

Skywise's Malik could head up Mango

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Joint chairperson of cash-strapped Skywise Airlines, Javed Malik, is a frontrunner to fill the position of CEO of Mango Airlines, South African Airways' low-cost subsidiary. This is the first time that Mango has had to find a new CEO since it was founded in 2006, following the resignation of its longtime head, Nico Bezuidenhout.



[Image Source: Moneyweb](#) - Javed Malik

Bezuidenhout effectively resigned from the position at the end of July to head up Fastjet, the London-listed low-cost carrier that focuses on Africa. He has twice been the acting CEO of SAA and clashed repeatedly with SAA chairwoman Dudu Myeni, who is a close friend of President Jacob Zuma.

Last month, Business Day reported that Myeni was lobbying to place former Business Unity SA CE Jerry Vilakazi as CEO at Mango, as a precursor to him becoming the next CEO of SAA. However, Vilakazi denied this.

Newcomer and low-cost airline Skywise was launched in February last year but was grounded by Airports Company SA in December for failure to pay R4m in airport fees relating to the landing, take-off, and parking of aircraft and related service charges. The cash-strapped company has made a number of attempts to secure funding to pay off its debts and fund its operations.

In December, the Financial Services Board shot down Skywise's attempt at a crowd-funding scheme, when it set up a website on which it offered 1,500 shares at R100,000 each and gave potential investors three days to buy in without first viewing the airline's share prospectus - a contravention of the Companies Act.

On Wednesday, Skywise said in a statement that it was in the final stages of a shareholder deal with a new investor, a promoter of new commercial aircraft.

Mango board chair Rashid Wally said no offer had been made to Malik for the position of CEO. He said he had met with Malik a few times to get to know him. The process of appointing a new permanent CEO could take three to six months and would still require Finance Minister Pravin Gordhan's approval. "It is a challenge filling the position of CEO. It is easier to fill in other industries but there is a scarcity of aviation experience," he said.

Malik would not say if he had received an offer from Mango. However, he said he had resigned from Skywise to pursue "much more challenging roles in the industry".

"If I were to be approached by Mango, it would be an honour. And I would be the first to take the process of transformation further."

Source: Business Day

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