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DECCAN HERALD BANGALORE 20 AUGUST 2026

2nd airport: Harohalli sites face hurdles

On CM's advice, 3 parcels identified in his constituency

ASRA MAVAD
BENGALURU, DHNS

LOCATION TROUBLES

1st location
Close to residential settlement; acquisition could be lengthy; cost of rehabilitation would be higher; potential resistance from residents; if land is shifted further, Bannerghatta forest might become an obstacle

2nd location
A portion of land already acquired for Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR)

3rd location
A huge hillock could become a barrier for runway construction; demolition wouldn't be easy as it is hard rock

"Meinhardt-KPMG, which is carrying out a feasibility study for us, has been informed of the additional site. Since we already mentioned in the tender that the company would need to accommodate the potential addition of another site, this isn't an issue and shouldn't cause any major delays."
M B Patil, Industries Minister


Potential site for 2nd airport in CM's constituency

DH first reported the development on July 9.

Karnataka has identified three potential sites in Harohalli — within Chief Minister D K Shivakumar's Assembly constituency of Kanakapura — for building Bengaluru's second greenfield airport, well-placed sources in the Infrastructure and Industrial Development department said.

The pursuit, however, may not yield the desired results as more hurdles than anticipated have emerged, they added.

The search for land in Harohalli began in July after Shivakumar suggested looking towards the region.

"We have found some potential land parcels but each comes with hurdles of its own. The first location is close to a residential settlement. Acquiring this land will be a lengthy process. While land prices may be lower in Harohalli taluka compared to South Bengaluru, the cost of rehabilitation in such a densely populated area will be higher. There might also be some resistance for this chunk of land," a source said.

He added that if this land is further shifted from the settlement, the Bannerghatta National Park might become an obstacle.

▸ Second airport, Page 6

2nd airport: Harohalli sites...

Second airport, From Page 1

"The proximity to the Bannerghatta peak is a concern. The airport could cause sound and other disturbances to wildlife," he said.

At the second shortlisted location, a portion of the land has already been acquired for the Satellite Town Ring Road (STRR).

At the third location, a hillock in the corner could become a barrier for runway construction.

A possible solution to eliminate the aforementioned hurdles would be to zero in on a chunk of land by combining the three shortlisted sites, a KIADB official said.

"If there is a chance of shifting the STRR alignment, then we can demarcate a piece of land by looking at the possible combinations of the three locations," he added.

The identified land parcels in Harohalli are almost 18 km away from the previously identified sites in Chudahalli and Somanahalli near Kanakapura Road, which are located adjacent to each other and span 4,800 acres and 5,000 acres, respectively.

Finalising the site in Harohalli could further delay the city's second international airport, believe industry insiders, as the Airports Authority of India (AAI) will need to conduct an on-ground feasibility study for the land parcel.

The AAI presented a feasibility report for the three previously shortlisted locations — Chudahalli, Somanahalli, and Gudemaranahalli near Nelamangala — in November 2025.

On August 19, in response to an unstarred question raised by Bidar South MLA Shailendra Beldale, Large and Medium Industries Minister M B Patil said the government had also begun inspecting a suitable site in the Harohalli region.

"Meinhardt-KPMG, which is carrying out a feasibility study for us, has been informed of the additional site. Since we already mentioned in the tender that the company would need to accommodate the potential addition of another site, this isn't an issue and shouldn't cause any major delays," the minister told *DH*, adding that the AAI would again be required to come down to Bengaluru to examine the new site.

DECCAN HERALD BANGALORE 20 AUGUST 2026

Two passengers with gold-like powder concealed in trousers intercepted at KIA

Seized material to undergo examination to confirm if it is gold

BENGALURU, DHNS

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) detected around 260 grams of gold-like metal in powdered form concealed in the stitched trousers of two passengers at the Kempegowda International Airport (KIA) on Thursday.

The 260 grams of gold-like metal in powdered form was packed in two transparent, pipe-like plastic packets.

The passengers, identified as Laxmana Devadiga and Raghavendra Devadiga, had arrived at Terminal 1 from Bangkok on IndiGo flight 6E-1214 and were scheduled to travel to Ahmedabad on flight 6E-6595.

According to CISF, the passengers were behaving suspiciously in the departure area. Information was passed on to the screening team, following which CISF personnel frisked them. Two transparent, pipe-like plastic packets containing a gold-like substance in powdered form, weighing around 260 grams, were found concealed at the waist level inside their stitched trousers.

The passengers were stopped from boarding the onward flight and handed over to the airport police for further investigation and legal action. A case has been registered.

The seized material is yet to be confirmed as gold and will be examined as part of the investigation.

August 14 incident

In a similar incident on August 14, customs officials intercepted a passenger arriving from Dubai and seized 583.3 grams of gold and 71.7 grams of other gold articles, collectively valued at Rs 1 crore. The gold was concealed inside the passenger's trousers. The suspect was arrested under the Customs Act, 1962.

THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

Mumbai slot squeeze speeds up cargo transition to Navi Mumbai

AKBAR MERCHANT
Mumbai, August 20

CARGO OPS GETS NEW CENTRE

- Adani has started denying slots to ad-hoc cargo operators at CSMIA
- Development expected to push more freighter operators towards Navi Mumbai airport
- Operator targeting complete shift of freighter ops from CSMIA to NMIA by August 26

A SQUEEZE ON ad-hoc slots at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) is accelerating the shift of dedicated freighter operations to Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA), with more cargo operators expected to move services over the next few weeks.

