

Art and Culture at Indian Airports

- By G.S. Bawa, General Manager (PR), AAI

A few decades ago an airport was far from representative of the tradition and history of a particular nation. But things have changed, and now-a-day passengers actually look forward to spend a few hours at the airport between their flights. Airports across the world are now showcasing the art and culture at the airport through various means and thus providing the first and last impression of a country, state or city where airport is situated.

Kolkata has long been known for its literary, artistic, and revolutionary heritage so Kolkata has often been dubbed as the Cultural capital of India or the Literary Capital of India.

The Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (NSCBIA) at Kolkata is the gateway to the East Asian Countries.

The newly inaugurated Integrated Terminal Building of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport (NSCBIA) is spread over an area of 1,89,815 sq. m. with all modern facilities like 128 Check-in Counters with CUTE, 40 Immigration Counters, 7 Departure and 16 Arrival Conveyor Belts, 18 Custom Counters, 18 Aerobridges along with 27 Elevators, 16 Escalators and 13 Travelators with a capacity to handle 20 million pax. annually.

The landscape concept for the airport terminal is rooted in the rich cultural heritage of Kolkata and Bengal. It is conceived as one of the biggest pieces of land art inspired by works of literary giant Rabindranath Tagore. The land art connects the building with its environment, the outside with the inside and creates a unique landscape. It also offers two disparate spatial experiences- the vastness of the grand central garden and the intimacy of the internal courtyards. The grand central garden is a canvas inspired by paintings and poems by Tagore. It also acts as the setting for the building. The garden occurs in two levels separated by a sweeping curve a direct inspiration from one of Tagore's famous paintings.

Compared to the simplicity of the lower level, the upper level of the garden is rightly textured and patterned. The pattern, which is unique in nature, has many variations. Inspired by letters and words extracted from one of the famous poems from 'Gitanjali', it becomes an art form for people to enjoy while at Airport. The roof of the terminal is designed to harvest rainwater.

Interior work of the New Terminal of Kolkata Airport is inspired from the work of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore. Airports Authority of India has also installed an

18ft tall statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in front of the Terminal in whose honour this airport is named.

While travelling through Kolkata Airport, passengers can now have the glimpse of Rabindranath Tagore's letters and scripts which have been vividly reproduced in the ceiling of Terminal Building by using powder coated aluminium piping in such a way that it will surely spellbound the travelers. In another huge ceiling of Terminal Building, Tagore's handwritings have been converted into embossed letters, which is very rare at airports all over the globe.

At Kolkata Airport apt attention and care have been taken to construct the new terminal building on the green concept. This building facilitates natural sun lights, rain water harvesting, energy efficiency and other environment friendly features. One can have a look of a great old banyan tree which has been protected at Kolkata Airport by the dedicated engineers with the help of environmental scientists. This is a very rare and rememberable sight for the passengers who visit India from world over for the cultural and environment friendly emotions in Indians.

Now, passengers without moving out of Kolkata Airport can also enjoy the art and culture of the city at airport itself; as all are now available inside the terminal building at walls, ceiling and even on the city side of Terminal, says Mrs. Peter Claus from Germany "Well done Airports Authority of India".



Passenger can enjoy Rabindranath Tagore's script while entering/exiting from Kolkata Airport



Mural painting at terminal by a great painter



This old Banyan tree at city side of airport is preserved during construction period by the engineers and environmental scientists



AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA
A CSR Oriented Organisation