

user's choice

HT- MARS AIRLINE SURVEY

India's best
airlines



India on board

TOUCH DOWN The second edition of the Hindustan Times-MaRS Airline Survey ranks airlines and airports according to customers' satisfaction



Image: IMAGESBAZAAR.COM, Imaging: SAKET MISRA

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The aviation industry in India has come a long way. 100 years to be precise. From humble beginnings, when Henri Piquet, a french pilot, covered a distance of 6 miles, carrying 6,500 mails on a biplane in 1911, to a flashy Vijay Mallya "personally" selecting air hostesses and welcoming fliers, the industry's evolution has been interesting to watch.

And with an ever-expanding industry, flyers expect certain standards. The 2011 HT-MaRS Airline Survey ranks domestic airlines and airports on various parameters to see which one provides customers with the highest level of satisfaction. For airlines, the parameters varied from cabin crew and check-in process, to inflight meals and in-cabin experience. For airports, they include ease of access and departure, food and beverages, terminal comfort and amenities, among others.

The hot race between full service carriers continues, with Jet Airways pipping the 2009 chart-topper Kingfisher Airlines for the lead spot.

As in the 2009 survey, the race for the top two positions was close. The biggest loser was Spicejet, falling from the 3rd to the 6th rank. IndiGo Airlines, at number 3, is the highest ranked low cost carrier (LCC), or budget airline as they are known.

Budget airlines are important in the Indian context. "Our typical consumer

TOP AIRLINES

	OVERALL RANKS			
	Score	Rank	2011	2009
Jet	806	786	↑1	2
Kingfisher	798	794	↓2	1
Indigo	785	761	↑3	4
Kingfisher Red	784	746	↑4	6
Jet lite	782	745	↑5	7
Spice Jet	782	773	↓6	3
Go air	775	752	↓7	5
Indian	766	736	8	8
Industry Average	788	765		

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is looking for immediate access to the cheapest fares," said Director-General of Civil Aviation, E K Bharat Bhushan. They have not only made air travel more affordable—frequency and coverage have improved as well. Be it Jodhpur, Nanded or Kandla, cheap flights are available everywhere. People who have never considered flying are stepping into airports now.

In India, LCCs and full-service carriers have the same high standard of customer service—the difference is only a meal on board. However, with the top slots going to two full-service airlines,

OVERALL, THE INDUSTRY AVERAGE FOR CUSTOMER SATISFACTION THIS YEAR IS HIGHER THAN THE 2009 AIRLINE SURVEY

it shows that the Indian traveller, though price conscious, values comfort and service equally.

Overall, the industry average for customer satisfaction is higher than the 2009 Airline survey. "More people are travelling and people are travelling more. This may have resulted in passengers expecting less than what they did before and exhibiting higher satisfaction levels. Airlines are offering better services too. After all, competition does have its compensation," said Raghu Roy, CEO, Monitoring and Research Systems Private Limited, our knowledge partner for the survey.

The airline industry finds itself stuck in a paradox of high growth and heavy losses. The aviation market is growing at an annual rate of 15%. Domestic passenger traffic in India touched 53.6 million in 2010-2011. However, private airlines in India have lost an estimated ₹3,500 crore in the first six months of

TOP AIRPORTS

	Score	Rank
Bengaluru	815	1
Delhi T3	748	2
Delhi T1	739	3
Chennai	733	4
Hyderabad	723	5
Ahmedabad	722	6
Mumbai	719	7
Indore	705	8
Jaipur	703	9
Lucknow	700	10

Aviation sector needs policy rethink

expert comment



RAJIV PRATAP RUDY

The Indian aviation sector in the past decade has faced highs and lows, finally levelling off to a stage where major initiatives are needed to take the next leap.

While India is perceived to be the biggest and fastest growing market, where less than 1% of the one-billion-plus people take to flights, the recent price war between domestic airlines has raised the issue of their sustainability. The perception that India has backtracked on reforms, leaving little space for a level-playing-field for competing airlines, needs to be corrected.

