

## Ease of Air Travel-Seminar: Flags the “Flight Path to Excellence: Strategies for Air Travel Improvement for Enhanced Passenger Experience”



New Delhi,. In a concerted effort to improve air travel for passengers, the Foundation for Aviation and Sustainable Tourism (FAST) organized an insightful seminar titled “Ease of Air Travel - Key to Better Passenger Experience” at New Delhi yesterday . Chief Guest of the Seminar; Shri V.Vualnam, IAS, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Gov. of India; during his address; showcased the government’s strong commitment to advancing air travel in India as part of its vision for a "Viksit Bharat" (Developed India).

Shri V.Vualnam highlighted the government's commitment to enhancing the air travel experience for passengers, and flagged that Passenger experience is important and we owe it to ourselves to address it effectively. The subject is not only very important it is equally very challenging; as India is a vast nation and has a great mix of people who use aviation for different purposes of commute. On Skilling, he mentioned employment potential of civil aviation is huge and we need to look wider and India shall be reckoned with Global Quality Manpower Provider.

He applauded FAST for doing an event on such a day to address the issues of ‘Ease of travel as a key to better passenger experience. In the same breath he

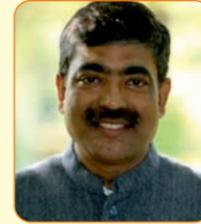
applauded the act of FAST for holding Seminars and Workshops on such important subjects and topics of civil aviation that impact the growth and development in the country.

He also mentioned that a key focus of the efforts is the improvement of passenger experience, vital given India's diverse air travel needs. The government is determined to make air travel accessible to all citizens through initiatives like the UDAN scheme, which aims to enhance Regional Connectivity, particularly in tier-3 cities. This initiative represents a substantial step in ensuring that more Indians can take advantage of affordable air travel options. The announcement of a landmark collaboration between Mahindra Aerospace and Airbus to manufacture helicopter fuselages in India was particularly highlighted, marking a significant development in the country’s aviation infrastructure.

The Secretary acknowledged the challenges faced by airlines due to lower operational yields compared to international counterparts, stressing the need for better efficiency and value for customers. He urged all stakeholders in the aviation sector to prioritize the enhancement of passenger experiences while ensuring operational viability to support continued growth in the industry.

## Shri Samir Kumar Sinha appointed as Secretary, Civil Aviation.

**LATEST NEWS**



Shri Samir Kumar Sinha, IAS AM, 1994, Additional Secretary & Director General (Acquisition), Department of Defence, has been appointed Secretary of Civil Aviation. Shri Vumlungmang Vualnam, Secretary of Civil Aviation, has been appointed as Secretary of the Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance.

## Shri Suman Billa appointed as Director General, Tourism



He is currently serving as Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and brings a wealth of experience to the role.

Recent statistics reveal a remarkable growth trajectory for the aviation sector, with airport numbers projected to expand from 74 in 2014 to 159 by 2024, alongside a doubling of passenger traffic from 110 million to 220 million. The government aims to ensure that every citizen is within 100 km of an airport, with aspirations to reduce this distance to 50 km, thereby boosting air travel accessibility across the nation.

Looking forward, the government plans to host the WINGS – INDIA 2026 event at Begum pet Airport, which will serve as a collaborative forum to tackle industry challenges and explore growth opportunities. This initiative underscores the government's dedication to fostering a conducive environment for the continuous development of the aviation sector in India, making air travel easier, safer, and more accessible for all.

The Welcome address was given by Lt. Gen. K.M. Seth, PVSM, AVSM (Retd.), former Governor of Tripura & Chhattisgarh and President FAST; and Vote of Thanks by notable industry leader, Shri Raman Sidhu, Chairman, EBG Federation – India, and a Life Trustee of FAST. This brought a fresh insight into the seminar for the deliberations in the subsequent Business Sessions that followed the Inaugural Session.



