Addressing Flying-as-Default Setting in India's IT Companies to reduce their Climate Pollution
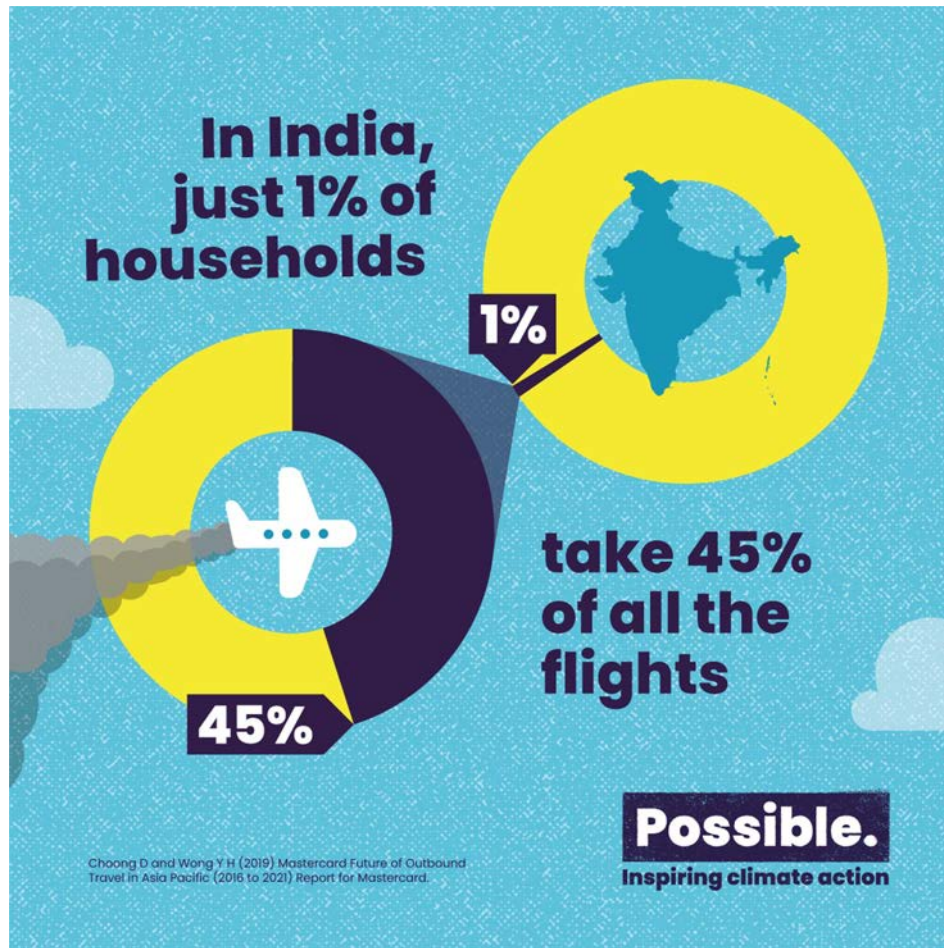
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PROBLEM STATEMENT
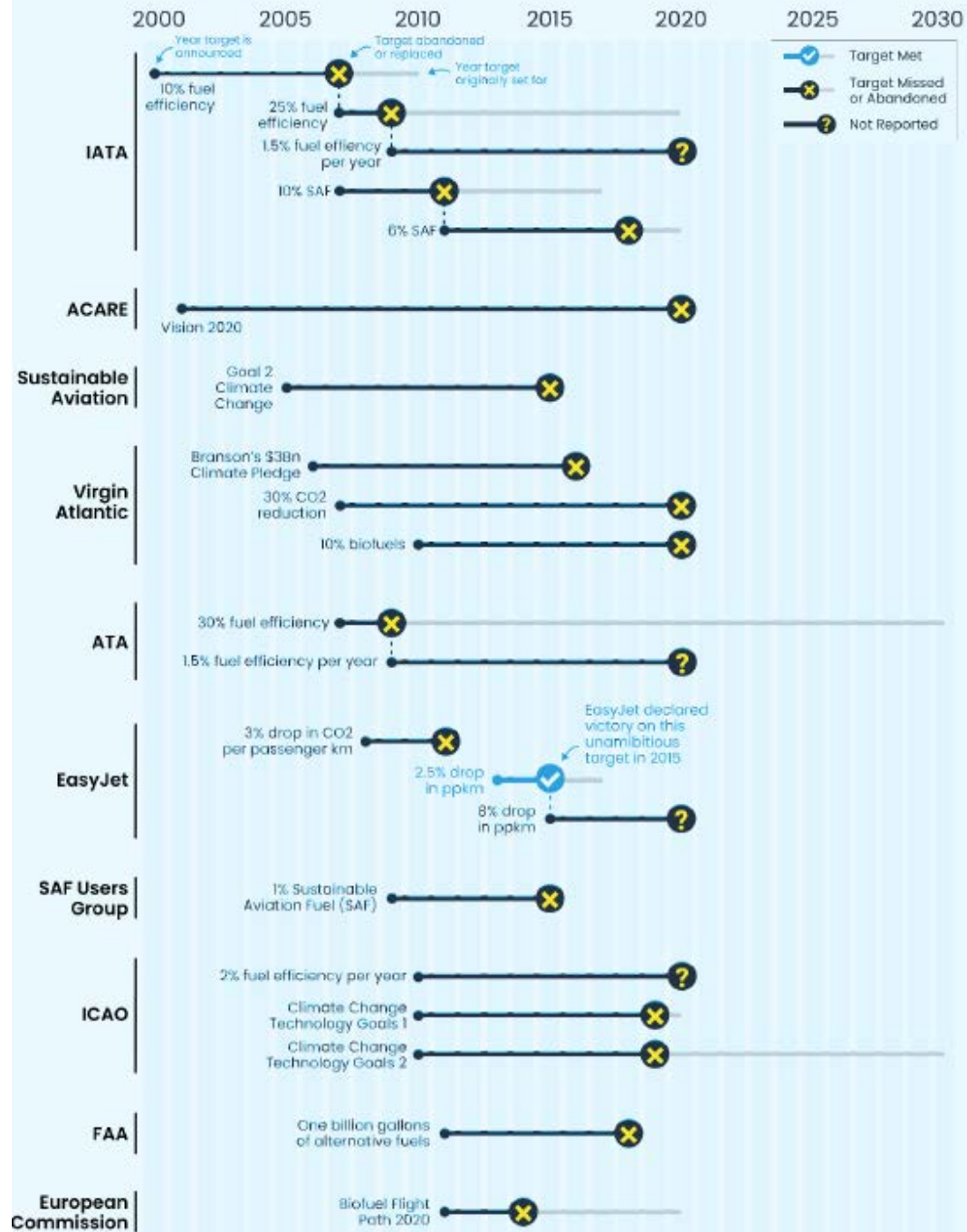
➢ In 2019-2020, flights of typical Indian IT Company with 200,000 employees emitted 110,000 tonnes of climate pollution

