The year 2020 has been an unprecedented one, in more ways than one. While the year forced the world to adopt to a ‘new normal’ due to Covid-19, it also gave all of us many invaluable lessons. This pandemic has given rise to a situation that is continuously evolving and the world is still grappling with it.

The Airports Authority of India is the major pillar of strength for Indian Civil Aviation. At AAI, we are mindful of how pandemic has brought in a paradigm shift in the way air travel is undertaken around the world.

AAI personnel have worked hard to quickly adapt to this ‘new normal’ and came up with innovative solutions to make the airports compatible with new social distancing norms. With round-the-clock sanitizing and other precautions taken at all Indian airports, air travel bolstered its position of being the safest means of travel during the pandemic.

Over the course of 25 years of its existence, AAI has faced and overcome many challenging situations and we will surely overcome this too soon. I am immensely proud of the way AAI has rose to the challenges of 2020, with courage, dignity, flexibility, empathy and a caring heart.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our ‘Covid Warriors’, to each one of you who is making sure that we endure this crisis and come out unscathed. Your sincere commitment has and will make all the difference!

With hope and gratitude, I wish you and your families a safe and Happy New Year!

Arvind Singh
Chairman, AAI
Indian Civil Aviation flies high towards normalcy

Standing tall against the pandemic, AAI Airports have been tirelessly striving to transport people and cargo across the country and continents. Effective and Extensive implementation of safety standards have enabled the steady increase in flight operations. In a span of more than seven months, over 3 crore passengers chose to fly through our airports located pan India. More than 3 lakh flights took to the skies, making domestic connectivity soar high. The sincere service of our airports have successfully instilled the confidence and trust in passengers to fly more.

Airports across all regions have also played instrumental role in bringing back lakhs of Indians stranded abroad under Vande Bharat Mission while ensuring all safety measures like proper sanitization of touch points and disinfection of luggage in place for every flight movement.

The unshakable commitment of Indian Civil Aviation Sector has made air operations bounced back even in such challenging times.

Chairman felicitated AAI Airports with ACI ASQ Awards 2019

Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI felicitated Lucknow, Trivandrum, Chandigarh & Mangaluru Airports that won 10 ASQ awards in four different categories announced by ACI in March 2020. An award ceremony was organised at AAI’s Corporate Headquarters on 08th October 20 wherein Chairman AAI presented the awards to winning airports. These awards were received by Board Members on behalf of winning airports with respective Airport Directors and Regional Executive Directors connected via video conferencing. The ASQ award ceremony was scheduled to take place in September 20 in Poland, but due to COVID-19, ACI requested to hold a virtual award ceremony.

Shri Amal Garg, a 1995 batch IRS-IT officer, joined as Chief Vigilance Officer, Airports Authority of India on 21st October 2020. Prior to this appointment, he has served Income Tax Department in various capacities at various places. Shri Garg has rich experience of working in various verticals of Income Tax Department like Investigation and Information Technology. He has also worked as Director (Finance), National e-Governance Division (NeGD) for one year.

Shri Amal Garg takes over as CVO at AAI

He holds degree of Bachelor of Engineering in Mechanical stream (B. E.) from IIT, Roorkee. Besides, he has studied Law from CCS University, Meerut and completed Advanced Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA) from Indian Institute of Public Administration, Delhi.

For his outstanding work and commitment, Shri Garg has also received an appreciation letter from Hon’ble Finance Minister. AAI family welcomes him and wishes best for his tenure.

Comprehensive Document on Review of Traffic at Indian Airports 2019-20 unveiled

A Comprehensive document on ‘Review of Traffic at Indian Airports 2019-20’ was unveiled in October 2020. The document is comprised of traffic analysis of last two years (2019-20/s 2018-19) in terms of growth rate, airport wise traffic share, month-wise traffic at top 45 airports and market share of airlines in 2019-20. It also covers the historic year-wise traffic data for all Indian airports since AAI’s inception i.e. 1995-96 with respect to aircraft movements, passengers, cargo and mail. Unveiled by Shri Arvind Singh, Chairman, AAI in the presence of Board Members of AAI, the document is of immense use to aviation planners, researchers, regulators, concessionaires and policy makers in Civil Aviation to meet the challenges ahead and develop new strategies.
New flight service added in the Delhi-Dehradun sector

With three flights per week, on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays, the airline is also offering premium economy class of travel between Delhi and Dehradun, in addition to business and the economy class. The service was inaugurated by Shri D. K. Gautam, Airport Director, Dehradun Airport on 09th November, 2020.

