भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
Corporate Communications Directorate
BUSINESS STANDARD DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

AIRPORTS: SWANKY GATEWAYS OF INDIA

As more and more airports get privatised, there are fears that a monopoly will emerge. How true is this?

BY SHOBHA JOHN

One of the factors that will spur the growth of India's aviation sector is airports. While earlier all airports in India were under the control of the Airports Authority of India (AAI), now we see their increasing privatisation, leading to conglomerates such as GMR, Adani, etc, having majority stake in them. The newest airports are Navi Mumbai and Jewar in UP.

According to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation, from 2023-2024, departing domestic passengers were 153.7 million, while from 2024-2025, it was 165.5 million, a 7.7 per cent rise. By FY2026, airports are expected to have a handling capacity of around 550 million passengers per annum (mppa), which could grow to about 850 mppa within five years. The government has ambitious plans of building 50 new airports over the next five years and expanding the present network of 163 airports.

CAPACITY SATURATED

And it is with this aim that the earlier rule of no greenfield airport within an aerial distance of 150 km of an existing civilian airport is being done away with. Civil aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu reportedly said that once capacity is saturated, the clause no longer applies. "The policy ensures the operational stability of the first airport, but it does not restrict the development of another airport once capacity has been saturated," he said.

Naidu was also quoted as saying: "In 2025, Indian carriers inducted 80 planes. This year, 106 more aircraft are expected to be inducted. For the next 10-15 years, Indian carriers will induct about 100 aircraft annually given the orders of airlines like Al Group, IndiGo and Akasa." He added that due to new age infrastructure being rapidly created, travelers from nearby countries can fly here and take connecting flights to other parts of the world. "India has the airports required for the job and our airlines are getting there with the right policies in place," he said.

All these ambitions fructified with the increased privatisation of airports which began in 2003. Public-private partnerships (PPPs) for brownfield Delhi and Mumbai airports began through bidding and went to the GMR-led and GVK-led consortia respectively, with AAI retaining a 26% stake. Bengaluru and Hyderabad followed; both were greenfield airports. In 2019, six airports — Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Jaipur, Mangaluru, Guwahati and Thiruvananthapuram — were privatised and awarded to Adani. The conglomerate now controls eight airports in India, including Mumbai and Navi Mumbai, where it acquired GVK's stake.

PUBLIC VS PRIVATE

PS Nair, former Board Member of AAI and subsequently, ex-ED and CEO of GMR Airports, has seen the workings of both public and private airport entities and said that like other PSUs, AAI was more procedure-oriented, while GMR is overwhelmingly result-oriented. Privatisation of AAI-operated airports, he said, had led the ownership to be vested in AAI, while the airport operator who emerged as the winner in the transparent, competitive bid process, operates, manages, upgrades and develops the airport to international standards on a long-term basis with a great degree of freedom.

"Accomplishments of the past 15 + years at Bangalore, Delhi, Hyderabad and Mumbai airports as also inland airports are the best testimonials for the advantages of divestment. Had there been status quo ante, there was no way these airports would have seen such incredible transformation," he added.

Now there is a move by the government to bundle airports together, pairing profitable or high-traffic airports with smaller ones. This is meant to ensure investment into non-metro airports that may not be viable on their own. There will be five bundles of metro and non-metro airports: Amritsar and Kangra; Varanasi, Kushinagar and Gaya; Bhubaneswar and Hubli; Raipur and Aurangabad; Tiruchi and Tirupati. The tender process is expected to be launched by March 2026. The 11 airports were selected from among AAI facilities handling 0.1-1 million passengers annually.

One of the areas of concern of increasing airport privatisation is the emergence of a monopoly. While the swanky and spanking new facilities can be eye-catching, there are charges of excessive User Development Fees for passengers, increased aircraft landing charges and the introduction of a disembarkation fee. In Mumbai airport, business jets were asked to relocate to Navi Mumbai.

However, Nair refutes the monopoly theory saying that all the PPP airports function as standalone airport companies with government nominees representing on the Boards. "Inherent checks and balances are the hallmark of each of these companies. As for the Adani Group operating eight airports, in the second wave of divestment, this Group was the highest bidder for all the six airports in the transparent open tender process," he said. The Adani Group plans to bid for nearly a dozen airports slated for privatisation as part of its Rs 1-lakh-crore investment plan in aviation infrastructure over the next five years.

There is the other side to increased charges. Nair said that the airport charges are subjected to a laid down, rigorous, transparent consultative process by an independent regulatory body, i.e., the Airport Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA). Tariff proposals filed by airport operators are examined by AERA in consultation with all stakeholders. Tariff increases include the genuine need of capital investments made by the operator, return on such investments and alignment with global best practices, he stressed.

The potential for air travel can be gauged from the fact that only about 6% of Indians travel by air. This is despite India being touted as the world's third-largest domestic aviation market. With greater connectivity and good infrastructure, the sky is the limit for air travel.

REAL ESTATE

With so many airports coming up, the real estate surrounding them too has got a major fillip. It has fueled the demand for residential plots, apartments and integrated townships and semi-rural areas are expected to see a major spurt in prices. For example, Jewar International Airport has transformed Noida, Greater Noida and the Yamuna Expressway. Apartment prices along the Expressway have reportedly climbed to 158 per cent. Similarly, Navi Mumbai International Airport has seen property prices nearby increasing 43.26 per cent over two years. Manohar International Airport has seen North Goa becoming a major real estate corridor with various infrastructure projects. Over the last two years, North Goa's residential prices saw a 76.51 per cent growth.

Interestingly, the growth of new airports has also given a boost to Indian art and culture with the installation of monumental sculptures, clay figures and huge paintings. According to Harper Bazaar India (HBI), this has made art accessible beyond the traditional confines of museums and led to a captive audience for artists too. HBI says that Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport has collaborated with the Museum of Art & Photography to showcase extensive exhibitions of luminaries such as Jamini Roy, Jangarh Singh Shyam, Jyoti Bhatt, Suresh Punjabi and LN Tallur. "The gallery there also houses a remarkable film ephemera collection, weaving narratives through Bollywood posters, stills, and lobby cards that trace everything from the evolution of the courtesan figure to fantastical journeys through Arabian nights," reveals HBI.

Mumbai's Terminal 2 is a living gallery with four levels of thousands of curated works. This includes the monumental "Fortress of Clay", paintings, sculptures and traditional crafts. Meanwhile, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Hyderabad, showcases regional heritage through MeMeraki's 'AIRAVAS', a contemporary reinterpretation of Tholu Bommalata, Andhra Pradesh's shadow puppetry tradition.

Of course, Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport was the first private airport to showcase art on a large scale. Terminal 3's Wall of Mudras, a monumental installation by sculptor Nikhil Bhandari in collaboration with art collective Ayush Kasliwal Design Studio, is at once striking and arresting. HBI says that "this expansive wall showcases hand mudras—sacred gestures that communicate India's spiritual and cultural ethos without words. The 'Surya Namaskara' statue adds another layer of contemplative beauty to the Terminal's spaces."

With the third and fourth waves of divestment of existing AAI-owned and operated airports on the anvil, its role is bound to undergo structural change. However, it will not render AAI redundant. After all, AAI renders the sovereign Air Navigational Services too.

The transformation of airports in India is timely and welcome. But let us not forget that at the end of the day, the passenger is the king and should be treated like that.

Navi Mumbai International Airport commenced operations on December 25, 2025


Noida International Airport, Jewar

> **"Accomplishments of the past 15+ years at major airports as also inland airports are the best testimonials for the advantages of divestment. Had there been status quo ante, they wouldn't have seen such transformation."**
>
> **PS NAIR, former Board Member of AAI and subsequently, ex-ED and CEO of GMR Airports**

BY FY2026, AIRPORTS ARE EXPECTED TO HAVE A HANDLING CAPACITY OF AROUND 550 MILLION PASSENGERS PER ANNUM (MPPA). THIS IS EXPECTED TO GROW TO ABOUT 850 MPPA WITHIN FIVE YEARS.

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THE TIMES OF INDIA CHENNAI 27 JANUARY 2026

Trichy airport plans longer runway

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Trichy: Trichy international airport has submitted a detailed project report (DPR) to the airports authority of India (AAI), New Delhi, seeking approval to extend its runway from 8,136ft to 12,500ft at an estimated cost of ₹350crore.

Airport officials said the proposal was backed by growing demand from rising passenger traffic and freight movement. Once cleared by AAI headquarters, tenders will be floated, with expansion work likely to begin before 2026.

Nearly 500acres of land, including defence land, have already been acquired by AAI and Tamil Nadu govt for the project. At present, the airport handles only narrow-body aircraft. Airport director S S Raju said about ₹220crore would be spent on extending the runway by around 4,500ft and constructing a parallel taxiway.

He said passenger traffic at Trichy airport is expected to cross two million for the first time in the current financial year, having already touched 1.7million passengers as of Dec 2025. Construction of compound walls around the newly acquired land, at a cost of ₹24 crore, will begin soon.

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

IT'S TIME FOR TAKE-OFF

Airports in India play a vital role have contributed for urban development in a big way by connecting people and cities

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The aviation sector plays a crucial role in economic integration by connecting people. They bridge the gap between regions by streamlining global transportation system. The aviation sector not only connects continents but is essential for global business.

At present India is the third-largest domestic aviation market in the world. Passenger traffic (domestic and international) stood at 96.54 million during FY26 (April-July 2025), while freight traffic reached 1.2 MMT in the same period. The sector is also backed by a rapidly expanding airport network, which has grown from 74 airports in 2014 to 162 as of September 2025. Riding on a robust growth in the sector, India is likely to overtake China and the United States to become the world's third-largest air passenger market by 2030, according to the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The rising demand has also accelerated fleet expansion, with the number of airplanes projected to reach 1,100 by 2027.

The Indian aviation market is on a high trajectory of growth with total passenger traffic to, from and within India, growing significantly. This growth is being driven by a growing economy, rising incomes, intense competition among airlines and a supportive policy environment. The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP 2016) unveiled the government's intent to alter the aviation sector's growth path. NCAP's flagship programme – Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS or UDAN) is connecting the dots in various parts masses by offering subsidised fares as low as USD 35 for a one-hour flight. Though India had been experiencing significant growth in the aviation sector, air traffic was mostly concentrated amongst six metros whereas many regions craved for air connectivity. This skewed development of air connectivity would create disparity in growth, if not addressed appropriately.

ECONOMIC CONNECTIVITY:
The aviation sector links people and regions, supports global business, and plays a key role in economic integration

RAPID MARKET GROWTH:
India is the third-largest domestic aviation market, with passenger traffic at 96.54 million (Apr–Jul 2025) and freight at 1.2 MMT, supported by a rapidly expanding airport network

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Running India's Airports at Scale Becomes the Next Focus

India has added airport capacity at a speed few large aviation markets have managed. New terminals have come up across metros and regional centres, airport numbers have more than doubled in a decade, and passenger volumes continue to rise. What is becoming clear, however, is that building airports was the easier part.

At major hubs, congestion is now a daily operational reality. Slot availability, turnaround times and peak-hour crowding remain pressure points, even where physical capacity has increased. Terminals can handle more passengers on paper, but moving aircraft, baggage and people smoothly through the system is proving more demanding.

Away from the metros, the challenge looks different. Several regional airports have the infrastructure in place, yet utilisation remains uneven. Matching airline schedules, ground handling services, and airport charges to lower traffic volumes has become as important as runway length. Operating smaller airports on metro-style cost assumptions has often made routes harder to sustain.

This is why the airport conversation is changing. Airports are no longer seen only as passenger terminals, but as operating platforms. Cargo handling, non-aeronautical revenue, proximity to maintenance facilities and the use of digital tools now shape airport economics. Technology can help reduce friction, but it cannot substitute for realistic capacity planning.

The emphasis now is less on announcing new airports and more on how existing ones are run, financed and adapted as traffic grows. As India's aviation market continues to expand, airports will decide whether growth feels orderly or strained. Capacity has been created. Execution will determine its value.

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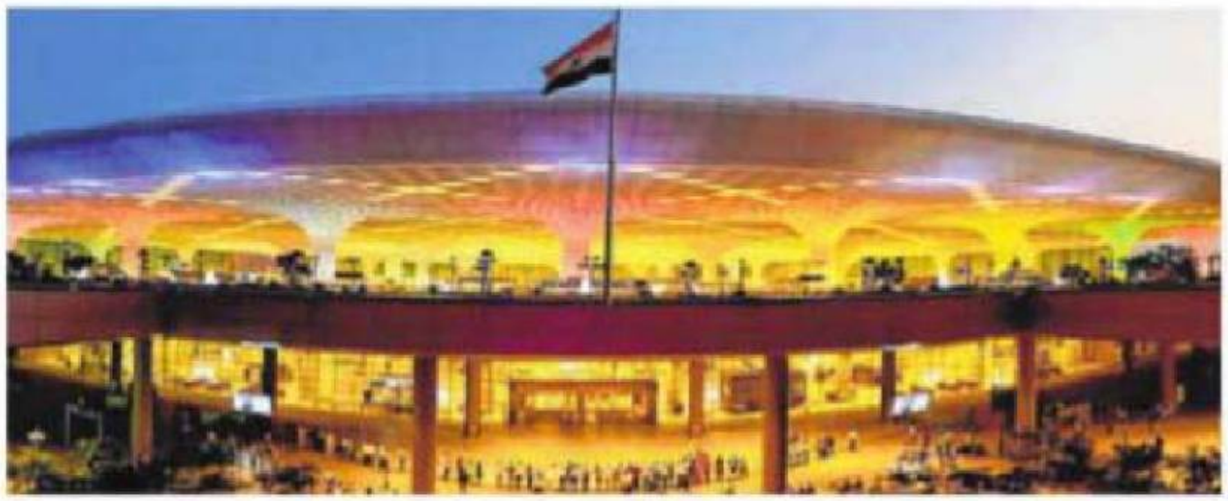
FREE PRESS JOURNAL MUMBAI 27 JANUARY 2026

Black toy-like drone found stuck in tree near Terminal-1

Megha Kuchik
MUMBAI



A black, toy-like drone was discovered stuck in a tree near Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport on Saturday, triggering a security scare amid heightened vigilance for Republic Day and frequent VVIP movements.