The event featured several distinguished speakers, including Shri Madhu Sudana Sankar, Joint Secretary, Min of Civil Aviation, Shri K. Narayan Rao, Vice President, DIAL, and Shri Kapil Kaul, CEO, CAPA-Asia Pacific Region. They were joined by Shri V. P. Agrawal, Former Chairman, Airports Authority of India and Vice President, FAST, and Dr. RK Tyagi, Former Chairman, HAL; who Moderated the Business Session One and Two, respectively. Speakers from wide spread areas with rich experience & expertise brought enthusiasm among the jam-packed audience; and the result was a meaningful discussions about improving passenger experience in air travel.

## Time-Bound Initiative Proposed to Address Skilling and Re-Skilling Challenges in the Aviation Sector



At the recent seminar titled "Ease of Air Travel - Key to Better Passenger Experience," organized by FAST, industry leaders and experts highlighted critical challenges related to skilling and re-skilling within the aviation sector. The event underscored the necessity for concentrated, time-bound efforts to tackle these issues faced by airline operators, especially in light of technological advancements, including artificial intelligence (AI).

The first business session focused on infrastructure development at airports, airlines, and support services. Key speakers included Shri R. P. Singh, Senior Member of the Joint Working Group on Civil Aviation; Dr. Alka Maheshwary from Amity University; Shri Tushar Pandey, Independent Consultant and Advisor on Public-Private Partnerships; and Shri Vipin Jain, Director of Ethics Group of Companies. Several other industry professionals also contributed valuable insights, enriching the discussion with their experiences regarding technological advancements and customer service improvements.

Dr. RK Tyagi captivated the audience with a lively Q&A session, fostering engagement and enthusiasm. He complemented the session by presenting signed copies of the book "How to Live an

Extraordinary Life," with personal best wishes from Gen. Seth, President of FAST.

The second business session featured presentations from Dr. Bimal Kumar, GM of HAL; Ms. Alpana Chaturvedi, CEO of SLS Logistic Academy Pvt Ltd.; Mr. Manish Rokade, GM of Pawan Hans Ltd.; and Mr. NK Pathak from RGNAU. The engaging discussions kept attendees invested in the session, even bypassing their lunch break.

Overall, the seminar provided in-depth knowledge on the key theme, which will contribute to a comprehensive white paper aimed at guiding authorities in enhancing passenger experience.

### Key Takeaways from the Seminar:

**Infrastructure Development:** The need for improved infrastructure at airports and airlines was emphasized to ensure seamless travel experiences for passengers.

**Skilling and Re-Skilling:** The importance of skilling and re-skilling to ensure quality service and effectively deploy technology, including AI, was discussed as crucial for enhancing passenger experience.

**Technological Advancements:** Leveraging technology to improve customer service through innovative solutions, including the application of AI, was a focal point of the discussions.

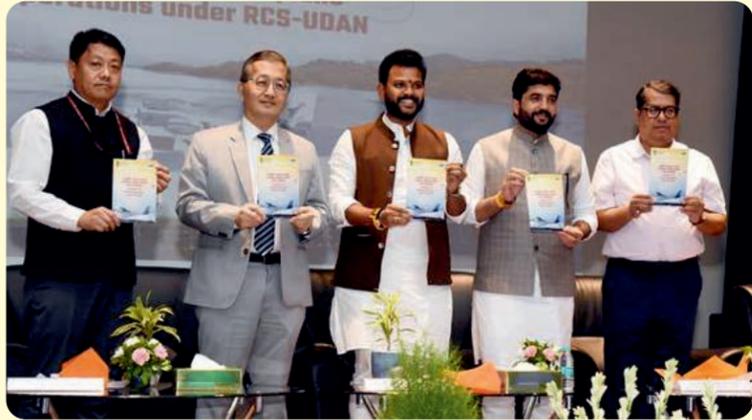
**Passenger Accessibility:** A commitment from the government to enhance passenger accessibility, comfort, and efficiency was reiterated, emphasizing the goal of creating seamless travel experiences.

### Outcomes and Recommendations:

The seminar aimed to produce a comprehensive white paper outlining recommendations for improving passenger experiences in air travel. The discussions and insights shared during the event will inform future policies and initiatives designed to further enhance air travel experiences in India.



