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India's overseas air traffic grows six per cent to 78.7mn, but domestic airlines lose share

NEW DELHI: India's overseas air traffic grows six per cent to 78.7 million, but domestic airlines lose market share.

India's international air passenger traffic rose a little over six per cent to 78.7 million even as the share of Indian carriers in the overseas traffic declined to 44.4pc in the year ended March 2026.

As per the Handbook on Civil Aviation Statistics for 2025-26 released by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), a total of 2,218 aircraft were registered with the regulator as on March 31 this year.

While scheduled airlines had 985 planes, the non-scheduled operators had 425 aircraft during the given period. The rest were with governments, private entities and training schools. In 2025-26, the total air passenger traffic increased 2.7pc to 246.1 million compared with the year-ago period when it stood at 239.7 million. Out of the total, domestic air traffic climbed 1.1pc to 167.4 million, while international air traffic rose 6.1pc to 78.7 million on an annual basis.

The figures include departing and arriving passengers in the case of international traffic. "The domestic passenger traffic registered a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of seven per cent during the period 2015-16 to 2025-26 while the international passenger traffic grew at 4.6pc (CAGR) during the same period," the report said.

On the international traffic front, the market share of Indian carriers was 44.4pc while that of foreign airlines stood at 55.6pc in 2025-26.

Indian airlines' market share of international traffic declined

(Cont. on page - 2)

Air India restores non-stop India-New York flights

NEW DELHI: Air India has restored non-stop flight operations on all four routes connecting Delhi and Mumbai with New York, reducing journey times by up to five hours following the easing of airspace restrictions that had forced the airline to introduce technical refuelling stops.



Journeys that had extended to around 22 hours due to enroute stops in Rome will now take about 17 hours, improving connectivity and convenience

(Cont. on page - 2)

Passports could be redundant in five years

DUBAI: Passports could become redundant within five years as biometric technology makes it possible to prove identity without a physical document, claims Paul Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports.

He said the technology to verify identities through biometrics already exists, yet travellers are still repeatedly asked to produce a document to prove who they are throughout their journey.

"The technology is ready. How quickly we make this everyday reality is largely up to us," he said in a post shared on his LinkedIn account. The main challenge, according to Griffiths, is getting governments, airlines and airports to con-

(Cont. on page - 2)

Air Arabia earns more

SHARJAH: While airlines around the world are finding the going difficult, the Sharjah-based Air Arabia delivered a third consecutive profitable quarter in 2026, reporting revenue growth, continued network expansion and sustained passenger demand despite a challenging operating environment.

The budget carrier posted third-quarter revenue of Dh2.31 billion for the three months ended Sept 30, up 10pc from a year earlier, while net profit reached Dh383 million. The airline carried more than 5.7 million passengers across its operating hubs during the quarter and maintained a healthy average seat load factor of 82pc.

The results highlight the resilience of Air Arabia's low-cost business model as travel demand remained firm across its network spanning the UAE, Morocco, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan.

"We are pleased to have recorded our third consecutive profitable quarter this year amid a challenging operating environment," said Sheikh Abdullah Bin Mohammad Al Thani, chairman of Air Arabia. "Despite these challenges, we are proud to have delivered a



(Cont. on page - 2)



Oil prices fall further

RIYADH: Oil prices fell on Monday on expectations of a supply surplus as shipments from the Mid-East through the Strait of Hormuz have been nearly restored to pre-war levels and Chinese refinery throughput fell in October, indicating lower crude demand.

Brent futures were down 54 cents or 0.6pc to $95.30 a barrel by 07:27 am Saudi time. US West Texas Intermediate crude fell 22 cents or 0.3pc to $88.34.

Oil had closed lower on Friday as the market weighed signs of lower geopolitical risk from the US-Israeli war against Iran, now in its ninth month. The benchmarks fell 16pc and 13pc respectively, the prior week.

The world oil market will return to a surplus in the fourth quarter of this year, the International Energy Agency said on Friday, as MidEast exports recover faster than global oil demand despite continued attacks on shipping.

(**Cont. on page - 6**)

UAE announces two-day National Day break for private sector

ABU DHABI: The UAE's Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation has confirmed that private-sector employees will get Dec 2 and 3 off for the National Day. On Friday, Nov13, authorities had announced a three-day holiday for the public sector.

For a longer break, UAE residents can take an annual leave on Friday, Dec 4, making it a five-day long break with the weekend.

The UAE National celebrations, called Eid Al Etihad, are held on Dec 2, marking the day when all seven emirates came together in a union.

