

Indian airlines plan to add 100 planes a year

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As Indigo Airline has expanded its fleet to 300 aircraft, the country's airlines' fleet is likely to add over 100 aircraft every year till the next few years as per the expected growth in the aviation sector.

Civil Aviation Ministry officials said that there were about 400 aircraft in 2013 and in 2021-22, the number increased to 700. Airlines in India are going to add 15 per cent capacity or 100 to 110 aircraft per year and the aviation sector is looking at close to 1,200 aircraft by 2027.

Officials said that expansion of the fleet size of an airline is a commercial decision and therefore each airline decides induction of aircraft keeping in view commercial viability, traffic demand and its business plan.

Barring the Covid period, the aviation traffic has witnessed consistent growth. The all-India passenger growth as projected by the Airports Authority of India for the next few years is 371 million passengers in 2023-24 and 412 million in 2024-25.

Similarly, airport infrastructure has also recorded corresponding growth in the last few years. Officials said that the total number of airports has nearly doubled from 74 in 2014 to over 141 in 2022.

Keeping in view the growth in aviation traffic, the government has accorded in-principle approval for setting up 21 Greenfield Airports across the country.

In keeping with the growth in the aircraft and passenger traffic, the aviation regulator has issued nearly 1100 commercial pilot licenses in 2022 as against 862 licenses in 2021. Officials said that there are 34 DGCA approved Flying Organisations (FTOs) operating at 52 bases in the country. Of these, IGRUA at Amethi (UP) is under the Central governments and 25 are in the private sector.

Officials said that the government has been promoting and facilitating the

manufacturing of aircraft, including a Regional Transport Aircraft, and associated equipment by public and private enterprises in India.

Hindustan-228 (Upgraded) civil aircraft developed by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) is a 19 seater turbo prop aircraft suitable for regional connectivity. HAL has also signed a MoU with the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) - National Aerospace Laboratories (NAL) for Design, Development and Certification of a 19 seater Light Transport Aircraft - SARAS MKII and subsequent production, marketing and lifecycle maintenance of the aircraft.

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