➢ 'Green' initiatives @ Indian IT companies exist , yet air travel untouched despite awareness it is largest source of climate impact; an industry known for 'innovation', sticks to business-as-usual in the case of flying

➢ Magical thinking about Sustainable Aviation Fuel, Sectorial Net-Zero 'Targets', Hydrogen/Electric Aircrafts leading to complacency

➢ Climate emergency is still a 'future threat', not a reality that's already here

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In India, just 1% of households take 45% of all the flights

1%

45%

Possible.
Inspiring climate action

Choong D and Wong Y H (2019) Mastercard Future of Outbound Travel in Asia Pacific (2016 to 2021) Report for Mastercard.

Non-CO_2: the hidden side of aviation's total climate impact

Contrails, NO_x, soot, water vapour, black carbon

CO_2
1/3rd of aviation's total climate impact

non-CO_2
2/3rds of aviation's total climate impact

TRANSPORT & ENVIRONMENT
@transportenvironment.org

Source: EASA, Updated analysis of the non-CO_2 climate impacts of aviation and potential policy measures pursuant to the EU Emissions Trading System Directive Article 30(4), 2020

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Two Decades of Missed and Abandoned Aviation Industry Sustainability Targets

Source: Missed Targets: A brief history of aviation climate targets of the early 21st century. May 2022. Produced by Green Gumption for Possible.