Adani Airport Holdings, which operates CSMIA, has started denying slots to some ad-hoc cargo operators for services from late August, sources said. The development is expected to push more freighter operators towards NMIA, which is seeking to establish itself as an alternative cargo gateway for the Mumbai region.

The airport operator is targeting a complete shift of dedicated freighter operations from CSMIA to NMIA by August 26, *FE* has learnt.

However, industry sources said the deadline was ambitious and some carriers would need more time to relocate their operations.

Several ad-hoc cargo operators, including YTO Cargo Airlines, Suparna Airlines and Challenge Group, currently operate services to Mumbai and are among those expected to consider shifting their freighter operations to NMIA.

NMIA has already begun building its international cargo operations. Hong Kong Cargo and AfCOM Cargo have started scheduled international freighter services from the new airport, which recently handled its first scheduled international freighter service.

The airport is looking to build scale in cargo as CSMIA also undertakes planned readjustments of parking bays and taxiways, which could require cargo operations to be shifted, at least temporarily.

However, the migration is unlikely to extend uniformly across Mumbai's cargo market. Major international cargo carriers that depend on the belly capacity of passenger aircraft are yet to show a similar willingness to shift operations to NMIA.

Emirates SkyCargo, Singapore Airlines Cargo, Cathay Cargo and Lufthansa Cargo are among the carriers that use CSMIA's passenger network to move cargo in the belly holds of their aircraft.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA AHMEDABAD 20 AUGUST 2026

Airport-riverfront tunnel plan gets UDD approval after 3-year hold-up

Route Cleared, But Army NOC Still Awaited

Ahmedabad: The road to the proposed riverfront-airport tunnel is no longer blocked on paper. The tunnel, planned beneath the Army Cantonment firing range, was stuck for three years after the Army withheld its no-objection certificate. Now, the state's urban development department has granted preliminary approval to the Hansol TP scheme alignment that reserves a 24-m approach road near The Ummed hotel, **reports Jignesh Parmar.**

The approval of TP Scheme No. 67 preserves the route required for the project, but does not by itself constitute the Army's NOC or final construction clearance.

According to officials familiar with the plan, the tunnel will begin near the Sardar Patel statue within the Ahmedabad airport premises, pass through Airport Circle and run along the road beside the five-star hotel. It will then connect with the 24-metre road being developed along the eastern bank of the Sabarmati Riverfront under Phase 2.

▶Continued on P 4

Tunnel from under firing range

▶Continued from P1

The project has assumed greater importance with Ahmedabad set to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games. The city is also at the centre of India's preparations and efforts for a possible bid to host the 2036 Olympic Games. The tunnel is part of a wider plan to create a seamless link between the airport, the Sabarmati Riverfront and the Sardar Patel Sports Enclave near Narendra Modi Stadium.

The project had been included in an MoU between Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation and the Army Cantonment. However, an NOC was not issued, and the ambitious project was held up.

An AMC official, on condition of anonymity, said, "Sabarmati Riverfront Development Corporation Ltd (SRFDCL), which is implementing Phase 2, had acquired around 70,000 to 80,000 sq metres of Army Cantonment land on lease without making a monetary payment. In return, SRFDCL agreed to construct residential quarters for Army personnel in Bhuj and Dhrangadhra."

Construction of the quarters in Bhuj was taken up for Rs 24.3 crore, while the Dhrangadhra project cost Rs 15.9 crore, the official said. The projects marked SRFDCL's first construction work outside the Riverfront project area.

An SRFDCL official said the tunnel was necessary because the approach road near The Ummed hotel falls within the firing-range area. Building a tunnel beneath the restricted zone would allow the road connection to be created without interfering with Army operations.

With the TP scheme now approved at the preliminary stage, AMC and SRFDCL can proceed with design finalisation, technical studies and applications for the remaining permissions. The construction schedule will depend on the Army's NOC, technical clearances, funding and the appointment of an executing agency.

Link airport, sports enclave

A direct road connection from Ahmedabad airport to the Sardar Patel Sports Enclave and Narendra Modi Stadium, as part of the Rs 850-crore Sabarmati Riverfront Phase-2 project, is set to significantly cut travel time for sports fans and commuters. According to a senior civic official, SRFDCL is developing a 5.8-km road parallel to the river on the eastern bank. A separate 30-metre-wide road is being developed on the western bank, running behind the Motera stadium complex.

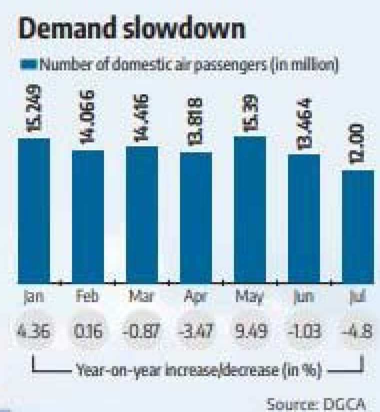
Riverfront Phase 2 will extend the riverfront stretch from Subhash Bridge to Indira Bridge.