The inaugural flight with 49 inbound passengers arrived at Dehradun at 14:40 hours, while it departed at 15:20 hours with 52 passengers. The addition of this new service has accelerated the sector, making the total operating flights in the sector to 58 during a week.

Salem Airport gears up for Aerodrome License of 4C IFR

Salem Airport in southern region is all set to convert its existing aerodrome license of 4C VFR into 4C IFR to equip itself with the capacity to meet any challenges during adverse weather conditions.

Currently as per the existing aerodrome license, the flight operations are dependent upon the visibility clearance. Experiencing poor visibility during winters, most of the operations get cancelled or diverted to other airports.

To facilitate smooth operations during adverse climate conditions and night landing, all possible measures have been taken to have IFR aerodrome license. Salem Airport carried out massive re-arranging runway marking and obstacle clearance measures thereby ensuring movement of CFT and ambulances during emergency situations without hindrance.

First direct flight from Kalaburgi to Hindon airport flagged-off under UDAN scheme

The first direct flight service between Hindon and Kalaburgi under Regional Connectivity Scheme commenced on 18th November, 2020. Inaugurated by Shri Amber Dubey, Joint Secretary, MoCA, also virtually attended by Shri D. K. Kamra, RED-NR, the 50-seater type E-145 LR aircraft carried 27 passengers to Kalaburgi, while 25 passengers returned to Hindon Airport. Shri Dubey, Joint Secretary was also one of the passengers to Kalaburgi in the inaugural flight. Star Air operated four flights a week between Uttar Pradesh’s Hindon to Karnataka’s Hubli airport on Sundays, Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays after resumption of flights post-lockdown. This new additional flight to Kalaburgi thrice a week will not only bring the two cities situated 1800 kms apart closer to each other, but also upgrade Hindon Airport as operational for the entire week.

New facility to reduce congestion

The Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata handles a huge traffic out of which 35-40% are transit passengers. The transfer facility for domestic transit passengers is now open and has considerably reduced congestion and touch-points in the terminal arrival and departure lounges.

The transit time will reduce from 60 minutes to 15 minutes, while the congestion will also reduce to 35%-40%. The objective of this project worth Rs 6.5 Crore was to substantially reduce time for transiting passengers to complete security check formalities before they are ready to board the next flight.

During this pandemic period, making airport congestion free is the key to instilling passenger confidence and making transit through the airport safer and Kolkata Airport has successfully delivered this facility for passengers’ convenience.
Regional Airspace Management at Chennai

A major milestone in implementation of Flexible Use of Airspace has been achieved with the establishment of Regional Airspace Management Cells (RAMC) at Chennai ATC Centre. RAMC Chennai is tasked with the responsibility of day-to-day allocation and management of flexible airspace structures such as Temporary Reserved Areas (TRA), Temporary Segregated Areas (TSA), AMC-manageable Restricted Areas and Conditional Routes (CDR) within Chennai and Kolkata Flight Information Region.

Considering the restrictions imposed by the ongoing pandemic, the establishment of RAMC Chennai gains greater prominence. The RAMC was inaugurated by Shri R. Madhavan, Regional Executive Director – Southern Region in the presence of GM (ATM-CH), GM (CNS-CH), senior officers from CNS/ATM, senior ATM representative from Airspace Management CHQ, and Representatives from Indian Air Force.

Kolhapur Airport bagged Best Water Management Award

AAI Airports are constantly working for cleaner and greener initiatives to ensure sustainable infrastructure development. Recently, Kolhapur Airport was honoured as Best Water Management airport by Water Digest Water Award for its environmental initiatives. The 14,000 sqm. garden at city side serves as lungs & hearts of the airport, where rainwater is collected & used with drip irrigation & other purposes.

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AAC Meet held at Kolkata Airport

The Airport Advisory Committee (AAC) Meeting of NSCBI Airport, Kolkata was held on 14th October, 2020 under the Chairmanship of Prof. Saugata Roy, Hon’ble Member of Parliament and was convened by Shri Kaushik Bhattacharjee, Airport Director, Kolkata. Officials of AAI, Airlines, CISF, Bidhannagar Police, TAAI, & municipalities around Airport were present in the meet. Prof Saugato Roy appreciated the traffic growth in present scenario & assured of all cooperation from State Government for development of Kolkata Airport.

