chairman was critical of our in-flight service and catering. He said that unless we improve both, we would lose the advantage we have enjoyed all these years over our competitors. He was particularly anxious that our Cabin Crew should be more economy-minded than they

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The financial year 1971-72 has closed. It is time now to take stock of things - of the objectives we have achieved, of some others we failed to achieve, of our shortcomings which we could have avoided as well as those also over which we had, in any case, no control.

The year 1971 started with bad omens. On January 30, 1971, the Indian Airlines Fokker Friendship aircraft bound for Amritsar from Srinagar was hi-jacked to Pakistan. The immediate outcome of the hi-jacking incident was the closure of air space between India and Pakistan. Our shortest route to London via Moscow was seriously affected, and instead of going directly over Pakistan we started back-tracking from Delhi to Jamnagar and thence to Moscow overflying Iran. This meant approximately a two-hour detour each way - an extra expenditure of roughly Rs.24,000 (US\$3,297) on each flight.

Then came the chain of events that culminated in the 14-day war between India and Pakistan and the birth of a new nation - Bangladesh.

Campaign of terror

Towards the end of March, the Pakistan Military Junta launched a campaign of murder, rape and arson, unparalleled in human history on the people of the then East Bengal. To escape this, men, women and children started pouring into India, literally by the millions. Our Government hurriedly tried to meet the situation by setting up large numbers of refugee camps. However, it is impossible for any country to tackle a problem of such a magnitude, at short notice. News of cholera and other epidemics in the camps started spreading across the world. Foreign newspapers came out with headlines and vivid pictures. The result was a large scale cancellation of reservations on all airlines bound for India. We were the worst sufferers.

MD appeals to staff

Soon after, the sub-continent was engulfed in the 14-day war between India and Pakistan. During this period international traffic to India virtually came to a standstill. We are still in the backwash of the Indo-Pakistan war, although there are signs of gradual improvement in the situation.

We had already been seriously affected by the economic recession in the USA and Europe and by the introduction of massive capacity on international routes as a result of the advent of the 747 aircraft. We were naturally sucked into the vortex. The result was that the year 1971-72 put us in the 'red' by approximately Rs.4 crores (US \$5,495,000) after being in the 'black' continuously for the last 18 years. No doubt, our intensive economy drive helped to reduce the deficit, but this did not succeed in pulling us out of the 'red'.

As for the future, there are encouraging signs in the international air travel market for 1972-73. However, I have grave doubts if most airlines will succeed in achieving profitability. Air-India's performance, I expect, will definitely be better provided, of course, another chain of abnormal events does not occur in or outside the country. Herculean efforts will nevertheless have to be made by all concerned to keep our head above water.

Tighten belts

To start with, we will have to tighten our belts. In fact, if we can find scope for moving it up another notch, we should do so. Unless we can keep our expenditure low, we are likely to run into serious trouble.

Secondly, our most important task is to achieve higher revenues. This cannot be attained merely by sales efforts. All staff in Air-India will have to strengthen the hands of our sales personnel in order to achieve this end. The ground staff will have to see that the passenger is attended to promptly and courteously; the catering staff will have to ensure

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What can the market bear?

"DREAM ON WINGS"

AIR-INDIA's film "Dream on Wings" was awarded the first prize of Cedre d'Argent du Festival Realisations Internationales at the 5th Festival of Lebanese Publicity Film held in Beirut recently.

The Film made for our Publicity Section by Messrs. Hungarofilm of Budapest uses the single cell animation technique, in which images flow into one another. It shows some of the cities to which Air-India flies. The main emphasis is however, on India. It also shows our Boeing 747 and the in-flight service.



The medallion awarded to Air-India for its film "Dream on Wings".

Delhi Round-up

By S. P. Dutt

OUR Resident Sales Representative in Lucknow, Mr. R.D. Burman, recently organised a Miss Air-India, Lucknow, contest in collaboration with the Lucknow Ladies Club. Mr. B. Gopala Reddy, Governor of U.P. was the Chief Guest at the function. Our Air Hostesses uniforms were displayed by models and judging from Press reports the function was a roaring success.

Mr. R.M.L. Saxena of Reservations has joined the Sales Section after working in the Reservations for more than 12 years, which he claims is a record!

Mr. M.P. Theophilus, Secretary of the Sports Club has planned busy schedule for sports activities. Two friendly matches were played recently against St. Stephen's College and against Delhi University teachers. We lost one and won the other. An inter-section Table Tennis Tournament

is going to be held in the near future and preparations are also under way for the annual sports meet. Manmohan Singh, Peon in Reservations, recently won a prize in the Delhi State Inter-Club Weightlifting Championships. Congratulations, Manmohan.

Our colleagues in West Germany may have recently seen some shots of Air-India posters on television. A visiting German Television team was much impressed by these and a small display of the posters along with our Boeing 747 model was arranged for them for this purpose.

We would like to congratulate Mr. J.S. Bawa, Assistant Personnel Officer who got married recently. His wife is a doctor.