BUSINESS STANDARD DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

Domestic air traffic fell 4.8% to 12 mn in July

India's aviation industry is turbulence-bound with domestic passenger traffic plunging to 12 million in July, a 4.8 per cent decline from the corresponding month a year earlier. After touching a peak of 15.39 million in May, high airfares and the seasonal slowdown have grounded demand, leaving airlines struggling to keep passenger numbers aloft.

DEEPAK PATEL



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DAINIK BHASKAR DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

इन टाइम • तय समय पर फ्लाइट के मामले में इंडिगो अव्वल

हवाई सफरः जुलाई में यात्री 5% घटे, लेकिन इंडिगो की बाजार हिस्सेदारी बढ़कर 67.4%

भास्कर न्यूज़ | मुंबई

भारतीय एयरलाइन इंडस्ट्री के लिए जुलाई का महीना सुस्त रहा। यात्रियों की संख्या घटी और कई एयरलाइंस की उड़ानें तय समय से पीछे रहीं। विमानन नियामक डीजीसीए के आंकड़ों के मुताबिक, जुलाई में घरेलू एयरलाइन कंपनियों ने कुल 120 लाख यात्रियों को सर्विस दी, जो जून से 4.8% कम है। तय समय पर फ्लाइट्स की आवाजाही के लिहाज से इंडिगो सबसे आगे रही। इसकी 91.2% फ्लाइट्स तय समय पर उड़ीं। अकासा एयर 90.8% के साथ दूसरे और एयर इंडिया ग्रुप 88.5% के साथ तीसरे स्थान पर रहा। दो घंटे से ज्यादा देरी वाली उड़ानों के मामले में इंडस्ट्री का औसत 1.26% रहा। बाजार हिस्सेदारी के लिहाज से इंडिगो का दबदबा और बढ़ा। यह जून के 66.3% से बढ़कर जुलाई में 67.4% हो गई।

विमान यात्रियों की तादाद स्थिर, सीटें भी ज्यादा खाली

जनवरी-जुलाई के दौरान भारत में कुल घरेलू विमान यात्री 984 लाख रहा, जबकि पिछले साल इसी अवधि में यह 977.8 लाख था। यानी सालाना बढ़ोतरी सिर्फ 0.64% रही। पैसेंजर लोड फैक्टर के मामले में भी गिरावट दिखी। इंडिगो का लोड फैक्टर जून के 85% से घटकर जुलाई में 82.4% रह गया। यानी करीब 18% सीटें खाली रहीं।

DECCAN CHRONICLE HYDERABAD 20 AUGUST 2026

DGCA: Test 25% of pilots for drug use

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 19

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) wants airlines to randomly test more than 25 per cent of their flight crew, particularly pilots, every year for psychoactive substances using urine samples.

The move comes after a pilot of Air India flight AI-2379 from Phuket to Delhi tested positive for drugs. The pilot has been de-rostered pending completion of an inquiry.

From August 13, Air India began screening all its group pilots for substances or medications not permitted under prevailing regulations.

Two out of 400 pilots tested positive for drugs during the screening. Air India submitted the test reports to the DGCA, which is examining the matter. The comprehensive screening covers substances and medications prohibited. The two Tata Group-owned airlines have more than 5,000 pilots.

INDIGO WEBSITE, APP CRASH DISRUPTS FLYERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, AUG. 19

The IndiGo Airlines portal experienced a technical outage affecting its core nreservation platform, causing intermittent disruptions across its website and mobile app on Wednesday.

It was confirmed by the airline, which posted on its social handle: "We regret the inconvenience caused and appreciate your patience and understanding." The airline team later mentioned that the website and mobile app were back to normal.

During the outage, the airline requested that customers needing immediate travel assistance reach out to its Contact Centre for support. Those with later travel plans were advised to try accessing the website or app again after some time.

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DAINIK NAVJYOTI JAIPUR 19 AUGUST 2026

दुबई फ्लाइट रोजाना लेट यात्रियों की बढ़ी परेशानी

नवज्योति,जयपुर। जयपुर से दुबई जाने वाले यात्रियों को इन दिनों लगातार देरी का सामना करना पड़ रहा है। स्पाइसजेट एयरलाइन की दुबई फ्लाइट का शेड्यूल पूरी तरह से प्रभावित हो गया है, जिसके कारण यात्रियों की परेशानी लगातार बढ़ती जा रही है। सोमवार को भी जयपुर से दुबई जाने वाली फ्लाइट अपने निर्धारित समय से करीब पांच घंटे की देरी से रवाना हुई। यह फ्लाइट सामान्य तौर पर शाम 5.55 बजे जयपुर एयरपोर्ट से उड़ान भरती है, लेकिन बीती रात यह करीब 11 बजे दुबई के लिए रवाना हो सकी। इसी प्रकार मंगलवार को भी दुबई जाने वाली फ्लाइट निर्धारित समय पर संचालित नहीं हो सकेगी। संशोधित कार्यक्रम के अनुसार फ्लाइट रात 9.35 बजे तक रवाना हुई।

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

IndiGo gains market share despite fall in July air traffic

NITIN KUMAR
New Delhi, August 20

INDIGO, TATA GROUP CORNER OVER 90% MARKET

THE DOMESTIC AVIATION market witnessed another month of contraction in July, with passenger traffic falling 4.8% sequentially as airlines continued to rationalise capacity. Market leader IndiGo, though, further strengthened its dominance taking its market share beyond 67% for the first time.

