

## Indigo to double its fleet size by 2030

- A Monitor Desk Report

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**Bengaluru:** India's largest carrier by market share, Indigo is looking to double its fleet by 2030. Having ordered for around 970 planes, the airline is set to receive one aircraft per week (50 aircraft) over the next year, Indigo's chief executive officer Pieter Elbers told reporters during a media roundtable .

The airline, which added six new destinations in the last quarter, plans to start flights to Bali (Indonesia) and Medina (Saudi Arabia) in the upcoming quarter (Q3FY24) as part of its international expansion plans. "Q2 was when internationalisation," Elbers said, adding that the airline is currently operating around 500 routes, including over 100 international.

Of its massive orderbook the airline is awaiting the delivery of the Airbus A321XLRs (extra long range) aircraft that will begin joining its fleet late in 2024 to fly non-stop flights (in the duration of up to 7-8 hours) from India to Athens and Seoul, Elbers revealed.

In fact, going forward, the focus of the airline is not just to connect international destinations out of metros, but also other parts of the country (read tier-II cities). "It (A321XLRs) will not only stretch our reach further into Asia and Europe but also within India itself," Elbers said.

Indigo, which recently signed a codeshare partnership with UK flag carrier British Airways, is now looking to expand its codeshare with the Australian flag carrier Qantas. It has been scouting for more global partners to spread its wings to destinations across the globe, already having in place codeshare partnerships with Turkish Airlines, Qatar Airways, Qantas, Virgin Atlantic, KLM, American Airlines and Air France.

In the quarter ended September, Indigo posted a net profit of Rs 189 crore, marking a 28% growth year-on-year. It expects to close the next quarter at 25% YoY growth moderated by the growth it saw in last year's third quarter. This was a profitable Q2 after five years, which traditionally is considered a weaker quarter in the airline business.

Indigo is also "well on track" to achieve the target of carrying 100 million passengers this financial year, Elbers said, after reporting a passenger count of over 26 million passengers in Q2. On the Pratt and Whitney engine troubles, Elbers said, after reporting a passenger count of over 26 million passengers in Q2.

On the Pratt and Whitney engine troubles, Elbers said, "We are in constant discussion with Pratt & Whitney for clarity on the timeline of the engine visits to address the powder metal issue." The precise timing or duration and the impact of aircraft groundings are not known yet and P&W will come up with the timeline in the next few months.

To ensure the airline continues to deliver on the capacity guidance for the next quarter, Indigo has damp-leased 11 additional aircraft which will start operating this month. The airline has also inducted a few ATRs (regional transport aircraft) to address the demand and supply mismatch and it will also add more ATRs in December.

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