We would like to convey our condolences to the bereaved family of Mr. Pase Ram, Sweeper, who died in tragic circumstances recently.

WHO'S WHO & WHERE

OPERATIONS DEPARTMENT

PROMOTIONS

Capt. J.S. Sahi, Sr. Captain
Santa Cruz.

POSTINGS

From	To	From	To
Mr. Dhruva Murthy, Flight Ops. Officer, Bombay.	Delhi	Mr. M.R. Relwani, Navigator, Hong Kong.	Bombay
Mr. G. Natarajan, Navigator, London.	Bombay	Mr. A. Faria, Flight Engineer, Hong Kong.	Bombay



Mr. B. Gopala Reddy, Governor of U.P. presenting an Air-India trophy to Mrs. Jagmohan Singh, who drove a Morris (1938) car in the recent Lucknow Vintage Car Rally

INCREASE REVENUE, CUT COSTS

(Continued from page 1)

good, tasty food presented in a courteous and efficient manner; the cabin crew will have to treat the passenger literally like a Maharajah so that he cherishes the memories of his flight with us long after the completion of his journey. While it will be the salesman's persuasive efforts which will bring the passenger to us for the first time, it will be our service

on the ground and in the air which will induce him to come back to us again and again. The difference between profit and loss for Air-India will be the way in which all of us will treat our honoured guest - the passenger.

The past year has been a difficult year for all of us. My admiration and

appreciation goes to all of you for the way in which you readily responded to do your best, not only for Air-India but also for the country. In our own small way, Air-India played its part in the hour of our country's supreme crisis. I have received letters of appreciation from Hon. Dr. Karan Singh, our Minister of Tourism & Civil Aviation, from Shree Jagjivan Ram, the Defence Minister, from Air Chief Marshal Lal, Chief of the Air Staff, from Air Marshal Dewan, AOC in C Eastern Air Command, Lt. General Moti Sagar, Director General, Civil Defence, Admiral S.N. Kohli, FOC in C Western Naval Command, and Air Vice Marshal Pandit, Air Officer Commanding, Maritime Operations Group. These letters express in profuse and generous terms the appreciation of the role played by our staff at various stations in helping the country to achieve a quick victory over Pakistan. I too wish to place on record my own appreciation for the excellent work done by all of you - wherever you may be.

I have no doubt whatsoever in my mind that you will not hesitate in taking whatever action that may be called for to serve the interests of Air-India. As I have said earlier, the year 1972-73 is not going to be an easy year. But based on the faith I have in you, I am full of optimism and I believe that our performance this year will be infinitely better than the preceding year.

Meet your targets

(Continued from page 1)

were at present. On one occasion, he said, he had found that the purser had opened the bottles of various types of wine to serve two first class passengers. The purser could very well have showed them the unopened bottles and asked them to choose, before opening the bottles.

The Managing Director shared these views. He voiced similar criticism about our ground service. This required to be improved too, he added. The Chairman felt that the RMs should review our policy of self-handling at some of the less busy outstations. "Every additional staff we employ means an additional problem - for the Management, for Accounts, for Personnel".

Referring to the revenue targets set for all the Regions, the MD pointed out that even if all the Regions achieved their targets 100%, we would still make a loss of something like Rs.4 crores during the current year. Mr. Unni said that our costs were going up. The fuel bill alone is likely to go up by Rs.16 crores during this year.

During the discussion on a computer reservation system, the Chairman said that we should go ahead and participate in BOADICEA, BOAC's computer system, for reservations in Europe and North America. Mr. Unni mentioned that a provision had been made in the budget for this purpose.

Mr. Knut Hammarskjöld, Director General of IATA, visited Kuwait between March 8 and 20, 1972. The Board of Airline Representatives in Kuwait gave a lunch in his honour at the Kuwait Hilton. Here he is seen with Mr. F.V. Mascarenhas, our Manager - Kuwait (Centre) and Mr. Khoury, General Manager, KLM, Kuwait (R).



World-wide review of baggage procedures

THE Passenger and Baggage Processing Sub-Committee of IATA and the Baggage Handling Sub-Committee of the Air Traffic Conference of America have declared May 15 - 21, 1972, as the Baggage Week. It will be observed by all IATA member airlines, including Air-India, all over the world. The Baggage Week which is held every year is an attempt at quality control or monitoring the airlines' collective performance in baggage handling.

The objectives are to stimulate awareness among the public contact and baggage handling airline employees of the importance of good baggage service to provide a framework for the development of year-round local baggage service improvement programmes and also to gather information that will prove useful to the various In-

dustry Groups when reviewing existing Industry procedures and practices.

The basic programme consists of a review of the procedures of through-checking of baggage to the passenger's final destination, procedures of transfer of interline baggage, tracing lost and found items, practices concerning Customs regulations and their interface with the flow of baggage and to encourage the practice of external passenger identification of baggage.