Air India, despite suffering enormous losses, continues to sell tickets below the operating cost. The government has allowed this situation to continue by bailing them out — but private carriers are now facing the heat as a result. Last quarter witnessed all but one airline suffering huge losses. A delegation of all the private airlines in the country recently met the aviation minister and senior officials in the PMO, explaining their position and it seems Air India despite bleeding, refuses to relent.

Civil Aviation should remain a priority sector. The government can be

credited with pursuing major policy reforms flagged during the NDA government, but not much has been witnessed in the last seven years. Airport modernisation has seen few achievements. Not a single metro airport has been modernised by the Airports Authority of India. The deadline for Chennai and Kolkata airports continues to be extended. Even the quality milestone is far inferior to what we see at the Delhi and Mumbai airports (done by private entities). Of the 36 non-metro airports selected for modernisation, only half have been completed.

We have Dubai, Bangkok, Singapore etc emerging as transit hubs. Whatever little position Mumbai had as India's hub is gradually dwindling. Our airline tax structure needs to be looked at so as to help airlines offer cheap tickets through Mumbai and other hubs. Why should an international passenger choose Delhi or Mumbai if he has to pay an extra 10 per cent as tax? Unfortunately, the policy today is such that we give more incentives to Indian passengers flying abroad than for tourism travel within the country.

Having said that the prospects are there for the aviation industry in India, which can still be denominated to be in its nascent state. The industry has seen sweeping reforms—the first was during Mr. Madhav Rao Scindia's tenure in 1990, the second during Mr. Vajpayee's tenure in 2003. Several policy initiatives have to be put in place before we can finally see the third leg of reforms in the aviation sector.

Rajesh Pratap Rudy is former Union Minister for Civil Aviation.

EVOLUTION OF AVIATION IN INDIA

A flight back into time takes us through the major milestones in the 100-year long history of civil aviation

1911

The first commercial civil aviation flight in India took place when Henri Piquet carried 6500 mails on a Humber biplane, between Allahabad and Naini, a distance of 6 miles.

1912

Indian State Air Services in collaboration with UK-based Imperial Airways introduced the London-Karachi-Delhi flight, the first international flight to-and-from India.

1924

Construction of Civil Airports in India began at Dum Dum in Calcutta, Bamrauli in Allahabadi and in Gilbert Hill, Bombay.

1927

A separate Department of Civil Aviation was established to look after all civil aviation matters. The Aero Club of India was also established this year.

1929

JRD Tata was awarded the first pilot license by the Federation Aeronautique Internationale on behalf of the Aero Club of India and Burma.

1931

Lt.Col. Shelmerdine was appointed first Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to look after civil aviation regulatory issues.

1932

JRD Tata founded Tata Airline, the first Indian airline. At the time of independence, nine air transport companies carried both air cargo and passengers.

1933-34

A number of Indian airlines including Indian Trans Continental Airways, Madras Air Taxi Services, Indian National Airways etc., commenced operations.

1937

The Indian Aircraft Act was formulated to govern the aviation industry.



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Airlines touch down in smaller towns

TAKE OFF The airline industry in India is poised for high growth. The next decade will see flyers from tier-II and III cities leading the way



VIJAYANAND GUPTA / HT PHOTOS

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Ask the average Indian traveller what she wants most from her choice of airline, and the answers vary from 'convenient schedule', 'quality of food' and of course 'best value for money'. With a generation of Indians who believe that time saved is money earned, flying has become the preferred medium of travel. Gone are the days where it was considered a luxury.

With domestic passengers growing from 1.4 crore to 4.6 crore between 2000-2010, Indians are clearly flying high. In the 2011 HT-MaRS Airline survey, Jet Airways has topped in eight of the nine parameters that customers rated airlines on, from 'check-in process' to 'boarding' and 'meals'. Kingfisher Airlines, the 2009 survey topper, was a close second. The airline which has seen the biggest fall was Spicejet. Other low-cost carriers such as IndiGo and the soon-to-be-shut-down Kingfisher Red have climbed in terms of scores as well as rank.

