

Air India , IndiGo plan for up to 170 wide-body aircrafts in little over a year

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New Delhi: In little over a year, Air India and IndiGo have announced plans to purchase up to 170 wide-body planes as they bet on ambitious expansion and efforts also continue to make India a global aviation hub. Also, the two carriers' orders usher in European aircraft maker Airbus into the country's wide-body space, which has traditionally been dominated by US major Boeing.

If narrow-body aircraft orders of Air India, IndiGo and Akasa Air are added to the list, the order book is well over 1,200 planes and that too in less than 14 months or since February 2023.

Billed as one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world, India is witnessing expansion of commercial aircraft fleet and continuing efforts to provide more direct flights connecting Indian cities with

foreign shores. Currently, a significant chunk of the international air traffic to and from India are through overseas hubs, mainly in the Gulf.

After taking to the Indian skies in 2006, IndiGo on Thursday announced placing a firm order for 30 A350-900 aircraft with Airbus along with the option to buy another 70 such planes.

Announced in February last year, Air India's total order for 470 aircraft includes 70 wide-body planes -- 20 A350-900, 20 A350-1000, 20 Boeing 787 Dreamliners and 10 Boeing 777X.

On Thursday (April 25), aviation consultancy CAPA India said the long and ultra-long haul market is "ripe for disruption, provided that Indian carriers lead the charge".

Apart from the wide-body aircraft, Tata Group-owned Air India's order include 210 A320 family planes and 190 Boeing 737MAX narrow-body aircraft.

In the narrow-body segment, less than two-year-old Akasa Air, in January 2024, announced a firm order for 150 Boeing 737 Max planes, comprising 737 Max 10 and 737 Max 8-200 jets.

Back in June 2023, IndiGo ordered an additional 500 narrow-body planes from Airbus. The airline's order book is more than 1,000 planes.

Together, domestic carriers are expected to take deliveries of more than 1,600 planes in the coming years, according to an analysis.

At present, the fleet size of the Indian airlines is more than 700.

Grounded Go First, which has not been flying since May last year, had an order for 72 aircraft.

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