(**Cont. on page - 6**)



Passports could be redundant...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

nect their systems and agree on common standards for recognising digital identities across borders.

Once that happens, he said, travellers could move from passing through an airport without showing their passports to leaving them at home altogether. Countries will move at different speeds, he acknowledged, "but that should give us greater urgency".

The first phase of Dubai's Al Maktoum International Airport is scheduled to open in 2032, five years from now. Once fully operational, it will be the world's largest airport.

Using biometrics, facial recognition and other technologies, the airport will be equipped with the latest innovations to ensure faster and smoother passenger flows. Griffiths had told local and international media in Sept that Dubai Airports is "deconstructing" the airport experience, with most processes being handled when a ticket is purchased.

He said facial recognition technology and cameras would identify passengers and their flights, eliminating the need for travellers to take out their passports for immigration checks.

Dubai Airports has been working closely with the General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs (GDRFA) on facial recognition technology. Dubai International Airport (DXB) is also deploying new screening machinery that will allow passengers to keep laptops and liquids in their bags. The same digital identity, Griffiths said, could follow travellers from crossing the border to collecting a hire car and checking into a hotel.

"Ultimately, our guests would spend less time proving who they are and more time enjoying their trip. It's up to us across aviation and tourism to work together to make that possible," he said.

Air India restores non-stop...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

for passengers travelling between India and the US.

Earlier this year, the closure of Pakistan's airspace to Indian airlines, followed by restrictions across parts of the MidEast amid regional conflict, had significantly affected flight routes between India and North America.

Consequently, Air India's services from Delhi and Mumbai to New York's John F Kennedy International Airport (JFK) and Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) were operating with technical stops in Rome for refuelling.

With the reopening of previously restricted airspace, the airline has resumed non-stop operations across all four India-New York routes.

Air India currently operates one daily flight each from Delhi and Mumbai to JFK. It also operates four weekly flights between Delhi and Newark and three weekly flights between Mumbai and Newark.The airline is deploying its flagship Airbus A350-900 aircraft on flights from Delhi to both JFK and Newark.

The aircraft features 28 Business Class suites with full-flat beds, 24 Premium Economy seats and 264 Economy Class seats, along with next-generation in-flight entertainment systems.

Flights from Mumbai to JFK and Newark are operated using Boeing 777-300ER aircraft featuring eight First Class suites with privacy doors, 40 flat-bed Business Class seats and 280 Economy Class seats.

The restoration of non-stop services is expected to improve the airline's offering on one of its key international markets by reducing travel time and eliminating the inconvenience of an intermediate technical stop.

Air India said the resumption, combined with its upgraded cabin products, would provide greater comfort, convenience and connectivity for passengers travelling between India and the US.

India's overseas air traffic...

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

from 45.7pc 2024-25. IndiGo and Air India cite high fuel costs, Pakistan airspace closure as panel flags rising airfares. Out of a total 90 scheduled international operators in India, the top 10 operators accounted for nearly 65pc and the top 15 operators accounted for 73.1pc of the total international passenger traffic in 2025-26. In terms of outbound international passenger traffic in the last financial year, the report said 51.5pc was to Africa and MidEast, 30.4pc to Asia Pacific and 13.6pc to urope, the report said.

Air Arabia earns more

(**Cont. from page - 1**)

solid net profit for the quarter, supported by revenue growth and sustained demand for our value-driven product."

For the first nine months of 2026, revenue rose two per cent to Dh5.81 billion, up from Dh5.71 billion in the corresponding period last year. Air Arabia carried 14.4 million passengers during the period, while maintaining an average seat load factor of 83pc , underscoring continued demand across its markets.

The airline also accelerated its expansion plans during the year. In Sept, Air Arabia launched operations from a new hub at King Fahd International Airport in Dammam, introducing domestic services to Jeddah, Madinah and Riyadh. The move followed the granting of an Air Operator Certificate to a new Saudi low-cost carrier established by an Air Arabia-led consortium with Nesma Group and KUN Investment.

Across its wider network, the group launched 14 new routes during the first nine months of the year, increasing total destinations served to 224. It also added 10 aircraft, taking its fleet to 100 owned and leased Airbus A320 and A321 aircraft, with four more set to join before the end of 2026.

"Our focus on operational efficiency, disciplined cost control and network optimisation has enabled us to deliver solid financial and operational performance during the first nine months of the year," Al Thani said. "These results are a testament to the agility of our management team, the continued trust of our customers, and the strength of our multi-hub business model."