The device was found when Vishal Raje, from the electrical team, was trimming a Ficus tree using a boom lift at the airport's auto-rickshaw pickup point, Terminal-1, Vile Parle East. The drone fell from the branches during the work. Raje immediately alerted the Landside Manager of Terminal-1, who instructed him to hand over the object to the police

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THE HINDU CHENNAI 27 JANUARY 2026

T.N. to send tender for new airport to Centre

Sunitha Sekar
CHENNAI

The State govt. will call for bids after the Assembly election this year

The Tamil Nadu government will send the tender document for the construction of the airport at Parandur near Chennai to the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) by March and call for bids after the Assembly election, according to sources privy to the development.

When the Union Ministry gave the in-principle approval for the project in April last year, it indicated that the tender document would have to be sent to it before bids were called, the sources said. "Concession agreement, RFP [Request for Proposal] and other documents related to PPP to be shared with the MoCA for consideration before issuing tender, wherein concessions or clauses pertaining to the GoI be highlighted," the Union government's high-level committee had said.

'Work almost over'

The work on the tender document is almost over; only a few aspects have to be worked out. This is likely to be done in February. By March, the State government plans to send the document to the MoCA, another source said.

CONTINUED ON
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From Page One

T.N. to send tender for new airport to Centre

"The MoCA is likely to take two to three months to vet the tender and other documents. By the time it sends them back, the election process will be over. After the Model Code of Conduct is lifted, we will issue the tender," the source said.

Around that time, the State government also plans to finish the social impact assessment, the only pending exercise to be completed as part of the process to get environmental clearance for the project. The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Union government directed the State to carry out various surveys and studies, including a social impact assessment. All the mandated surveys and studies have been completed, but for the social impact assessment.

Data have to be collected from Ekanapuram, an exercise that cannot be done now. After the election, the work on the social impact assessment will be completed and submitted to the Union government, the sources said.

For the ₹27,400-crore airport project, 1,650 acres of land has so far been acquired by the State. The airport is coming up on a land area of 5,746.18 acres (3,774.01 acres of patta land and 1,972.17 acres of government land).

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Quarantine doctors check thermal scanning of travellers at the Suvarnabhumi International Airport, Thailand. FILE

ASIAN AIRPORTS RAMP UP SCREENINGS

Only 2 Nipah cases in Bengal, 196 contacts negative: Ministry

Anonna Dutt
New Delhi, January 27

AS AIRPORTS in Thailand, Taiwan and Nepal reintroduced Covid-style health checks following reports of Nipah cases in India, the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday clarified that only two cases had been reported in West Bengal since last December. All the contacts linked to them have tested negative.

"It has been observed that speculative and incorrect figures regarding Nipah Virus Disease (NiVD) cases are being circulated in certain sections of the media. In this context, it is clarified that, as per reports received from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), only two confirmed cases of Nipah Virus Disease have been reported from West Bengal from December last year till date," the ministry note said, adding that the Centre, in close coordination with the West Bengal government, has initiated prompt and comprehensive public health measures in accordance with established protocols.

The ministry said the public and media should "rely only on verified information released by official sources and refrain from spreading unverified or speculative reports".

It further clarified that a total of 196 contacts linked to the confirmed cases had been identified, traced, monitored and tested. "All traced contacts have been found asymptomatic and have tested negative for Nipah Virus Disease. Enhanced surveillance, laboratory testing and field investigations were undertaken through coordinated efforts of Central and State health agencies, which ensured timely containment of the cases," it said.

Nipah is a viral infection that mainly affects animals such as bats, pigs, dogs and horses, but can infect humans who come in contact with the infected animals. It can be transmitted through food items such as fruits or date palm sap which have been contaminated with bodily fluids of an infected animal, usually bats. Nipah usually presents as fever and swelling of the brain and can prove fatal. However, the disease is not as transmissible as Covid-19 or influenza and is unlikely to cause a huge number of infections in a short time.

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AMAR UJALA DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

देश में यात्री विमान बनाने के लिए अदाणी-एम्ब्रेयर के बीच करार

साझेदारी से विमान निर्माण का हब बनेगा भारत

नई दिल्ली। अदाणी समूह और ब्राजील की प्रमुख विमान निर्माता कंपनी एम्ब्रेयर मिलकर भारत में यात्री विमानों का निर्माण करेंगे। यह साझेदारी छोटे शहरों के बीच हवाई संपर्क बेहतर बनाने में मदद करेगी। दोनों कंपनियों ने मंगलवार को इस आशय के समझौता ज्ञापन पर हस्ताक्षर किए।

इस साझेदारी के तहत भारत में विमान निर्माण, आपूर्ति शृंखला, रखरखाव (एमआरओ), बिक्री के बाद की (आफ्टर-सेल्स) सेवाएं और पायलट प्रशिक्षण जैसे क्षेत्रों में मिलकर काम किया जाएगा। शुरुआत में देश में विमान असेंबली लाइन स्थापित की जाएगी और बाद में धीरे-धीरे स्वदेशी हिस्सेदारी बढ़ाई जाएगी। कंपनियों ने एक बयान में कहा कि यह पहल आत्मनिर्भर भारत और सरकार की उड़ान योजना के अनुरूप है, जिसका उद्देश्य छोटे शहरों को हवाई नेटवर्क से जोड़ना है। ब्यूरो

रोजगार पैदा होंगे : इस मौके पर अदाणी डिफेंस एंड एयरोस्पेस के निदेशक जीत अदाणी ने कहा कि क्षेत्रीय विमानन देश की आर्थिक तरक्की की रीढ़ है। उड़ान जैसी योजनाओं ने टियर-2 और टियर-3 शहरों तक हवाई कनेक्टिविटी को मजबूत किया है। ऐसे में देश में एक स्वदेशी क्षेत्रीय विमानन पारितंत्र की जरूरत पहले से ज्यादा बढ़ गई है। कंपनी के अनुसार इस पहल से बड़ी संख्या में रोजगार के अवसर पैदा होंगे और भारत को वैश्विक एयरोस्पेस उद्योग में नई पहचान मिलेगी। एम्ब्रेयर कमर्शियल एविएशन के अध्यक्ष और मुख्य कार्यकारी अधिकारी अर्जन मेइजर ने कहा कि भारत एम्ब्रेयर के लिए एक बेहद महत्वपूर्ण बाजार है। यह साझेदारी हमारी एयरोस्पेस विशेषज्ञता को अदाणी ग्रुप की मजबूत औद्योगिक क्षमताओं के साथ जोड़ती है।

एम्ब्रेयर की पहले से मौजूदगी : एम्ब्रेयर की भारत में पहले से मजबूत मौजूदगी है। देश में इसके करीब 50 विमान वाणिज्यिक, रक्षा और व्यापारिक उड्डयन सेवाओं में इस्तेमाल हो रहे हैं। वायुसेना भी एम्ब्राएर के नेत्रा विमान का उपयोग करती है। भारत दुनिया का तीसरा सबसे बड़ा घरेलू विमानन बाजार है। आगामी 20 वर्षों में देश को लगभग 2,000 विमानों की आवश्यकता होने का अनुमान है।

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Embraer, Adani to set up aircraft making unit

DEEPAK PATEL
New Delhi, 27 January

Joining hands

- This would be the first commercial aircraft final assembly line to be established in India
- Adani Group and Embraer are also having discussions with prospective airline customers in India for an order
- Embraer is engaging with IndiGo and Air India on potential future sales or fleet decisions
- Embraer will initially be using its existing supply chain to support the final assembly in India

Brazilian regional aircraft maker Embraer and Adani Defence & Aerospace on Tuesday signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to establish an aircraft manufacturing facility. This would be the first commercial aircraft final assembly line (FAL) to be established in India.

"The companies, through this MoU, aim to collaborate on opportunities in aircraft manufacturing, supply chain, aftermarket services, and pilot training," said Jeet Adani, director, Adani Defence & Aerospace, after signing the partnership agreement with Arjan Meijer, president and chief executive officer (CEO), Embraer Commercial Aviation in Delhi.

"We are looking at a few places for the location of the FAL. We expect everything to be finalised (location, which Embraer models to manufacture, etc) in the next couple of months. We will start construction work on the site as soon as it is finalised. The supply chain is ready to work," Adani mentioned.

As of now, Embraer's FALs are concentrated in two countries. In Brazil, the company runs its primary FALs at Sao Jose dos Campos and Gaviao Peixoto.

In the United States, Embraer operates FALs in Melbourne, Florida, focused on business jets, including the Phenom and Praetor families, and in Jacksonville, Florida, where it has carried out assembly of defence aircraft such as the A-29 Super Tucano. Adani said that while the Adani group and Embraer are finalising the location of the FAL in India, they are also having discussions with prospective airline customers in India for an order.

At present, Star Air is the only airline in India regularly operating Embraer regional aircraft, even as Embraer engages with other carriers such as IndiGo and Air India on potential future sales or fleet decisions.

When Meijer was asked if a fresh supply chain would be established in India to support the upcoming FAL, he replied: "We will initially be using our existing supply chain to support the final assembly in India. We want to make the supply chain indigenous too, but it will take time."

Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu said that there was a strong need for a regional aircraft maker in India that can develop 80-150 seater planes. He said that the planes developed in the Indian FAL of Embraer would be exported as well.

The minister said that the Adani group's scale and capability to execute big aviation projects such as construction of Navi Mumbai airport was commendable. India's civil aviation market has expanded rapidly, with domestic airlines operating a combined fleet of around 800 aircraft and nearly 1,700 more on order. However, the regional aircraft segment remains largely untapped.

In a joint presentation, the two companies said regional aviation plays a catalytic role in economic development rather than merely responding to it, acting as a trigger for growth in smaller cities and underserved regions.

Regional aviation forms the backbone of the UDAN scheme, where many routes have low passenger demand and are not economically viable for large narrow-body aircraft such as the A320 or Boeing 737, they said. Regional transport aircraft are better suited to these markets as they can operate efficiently from shorter runways and airports with limited infrastructure, enabling connectivity where it would otherwise not exist, they added.

HUGE ORDERS FOR PLANES

In 2025, Indian carriers inducted 80 planes. This year, 105 more are expected. For the next 10-15 years, 100 aircraft annually will be inducted. PAGE 2

REGIONAL AVIATION

Through UDAN, the government plans to increase airports to 230 by 2030 and create hundreds of new short routes. PAGE 3

RTX INFLUENCE IN INDIA

By delivering environmental benefits, GTF™ engines have helped Indian carriers save over 1 billion liters of fuel. PAGE 4

THE MOST AGILE FALCON

Dassault's best seller in India is the 2000-series jet but it expects several customers to trade up to the 5,500 nm GX. PAGE 5

India, the world's third-largest domestic aviation market, was hit by various crises last year, showing the urgent need to put in systems that ensure greater safety and compliance

INDIA GOES FROM TURBULENT, TOUGH TIMES TO RENEWED HOPE

BY SHOBHA JOHN

The year 2025 has been one of the toughest for Indian aviation as it was hit one after the other by various crises. The Air India 787-8 Boeing Dreamliner crash in Ahmedabad on June 12 where 260 people lost their lives seemed a harbinger of things to come. Even as the final investigation report of the crash was awaited, the IndiGo crisis of December 2025 came as a shocker. Thousands of its flights were cancelled and passengers left high and dry because the airline failed to adhere to new Flight Duty Time Limit (FDTL) regulations despite having enough time to do so.

This churning in the Indian aviation sector went side by side with the country being touted as the third largest domestic aviation market. With over 185 million passengers flying in its scheduled domestic sector in 2024-25, according to the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), it is indeed a coveted market for all airlines.

WINGS INDIA 2026

It is, therefore, fitting that Wings India 2026, the international aviation meet, is being held now as it hopes to pave the way for the future, be it in design, manufacturing, maintenance, innovation or sustainability. With global aviation leaders descending on Hyderabad, the event is being touted as the gateway to discovering the future of aviation in one of the world's fastest-growing markets.

However, this huge potential could be stymied by indiscipline and lack of oversight on the part of operators, making people question if safety is being compromised. This coupled with surging ticket prices whenever there is a crisis led to much angst among passengers.

At the heart of any aviation sector is the issue of safety and pilot alertness. This goes hand in hand with enough rest time for them. New DGCA FDTL rules which were effective from November 1, 2025, meant that airlines needed more pilots. While some factored this into their rostering, IndiGo was caught napping as it didn't increase the number of pilots needed, leading to crew shortage. Early December saw mass cancellations of IndiGo flights even as passengers came to airports baying to utter chaos. This continued for a few days till Civil Aviation minister Ram Mohan Naidu cracked down and ordered an inquiry into the sorry mess. In contrast, Air India was in a comfortable position as it had more than doubled its pilots.

FDTL norms are also followed by international airlines. So why do such disruptions not happen abroad? Some have dedicated transition teams of operations planners, crew scheduling, pilot unions, and legal compliance officers, while other have increased pilot strength and adjusted their schedules. The IndiGo crisis, therefore, showed a lack of preparedness and discipline. Questions were also asked as to how the DGCA okayed the airline's winter schedule without adequate staff to tackle FDTL.

> THE SIMULATOR MARKET SAW THE ENTRY OF ESTABLISHED CONGLOMERATES. THE ADANI GROUP ACQUIRED FSTC, INDIA'S LARGEST PILOT-TRAINING COMPANY, FOR ₹820 CRORE.

LARGEST MARKET SHARE

Considering that IndiGo held the maximum market share at 61.1 %, followed by Air India (14.3%) and Air India Express (6.3%), the crisis hit everyone badly. There were allegations that a narrowly had held exercise to ransom with Minister Naidu even declaring that we need to have five big airlines. "I want more players to be there in this industry. This is the time to start an airline in India," he declared.

Meanwhile, the Airline Pilot Association (ALPA) alleged that IndiGo had deliberately not followed the FDTL as it knew it would get a breather from the DGCA. And it did, as the DGCA granted it temporary exemption from some FDTL rules until February 2026.

As a result of this crisis, the aviation ministry gave approval to three airlines to start operation—Shankh Air, Air Hind Air and FlyExpress. But these are regional airlines and won't be enough to reduce the duopoly in India's aviation sector. Former civil aviation minister Praful Patel reportedly said that only established, high-capital players can survive the industry's "tough" financial demands. "That is why it is important that big players should come into the aviation business. Some new airlines have been given licenses, but I don't think they are long-term players," he said. Meanwhile, Air India too was pulled up for various safety lapses and fined.

> INDIA'S PASSENGER TRAFFIC IS EXPECTED TO GROW EXPONENTIALLY. THE INTERNATIONAL AIR TRANSPORT ASSOCIATION FORECAST THAT THE ANNUAL NUMBER OF PASSENGERS TRAVELLING INTO, OUT OF OR WITHIN INDIA BY PLANE WILL REACH 425MN BY 2044.