The key drivers of this sector in India have been an increase in cargo, tourist traffic and a decrease in fares owing to low-cost carriers leading to the huge increase in passengers. Looking at the future, a majority of the growth is expected to come from tier-2 and tier-3 cities.

BOMBARDIER, AN AIRCRAFT MANUFACTURER, SAYS THAT 40% OF DOMESTIC DEMAND WILL COME FROM SMALL TOWNS BY 2015

Bombardier, an aircraft manufacturer, has estimated that 40% of domestic demand in India will be from smaller towns by 2015.

Given these trends, airlines are offering something for all — be it frequent fliers looking for service and comfort or the first time flier looking out for the best deal.

"Jet Airways offers the best schedules while IndiGo is extremely disciplined in its on-time performance," said Mumbai-based entrepreneur Milan Zatakia, summing up the demands of today's frequent fliers.

For the born-in-a-hurry types, the rise in options has been a blessing. "I prefer air travel because it saves time, and is not that expensive if one compares it with the time and energy saved," said Jayant Krishna, an IT consultant in Lucknow.

A study by the International Civil Aviation Organisation suggests that \$100 spent on the airline industry generates \$350 for the economy overall and 100 additional jobs in air transport creates 650 new jobs across the economy. With more airports and greater connectivity to metros, smaller towns are expanding their business avenues, fuelling growth.

Flying from such towns has its unique advantages. "Bhopal is a comparatively smaller town where you can easily report to the check-in counter 45 minutes in advance. Moreover the traveling time from home to the airport is barely 20 minutes which makes it convenient," he adds.

The story of the airline industry in India has slowly moved away from how cheap the Delhi-Mumbai ticket has gotten, to how these cities have become prominent on the aviation map.

(With inputs from Soubhik Mitra in Mumbai, Anupam Srivastava in Lucknow and Rahul Noronha in Bhopal)

TOP3 AIRLINES SERVICES OFFERED

Landing/taking off	Check in process
Jet 818	Jet 764
Kingfisher 806	Kingfisher 763
Kingfisher Red 790	Indigo 751
Airport services	Flight boarding
Jet 830	Jet 806
Kingfisher 805	Jet Lite 805
Spice Jet 796	Kingfisher 801
Arrival services	Inflight meals/catering
Jet 801	Jet 809
Kingfisher 801	Jet Lite 804
Indigo 780	Kingfisher 796
Cabin crew	In cabin experience
Jet 811	Jet 819
Kingfisher 808	Kingfisher 804
Kingfisher Red 803	Indigo 800

Jet, set, go: Landing first on the tarmac



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With a clean sweep of all the four metros, Jet Airways has emerged as a clear winner in the HT-MaRS Airline Survey. Passengers across India have given the airline a resounding thumbs-up.

"Whenever I have flown Jet, the service has been consistently good. They are helpful and considerate. And the uniforms of the flight crew are pretty good too," said Ankita Biswas, a management student. Jet has dethroned Kingfisher Airlines across various survey parameters such as cabin crew, airport services, and check-in process from the 2009 survey.

The overall satisfaction score for both,

Jet and Kingfisher have risen, but the rise has been greater for the former. For Jet, the 2009 score was 786 points compared to 806 now, indicating that the airline has been able to deliver 'the joy of flying' that its tagline promises.

"I prefer Jet because they offer great customers and lounge services," said Ram Mohan, 55, a software consultant.

Attuned to market needs, the airline has continued with Jet Connect and JetLite in sectors where full service carriers do not operate and has also ventured into international operations.

But while Jet has shone on the international front, it has lost some of its home ground. "Jet has been focusing more on their international operations. With the entry of IndiGo, Spice and GoAir in the

domestic operations, the game has changed.

