

UK airports brace for busiest Christmas travel

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: British airports are preparing for what could be a record-breaking Christmas travel season as passenger numbers continue to rise, the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) said.

The UK aviation industry has seen strong growth in 2025. Between July and September, 90.2 million passengers passed through British airports, up 2% from the same period in 2024.

The CAA expects total annual passenger numbers to exceed 300 million for the first time, surpassing 295 million in 2024. Palma de Mallorca, Dublin, Amsterdam, and Alicante were among the most popular destinations.

Flight punctuality has also improved, with 62% of flights arriving or departing within 15 minutes of schedule in the third quarter, compared with 57pc in 2024, though still below pre-pandemic levels of 69pc in

2019.

For December 2025, the CAA expects more than 22 million passengers, including over 7 million at Heathrow's four terminals. Ongoing rail works affecting 2,500 trains may push some travellers to fly instead.

"We now have more people flying than ever before and are on track for the biggest Christmas getaway in history. With high passenger numbers and potential winter weather, passengers should check for disruption and plan ahead," Selina Chadha, CAA group director for consumers and markets, said.

Aviation Minister Keir Mather said the government has secured the sector's future through airport expansions at Luton, Gatwick, and Heathrow, and by redesigning airways to support growth, jobs, and connectivity.

Worldwide, airports including Dubai and Chicago are also expanding capacity to meet growing demand for air travel.

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