## The civil aviation Sector is poised for continued growth



The civil aviation sector has witnessed significant growth and advancements in 2024, both globally and in India. Overall, the civil aviation sector is poised for continued growth and development in 2025, driven by increasing demand, expanding infrastructure, and a focus on sustainability

## Launch of Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for pilots



Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Sh. Ram Mohan Naidu, launched the Electronic Personnel License (EPL), making India the second country in the world to digitalize pilot licenses. Ensuring a tamper-proof and robust licensing system, EPL sets a new benchmark in aviation regulatory excellence. Secretary Civil Aviation Sh. V. Vualnam, DGCA DG Sh. Faiz Ahmed, BCAS DG Sh. Rajesh Nirwan and other senior officials were present at the occasion. India becomes the 2nd country in the world to launch the Electronic Personnel License (EPL) for pilots, ensuring faster, more efficient, and transparent licensing. With a tamper-proof and robust system, EPL sets a new benchmark in aviation regulatory excellence.

## Regional air connectivity will remain govt's priority, Civil aviation secy;



Regional air connectivity will continue to be a priority for the government and air passenger traffic is projected to touch 40 crore by 2029, Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam said in New Delhi. Speaking at a conference in the national capital, he also said the ecosystem is being developed for operations of seaplanes.

Business Standard

## India's first AAI-owned zero-waste airport is in Indore!



The new ATC tower-cum-technical block and the solid waste management plant at Devi Ahilya Bai Holkar Airport was inaugurated by Shri Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu, Union Minister of Civil Aviation recently by positioning Indore Airport as a pioneer in sustainability and innovation in eco-friendly aviation.

complex, equipped with state-of-the-art communication systems, enhances operational efficiency and modernizes our infrastructure for future air traffic demands. Additionally, with Indore being India's cleanest city, this initiative implements the 4R strategy (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, Recover) to promote responsible resource use and establish a model for environmental stewardship.

The newly constructed ATS

Minister also visited the MP Flying Club and had the pleasure of meeting enthusiastic young cadets—the future of Indian aviation. Their energy and optimism were infectious! The eco-friendly initiatives at Indore Airport provide a blueprint for sustainable aviation practices across the country!



## Air Mobility Expo 2025

Sh. Vumlunmang Vualnam, Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, graced the Urban Air

Mobility Expo 2025 with his esteemed presence and formally inaugurated the Airports Authority of India Stall at the event along with Sh. Faiz Ahmed Kidwai, Director General, Directorate General of Civil Aviation, Sh. Asangba Chuba Ao, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India and senior officials from Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India, Directorate General of Civil Aviation & AAI.

## "We are committed to making air travel more affordable Quotes Highlighting the Minister's Achievements in Indian Aviation;

"As we step into 2025, I extend my heartfelt wishes for a year filled with joy, progress, and success." - Emphasizing the Minister's optimism and positivity for the new year.

"I am proud of the remarkable strides made in Indian aviation, which has solidified our position on the global stage." - Reflecting on the Minister's pride in the accomplishments of the aviation sector.

"The launch of the Guidelines for Seaplane Operations marks a new era in unlocking the potential of our coastlines and water bodies." - Highlighting the significance of the Guidelines for Seaplane Operations.

"The passage of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak in Parliament positions India as a State of Design

and enhances the Ease of Doing Business in the sector." - Emphasizing the impact of the Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak on the aviation sector.

"We are committed to making air travel more affordable with the launch of the UDAN Yatri Cafe, expanding it to airports nationwide." - Emphasizing the Minister's goal of making air travel more accessible. The UDAN Yatri Cafe is more than just a food outlet—it represents our mission to democratize the travel experience for the masses. With every affordable cup of tea or snack, we reaffirm our belief in making air travel an experience that is both enriching and within reach of all.

"Initiatives like HEMS Sanjeevani in Uttarakhand and the establishment of India's first

Airport Operation Control Centre showcase our dedication to innovation and operational efficiency." - Highlighting the Minister's focus on innovation and operational efficiency.

"Together, we are shaping a future where air travel is accessible and enriching for all." - Emphasizing the Minister's collaborative approach to creating a better future for the aviation sector.