Varanasi Airport gets two new Passenger Boarding Bridges

Hon’ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated two new Passenger Boarding Bridges (PBBs) at the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, Varanasi on 09th November, 2020. Large screens were placed at both at the ground floor and first floor of Domestic SHA for Chief guests and public to witness the grand occasion.

Costing approximately Rs. 9 crore, the two PBBs are connected to bays 7 and 10. Flight SG- 703704 for Mumbai-Varanasi- Mumbai was the first to be operated on new PBB at bay 10.

With this addition, total number of PBBs has increased to four at the Varanasi airport, thereby enabling more efficient flight operations. All the aerobridges are located at the first floor of the apron.

Regular Cargo Freighter service in North East India

Domestic carrier Air India and SpiceJet have started their freighters cargo flights with their base station from Kolkata to some of the major North East airports. In the first week of October, Air India and SpiceJet began their services from Agartala, Imphal, Aizawl, Dimapur, Silchar. Services to Guwahati were already operational. This will strengthen the supply chain of essential commodities to the North East Region and benefit local farmers.

Considering potential of the growing cargo market and demand from other states, the LGBI Airport at Guwahati has constructed its second domestic cargo terminal. With enhanced capacity and latest features, this facility will cater to growing demands.

Chennai Airport gearing up for a spectacular terminal building

The integrated terminal building is in the making at AAI’s Chennai Airport, with installation of truss for roof in progress. Packed with enhanced facilities, terminal is to stand in between existing domestic & international terminals.

CSR: Food Containers for HKM Guwahati

Under AAI Corporate Social Responsibility scheme, a total 35 units of insulated food containers were given to the Hare Krishna Movement Society, Guwahati branch by LGBI Airport, Guwahati on 04th Nov, 2020. Airport Director Shri Ramesh Kumar handed over the containers to the members of HKM in presence of AAI officials at the airport.
The Kolkata Airport has installed an Ultra Violet luggage sanitization tunnel at one of the 10 arrival belts in the domestic wing. The tunnel costing Rs. 7 lacs has a capacity to disinfect 1000 bags per hour. More such sanitization tunnels will be installed in future to reduce dependency on manpower. The machine is similar to an X-ray machine which instead of probing inside the bag, disinfects the external surface by destroying fomites. The handheld disinfection will continue to be in use at the airport for disinfecting passenger baggage while entering the airport as well as cabin baggage. The shoe sanitizer mats at strategic places have also been placed to disinfect passengers' shoes. Additionally, foot operated sanitizer machines, sensor-based wash rooms and drinking water machines have also been installed in numbers at various places at the airport.

Effective Disinfection Method at Agartala Airport

Agartala Airport has installed the first of its kind Ultraviolet Germicidal Irradiation (UVGI) system at its Central Air conditioners. The system is one of the most effective disinfection methods that uses short wavelength UV light (255-280nm) to kill or inactivate micro-organism/virus by destroying their DNA. This initiative will help in curbing the spread of Coronavirus at the airports.

Testing Facility at Guwahati Airport

A COVID testing facility for passengers has been opened at the Guwahati Airport. With the help of the Government of Assam, State Health Department and Police, the testing centre was established for RAT as well as RT-PCR, paid as well as free for passengers arriving to Kamrup Metro Guwahati only. The passengers of other district will be tested as per the District task force guidelines.

In-house Automatic Touchless Water Taps at Gaya Airport

With an objective to reduce the spread of Covid-19, touchless automatic water taps have been developed in-house by Shri Sudeep Kumar, Manager (CNS) at Gaya Airport in cost effective manner. This will ensure touch-free usage by passengers in restrooms of terminal building. With the application of this automatic system, any water tap can be converted for touchless operation without altering existing hardware. These are easy to install, operate and cost effective. The cost of this in-house set-up is approximately Rs. 1000/- whereas to implement a touchless water tap system may cost more than Rs. 10,000/- from the readymade water taps available in the market which may also require alteration in the existing hardware. Six automatic touchless water taps have been installed at arrival and departure washrooms of terminal.
Tuticorin airport gets additional power back up

The work on installing two 625 KV diesel generators is in progress at Tuticorin Airport, which is being expanded to handle bigger aircraft, carrying additional number of passengers even during night.

The Tuticorin Airport, which is being presently served with a 70 KV generator, is in need of additional power back up facilities with higher capacity, as the aerodrome’s runway is being expanded to handle wide-bodied aircraft and consequently, more number passengers.

Since the airport has been equipped with night landing facility, the need for having additional power generators with higher capacity was underlined during the recently held meetings.