POSSIBILITY

➤ Pilot project at 1 Large IT Company, from 2015 to 2020, resulted in 15-20 % reduction of air travel emissions over 3 years.

➤ If implemented across 25% of NASSCOM's 2300+ member companies ~ 6.3 Million Tonnes of CO2e per year reduction possible

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Super Flyer FY 2019-20
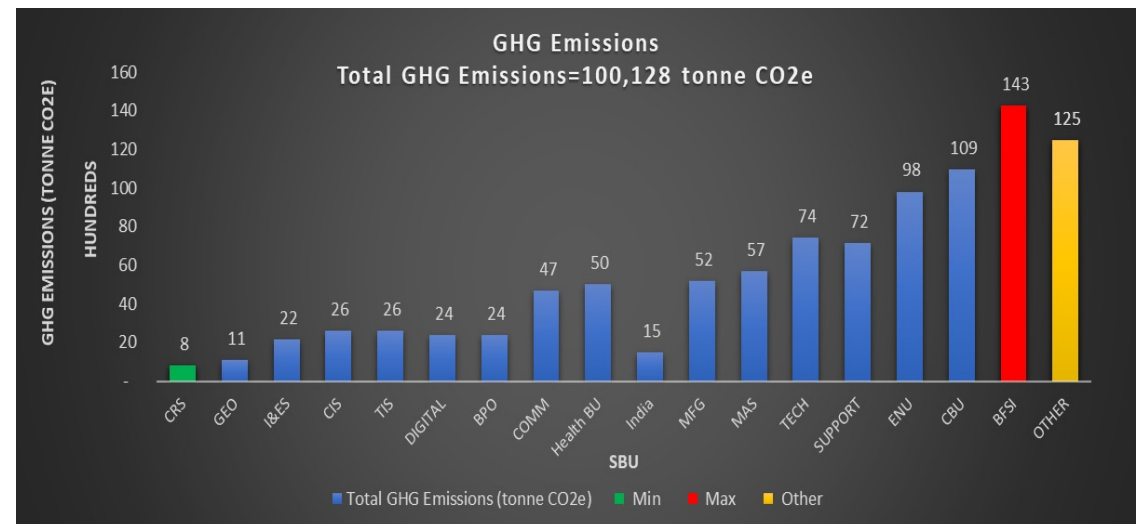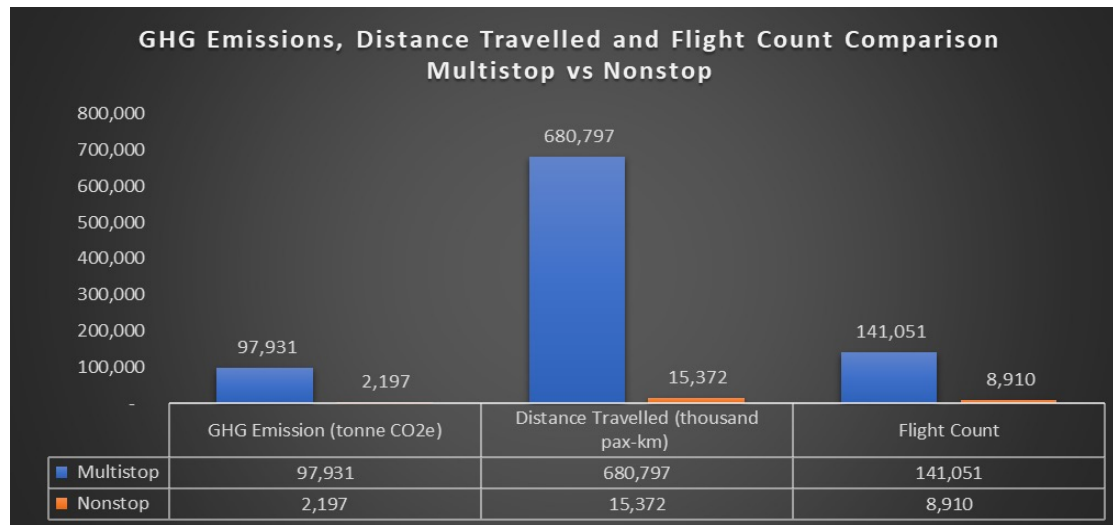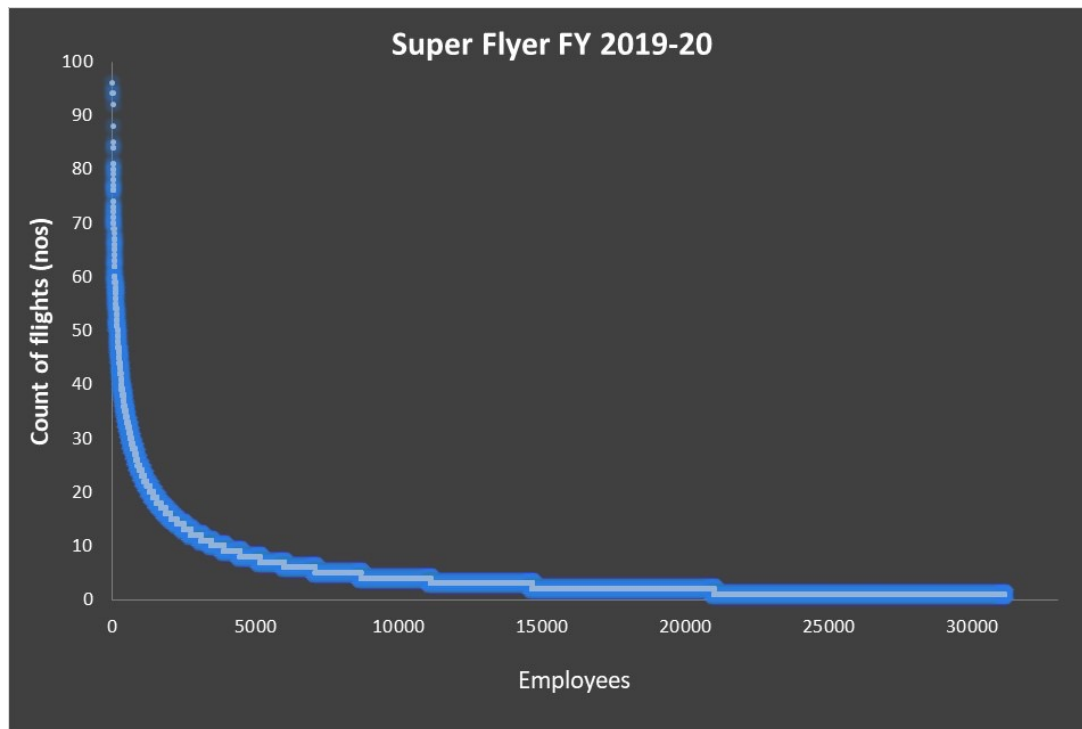
	Value	Units
Avg. flyer	3.2	tonnes CO2e/yr
Super flyer	23.3	tonnes CO2e/yr
Avg. flyer	5	Flights/yr
Super flyer	46	Flights/yr