FLYING SCHOOLS

One cannot talk of airlines in India without mentioning flying schools. In a first-ever ranking by the DGCA of flying training organisations in India based on safety, infrastructure and the quality of training, 22 institutes were placed in B category and 13 in C category. The DGCA's ranking had four categories: A+ for scores of 85% and above, A for scores between 75% and 85%, B for scores between 60% and 75%, and C for scores below 60%. None came in the top two categories, a sad reflection of the decline in flying standards and poor infrastructure.

However, the actual training of pilots on simulators saw the entry of established conglomerates. The Adani Group acquired Flight Simulation Technique Centre (FSTC), India's largest pilot-training company, for Rs 820 crore. This gives Adani Defence Systems & Technologies Ltd. and Horizon Aero Solutions a combined 73% stake, with the remaining 27% retained by the original promoters. FSTC has 12 full-flight simulators, 17 training aircraft and operations flying schools across Gurugram, Hyderabad, Bhiwani, and Narnaul.

In addition, there are companies running smaller simulators which student pilots avail to fulfil certain mandatory hours last down by the DGCA. With India needing 30,000 pilots over the next 15-20 years due to domestic airlines placing some 1,500 orders for planes, the skilling of pilots will be a huge industry.

India's passenger traffic is also expected to grow exponentially. The International Air Transport Association forecast that the annual number of passengers travelling into, out of or within India by plane will reach 425mn by 2044, almost triple last year's figure. Also, the number of aircraft in India has reached over 800.

AIRPORT INFRASTRUCTURE

As for airports in India, the sky is the limit. The opening of two new airports—Navi Mumbai on December 25 and Noida soon—showcased India's talent to build infrastructure which is world-class. And yet, smaller cities need to be connected by air. With poor infrastructure and thin demand, there is a gap in connectivity. Of course, the UDAN scheme, launched in 2016, has given a fillip to regional aviation with 948 routes and 93 airports operationalised as on October 13, 2025, but not all airports are viable for airlines.

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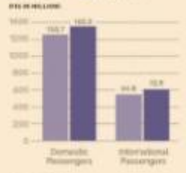
PASSENGER TRAFFIC

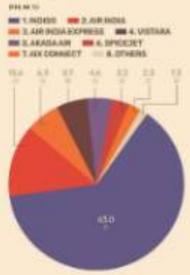
Air Passenger Traffic in India, both domestic and international, witnessed a positive growth in the year 2024-25 compared to the previous year



SOURCE: DGCA

DOMESTIC MARKET SHARE

Domestic market share in terms of passengers carried: 2024-25



FROM PAGE 1

An integral part of aviation is the Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul (MRO) market which is projected to be worth $4 billion by 2031, according to Nasla. India has some 147 MROs approved for Line/Base maintenance, but those offering heavy maintenance or engine overhauls are few. The main players are Air India Engineering Services, Indamer Aviation, GMR Aero Technic and Air Works, with Adani slated to enter this lucrative market.

The government, on its part, had announced in 2024 that a uniform rate of 5% IGST would apply to imports of parts components, testing equipment, kits and test kits of aircraft. Previously, varying GST rates of 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28% created challenges. This new duty simplifies the tax structure and fosters growth in the MRO sector. Also, customs duty on tools and test kits has been exempted and 100% Foreign Direct Investment has been permitted for MROs.

FOREIGN TIE-UPS

In addition, French aerospace major Safran set up a facility, Safran Aircraft Engine Services India at GMR Aerospace and Industrial Park near Hyderabad airport. This is India's first designated aircraft engine MRO centre set up by a global original equipment manufacturer and is spread over 45,000 sqm. It has been built with an investment of around Rs 1,200 crore and is expected to service up to 300 LEAP engines annually which power Airbus A320neo and Boeing 737 MAX planes.

These tie-ups are essential to reduce the MRO work that is going abroad nowadays. Pegged at nearly 85 per cent,

> EVEN AS INDIA IS POISED FOR A MAJOR AVIATION GROWTH, THIS HAS TO BE IN TANDEM WITH SAFETY, PASSENGER PROTECTION, STAFF CONCERN AND MORE IMPORTANTLY, RELIABILITY AND INTEGRITY

this has resulted in higher costs and longer turnover time for airlines in India.

So what does 2026 portend for Indian aviation? Let us start with the regulator, the DGCA, which is tasked with oversight of the sector. Staff shortages have plagued it for years and are slowly being filled up. Nasla informed the Rajya Sabha in December that 441 new posts had been created in the last three years in DGCA. A total of 1,630 posts were newly sanctioned, of which 836 have been filled.

In addition, there is a need for strict compliance by airlines to various regulations. So even as India is poised for a major aviation growth, this has to be in tandem with safety, passenger protection, staff concern and more importantly, reliability and integrity.

The writer is a senior journalist.

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A COMMERCIAL FEATURE 4

TURBOPROPS ARE THE FUTURE OF REGIONAL AVIATION: ATR

With the government planning to create hundreds of new short routes, the importance of ATRs will grow. India has around 70 ATR aircraft in operation and is the 2nd-largest market for this company, after Indonesia. In the next 20 years, India will require around 210 additional turboprops. This expansion is expected to unlock 900 new city pairs, 62% of which will involve Tier-II and Tier-III cities, and generate 90 million additional passengers annually, says Jean-Pierre Clercin, Head of APAC Region, ATR

JEAN-PIERRE CLERCIN
Head of APAC Region, ATR

ATR is the world's top aircraft manufacturer in regional aviation. What are your expansion plans for unexplored regions?
Asia-Pacific remains a fast-growing region, with India and Southeast Asia leading the way. In India, through the UDAN Regional Connectivity Scheme, the government plans to increase the number of airports to 230 by 2030 and create hundreds of new short routes. This is precisely where ATR aircraft deliver the best economics and performance. In Southeast Asia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and Malaysia are investing heavily in regional aviation to connect islands and underserved communities. These geographies are perfect for ATR turboprops which can operate on short runways and provide affordable, reliable connectivity. There is also strong potential in Africa where governments are investing in airport infrastructure and regional mobility.

Of your three variants–ATR 42-600, ATR 72-600 and ATR 72-600F (freighter)–which is the most popular?
The ATR 72-600 is our best-seller today, thanks to its ability to deliver the lowest seat-mile cost in the regional market and serve short-haul routes efficiently. Airlines value its combination of fuel efficiency, passenger comfort comparable to single-aisle jets and versatility for regional networks. The ATR 42-600 remains a vital part of our portfolio. Its unique advantage lies in serving very thin routes and challenging airfields. Both aircraft share 85% spare parts commonality, which reduces costs for airlines operating both types. This is a major reason why 25% of operators have incorporated both in their fleet.

The ATR 72-600F addresses the booming regional cargo market, particularly for e-commerce and pharma logistics. It offers purpose-built freighter capabilities, including a large cargo door and compatibility with standard ULDs, making it the ideal solution for short-haul cargo operations.

You claim that your planes burn 45% less fuel and emit 45% less CO2 than a similarly sized regional jet. Who are your competitors?
Turboprops always outperform jets on trips under 300nm. Our latest-generation PW127XT engines deliver significant benefits, including 20% lower maintenance costs, 40% extended time on wing, and at least 3% improved fuel efficiency compared to previous models. Consequently, our ATR 72-600 equipped with the XT series engine is a benchmark in fuel efficiency, burning 45% less fuel than similar size jets.

Today, ATR is the leading manufacturer producing regional turboprops in the 30-90 seat segment. While some competitors have exited the market, there is renewed interest in turboprops from old and new entrants. Turboprops are the future of regional aviation.

Also, in many regions, regional air travel faces competition from other modes of transport such as trains, cars and buses. Consequently, our strategies integrate the trends we observe in other industries and the travel patterns of millions. Regional aviation is the fastest and most cost-effective way to establish connectivity between cities with low passenger flows, requiring significantly less investment compared to rail and road infrastructure. Busier turboprop routes often link islands, where building tunnels or bridges would be expensive. For example, in India, the cost of high-speed rail infrastructure is estimated to be 35 times higher than building two regional airports; in Indonesia, it is 240 times higher, mainly due to its archipelagic geography.

In the age of jets, is a turboprop aircraft powered by a propulsion system popular?
Global demand for ATR turboprops is strong and growing. Recent orders from markets as diverse as Taiwan and Algeria, along with milestone deliveries in Canada, the world's leading turboprop market, highlight their relevance. Even in regions dominated by jets, such as the US, airlines are embracing turboprops for premium services. These developments reflect a clear trend: operators are prioritising efficient, sustainable connectivity. We've also seen strong momentum from lessors, with 13 aircraft ordered in 2024 and a highly active secondary market evidenced by 90 transactions. In 2024, 16 new operators joined the ATR family.

At the same time, more carriers are considering ATR as the ideal solution to replace regional jets, particularly in Europe and Japan. In the US, the potential is even greater with opportunities to replace ageing 50-seat jets and restore regional connectivity. In India, over 90% of regional trips are under 400 nautical miles where turboprops deliver the best economics and lowest emissions. Every major project for next-generation aircraft, whether open rotor concepts or urban air mobility, includes propeller technology.

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INDIA IS A STRATEGIC MARKET FOR ATR, WITH AROUND 70 ATRS IN OPERATION. IN THE NEXT 20 YEARS, IT WILL REQUIRE AROUND 210 ADDITIONAL TURBOPROPS.

RTX AND ITS ENDURING TIES WITH INDIA

The parent company of Pratt & Whitney, RTX, sees India as a strong aerospace supply chain partner and sources products and services worth over $500 million annually from it

From a modest fleet at independence to its status as a global aviation powerhouse in 2026, the ascent of India's aviation industry has been extraordinary. Today, as the world's third-largest domestic aviation market with over 800 commercial aircraft and a transformed Indian Air Force (IAF), India stands at the forefront of global aerospace. For decades, Pratt & Whitney has powered this journey, laying the foundation for a broader, strategic commitment by its parent company, RTX.

A LEGACY OF PROPULSION

Pratt & Whitney's commitment to India spans the entire history of the nation's civil aviation journey. It began with WASP engines powering the Dakota transports of 1947 and evolved through the jet age with Air India's Boeing 707s. When India later wanted to expand its transatlantic reach, Pratt & Whitney's JT9D engines powered the "Queen of the Skies" – the Boeing 747.

In the modern era, Pratt & Whitney catalyzed the democratization of air travel. The V2500 engines powered the early low-cost carrier boom, while the introduction of the Geared Turbofan (GTF) engine in 2018 revolutionized efficiency. By delivering industry-leading environmental benefits, Pratt & Whitney GTF™ engines have helped Indian carriers save over 1 billion liters of fuel.

P&W CATALYSED THE DEMOCRATISATION OF AIR TRAVEL. THE V2500 ENGINES POWERED THE LCC BOOM, WHILE THE GTF ENGINE REVOLUTIONISED EFFICIENCY.

Building on this success, Pratt & Whitney's GTF Advantage™ engine will further elevate Indian aviation by increasing the A320neo family's capabilities. The GTF Advantage delivers between 4% to 8% more takeoff thrust, enabling higher payloads and longer ranges to unlock new destinations for Indian airlines. The engine is exceptionally durable; it features increased airflow in the core to lower operating temperatures and a state-of-the-art hot section to increase time on wing. Crucially, certain technological advances found in the GTF Advantage can be incorporated into existing GTF engines during maintenance.

BEYOND COMMERCIAL AVIATION

Pratt & Whitney also remains a pillar of national defense and regional connectivity. The company's turboprops drive regional connectivity, linking over 150 airports. Simultaneously, the IAF relies on Pratt & Whitney to power its critical air assets, including the C-17 Globemaster III with the F117 engine, the PC-7 trainers with the PT6A engine, and the incoming fleet of 56 C295 aircraft with PW127G turboprop engines.

SCALING TO CHANNELISE POTENTIAL

With approximately 600 aircraft in India currently powered by Pratt & Whitney, the focus has shifted toward deep localization. RTX views India as a strong aerospace supply chain partner, currently sourcing products and services worth over $500 million annually from the country. Pratt & Whitney constitutes a growing portion of this ecosystem; while its current annual spend is approximately $120 million, the figure is expected to grow to $150 million by 2030.

This ambition seamlessly integrates with RTX's broader strategy. As one of the largest multinational aerospace companies in the country, RTX is leveraging its nearly 7,000-strong workforce to forge a deeper partnership with India.

RTX: ENGINEERING THE FUTURE OF AEROSPACE

RTX's commitment extends beyond engines to advanced infrastructure and high-end engineering. The group's presence is ubiquitous, from airport solutions to critical systems on the Tejas LCA Mk1, C-130J Super Hercules, and AH-64 Apache.

The centerpiece of this growth is the RTX Global Engineering and Technology Centre (GETC) and the India Operations Center (IOC) in Bengaluru. The GETC employs 4,000 engineers focused on core engineering and AI/ML applications. Meanwhile, the 26-acre IOC is a hub for advanced manufacturing. By 2026, this facility will host 1,700 employees and produce critical components such as avionics and sensors.

Having invested over $240 million in manufacturing and R&D capability, RTX is empowering the talent and technology that will define India's aerospace future for decades to come.

FROM PAGE 3

How many ATRs fly in India?
India is already a strategic market for ATR, with around 70 ATRs currently in operation. This represents approximately 5% of the global ATR fleet, which totals about 1,300 aircraft. India is the 2nd largest market for ATRs (after Indonesia). In the next 20 years, India will require around 210 additional turboprops. This infrastructure expansion is expected to unlock 900 new city pairs, 62% of which will involve Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities, and generate 90 million additional passengers annually. Nearly 35 million of them will travel on regional routes under 400 nautical miles.

Are ATRs using biofuels and synthetic aviation fuels?
ATR aircraft are certified to operate with up to 50% SAF blends today, and we performed the world's first commercial flight powered by 100% SAF in both engines in 2022. Today, all production test flights use SAF blends, and we aim for full 100% SAF capability by the second half of this decade. To accelerate adoption, ATR is partnering with AIOBA Energy, an SAF aggregator, to improve accessibility for regional airlines.

ATR is also leading two major R&D projects under the European Union Clean Aviation programme.

