

Paramount ready to acquire other airline companies

By OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, June 5:

After a string of buyouts, stake acquisitions and mergers involving several airlines in the civil aviation sector, Paramount Airways, an airline based in southern India, on Tuesday announced that it was ready to acquire another airline to expand its operations. Interacting with reporters in New Delhi, Paramount Airways managing director M. Thiagarajan said that his airline preferred to acquire an airline in western India since the company planned to begin operations in western India. "We are in talks with a couple of airlines but I will not name these and will not engage in any speculation," Mr. Thiagarajan said.

"We are the market leaders in southern India with 26 per cent of market share. We are ready to begin oper-

ations in western India by next year. That's why we would prefer to acquire an airline with a good network in western India," Mr Thiagarajan said.

"We would prefer to buy out an airline completely rather than go in for any other arrangement. Any airline that we acquire would lose its identity and become part of Paramount," Mr. Thiagarajan said.

Mr Thiagarajan refused to answer queries on whether his airline was in talks with Go Air on any buyout proposal. Go Air officials too were unavailable for comments on the market speculation regarding talks between Paramount and Go Air. Officials of low cost carrier SpiceJet flatly denied that there were any talks going on.

The Paramount Airways MD spoke at length about the business model of his airline and said it was able to break even financially.