➢ 'Super Flyers' took 10 x flights vs. avg. flyer.

➢ 'Super Flyers' emit 7 x climate pollution vs. avg. flyer.

➢ If 'Super Flyer' = avg. flyer, reduction of **19,521** tonnes CO2e.

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FAIR TRAVEL:
THEORY OF CHANGE

Input	→	Activities	→	Outputs	→	Outcomes

Outcomes

Short-term	Long-term

Input

A. Program Design Co-Creation Stakeholder Consultations with Launch Cohort, Aviation-affected Civic Groups, cBalance/Stay-Grounded

B) Company-specific Air Travel Emission Inventory and Analytics:
1. Airline Choice Switch Scenario Analysis
2. Flying Class Switch Scenario Analysis
3. Stop vs. Non-Stop Switch Scenario Analysis
4. Modal Shift (Plane-to-Train) Scenario Analysis
5. Super-Flyer Analysis
6. Strategic-Business-Unit / Vertical Emission Intensity Benchmarking

Activities

1. Corporate CRAG Formulation Change-Management Support Process Implementation (Workshops, Support-Groups, Measurement & Verification)
2. Inter Strategic-Business-Unit / Vertical Emissions 'Trading'
3. Strategic Communications Campaign
4. Air Travel Target Setting and Optimization Software Development
5. Post-Implementation Policy Advocacy Roundtables with NASSCOM and 2nd Tier of IT/BPM companies likely to emulate the example set by 1st cohort

Outputs

1. Sustainable Business Travel Policies
2. Strategic Communication Collaterals (Articles, Op-Ed Columns in Business Media/Social Media)
3. Case-Study Documents
4. Policy Advocacy Position and Discussion Paper
5. Air Travel Target Setting and Optimization Software

Short-term

Pioneering Indian IT/BPM Companies include aviation emission reduction in Sustainability and Climate Impact Mitigation Programs such as Science-Based Targets, GRI Reporting, CDP Reporting etc.

Long-term

1. Significant share of IT/BPM Companies in India afiliated with NASSCOM replicate the sustainable travel model adopted by pioneering IT/BPM Companies
2. NASSCOM and affiliated members engage domestic airlines in a preferred-partner program based on emissions intensity ranking of airlines to incentivize airlines to mitigate emissions to win or maintain preferred airline partner status of NASSCOM Members

↓

Impact

Air Travel Emissions from India's IT industry are measurably reduced. Blueprint created by the program ready for adoption by other non-manufacturing sectors like Banking, Finance, Consulting etc. with significant air travel emissions.

Climate impact reduction from lifestyle choices, transcending just air travel reduction, of a large number of corporate employees employed in India's IT economy.

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PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Psycho-social challenges

➢ **travel-ego**; people worked hard to get to upper echelons of company, do not want to be told not to travel

➢ **dopamine hit** from travel and perks; system built on gaining miles

➢ IT is booming; **image** that IT world is doing only good and are heroes – cannot possibly be harming the earth

➢ travelling not quest to learn about the world; **transactional** and quantified in time and money; any deviation held in suspicion

➢ no contagion effect for people to take up as a cause; **no role models** and not yet part of discourse

➢ depletion of motivation when **top management excuses itself**; equity important for employee buy-in

➢ air travel is 'fact of life' for IT employees (though COVID proved otherwise)

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Systemic/structural challenges

➢   notions of **productive use of time**

➢   company **insurance policies**

➢   continuing aspirations for **expanding market share** and global **geographical spread** of 'clients' demands air travel

➢   formal systems don't exist to plan **clubbing of travel**

➢   flying not seen as part of sustainability; linked to **bringing in business**, not source of pollution

➢   flying stems from **client requests** or to maintain relationship; perception of low or no 'agency' to change this

➢   average age of employees ~ 25 years; high **preference for travel**

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Systemic/structural challenges

➢ desire for **teams to travel together** engenders requests for some employees to be shifted to air travel despite company policy

➢ **trains more expensive** than flights in some regions

➢ quality of other modes of transport in India; **efficiency and cleanliness**

➢ **exaggerated claims**/projections by airlines to achieve zero-carbon emissions targets in the future

➢ **magical thinking** about hydrogen aircraft and 'sustainable' aviation fuel

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Willingness to reduce

➢ willing if **no effect on profits**

➢ willing if it helps in **budget control**

➢ willing if **other partners** are also working on the same

➢ willing if we **leave out VIP's** & sales team

➢ conditional willingness; through **shifting ownership to individual** employees

➢ willing when **clients request** emission reduction credentials of organization

➢ willing to work on the **relative emissions reduction** not absolute reduction

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NEXT STEPS

Possible pathways

➢ **hold a mirror** to excessive air travel; quantitative information necessary but not sufficient

