

Saudi air traffic hits new record in 2024

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Riyadh: Saudi Arabia's airports processed a record 128 million passengers in 2024, marking a 15 per cent increase from the previous year and a 25 per cent surge compared to pre-pandemic levels, according to the Air Traffic 2024 Report by the General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA).

Domestic flights carried 59 million passengers, while international routes served 69 million. Flight operations also saw significant growth, with 905,000 flights handled across the Kingdom's airports, an 11 per cent increase from 2023. Of these, 474,000 were domestic flights and 431,000 were international.

The record-breaking figures highlight the continued recovery and expansion of Saudi Arabia's aviation sector.

Saudi Arabia also expanded its global air connectivity by 16 percent, linking the Kingdom to over 170 destinations worldwide.

Saudi Arabia's aviation sector also witnessed a sharp rise in air cargo operations, which grew by 34 per cent to exceed 1.2 million tons in 2024.

The Kingdom's three largest airports handled the bulk of this cargo, with King Khalid International Airport in Riyadh processing 573,000 tons, King Abdulaziz International Airport in Jeddah managing 461,000 tons, and King Fahd International Airport in Dammam handling 140,000 tons.

The four main airports—Riyadh, Jeddah, Dammam, and Medina—accounted for 82 percent of total air traffic.

Saudi Arabia's air traffic saw a notable spike during the Hajj season, which ran from May 9 to July 21, with 1.5 million pilgrims arriving in the Kingdom by air. This represented 40 per cent of all international arrivals during that period.

The Jeddah-Riyadh route recorded the largest increase in capacity among domestic routes worldwide in 2024, according to the British global travel data provider OAG. Meanwhile, the Cairo-Jeddah route ranked as the second busiest international route globally.

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