

# ‘This is your Captain... Welcome to Air India’s future’

TNN | Jan 28, 2022, 01.30 AM IST



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NEW DELHI: Air India’s Maharaja opened his eyes to a whole new world on Thursday, with the Tata Group reacquiring its old airline along with AI Express and a 50% stake in ground handler AI-SATS. Pilots on all AI flights of Friday will greet guests with the line, “This is your Captain speaking... Welcome to the future of Air India”. And Tata Sons chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran promised employees of the airline that “the golden age lies ahead”.

The divestment was completed on Thursday — exactly two years after the preliminary information memorandum was issued. The government transferred 100% shares in AI to Tata's wholly owned subsidiary Talace Pvt Ltd along with management control.

Chandrasekaran met Prime Minister Narendra Modi here before taking over — in trademark low-key Tata style — the airline that was nationalised 69 years ago.

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The group acknowledged “Modi's commitment to reforms and faith in India's entrepreneurship spirit, which made this historic transition possible”.

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<https://t.co/9qgOjzsR7f>

— Saurabh Sinha (@27saurabhsinha) [1643337339000](#)

Ratan N Tata “joined Chandrasekaran in expressing his thankful recognition to the government... for the successful completion of this important transaction”.

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The Tatas paid Rs 2,700 crore as the upfront amount and took over Rs 15,300 crore debt. “We are excited to have AI back in the Tata Group and committed to making this a world-class airline. I warmly welcome all the employees of Air India to our group and look forward to working together,” Chandra said in a statement after taking over the airline in the presence of aviation secretary and former AI CMD Rajiv Bansal, Dipam chief T K Pandey and others.

Union aviation minister Jyotiraditya Scindia tweeted: “Best wishes to the new owners. I am confident that the airline will bloom under their wings, and pave the way for a thriving and robust civil aviation industry in India.”

While big-ticket changes like fleet and cabin upgrade will take huge investment and time, flyers will start feeling the difference from Friday.

“Dear Guests... Welcome aboard this historic flight, which marks a special event. Today, Air India officially becomes a part of the Tata Group again, after seven decades. We look forward to serving you on this and every Air India flight with renewed commitment and passion. Welcome to the future of Air India,” pilots of all flight will make this flight announcement on Friday.

Under Taj Hotels MD-CEO Puneet Chhatwal’s watch, TajSats has finalised an “enhanced meal service” for inflight meals on AI starting Friday. On-time performance has been AI’s weak point and orders have been issued to close doors 10 minutes before departure time so that they can leave on time. Cabin crew BMI and grooming will be checked when they report for flights.

“Tonight we will transit from a public sector to a private sector. The next seven days will be very important as we will be changing our image, attitude and perception,” says a mail sent to cabin crew members just before the handover.