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FOREX RATES

As on 16th November 2026 (In rupees)

Currency	Bill Buy	Bill Sell
US Dollar	93.62	94.83
British Pound	123.65	125.36
Euro	102.81	104.99
Japanese Yen	58.66	59.59
Swiss Franc (CHF)	111.09	113.5
Canadian Dollar	65.29	66.75
Australian Dollar	63.13	64.48
Norwegian Krone	9.66	9.94
Swedish Krona	9.19	9.45
New Zealand Dollar	51.44	52.57
Hong Kong Dollar	11.78	12.14
Kuwaiti Dinar	310.4603	298.9957
Singapore Dollar	72.37	74
Saudi Arabian Riyal	24.62	25.4
U A E Dirham	25.22	25.94

Forex reserves jump $2.49 bn to $719.55 bn

MUMBAI: India's forex reserves increased by US$2.49 billion to $719.547 billion during the week ended Nov 6. In the previous week, the forex reserves had dropped by $2.691 billion to $717.056 billion. The reserves had touched an all-time high of $785.706 billion during the week ended Sept 4, driven by a heavy flow of currency as part of a special concessional swap for deposits from the diaspora through which banks raised a record $133 billion, but had been on a decline ever since. During the week ended Nov 6, foreign currency assets, a major component of reserves, increased by $232 million to $ 591.350 billion, according to the data released by RBI.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound and yen, held in foreign exchange reserves. The value of gold reserves increased sharply by $2.205 billion to $104.796 billion during the week.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up by $52 million to $18.610 billion, the central bank said.

Online Diwali sales grow to Rs 1.41-lakh-cr

NEW DELHI: The online sales in the country during the festive Diwali season grew 17pc year-on-year to Rs 1.41-lakh-crore in 2026. A report by Datum Intelligence has estimated gross merchandise value (GMV) at Rs 1,40,800 crore over 34 sale days through Nov 9.

In 2025, online festive sales stood at Rs 1.2-lakh-crore – the sales period lasted 30 days. Orders through quick commerce platforms rose 75pc year-Amazon said its shopping volume had increased more than 50pc by Nov 3 compared with last year's festive season, while Flipkart reported up to 22pc growth in orders, units sold and buyers during its 11-day "Big Billion Days" sale. on-year, while brand websites recorded growth of 27-30pc.

Also, the report highlighted that orders through marketplaces grew eight per cent. Additionally, online card transactions rose seven per cent over the first 32 sale days. Moreover, the fourth week and final four days together recorded 71pc growth over the corresponding period last year. E-commerce giants like Amazon, Flipkart and Meesho have reported healthy growth during their respective festive sales, though their disclosures covered different periods and metrics.



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GULF FAQs

What's UAE Golden Visa scam?

A Dubai court ordered two conmen to repay Dh4.4 million and pay an additional Dh300,000 in compensation after defrauding an investor by luring him with the false promise of a UAE Golden Visa.

The Dubai Civil Court issued the ruling after the victim filed a civil lawsuit seeking to recover his stolen funds and claim financial damages for the severe economic and moral harm he suffered as a result of the elaborate confidence trick.

According to court documents, the ordeal began when the two accused approached the investor and pitched a lucrative, hassle-free opportunity. They convinced him to hand over Dh4.4 million, falsely claiming they could facilitate the issuance of the coveted 10-year UAE Golden Visa for him through official investment channels. Relying on their persuasive assurances and fabricated claims, the victim transferred the hefty sum to the pair.



However, once the money was safely in their possession, the duo cut off all communication, failed to process any legitimate residency paperwork and unlawfully misappropriated the entire amount for their own personal gain. Realising he had been duped in a calculated fraud scheme, the investor swiftly reported the matter to Dubai Police, sparking a formal criminal investigation into the financial deception and breach of trust.

During the subsequent criminal proceedings, public prosecutors charged the two men with fraud and the unlawful appropriation of third-party funds. After thoroughly reviewing bank transfer records, written correspondence, and investigative findings, the Dubai Criminal Court found both defendants guilty of the scam, establishing their criminal liability for deceiving the victim through fraudulent methods and seizing his money.

Armed with the final criminal conviction, the victim approached the civil court to reclaim his life savings. In its judgment, the civil court affirmed that the criminal verdict served as conclusive proof of the unlawful act, holding both men jointly liable for the substantial financial losses and emotional distress inflicted on the investor.

Consequently, the judge ordered the pair to jointly return the full Dh4.4 million to the victim and pay him an extra Dh300,000 in compensation for the material and moral damages incurred, in addition to covering all legal fees, interest and court expenses.

My friend is detained in Sharjah, facing deportation, what to do?