ATR HIGHLINE IS OUR PREMIUM CABIN CONCEPT AND OFFERS CONFIGURATIONS FROM PREMIUM SEATING TO FULL ALL-BUSINESS CLASS LAYOUTS, WIDER SEATS, BUSINESS-CLASS LEGROOM, SPACIOUS INTERIORS, HIGH-SPEED INTERNET AND COMFORT LEVELS EQUIVALENT TO LARGE BUSINESS JETS.

HERACLES and DEMETRA aim to integrate hybrid-electric technology into regional aircraft, and through these projects we will fly a hybrid-electric ATR 72-600 test bed before 2030. This will help inform the ongoing feasibility study for our next-generation aircraft (ATR EVO), to enter the market in the mid-2030s. This concept will combine ultra-efficient engines, eco-designed systems and 100% SAF compatibility.

What is the ATR Highline collection?
ATR HighLine is our premium cabin concept and was created in response to a growing demand for exclusivity and differentiation on short-haul routes. The collection offers a range of configurations ranging from premium seating to full All-Business Class layouts, featuring wider seats, business-class legroom, modern and spacious interiors, high-speed internet connectivity, power outlets and comfort levels equivalent to large business jets. Customers like Bonjaya Air and Air Tahiti have already adopted HighLine for exclusive services.

FROM PAGE 3

Incidentally, FSTC operates 11 full-flight simulators and 17 training aircraft, allowing for all types of pilot training, be it type ratings, recurrent training or specialised skill programmes.

CAE, on the other hand, is a Montreal-based technology company focused on training, simulation and critical operations solutions to enhance safety in aviation. In a joint venture with InterGlobe Enterprises, it decided to start six full flight simulators in Mumbai. CAE already operates three commercial aviation training centres in Greater Noida, Gurugram and Bengaluru, with a capacity to operate up to 23 full-flight simulators.

HUGE REQUIREMENT

According to CAE's 2025 Aviation Talent Forecast, some 98,000 pilots will be required in the Asia Pacific region by 2034. In India, over 60% of type rate training (for Airbus or Boeing planes) is done abroad due to a lack of adequate training infrastructure here. So there is a lot of potential for simulator training, especially for Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 planes, the workhorses of Indian aviation.

While the sims operated by FSTC and CAE cost billions of dollars and completely mimic the cockpits of Airbus and Boeing planes, there is also a growing number of small companies which operate fixed simulators. These mimic a plane's cockpit, but they are fixed to the ground and do not move.

One such company is Take Off Academy in Delhi's Dwarka, a premier aviation training institution with a state-of-the-art simulator which provides a highly realistic flying environment, enabling trainees to gain hands-on experience, sharpen decision-making skills and build confidence. The sim is used for initial training of students for Commercial Pilots License (CPL).

"In our simulator, the trainees can fly to any airport, do day and night flying or fly in low visibility. These are all fixed-based flight training devices and are unlike the big simulators used for training pilots which move and rotate."

CAPT LAKSH KUMAR, an instructor at Take Off Academy

It has a simulator (FNPT-1, Fixed Base) which can be used for three types of aircraft – single engine Cessna 172, and multi-engine Piper Seneca and Super King Air B200. It was bought some five years back from Elite Company, Switzerland, and together with committed instructors, the company trains close to 150 students annually.

Capt Laksh Kumar, an instructor at Take Off Academy, said, "This simulator can be used for three types of aircraft and by just re-configuring and changing the settings, it can be used for training. The trainees can fly to any airport, do day and night flying or fly in low visibility. These are all fixed-based flight training devices and are unlike the big simulators used for training pilots which move and rotate."

Instructors at Take Off Academy are CPL holders with instrument ratings and most are awaiting airline jobs. However, the credibility of any simulator company rests on the technical finesse and commitment of its instructors and Take Off Academy seems to have cracked the code in that respect. Their simulator is DGCA-certified and therefore, students can log in flying hours, a necessity for obtaining a CPL. In addition, Take Off Academy also trains and tests pilots in English Language Proficiency (ELP), a mandatory certification that aviators need.

INTEGRITY OF TRAINING

Some flying schools and individuals also have computer systems which mimic simulators. Student pilots must remain aware of what type of simulator a company has so that it is sync with the requirement they need.

It was in October 2025 that the DGCA imposed a fine of ₹40 lakh on IndiGo Airlines after it was found that it had used unqualified simulators for pilot training at airports classified as Category C, those include challenging locations such as Leh, Kozhikode and Kathmandu. Some 1,700 IndiGo pilots had undergone this simulator training in centres in Chennai, Delhi, Bengaluru and Hyderabad, as well as in Greater Noida and Gurugram. Therefore, the integrity of pilot training programmes cannot be over emphasised and regular audits and surprise inspections of simulators is a must to ensure safety in Indian aviation.

So what is the future of the simulator market? The integration of advanced technologies such as Augmented Reality (AR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to enhance pilot training will become a reality. CAE has even installed an in-house research and development department that leverages technologies to enhance flight simulation.

According to Persistence Market Research Company, cloud-based simulation platforms too will be the order of the day. These include browser-based or downloadable training modules, cloud-hosted full cockpit environments, and remote instructor access. The increasing adoption of cloud-based platforms due to their lower cost, easy accessibility, faster adoption and ease integration of AI is likely to present a considerable growth opportunity.

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Simulators: Workhorses of the Aviation Sector

India's expanding aviation scene will see the need for more flight sims and even small companies are seeing an opportunity here

BY **SHOBHA JOHN**

The galloping Indian aviation market has seen a growing demand for simulators. With airlines expanding and needing more pilots, their training on simulators, or sims, will also burgeon.

Simulators are completely identical to the cockpit of an actual plane, including flight management systems, displays and avionics. They are used for initial, refresher, recurrent, transition, up-grade of pilot training.

SIM MARKET

Simulator technology advances, particularly in computer technology, during the last two decades have had a major impact on pilot training. According to Fortune Business Insights, known for its comprehensive market studies, the global flight simulator market in 2024 was $5.90 billion; in 2025, it was $6.21 billion and in 2032, the forecast is for $8.59 billion. That is a compound annual growth rate of 4.7% from 2025–2032.

North America dominates this market with a 35.76% share in 2024, with Full Flight Simulators (FFS) leading the pack. Simulators are of different sizes and ranges depending on their use. China, France and Spain too are good markets for flight sims.

However, the Asia Pacific region is projected to be the fastest-growing market in the coming years. A high demand for skilled pilots in India, China, Vietnam and Indonesia, rapid expansion of low-cost carriers and expanding fleet will fuel the demand for more simulators.

REALISTIC SCENARIO

Flight simulators too are varied. In some, there is integration of Mixed Reality (MR), Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR). These provide enhanced immersion and realism, which allows pilots to experience a simulated environment and various flight scenarios, leading to better pilot skills and decision-making. In the defence sector too, flight simulators play a vital role as they provide realistic combat training, replicating aircraft operations, weapon systems and tactical scenarios. They help to sharpen combat skills and precision targeting.

In India, the two major companies dealing with commercial flight simulator training and which have FFSs are Flight Simulation Technique Centre (FSTC) and CAE. FFSs too have different levels depending on their pitch, roll, heave and vibrations.

FSTC was founded in 2012 and is the largest Approved Training Organisation in India certified by both the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and European Union Aviation Safety (EASA). As it also has a flight school, students can do their entire training there, from a single-engine Cessna to an Airbus or Boeing. Last year, Adani Defence Systems & Technologies Ltd, in partnership with Prime Aero Services LLP, acquired a majority stake in FSTC for Rs 820 crore. This move integrates FSTC's flight training capabilities with Adani's existing MRO services to cater to both civil and defence sectors.

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TAKE OFF ACADEMY IN DELHI HAS A SIMULATOR FOR THREE TYPES OF AIRCRAFT AND WITH COMMITTED INSTRUCTORS, TRAINS CLOSE TO 150 STUDENTS ANNUALLY.

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This business plane is the best-handling Falcon and has the same engineering organisation and design philosophy as the Rafale, giving it more agility

DASSAULT'S 6X: THE BEST JET FOR A KISS LANDING

Falcon business jets are designed and produced in France side by side with Dassault's Rafale fighter jets, now a mainstay of the Indian Air Force. The latest Falcon, the 6X, is now entering its second year of service with more than 30 units delivered. It features the largest cabin cross-section in business aviation with already a strong reputation for comfort. The first 6X was delivered to an Indian customer this fall. And Dassault expects more to follow.

"It's important to understand the relationship between the Rafale and the 6X," said Dassault's Indian representative Aadil Goulamaly. "They come from the same engineering organization and under the skin, share the same design philosophy. Their systems are quite similar."

Nowhere is this truer than in the fly-by-wire flight controls which give fighters agile handling and convey many benefits for business jet owners as well.

SMOOTH AS SILK

Chief Test Pilot Bruno Ferry attests that the 6X is "simply the best handling Falcon yet; and Falcons have always been known for exceptional handling." The company's test pilots say it's hard not to make a "kiss landing", meaning it won't even clink the passengers' ice cubes when the wheels touch the runway.

But this is the least of the fly-by-wire system's benefits. Dassault was one of the first aircraft companies to introduce fly-by-wire (the company prefers the term "digital flight control system"). Leading aerospace publication FlightGlobal has noted that Dassault's fighter controls influenced the first airline fly-by-wire system, which was on the Airbus A320.

For passengers, there are a few things worth knowing about Dassault's fly-by-wire technology. It makes handling precise and easy. It's the same philosophy as in the Rafale. The basics of putting the airplane on the trajectory you want should be easy, so pilots keep the big picture in mind, whether in combat or on a murky night approach to Mumbai.

NO STALLING

Fly-by-wire offers full envelope protection, meaning pilots can't stall the airplane by flying too slowly or overspeed, and they can't exceed flight limits that would lead to structural damage. All very reassuring.

Also, because of the wing geometry with flaps and slats, Falcons, including the 6X, have low approach speeds. This means they can access shorter runways. Lastly, the wing is flexible, which naturally damps turbulence, but the flight controls also react to updrafts and downdrafts to help provide what Dassault says is the smoothest ride in business aviation.

The company's best seller in India is the 10-seat 2000-series jet, the latest version of which has 4,000 nautical miles range. But it's a big world out there and Dassault expects several customers to trade up to the 5,500 nm 6X. For context, that will take anyone from any point in India to London, where one can even land downtown at London City Airport with its short runway and steep approach.

SPACIOUS CABIN

As much as Dassault wants one to know about its military-inspired technology, the company is relentless in singing the praises of its 16-passenger cabin. "Because it is taller (six feet, six inches) and wider than any other purpose-built business jet (to go larger you would need a converted airliner), you can make a big crowd really comfortable on this plane. You literally have elbow room; and two passengers can pass each other in the aisle without rubbing bellies," noted Goulamaly. "They can also be productive throughout the flight, which is very important to the modern corporate user. Everyone can be on high-speed Internet, even video-conferencing with the home office."

He further noted that passengers emerge rested even after long flights. This is partly because of a low cabin altitude, about half what you would experience on an airliner, and because of the silence and lack of vibration in the cabin which is often a source of fatigue. Dassault has one of the most sophisticated "sound labs" in the industry to evaluate sound reducing materials.

"Here's a note I received from our new customer," Goulamaly said with pride. "This business tool allows me to rapidly reach my destination and arrive rested and able to make important decisions, even after a 10-hour flight," he read. "That's exactly what you want a business jet to do for you," said the representative.

DUE TO THE WING GEOMETRY WITH FLAPS AND SLATS, FALCONS, INCLUDING THE 6X, HAVE LOW APPROACH SPEEDS. THIS MEANS THEY CAN ACCESS SHORTER RUNWAYS AND THE RIDE IS SMOOTH.

Taking a LEAP of Faith

CFM's LEAP engines have powered the A320neos and the B737 MAXs and its technical innovations have improved fuel efficiency and lowered CO_2 emissions

What is the best-selling engine in commercial aviation? Some would say it is the LEAP engines used in single-aisle aircraft. It is used on both the Airbus A320neo (CFM LEAP-1B engines) and Boeing 737 MAX (CFM LEAP-1B) planes. The company producing these engines is CFM International, a 50/50 joint company between GE Aerospace and Safran Aircraft Engines.

For over 40 years, CFM International has invested in technologies that improved fuel efficiency, lowered CO2 and NOx emissions and reduced noise. For LEAP-1A engines, CFM has produced over 1,200 high-pressure turbine durability kits since certification in December 2024.

EUROPE MARKET

In fact, in 2025, it was reported that CFM engines had powered a majority of European commercial flights. Till the end of July 2025, there were almost 5.5 million flights by commercial operators in Europe. The top five engine types were CFM International CFM56 and Leap, IAE's V2500, the Pratt & Whitney PW1000G (GTF) and GE's CF34. The CFM56 engine had powered more than 40% of Europe's fleet.

Gaël Méheust, president and CEO of CFM International, reportedly said: "The LEAP engine family is maturing much faster than its predecessor. We are now refining the hardware to deliver more durability while reducing the maintenance burden for A320neo operators. As a result, they benefit not only from the exceptional efficiency, reliability, and utilization LEAP engines deliver, but also from more predictable operations and longer time on wing."

CFM also designed the RBS–Reverse Bleed System–an automated system that blows cooling air into the engine core after shutdown to prevent carbon buildup. This reduces maintenance, extends time on wing and improves operational efficiency for airlines. Other technical innovations include composite fan blades and ceramic matrix composites which help deliver an engine that's 15% more fuel efficient, with 15% lower carbon emissions than previous CFM56 engines.

CFM LEAP engines have already been delivered to more than 4,000 airlines. In addition, 480 narrow-body freighters are also powered by CFM56 engines. Also, over 60% of A321 freighters use CFM56 engines. With more than 40 licensed CFM56 MRO shops globally, reliability is a factor.

CFM AND INDIA

Meanwhile, in India, a state-of-the-art training facility, CFMAESSA in Hyderabad, provides quality engine maintenance training services and facilities for CFMI customers. CFMAESSA is set up in an area of 3,000 sqm with three classrooms and a workshop with dedicated engines for maintenance training.

In Turkey, Pegasus Airlines and CFM International signed an agreement for up to 300 LEAP-1B engines for its Boeing 737-10 fleet. The pact also covers spare engines and maintenance services. In fact, in July 2016, Pegasus was the first LEAP engine operator and the first commercial operation of these engines took place on a flight between Istanbul and Antalya.

Also last year, Avolon, a leading aircraft leasing company, ordered 100 CFM LEAP-1A engines to equip 50 new Airbus A320neo family aircraft. Avolon has a fleet of 99 A320neo family aircraft powered by LEAP-1A engines, with firm orders for an additional 163 LEAP-1A powered aircraft.