The airlines have been asked to fill in questionnaires in order to provide the Industry with the basic outline of airline activities which will also serve to uncover problem areas. Extensive surveys will be taken all over the world of every aspect of baggage handling. A survey is also to be made of the baggage make-up areas of airports.

Challenge of a jumbo-sized inventory

A quick round up of activities of our Stores Department was given by Mr. S.C. Kale, Controller of Stores and Purchases in a speech before the Rotary Club of Bombay North.

With his first-hand knowledge of the subject Mr. Kale provided the distinguished gathering with an insight into the complexities of Stores management. He said that it is not merely the size of inventory (which will reach a staggering Rs.31 crores in a year's time) which provides the challenge, but also the wide range of items, some of them quite expensive, to be bought from world-wide sources.

The variety of items stored by Air-India may go up to 200,000 in this year, ranging from pins to toothpicks, from medicines and perfumes to sausages and champagnes, from saris and carpets to aircraft spares which include tiny jewels to giant engines, costing Rs.60 lakhs each.

"We of course buy all this material plus many services like laundering, printing and pest control", said Mr. Kale. "We will be spending Rs.10 crores a year to keep up the stocks".

What is unique about Air-India's inventory, apart from its value and variety, is that it consists of all high quality material, meticulously inspected and carefully documented. Mr. Kale pointed out that spares back-up is vitally important in airline busi-

ness. "An aeroplane is capable of earning its cost within a year. It can do this only if it is in the air 3,500 hours a year or an average of 10 hours a day. Insurance alone costs approximately Rs.18,400 a day for the jumbo. So we cannot let it be grounded for a spare part.

The purchase of aircraft spares presents some special problems. Contrary to popular impression, not all spares are bought from the Boeing Company. As a matter of fact, there are 500 different suppliers".

Mr. Kale went on to explain the background to the airlines spares pool and how it works. "We may steal passengers from each other, but if an airlines plane is held up, the others rush to help out".

With the arrival of 747s on the scene, this type of co-operation has been extended to the field of ground support equipment too, Mr. Kale said.

Referring to materials bought in India, Mr. Kale pointed out: "We have to meet very high standards or reliability, quality and safety. We have to test everything we buy - cloth for fading, for its washability and its fire resistance; melamineware for staining; air sickness bags for seepage; baggage tags for tear resistance; carpets for loop strength; cabinets for 'G' forces and cleaning agents for effect on metals, plastics and hands".

A meeting of Managers in the East Asia Region was held in the Regional Office at Hong Kong on March 24, 1972. Seen after the meeting are from (L to R) Mr. Surya Patel, Manager, Thailand; Mr. H.D. Billimoria, Manager, Hong Kong; Mr. C.S. Pinto, RM-East Asia; Mr. B. Menezes, Manager, Japan; Mr. P.S. Rajaratnam, Manager, Singapore; Mr. S.V. Tipnis, Manager, Jakarta; Mr. A. Ghosh, DSM, Manila and Mr. S.S. Virk, Asst. Manager, Kuala Lumpur.



DREAMING OF INDIA - Nayanara ("GUCKI"), seventeen-year-old daughter of Mr. Sailen Ghosh, ASM, Vienna, is an extremely talented girl. She has appeared in a number of German films and is also seen on the Austrian TV in various programmes. She is also a poet. She wrote a poem in French (English translation is reproduced below) for a competition in the Lycee Francais in Vienna. It was widely acclaimed.

DREAMS OF INDIA

If there is a land with unnumbered features
pulsating with music, dance and art,
If beneath an earth lie gems in vaulted caves,
If there is a sunlit sea filled with pearls
and the highest mountains sheltering fertile ground
it is India

If you travel from North to South
from alpestran landscape thru enchanted valleys
leaving sacred rivers and holy grounds behind,
down to rice planted terraces beyond thousands of temples
thru jungles and deserts, home of the wildest life
and finally reach Cape Comorin
it is India

If you meet with all the lights of human wisdom,
If you find indestructible faith and believe,
in spite of fight for daily bread,
If you see a smile on a child's face
reflecting a lurking bazaar lane in it's deepbrown eyes
If you find joy and happiness in the poorest hut
it is India

If there is a temple of greatest love
inlaid with precious stones and built with frozen tears
wrapped in silk, born on the loom of a fanciful weaver
who wove together the colours of a many mooded country
it is India

If there is an example of universal love and respect for your brother
where famous names fought for peace and non-violence
If search for truth is the aim of life
to make a happier and better world
it is India.

Rs. 10,000 prize for Mrs. Sheila Chandorkar

WHEN people take up hobbies, they rarely, if ever, think of making money from them. It is something to help while away spare time, no more. But it is not unusual to come across people who have found their hobbies monetarily profitable.

Take the case of Mrs. Sheila Chandorkar, wife of Mr. V.B. Chandorkar, Technical Officer in our Civil Construction Division. Like many

housewives she is interested in embroidery and over the years she has become a skilled artist. Her portraits of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President John F. Kennedy were greatly admired.

