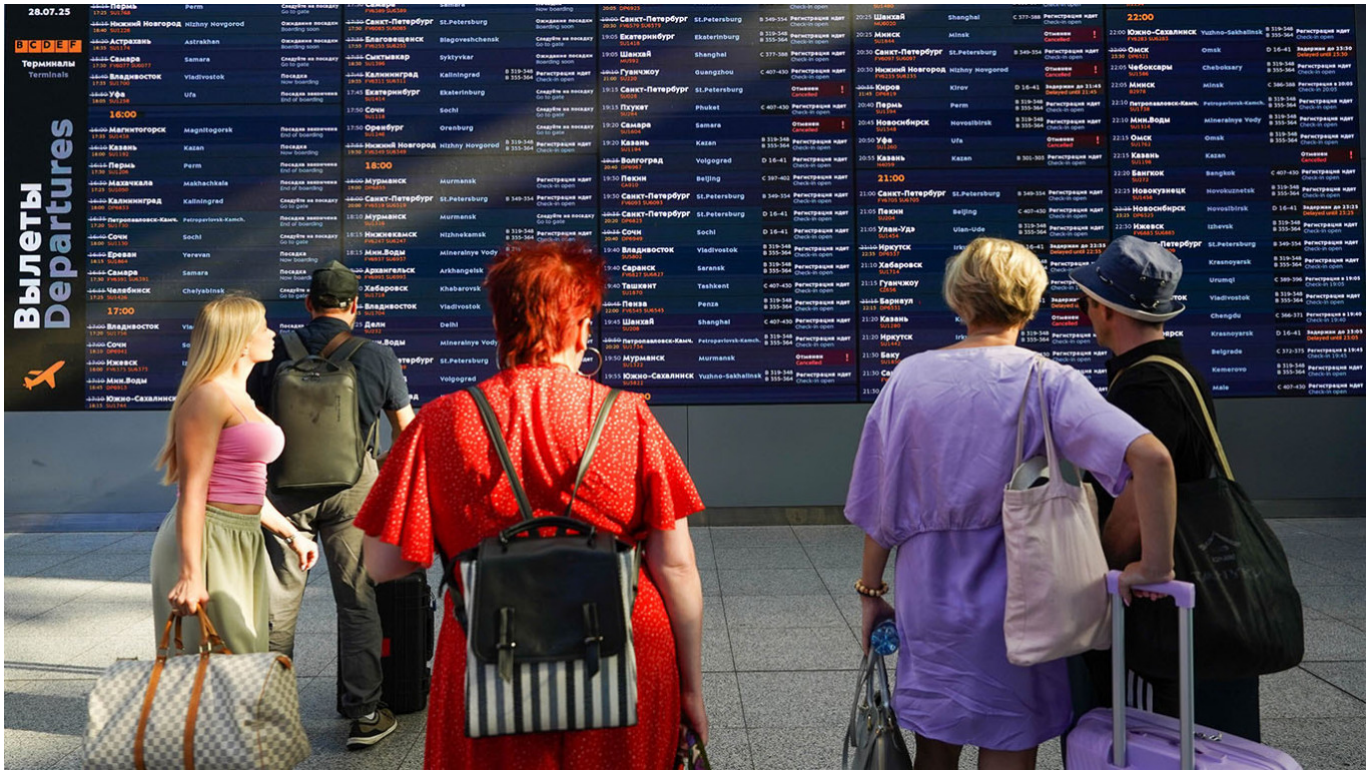
The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russian Summer Air Travel Fell Amid Surge in Daily Drone Attacks

September 29, 2026



Passengers at Moscow's Sheremetyevo Airport. **Alexander Avilov / Moskva News Agency**

Russian airlines recorded a 7% drop in passenger traffic during the summer travel season, as a surge of daily Ukrainian drone attacks disrupted operations at dozens of airports across the country, the Interfax news agency reported Tuesday.

Dmitry Yadrov, who heads the civilian aviation agency Rosaviatsia, said in a meeting with Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin that Russian airlines transported 39.5 million passengers between May and August.

That is reportedly down from around 42.6 million passengers who were transported over the same period last year.

The drop comes amid near-daily disruptions at Russian airports due to Ukrainian attacks.

Related article: Russia Says It Won't Let Ukraine Disrupt Air Travel After Zelensky Warning

Earlier this month, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky warned foreign airlines and insurance companies that Ukrainian drones made Russian airspace dangerous. In response, Rosaviatsia vowed it would work to prevent any disruption to civil aviation.

“Despite all the challenges we faced, primarily those related to restrictions on the use of airspace, the industry as a whole — airlines, airports, air navigation — operated normally, reliably and safely,” Yadrov told Mishustin on Tuesday.

Russia’s Economic Development Ministry projects passenger traffic to reach 108.5 million in 2026, down 0.3% year-on-year, according to Interfax. The ministry cites “systemic constraints,” including difficulties maintaining foreign aircraft and prolonged airport closures in southern Russia, as the main causes for the expected decrease.

Aviation experts warn that demand for air travel could fall even further as the government is weighing whether to introduce new passenger fees to offset rising aircraft leasing costs and jet fuel prices.

According to the newspaper Kommersant, those proposed surcharges could raise between 68 billion rubles and 84 billion rubles ($807 million and $997 million) annually.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2026/09/29/russian-summer-air-travel-fell-amid-surge-in-daily-drone-attacks-a93814