On the other hand, SpiceJet hit a multi-year low across key operational metrics during the month, with its domestic market share plunging to just 1.6% down from 3.9% in January 2026.

According to data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Thursday, domestic airlines carried 12 million passengers in July compared to 12.6 million passengers in July 2025. Traffic was also lower than the 13.46 million passengers in June 2026.

The decline comes after the sharp summer travel peak in May with airlines continuing to calibrate capacity and network deployment amid changing demand conditions.

Despite the contraction in monthly traffic, passenger numbers during the first seven months of the year remained marginally higher than last year.

Domestic airlines carried 98.4 million passengers during January-July 2026, up 0.64% from 97.78 million passengers in the corresponding period last year.

IndiGo emerged as the biggest beneficiary of the capacity realignment, with its domestic market share rising to a record 67.4% in July, up from 66.3% in June. The airline carried 8.08 million passengers during the month, accounting for more than two-thirds of all domestic air traffic.

The increase further consolidates IndiGo's position in the domestic market at a time when overall traffic is contracting. The airline's market share has risen steadily through the year, from 63.6% in January to 67.4% in July.

The Air India Group, meanwhile, retained a 24% share of the domestic market in July, broadly unchanged from 23.9% in June. The group carried 2.88 million passengers during the month, compared with 3.22 million in June.

Together, IndiGo and the Air India Group accounted for 91.4% of domestic passenger traffic in July, highlighting the increasing concentration of the Indian aviation market around the two major airline groups.

Akasa Air's market share declined to 5.5% in July from 6.4% in June, while SpiceJet's share fell further to 1.6% from 1.9%. Akasa carried 0.67 million passengers during the month, while SpiceJet carried 0.19 million.

Regional carriers Alliance Air, Star Air, Fly91 and IndiaOne Air continued to account for a relatively small portion of the market.

Passenger load factors remained healthy despite the decline in traffic, suggesting that airlines have been able to align capacity with demand. Akasa Air recorded the highest load factor among the major carriers at 91.9%, followed by Air India Group at 83.2% and IndiGo at 82.4%.

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL MUMBAI 20 AUGUST 2026

IndiGo website crashes

The website of India's largest domestic airline IndiGo ran into a technical snag on Wednesday, resulting in the airline's customers facing problems booking tickets and checking in online. IndiGo said in a post on X that its teams were working with a partner to fix the issue as soon as possible.

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HINDUSTAN DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

हवाई यात्रियों की ज्यादा शिकायतें सामान से जुड़ीं

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता। विमान में सफर करने वाले यात्रियों द्वारा सबसे ज्यादा शिकायतें सामान को लेकर की जा रही हैं। उसके बाद सबसे ज्यादा लोग उड़ान सेवा समय से संचालित न होने से परेशान हैं।

गुरुवार नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) की तरफ से जारी आंकड़ों से पता चलता है कि जुलाई में विमानन कंपनियों के खिलाफ कुल 2,196 शिकायतें दर्ज हुईं। यानी हर 10 हजार यात्रियों पर करीब 1.83 शिकायतें आईं। उधर,

- **समय पर उचित सेवाएं न दे पाने से कंपनियों को देना पड़ा जुर्माना**

तय समय पर सेवाएं न देने पर विमान कंपनियों को मुआवजा देना पड़ा है।

विमानन कंपनियों ने 2179 शिकायतों यानी 99.2 प्रतिशत का निपटारा कर दिया। इसमें सामान और बैगेज से जुड़ी शिकायतों की हिस्सेदारी 31.3 प्रतिशत रही। समस्याओं की 20.6 प्रतिशत, रिफंड से जुड़ी 18.4% शिकायतें रहीं।

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HINDUSTAN TIMES MUMBAI 20 AUGUST 2026

SpiceJet, lessor fined ₹15 lakh for wasting NCLT's time

Yash Tiwari & Dipali Banka
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MUMBAI: Debt-laden carrier SpiceJet and aircraft lessor Aviator ML 29641 Ltd were fined a combined ₹15 lakh by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Wednesday for informing the tribunal about their settlement at the last minute, after orders had been reserved in eight insolvency petitions against SpiceJet.

The tribunal directed SpiceJet and Aviator ML to pay ₹7.5 lakh each to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund.

The NCLT's special bench, comprising judicial member Mahendra Khandelwal and technical member Anu Jagmohan Singh, passed the oral order on Wednesday.

"Payment of cost of ₹15 lakh payable equally by the operational creditor (Aviator ML) and corporate debtor (SpiceJet), that is ₹7.5 lakh each, to be deposited in the Prime Minister National Relief Fund, within a period of 7 days from today," the bench said.

Taking cognizance of the manner in which SpiceJet informed the tribunal about the settlement on the day the order was due to be pronounced, the bench expressed its displeasure, saying, "It is a fraud played with the bench."

SpiceJet is facing eight insolvency petitions. HT

The insolvency court had earlier reserved orders in eight insolvency petitions against the airline. The bench said one of its members was demitting office on Wednesday and there was not enough time to prepare detailed orders. It therefore de-reserved the matters and directed that they be placed before the regular bench for further consideration.