➢ emphasise connection between excessive flying and growth of mega airports in the future; conduct **immersion workshops at contested sites** to shape critical social discourse

➢ stories of past disruptions caused by airports well established, additional work needed to **connect socio-ecological disruptions with travel mode 'choice' going forward**

➢ work on **disentangling two growth stories** - IT Industry growth (which IT companies defend vehemently) and aviation growth; former possible without latter; COVID restrictions have proved (revenue growth continues vs. flatlined air travel distance)

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Possible pathways

➢ **Addressing inexorable 'need'** to travel more important 'brake' to apply than promoting train travel (in India)

➢ COVID response shows that 'facts of life' can be questioned; **'non-negotiables' are negotiable**

➢ Showing the **sales team reports on performance before vs. during COVID** to prove 'decoupling ' of sales from flying intensity is possible

➢ Don't limit intellectual and ethical stimulation to air travel; **sensitise employees on all aspects of climate emergency**

➢ **Incentives (monetary or otherwise)** to employees for reducing flights can galvanize action

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Possible pathways

➢ improved **efficiency and comfort of alternative modes** of transport

➢ enabling account managers/ salespeople to hold **conversations with clients around reducing air travel;** finding other ways to build the relationship

➢ ensure **CEO and senior management leads by example** by setting flying reduction targets and achieving them

➢ check if clients already value GHG mitigation; **project-based carbon budget** control can be established

➢ **employee activism** to influence senior management

➢ Internal **business-unit level 'cap and trade'** scheme

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NEXT STEPS

CRAG Design

Sr. No.	Team	Role	Salary	Flying Intensity
1	Team X	Client Facing	High	High
2	Team X	Client Facing	High	Medium
3	Team X	Client Facing	High	Low
4	Team X	Client Facing	Medium	High
5	Team X	Client Facing	Medium	Medium
6	Team X	Client Facing	Medium	Low
7	Team X	Client Facing	Low	High
8	Team X	Client Facing	Low	Medium
9	Team X	Client Facing	Low	Low
10	Team X	Offshore	High	High
11	Team X	Offshore	High	Medium
12	Team X	Offshore	High	Low
13	Team X	Offshore	Medium	High
14	Team X	Offshore	Medium	Medium
15	Team X	Offshore	Medium	Low
16	Team X	Offshore	Low	High
17	Team X	Offshore	Low	Medium
18	Team X	Offshore	Low	Low

- ➢ 3 team members per 'combination'

- ➢ 2 CRAGs (Team Level and SBU Level) per IT Company

- ➢ 108 CRAG Members & 108 Control Group Members

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Engagement Details	Schedule	Location
Workshop 1 - Awareness (Knowledge Sharing) and Listening.	June 2022	at IT Company & Displaced Communities
Workshop 2 - Co-creating goals, principles & measurement methodology	July 2022	at IT Company
Check-in 1	August 2022	Virtual
Check-in 2	Sept 2022	Virtual
Check-in 3	Oct 2022	Virtual
Workshop 3 – Course Correction	Nov 2022	at IT Company
Check-in 5	Dec 2022	Virtual
Check-in 6	Jan 2023	Virtual
Check-in 7	Feb 2023	Virtual
Check-in 8	March 2023	Virtual
Workshop 4 - Critical Feedback	April 2023	at IT Company
NASSCOM Roundtable	May 2023	Navdarshanm

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UnFairlines

Name of passenger
Climate D. Nair

From
A Liveable Earth

To
Climate Collapse

Boarding Till
Oct 23,2021

LED Lights: 1 year	No Meat: 1 year	1 Less Domestic Flight
591 kg CO2 saved	945 kg CO2 saved	995 kg CO2 saved

www.websitename.com

UnFairlines

FLYing is the fastest way
to FRY the planet

LAST CALL
for Environmental Organizations in India

To
Reduce their fLYING

Gate	Date	Flight
07	Oct 23, 2021	Stay Grounded

Boarding Till
Oct 23,2021

Seat
HOT SEAT 1A

fair travel