Some months ago when the Modithread, a wellknown textile group in Delhi, ran an Embroidery and Knitting Competition Mrs. Chandorkar decided to enter it. She chose to make the portrait of a Tibetan girl with a child on her back, which had appeared on a calendar of a city firm. For two and half months, she worked for almost eight hours a day, seven days a week, recreating the portrait on cloth with Modi colour threads. What emerged was a remarkable work of art. Everyone who saw it said that it would undoubtedly win the first prize in the competition. It did-Rs.10,000 in cash or a trip to Paris for two on Air France. Mrs. Chandorkar chose the cash prize.

Mrs. Chandorkar who is an M.A. from the University of Bombay was naturally delighted at her success, so was Mr. Chandorkar. What did they plan to do with the money? "We haven't decided yet".



TOWARDS A QUICK

By K. S.



A Typical scene at Bombay Airport. One of our Boeing 747s surrounded by ground support equipment. Missing from the scene is the cargo handling equipment.

If you drive along the perimeter road from our Engineering Base towards the New Terminal Building at Bombay Airport around six on a Friday evening, you can see one of our Boeing 747s being towed towards the parking bay opposite our Cargo Warehouse. Like a luxury liner being brought into a harbour by a pilot launch, it moves slowly and majestically. As soon as it stops, a clutch of half a dozen vehicles, painted bright orange and yellow, detaches itself and lays siege around the plane.

As darkness falls, the plane stands bathed in light, its windows blazing and with the hum of the ground power and air conditioning units adding a sense of urgency and excitement to the scene. After some time more vehicles join the siege. The two high lift trucks dispensing food and other cabin stores attach themselves to the plane. A train of cargo containers arrives and the elaborate loading operation begins, quietly, efficiently and methodically.

Half an hour before departure, the final count-down begins. As coach-loads of passengers begin to arrive, the tempo of activity increases sharply. Traffic staff dash in and out of the plane; cargo men anxiously look at the baggage containers still to go into the hold and put on a fresh burst of speed. Soon it is all over; cargo holds are closed, cabin doors are firmly shut and the vehicles begin to pull away one by one. High lift trucks, cargo loading equipment, passenger step ladders, water carts, air conditioning unit, all move away, leaving only the ground power unit. As the engines start, even the GPU roars away and the plane is free to move under its own power towards the taxi track. She is away.

Drama

Watching the drama from the side lines, you are struck by two things. One is the highly sophisticated ground support equipment necessary for the operation of the 747 and the other a proper organisation to handle it. Unlike the earlier generation of jet aircraft the 747 needs a co-ordinated effort on the ground to ensure minimum ground time, which is a key to its success.

This need was highlighted by the Ramp Equipment Review Committee appointed by the Headquarters long before our 747 arrived last April. The Committee's investigations revealed an astonishing division of responsibility within Air-India between various departments as far as ground handling was concerned.

For instance, the high-lift trucks and passenger step-ladders were under the control of the Commercial Department, but were maintained and serviced by the Transport Division of the Operations Department. On the other hand, the engineering ramp equipment like the aircraft tractors, ground power units and air conditioning units were entirely the responsibility of the Engineering Department. Even here the equipment was used by the Maintenance Division, while the servicing was done by the Plant and Equipment Division. This diffusion of responsibility and lack of a single



Above, Mr. J.R. Puri, Controller, GDS, with Mr. D.A.R. Parker, Chargehand, who is checking the 106-ton 747 air-conditioner. Below left, Mr. K.P. Asthana, Senior Technical Officer. Right, Mr. G.G. Mhatre, Technical Officer. (L) and Mr. R.G. Patwardhan, Asst. Controller.



KER TURN-ROUND

Mhatre

controlling authority led to many irritations and inconveniences. There were also growing complaints from foreign operators whom we had contracted to handle.

The whole arrangement was not the result of a deliberate policy, but had evolved over a period of years. In the very early stages the planes hardly required any ground support equipment, except perhaps a battery-cart as in the case of the DC-3s. Later in the Constellation and Super Constellation era, the ground power unit came on the scene, which served as a starter and also provided power for air conditioning. With the arrival of the Boeing 707 in 1960, a single GPU could no longer serve the purpose. There was need for a pneumatic starter for the jet engines and also a separate air conditioning unit. Powered step ladders were added later. There was also more cargo handling equipment.

New set-up

However, the situation altered drastically with the 747. The new plane not only required sophisticated ground support equipment, including mechanical cargo and baggage handling equipment, but there was so much more of it. The PER Committee found that unless the entire organisational set-up was changed, there would be nothing but chaos on the ground when the 747 was introduced. It therefore recommended that a separate Ground Support Division be set-up, which should gradually take over complete ground handling, including cargo and baggage at both Bombay and Delhi.

The recommendation was accepted by the management and the new Division came into being on April 1, 1971, a couple of weeks before our first Boeing 747 arrived in Bombay. Mr. J.R. Puri, Deputy Engineering Manager, was named Controller of the Division.