"There is no option left with us except to de-reserve order...matter may be placed before the regular bench which will consider the matter," the bench said.

"We view the order as a positive step towards resolving the outstanding matters and remain committed to working closely and constructively with our partners to find mutually acceptable solutions," a SpiceJet spokesperson told *Mint*.

The timing of the disclosure angered the tribunal because the matters had already been reserved for pronouncement. The bench questioned why the development had not been communicated earlier.

This is not the first time the NCLT has raised concerns over SpiceJet's insolvency proceedings. *Mint* reported in December 2024 that the tribunal had observed that the insolvency forum was being used to leverage settlements with the airline.

Since 2023, SpiceJet has faced more than 20 insolvency petitions, although several cases have ended in settlements with creditors and aircraft lessors.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

India's domestic air passenger traffic down 4.8% in July

Neha LM Tripathi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Domestic air passenger traffic fell 4.8% to 12 million in July from 12.6 million last year, with most major airlines also reporting lower passenger load factors, according to Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) data released on Thursday.

Despite the July decline, passenger traffic during the first seven months of 2026 remained marginally higher than in the corresponding period last year.

Indian airlines carried 98.4 million passengers during January-July, compared with 97.78 million a year earlier, an increase of 0.64%.

IndiGo, India's largest airline, carried 8.08 million passengers in July, down from 8.92 million in June. The Air India Group, comprising Air India and Air India Express, carried 2.88 million passengers, compared with 3.22 million in June.

Akasa Air carried 665,000 passengers in July, down from 861,000 in June, while SpiceJet carried 187,000, compared with 263,000 in the previous month.

Despite the fall in passenger numbers, IndiGo's market share rose to 67.4% in July from 66.3% in June, while the Air India Group's share edged up to 24% from 23.9%.

Akasa Air's market share fell to 5.5% from 6.4%, while SpiceJet's declined to 1.6% from 1.9%.

The passenger load factor — the proportion of available seats occupied — declined for IndiGo, the Air India Group and Akasa Air during the month. SpiceJet was the exception, with its load factor rising to 74.7% in July from 73.2% in June.

DESPITE THE JULY DECLINE, PASSENGER TRAFFIC DURING THE FIRST SEVEN MONTHS OF 2026 REMAINED SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN IN THE CORRESPONDING PERIOD LAST YEAR

The overall cancellation rate of scheduled domestic airlines was 0.62% in July. Technical issues accounted for 39.9% of cancellations, followed by operational reasons at 27.4% and weather-related disruptions at 22.7%, according to the DGCA.

IndiGo recorded the highest on-time performance (OTP) among scheduled domestic airlines at 10 major airports, at 91.2%, followed by Akasa Air at 90.8% and the Air India Group at 88.5%.

Alliance Air recorded an OTP of 76%, while SpiceJet had the lowest at 34.6%.

The airports covered in the OTP assessment were Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Cochin, Guwahati and Lucknow.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

IndiGo's transition plan has one risk too many

In April 2024, IndiGo generated a lot of buzz when it placed an order for 30 A350-900 — a twin-engine, long-range aircraft — to begin transitioning from a no-frills carrier to a network carrier. In October 2025, the airline added another 30 aircraft to its order. Deliveries, as per the latest update, are likely to begin in mid-2028.

When the airline first announced plans to become a network carrier, the market reacted with caution. As the deadline for the induction of the long range aircraft draws nearer, experts and industry insiders remain sceptical about the plan. This piece will elaborate a few reasons behind the scepticism, some internal to IndiGo and some external and/or structural factors.

Anjuli Bhargava

Let's start with the internal constraints. First, IndiGo, with its 430 aircraft in operation, over 500 ordered, and 68,000 employees, is already a large operation that is required to deliver consistently, every day of the year. Airline experts believe keeping it going in present form is challenging enough, without adding new verticals — IndiGo still has plenty of opportunity in its present niche and should not give in to "unrealistic ambitions", they maintain.

Second, the airline faced a crisis of delays and cancellations in December 2025 — that became a national embarrassment — due to personnel management issues; as a result, the airline had to rebuild its core team. CEO Willie Walsh has only recently assumed charge, as have a new HR chief, chief financial officer, and chief of strategy, among others. A big new challenge at this stage might be biting off more than it can chew.

Moreover, airlines get built with a certain DNA and changing that mid-course doesn't always work out. Jet Airways was structured and operated as a full-service airline from its inception in 1993. As the environment around it changed, Jet tried to adapt, reinvent, and reboot in every manner possible, but to no avail. In the end, it had to shut shop. As one observer said at the time, selling Oberoi rooms at OYO rates simply wasn't viable in the long run.

But the bigger hurdles for Indigo's plans are likely structural or external. Even if it were to surmount internal challenges and smoothly transition from a no-frills airline to a full-service one, there are at least three or four factors outside its control.

One is the existing competition. In one direction, there's Lufthansa, British Airways, Air France, Emirates, Etihad and Qatar Airways to joust with and, in the other, there's Singapore Airlines, JAL, Korean Air and a clutch of other Thai and Malaysian carriers. Several have been in the business for the last 50-70 years. None of them are going to concede any traffic. If the competition can make life difficult, it will.

