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# The Highs & Lows of Private Aviation in India

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Rajeev Wadhwa, is the founder & chairman of Baron Aviation and Allied Services Pvt Ltd, a private aviation company that offers innovative solutions in the private aviation and luxury travel business.



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With Indian MNCs growing at a rapid rate, the use of private jets is emerging as the latest status symbols for high-flying Indian entrepreneurs. These individuals, panning across industries, have two things in common: huge success and the ability to showcase their success.

### The High Fliers

As of 2012, the Forbes billionaire list had 48 Indians as compared to the nine Indians listed in 2004. The net worth of Indian HNIs is estimated to grow five-fold from Rs 65 trillion in 2011-2012 to Rs 318 trillion in 2016-2017. The rise of the Indian billionaire is hugely credited to the home-grown Indian entrepreneurs who have established a name for themselves in the global map.

As the number of Indian entrepreneurs grows, they are gradually catching up with their western counterparts when it comes to adopting the latest technologies, best practices, global expansions and merger and acquisitions. However, Indian bigwigs are yet to match up to their western counterparts when it comes to individual lifestyle.

It is largely true that Indian corporates are far more stressed than their international counterparts due to infrastructure and other constraints. Take, for example, issues related to scheduled airlines, which any serious entrepreneur disregards in preference of charters because of last minute changes in his plans and meetings schedules, long security checks, the hassles of not being able to discuss private matters at the airport, no business class seats, limited operational airports, flight cancellations and lay-overs etc. A company's success depends on the productive worth of the CEO's time and hence, flying private is the need of the hour.

Private flying is must today for entrepreneurs who have limited time and too much in hand to do. Convenience of making travel schedules and flying according to your scheduled time enhances productivity, ease of landing in small towns which are not open to commercial aviation (there are more than 150 airports that can land private aircraft in India as opposed to 70 airports for larger commercial aircrafts), privacy and confidentiality which is a major concern for HNIs and corporate bigwigs is only available in a chartered private jet which combines comfort, luxury and supreme privacy.

### Pros & Cons

Owning private jets is a not difficult for India's corporate heads. They can very well afford it, but then issues like aircraft operations, parking, maintenance, compliance with DGCA rules are some of the issues that prevent individuals from owning private jets today.

In spite of this, in 2012, India became the second-largest business jet market in the Asia-Pacific region, after China's 220, with a fleet of 165 (up from 26 in 2005). The domestic general aviation segment is expected to grow at 10 per cent per annum to cross \$4.5 billion by 2017.

It is estimated that around 120 business jets, 150 small aircraft and 180 helicopters will be added by then. With the increase in investments taking place in places that are not connected by scheduled airlines and the increase in business expansion plans, companies and HNIs now prefers using the services of chartered private jets to connect between their offices and manufacturing facilities. And the numbers are growing by the day. General Aviation has great prospects and future in India and reasons are compelling.