



Chairman's *New Year Message* 2026

Dear Colleagues,

As we bid adieu to 2025, it is an opportune moment to reflect on a year marked by steady progress, workforce strength and collective achievement for the Airports Authority of India. The milestones reached during the year are a testament to the dedication of our workforce, the support of our stakeholders, all under the visionary leadership of our Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, continue to shape India's aviation growth story. As we step into a new year with renewed purpose, I extend my warm wishes to all for a joyful and fulfilling **New Year 2026**.

India is celebrating 150 Years of Vande Mataram, the commemorative initiative to celebrate the spirit of our national song and its unique role in the history of India. AAI observed 150 years of 'Vande Mataram' across its airports and establishments, celebrating the enduring legacy of the national song and reaffirming the values of unity, service and patriotism that continue to inspire the organisation.

During the year, AAI demonstrated strong execution capabilities through both large-scale operations and sustained infrastructure expansion. Prayagraj Airport emerged as a vital aviation gateway during the MahaKumbh, operating round the clock with expanded infrastructure and enhanced connectivity to 26 cities.

AAI's Air Traffic Control teams demonstrated outstanding professionalism during periods of heightened operational demand, effectively managing increased traffic during the Char Dham Yatra and safely coordinating flight diversions necessitated by evolving regional airspace closures and special operational exigencies, while maintaining the highest standards of safety and service continuity. AAI also conducted full-scale mock exercises across all AAI airports nationwide to reinforce preparedness, coordination and operational resilience.

Infrastructure development remained at the core of AAI's mandate in 2025, responding to the rapid growth of India's aviation sector. Over the past decade, the number of operational airports in the country has more than doubled from 74 in 2014 to 164 in 2025, significantly enhancing accessibility and regional integration. In this context, AAI has outlined a capital expenditure plan of ₹25,000 crore for the period from FY 2024–25 to FY 2028–29, bolstering India's aviation infrastructure in anticipation of future demand. The Government's vision of achieving 350 operational airports by 2047 further underscores the central role of aviation in driving nation's economic growth, tourism and balanced regional development.

In FY 2025–26, AAI continued its infrastructure development momentum with the laying of foundation stones for the new Terminal Building at Hisar and the new Civil Enclave at Bihta. In addition, the recently inaugurated new Terminal Buildings at Patna, Datia, Satna and Tuticorin airports, along with the interim terminal building at Purnea Airport, are set to transform regional air travel and strengthen India's airport network. Looking ahead, AAI is advancing key upcoming projects at Jodhpur, Vijayawada, Goa, Belagavi, Rajahmundry, Hubballi and Kadapa to enhance passenger capacity and improve the overall travel experience.

AAI continues to advance a comprehensive Air Navigation Services modernisation roadmap for 2025–2035, focused on revamping ATC infrastructure through state-of-the-art new and upgraded control towers. The adoption of digital tower technologies and the deployment of advanced CNS/ATM systems position AAI at the forefront of innovation while ensuring globally benchmarked levels of safety and service performance.

Complementing infrastructure growth, the UDAN–RCS remains a cornerstone of inclusive aviation development. As UDAN marks nine years since its launch in 2016, it has played a transformative role in democratising air travel and connecting underserved and unserved airports/airstrips. With AAI's pivotal support, UDAN operates 649 routes linking 93 airports, including heliports and water aerodromes, and has enabled over 1.56 crore passengers to fly.

As passenger volumes increase, digital innovation has emerged as a key enabler of efficiency and convenience. The Digi Yatra initiative, launched in 2022, represents a significant step towards paperless and contactless air travel through facial recognition technology. By March 2025, over 52.2 million passengers had availed the facility, with the Digi Yatra app recording 12.1 million downloads. Currently operational across 14 AAI airports, Digi Yatra reflects the growing adoption of technology-driven, passenger-centric solutions across India's aviation ecosystem.

Sustainability continues to guide AAI's long-term vision for airport development. The Sustainable Green Airports Mission (SUGAM), launched in 2023, promotes environmentally responsible practices across AAI-managed airports. At present, 87 AAI-airports operate entirely on green energy, contributing significantly to India's national goal of achieving net-zero emissions by 2030.

Launched in 2024, the UDAN Yatri Café reflects AAI's commitment to inclusive, people-centric airport infrastructure. Operational at seven AAI airports, it offers quality refreshments at affordable prices, enhancing passenger comfort and reinforcing airports as welcoming, efficient and citizen-friendly public spaces.

Reinforcing AAI's people-first approach, the observance of Yatri Sewa Diwas underscores the organisation's commitment to citizen-centric service delivery by fostering a culture of accountability, empathy and responsiveness across airports. A defining global milestone of this year was India's re-election to the Council of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). This reaffirmation of trust underscores India's strengthened voice in International Aviation decision-making and its commitment to fostering a safe, efficient and future-ready global aviation ecosystem.

It is my pleasure to inform all my fellow colleagues that the National Pension Scheme (NPS) in lieu of the existing Employee Defined Contributory Pension Scheme (EDCPS) has been approved and will be implemented shortly. This scheme is highly beneficial for all AAI officials and fulfils a long pending demand.

In the words of the Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji, "In recent years, India's aviation sector has advanced at an unprecedented pace, placing the country among the fastest growing domestic aviation markets in the world." Inspired by this vision, the AAI remains firmly committed, as it looks ahead to 2026 and beyond, to building a safe, sustainable, inclusive and future-ready aviation ecosystem.

Jai Hind!

Vande Mataram!

Vipin Kumar
Chairman, AAI