Even if fear of competition will not deter a resolute new entrant, experts point out that Indian airports are not geared to facilitate the kind of hub-and-spoke operations that network carriers are structured around. Many of the metro airports, for instance, require fliers to arrive at one terminal and then make their way — often by road, via connections outside the airport premises — to another terminal to board an international flight, which in all likelihood will not take you to your final destination if it is Buenos Aires or Botswana, for instance.

Compare this with what Emirates — which picks up fliers from nine different Indian cities headed to diverse destinations — offers. Pick-up from the nine cities, arrival at Dubai and, within a 1.5-2 hour window that one can spend shopping and eating in the transit zones, boarding for one's end-destination.

Moving into long haul also makes the airline lose some of its current cost advantage since the costs of operating an A350 doesn't vary dramatically between operators — while the unique geography and spread of metropolises and Tier 2 and 3 cities in India allows IndiGo to use its A320s aggressively through the day. This lets it beat the competition by better utilising an expensive asset while reducing ground handling and others costs since the same staff handle multiple flights in a day.

While the industry gives the planned foray the benefit of doubt — well earned, with admiration for its current operations (glitches notwithstanding) — wishes IndiGo luck, the risks continue to weigh on the minds of the aviation-sector watchers.

Anjuli Bhargava writes on governance, infrastructure, and the social sector. The views expressed are personal

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MINT DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

IndiGo hits peak market share; Akasa, SpiceJet slip

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India's largest airline, IndiGo, strengthened its dominance of the domestic skies in July, raising its market share to a record 67.4%, while Akasa Air and SpiceJet lost ground.

Air India Group, the country's second-largest aviation company, was steady at around 24% of the market, according to the monthly passenger traffic data released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

Share of Akasa fell to 5.5% from 6.4% in June, while SpiceJet's declined to 1.6% from 1.9%.

IndiGo's gain comes at a time when the overall domestic aviation market contracted as airlines cut capacity amid a surge in jet fuel prices triggered by the West Asia war.

Airlines carried around 12 million passengers in July, down 5% from a year earlier and 11% from June, when traffic stood at 13.5 million. The sequential decline followed a more than 12% year-on-year drop in June, pointing to a sustained slowdown in domestic air travel demand.

"The paradox is largely a capacity or network-driven market-share shift rather than a structural acceleration in domestic aviation," said Jainam Shah, aviation analyst at brokerage firm Equirus Securities. Overall traffic has weakened because of higher fuel costs, muted demand, and airlines rationalising capacity by cutting or pausing unviable routes, he said.

For an extended version of this story, go to livemint.com.

IndiGo's new CEO flags A350 induction as vital for growth

New aircraft to power overseas expansion; IndiGo has firm orders for 60 Airbus A350-900s

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IndiGo's new chief executive officer William 'Willie' Walsh has identified the induction of the Airbus A350 as the key milestone for the airline to expand overseas operations profitably over the next five years as it seeks to capture a larger share of international traffic and make India a global aviation hub.

"I think that will be the successful introduction into service of the Airbus A350, which will facilitate our ambition to expand our international operations in a profitable way," Walsh told shareholders at the 23rd annual general meeting of InterGlobe Aviation, IndiGo's parent company, his first since taking charge on 3 August.

The strategy was outlined at the AGM on Thursday. Chairman Vikram Singh Mehta said India's "massive long-haul" market remained underserved.

"Indian carriers must capture outbound wealth currently dominated by foreign carriers," Mehta said.

IndiGo has firm orders for 60 Airbus A350-900 aircraft, with deliveries scheduled from next year. The A350-900 aircraft can carry 300 to 350 passengers in a standard three-class seating configuration and has an average range of 8,500 nautical miles (15,700km).

With these planes, IndiGo can widen its overseas operations. It can fly non-stop from Delhi and Mumbai to destinations including those on North America's east coast and Midwest; all major hubs in Europe; Australia and New Zealand, and Seoul and Tokyo. The airline currently operates flights to over 35 destinations in West Asia, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central Asia, Europe, and Africa.

Chief executive William 'Willie' Walsh sees the induction as the key milestone for the airline to expand overseas operations profitably over the next five years. PTI

IndiGo has not said which routes it will tap through the long-haul planes. A questionnaire sent to IndiGo on which routes it will fly was yet to be answered.

In an April *BBC* interview, when Walsh was director-general of the International Air Transport Association and named chief executive-designate of IndiGo, he said it was a "scandal" that India had only about 50 widebody aircraft, given the country's size. The fleet, he said, "should be much bigger."

Walsh also pointed to India's reliance on Gulf hubs for North America traffic as an opportunity for more direct long-haul connectivity.

"We view the reaffirmation of IndiGo's long-haul ambitions positively," aviation analyst Jainam Shah of Equirus Securities said. "The A350 induction will be a significant milestone for the airline, marking its transition into a scaled widebody, long-haul operation."

IndiGo currently has no widebody aircraft, although it has six of them on lease from Norse Atlantic Airways. Its own fleet consists of more than 400 narrowbody Airbus jets, including the A320neo family aircraft and A321XLRs, as well as ATRs. Rival Air India is the only carrier with widebody planes for long-haul flights, consisting of Boeing 787 Dreamliners, Boeing 777s and Airbus A350-900s.

IndiGo expects international flights to reach about 40% of its overall capacity by FY30, from roughly 30% currently.

