

When It's An Advantage to be A Woman

Budget airlines are constantly on the lookout for ways to cut their fuel bills and India's GoAir is no different.

Its latest idea is to hire female-only cabin crew, refusing applications from their heavier male counterparts in a bid to limit fuel burn.

The low-cost airline has calculated that the move will save up to 30m rupees (£330,000) a year, because women 20kg lighter on average.



Around 130, or 40%, of GoAir's existing crew members are male, and they will keep their jobs. But men will miss out in the future, as the airline presses ahead with ambitious expansion plans for 80 new aircraft by 2020 and around 2,000 cabin crew and pilots. It currently has a fleet of 15 aircraft.

The chief executive, Giorgio De Roni, said the decision was driven by the rupee's sharp fall against the dollar over the past year.

"The rupee's fall has hurt the industry badly. All major expenses – aircraft leasing, spare parts and fuel costs – are linked to the dollar," he told the Times of India.

"We are looking at every possible way of cost-cutting to remain profitable."

As operating costs rise, GoAir has taken other measures to reduce the weight on board its aircraft and limit fuel burn. Its in-flight magazines have been shrunk, and water tanks are not being filled to capacity.

Aircraft are also using a single engine to taxi in order to save fuel.

"Our new aircraft will have sharklets [wingtip devices] that will help in reducing fuel burn by 5%. From next year onwards, we will have sharklets installed in five of our existing planes, while the remaining 10 will be phased out to have a young fleet," De Roni said.