Mr. Puri set about the job of organising the Division energetically. He brought to his new job an extensive background in aircraft maintenance engineering. Having completed his training at the Air Services Training School, Hamble, England, in 1938, he spent the first half of his career working in Britain for several British firms, including Bristol Aeroplane Company during the war and later BOAC. He joined Air-India in 1954. He was in charge of the Field Service Unit at Bombay Airport from 1968 to 1969 and had therefore first hand knowledge of the problems of ground handling.

Along with Mr. Puri, Mr. R.G. Patwardhan, Assistant Superintendent in the Industrial Engineering and Production Planning Division, was named as Assistant Controller, to whom the new appointment brought a welcome opportunity of working in the field. Besides he was a member of the PER Committee and had made a detailed study of all aspects of ground handling. Later in the year, Mr. R.P. Hudlikar, Assistant Engineering Manager, joined the Division as the Deputy Controller. He was made in charge of the Division's Operations at Delhi Airport.

Although the Division started off as part of the Engineering Department, it has since been transferred to the Technical Planning Department under Captain K. Vishvanath.

The SECMAFER tractor (pictured below) ordered by Air-India for towing the 747 is heavier than a Lockheed Super Constellation, whose all-up weight was 136,000 lb. as against 156,000 lb. of the tractor. The 800 h.p. tractor has a draw-bar pull of 66,000 lb. as compared to 30,000 lb. draw-bar pull of a 707 tractor which is only of 250 h.p. It costs over Rs.20 lakhs (including import duty) and is manufactured in France. A slow-speed tractor, it is 29 ft. 6 in. long, 9 ft. 9 in. wide and 5 feet high and can be driven from both sides.



Looking back over the last year, Mr. Puri said: "In the initial stages we faced a number of problems. There was a shortage of spares; supply position was bad. Staff were not trained to handle the new equipment. Now the situation has, I am happy to say, vastly improved. As a matter of fact, foreign airlines whom we handle are extremely happy with our service."

The Division now handles something like 800 flights a month in Bombay, including about 500 flights of foreign carriers. Although the overall number of flights at Delhi is less than Bombay, the number of jumbo flights passing through Delhi is far more than Bombay. "We are now handling on an average 30 to 32 jumbo flights a week in Delhi," said Mr. Puri. "Most of them arrive at night. It is not unusual to see three or four jumbos at a time at Delhi Airport."

Because of this, it has been necessary to station 2½ sets of 747 handling equipment in Delhi, while Bombay has 2 sets. Of the Rs.3.5 crores worth of equipment that the Division

now holds, the 747 accounts for Rs.2.25 crores and the rest 707. Air-India earns on an average Rs.1.25 lakhs a month at present by way of handling fees, which is likely to go up to Rs.1.5 lakhs. All this is in foreign exchange. Because the ground handling equipment is so expensive, few airlines do their own handling away from their home base. This is true of Air-India too.

Ground handling

The Division has now taken over the complete ground handling of the Boeing 747, including loading and unloading of cargo and baggage. In the case of 707s, it does the engineering ramp handling, while traffic continues to handle cargo. Ultimately, this too will be taken over by the GSD.

The Division has a total staff of about 270, of whom 165 are in Bombay and the rest in Delhi. Those engaged in actual handling, work round-the-clock in eight-hour shifts. An engineer is in charge of each shift,

who is assisted by a chargehand and a number of technicians and cleaners.

Apart from ramp handling there are three other sections within the Division. They are maintenance, overhaul and technical support/administration. "It is really like a mini-engineering department," says Mr. Patwardhan, who has the main responsibility for technical support and administration. Mr. K.P. Asthana, Sr. Technical Officer, is in overall charge of overhaul and maintenance side.

Now that the day-to-day operation has settled down, Mr. Patwardhan is now concentrating on long term planning to improve equipment serviceability and technical development. Every evening he gets an equipment serviceability report, which serves as an advance warning of any shortage of equipment likely to occur. He can then plan ahead to meet an emergency.

As Mr. Puri says: "We aim at 100 per cent equipment serviceability. We just can't let the equipment lie unserviceable. If we did, it would foul up all our schedules and those of foreign operators too".

Mr. R.K. Nanda, Technical Officer, testing the baggage conveyor. Mr. S.R. Limaye, Plant Technician in the driver's seat.



Cabin equipment and food being loaded on a Boeing 747. Note the cargo loader in the right foreground.



London Diary

By Trevor Turner

THE new uniforms for the male traffic staff have recently been introduced at London Airport and the general impression seems to be that our boys look extremely handsome in these new uniforms. The cut, style and colour are certainly a very refreshing change from the old uniforms. As the introduction of these coincided with the new ground receptionists saris, we have been responsible for quite a new look with these uniforms.

London Airport always seems to be changing. The new departure hall is now fully operational. Never again will we see the individualism of the ticket desks as the hall is now full of the new style ticket desks which although efficient, do not show any individual style. Everybody's desks look the same, rather like egg boxes or ice trays.