The generators will be installed before March, 2021 at an outlay of 1.16 crores, as it will be feasible for keeping the airport terminal and runway operational even at night and even during acute power shortage.

Varanasi airport sets the ball rolling for a delightful, digital journey experience

For successful roll-out of the DigiYatra programme, a partial trial-run launch was conducted at Varanasi airport 13th October, 2020 at the entry gate of terminal building involving few airlines only. Trial is likely to re-commence at the airport under Phase-I involving Vistara and Indigo airlines for the ‘Proof of Concept’ of Digi-Yatra process. If everything happens as per schedule, the facility will ‘Go-Live’ from 15th January, 2021, giving an edge to the airport as the first AAI airport to have launched the scheme. Plans are afoot for similar trial runs at Kolkata, Pune and Vijayawada as well.

Once the ‘Digi-Yatra’ policy is fully implemented, a passenger can travel without a boarding pass in the country. The concept is free of charge and optional for passengers. The system ensures elimination of all travel records of a passenger through an airport, post travel.

In order to ensure faster processing and reduce waiting time of passengers at airports, MoCA had envisioned the ‘DigiYatra’ journey concept way back in October 2018. The biometric based boarding system uses facial recognition for verification of passenger identity. The DigiYatra ID can be generated by submitting a passport, Aadhar card or driving license for verification of passenger along with the PNR number and passenger dataset.

Kullu-Manali Airport successfully handles VVIP movements

The Kullu-Manali airport witnessed VVIP-3 movement in connection with the Prime Minister’s visit for inauguration of the ‘Atal’ tunnel on 03rd October, 2020. In spite of being a small VFR airport, having parking and ATC capacity constraints and no navigation facility, the Kullu-Manali airport successfully took the challenge of accommodating nine Mi-17 helicopter (VVIP-3 formation), aircraft of Defence Minister, Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh, Chief of Defence Staff, Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Northern and Western Commands, apart from two schedule movements, one ATR 72 and one Pawan Hans helicopter. Although, the PM did not visit the Kullu-Manali airport, but it served as a stand-by airport for the PM and handled several other high-profile movements, in just two parking bays without any delay. The creation of temporary parking bays and apron control along with minute to minute ATC planning played a key role in handling various challenges associated with huge VVIP movements.
AAI Airports strive to provide best travel experience to passengers. Automatic pay stations were recently commissioned at AAI’s Indore Airport recently. Car parking at the airport would now enable payment of parking charges through cash, card & UPI. Inaugurated by Hon’ble MP (Indore), the facility will enable express exit from the airport making the process queue less. The 3rd aerobridge at the airport was also inaugurated for the convenience of the passengers.

AAI’s Pune Airport commissioned a 70 Kilo Liters per day (KLD) capacity Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at the cost of Rs. 25 lacs. This plant has a lifespan of 20 years and its treated water can be further used for horticulture and AC chilling plant.

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A Mobile Medical Van handed over to State Administration by AAI’s Udaipur Airport at a function in presence of Shri PS Khachariya was, Mayor, DM & CMHO, Udaipur. This ECG-equipped van costing 18 lac would be used to test COVID19 patients and other emergency cases.

Integrating Sports in Work Culture

Sports play a huge part in ensuring well-being of Physical and Mental Health. AAI as a responsible organization encourages its employees to maintain a healthy work-life balance. A two-day Badminton tournament was organised from 06th-07th October, 2020 at Surat Airport, in which employees participated with much zeal.

Bridging the gaps- Workshop on Soft Skills

AAI in its continuous endeavour, strives to enhance the convenience of passengers travelling through its airports. In order to prepare the frontline staff such as CISF personnel, Airport Security Guards well for performing duties in passenger-friendly manner, a two days’ workshop on the importance of soft skills was organized at Silchar Airport. Focused on mantra of service with safety and courteous behaviour, the workshop was organised in coordination with Cachar Club, Silchar.
Getting prepared for emergencies

A three-day basic training in Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Emergency Management was conducted by National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata.

The training programme was inaugurated on 15th December, 2020 by Shri G. V. V. Sharma, IAS, Member Secretary NDMA, in the presence of Shri Dushyant Naria, IAS, Principal Secretary, Disaster Management & Civil Defence, WB Govt., Shri Kaushik Bhattacherjee, Airport Director, Kolkata, Shri Manoj Gangal, AAI, Regional Executive Director, (Eastern Region)

The airport hosted the basic training programme to enhance the preparedness of airport emergency handlers to respond to CBRN emergencies, encompassing threats emanating from the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear materials at the airport. The training consists of lectures as well as field training, including live demonstrations of detection and decontamination, including use of personal protective equipment.