But Jet still has high standards and professionalism," said Kapil Kaul, CEO South Asia, Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation.

With all the praise, there is still room for improvement. "The food has become progressively worse and they need to do something about it," said Biswas.

With the competition nipping at its heels, the airline has its work cut out. But it is clearly advantage Jet for now.

AIRLINE REPORT CARD

92.1% On time performance	18.2% Market Share
0.6% Flight Cancellation	46 Number of domestic centres

TOP3 AIRLINES TOWNWISE

Delhi	Bangalore
Jet 797	Kingfisher 900
Kingfisher 767	Jet 892
Kingfisher Red 762	Kingfisher Red 888
Kolkata	Ahmedabad
Jet 809	Jet 876
Indigo 762	Spice Jet 858
Indian 752	Indigo 835
Mumbai	Lucknow
Jet 797	Jet lite 864
Spice Jet 770	Indigo 809
Kingfisher Red 769	Kingfisher 806
Chennai	Jaipur
Jet 755	Kingfisher Red 811
Kingfisher 735	Spice Jet 738
Spice Jet 723	Jet 732
Hyderabad	Indore
Jet 838	Jet 805
Spice Jet 822	Indian 795
Indigo 810	Kingfisher 782

'King of good times' no more?

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While satisfaction levels with Kingfisher Airlines have improved from the 2009 Aviation survey, the airline has slipped to the number two spot overall. But it is far from losing its flash.

For Pradeep Varma, 55, a freelance consultant in Delhi, the first choice is always Kingfisher. This gold card member says the comfort factor lures him in. This is reflected in its high score in the "in-flight reading" parameter, showing that the airline pays attention to detail.

With Kingfisher Red slated for a shut down, growing concerns about the airline's finances which have led to a cut in number of flights, competition from low-cost carriers such as IndiGo on sectors in which it had an advantage because of the acquisition of Air Deccan, it may seem that the 'good times' are on the wane.

But Kingfisher continues to provide its customers quality service. "Once, I had exceeded the baggage limit by more than 10 kg but the staff did not charge me for it. Low cost airlines are extremely strict about baggage limits," said Mumbai resident Abhishek Gupta. "A clean craft, polite staff and excellent in-flight service are things that



make you think of Kingfisher every time you fly," adds Varma.

The janta in maharaja Mallya's court seem happy with their choice of carrier. The airline was Bangalore's top choice in the metro-wise rankings.

Anubhav Gupta, a student in Bangalore explains why: "It's not just about the luxury or that it's UB Group's child, the routes Kingfisher offers from Bangalore are a big factor."

Kingfisher has also done well in Delhi, Chennai, Lucknow and Indore, thus proving that it can hold its own, away from 'home'.

Though cost is the most important deciding factor, Kingfisher customers don't mind shelling out an extra buck. As far as the experience of flying is concerned, the 'king' in Kingfisher is still intact.

(With inputs from Soubhik Mitra in Mumbai)

AIRLINE REPORT CARD

91.5% On time performance	18.8% Market Share
1.4% Flight Cancellation	63 Number of domestic centres

'IndiGo'ing places at lower prices

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It may be the newest kid on the block, but IndiGo has taken the Indian airline industry by storm. Established in 2006, it has taken off in a big way, becoming a big name in the low-cost carrier market in no time. No wonder then, IndiGo emerges as the best low-cost carrier in the HT-MaRS Airline Survey 2011.

The success story of low-cost carriers is linked to the growth of India's small towns and IndiGo has thrived on this.

"The in-flight snacks are one of the best and since I am a frequent flier, the airline ground staff at Guwahati are extra friendly and helpful," said Patricia Mukhim, 53, editor of The Shillong Times.

Offering routes between cities which were hitherto unconnected, IndiGo has scored high satisfaction ratings in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow.

These carriers have also encouraged people to switch to air travel. In a price-sensitive market like India, IndiGo scores a hit by offering cheaper deals.