A new Duty-Free Supermarket designed to serve 1,000 passengers an hour has opened at Terminal 3 and at the present moment is the biggest supermarket at any world airport. There are 16 check-out desks and 52 different lines of liquor, 30 kinds of cigarettes and tobacco and 17 brands of cigars are on sale. Incidentally, in February there was a 12 per cent increase on the number of passengers using the Airport. The total was 944,308. So if they all bought a bottle of Scotch the profit ratio for the supermarket should be pretty good!

On the cargo side of the airport the new Laces system is in full operation, although part of the operational side of it has been the cause of some industrial dispute. This is a computerised system for the clearance of Customs documents and all airlines and agents on the airport are linked to it and in the near future it is planned to extend it to organisations off the airport.



The RD-UK attended the 25th Anniversary of the Indian Journalists' Association. Here he is seen with H.R.H. Prince Richard of Gloucester who was the Guest of Honour.

Our Cargo boys shipped a Mini-Cooper car to New York. This was not any ordinary Mini-Cooper as it was completely stripped down and rebuilt by Messrs. Wood & Pickett Ltd. and some of the features included a tinted windscreen, wide racing tyres, sun roof, leather upholstery, stereo record player and several other refinements. This was the first time we had shipped a car on one of our 747 pallets to New York, so we hope it won't be the last.

We all suffered in our various ways with the power cuts as a result of the miners' strike. At least we got the warnings as to when the cuts were going to be and these occurred at the same time each week. The trouble lasted for just over three weeks. In Bond Street it was just as well we were no more than five to six flights up, but the climb up the stairs did not deter many of us, neither did it seem to worry our charter passengers.

Our Glasgow office has recently moved and they all seem happy in their new premises which are certainly more practical, attractive and brighter than the old office which they occupied ever since our Glasgow Office opened over fifteen years ago.

In early March we extended our congratulations to the Regional Director U.K. and Mrs. Dalal on the occasion of their Silver Wedding Anniversary.

At the time of going to Press, all members of the Airline PR business from all over the World are meeting in London for the IATA PR Conference. This is the first of a number of IATA meetings to be held in London before the main annual general meeting to be held in September.

Much has been said in the U.K. Press recently about our rising prices and the subsequent effect upon our cost of living. It is alleged that this has gone up faster in this country than in any other non-communist industrial country within the last year. Many people blame decimalisation. We have now lived with our new currency for over a year and there are a number of food items that have gone up by over 100 per cent during this time. Another recent price rise was also a 100 per cent rise for the cost of getting married and buried.

One of the things that has not increased however is the cost of flower and vegetable seeds. Believe it or not, from a recent catalogue put out by Suttons, the famous seed firm, they point out that the majority of their prices have not altered since 1939.

One of our contacts recently flew with us from New York and he was seated beside a little girl who was travelling alone. After listening to the announcements about life jackets and when our friend showed her where her life jacket was she said: "Do we have to pay for it".

WEDDINGS



Myra Nunes to Willie Lewis, both from Customer Service.



Olga Fernandes to A.L.F. Dias of our Booking Office.

ON THE JOB:

EVERYTIME an aeroplane is wheeled into a hangar for a major check, there is usually a list of modifications to be done on it. Many of these mods originate from the manufacturer, but some are suggested by airline staff.

Take the case of P.K. James, Senior Aircraft Technician. He suggested a modification of our Pratt and Whitney JT3D engine cowlings so that the combustion chamber drain outlet assembly can be removed quickly. This has been accepted and James has been given an award of Rs.50.

James is 31 and joined Air-India in 1966 after serving with the Hindustan Aircraft Limited.

IF you walk into our Jet Engine Overhaul Shop, you will notice overhead gantries installed to convey heavier engine components from one end of the Shop to the other. They are electrically operated and before P.C. Kapse designed a rope-operated brake for them, a second man was required to hold the gantry in position.

Now the operator himself can do the job. Kapse won a Suggestion Award of Rs.50 for this.

Kapse, a 44 year-old Chargehand in the new 747 Engine Dressing Shop, has been with Air-India for 23 years. He is good at puppetry and is also something of a ventriloquist.

REMOVAL of cabin and galley entry door handles on our aircraft has always been a bit of a problem and in the process nuts and door trim were being damaged.

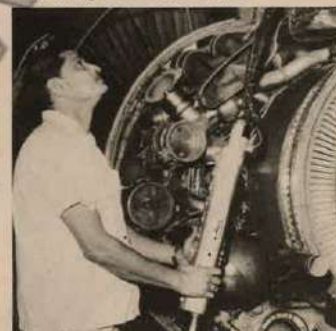
Aircraft Technician R.H. Ibrahimpurkar has now designed a 'C' type spanner which has solved this problem. Ibrahimpurkar who works in the Maintenance Division, has been given a Suggestion Award of Rs. 50 for it.

He is 32 and has been with Air-India for the last 12 years. Married with two children, he is fond of reading. "I read a number of magazines and books in Marathi", he said.