That is more power to CFM International.

CFM HAS ALSO DESIGNED THE REVERSE BLEED SYSTEM, AN AUTOMATED SYSTEM THAT BLOWS COOLING AIR INTO THE ENGINE CORE AFTER SHUTDOWN TO PREVENT CARBON BUILDUP. THIS REDUCES MAINTENANCE AND IMPROVES OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY FOR AIRLINES.

Corporate Communications Directorate

DAINIK JAGRAN DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

अब भारत में भी बनेंगे वाणिज्यिक विमान

- अदाणी समूह ने ब्राजील की विमान निर्माता एम्ब्रेयर के साथ किया रणनीतिक समझौता
- समझौते के तहत देश में 150 सीट तक के वाणिज्यिक विमानों का किया जाएगा निर्माण

नई दिल्ली, प्रेट्र: अदाणी समूह और ब्राजील की प्रमुख विमान निर्माता कंपनी एम्ब्रेयर ने एक रणनीतिक सहयोग की मंगलवार को घोषणा की। इसका मकसद भारत में एक क्षेत्रीय विमान मैन्यूफैक्चरिंग संयंत्र स्थापित करना है। एम्ब्रेयर 150 सीट तक के कामर्शियल विमान बनाती है। इस समझौते के तहत निवेश और प्रस्तावित मैन्यूफैक्चरिंग संयंत्र के स्थल की जानकारी नहीं दी गई है। भारत दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते नागर विमानन बाजारों में से एक है। यह साझेदारी छोटे व मझोले शहरों के लिए हवाई संपर्क को बेहतर बनाने में मदद करेगी।

अदाणी डिफेंस एंड एयरोस्पेस और एम्ब्रेयर के अधिकारियों ने राष्ट्रीय राजधानी में नागर विमानन मंत्रालय में मंगलवार को आयोजित एक समारोह में भारत में क्षेत्रीय परिवहन विमानों पर रणनीतिक सहयोग के लिए समझौता ज्ञापन (एमओयू) पर हस्ताक्षर किए। दोनों कंपनियां देश में क्षेत्रीय परिवहन विमानों के लिए एक 'फाइनल असेंबली लाइन' (एफएएल) भी स्थापित करेंगी। नागर विमानन सचिव समीर कुमार सिन्हा ने कहा कि यह सहयोग केवल क्षेत्रीय विमानों के संयोजन तक ही सीमित नहीं है। इसमें प्रगतिशील प्रौद्योगिकी हस्तांतरण, कौशल विकास, सुदृढ़ आपूर्ति श्रृंखला और भारत को क्षेत्रीय विमानों का एक विश्वसनीय विनिर्माण केंद्र बनाना भी शामिल है। इस साझेदारी के साथ, भारतीय विमानन क्षेत्र में पहले से ही मजबूत उपस्थिति रखने वाला अदाणी समूह, भारत में विमान विनिर्माण के क्षेत्र में कदम रख रहा है। 'अदाणी डिफेंस एंड एयरोस्पेस' के निदेशक जीत अदाणी ने जीत अदाणी ने कहा कि विनिर्माण सुविधा के लिए कुछ स्थलों की तलाश की जा रही है और अगले कुछ महीनों में इन्हें अंतिम रूप दिया जाएगा। एम्ब्रेयर के ई-जेट ने 2005 में भारत में परिचालन शुरू किया था। वर्तमान में इसके पास देश में करीब 50 विमान हैं जो भारतीय वायु सेना, सरकारी एजेंसियों, वाणिज्य विमान संचालकों और वाणिज्यिक विमानन कंपनी 'स्टार एयर' की सेवा में हैं। एम्ब्रेयर ने 21 जनवरी को प्रेस विज्ञप्ति में कहा था कि अगले 20 वर्ष में भारतीय बाजार को 80 से 146 सीट के कम से कम 500 विमान की आवश्यकता होने का अनुमान है।

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Gaining ground for newer skies

India has a rapidly growing civil aviation market that aims to build 350 airports by 2047, thanks to consistently supporting factors, including supporting government policies

Photo: iStock

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The civil aviation industry in India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing sectors of the economy, playing a vital role in connectivity, trade, and tourism. The sector comprises of scheduled air transport services (domestic and international airlines), non-scheduled services, as well as dedicated air cargo services for transporting goods and mail.

At present, India is said to be the third largest civil aviation market in the world. From 74 airports in 2014, the number of airports in India has grown to 164, with a further aim to reach 350 airports by 2047. This progress has been rapid and can be attributed to multiple factors, including the introduction of low-cost carriers, FDI in domestic airlines, great innovations and advanced technologies and government's focus on regional connectivity.

GROWTH FACTORS

The growth of the civil aviation industry can be attributed not only to the huge investment it enjoys, but also to various government initiatives that favours the sector. Besides, the quest for overall regional connectivity has motivated the government to add newer routes to existing airlines as well as helicopter operators with an aim to boost flight services to remote areas of the country, or the areas that were not connected with the air route, including the hills.

FLYERS SPOILT FOR CHOICE

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has granted permissions to new airlines to start flying, signalling a push to widen airline choice in a market. For flyers, this means more options in terms of routes, fare structures and services. With more carriers in the sky, passengers can expect airlines to rethink their pricing strategies and service offerings to attract frequent flyers. With more and newer fleets being added to the current airlines, the flyers would definitely be spoilt for choice in the days to come.

ENHANCED CONNECTIVITY

One of the core shifts set for this year is the expansion of regional connectivity. New airlines are not just flying the usual metro-to-metro routes, but aim to expand links between smaller cities and Tier-II and Tier-III towns, ensuring better and faster travel for people.

NEW AIRPORTS, NEW HOPE

The opening of new airports, in Mumbai and Noida, is expected to ease congestion at the existing airports and open up fresh routes and increased flight frequencies. Besides, with more airlines connecting smaller cities, the number of direct flight options from less-served regions will also grow.

With these and a lot more growth factors, the aviation landscape in India is definitely expected to soar to newer heights.

FACT FILE: AVIATION UPDATES

- India is currently the world's third-largest aviation market
- In 2026, India's aviation sector will new heights as Mumbai and Delhi's new secondary airports will ease congestion at primary hubs
- Passenger traffic (domestic + international) stood at 96.54 million during FY26 (April-July 2025), while freight traffic reached 1.2 MMT in the same period
- The industry is preparing for an era of digital transformation (Advanced Air Mobility) and sustainable solutions

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Adani, Embraer Tie Up to Build 1st Commercial Aircraft Factory in India

Global majors like Airbus and Boeing haven't shown interest in setting up assembly lines, instead focusing on local sourcing

Our Bureau

New Delhi: Adani Group has tied up with Brazilian aerospace major Embraer to build an assembly line for regional commercial aircraft in India.

While the final decision on setting up the facility will depend on getting a sizeable order from an airline, the partnership is the first concrete step towards India becoming self-reliant in aerospace manufacturing.

Despite being one of the major markets for aircraft manufacturers, Airbus and Boeing have not shown interest in setting up assembly lines in the country and instead concentrated on increasing sourcing from local players.

Embraer, the third-largest civilian aircraft manufacturer behind Boeing and Airbus, makes the Embraer Regional Jet and E-Jet families of narrow-body, short- to medium-range passenger aircraft. It also makes private jets, defence aircraft and agricultural planes.

"Together, we will establish a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India and a one-of-a-kind aviation ecosystem, a project that will redefine the future of aviation in our country," Adani Group director Jeet Adani told reporters here.

Embraer will look to produce smaller aircraft suited for the country's regional connectivity, said Arjan Meijer, president and chief executive of Embraer Commercial Aviation.

Earlier Meijer had told ET that his company was interested in setting up an assembly line provided it got a customer in the country.

Embraer's biggest plane, the E2, is smaller than the Boeing 737 and Airbus A320 but Meijer is of the view that this is an opportunity. That's because Indian carriers fly to many small, regional destinations and may find it difficult to fill an A320 or B737 to and from these airports, given that they seat 180 people and more. The E2 offers roughly 25% lower trip cost per seat than the bigger planes, according to Meijer.

"We see a big future in India and we believe stars are aligning for making in India," Meijer said.

Civil aviation secretary Samir Kumar Sinha said the collaboration is not just about assembling a regional aircraft but also about progressive technology transfer, skilling, having robust supply chain as well as making India a trusted manufacturing hub for regional aircraft.

The government has been pushing for increased regional connectivity through the UDAN Scheme. It has been subsidising ticket fares (including putting price caps to make it affordable) to push small-town connectivity.

Despite the push, viability remains a concern as several small carriers have struggled to remain solvent due to a dearth of funding and competition from big players.

Taking Up Vacant Space

ADANI- EMBRAER TIE UP

- **Partnership is** the first concrete step towards India becoming self-reliant in aerospace mfg
- **Embraer will** look to produce smaller aircraft suited for the country's regional connectivity
- **Embraer's biggest** plane, the E2, is smaller than Boeing 737 and Airbus A320
- **Indian carriers** fly to many small, regional destinations

E2 offers roughly 25% lower trip cost/seat than bigger planes

Global majors like Airbus and Boeing haven't shown interest in setting up assembly lines in India | These cos concentrate on increasing local sourcing

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INDIAN AVIATION: Elevating aerospace AMBITIONS

Roaring jet engines, gleaming metal and forward-looking ideas underscore how the nation's aviation ecosystem is shaping the next chapter of its skies

Wings India 2026 is set to open a window into what the next decade of Indian Aviation could look like, promising remarkable changes and tech advancements

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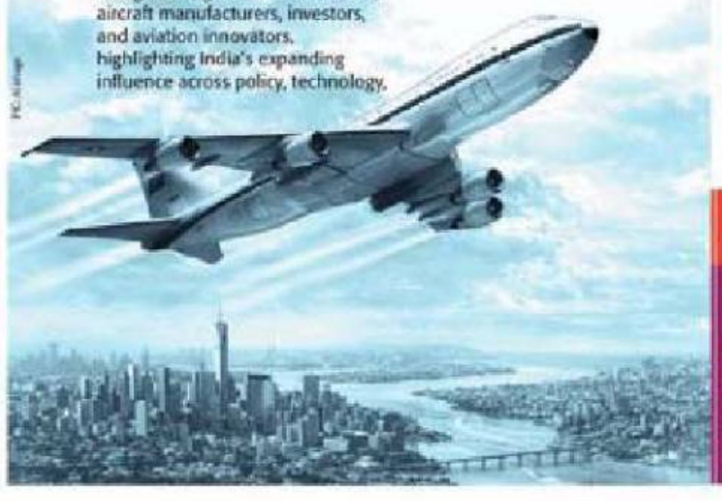
As Indian aviation enters a phase shaped by ambition as much as scale, it has emerged as one of the country's fastest-growing sectors. Rapid innovation and technological advancement are redefining capacity, capability, and global relevance.

This momentum will be on full display at Wings India 2026. Being held in Hyderabad, the event brings together leadership-level delegations, global airline leaders, aircraft manufacturers, investors, and aviation innovators, highlighting India's expanding influence across policy, technology, investment, partnerships, and long-term strategic alignment. Anchored in the theme 'Indian Aviation: Paving the Future – From Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation and Safety to Sustainability', Event India reflects a maturing aviation ecosystem where policy intent, industry capability, and long-term vision are increasingly converging.

Rather than fitting into a conventional industry format, the aviation sector today reflects a deeply interconnected ecosystem. Airlines, aircraft and engine manufacturers, airport developers, leasing firms, drone companies, startups, regulators, and policymakers increasingly operate within shared frameworks, where strategic dialogue runs alongside business engagement.

This convergence signals a shift toward resilience, integration, competitiveness, sustainability, and globally relevant growth pathways for India's aviation sector's future ecosystem.



CONNECTING PEOPLE AND IDEAS ACROSS

Strong international participation underscores India's relevance as both a market and a long-term strategic partner, while active involvement from Indian states highlights aviation's growing role as a catalyst for regional connectivity, development, and economic growth. The sector's visual and operational scale, from commercial jets and business aircraft to helicopters and specialised platforms, reinforces the depth of engagement with global aerospace players and the increasing sophistication of domestic operational and technical capabilities. At its core, the discourse shaping Indian aviation is forward-looking, spanning sustainability, airport infrastructure, multimodal integration, and the need to balance rapid growth with environmental accountability and rising passenger and cargo demand. Emerging technologies are increasingly redefining air transport. Conversations around drones, advanced air mobility, and digitalisation point to new possibilities across logistics, surveillance, urban mobility, and disaster response. Equally critical is the focus on skills, training, and human capital, with initiatives aimed at startups, students, and workforce development signalling an industry investing in its next generation. Structured engagement between industry and government continues to translate dialogue into collaboration, opening pathways to partnerships, technology transfers, and global supply chains.

Together, these trends signal a sector prioritising resilience, innovation, inclusive growth, infrastructure depth, workforce readiness, sustainability, competitiveness, strategic planning and long-term integration.

INNOVATION TAKES OFF

Beyond commerce and policy, the sector is also recognising excellence through awards and platforms that celebrate innovation, operational leadership, and long-term contribution. India's aviation market has seen significant growth in recent years , domestic passenger traffic reached over 154 lakh flyers in 2025, marking an 8.4 per cent YoY increase and making it one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets and driving India into the top five global aviation markets.

These developments underline an aviation sector transitioning from rapid expansion to measured, strategic growth. As capacity scales alongside innovation, policy alignment and sustained infrastructure investment, Indian aviation is reinforcing its role in regional connectivity and global networks. Increasing emphasis on sustainability, skills development, digitalisation and operational resilience reflects a maturing ecosystem.

With stronger domestic capabilities, deeper industry, government collaboration and rising international integration, the sector is moving toward long-term competitiveness and global relevance, positioning India as an influential participant in the evolving global aviation order, denoting a bright future.