My friend was detained by the Sharjah Police a few days ago; he had no prior legal issues. Now, it seems he is going to be deported. How can I find out what the problem is and the reason for his impending deportation? Is there any way to have the deportation order cancelled?

Since your friend has already been detained by Sharjah Police and may be facing deportation, this needs urgent legal review. This is not something to wait on, because once deportation steps progress, the available options may become more limited.

The first priority is to identify the reason for detention, whether there is a police/prosecution/court file and whether the deportation is judicial or administrative. The possibility of cancelling or suspending deportation depends on those details and the supporting documents. UAE official guidance confirms that cancellation routes differ depending on the type of deportation.

Please contact me immediately on WhatsApp with his ID copy, passport details, detention location and any information from the police. I can arrange an urgent paid consultation with the legal team to advise on the fastest practical step.

Can an employer dismiss an employee while on leave?

I have been receiving indications that I may be terminated from my job at a mainland Dubai company. This comes just as I am about to go on a previously approved and well-earned period of leave. Can an employer terminate an employee while he/she is on leave? If so, what is the legal process and what rights would the employee have?

Pursuant to your queries raised, as you are employed at a mainland Dubai company, the provisions of the UAE employment law are applicable. If an employer or an employee intends to terminate an employment contract while an employee is on leave, the valid notice period shall begin the day following to the day scheduled for an employee to return from the leave, unless an employee and employer have agreed otherwise. This is in accordance with the Article 35 Federal Decree-Law No. (33) of 2021 Federal 2021 Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relationships and its amendments Relationships amendments (the "Employment Law")

If either party to the employment contract wishes to terminate the contract in accordance with the provisions of this Decree-Law and its Implementing Regulation, while the worker is on the leave, the validity of the notice period agreed upon in the employment contract shall not begin, except from the day following the day scheduled for the worker's return from the leave, unless both parties agree otherwise."

An employer or an employee may terminate an employment contract for a valid reason, provided written notice is given to the other party. An employee must continue working during the notice period agreed in the contract, provided that the period is not less than 30 days and not more exceed 90 days. This is in accordance with the Article 43(1) of the Employment Law:

"Either party to the employment contract may terminate the contract for any legitimate reason, provided that the other party is notified in writing and commits to work within the warning period agreed upon in the contract, provided that the period is not less than 30 days and not more than 90 days."

In accordance with the aforementioned, an employer may terminate an employee's employment contract while the employee is on approved leave, provided that the termination is for a legitimate reason and the employee is notified in writing. However, unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the notice period will only commence from the day following the employee's scheduled return from leave. The notice period must also comply with the period agreed in the employment contract, subject to the statutory minimum of 30 days and maximum of 90 days. If you feel that your employer has terminated your employment without a valid reason, you may consider filing a complaint with the Ministry of Human Resources & Emiratisation.

APPLICABLE LAW: Federal Decree-Law No. 33 of 2021 Regarding the Regulation of Employment Relationships.

Mounting dues cripple SpiceJet

NEW DELHI: Financially troubled SpiceJet is looking to raise fresh capital as the airline continues to grapple with mounting dues, delayed payments to suppliers and other financial liabilities.

The airline has called a board meeting on Nov 18 to consider raising funds through equity shares, debt securities and other financial instruments.

The move comes amid concerns over the airline's ability to meet its payment obligations. Between April and Sept, SpiceJet missed the statutory 45-day payment deadline on more than 85pc of invoices from



small suppliers, with Rs 63.03 crore remaining unpaid beyond the stipulated period. SpiceJet's active fleet has also shrunk to just 12 aircraft, leading to severe operational disruptions and daily flight cancellations.

In a regulatory filing to the BSE, SpiceJet said its board of directors would meet to consider and approve a proposal for raising fresh capital through the issuance of equity shares, preference shares, debt securities or other permissible instruments.

The airline said the funds could be raised through a preferential issue, qualified institutions placement (QIP) or any other mode considered appropriate by the board.

Under the payment rules applicable to micro and small enterprises, dues must be cleared within the prescribed period, which cannot exceed 45 days where a written agreement exists. SpiceJet's disclosure also comes amid its efforts to secure additional funds to meet financial requirements and support its operations. The airline said the trading window for dealing in its securities would remain closed until further notice in accordance with the SEBI's insider trading regulations.

FPI inflows hit $9.1bn

MUMBAI: Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have returned to Indian equities in Nov, with net inflows of $9.1 billion so far this month, but the buying has yet to translate into stronger relative market performance. The MSCI India index rose one per cent week-on-week, underperforming the emerging markets index by 230 basis points and the Asia ex-Japan index by 258 basis points, according to Jefferies' Nov 13 India Market Weekly report.

