

Press release of actual press release statement by the GS in the release as on 03.11.09

## **Strike to Save Air India: ICPA**

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Air India pilots today asserted that they would go ahead with their November 24 strike call if their demands were not met within a week, saying the "erroneous" policies of the management were responsible for the losses of the national carrier.

Warning that they would "expose" the management's actions through industrial action, the Indian Commercial Pilots Association (ICPA) General Secretary R S OtaI said, "the strike has been called to save Air India. We intend to tell the public and the political leadership what is wrong with Air India."

ICPA, the body of non-executive pilots of erstwhile Indian Airlines, called for a strike from November 24 "if issues including that of pending arrears are not addressed by Air India management by November 10."

The pilots' body claimed it was the "erroneous policies of the management which were responsible for the losses" that the national air-carrier had accrued over the years and demanded "fixing responsibility for the mess".

Such a move has been "promised time and again but nothing has been done so far," OtaI told reporters, adding that when the magnitude of Air India's losses have come out in public, people would like to know who should be held accountable for the "mismanagement" of the airline.

"We want some independent agency to investigate the whole issue, including the merger (of Air India and Indian Airlines), which has proved to be a complete failure," OtaI said.

OtaI alleged that the management had gifted away its passenger load to the Gulf and other destinations from the South to a rival air-carrier by bringing changes in the winter schedule.

"With changes in the winter schedule, Air India has gifted away its passenger load to a rival," he alleged.

ICPA would bring out one scandal/mismanagement instance every week, OtaI said, adding, "the air-carrier leased one aircraft for its Agatti operations, which had almost completed 15 years into operations and has accrued losses to the tune of Rs 3 crore in the last six months."

This apart, four of the Air India leased aircraft are grounded for quite some time now-- two in Jordan and two in Mumbai. "These aircraft are to be returned to the lessor but the management has failed to take a call on the issue."

"We have given the management enough time. We had thought wisdom will prevail, but it is not to be. Employees have lost the zeal to work and our patience has run out," OtaI said.

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