Trends shaping future industry expansion

TECHNOLOGY: Advances in drones, digitalisation, advanced air mobility, and modern aircraft operations are enhancing efficiency, logistics, urban mobility, surveillance, and disaster response capabilities

ECOSYSTEM & SKILLS: Airlines, manufacturers, airport developers, startups, regulators, and policymakers operate within interconnected frameworks, with strong emphasis on skills

GLOBAL REACH: Infrastructure investment, policy alignment, and international collaboration strengthen resilience, competitiveness, and sustainability

MARKET GROWTH: Indian aviation is one of the fastest-growing and dynamic sectors, with domestic traffic at 154 lakh in 2025, up 8.4 per cent YoY

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National Pride: Progress in Indigenous Fighter Jets Boosts

Indigenous aircraft no longer serve as experimental platforms, but as serially produced frontline fighters beginning to reshape the Indian Air Force's combat spine

Namita S Kalia

In mid-2025, the government approved a landmark deal worth roughly ₹66,500 crore for 97 advanced fighter jets, a decision cleared by the Cabinet Committee

As more jets roll off production lines, engineers are setting sights on next-generation fighters, unmanned systems, and advanced avionics

The higher level of autonomy was reinforced by the first production series of LCA completing a successful maiden flight, a milestone report widely celebrated

It's that time of the year again when the tricolour will soar on Rajpath, this time under the shadow of a unmistakable aeronautical revolution. Indigenous aircraft have featured in Republic Day fly-pasts before, but never like this, no longer as experimental platforms or symbolic gestures of self-reliance, but as serially produced frontline fighters beginning to reshape the Indian Air Force's combat spine. It is a journey from aspiration to capability, from licence-produced fleets to self-reliant combat aircraft for sovereign skies.

At the heart of this shift is the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), a project that began as an audacious vision of home-grown aerospace prowess and has, in the last decade, matured into the backbone of India's indigenously produced fighter fleet. Today, as the government accelerates production and deployment, this programme has become both a symbol of national pride and a strategic necessity in an increasingly contested regional airspace.

To understand the scale of India's indigenous push, one must first look at the orders. In mid-2025, the government approved a landmark deal worth roughly ₹66,500 crore for 97 advanced fighter jets, a decision cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security and heralded as the largest single purchase of domestic combat aircraft in Indian history. This followed an earlier government procurement of 83 LCA Mark 1A jets valued at approximately ₹48,000 crore, orders from which deliveries have already begun materialising.

Combined with the initial fleet of 40 LCA Mark 1 aircraft, this brings the planned indigenous fighter fleet to a projected 220+ jets over the next

PHOTO: ISTOCK

decade, a quantum leap from the 1990s era when Indian defence aviation depended almost entirely on foreign hardware and licensed production. In the early days, the LCA project navigated technological headwinds common to complex aerospace development, from avionics integration to powerplants. But recent achievements underscore a maturation that once seemed improbable. The higher level of autonomy was reinforced by the first production series of LCA completing a successful maiden flight, a milestone report widely celebrated as a boost to domestic industrial confidence and innovation.

Republic Day 2026 comes at a moment of major change for the Indian Air Force. A couple of decades ago, such ambitions resided in defence white papers and speculative editorials. Today, they are tangible realities, metal and thrust, engineering and flight. The roar of indigenous fighters overhead on Republic Day is more than ceremonial; it is the sound of a nation advancing toward autonomous defence and global aerospace participation.

And in the eyes of veterans, engineers, and pilots who watch this journey from the beginning, it is a moment of vindicated faith in Indian ingenuity. The skies about Rajpath this year, speak not just of sovereign celebration, they echo a legacy taking flight. Beyond combat readiness, the programme has inspired research partnerships with universities and tech startups across the country, and public fascination with indigenous jets has surged, turning fly-pasts into celebrations of technological progress. The LCA story demonstrates that long-term investment, patience, and iterative problem-solving can yield transformative results. As more jets roll off production lines, engineers are setting sights on next-generation fighters, unmanned systems, and advanced avionics.

These developments underscore a broader ambition i.e., to see India not only participate in global aerospace but to help define its future.

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FINAL DECISION ON THE LOCATION EXPECTED IN COMING MONTHS

Adani, Embraer to set up aircraft assembly unit

- Regional aircraft manufacturing & connectivity push to be in focus

NITIN KUMAR
New Delhi, January 27

THE ADANI GROUP on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership with Brazilian aircraft manufacturer Embraer to set up a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India, marking a significant expansion of the Group's presence in the country's fast-growing aviation sector.

The collaboration, formalised through a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between Adani Defence & Aerospace and Embraer, will involve the establishment of a final assembly line for regional transport aircraft in India. The move aligns with the government's efforts to strengthen regional air connectivity and build domestic manufacturing capability under the Make in India and UDAN schemes.

With this partnership, the Adani Group deepens its aviation footprint beyond airport operations and services into aircraft manufacturing. The group already operates several airports across the country and has interests spanning defence manufacturing, aerospace components, maintenance, repair and overhaul, and aviation training.

Adani Defence & Aerospace Director Jeet Adani said the collaboration would lead to the setting up of a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India, reinforcing the group's long-term commitment to the aviation sector. He added that a couple of locations are currently being evaluated for the proposed facility, with a final decision expected in the coming months.

Embraer manufactures commercial aircraft with seating capacity of up to 150 passengers. The companies did not disclose investment size or timelines.

India is currently one of the world's fastest-growing civil aviation markets, with domestic airlines having placed orders for nearly 1,500 aircraft, largely with Boeing and Airbus. However, regional connectivity remains a key gap, particularly for tier-II and III cities, where smaller aircraft are better suited.

Embraer, whose E-Jets have been operating in India since 2005, currently has close to 50 aircraft in the country serving the Indian Air Force, government agencies, business jet operators and regional airline Star Air. The company has said India will require at least 500 aircraft in the 80–146 seat category over the next two decades.

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammohan Naidu said, "The need for regional transport aircraft has never been stronger. This collaboration can also support manufacturing for the wider South Asian market."

Embraer Commercial Aviation CEO Arjan Meijer said India was a pivotal market for the company and that the collaboration would combine Embraer's aerospace expertise with Adani's industrial capabilities.

JEET ADANI, DIRECTOR, ADANI DEFENCE & AEROSPACE

The collaboration would reinforce the group's long-term commitment to the aviation sector

K RAMMOHAN NAIDU, CIVIL AVIATION MINISTER

Need for regional transport aircraft has never been stronger...It can support manufacturing for the South Asian mkt

ARJAN MEIJER, CEO, EMBRAER COMMERCIAL AVIATION

The collaboration would combine Embraer's aerospace expertise with Adani's industrial capabilities

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FIRST CUSTOMISED 787-9 GETS READY FOR SERVICE FROM FEBRUARY 1

Air India hints at more orders for Boeing 787 Dreamliner

YARUQHULLAH KHAN
Hyderabad, January 27

AIR INDIA IS likely to place additional orders for Boeing 787 Dreamliners as it accelerates the overhaul of its long-haul fleet, with CEO Campbell Wilson signalling further expansion even as the first customised 787-9 prepares to enter commercial service from February 1.

Speaking to reporters in Hyderabad on Tuesday after a special flight operated with the new aircraft landed at Begumpet airport, Wilson said the airline's wide-body transformation would gather pace over the next few years. "In 2027 and 2028, you will see a huge transformation in the Air India long-haul wide-body fleet," he said, indicating that more Dreamliners could be added beyond the current order book.

Air India is set to deploy the Boeing 787-9 on the Mumbai–Frankfurt route from February 1, marking the first commercial operation of a custom-built aircraft inducted after the Tata Group took over the airline in January 2022. The aircraft, registered as VT-AWA, is also the first of the new-generation widebodies ordered as part of the airline's broader fleet renewal plan.

During the flight, Wilson said the carrier was expecting "at least 20 line-fit aircraft", adding that the phrasing was deliberate and hinted at further additions. Air India has already placed firm orders for 570 aircraft across narrow-body and wide-body categories, of which 27 have been delivered so far.

Calling the induction a milestone, Wilson said the arrival of the Boeing 787-9 marked the first production widebody from the 470-aircraft order signed three years ago and a key step in the airline's five-year Vihaan.AI transformation programme. Nearly 100 new and leased aircraft have joined the Air India group since privatisation, though this is the first aircraft fully designed to the airline's new product specifications.

For now, the aircraft will operate with certain restrictions as Air India awaits regulatory clearances from the US Federal Aviation Administration for the sliding privacy doors in business class and for 18 economy seats. Once approved, the configuration will become the standard across the airline's Dreamliner fleet.

Wilson said the retrofit of existing Boeing 787-8 aircraft was progressing, with the first upgraded aircraft expected to return to service in the coming weeks and the entire fleet to be completed by mid-2027.

The new cabin features upgraded interiors and mood lighting inspired by Indian wellness concepts. According to the airline, the lighting system includes 10 custom settings designed to align with passengers' circadian rhythms and improve comfort on long-haul flights.

Acknowledging delays in inducting the aircraft, Wilson said supply chain disruptions across the global aviation industry had pushed timelines back. "It has been a long wait, longer than we expected," he said, adding that deliveries are now beginning to stabilise as production ramps up.

(The Correspondent is in Hyderabad at the invitation of Air India)

TRANSFORMATION DRIVE

- Boeing 787-9 is set to be deployed on Mumbai–Frankfurt route from Feb 1, marking the first commercial operation of a custom-built aircraft inducted after the Tata Group takeover
- The carrier was expecting at least **20** line-fit aircraft, adding that the phrasing was deliberate and hinted at further additions
- Air India has already placed orders for **570** aircraft across categories
- Boeing 787-9's arrival marked 1st production widebody from the 470-aircraft order signed three years ago

CAMPBELL WILSON, CEO, AIR INDIA

In 2027 and 2028, you will see a huge transformation in the Air India long-haul wide-body fleet

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THE FINANCIAL EXPRESS DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

INDIAN AVIATION SHARPENS FOCUS ON DELIVERY

Wings India 2026 opens at a point when India's civil aviation story is beginning to change in tone. Growth remains central, but the conversation has moved beyond ambition to the harder question of delivery. The focus is now on how capacity is built, sustained and made reliable over time.

As one of the world's fastest-growing aviation markets, India faces the task of strengthening the aviation chain as a whole. That means looking beyond aircraft induction alone to the systems that support it, including manufacturing, deployment, maintenance, safety practices, workforce readiness and sustainability.

Positioned as Asia's largest civil aviation event, Wings India 2026 brings together aircraft manufacturers, engine makers, airlines, airport operators, cargo players and service providers at a moment when these connections matter more than ever. The event's theme, "Indian Aviation: Paving the Future, From Design to Deployment, Manufacturing to Maintenance, Inclusivity to Innovation and Safety to Sustainability," reflects a broader recalibration underway across the sector.

The programme makes that shift clear. While fleet expansion and rising passenger numbers still form the backdrop, the emphasis this year is on the enablers of growth. Airport development, leasing and financing structures, maintenance capacity, training pipelines and operational technologies feature prominently. As airlines expand networks beyond major hubs and induct aircraft at a pace, these elements are no longer peripheral.

A key feature of the opening day is the Global CEOs Forum, which places senior industry leadership at the centre of discussions on building resilient aviation ecosystems. For global aircraft and engine manufacturers, India is increasingly seen not only as a destination market, but also as a base for services, manufacturing and long-term support. With large numbers of aircraft expected to enter service in the coming years, downstream capabilities, such as maintenance infrastructure and skilled manpower, are becoming increasingly decisive.

Regional connectivity also features strongly at this edition of Wings India. The discussion has moved beyond announcing routes to the practicalities of operating them sustainably. Right-sized aircraft, airport preparedness and the role of regional aviation, helicopters, and business and general aviation are central to extending connectivity to tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

Sustainability is being approached pragmatically rather than rhetorically. The focus is on achievable steps, including improving fuel efficiency, introducing sustainable aviation fuel where viable, and aligning infrastructure expansion with safety and environmental standards.

As Wings India 2026 gets underway, the message is straightforward. Indian aviation has reached a stage where scale must now be matched by systems, skills and services if the next phase of growth is to endure.

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Why Aircraft Upkeep is Becoming India's Next Aviation Test

India's commercial aviation boom has created a less visible but increasingly important challenge: keeping aircraft flying efficiently once they enter service. As airline fleets expand rapidly, the spotlight is shifting from procurement to support, maintenance and manufacturing capability.

For years, a large share of India's aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul work has been carried out overseas, adding cost, downtime and operational dependency. With hundreds of new aircraft joining fleets over the next decade, that model is becoming harder to sustain. Turnaround time, engine availability, and parts logistics are now central to airline reliability, not back-end considerations.

Examples are beginning to accumulate. Tata Boeing Aerospace's fuselage manufacturing in Hyderabad, Airbus's partnerships with Indian suppliers, and the C295 transport aircraft programme, with high levels of local structural work, point to a shift from assembly to capability.

This has brought renewed focus on domestic MRO and aerospace manufacturing. Policy changes, including full foreign investment permission and tax rationalisation on aircraft components, have improved the economics of setting up operations in India. At the same time, global OEMs and engine makers are expanding partnerships with Indian firms, gradually embedding India into global supply chains.

Examples are beginning to accumulate. Tata Boeing Aerospace's fuselage manufacturing in Hyderabad, Airbus's partnerships with Indian suppliers, and the C295 transport aircraft programme, with high levels of local structural work, point to a shift from assembly to capability. In MRO, airlines and lessors are increasingly looking at domestic options for airframe and engine support to reduce aircraft downtime.

Challenges remain. Skilled manpower, engine shop depth and supplier consistency will determine how fast localisation can progress. Building capability is slower than ordering aircraft, and reliability will matter more than scale.

These issues sit squarely within the agenda at Wings India 2026. With airlines, OEMs, engine manufacturers and service providers engaging on the same platform, the conversation is moving from intent to execution. As India's aviation market grows, the ability to maintain and support aircraft locally will decide how resilient that growth proves to be.

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Interview

DAVID SALE
Managing Director, Asia Pacific, Bell.

How is Bell aligning with India's Atmanirbhar Bharat vision through localization and partnerships?

▶ For Textron and Bell, we maintain a substantial presence with over 130 employees across offices in New Delhi, Bangalore, and Mumbai, including more than 100 Bell engineers working on various programs in Bangalore. Our local sales, customer support engineer, aftermarket teams together with Jubilant Enpro, our Independent Representative in India, provide comprehensive support to our Indian customers, reinforcing our commitment to being a vested member of India's aviation community rather than just an equipment supplier.

What role does Bell see for itself as India expands helicopter operations?

▶ India represents what we consider to be one of our top markets in the Asia-Pacific region. The convergence of rapid urbanization, infrastructure development, and the government's supportive regulatory approach creates an ideal environment for helicopter operations expansion.

