

## Former SriLankan Airlines CEO arrested

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**Dhaka: Sri Lankan anti-corruption authorities have arrested the former chief executive officer of SriLankan Airlines on allegations of conspiring to accept bribes from Airbus in connection with a multi-billion-dollar aircraft purchase deal.**

Officials said Kapila Chandrasena, who served as CEO of the Sri Lankan national carrier during a 2013 agreement to acquire 10 Airbus aircraft valued at USD 2.3 billion, was arrested on Thursday, March 12, and later remanded in custody.

An official from Sri Lanka's Commission to Investigate Allegations of Bribery or Corruption said Chandrasena allegedly conspired to accept a bribe of USD 16 million linked to the aircraft deal.

Investigators claim he received EUR 1.45 million into a bank account in Singapore as part of the alleged scheme.

According to prosecutors, Chandrasena created a shell company in Brunei under his wife's name and arranged for the payments to be transferred to the company's Singapore-based bank account.

SriLankan Airlines has long faced financial difficulties. The carrier reported accumulated losses of LKR 596 billion, equivalent to USD 1.9 billion, as of March last year.

Efforts by the Sri Lankan government to privatize or sell the airline have so far failed to attract potential buyers.

Chandrasena had previously been arrested in February 2020 in a related but separate case but was later released on bail.

During that investigation, authorities in the United States, Britain, and France named him in a joint probe examining Airbus business dealings with several airlines.

In January 2020, a French court approved a settlement requiring Airbus to pay EUR 3.6 billion to authorities in France, Britain, and the United States to resolve the corruption investigations.

Meanwhile, Nishantha Wickramasinghe, who chaired SriLankan Airlines during the 2013 aircraft purchase deal, was arrested in June 2025 in an unrelated corruption case.

Authorities accused him of financing the failed re-election campaign of his brother-in-law, then-president Mahinda Rajapaksa. The case remains under investigation.

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