



Dibrugarh Airport

RUNWAY SUCCESSES

The Airports Authority of India is an august body that designs, develops, operates and maintains some of the major airports in the country

Picture this—a grandiose, two-mile long space that is shaped like a dragon. Above, a gold, mesh ceiling is supported by red columns, evoking traditional Chinese colours in a most modern way; below, about 50 million people pass through each year. This is no palace or museum, it's Terminal 3 at Beijing International Airport, one of the world's largest buildings.

Of course, all airports are not quite so glamorous; they are, more often, merely utilitarian entry and exit points for travellers. However, many cities of the world have spent enormous amounts on airports in order to make them into their city's most captivating gateway. Says architect Ron Steinert, an airport expert with the international architecture firm, Gensler, "Airports are a national symbol, therefore no expense is spared to make sure mine is better than yours."

Ask any business or leisure traveller who might be perched in a poorly-lit airport lounge, trying to balance a cup of weak coffee

and an important conference call, about the importance of a well-equipped airport. In fact, most passengers would agree that airports must basically conform to the four C's: comfort, conveniences, cleanliness and customer service.

Many of India's airports which subscribe to the above qualifications also come under the aegis of a premier institution known as the Airports Authority of India (AAI). It's mission, since the time of its inception, has been nothing less than noble—"To achieve highest standards of safety and quality in air traffic services and airport management by providing state-of-the-art infrastructure for total customer satisfaction and prosperity of the nation."

Established in 1995, AAI was constituted by an Act of Parliament by the merger of the National Airports Authority and International Airports Authority of India. The resultant organisation was a single body that was entrusted with the responsibility of creating, upgrading, maintaining and managing civil aviation infrastructure both on the ground

and air space in the country.

AAI is an august body that manages 125 airports, which include 11 International Airports, 8 Customs Airports, 81 Domestic Airports and 27 Civil Enclaves at Defence airfields. AAI provides air navigation services for over 2.8 million square nautical miles of air space. You just have to consider the mind boggling statistics in terms of aircraft, passengers and cargo for the year 2008-2009 (Domestic and International), to get a sense of the enormous work capacity of this institution.

The number of aircraft—13,06,532; passengers—4,42,62,137; cargo—4,99,418 tonnes.

The main functions of AAI inter-alia include construction, modification and management of passenger terminals, development and management of cargo terminals, development and maintenance of apron infrastructure including runways, parallel taxiways, apron, etc. The AAI also handles the provision of Communication, Navigation and Surveillance, plus all the

