

India unveils policy on new airport projects

In an effort to promote new airports in the country, the Indian government Friday did away with the compulsory approval clause for all new projects that come up beyond a 150-km radius of existing ventures.

'A steering committee would be set up under the chairmanship of secretary, civil aviation, to coordinate and monitor clearances required from various agencies for setting up an airport,' an official statement said.

'In the case of an application by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) or other airport company to set up an airport within 150 km of an existing airport, the application shall be considered by the steering committee,' the statement added.

In cases where the committee is unable to reach a decision, the matter would be taken up by the cabinet, says the policy while designating the Directorate General of Civil Aviation as the competent authority to grant licences.

The policy, however, requires promoters of airports to get approval from all the government agencies that take care of aspects such as air traffic management, security, customs and immigration.

'These agencies would notify their respective guidelines,' the statement said, adding promoters would have to enter into a pact with them regarding the rights and obligations of each party.

The new airports policy was necessitated by the recent strikes by the employees of the existing airports in [Bangalore](#) and Hyderabad. They protested the closure of the two airports to make way for the two Greenfield projects nearby.

The new policy is also expected to influence a decision on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mayawati's request for an early clearance for an airport hub at Jewar, within 150 km of the Indira Gandhi International Airport in the capital.

Called the Taj International Airport and Aviation Hub, the \$1.25 billion project is proposed by infrastructure major GMR on an area of 1,000 hectares in Gautam Buddh Nagar, some 70 km from Delhi airport.

Officials said the new policy makes room for interested parties, including the state governments, to make recommendations in case some new airport projects within 150 km of existing ones are awaiting approvals.

'Airports for cargo or non-scheduled flights or heliports need not be submitted for approval of the ministry of civil aviation and these cases may be considered and decided at the level of the directorate,' said the official statement.

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