Remark of Union Minister of Civil Aviation Shri Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu Kinjarapu on the occasion of New Year message



## Civil Aviation Minister Ram Mohan Naidu Inaugurates UDAN Yatri Cafe At Chennai Airport

Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Ram Mohan Naidu, inaugurated the UDAN Yatri Cafe at Chennai Airport, marking the second such facility under this groundbreaking initiative. The first UDAN Yatri Cafe was inaugurated on December 19, 2024, at Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport in Kolkata, commemorating the 100th anniversary of the historic airport. The Kolkata Cafe has been a resounding success, with travelers expressing high satisfaction with the quality, taste and cost of the offerings. Following immense passenger demand, the initiative is now being expanded nationwide. First Cafe was inaugurated by HMCA, Sh. Naidu on December 21, 2024 at Kolkata Airport, Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation and Cooperation, Sh. Mohol Murlidhar was also present during the occasion.



demand from travelers to introduce this facility at other airports. After the eastern gateway of Kolkata, we are proud to bring the UDAN Yatri Cafe to the southern gateway, Chennai Airport which is one of the oldest and now the fifth busiest airport in the country, handling over 22 million passengers annually.

The cafe will offer all connected passengers access to hygienic refreshments at subsidies prices: Addressing the media, Ram Mohan Naidu said, "The UDAN Yatri Cafe is a testament to Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji's vision of inclusive flying, making air travel more convenient, accessible and affordable for all. Following its successful launch at Kolkata Airport, there has been strong



The UDAN Yatri Cafe inaugurated today aligns with the spirit of the UDAN scheme (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik), aimed at democratizing air travel and modernizing airport infrastructure. The event was attended by Dr T R B Rajaa, Minister for Industries, Tamil Nadu, senior officials from the Ministry of Civil Aviation, AAI and Chennai Airport, marking another milestone in the Ministry's mission to enhance passenger experience and connectivity.



## Traffic Reporter – Indian Aviation Soars to New Heights in 2024 Record-Breaking Passenger Traffic

### Reaching greater heights: Overview of Indian aviation in 2024

India's civil aviation sector achieved remarkable growth in 2024, solidifying its position as the third-largest market globally. The sector handled an all-time high passenger traffic of approximately 400 million, marking an 8.3% increase from 2023. A report by Ms. Renu Grover, Former General Manager, Corporate Planning & Management Services, AAI, Traffic Analyst. Full report on page 3.

#### Key Statistics:

- International passenger traffic grew by 12.8% to 75.47 million
- Domestic passenger traffic increased by 7.4% to 325.26 million
- Top 10 airports handled over 70% of total passenger traffic

#### Airport Highlights:

- Delhi airport handled the highest number of passengers (20% of total volume)
- Mumbai and Bengaluru airports followed with 14% and 10% shares, respectively
- Hyderabad airport recorded the highest growth among top 10 airports at 15%

#### Outlook:

The Indian aviation industry is poised for sustained growth, driven by the emerging middle class, and rising per capita income. With additional aircraft inductions and improvements in airport infrastructure, air traffic in India is expected to grow substantially.

#### The growth story

India is the third largest civil aviation market in the world.

In 2024, India's passenger aviation sector witnessed significant growth, emerging as one of the fastest-expanding markets globally. Fuelled by a combination of favourable economic conditions, rising disposable incomes, and a young, tech-savvy population, Indian aviation grew at a fast pace. This surge in air traffic was further supported by a conducive policy environment, including government initiatives like the RCS - UDAN scheme, which aim to make air travel more accessible across the country, particularly in underserved regions. Additionally, improvements in airport infrastructure and innovations in passenger services contributed to this growth.

