

Future in Mind

Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International Airport expands to meet growing demand. BY LISA MATTE



Less than a decade after its initial opening in 2008, Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International Airport is already looking ahead. It is located about 19 miles south of central Hyderabad, one of India's fastest-growing urban centers and home to special economic zones dedicated to encouraging development in the realm of information technology, pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, and the financial industry. The airport's future ties in directly to a comprehensive regional plan.

Announced in January 2013, the Hyderabad Master Plan 2031 for Hyderabad Metropolitan Region covers a 2,300-square-mile area, home to 18.4 million people, including Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International Airport. The plan includes development of a comprehensive travel infrastructure to address growing demand well into the mid-21st century. Currently serving about 12 million passengers a year, Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International Airport expects to accommodate annual traffic of 40 million passengers, serving as the gateway to central and southern India under the master plan implementation.

Phase 1 of the master plan, encompassing existing development, comprises the airport's primary runway. The second-longest in India, the runway can accommodate the current generation of superjumbo jets including the Airbus A380. A secondary, paral-

lel runway accommodates aircraft up to the size of a Boeing 747. Existing infrastructure includes a cargo terminal, rescue operation facilities and state-of-the-art air traffic control and operational database technology.

Planned with the future in mind, the modular design of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport's main passenger terminal will expedite transition as expansion continues. Current facilities include multiple-contact boarding bridges, remote stands, common user terminal equipment, check-in stations, self-service kiosks, customs and immigration facilities and a transit hotel. An "Airport Village" functions as a central location for shopping, dining, meeting points, lounges, a children's play area and access to parking and transfer assistance.

Additional development outlined in the master plan calls for a dual runway connected by two cross taxiways, two integrated passenger terminals and dedicated cargo terminals.

In the meantime, the airport marches forward one step at a time. In August, Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International became India's first airport to secure regulatory approval for eBoarding. A significant component of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "Digital India" initiative, paperless eBoarding will ease passenger transit while establishing Hyderabad Rajiv Gandhi International Airport as a leader in India's airport technology landscape.

UP AND COMING:

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