

Monday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, 2008 (Mumbai)  
(CORPORATE NEWS) Page No- 06

## CHANGING IMAGE

# GoAir to go in for premium seating as part of makeover

By P.R. SANJAI  
pr.sanjai@livemint.com

MUMBAI

The Wadia Group promoted GoAirlines (India) Pvt. Ltd, that runs low-fare airline GoAir, now plans premium seating on its flights.

This separate class will have two seats on each side of the aisle and more leg room, said a company executive.

Passengers in this section will be served free meals and offered other facilities such as seat selection and telephone check-in, the executive said on condition of anonymity, adding that an announcement to this effect will be made soon.

"The price difference and other facilities are yet to be finalized. This class will be named with a terminology attached to the word 'go'. The carrier is in the process of changing the seating structure to enable this change," the executive said, adding that the new class will not be as costly as business or first-class seats.

Low-fare carriers typically fly a single passenger section, while full-service airlines have two classes—economy and business. Full-service international carriers also have a first class.

On offer in this section will be free meals, seat selection and phone check-in

GoAir's initiative is part of a makeover to become a value carrier, a business model placed between no-frills and full-service airlines, as reported by *Mint* on 6 October. Until now, GoAir has been a no-frills, low-fare carrier that sells light refreshments on board.

GoAir chief executive officer Edgardo Badiali declined to confirm this plan. In an earlier interview, Badiali had said GoAir was considering a frequent flyers programme, a feature typical of full-service carriers.

Jet Airways (India) Ltd and Kingfisher Airlines Ltd run full-service carriers while SpiceJet Ltd and IndiGo operate low-fare flights. JetLite Ltd and Air India Express are called value carriers.

Although the Vijay Mallya-promoted Kingfisher started as an all-economy, full-service airline, it later introduced first-class configuration on some routes. After

acquiring Air Sahara (now JetLite), Jet Airways had re-structured seat configuration into all-economy instead of two classes.

Chennai-based Paramount Airways Pvt. Ltd, a full-service carrier with all-business class, had changed its seat structure to add a more plush offering in first-class seats.

"Domestic carriers are bleeding because of high jet fuel cost and finding ways to increase airfares by providing value-added services," said an analyst with an international brokerage, who declined to be named as he is not authorized to speak to the media. "Moreover, there is no difference in airport and fuel costs for low-fare carriers."

"The so-called low-cost carriers are slowly shedding their conservative image of no-frills to maximize revenues," he added.

For instance, InterGlobe Aviation Pvt. Ltd-run IndiGo, a low-fare carrier, is offering free food to corporate travellers on board, while SpiceJet is designing a special package for corporate travellers.

[www.livemint.com](http://www.livemint.com)

For our 6 October story "GoAir looks to fill gap between no frills and full service carriers", go to [www.livemint.com/goair.htm](http://www.livemint.com/goair.htm)