Emergency Medical Services stand out as a particularly significant opportunity. India's vast terrain, large population, and the critical need to provide medical care within the "golden hour" make HEMS essential. Our Bell 429 is specifically designed to address Indian air ambulance needs with its twin-engine reliability and spacious cabin providing unobstructed patient access. The Bell 412 platform also serves critical roles in search-and-rescue and firefighting operations.

Beyond EMS, we see substantial growth opportunities in corporate transport, tourism, offshore energy operations, and public safety. Our fleet of over 85 Bell helicopters currently operating across India—particularly the Bell 407 and Bell 412—demonstrates the trust Indian operators place in our platforms' performance and cost-effectiveness.

How is Bell preparing for India's emerging advanced air mobility and future heliport ecosystem?

▶ For Bell, the near-term priority remains supporting India's immediate helicopter infrastructure needs while maintaining technological readiness for advanced air mobility. Our decades of experience in vertical flight innovation—from pioneering commercial helicopters to developing tiltrotor aircraft, positions us to support India's aviation ecosystem as it evolves. We're committed to working with Indian regulators, operators, and infrastructure developers to ensure that when advanced air mobility arrives in India, we're ready to contribute our expertise and proven safety record to this next chapter of urban transportation.

AFTER SCALE, DELIVERY

India's Aviation Growth is Being Tested

India's civil aviation sector has grown big enough that the hard work is no longer about demand. It is about delivery. Passenger traffic has risen sharply over the past decade, airport numbers have climbed, and regional flying is now part of the mainstream travel map. Keeping that machine running smoothly is the next test.

India is the world's third-largest domestic aviation market. Annual passenger traffic has expanded from roughly 460 million in 2014 to close to 750 million in 2025. The number of operational airports has risen from 74 to around 160 over the same period. Regional connectivity has also widened through UDAN-linked routes and smaller aerodromes, bringing new cities into airline networks.

But scale brings friction. Airport capacity and punctuality are now daily operational issues, especially as traffic concentrates around major hubs. Airlines are also adding aircraft faster than the support stack can always keep pace. Maintenance readiness, spare parts availability and trained technicians matter as much as aircraft induction, because reliability is what passengers notice first.

Financing is another quiet pressure point. Leasing and aircraft funding structures have become central to how quickly carriers can add capacity without stretching balance sheets. That is why leasing and financing conversations are increasingly prominent in industry forums.

The workforce question is just as immediate. The sector's growth is pulling up demand for pilots, engineers, ground staff and cargo and logistics professionals. Training pipelines and retention will shape how smoothly fleets and airports can scale.

This is what Wings India 2026 is really capturing. The event still reflects expansion, but it also reflects the operational questions behind it. India's aviation story is moving from big numbers to daily performance, and the winners will be those who can make growth look routine.

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Air Cargo is Starting to Shape How Indian Airports Operate

For a long time, cargo sat quietly behind passenger flying in India. It paid the bills in the background while attention stayed on terminals and aircraft orders. That balance is shifting.

Cargo volumes have grown steadily, pushed by express deliveries, pharmaceuticals and time-sensitive manufacturing supply chains. At several airports, freight now determines how apron space, night slots and ground staff are deployed. Passenger traffic still dominates headlines, but cargo increasingly shapes daily operations.

Unlike passenger flying, cargo is unforgiving of delay. Dwell time matters. So does paperwork, handling speed and storage. Airports that move freight quickly win repeat business. Those that do not lose it just as fast. This has forced a rethink in how cargo areas are designed and managed.

Growth has also been uneven. A small number of airports handle most volumes, while others look for specialised roles rather than scale. For airlines, cargo offers flexibility, particularly when passenger demand softens or networks are disrupted.

These realities are reflected in the cargo-focused discussions at Wings India 2026. The debate is no longer about recognising cargo's importance. It is about running it better.

As India's aviation system grows more complex, cargo is no longer an add-on. It is shaping airport behaviour, operating hours and investment choices in ways that were rare even a decade ago.

The Right Choice for India

INDIA is one of the fastest-growing aviation sectors in the world. In a clear push toward the future, the country has announced ambitious plans to build 50 new airports before the end of this decade, fuelling demand for air travel and expanding connectivity.

This growth is prompting airlines to modernize their fleets, replacing older aircraft with new jets—such as the Embraer E2—which offer a compelling combination of outstanding performance, class-leading efficiency, and superior comfort.

Wings India

The E2, showcased at this year's Wings India— the country's premier aviation event—boasts seat costs comparable to larger narrow body aircraft, 12.5% better fuel efficiency than the closest competitor, and an elevated on board experience for passengers. Notably, the E2 features no middle seat in any class and overhead bins with 40% more space.

New Commitment

Underlining its long-term commitment to India, Embraer has recently established a wholly owned Indian subsidiary with a corporate office in AeroCity, New Delhi. This strategic move not only deepens Embraer's operational presence but also positions the company to better serve domestic airlines and build capacity in one of the world's most dynamic commercial aviation markets.

Helicopters Edge into the Commercial Mainstream

For years, helicopters in India have been associated mainly with offshore work, VIP travel or emergency response. That picture is slowly widening.

As aviation activity pushes into smaller cities and difficult terrain, helicopters are being reassessed as a commercial tool rather than a specialist add-on. Operators point to their ability to bypass runway constraints and deliver point-to-point access where fixed-wing aircraft cannot operate economically or at all.

The range of use-cases is expanding. Offshore energy remains a steady base, but charter services, tourism circuits and medical evacuation are drawing more attention. In some regions, helicopters are being considered to link remote destinations with nearby airports, cutting travel times that would otherwise stretch into hours.

What is holding the segment back is less about demand and more about execution. Commercial helicopter operations depend heavily on safety discipline, crew availability and basic infrastructure such as helipads and support facilities. Costs remain sensitive, and reliability matters as much as reach.

That is why the discussion around helicopters has shifted. Instead of asking where they can fly, the focus is now on how they can be operated consistently and safely at scale. These questions are reflected in the helicopter-focused sessions at Wings India 2026.

As India's civil aviation network becomes more layered, helicopters are beginning to find a clearer place within it. Not as a replacement for fixed-wing travel, but as a complementary option where speed and access outweigh volume.

UDAN Changed the Map, Now Airlines Must Make it Work

UDAN changed the map. Routes that once required a full day of travel now take an hour in the air, and smaller cities that used to sit outside airline planning have become part of the network. In that sense, the scheme has already done its most visible job.

What comes next is less visible and more difficult. Regional flying has to hold up when it is not being pushed by targets or headlines. On many routes, the numbers are tight. Frequency decisions matter. A flight that works twice a week may not work daily. Aircraft choice matters too, because the wrong capacity can punish both cost and yields.

That is why the conversation is shifting from opening routes to operating them well. Turboprops, smaller regional jets, and helicopters are not just connectivity tools. They are tools for matching demand to capacity. Reliability, turnaround time, and cost control become the story, not route counts.

Airports have their own homework. Regional airports cannot be run on metro assumptions. Charges, ground handling, and basic operational readiness decide whether a route stays or quietly disappears from schedules.

Wings India 2026 becomes a useful forum here. The industry is no longer debating whether regional connectivity is desirable. There is debate about what makes it durable. UDAN proved that regional aviation can be built. The next phase is about making it routine.

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Aircraft Leasing Moves to the Centre of India's Aviation Expansion

As Indian airlines add aircraft at an unprecedented pace, the question of how fleets are financed has become more visible. Aircraft leasing, once a back-end decision, is now shaping how quickly carriers can expand and how flexibly they can respond to market conditions.

Leasing allows airlines to induct aircraft without committing large upfront capital, helping balance growth ambitions with financial discipline. In a market where traffic continues to rise but operating costs remain sensitive, access to competitive leasing structures can influence everything from fleet mix to route planning.

India's airlines have traditionally relied on overseas leasing hubs, reflecting the global nature of aircraft finance. That model is beginning to evolve. Efforts to build a domestic leasing ecosystem, including regulatory and tax changes, are aimed at keeping more of the financing and legal processes closer to home. While the scale remains modest, the intent is to reduce friction and improve certainty for airlines operating in a high-growth environment.

For carriers, the issue is not simply cost. Lease terms affect maintenance planning, aircraft utilisation and long-term fleet flexibility. As fleets grow larger and more diverse, aligning financing with operational realities is becoming increasingly important.

As fleets grow larger and more diverse, aligning financing with operational realities is becoming increasingly important.

These themes are reflected in the aircraft leasing and financing discussions at Wings India 2026, where airlines, lessors and policymakers are examining how best practices can be adapted to India's market conditions. The conversation has moved beyond awareness to execution.

As India's aviation sector matures, leasing is no longer a background function. It is becoming a strategic lever that will help determine how smoothly the next phase of growth unfolds.

Women are Becoming Harder to Miss in India's Aviation Workforce

Spend time around Indian airports or airline operations today, and one change is easy to spot. There are more women in roles that were once rare sights on the flight deck, in operations rooms and on the technical side of the business.

India already has one of the highest proportions of women pilots in commercial aviation globally, a fact often noted by airlines and regulators alike. That visibility has started to spill into other parts of the system as well. Women are increasingly present in training, safety, ground operations and airport management roles, even if the numbers thin out at senior levels.

This has less to do with symbolism and more to do with supply. As fleets grow and operations stretch across more cities, airlines and service providers need a wider talent pool. Recruitment pipelines have expanded, training access has improved, and predictable rostering has made aviation careers more workable over time.

The harder part comes later. Retention, progression and experience-building take longer than recruitment drives. As competition for skilled personnel intensifies globally, keeping trained professionals in the system is becoming a practical concern.

That is why the conversation has shifted. At Wings India 2026, women in aviation are being discussed not as a side issue, but as part of how the industry plans to staff future growth. In a market scaling this quickly, participation is no longer just about representation. It is about keeping the system running.

Airlines are leveraging technology and operational efficiencies, such as AI-powered route optimisation, lightweight seating and carbon offesetting programmes, to lower emissions and promote sustainability.

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FREE PRESS JOURNAL MUMBAI 27 JANUARY 2026

Dreamliners have bright future in India: Boeing

PTI
NEW DELHI

US aircraft maker Boeing expects more orders for its Dreamliners in the Indian market, which is poised for substantial growth in the coming years, according to a senior company executive.

Amid the ongoing tariff issues between India and the US, Boeing India and South Asia President Salil Gupte emphasised on the two countries' goal for industrialisation of Indian aerospace and exuded confidence that the aircraft maker will be able to see through some of these short-term challenges.

In India, Boeing 787 planes, also known as Dreamliners, are operated by Air India. The airline's first custom-made Dreamliner post privatisation in January 2022 is set to commence commercial operations from February 1.

"B787 has an extremely bright future in India... we look forward to potentially more orders for the 787 in India coming," Gupte told PTI.

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GREATER KASHMIR SRINAGAR 27 JANUARY 2026

Beyond highways and flights

Kashmir's long wait for a direct rail line

Isolation

Aman Qayoom Wani
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Every winter, Kashmir confronts a familiar and deeply unsettling reality: a region of millions is rendered vulnerable by fragile and unreliable connectivity. A brief spell of snowfall, landslides, or reduced visibility is sufficient to shut down the Jammu–Srinagar National Highway and suspend air operations, leaving the Valley effectively cut off from the rest of the country. This recurring isolation is not an unforeseen disaster it is a predictable seasonal event. Yet, despite decades of discussion and repeated assurances, a permanent and dependable solution remains elusive.

The Jammu–Srinagar National Highway (NH-44), often described as Kashmir's lifeline, has instead become its most critical point of failure. A single road passing through treacherous terrain cannot be expected to bear the economic, medical, educational, and social needs of an entire region, particularly during harsh winters. Whenever the highway closes for days or weeks, the consequences are immediate and severe.

When road connectivity collapses, air travel is presented as the only alternative. In reality, it offers neither certainty nor equity. Flights to and from Srinagar are acutely weather-dependent and are frequently cancelled at short notice due to poor visibility or snowfall. Despite this unpredictability, airfares escalate sharply during road closures, creating an unchecked monopoly. Passengers are compelled to pay exorbitant prices, often without any assurance that the flight will actually operate. This exploitative pricing disproportionately affects students, patients, small traders, and middle-class families who have no viable alternative.

> Until Kashmir is connected by a dependable, year-round rail line, winter will continue to expose the gap between assurances of seamless connectivity and the lived reality of seasonal isolation.

Students are among the worst affected. Thousands pursue education across the country and must travel during examination periods or academic sessions. Road closures and unaffordable air tickets force many to miss examinations, entrance tests, interviews, and admission deadlines losses that cannot be compensated later. These disruptions undermine merit, waste years of effort, and narrow future opportunities for an entire generation.

The humanitarian impact is even more alarming in the case of patients. Kashmir lacks adequate tertiary healthcare facilities for several specialized treatments, forcing patients to seek care outside the region. During prolonged road closures, patients remain stranded, medicines run short, and referrals become impossible. Families travelling for medical emergencies face unbearable uncertainty, financial distress, and at times irreversible loss. A healthcare system cannot function when access itself is seasonal and unreliable.

The economic cost of isolation is equally devastating. Kashmir's horticulture sector, particularly apples and other perishable produce, depends heavily on timely transportation to national markets. Road closures delay consignments, degrade quality, increase wastage, and reduce returns for farmers already operating under challenging conditions. Businesses suffer losses, supply chains collapse, and tourism another key economic pillar takes a direct hit due to cancellations and negative perceptions of inaccessibility.

At the heart of this recurring crisis lies an unfinished national project - direct Delhi–Srinagar rail link. The Udhampur–Srinagar–Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) has been under execution for decades and represents one of the most ambitious infrastructure projects in the country. While engineering milestones are celebrated and trial runs announced, the core issue remains unresolved Kashmir still lacks a regular, all-weather, long-distance train connecting it directly to the rest of India.

A reliable rail connection would fundamentally transform Kashmir's logistical, economic, and social landscape. Railways offer stability during adverse weather, affordability for ordinary citizens, and the capacity to transport essential goods, fuel, medicines, and agricultural produce at scale. More importantly, predictable connectivity would restore confidence, dignity, and a sense of normalcy to daily life.

The question, therefore, is no longer whether a direct Delhi–Srinagar train is feasible it is whether the political will exists to prioritise its timely and full operationalization. Snowfall is not an unexpected calamity; it is a certainty. Governance and infrastructure planning must reflect this reality.

Until Kashmir is connected by a dependable, year-round rail lifeline, winter will continue to expose the gap between assurances of seamless connectivity and the lived reality of seasonal isolation. For the people of Kashmir, a direct rail link is not a luxury or a symbolic achievement it is a long-standing necessity, delayed for far too long.

