

## IndiGo announces add'l flights between Jeddah and Mumbai

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Gurgaon: Indian carrier IndiGo announced Monday (June 23) the launch of additional daily, nonstop flights between Mumbai and Jeddah, effective August 15.

The airline said in a statement that the strategic expansion caters to the growing demand for travel between India and the Middle East. “The addition of these daily flights reflects IndiGo's commitment to strengthening its international presence and connecting key destinations across its extensive network,” it said.

Vinay Malhotra, Head of Global Sales, IndiGo, said, “With these, we will now operate 42 weekly flights to Jeddah from 5 cities in India. These flights will not only enhance trade and tourism opportunities between India and the Middle East but also provide customers with even more options to travel to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.”

The airline recently ditched its single-class cabin strategy by introducing a Business Class service on some of its aircraft that will fly over some of its 'busiest and business routes', domestic and international.

However, for India's fastest-growing budget airline, the next growth phase is to expand beyond a low-cost carrier (LCC) model, including keeping options for other cabin classes such as Premium Economy. And as far as CEO Pieter Elbers is concerned, IndiGo "left that station already" when referring to the airline's low-cost categorisation.

Elbers explained, "We keep all options open going forward. I think (the Business Class offering) is a step. We are going to introduce it now for domestic-only, and we will keep options open going forward."

The CEO of the Delhi-based airline said that the unique dynamics of the Indian market have more diverse and distinct segments than many other regions.

"India still has millions of first-time flyers each year. Today, we have (a fleet of) 300 aircraft and 100 million customers. We will double by the end of the decade, and by the end, we will still have millions of first-time flyers, for whom our promise of affordable fares remains crucial," he explained.

Elbers also said that the airline would price these products "competitively". "Of course, it will be different, like pricing between the different classes. We will stay loyal to basic customer promises and create an aspirational yet affordable product for our customers," he explained. Elbers said cabin configurations of the Business Class offering will be announced in August.

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