

7:30 pm IST. Aug 6, 2014

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

Air India Finds Rat on Flight

By SANTANU CHOUDHURY



A spokesman for India's state-run carrier Air India Ltd. denied a newspaper report that "scores" of rats were scurrying around one of its planes after a recent flight. He said only a single rodent was sighted aboard.

A Times of India report Wednesday said that an Air India flight had to be fumigated after rats were discovered on flight from Kolkata that had just landed in New Delhi.

The Air India spokesman, who declined to be named, dismissed the story, saying: "What I have been told is that there was only one rat on the aircraft." A rodent stowaway is a "rare occurrence," said another spokesman.

The standard protocol after a rat-sighting is immediate fumigation as the rodents can chew through wires and affect the functioning of the plane, said **Ang Tan Loong, founder of Stopest**, a Kuala Lumpur-based company that offers aircraft fumigation services to airlines in Southeast Asia.

"You have to fumigate the entire plane as you don't know how many more could be present inside and you can't just put traps to catch all of them," he said. Rodents generally enter an aircraft while it is being cleaned at an airport with the doors kept open, or sometimes catch a ride on the luggage and food catering trucks to board an aircraft.