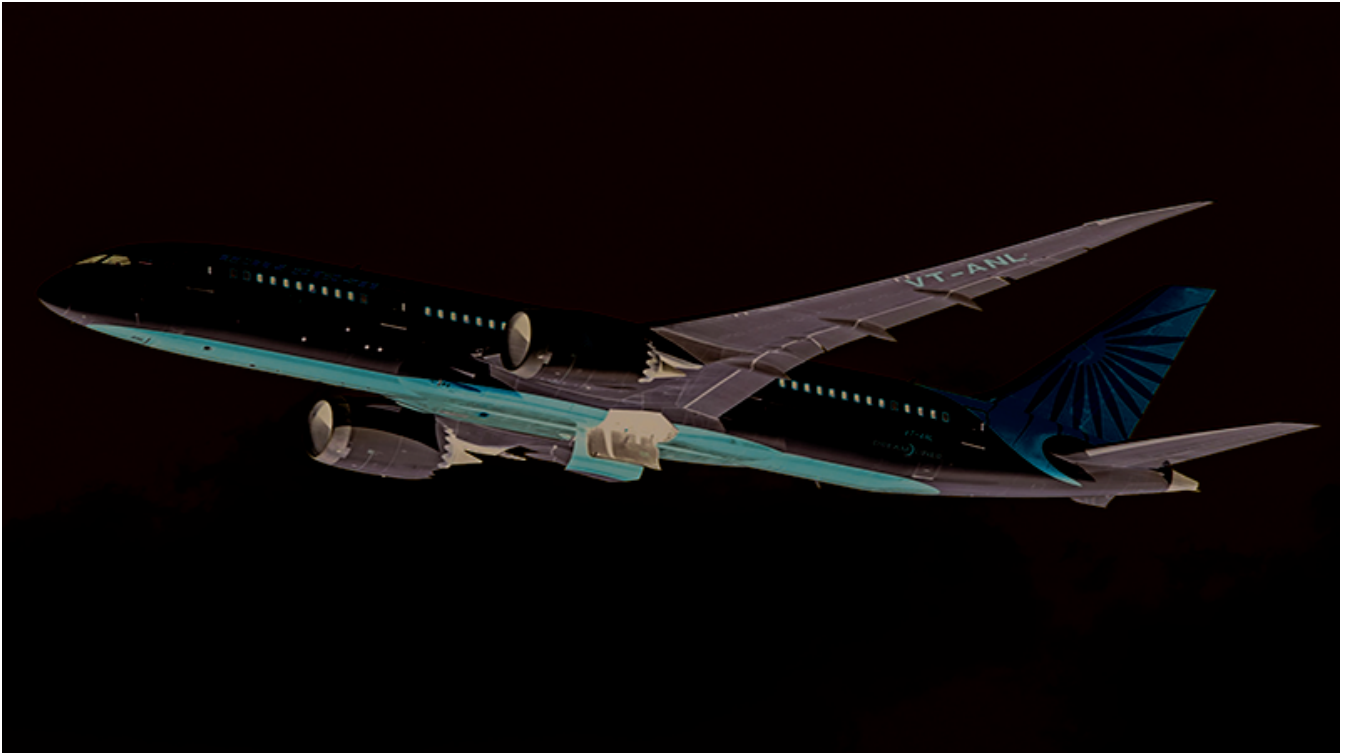


Indian government directs airlines to restrict inflight meal offerings

A Monitor Report

Date: 15 April, 2021



New Delhi : India's Ministry of Civil Aviation has directed airlines to stop serving meals on domestic flights under two hours. The decision, set to be confirmed by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), comes amid concerns that passengers removing their masks onboard flights will increase the spread of the virus.

Airlines across India are no longer being allowed to serve food on domestic flights with a duration of under two hours. After the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) questioned the wisdom of removing masks onboard flights, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has brought the new directive into force on April 15.

There have been calls for all in-flight meals to be removed, but the government has only acted on short-haul domestic flights so far. For all international flights and domestic flights longer than two hours, airlines will still be able to serve meals, snacks and refreshments, subject to strict guidelines.

The directive from the Ministry of Civil Aviation said, "Airlines are permitted to serve only pre-packed snacks, meals and pre-packed beverages on flights that have a duration of more than two hours. The servicing of in-flight meals must be staggered "among the adjacent seats as far as possible."

Airlines will be subject to the following conditions when serving meals: trays, plates and cutlery must be completely disposable; used trays, plates and cutlery shall not

be re-used; all beverages will be served in single-use disposable units; crew must wear a fresh set of gloves for each meal/beverage service; staggered service of food among adjacent seats as far as possible.

The directive concludes that the amendments has come into effect from April 15. The provisions will also be 'reviewed on a regular basis and necessary modification(s) would be carried out on the basis of inputs from the experts'.