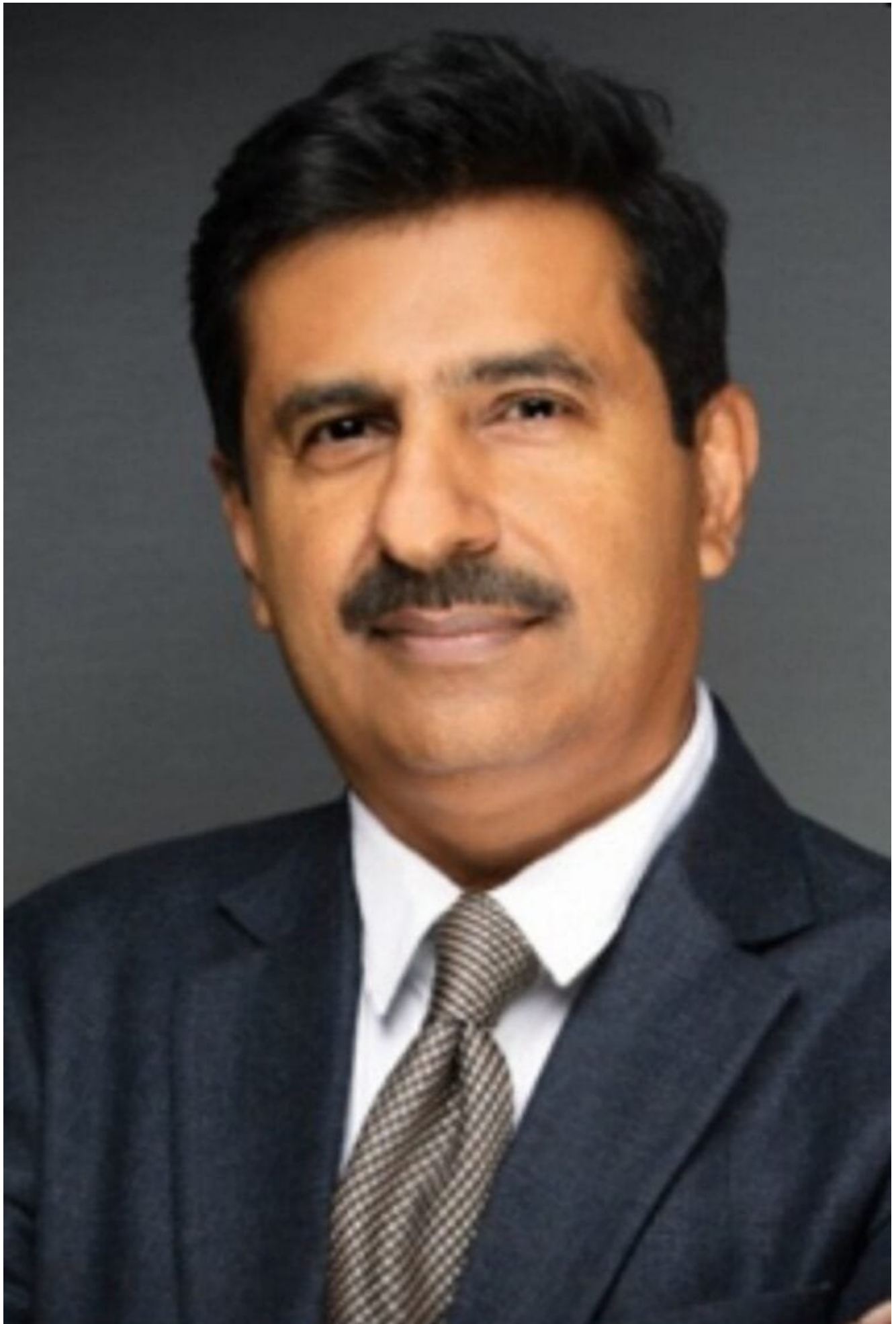


On World Pilots' Day, Sky One Group Chairman Jaideep Mirchandani Calls for Stronger Domestic Pilot Training Infrastructure to Meet Soaring Demand

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It was in 2014 that the International Federation of Air Line Pilots Associations (IFALPA) officially designated April 26th as World Pilots' Day, acknowledging the essential role pilots play in sustaining global aviation. Since then, the day has been observed annually to honour their contribution in connecting people and ensuring safe air travel.



Jaideep Mirchandani, Group Chairman Sky One

Even in today's tech-driven era, with ongoing advances in autonomous flight research, pilots remain at the heart of flight operations and are irreplaceable. With the aviation sector expanding rapidly, the global [demand for trained pilots continues to rise](#). According to Boeing's 'Pilot and Technician Outlook 2024-2043,' 6,74,000 new pilots will be needed over the next 20 years to operate and maintain the global commercial fleet.

The report highlights strong demand in the Asia-Pacific region, particularly in countries like India, where civil aviation is growing steadily. Recently, Civil Aviation Minister K. Rammohan Naidu noted that India will require around 30,000 [pilots](#) over the next 15 to 20 years, considering the scale of aircraft orders placed by Indian airlines.

Official data shows that the country currently has about 6,000 to 7,000 active pilots, a number that must rise substantially to [meet future needs](#). The government is introducing several measures to address this, and according to Jaideep Mirchandani, Group Chairman of Sky One, India should now set its targets on [becoming a global hub for pilot training](#).

In 2023, India issued a record 1,622 Commercial Pilot Licenses (CPLs), though the number dropped to 1,342 in 2024. **Mr. Mirchandani** stresses the importance of maintaining momentum through timely policy updates. *"The DGCA's new rating system for Flying Training Organisations (FTOs) is a step in the right direction, as it promotes higher training standards. [Strengthening the domestic training infrastructure and developing dedicated airports for cargo and pilot training can have a lasting impact,](#)" he says.*

He also points to the need for cadet programmes structured around models used in Western countries, where training is often subsidised or partially funded. *"The cost of pilot*

training is shaped by multiple factors, including rising aviation fuel prices, the use of imported simulators and spare parts and the need for experienced instructors, many of whom are brought in from abroad. Addressing these challenges requires effective coordination between the Ministry of Civil Aviation, airlines, training institutes and other key players,” he explains.

Mr. Mirchandani adds that introducing financial support mechanisms, such as subsidised loans or scholarships, can ease the burden for aspiring pilots. *“Encouraging airlines to train and employ local talent not only helps fill the current gap but also contributes to the broader economy through job creation and reduced dependence on foreign-trained pilots,” he concludes.*