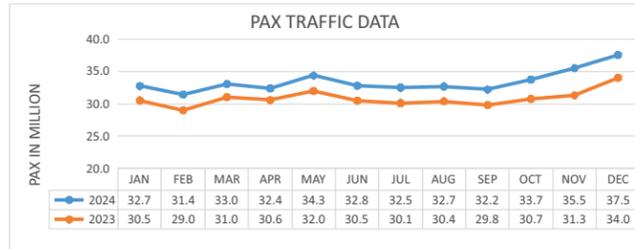
#### Pax traffic at a glance

In 2024, the Indian aviation sector achieved a remarkable milestone of handling an all-time high passenger traffic of ~400 million. The following table depicts the

(Data in million)	2024	2023	Growth
International	75.47	66.93	12.8%
Domestic	325.26	302.92	7.4%
Total	400.73	369.85	8.3%

international and domestic pax traffic handled at Indian airports during 2024 vs. 2023:

During the year, airports across the country handled ~400 million pax as against 370 million during the previous year and witnessed a growth of 8.3%. A remarkable growth of 12.8% was observed in international pax traffic whereas 7.4% growth was recorded in domestic pax traffic during 2024. Month-wise comparison of total pax traffic handled during the year 2024 and 2023 is shown below:



#### Key highlights:

- The top 10 airports in the country have handled more than 70% of the total pax traffic.
- Delhi airport has handled the highest number of pax, i.e. about 20% of the total volume, followed by Mumbai and Bengaluru with 14% and 10% share respectively.
- Among the top 10 airports, the highest growth of ~15% has been observed at Hyderabad airport.
- About 40% of the Goa (U.T.) pax traffic has been handled by the new Goa (MoPA) airport.

#### Future outlook

The growth in the civil aviation sector in India has been driven by the emerging middle class and rising per capita income. As the Indian economy continues to strengthen, the aviation industry stands poised for sustained growth, with both domestic and international travel seeing substantial increase. Additionally, with the induction of additional aircraft by most of the airlines in the near future (and improvement in the grounding situation of the current fleet), the air traffic in India is expected to grow substantially. These key factors are not only driving the current momentum but also laying a solid foundation for the future of Indian aviation.

Contribution :

**Ms. Renu Grover,**

Traffic Analyst

Former General Manager,

Corporate Planning & Management Services, AAI;

## Flight operations commenced from Hindon Airport



Union Minister Shri Kinjarapu Ram Mohan Naidu inaugurated flight operations of Air India Express from Hindon Airport on MARCH 1-2025, connecting Ghaziabad to Bengaluru, Chennai, Goa, Jammu and Kolkata.

This initiative enhances convenience for travelers from NCR, Western Uttar Pradesh, and Southern Uttarakhand, providing an alternative to IGI & Jewar Airports. With the addition of 40 weekly flights, Hindon Airport is set to boost accessibility and economic opportunities in the region.

The first Air India Express flight from Hindon to Goa was flagged off by Hon'ble Minister Sh. Ram Mohan Naidu and MP Ghaziabad Shri Atul Garg.



Secretary Civil Aviation, Sh. V. Vualnam, Chairman AAI Sh. Vipin Kumar, Air India Express MD Sh. Aloke Singh were also present on the occasion. During a significant event held at AAI's Hindon Airport, Chairman AAI, Sh. Vipin kumar, IAS extended a warm welcome and felicitated esteemed dignitaries.

## Achievements in the Aviation Sector



#### Infrastructure Development

**Airport Expansion:** Foundation laid for new terminals in Varanasi, Agra, Darbhanga, and Bagdogra.

New airports inaugurated in Sarsawa, Rewa, Ambikapur, Aligarh, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Moradabad, and Shravasti.

#### Record Passenger Traffic

**Domestic Flights (2024):** Carried 146.4 million passengers, a 5.9% increase compared to 2023, with a record of over 500,000 passengers in a single day on November 17, 2024.

**International Flights:** Transported 64.5 million passengers, an 11.4% increase from 2023, with 29.8 million carried by Indian carriers.

#### Greenfield Airports

Approval for 21 New Airports: Notable projects include Mopa (Goa), Navi Mumbai, and Kushinagar.

12 airports operational, with advanced construction at Noida (Jewar) and Navi Mumbai expected by FY 2025-26.

#### Udaan Yatri Café Initiative

**Affordable Dining:** Inaugurated in Kolkata, offering budget-friendly food options to travelers, exemplifying the effort to democratize air travel.

#### Digi Yatra Services

Launched at 9 more airports, bringing total to 24.

Over 8 million app downloads and 40 million journeys completed.

#### Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) Sector

**Policy Changes:** Unified 5% IGST rate for aircraft parts to simplify the MRO process.

Extended re-import period for warranty goods and export goods for repairs to one year.

#### Gender Equality Initiatives

**Advisory Issued:** Aiming for 25% representation of women in aviation by 2025.

Leadership and mentorship programs promoted alongside recognition of women achievers in the industry.



## FAST : Foundation for Aviation & Sustainable Tourism



A premier non-profit research body; duly registered with ICAO; came into being in 1992.

FAST is primarily concerned with promotion of civil aviation and tourism in the country and acts as a facilitator between the industry and the government. Through such

events FAST flags the contemporary issues and concerns of stakeholders. FAST also helps in taking a “balanced view approach” in the decision-making process.

FAST is presently headed by Lt. Gen. KM Seth, PVSM, AVSM (Retd), former Governor of Tripura & Chhattisgarh as its President.

Mr. Vijai Prakash Agrawal, former Chairman, Airports Authority of India is the Vice President of FAST. He holds Master of Engineering (Power Electronics and Electrical Drives) and Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical) from IIT Roorkee; conferred upon with Distinguished Alumni by IIT Roorkee.

Dr. SS Sidhu, former Secretary Civil Aviation, Government of India, and Secretary General ICAO was the founder President of FAST.

FAST evaluates policies on realistic and balanced approach for promoting civil aviation and tourism and supports the industry by providing quality consultancy/advisory services.

FAST Highlights the vital role of civil aviation and sustainable tourism towards the economic development, global integration and international understanding.

FAST Supports and contributes through active participation in the international and national fora in the development, promotion and implementation of policies and approaches aimed to foster the expansion and liberalization of civil aviation and tourism; and Focus on identifying concepts and measures, using latest technology to strengthen and upgrade aviation and tourism infrastructure.

FAST believes in Dissemination and Exchange of Knowledge. Even during Covid-19 pandemic times FAST adopted the On-Line Webinars and continued the spirit of exchange of knowledge. FAST conducts Seminars and Workshops on topics relating to Civil Aviation and Tourism, at least once a year. The last one was in Sept. 2024 and next is on 27th March 2025.

advisory services and undertake projects/consultancy services in all aspects of civil aviation and tourism; including Corporate Planning and Traffic Studies

Build individual and corporate profile through participation/sponsoring in FAST Seminars/Symposiums on subjects related to Civil Aviation and Tourism

Use recognized FAST platform to make industry representations to Government and concerned agencies on policy issues of National Importance.

Any specific requirement of the industry:

FAST has on its panel, a pool of eminent experts of national and international standing.



### OUR VISION

As a “Think Tank”, FAST evaluates policies on realistic and balanced approach for promoting civil aviation and tourism and supports the industry by providing quality consultancy and advisory services.

**FAST Leads : as it is Fast in adopting the change; and Offers :**

#### AVIATION TRAINING:

- Crew Resource Management (CRM)
- Special Ground Training (SGT)
- Dangerous Goods Awareness Program
- Safety Management System (SMS)
- Adverse Weather Operations (Monsoon Flying)
- Human Factors,
- Accident Prevention
- Accident Investigation etc.
- Third Party Safety Audit for Aerodromes
- Independent and objective advice and



### OUR MISSION

Highlight the vital role of civil aviation and sustainable tourism towards the economic development, global integration, and international understanding. Support and contribute through active participation in the various fora (international and national) in the development, promotion and implementation of policies and approaches aimed to foster the expansion and liberalization of civil aviation and tourism; and Focus on identifying concepts and measures, using latest technology to strengthen and upgrade aviation and tourism infrastructure. Function as an institutional base for the industry

## Review of cleanliness initiatives across the airports at highest level



Union Minister of Civil Aviation, Shri Ram Mohan Naidu, recently chaired a high-level meeting of officials including Civil Aviation Secretary Shri V. Vualnam and BCAS DG Shri Rajesh Nirwan. He reviewed the progress of ongoing aviation infrastructure projects, sustainable aviation and cleanliness initiatives across the infrastructure and enhancing passenger experience. The meeting was attended



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