



# AAI TAKES WING

Alok Sinha, Chairman, AAI, believes strongly in airport development, taking on challenges and facing them upfront **LL BUREAU**

A country's economic growth potential is directly affected by its infrastructure development and the ability of an enterprise to engage effectively. Infrastructure is crucial for the delivery of public services and economic development. The role of Airports Authority of India (AAI) in this respect is paramount, as it is a major airport operator and a leader in developing airport infrastructure along the length and breadth of the country, including remote and far-flung areas. This august body came into existence with the merger of National Airports Authority and International Airports Authority of India.

The mainstay of the Civil Aviation sector in the country, AAI currently handles about 122 million domestic and about 47 million international passengers, and is poised to

handle 217 million domestic and 76 million international passengers by 2020. The complete fleet size is expected to grow from the present statistic of about 400 to 1000 aircraft by 2020. It is a matter of great pride that India could well be the 3rd largest aviation market by 2020 – a rapidly expanding air transport network and the spread of airport infrastructure in the country is the testimony to such claims.

At the helm of this impressive organisation is the newly appointed Alok Sinha, IAS, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, who brings a vast administrative experience to his repertoire, including the policy development initiatives for Operations and Maintenance of Airports in the country, including the PPP model; development of Greenfield Airports and Air Cargo Operations; flexible use of airspace and the



ICAO TRAINAIR, plus accreditation for AAI's Fire Training Centre



Indian Aviation Academy conferred with Arch of Europe Award for Quality and Management in Gold Category, by the Business Initiatives Directives Group, Madrid (Spain)



*Ashok Lavasa, Secretary (CA), Alok Sinha, JS, MoCA & Chairman, AAI, along with AAI Board Members, immediately after signing of MoU between MoCA & AAI, for establishment of Solar Power plants at airports*

development of Indian airports as international hubs.

As Aviation Administrator, Sinha strongly believes in the widespread development of airports in the country. He is undoubtedly the right man in the right place for realising the government's ambitious plans for the aviation sector. Sinha's future oriented approach has led him to believe in the importance of investing in airports: "A three-kilometre of road takes you nowhere; at best, it connects you to two/three places, but a three-kilometre of runway may connect you to the world," maintains Sinha.

On AAI's anvil are plans to invest Rs.1,500 crore in the development of non-metro airports during the remaining part of the 12th Plan, which is aimed at improving connecting infrastructure and develop world-class air navigation services, infrastructure and other related activities to improve air connectivity.

Adds Sinha, "It is the right time for us at AAI to channelise our experience, energies and expertise to develop regional, low-cost airports to provide remote area connectivity in the country. In the first phase, places having basic airport infrastructure can be developed and made operational. Wherever required, Greenfield Airports can also be planned and developed. The consideration to develop small airports in remote areas such as the North East region is already being accorded by AAI, and accordingly, AAI has drawn plans for low-cost airports at Along, Daparizo, Itanagar, Tezu, etc."

Along with the implementation of infrastructure, under Sinha's management, AAI will be exploring the important dimension of quality of service at airports. According to him, it is the quality of service that AAI delivers to its customers, whether airlines or passengers, that will pay rich dividends. Therefore, Sinha feels, quality service should be AAI's ultimate goal.

### AAI IN TIER III CITIES

Sinha is all for providing remote area connectivity in the country. The need of the hour is promotion of Regional-Air-Connectivity, bringing down air fares, reducing operational expenses of various stakeholders so as to encourage people



*Alok Sinha, Chairman, AAI, during Blood Donation Camp, organised by AAI, at Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan*

to fly. One of the prerequisites for the same is the availability of basic airport infrastructure at as many locations as possible and the enabling incentives for the airlines to fly to these towns. While the Government of India has been consistently working towards improvements on Routes Dispersal Guidelines (RDG) within AAI, waiving off landing, Parking or Navigation Charges, Alternative Night Parking Charges, etc., will have to be factored.

The aviation segment is entering into a new era of expansion, driven by low-cost carriers. About 100 low-cost airports may be required to meet the surge in demand and other nationwide developmental activities within the next 20 years, to connect Tier-II and Tier-III cities. The low-cost airport model, however, will not compromise on the technical, security and other issues related to essential services at airports, and emphasis will be made to enhance the non-aeronautical revenue.