WHEN the oxygen bottles from our aircraft arrived in the Components Overhaul Division, technicians servicing them found it difficult to remove the locking nuts, because they were rusted. The nuts were often damaged while removing.

Senior Aircraft Technician J.S. Fernandes from the Division therefore designed a tool which has solved the problem. He has been given a Suggestion Award of Rs.50.

Fernandes, who is 50, has been with Air-India since 1948. Before that he spent 10 years with the railways as a Fitter. Married with one son, he finds social work a stimulating pastime.



RETIRED.....

Mr. J. H. Mirchandani

"**H**AS he retired? Really?" is the reaction of most Air-India staff who knew Mr. J.H. Mirchandani, Transport Supervisor. Three months after he retired, they still ask for him. He is one of those few men who are respected and liked by everyone who comes in contact with them.

When the Transport Division gave him a farewell party, the first-floor canteen hall was packed to capacity. Among senior executives present were Captain K.M. Mathen, Director of Operations, Captain J.S. Dhillon, Deputy Director of Operations, Mr. S.K. Nanda, Chief Personnel Manager, Mr. A.S. Banavalikar, Personnel Manager and Mr. S.N. Roy Chowdhury, Personnel Manager (Operations).

Mr. Mirchandani joined Air-India in 1948 as a senior clerk, became Asst. Transport Supervisor in 1953, Dy. Transport Supervisor in 1955 and Transport Supervisor in 1968. Over the years he identified himself with Transport so much that he was really "Mr. Transport" to the Air-India staff.

As Mr. R.N. Tavadia, Manager-Transport, said: "His retirement is a personal loss to me. I am losing a valuable colleague who always stood by me and shared the burdens of my duties".

Mr. Mirchandani's response to all the tributes paid to him was characteristically modest. His brief speech was interspersed with a couple of humorous anecdotes. "Never try to bluff your boss", he said. He des-



cribed how he was caught out while trying the trick with the late Mr. A.C. Gazder, Technical Director.

The sentiments of Transport staff were eloquently expressed by Raymond Pimenta, one of the Assistant Transport Supervisors. He said that Mr. Mirchandani was like a 'Guru' to all of them. Although a strict disciplinarian, he was also very considerate. Mr. Pimenta ended with a popular verse which summed up what everyone felt:

"Good luck, good health, God bless you,
That's all our hearts can say.
Good luck, good health, God bless you,
And guide you on your way.
Wherever you may wander,
Although we are apart,
Good luck, good health, God bless you and keep you,
Always close to our hearts."

Mr. Homi J. Sanjana

MR. Homi J. Sanjana, Senior Technical Assistant from the Production Planning and Industrial Engineering Division, retired recently from Air-India after 24 years service.

The staff of PP&EI Division gave him a farewell party, which was atten-

ded by Mr. P.C. Jacob, Dy. Engineering Manager.

"He is the most cheerful man I have known", said Mr. R. Vidyasagar, who worked with Mr. Sanjana for many years. "He joked and laughed all the time".

Security Staff

A big farewell party was organised by our Security staff at Santa Cruz to bid goodbye to three chowkidars who retired from the Corporation recently. They are Mr. D. N. Sutar, Mr. K.A. Shellar and Mr. S. R. Sakpal.

Mr. Sutar joined Air-India in February 1948, Mr. Shellar in October 1948 and Sakpal in October 1955. All of them are ex-Jawans, having served in the Indian Army for a five-year term before joining Air-India.

All Security Office staff, except those on duty, were present at the farewell party which was held in the

Works Canteen. Mr. G.B. Patwa, Chief Security Manager, presented gold rings to the three on behalf of the staff. He also presented Long Service Pins to some of the Security staff at the same time.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Patwa praised the staff on their splendid performance during the recent national emergency. "I am proud of the esprit de corps that exists among the Security staff", Mr. Patwa congratulated those who had received Long Service Pins. He concluded by wishing those who had retired a long and peaceful retired life.

Mr. G.B. Patwa, Chief Security Manager, (R) making a presentation to Mr. Sutar. Mr. Shellar and Mr. Sakpal are in the centre.



What the consumer expects from airlines

By Louis Harris

Among the many speakers who addressed the recent IATA PR Conference in London was Mr. Louis Harris of the Louis Harris International who gave the consumers point of view in his address. We reproduce below significant extracts from his speech.

THERE are only two indispensable ingredients to the airlines industry: the technology to produce and run a scheduled airline — which capability makes available planes people can travel on — and a consuming or flying public which will utilise this airline capability. If there were no airlines, then there would be no flyers. But if there were no consumers, then there would also be no airlines.

The air travel market, fortunately, has been growing apace around the world. I can recall well only 10 years ago in the U.S. when no more than 10 per cent of the public took a commercial flight in a given year. This has now risen to 23 per cent. More than doubled in the last decade. And it is conservative to assume that in another decade this number can double again. The trend in other technologically developed societies will grow in commensurate steep upward curves.