"If you buy a ticket 15-20 days in advance, you can get it cheaper than other airlines. IndiGo offers good connectivity to locations via Delhi or Kolkata," said Dr Amulya Kumar Singh, an orthopedic from Patna.

Passengers all across India rave about IndiGo's on-time performance, the high-



est amongst all airlines at 92.4%. Pallavi Singh, a marketing consultant, says: "They are always on time and often before time, which is remarkable." Singh concurs, calling punctuality the 'hallmark' of the airline. "Recently, I travelled to Pune and the flight reached before time," he adds.

The turn-around time for an IndiGo flight is less than 30 minutes, a hard feat to match. Though there are no complimentary meals on this no-frills airline, the service and performance matches the best.

The IndiGo formula seems to be working its magic, as it is the only profitable airline this year. While veterans like Kingfisher and Jet languish in losses, IndiGo has posted a profit of ₹650 or for the financial year 2010-11.

So look out, big boys, the competition has arrived.

(With inputs from Rahul Karmakar in Guwahati)

AIRLINE REPORT CARD

92.4% On time performance	18.7% Market Share
0.1% Flight Cancellation	26 Number of domestic centres

Has the Maharaja lost his crown?

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Once a symbol of pride and now dismissed as a white elephant torn between empire-building babus and demanding trade unions, Air India (AI) is struggling to find a balance between an overarching public sector culture and the difficult demands of an aggressive, competitive industry in which both no-frills players and full service charmers are cornering India's national carrier in a pincer attack.

Rohit Nandan, AI's new chairman and managing director, can take heart from the fact that despite being the lowest scorer in the HT-MaRS Airline Survey for the second time, the cabinet seems poised once again to drop a financial lifeline to the airline which is hemorrhaging even as it had lined up the purchase of a III-strong new fleet.

"You need someone with the passion of JRD Tata to return the airline to its past glory. Unfortunately, we have nobody with that kind of passion in India," said Captain Mohan Ranganathan, an aviation expert.

From a combined profit of over ₹75 crore in 2005-06 to losses of ₹7,000 crore that AI is estimated to incur in fiscal 2011, the story has been one of constant decline.

The airline scored a measly 766 index points as compared to others, finding favour only in Kolkata and Indore in the city-wise ranking.

Poor management, controversial hires, political interference have all contributed to bringing AI to its present state. The airline has an unusually high employee-aircraft ratio of 243:1 (industry average is around 150:1), yet the service leaves much to be desired.

EK Bharath Bhushan, Director General, Civil Aviation, expressed no surprise at AI's low scores. "They need to improve on-time performance, cleanliness; basically every single parameter," he said.

AIRLINE REPORT CARD

73.7% On time performance	18.7% Market Share
3.1% Flight Cancellation	49 Number of domestic centres

1939 Urmila K Parikh became the first Indian woman to get a pilot's license. Tata Airlines started air mail services on the Karachi, Ahmedabad, Bombay, Bellary and Madras routes on October 15.	1941 India's first aircraft, the Harlow trainer, was rolled out for test flight.	1945 Deccan Airways was founded, a joint venture between the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Tatas. Its first flight began in July 1946.	1946 Tata Airlines was renamed as Air India	1948 Indian government established a joint sector company, Air India International Ltd in collaboration with Air India with ₹2 crore capital. The inaugural flight took off on June 8, 1948 on the Mumbai-London air route.	1953 The Air Corporations Act, 1953 nationalised nine airline companies and Indian Airlines was born. The government-owned airlines dominated Indian skies till the mid-1990s	1960 India entered the jet age with the introduction of Boeing 707-437 into the fleet of Air India. India and USA were connected for the first time by an Indian Airlines flight.	1990... Private airlines entered the fray after the de-regulation of the civil aviation sector. The East West Airlines was the first national level private airline to operate in the country after 37 years.	Captain Nivedita Bhasin (left) of Indian Airlines at 26 became the youngest pilot in civil aviation history to command a jet aircraft.
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AJAY AGGARWAL / HT PHOTOS