The next round of development will target regional connectivity, by linking small towns together; and to spur growth, airports will be designed and equipped to offer low costs to airlines as well as to passengers. The development of these 100 airports will be undertaken in a phased manner—AAI has already completed over 60 airports in the past nine years. The ultimate success of development will come through cooperation from states and other stakeholders by providing incentives such as reduction in VAT charges on ATF (Aviation Turbine Fuel), providing land free of cost or provision for viability -gap-funding, etc.

# FUTURE GO-GREEN AIRPORTS

In a significant step forward, AAI plans to invest in sustainable energy by tapping into alternate energy resources **LL BUREAU**

**A**irports form a major part of infrastructure development in a developing country such as India, which is witnessing a rapid expansion in airport infrastructure. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has been on the forefront in doing this in a sustainable manner. The Airport Sector is likely to witness major activity in smaller towns and cities to bring them on the connectivity map of the country. The environmental concerns will also be equally important and AAI is adequately geared for the same.

The Airport terminals of the 21st century will have to work in tandem with eco-friendly building systems, thereby operating largely to harness natural and renewable sources such as wind and sunlight. Thus, there is a need to focus on innovation and out-of-box solutions for airports of the future.

Environmental and sustainability issues are the future challenges for all mega projects and airports are no exception to this. The focus will have to be on tapping alternate energy resources. Thus, the future of the aviation industry lies in sustainability and eco-friendly solutions.

In the recent past, AAI has taken up a number of initiatives towards sustainable development. These include adherence to Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) norms; Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) certified rating 4-Star and above for electrical appliances; automatic shutting of lights for sensors and timers; implementation of Building Management System (BMS); use of energy efficient chillers and variable speed drives; energy efficient fluorescent lamps; automatic sliding doors; air curtains; machine room less elevators; LED lights, both for taxiway and apron-edge lights.

AAI has also ensured that the new terminal buildings are designed to be thermally efficient with the use of modern glass facades to reflect heat and reduce cooling loads, optimisation of roof skylights by using natural light during daytime and use of automatic light sensor to reduce indoor lighting. Water conservation and water management is also a major focus area at AAI Airports, which include effective management of ground water resources, rainwater harvesting, etc. As for waste management AAI has set up a small paper recycling unit of its own.

Under the carbon reduction programme, AAI monitors consumption of diesel fuel and minimises the uses wherever



possible and is replacing the same with more environment friendly fuel such as R134a, which does not deplete the ozone layer. AAI has also initiated a process to get registered with the Airport Carbon Accreditation (ACA) of Airport Council International regarding the reduction of carbon footprints at some of its airports.

Renewable energy initiatives have also been implemented in AAI, which include provision of Solar Photo Voltaic (SPV) power plant for airports; use of solar power street lights, and solar power aviation obstruction lights at remote sites; use of solar water heating; exploring windpower generation at coastal airports.

The latest in this area is the signing of an MoU between AAI and Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), on May 28, 2014. The MoU includes setting up of solar plants of 50MW capacity (cumulative capacity at 30 of its airports). The cumulative capacity will be further re-enhanced to 150MW over a period of time. Ashok Lavasa, Secretary, Civil Aviation, under whose aegis the MoU was signed, highlighted the importance of tapping solar energy through various outlets, including storage of power generated in rechargeable batteries.

While elaborating on sustainability, Lavasa said, "Speed and safety have been the key elements of flying thus far. Sustainability has now emerged as another key element. We need to keep our skies clean and our surroundings congenial, for which the use of appropriate technology and harnessing natural resources will become increasingly important. Wind and sun are sources of infinite energy and airports in India are suitably placed to benefit from their abundance due to the vast open spaces and rooftop surfaces that they have. By tapping this energy they can satisfy some of their own requirements as well as become net producers of energy, thereby playing the progressive role of prosumers. This is a cause that AAI should espouse both in designing their airports as well as using natural resources to produce energy." Lavasa further stated that utilisation of stored energy in an efficient and effective manner is very important and as such AAI would identify the outlets where the tapped energy could be channelised, including other applications of renewable energy for various establishments at airports. Lavasa directed that projects should be accomplished in a time-bound manner and airport-wise specific timelines should be worked out and followed up for effective implementation.

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