


ON RECOVERY PATH

# Widespread outage hits Microsoft mail, apps

MATHURES PAUL

**Calcutta:** Millions of Microsoft users around the world were unable to join Teams meetings, access email on Outlook or use other services on Friday after a global IT failure.

Schools, government offices and businesses including domestic airlines were affected. So were many consulates — and Australia's spy agency.

The outage began on Thursday evening and continued into Friday. On Friday afternoon, many users were still unable to send or receive emails through Outlook. Microsoft Teams, the Copilot AI assistant and other Microsoft 365 services too were hobbled.

Later in the evening, Microsoft said the recovery process had been "encouraging, with service availability and email delivery performance improving across a growing portion of affected infrastructure".

"We know our customers rely on our services to get important work done every day, and regret the impact these outages had on those who depend on us. Our teams are reviewing what happened and how we can prevent similar issues going forward," Charles Lamanna, executive vice-president, Copilot, Agents and Platform at Microsoft, said in a statement sent to **The Telegraph**.

Earlier in the day, IndiGo said its "email support services are currently impacted, and we may not be able to receive your emails". The carrier asked customers to get in touch through its website or mobile app.

Akasa Air said its "email support services are currently experiencing delays". Air India said it was "closely monitoring the ongoing Microsoft outage. Our flight operations remain unaffected."

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# Loss of data unlikely: Expert on Microsoft outage

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In Japan, digital minister Toshiharu Furukawa said the government's email services had gone down but it had other means of communication. In Hong Kong, work at Morgan Stanley and Goldman Sachs was disrupted because staff could not get into their emails or Teams.

In Europe, stock exchange operator Euronext said its listing teams had problems with email, and British insurer Aviva said it was putting back-up plans in place for its earnings calls.

Across the Atlantic, VIA Rail Canada warned passengers that they "may not be able to receive email communications about their trip" because of technical problems with Microsoft services.

AI companies, too, found themselves hamstrung by the outage. OpenAI, the company behind ChatGPT, said: "We're investigating an issue with Microsoft connectors where new connections may be broken and tools are not working as expected."

Anthropic reported a similar problem with its Microsoft 365 connector and Claude for Outlook.

The diplomatic sector, too, suffered disruptions. "We experienced email outage on and off through the day," said an official of a consulate-general.

Another consulate received several telephone calls seeking responses to important mails. "But since we did not receive them, we could not respond, either," an official said.

A source at a third consulate said: "Mail was down but work continued via Teams and WhatsApp."

None agreed to be quoted. "We need to get the clearance for any quote from the embassy in Delhi but since mail is down, we cannot seek that," a consulate official said.

Mark A. Gregory, associate professor at the School of Engineering at RMIT University, Melbourne, said: "The Microsoft outage appears to have been caused by a misconfiguration of networking systems and infrastructure. The impact has been global and highlights the risks associated with relying on cloud services. The loss of productivity will be in the tens of millions in Australia and tens of billions globally."

Tom Worthington, honorary senior lecturer at the School of Computing at the Australian National University, said: "It is unlikely there will be a loss of data, just inconvenience as systems are manually rolled back to the last good copy of the software."

The outage underlines how much people depend on Microsoft's email, chat and business software.

Govind Rammurthy, MD and CEO of eScan, warned against putting all one's eggs in one vendor's basket.

"Modern enterprises have quietly built their entire operational nervous system inside one provider's ecosystem. When that ecosystem hiccups, there is no graceful degradation; there is a complete stop," he told **The Telegraph**.

"What is equally telling is the recovery timeline. Despite enormous engineering resources and AI-assisted tooling, restoring complex interdependent systems is taking literally hours of careful human intervention."

He added: "Self-healing infrastructure remains aspirational for novel failure modes. The takeaway isn't to abandon Cloud. It is to stop treating single-vendor convenience as an acceptable long-term architecture."

Earlier disruptions had rarely lasted more than a few hours.

This is Microsoft's third such failure this year. In January, its Outlook, Teams and calendar services were down for hours; in August, users had trouble signing in to Microsoft 365 and syncing Outlook emails.

Memes about the latest Microsoft outage filled social media feeds. "Outlook not so good" seemed the joke of the day, along with images of the Microsoft 365 logo with the numeral scribbled over to read "Microsoft 364".

Varun Desai, the organiser of Jazzfest in Calcutta, spoke of communication problems with overseas artistes.

"Artistes performing at the upcoming Jazzfest in December are applying for their visas. This involves a lot of back-and-forth communication between the festival organiser and the artistes, as we have to send them invitation letters confirming that they are going to perform at the festival," Desai said.

"We realised that many people were unable to communicate because they were using Outlook. The outage has made it difficult for us to communicate with the consular network. Luckily, it's the weekend, and the work can be done on Monday."

A spokesperson for Senco Gold Limited told this newspaper: "The lack of connectivity affected our operations, making internal and external communication difficult. However, it did not hamper our sales, and no customer faced any problem transacting at any of our showrooms across India."