"We see a huge opportunity for India to develop in similar ways to some of the global hubs in the Middle East and in Europe, not just serving India but to serve the world over India," Walsh said.

Shah of Equirus Securities said international capacity had risen from 15% of IndiGo's total in FY22 to 32% in FY26.

"With A321XLRs enabling mid- to long-haul expansion, A350s supporting long-haul routes, and continued additions to the international network, we see sufficient capacity and network levers for IndiGo to reach the 40% target by FY30."

Walsh stressed that expansion would have to preserve IndiGo's cost advantage. "We have to remain focused on the profitable development of our long-haul network and take all measures to ensure that we continue to be the leader when it comes to costs in our industry," he said.

IndiGo's long-haul strategy, however, has seen a reset. In July, IndiGo said it would discontinue its Boeing 787-9 operations and end its damp-lease agreement with Norway's Norse Atlantic Airways from October-end. The arrangement was designed to accelerate IndiGo's entry into long-haul markets and build operational expertise ahead of its own A350 fleet.

For an extended version of this story, go to livemint.com.

GLOBAL GOALS

WALSH identified the induction as the key milestone for the airline to expand overseas operations

THE move comes as IndiGo eyes a larger share of global traffic and seeks to make India an aviation hub

INDIGO expects international flights to reach about 40% of its overall capacity by FY30

THE A350-900 can carry 300-350 passengers in a standard 3-class seating configuration

MILLENNIUM POST DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

Domestic air passenger traffic slips 4.80% to 1.20 cr in July

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
Mumbai, August 20

Domestic air passenger traffic slipped 4.80 per cent to 1.20 crore in July from 1.26 crore recorded in the year-ago month, with all major Indian airlines seeing a drop in the load factor, data released on Thursday by DGCA showed.

Passengers carried by domestic airlines during January-July 2026 increased to 984.03 lakh against 977.79 lakh a year ago, thereby registering an annual growth of 0.64 per cent, according to the DGCA.

IndiGo carried 80.82 lakh passengers during the previous month against 89.20 lakh in June; Air India group flew 28.75 lakh passengers during the reporting period compared to 32.22 lakh in June 2026, DGCA data showed.

The total number of passengers transported by Akasa Air stood at 6.65 lakh in July against 8.61 lakh in June. Passenger volumes at SpiceJet were seen at 1.87 lakh in the previous month against 2.63 lakh passengers in June, it said.

IndiGo raised its market share in the previous month to 67.4 per cent from 66.3 per cent, and Air India group market share also rose marginally to 24 per cent from 23.9 per cent in June. Akasa and SpiceJet saw their market share falling to 5.5 per cent (from 6.4 per cent) and 1.6 per cent (from 1.9 per cent) in June, according to data.

In on-time performance, IndiGo had the highest percentage of its flights (91.2 per cent) departing and arriving on time, followed by Akasa Air (90.8 per cent) to and from 10 domestic airports – Bengaluru, Delhi, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Cochin, Guwahati and Lucknow – during the previous month, according to the aviation safety regulator.

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THE MORNING STANDARD DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

Pilot aborts take-off after technical snag

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

MORE than 150 passengers on an IndiGo flight from Delhi to Mangaluru had a scare on Thursday after the pilot aborted take-off following a technical snag while the aircraft was taxiing towards the runway.

According to FlightAware website, flight 6E 6456, operated by an A321 aircraft, was scheduled to depart at 5.30 pm. The passengers were finally sent by the airline in an alternative aircraft at 8.16 pm, nearly three hours after the scheduled departure. They were made to alight from their aircraft, taken to the terminal and sent to Mangaluru by another plane.

According to IndiGo, a technical snag was detected during taxiing. Following standard operating procedures and in the interest of safety, the pilots returned the aircraft to the bay and informed the relevant authorities. The airline said the affected aircraft would undergo necessary checks and maintenance before resuming operations. It also arranged an alternative aircraft for the passengers to complete their journey.

A passenger told an agency that the flight was initially delayed by around 20 minutes. The aircraft began taxiing after 5.50 pm but stopped after around 8-10 minutes. The pilot then informed passengers that the aircraft was returning to the bay due to a technical issue.

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SWATANTRA BHARAT LUCKNOW 20 AUGUST 2026

इंडिगो की वेबसाइट में आई खराबी : टिकट बुकिंग से चेक-इन तक अटकी सेवा, तकनीकी दिक्कत

नई दिल्ली। देश की प्रमुख एयरलाइन इंडिगो की वेबसाइट में बुधवार को तकनीकी समस्या सामने आई। इसके चलते कुछ यात्रियों को टिकट बुक करने और ऑनलाइन वेब चेक-इन करने में परेशानी का सामना करना पड़ा। एयरलाइन ने खुद इसकी पुष्टि करते हुए कहा कि उसके मुख्य रिजर्वेशन प्लेटफॉर्म में रुक-रुककर समस्या आ रही है। कंपनी के मुताबिक, इस तकनीकी गड़बड़ी के कारण कुछ ग्राहकों के लिए ऑनलाइन सेवाओं तक पहुंच मुश्किल हो गई।

