

Dubai Airport expects to exceed pre-pandemic passenger traffic

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dubai: Dubai Airports has again revised upwards its full-year 2023 forecasts, to 86.8 million from 85 million, as the city awaits a further rush of travel demand through the next few weeks. The numbers will also be boosted by the UAE's hosting of the COP28 global summit on climate change and sustainability initiatives.

The revised numbers puts Dubai International Airport on course to surpass pre-Covid passenger traffic – 'by almost a year'. In 2019, the year before Covid, Dubai Airport oversaw 86.3 million travelers passing through.

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In the first nine months, Dubai International Airport oversaw 64.5 million passengers, with 22.9 coming through just in the July to September period (which also saw the peak summer travel demand). That's 39.3 per cent higher compared to the corresponding time in 2022 and 1 per cent above 2019.

“We are thrilled but not entirely surprised that DXB is all set to surpass the pre-pandemic milestone well ahead of our initial projections by almost a year,” said Paul

Griffiths, CEO of Dubai Airports. “Our outlook for the remainder of this year - and the next - remains optimistic.”

On average, DXB reported that 7.6 million travellers use the hub monthly.

Future gains are in sight

The airport said the current trends in numbers are expected to continue in 2024. In anticipation, Griffiths confirmed Dubai International is undertaking a strategic project to expand infrastructure capacity while enhancing operational efficiency.

The refurbishment plan will take the hub’s current capacity from 100 million passengers annually to 120 million. In an earlier interview with Gulf News, the airport CEO stated that DXB is investing between Dh6 billion to 10 billion for the expansion.

The airport stated that Dubai tops the list of cities with the highest spending by international visitors, with a total earning of \$29.4 billion.

The average waiting time at Dubai Airport's passport control queues was less than 11 minutes for 96.4% of the arriving passengers. About 95.1% of passengers queued for less than six minutes at departure passport control.

The average queue times at security-check on departures were less than 4 minutes for 98.4% of total passengers.

India destinations remain at the top

Regarding passengers and their travel schedules, India continues to retain its position as DXB’s top country destination, with 8.9 million passengers in the first nine months of the year. Saudi Arabia follows with 4.8 million passengers, and the UK at 4.4 million passengers.

Other country destinations include Pakistan (3.1 million passengers), the US (2.7 million) and Russia (1.8 million). The top cities by traffic were London (2.7 million passengers) and Riyadh (1.9 million), closely followed by Mumbai (1.8 million) and Jeddah (1.7 million).

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