The global investment bank's weekly data also shows that foreign investors put $0.9 billion into Indian debt markets during Nov so far. However, the rupee weakened 0.4pc against the US dollar, while the 10-year government security yield rose around 11 basis points to 7.30pc, Jefferies said. The combination of renewed foreign buying and continued market underperformance forms the central contrast in the brokerage's latest assessment.

Jefferies reported $9.1 billion in net FPI equity inflows for Nov up to the report date, a marked return of foreign buying in the month-to-date data. Debt flows were positive too, at $0.9 billion, according to the brokerage's flow charts.

Yet the inflows have not been accompanied by comparable strength in Indian equities relative to other markets.

Jefferies said the MSCI India index gained one per cent during the week, against a relative underperformance of 230 basis points versus emerging markets and 258 basis points versus Asia ex-Japan. ht.

UAE employers plan 2.8pc...

ABU DHABI: UAE employers are expecting an estimated average salary increase of 2.8pc in 2027, with most planning to hold pay ranges steady or award modest rises, according to the UAE Salary Guide 2027 by recruitment firm Cooper Fitch.

The survey covered more than 1,091 organisations in the Gulf region, representing over five lakh employees. It found that 88pc of respondents expect to increase or maintain salary ranges next year and 77pc plan to hold them steady or award increases of one to five per cent.

However, DrTrefor Murphy, founder and CEO of Cooper Fitch, believes the actual increase in the UAE could be higher. "I actually think the increase in the UAE could be higher than 2.8pc perhaps closer to four per cent," he told a TV channel. Some 46pc of UAE organisations plan to raise salary ranges in 2027 up from 43pc in 2026.

Increases of one to five per cent are the most common at every level, at 35pc overall.

Some 42pc expect no change, while 12pc anticipate decreases. Seniority shapes expectations. Some 68pc of CEOs and board members expect rises, compared with 49pc of directors, 36pc of middle managers and 19pc of individual contributors. CEOs and board members also report larger planned rises more often: 21pc expect increases of 10 pc or more, compared with three per cent overall.

Company size matters too. Organisations with 251-1,000 employees are the least likely to plan increases (33pc), against 51pc of those with 51-250 employees and 50pc of those with 1,001 or more.

Some 44pc of the smallest firms, with up to 50 employees, expect to raise pay. By sector, information technology has the highest share planning pay increases (63pc). Within the sector, 13pc expect rises of 10pc or more and another 13pc expect rises of six to nine per cent. However, 25pc of IT respondents also expect decreases.

Oil prices fall further

(Cont. from page - 2)

"For the first time since the US-Iran conflict began, traders are actively contemplating the possibility of excess supply rather than persistent tightness. That shift in narrative is clearly dampening the tone," said Tim Waterer, chief analyst at KCM Trade.

Oil supply will average 105 million barrels per day in the fourth quarter, 1.7 million bpd higher than forecast demand, the IEA said. The IEA had previously forecast a fourth-quarter supply deficit.

The agency also gave more details of remaining volumes to come from a record release of oil from its members' emergency reserves pledged in March, saying 71 million barrels would be made available by the end of February including 15 million barrels of diesel to ease market tightness. Signs of lower demand in China, the world's second-largest oil consumer, also pressured prices. The latest data from the country's National Bureau of Statistics on Monday showed refinery throughput for Oct fell two percent from a month earlier and was down 8.1pc from a year ago.

UAE announces two-day National Day...

(Cont. from page - 2)

The phrase Eid Al Etihad literally means Celebration of the Union. It's not a new name — it's actually a return to the authentic Arabic title that the nation's founders used to describe this day.

According to a UAE law passed in 2025, some public holidays are transferable.

This means that if they fall mid-week, they can be moved to the beginning or end of the week so residents can get a longer continuous break with the weekend. Last year, the UAE "transferred" its Eid Al Etihad public holiday for the first time, allowing residents to enjoy an extended four-day weekend for UAE National Day.

The National Day holidays in 2025 were initially scheduled for Dec 2 and 3 (Tuesday and Wednesday), but were officially moved to Dec 1 and 2 (Monday and Tuesday). This resulted in a longer break for residents who follow the Saturday–Sunday weekend, giving them time off from Nov 29 to Dec 2.

This year's celebrations will focus on the families, generations and communities that have shaped the country's journey over the past 55 years, highlighting the shared values, traditions and experiences that connect people across the Emirates.

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