इंडिगो ने तकनीकी समस्या पर क्या कहा- एयरलाइन ने बयान जारी कर बताया कि उसके कोर रिजर्वेशन प्लेटफॉर्म में इंटरमिटेंट समस्या आ रही है। कंपनी की तकनीकी टीम अपने पार्टनर के साथ मिलकर इसे जल्द से जल्द ठीक करने में जुटी है। इंडिगो ने यात्रियों को हुई असुविधा के लिए खेद जताया और कहा कि समस्या को प्राथमिकता के आधार पर दूर किया जा रहा है।

टिकट बुकिंग और वेब चेक-इन पर क्या असर पड़ा- वेबसाइट में आई तकनीकी परेशानी के कारण कुछ ग्राहक टिकट बुकिंग और ऑनलाइन सेवाओं का इस्तेमाल नहीं कर पा रहे थे। कुछ यात्रियों के लिए वेब चेक-इन में भी दिक्कत की जानकारी सामने आई। हालांकि, एयरलाइन ने इसे पूरे सिस्टम के स्थायी रूप से बंद होने के बजाय रुक-रुककर आने वाली तकनीकी समस्या बताया है।

जिन यात्रियों की फ्लाइट जल्द है, वे क्या करें- इंडिगो ने ऐसे यात्रियों को सीधे अपने कस्टमर सपोर्ट या कॉन्टैक्ट सेंटर से संपर्क करने की सलाह दी है, जिन्हें तत्काल यात्रा से जुड़ी सहायता की जरूरत है। वहीं, जिन यात्रियों की फ्लाइट बाद में है, उन्हें कुछ समय बाद दोबारा इंडिगो की वेबसाइट या ऐप एक्सेस करने की सलाह दी गई है। इंडिगो ने यात्रियों से धैर्य बनाए रखने की अपील करते हुए तकनीकी समस्या के कारण हुई असुविधा के लिए माफी मांगी। एयरलाइन ने भरोसा दिलाया कि उसकी टीमें समस्या को जल्द ठीक करने के लिए काम कर रही हैं।

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THE STATESMAN KOLKATA 20 AUGUST 2026

Air India SATS signs MOU with CONCOR Air Limited (wholly owned subsidiary of CONCOR) to speed up cargo movement from ICD Dadri to NIA

Air India SATS Airport Services Private Limited (AISATS) has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with CONCOR Air Limited (CAL) to facilitate the seamless movement and handling of customs-cleared transhipment (TP) cargo from CONCOR's Inland Container Depot (ICD) at Dadri to AISATS' Integrated Cargo Terminal (ICT) at Noida International Airport (NIA), for onward international dispatch. The collaboration strengthens AISATS' air cargo terminal operations at NIA by deepening its connectivity with inland freight networks, bringing together CONCOR's inland logistics and customs-cleared cargo handling capabilities to create a more efficient, integrated pathway for cargo moving from inland facilities to international air freight.

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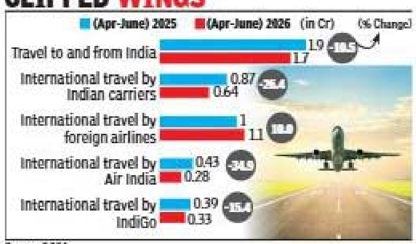
THE TIMES OF INDIA DELHI 21 AUGUST 2026

War brings AI Grp's int'l carriage down 35%, IndiGo's 15.4%

CLIPPED WINGS



Source: DGCA

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New Delhi: The US-Iran war's impact on international air travel globally has, from an Indian perspective, hit homegrown carriers harder than foreign ones.

While people flying in and out of India fell 10.5% to 1.7 crore during April-June, the traditional peak summer quarter, Indian carriers saw a sharp 26% decline in their international carriage while foreign players registered an increase, according to DGCA data released Thursday.

Dubai-based mega carrier Emirates benefited from UAE severely limiting foreign airlines' flights for a prolonged period in that quarter and saw its carriage to and from India increase 7% to 14.8 lakh from 13.8 lakh in the corresponding period last year. Neighbouring Abu Dhabi-based Etihad's India carriage declined only by 1,939 passengers from last April-June's figure of 8.5 lakh.

The conflict was yet another blow to Indian carriers that have been reeling under the impact of Pakistan airspace closure since last April which has impacted flights between north India, with Delhi the biggest hub for Air India and IndiGo, and the West.

Domestic flyers fell 4.8% in a year

Last month saw domestic flyers decline 4.8% to 1.2 crore from 1.3 crore in July 2025. IndiGo's domestic market share touched an all-time high of 67.4% in July 2026, with Air India group at 24%, Akasa at 5.5% and other smaller players accounting for the remaining 3.1%. TNN

Air India Group (AI and AI Express) saw its international carriage drop 35% due to reduction in overseas flights since the air crash in Ahmedabad in June 2025. IndiGo saw international carriage drop 15.4% to 33.4 lakh from 39.5 lakh in April-June 2025.

On the other hand, with no Pakistan hurdle and spare capacity as their West Asia operations have been curtailed by the war, some western carriers, led by Lufthansa, SWISS and British Airways, have increased their India flights. Lufthansa flew 3.7 lakh passengers in and out of India this April-June, as opposed to 3.5 lakh a year ago. British Airways, which added flights after Lufthansa, managed to avoid a big decline in India carriage by flying over 2.9 lakh people as opposed to about 3.1 lakh in April-June 2025.