Gateways of India

TRAVELLER COMFORT Airports in India are better and offer more facilities. The HT- MaRS Airline Survey ranked airports according to services offered

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Instead of the familiar roar of a Boeing 777 kissing a brand new tarmac, the inauguration of Delhi's swanky Terminal 3 will be remembered more for the yelp of a dog being chased off India's longest runway. The dog clearly stole the thunder from India's largest terminal that took more than three years to build.

The story of Indian airports is not all glass, chrome and steel. There was a time when airports were merely an afterthought. As Kapil Kaul, CEO South Asia, CAPA, puts it, "Earlier, Indian aviation was only about Air India. That scenario has changed. Now it is also about the airports."

In 1998, public-private partnerships arrived on the Indian scene, changing the face of Indian aviation. Cochin International Airport became the first product of such a partnership. There have been four others- Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad and Bangalore.

The HT-MaRS Aviation Survey has ranked Bangalore airport as the best in the country for the second survey in a row. "The new Bangalore airport is an experience in itself. The coffee shops, bookstores and retail outlets make it much more attractive than the stark older one," said Tara Fernandes, student.

Though Bangalore airport has maintained its lead, the new Terminal 3 in Delhi, with its sheer size and snazzy interiors, has earned a nod of approval from passengers. But despite the shock-and-awe it created, it has yet to live upto its hype.

"With T3 we are blinded a bit by the glam but a lot of work needs to be done. The time required for disembarkation is too much, toilets need to be placed conveniently and security checks have to be streamlined," said Ram Mohan, a consultant in Delhi.

Over the years, the number of fliers using airports has increased, making them busy places indeed. Regional centres are gaining momentum. For instance, the number of passengers using Jaipur airport has risen by 250% since 2005-06. Patna has more than doubled the number of flights in the last year. Director-General of Civil Aviation, E K Bharat Bhushan feels that the growth is and will be equally 'well-spread'. "Thirty-five non-metro airports are being modernized at the moment. Smaller towns are coming up. The economics demands it," he said.

The 1460-acre Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar International Airport at Nagpur offers better air connectivity to domestic and foreign destinations, more passengers and more airlines. Given its geographical advantage, it links smaller cities and emerging metros in Vidarbha and Central India.

Today, international airlines such as Oman Air, Saudi Arabian Airlines and Buddha Airlines operate direct flights to

JAIPUR AIRPORT HAS SEEN A 250% RISE IN PASSENGER TRAFFIC SINCE 2005. IN PATNA, THE NUMBER OF FLIGHTS HAS DOUBLED IN THE LAST YEAR.

the once sleepy airport at Lucknow.

But challenges lie ahead for airport development. Land acquisition (like that faced by the Navi Mumbai airport), scarcity of funds and security hassles are just some of them. As the number of airlines jostling for airspace has risen, air congestion is another problem that needs to be tackled.

Authorities in Indore were forced to build a smaller car park at the new terminal of the Devi Ahilyabai Holkar Airport due to land transfer issues.

"Airports should offer airlines the entire benefits of the back-end so that the airlines focus on quicker turn around times, landing and taking-off seamlessly without any glitches. That will save time and costs," says Kaul.

The task of modernising airports is still a work-in-progress.

"Modernisation is not just about snazzy buildings. Technology scale-ups, like installing a satellite-based tracking system are important as well," said Bhushan. "Looks aren't all that matters, after all."

But perhaps only in India, a trip to the airport can sometimes substitute for a trip to the zoo. In July 2011, a Kingfisher flight was stranded for hours when a few peacocks were sighted on the runway at Nagpur airport. Several barking deer and wild boar roam inside the vast airport campus. A major mishap was averted when an Indigo pilot tried to save two snakes on the runway last year.