Apart from equipping the airport emergency handlers to handle CBRN emergencies, the training programme will also help them to provide medical first aid and initial psycho-social support. Around 35 personnel were trained in various aspects of CBRN emergencies.

Emergency Fire mock drill exercise at airports

Fire Fighters Team posted at North East Airports are on standby round-the-clock. To check the preparedness and upgrade them with changing time, fire mock drills were conducted at Imphal, Dibrugarh, Agartala, Guwahati, Jorhat, Silchar and other major airports in the region. This exercise helped them to check their preparedness against any kind of fire emergency situations arising at the airport and to ensure full emergency readiness and check response capabilities.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) in association with the AAI and CISF, conducted Mock Drill at Raipur Airport.

One step ahead in the testing times

Calicut International Airport has successfully installed six custom-designed touchless Entry Kiosks at various entry points in terminal, to aid CISF Security Personnel for touch-free inspection of tickets and identity cards at entry points and also in boarding pass checking at International and Domestic Security hold areas.

The Project was implemented as a brain-child of Airport Systems under CNS Department at a cost of Rs. 7.15 lakhs. The kiosks are made of imported acrylic material, giving a perfect and classy look to design. The main components of these one-of-its kind and specially designed kiosks are two cameras, one for document reading and another for face reading. A Counter Communication system is mindfully integrated to the kiosk design to facilitate communication between security personnel and passengers, so that features of the same are so meticulously planned to ensure its adherence to the COVID protocols. Further, the kiosks have protective glass shields over two sides additionally to curb direct contact with passengers, which helps our security personnel to perform their job without getting themselves exposed to the pandemic.
AAI Airports turned pink - Generating Awareness on Breast Cancer

To raise awareness about the importance of early detection of breast cancer among women, the month of October is observed as Breast Cancer Awareness Month, or, ‘Pink October’. Supporting the global effort, AAI Airports organized various activities for generating awareness on the Breast Cancer during the month of October & November 2020. AAI Staff especially women employees’ officials at various airports were seen proudly donning pink ribbon during October, inspiring women to go for early detection tests.

Kolkata Airport organized one-day ‘Breast Cancer Awareness Program’ in association with Tata Medical Center, AOC & CISF on 9th October, 2020. The session started with a motivational performance by staff of Air Asia. The team of doctors headed by Dr. Sujata Lahiri conducted the session and created awareness among female associates of the organization. Employees and all other female staff were motivated to take self-examine tests and precautionary measures at home along with yearly checkup with the expert to avoid any delay in the treatment if required.

Staff of Agartala Airport chose a very noble but effective way of disseminating awareness about the disease by interacting with passengers to spread the message with a theme "HOPE, FIGHT & CURE. The airline operators, CISF and airport staff actively participated in the awareness programme. Similar activities were also carried out at other airports of North East Region like Jorhat, Guwahati, Imphal, Dimapur Silchar in association with airline staff.

The Kalyanamayee team of Visakhapatnam Airport organized a program “Mana Visakhapatnam Airport Turns Pink” on 02nd November, 2020 in association with India Turns Pink, as a part of ‘India Turns Pink Campaign’ for a breast Cancer Free India by 2030. The event was inaugurated by Shri M.V.V. Satyanarayana, Honorable MP of Visakhapatnam & Chairman of AAC & Shri Sambasiva Rao, MD, Sravan Shipping, along with, Shri M. Raja Kishore, Airport Director.

At Amritsar airport, an awareness programme and Work sop was organized on October 13, 2020 for all female officials of AAI tooka pledge to spread awareness amongst other women and Dr. Rajiv Gupta from the Amandeep Hospital, Amritsar deliberated on the reasons and remedies for breast cancer. At Udaipur airport, the terminal building stood illuminated pink in support of ‘Pink October’. At Varanasi, Dehradun and Lucknow airports, the female officials of both AAI and Indigo airlines carried out various activities to bring awareness amongst employees and passengers alike, notably through the ‘Namaste’ campaign. On the concluding day of ‘Pink October’, both male and female employees at the Jammu airport, dressed in a pink attire, joined the awareness campaign launched at the terminal building.
Please share your thoughts on the e-Newsletter. You can reach us at gmcc@aai.aero or gmccaai@gmail.com

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July-September 2020