

Standing Committee Report Summary

Development of Greenfield and Brownfield Airports, and Issues pertaining to Civil Enclaves in Defence Airports

- The Standing Committee on Transport, Tourism and Culture (Chair: Mr. V. Vijayasai Reddy) submitted its report on ‘Development of Greenfield and Brownfield Airports and Issues pertaining to Civil Enclaves in Defence Airports’, on July 24, 2023. Greenfield airports are developed on empty/undeveloped land and their commissioning/planning is done from scratch. Brownfield airports have existing infrastructure for airport development such as runways and terminal buildings. Key observations and recommendations of the Committee include:
 - **Comprehensive policy for brownfield airports:** The Committee observed it is necessary to revamp, expand, and modernise brownfield airports. But they face constraints in terms of site expansion, design limitations, and execution risks. While there is no specific policy for brownfield airports, the Ministry of Civil Aviation highlighted that the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP), 2016, and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) Act, 1994 contain guiding principles for the development of brownfield airports. The Committee noted that a clear policy which specifies parameters to decide whether a greenfield or brownfield airport should be developed must be formulated.
 - **Coordination challenges and project delays:** The Committee observed that the Ministry faces several challenges in coordinating with state governments for establishing airports. These include delays in land acquisition and allotment and delay in submission of in-principle approvals where the central government has already provided site clearance. For instance, while 13 greenfield airports have received in-principle approval, four were operationalised after 10 years, and one was operationalised after 20 years. Delays are also caused due to rehabilitation and resettlement issues that lead to various litigations.
 - The Committee recommended a coordination mechanism between stakeholders and a mechanism to track land acquisition progress. The Committee agreed that legal disputes cause significant delays to greenfield projects, and highlighted that stakeholder grievances must be addressed to prevent escalation of such disputes. Also, target deadlines must be kept wherever possible.
 - **Civil enclaves:** Civil enclaves are airports used for both military and civil aviation. Currently, there are 31 civil enclaves, of which 28 are being maintained by AAI. The Indian Air Force (IAF) develops basic infrastructure such as the extension of runways and AAI coordinates with the IAF for upgrading infrastructure. The Committee recommended that since civil enclave airports are managed by two operators, there must be perfect coordination between them to avoid delays. Noting non-adherence to probable dates of completion, the Committee recommended that these be examined and sorted out with the IAF.
 - The Committee noted that while such enclaves are important for defence needs, the requirements of commercial aircraft must also be addressed. It suggested that the feasibility of developing a full-fledged airport may be considered. The Committee also noted that air traffic controllers in such airports are overworked due to handling fighter and civilian aircraft. It suggested that issues such as delinking permissions for lease rentals, extension of watch hours for commercial flights, and expansion of existing airports be jointly addressed by the Ministry of Civil Aviation and the Ministry of Defence.
 - **Airport security:** The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) provides security cover to 66 airports in India. Noting the growth of the sector and rising security needs, the Committee recommended that the Ministry examine the feasibility of specialized security for airports in consultation with the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Committee noted that as of November 30, 2022, AAI and joint ventures had outstanding dues worth Rs 4,708 crore pertaining to CISF deployment. The Committee urged AAI and joint ventures to promptly clear such dues.
 - **Accommodating future growth:** The Committee noted that the availability of airports must be increased to improve air connectivity. It highlighted that focus must be placed on constructing international airports in tier-II cities to improve trade, tourism, and attract foreign investment. The Committee also highlighted that several international transit hubs have emerged in countries such as Dubai, Doha, Singapore, and Hong Kong. It suggested that the Ministry develop such global transit hubs for international flights.

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