Now, that truly is Incredible India! (With inputs from Ruchir Kumar in Patna, Pradeep Kumar Maitra in Nagpur, Rashpal Singh & Sachin Saini in Jaipur and Anupam Srivastava in Lucknow)

voxpop



Once I had exceeded the baggage limit by more than 10 kg but Kingfisher staff did not charge me for it.

ABHISHEK GUPTA
Resident, Mumbai



Jet Airways offers the best schedule while Indigo is extremely disciplined in its on-time performance

MILAN ZATAKIA
Entrepreneur, Mumbai



Train and roadways are obsolete now as I don't have time and energy to waste. For me, price, comfort, and flight timings all combined together.

APARNA GEHLOT
Apparel dealer, Jaipur

TOP 10 AIRPORTS ACROSS PARAMETERS

ACCESS & DEPARTURE FROM AIRPORT

	Score	Rank
Bangalore	833	1
Jaipur	775	2
Delhi T3	737	3
Chennai	734	4
Delhi T1	728	5
Indore	713	6
Mumbai	707	7
Lucknow	693	8
Ahmedabad	648	9
Hyderabad	621	10

Attributes
Availability of baggage carts/trolleys, Parking facilities, Transport to reach place of stay from the airport.

GETTING AROUND IN THE AIRPORT

	Score	Rank
Bangalore	821	1
Ahmedabad	808	2
Hyderabad	767	3
Lucknow	763	4
Delhi T1	757	5
Chennai	751	6
Delhi T3	743	7
Kolkata	737	8
Mumbai	726	9
Jaipur	701	10

Attributes
Boarding info/Flight screens, Ease of Transit through Airport, Signage around Terminal areas.

EXPERIENCE WITH SECURITY

	Score	Rank
Bangalore	830	1
Ahmedabad	829	2
Hyderabad	811	3
Lucknow	801	4
Delhi T1	791	5
Delhi T3	791	6
Chennai	783	7
Kolkata	772	8
Mumbai	748	9
Indore	709	10

Attributes
Courtesy and helpfulness of security staff at entry point, Waiting time at security check-in.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES

	Score	Rank
Bangalore	806	1
Delhi T3	764	2
Delhi T1	741	3
Hyderabad	714	4
Mumbai	709	5
Chennai	706	6
Indore	703	7
Kolkata	655	8
Jaipur	654	9
Lucknow	644	10

Attributes
Choice and price of Food & Beverage outlets, Staff Service at Food & Beverage outlets.

TERMINAL COMFORT AND AMENITIES

	Score	Rank
Bangalore	827	1
Hyderabad	778	2
Ahmedabad	772	3
Delhi T3	762	4
Chennai	748	5
Mumbai	746	6
Delhi T1	744	7
Lucknow	738	8
Kolkata	724	9
Indore	700	10

Attributes
Cleanliness of Public Areas, Courtesy and helpfulness of airport staff, Waiting Comfort & Seating facilities.

METHODOLOGY

The survey was carried out by MaRS Monitoring and Research Systems Private Limited among 2200 men who had taken at least six flights in the past one year. The sample was spread ten towns- Delhi, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kolkata, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Indore, Chennai, Hyderabad and Bangalore. People have clearly exercised their choice. About 85% of the sample respondents have used more than one airline in the past one year. On an average, a passenger has used 2.6 airlines in the past one year. From each respondent a rating of a maximum of two airlines, the two most used, were taken. The achieved sample of passengers was 301 for Go Air, 304 for Jet Lite, 331 for IndiGo, 336 for Spicejet, 391 for Kingfisher Red, 667 for Air India, 783 for Jet Airways and 936 for Kingfisher. Survey team was led by Mr. Gaurav Panakel (gaurav@marspvt.net). Interviews were carried out using a fully structured questionnaire.

