



A ROARING FLY OFF

AAI's classy new terminal at NSCBI Airport in Kolkata took off with a flying start in the august presence of the President and other dignitaries **LL BUREAU**

They have done exceedingly well. Congratulations!...The new Kolkata airport terminal is an example of how the Public Sector can also create a world-class facility." With these words, AAI earned accolades for the development of its infrastructure from the Hon'ble President Pranab Mukherjee, who set the seal of approval on the New Integrated Terminal Building of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport, Kolkata. The auspicious event took place on 20 January, 2013, in the presence of Civil Aviation Minister Ajit Singh, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal Governor MK Narayanan, and other dignitaries.

Within three days of the President's initiation, the first inaugural flight AI-021, comprising the maiden Kolkata-Delhi-London sector, was successfully operated on 23rd January, 2013, on the propitious occasion of the 116th Birth Anniversary of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, at 10.00 hours, from the New Integrated Terminal Building of NSCBI Airport, Kolkata. There were 115 passengers on board out of which 65 pax were scheduled for an international destination.

All the facilities of the new terminal such as Check-in, Baggage Handling System (BHS), Common User Terminal Equipment (CUTE), Customs, Immigration, Security Check, Boarding Gate, and other necessary facilities were successfully operated. The ever hospitable Airports Authority of India gave the departing passengers a warm send-off at the terminal.

The passengers and the media were fulsome in their praise of the state-of-the-art



facilities in the new terminal which made for an altogether comfortable experience all round. The new terminal will have 48 international and 80 domestic check-in counters, 38 immigration counters, 23 international and 33 domestic security gates and 18 aerobridges.

Taking cognizance of the prodigious effort put in by the labour, VP Agrawal, Chairman, Airports Authority of India, revealed, "More than 4,000 workers worked day and night for the new building at a frantic pace to finish the magnificent glass and steel structure spread over 1,89,815 square metres, at the cost of Rs 2,325 crore."

Earlier, the President emphasised the airport's relevance in relation with other Asian countries: "The importance of Kolkata airport has increased on the backdrop of Kolkata maintaining good trade relations with other Asian countries because of its good strategic locations..." remarked Mukherjee, after unveiling an 18-foot high bronze statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose in front of the new terminal. The new terminal would help in handling increased cargo, while providing services to 20 million

passengers, up from the present nine million, the President informed. And, out of 20 million passengers, 16 million will be handled in the domestic wing, and the rest at the international wing.

Addressing the gathering at the programme, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee urged Civil Aviation Minister, Ajit Singh, to start inter-state services from the NSCBI airport and introduce night-landing services at the Bagdogra airport in North Bengal for the convenience of tourists. "The AAI should approach other airlines to start domestic and international services to facilitate the easy movement of investors to and from the city, as West Bengal is the future destination for industrialisation," she said.

While lauding the public sector and praising both, the Civil Aviation Ministry

and AAI for realising an avant garde airport in Kolkata, the President narrated the history behind AAI's upgradation of Kolkata airport.

"When Government of India decided to modernise and upgrade the Kolkata airport, there was a view that substantial investment needed for the project should come from the private sector so that there is no pressure on the exchequer," Mukherjee said. Delhi airport was the first to adopt a similar model, the President continued. There was a demand for a public sector involvement in the project and the authorities of the Kolkata airport, too, had voiced similar sentiments. Finally, the President also pointed out that the new terminal would play a pivotal role towards enhancing and demonstrating the Look-East policy of the Centre.



"The new Kolkata airport terminal is an example of how the Public Sector can also create a world-class facility..."

This is an excerpt from the Hon'ble President Pranab Mukherjee's speech at the inauguration of NSCBI Airport, Kolkata.



Ajit Singh, Minister of Civil Aviation, lighting the lamp on the occasion of the inauguration of NSCBI Airport, in the presence of M K Narayanan, Governor and Mamata Banerjee, Chief Minister, West Bengal, KC Venugopal, Minister of State for Civil Aviation and VP Agrawal, Chairman, AAI