This surge of consumer demand is the bed-rock basis for optimism about the airlines industry world-wide. Yet at the same time, this very fact makes your business fraught with peril. For unless you know very precisely what people expect in the way of service, and in fact, unless you are meeting head-on their full expectations, you can preside over a sea of trouble the likes of which are horrifying to contemplate.

Market

The key, I believe, is to understand your market, quite apart from whatever the marketing capability of your particular airline might be, because we have consistently found that most of the attitudes about airline economics, national and international governmental regulation, confidence in your operations as corporate entities are all profoundly shaped by the assessment people make out of their own experience as air travellers. Put it this way: a series of bad experiences as a passenger can give birth to literally mountains of restrictive encumbrances in how the airlines are allowed to run their business.

Yet we have found that people do not come by their views about airlines simply out of their individual experiences as flyers. Rather, as with most human experience, they are preconditioned by what they are exposed to on television, in the newspapers, magazines, radio, and other media, both in the form of news stories and through advertising. And easily the most credible side of that equation is what they read about in the non-advertising columns.

The perspective and the nature of your marketplace is changing drastically. My view is that it is your appointive responsibility to be certain your management is not meeting yesterday's demand patterns with yesterday's roster or service, but rather is meeting tomorrow's demand with tomorrow's services. And the key to what this demand is and what your roster of services ought to be lies squarely with how well you understand this new and emerging airline consumer.

The modern air traveller who makes up IATA's ultimate consti-

tuency is affluent, well educated, young, and urban-based. There is another way to look at this prototype of the international air traveller. He is essentially urbane and sophisticated, not prone to buy quick and easy shibboleths, likely to turn off quickly to puffery, not a Good Time Charley, far more serious-minded than you might suspect, with ever-broadening interests, a probing and inquiring mind, and a desire to know what lies back of the service he is utilising and paying for, as well as to expect something more from your airline than simply good service, prompt delivery, and good value for the money spent.

A recent survey we conducted among international air travellers yielded this kind of line-up on what are the important and unimportant elements of service. Let me warn you that if you stacked up the miles of film and pounds of print of advertising the airlines turn out next to this read order of priorities people set on services, one might think you were literally living in two quite different worlds. For example, it is not uncommon to see advertising which emphasises movies, luxuriant food and beverage service, new types of planes available with the latest in passenger comfort, and good-looking interiors of planes, new low, low fares, and highly friendly stewardesses. What I have just related probably accounts for two-thirds of airline advertising over the past five years.

Important

Yet the roster of services I have just ticked off all fall in the bottom half of what is really important to international air travellers.

Actually, with a 54 per cent "very important" rating, friendly stewardesses provide the bridge from the less to the more important elements of service. For following on the heels of friendly stewardesses is the category "friendly and courteous employees", cited as very important by 69 per cent. What other employee friendliness and courtesy is more important than that from stewardesses we will come to in a moment. Even more important is the element of "experience in running an airline", a high confidence element that separates the scheduled carriers from the supplementals. Moving up, there is one specific that does apply to passenger comfort, but is highly targeted: "enough leg room", cited as "very important" by a substantial 77 per cent.

The next three elements of services, which rank in fifth, fourth, and third place, all have to do with service and involve employees, but ironically have nothing whatsoever to do with what happens in the air. They are all concerned with basic ground service: ease in making reservations, mentioned as very important by 82 per cent; fast ground service at ticket and check-in counters, cited by 83 per cent; and fast check-in and baggage claim, also thought to be important by 83 per cent.

Finally, at the top of the list are two key elements which deal with individual security and ultimate assurance: a good maintenance and safety record, given a very important rating by 90 per cent; and able pilots, highly important to 92 per cent.



The King of Bhutan travelled on our service from Nairobi to Bombay recently. Here he is seen with Mr. K.L. Ramchander, our Manager-Santa Cruz at Bombay Airport.



At the Air-India Sunset Dinner Cruise on Lake Burley Griffin, Canberra, are seen (L to R) Mr. F.B. Rush, ASM, Sydney; Mr. Joseph Forde, our Commissioner for Malta in Australia, Mr. R.K. Nampat-singh, Manager-Australasia, Mr. Trevor Rafferty, Manager, Ansett Airlines, Canberra and Mr. S. Krishnamurti, Indian High Commissioner in Australia.

News in pictures

Sir Cecil Beaton, the wellknown photographer and designer, boarding our aircraft at London Airport along with Raymond Mortimer.

Mr. R.J. Uplinger, President, Lions International, left on our service to Tokyo. Here he is seen at Bombay Airport with (L to R) Mr. Minoo Engineer, Secretary for S.W. Asia, Lions International, Mrs. Engineer and Mr. G.D. Vyas, our Sales Officer, Bombay District.



A group of doctors led by Dr. Troch (3rd from left), left Brussels for an extensive tour of India and Nepal. Mr. R. Taton, our Sales Manager (L) and Mr. Ali-Merali, Sales Representative (R) are seen with the group at Brussels Airport.