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TOP FOUR AIRPORTS

The HT MaRS Airline Survey rated customer satisfaction with various airport services such as quality of food and beverages, parking facilities, ease of transit through airport, courtesy of staff at security check-in etc. Bengaluru airport was ranked one. The top four airports are listed below.

Bengaluru



Located 35 km away from the city's central hub, Bengaluru International Airport is in Devanahalli, off National Highway 7. Though the drive to the airport is long and tiring, the airport itself is a darling of passengers who find it clean and comfortable.

The airport scored a total of 815 index points, pipping the new T3 terminal as well. Bengaluru Airport scored particularly high in the 'access and departure from airport' as well as the 'terminal comfort and amenities' parameters.

Check-in and immigration is a breeze, while the facilities are a major improvement from the old airport where chaos reigned supreme. The state-of-the-art lounges, equipped with comfortable seating, wi-fi facility and televisions ooze luxury and comfort, but most passengers find the departure hall cramped and wanting in space. Food options can be improved as well.

Delhi - Terminal 3



The upscale T3 terminal was inaugurated last year amid great chest-thumping fanfare. Spread over 5.4 million square feet, everything about the new terminal screams 'big'. It's equipped to handle 34 million passengers annually, with 95 immigration counters and a 100-room transit hotel. The multi-level car parking, with a capacity of 4,300 cars, is the largest such facility in India.

The massiveness of the airport hits home as soon as you enter it, but the overtly-patterned, garish carpet hampers the movement of luggage.

The airport scores high in the 'access and departure from the airport' and 'food and beverages' categories, with a wide array of restaurants and a direct Metro line. But the multiple, haphazard security checks and confusing signage earn it low scores in the 'getting around in the airport' and 'experience with security' categories.

Delhi - Terminal 1



A few years ago, the Delhi airport could not live up to the expectations of a city aspiring for a place on the world map. Dirty, lacking in essential amenities, unhelpful staff-these were just a few of the problems welcoming people into Delhi. In 2006, the GMR-led consortium was awarded the mandate to modernise the Airport after a competitive bidding process and much has changed since then.

A far cry from its days of yore, the airport now has a wide array of restaurants and cafes, comfortable lounges and is easily accessible. Although it doesn't have the lights and glamour of Terminal 3, but in its steely, old-world yet spruced-up avatar it is aiming for efficiency and performance.

The airport scored high in the 'food and beverage' category, as well as the 'getting around in the airport' and 'access and departure' categories.

Chennai



Inching its way towards improvement, Chennai International Airport is trying to keep pace with a changing city. Handling some 25 flights per hour on an average, the airport is now undergoing an expansion and modernization programme.

With construction underway, the airport is disarray. But once completed, it promises a new domestic terminal and bigger international terminals, capable of handling 23 million passengers a year. Over the next two years, the airport will boast of 104 check-in counters, 16 aerobridges, 60 immigration counters and two runways.

The airport is well connected to the city; though plans to connect it via metro will take another four years. While the airport has scored well in the 'terminal comfort and amenities' category, the toilets, which inspired horror stories from many a passenger need to be improved.

1990...

In April, the government adopted an open-sky policy and allowed air taxi operators to operate flights from any airport, and decide their own flight schedules, cargo and passenger fares.

Air India entered the Guinness Book of World Records for the largest evacuation effort by an airline when it carried over 1.11 lakh passengers from Amman to Mumbai just before the Gulf war began.

1994

Private airlines were permitted to operate scheduled services and private players including Jet Airways, Air Sahara, Modiluft, East West Airlines commenced domestic operations.

1998

The first private airport came up in Cochin, Kerala.

1999

Tragedy struck when the Indian Airlines IC 814 flight was hijacked in Kandahar.



2003

The 'low cost carrier' era began when Air Deccan started its services.



2005

Kingfisher Airlines began operations. The government designated Air India, Indian Airlines, Jet Airways and Air Sahara to start international services.



2010

The brand new T-3 terminal was inaugurated in New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport. Pawan Hans started its sea plane services Jal Hans.