Aman Qayoom Wani, Advocate Supreme Court of India

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HINDUSTAN DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

परिवहन विमानों के लिए सहयोग करेंगे

नई दिल्ली। अदाणी समूह और ब्राजील की एम्ब्रेयर ने एक रणनीतिक सहयोग की मंगलवार को घोषणा की। भारत दुनिया के सबसे तेजी से बढ़ते नागर विमानन बाजारों में से एक है। यह साझेदारी छोटे व मझोले शहरों के लिए हवाई संपर्क को बेहतर बनाने में मदद करेगी।

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THE HINDU DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

AI unveils interiors of Boeing 787-9 aircraft

Murali N. Krishnaswamy
HYDERABAD

Air India unveiled the interiors of its first line-fit Boeing 787-9 (VT-AWA) on Tuesday. The day also marks exactly four years since the Tata Group officially reacquired the airline from the Government of India, in 2022.

The aircraft, which was flown from Delhi to Begumpet, will be a part of the aircraft display at Wings India 2026 here.

Speaking to the media, the airline's CEO, Campbell Wilson, said that the new aircraft is a part of the 470-aircraft order that was signed three years ago. The new cabin interiors will now be standard across the airline's 787 fleet. This includes the airline's legacy fleet of Boeing 787-8 aircraft which were acquired when Air India was a government enterprise.


Campbell Wilson

(The writer is at Wings India 2026 at the invitation of Air India)

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MINT DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Adani to make aircraft in India with Brazil's Embraer

The deal with world's third-largest plane manufacturer marks Adani's entry into the sector

Abhishek Law & Swastika Das Sharma
NEW DELHI

Gautam Adani-led Adani Group has signed a partnership with Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer S.A. to set up a small-jet manufacturing facility in India.

Adani Defence and Aerospace, an Adani Enterprise Ltd subsidiary, will zero in on the project site—to be Embraer's first production facility in Asia—"over the next couple of months", the company's director Jeet Adani said on Tuesday.

"Together, we will establish a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India and a one-of-a-kind aviation ecosystem, a project that will redefine the future of aviation in our country," Adani said announcing the deal, which marks the group's entry into aircraft manufacturing. "We have some sites in mind and are working on them. In the next couple of months, we will come back with the details, including investment and aircraft type to be manufactured," Adani said.

Embraer, world's third-largest civilian aircraft manufacturer after The Boeing Co. and Airbus S.E., manufactures the Embraer Regional Jet and E-Jet families of narrow-body, short- to medium-range passenger aircraft. It also makes private jets, defence aircraft, and agricultural planes.

It would be the first of the three to have a final-line assembly (FLA)—manufacturing facility where aircraft are assembled—in India. Boeing and Airbus source components from Indian firms but do not have assembly units here.

"This partnership is more than just a business agreement. It is a vision taking flight. It represents India's determination to build world-class aviation capabilities on our own soil, aligned with the national mission of Atmanirbhar Bharat," Adani said.

Embraer's FLA will produce smaller aircraft suited for regional connectivity. REUTERS

He said talks were underway with customers for orders. None of the major domestic carriers—IndiGo, Air India, Spicejet Ltd and Akasa Air—operate Embraer jets. Regional airline Star Air is the only carrier with an Embraer fleet of 8 jets. It plans to order more Embraer jets in the coming days.

Embraer's FLA will produce smaller aircraft suited for the country's regional connectivity. Arjan Meijer, president and chief executive, Embraer Commercial Aviation, told *Mint*. "India is a pivotal market for Embraer, and this partnership combines our aerospace expertise with Adani's strong industrial capabilities and commitment to indigenization," Meijer said.

"Together, we will evaluate the most viable, advanced, and efficient solutions in support of India's RTA (regional transport aircraft) ambitions, and their potential for implementation," he added.

Earlier, the Brazilian aircraft maker had set up a subsidiary in the country for sourcing components and parts for its aircraft. It also tied up with the Mahindra Group in October 2025 to make the C-390 medium transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

The type of aircraft to be manufactured in the latest facility is yet to be decided. It could be either the E-175 (a 76-seater regional jet) or the Embraer E195-E2, the largest and most advanced variant in the E-Jet E2 family, having up to 146 seats in a 2+2 configuration. "It would be one of these two, perhaps. We are yet to decide on that," Meijer said, adding that these are the two most popular models under discussion and suited for India's regional connectivity plans.

Both these would be small- to medium-sized jets, a senior civil aviation ministry official said on the condition of anonymity. "We need to build a supply line. We need it here in India; we can do that. Initially, the components will be coming from Brazil. But we will build the supply line here too."

"This collaboration reflects the evolving character of India's defence and aerospace engagement with the world, one which is increasingly based on partnership, capability building, and long-term strategic alignment," said defence secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, who was at the event to mark the signing of a memorandum of understanding between Adani and Embraer.

"By bringing this capability to India, we are moving decisively up the value chain from being primarily a market for aircraft to becoming a participant in their production," Singh said.

Experts said it could take at least five to seven years for the first aircraft from the facility to actually take off.

abhishek.law@livemint.com

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

TAKING OFF

ADANI Defence and Aerospace, an Adani Enterprise subsidiary, will zero in on the project site

THIS will be Brazilian aircraft maker Embraer's first production facility in Asia

EMBRAER would be the first of the top three aircraft makers to have a final-line assembly in India

JEET Adani said discussions were underway with customers for orders

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THE MORNING STANDARD DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Air India flies plush, exclusively built Boeing 787 from Delhi to Hyderabad

S LALITHA @ New Delhi

OVER 75 mediapersons and Air India staff were flown in from New Delhi's Terminal 3 to Begumpet airport for a firsthand experience of the first line fit (made only for Air India) Boeing 787-9 aircraft. Bearing registration mark VT-AWA, the new aircraft features completely new cabin interiors which have been installed directly on Boeing's production line, said an official release. The delivery was taken on January 11 after it arrived from Boeing's factory at Everett in Washington.

Headphone pairing capability via Bluetooth available in seats across all cabins and wireless charging pads are key features. Business Class suites have unique onboard mood lighting inspired by ancient Indian wellness traditions.

Air India's new Boeing 787-9 aircraft comes with 296 seats distributed between three cabin classes: Business, Premium Economy, and Economy. All seats are equipped with state-of-the-art inflight entertainment (IFE) system.

"The Business Class cabin consists of 30 luxurious suites in a 1-2-1 configuration, offering direct aisle access to every guest, " it said. Each suite, featuring a sliding privacy door, reclines into a fully flat bed of 79 inches in length. The suite also features an attractive cubby area that offers storage space with soft lighting inside, a vanity mirror and a headphone hook, the release added.

Premium Economy features 28 seats with generous leg room and designed for enhanced long-haul comfort.

Billing 2026 as a year of transformation for Air India, the CEO and MD of Air India Campbell Wilson said Air India will begin operating at least 20 of its world class widebody aircraft this year from its fleet to Europe, East Asia and Australia. Briefing the media on Tuesday evening after the conclusion of a special trip from Delhi to Begumpet of the first Dreamliner aircraft with custom-made interiors made for the airline, Wilson said the Boeing 787-9 will launch commercial operations on the Mumbai-Frankfurt route from February 1.

It will be operated five days a week, an executive informed later. "Mumbai-Frankfurt is a popular route for business and visiting friends and relatives. It also contributes a lot of connecting passengers beyond Frankfurt to North America and Europe and behind Delhi to South East Asia and Australasia," he said.

The writer was part of a sponsored tour on Boeing 787-9.

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THE MORNING STANDARD DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Adani ties up with Embraer to manufacture aircraft

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

AIRCRAFT manufacturer Embraer and Adani Defence & Aerospace have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore opportunities in aircraft manufacturing, supply chain, aftermarket services and pilot training. The partnership will establish an assembly line, followed by a phased increase in indigenisation to advance India's Regional Transport Aircraft (RTA) programme.

The pact between the two parties was signed at an event in New Delhi attended by Union Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu. The final terms and conditions, and the nature of the partnership are yet to be announced. Details about the investments and the location of the proposed facility were also not disclosed.

With the partnership, Adani Group, one of the leading players in the aviation space, will start manufacturing aircraft in India. Besides two airports in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Adani Group operates six other airports at Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram, Jaipur and Mangaluru. Jeet Adani, director, Adani Defence & Aerospace, said a couple of sites are being looked at for the manufacturing facility and things would be finalised in the next couple of months.

Aviation minister Naidu said this is the time to be in India as he highlighted the manufacturing and growth potential of the country. He added that the need for regional transport aircraft has never been strong before and it will help in providing solutions for many problems. The collaboration can also have manufacturing aircraft for the larger South Asian market.

Arjan Meijer, president and CEO, Embraer Commercial Aviation said, "India is a pivotal market for Embraer, and this partnership combines our aerospace expertise with Adani's strong industrial capabilities and commitment to indigenisation."

To establish assembly line, expand indigenisation

The partnership will establish an assembly line, followed by a phased increase in indigenisation to advance India's Regional Transport Aircraft programme. The pact was signed at an event in New Delhi attended by Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu.

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NAVBHARAT TIMES DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

फ्लाइट में आई खराबी, तो पैसेंजर्स को घंटों शटल में रखा, एयरलाइन पर जुर्माना

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■ **नई दिल्ली:** राजधानी के एक कंस्यूमर कोर्ट ने एलायंस एयर को एक बुजुर्ग महिला यात्री को घंटों तक शटल में बंद रखने और इस दौरान रिफ्रेशमेंट व पब्लिक सुविधाओं का यूज न करने देने का दोषी ठहराया है। अदालत ने इसे सेवा में गंभीर कमी मानते हुए एयरलाइन को एक लाख रुपये का मुआवजा देने का निर्देश दिया है। साउथ दिल्ली के डिस्ट्रिक्ट कंस्यूमर डिस्प्यूट रिड्रेसल कमिशन में प्रेजिडेंट मोनिका ए श्रीवास्तव और मेंबर किरण कौशल की बेंच ने शशि सिंघाई की शिकायत को मंजूर किया। आयोग ने 23 दिसंबर 2025 को दिए आदेश में कहा कि रिकॉर्ड में मौजूद सबूतों और एयरलाइन के जवाब से यह भी साफ है कि शिकायतकर्ता और अन्य यात्रियों को दो घंटे से ज्यादा समय तक शटल में इंतजार कराया गया।

AI Image

- एलायंस एयर को यात्री को एक लाख रुपये का जुर्माना देने का निर्देश
- रिफ्रेशमेंट और वॉशरूम का एक्सेस न देने का भी था आरोप

आयोग ने कहा कि अगर यह मान भी लिया जाए कि विमान में इंजिनियरिंग से जुड़ी कोई दिक्कत थी, तब भी यात्रियों को एयरपोर्ट पर ठहराया जा सकता था और उन्हें वॉशरूम जैसी बेसिक सुविधाएं दी जा सकती थीं। इसके बजाय यात्रियों को शटल में बंद रखा गया और उन्हें रिफ्रेशमेंट या पब्लिक सुविधाओं का यूज करने की इजाजत नहीं दी गई। इन फैक्ट्स को देखते हुए डिस्ट्रिक्ट कंस्यूमर कमिशन ने माना कि एलायंस एयर ने शिकायतकर्ता को सर्विस देने में गंभीर कमी की है। आयोग ने यह भी कहा कि शिकायतकर्ता सीनियर सिटीजन है और उन्हें पूरा दिन बिना खाना खाए बिताना पड़ा, जबकि उन्होंने फ्लाइट के लिए खाना बुक किया था।

छतरपुर की रहने वाली सीनियर सिटीजन ने शिकायत में बताया कि उन्होंने एलायंस एयर की नई दिल्ली से बिलासपुर, छत्तीसगढ़ जाने वाली फ्लाइट में खाने के साथ टिकट बुक किया था। फ्लाइट को 18 दिसंबर 2021 जब यह फ्लाइट में बैठी थीं, तभी यात्रियों को बताया गया कि प्लेन में टेक्निकल खराबी है और फ्लाइट तय समय पर उड़ान नहीं भर पाएगी। इसके बाद शिकायतकर्ता समेत सभी यात्रियों को फ्लाइट से उतार दिया गया और उन्हें दो घंटे से ज्यादा समय तक कैरियर बस या एयरपोर्ट शटल में बिना पानी और पब्लिक सुविधा के इंतजार कराया गया। शिकायतकर्ता ने बताया कि वह सीनियर सिटीजन होने के साथ डायबिटिक भी हैं, जिसकी वजह से उन्हें काफी परेशानी हुई।

एलायंस एयर पहले एयर इंडिया का हिस्सा थी। भारत सरकार द्वारा एयर इंडिया के विनिवेश के बाद यह एक पब्लिक सेक्टर अंडरटेकिंग के तौर पर काम कर रही है। एयरलाइन ने अदालत में दावा किया कि कैरिज कॉन्ट्रैक्ट के तहत उसने अपनी जिम्मेदारी पूरी की है, इसलिए सेवा में कमी या मानसिक उत्पीड़न का कोई सवाल नहीं उठता।

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THE TRIBUNE DELHI 28 JANUARY 2026

Adani, Brazilian firm to set up aircraft-producing unit in India

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 27

Adani Group and Brazilian major Embraer on Tuesday announced a strategic collaboration that aims to set up a regional aircraft manufacturing facility in India, a significant boost for the country's indigenous manufacturing capabilities.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets and the partnership will look to help enhance air connectivity to Tier 2 and 3 cities.

Adani Group and Embraer officials exchange the MoU. PTI

Officials of Adani Defence & Aerospace and Embraer inked the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the strategic collaboration on regional transport aircraft in India at a function at the civil aviation ministry in the national capital on Tuesday.

Both companies will also set up a Final Assembly Line (FAL) for the regional aircraft of Embraer in the country.

Adani Defence & Aerospace Director Jeet Adani said with the Embraer collaboration, a regional aircraft manufacturing facility will be set up in India. Embraer makes commercial jets with up to 150 seats. Details about the investments and the location of the proposed facility were not disclosed.

The companies aim to collaborate on opportunities in aircraft manufacturing, supply chain, aftermarket services, and pilot training, a release said. Civil Aviation Secretary Samir Kumar Sinha said the collaboration is not just about assembling a regional aircraft but also about progressive technology transfer, skilling, having robust supply chain as well as making India a trusted manufacturing hub for regional aircraft. — PTI