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METRO AIRPORTS

India has six metropolitan cities – Bengaluru (formerly Bangalore) (*State of Karnataka*), Chennai (formerly Madras) (*Tamil Nadu*), Hyderabad (*Andhra Pradesh*), Kolkata (formerly Calcutta) (*West Bengal*), Mumbai (formerly Bombay) (*Maharashtra*), and New Delhi (*Haryana*). Each has a major airport, which together with 19 other international and customs facilities account for 94 per cent of all passenger traffic in the country.

The designation of a metro city depends on several parameters, including population count, business environment, infrastructure availability, educational institutions, employment opportunities and skill levels, social environment, financial services and transport. Pune and Ahmedabad are expected to reach metro status in the not too distant future. In anticipation, the airport at Ahmedabad is undergoing a major upgrade and expansion programme, while Pune is to get a brand new international airport at Chakan.

Bengaluru International (BLR/VOBL) (*Karnataka*)

Phase I of the new Bengaluru International Airport was opened in May 2008, replacing the old HAL Bangalore International Airport. It was built by Bangalore International Airport Ltd (BIAL), a joint venture of Siemens Project Ventures as the lead partner (40%), Larsen & Toubro (L&T) (17%), Unique Zurich Airport (17%), Karnataka State Government (13%), and the Airports Authority of India (AAI) (13%). BIAL was awarded a 30-year concession, with the option of extending the agreement for another 30 years. The airport was built by L&T and cost INR 2,470 crore (USD 494 million). Bangalore Airport and Infrastructure Developer Private Ltd, a subsidiary of GVK Power and Infrastructure Ltd, has recently since acquired an approximately 14 percent stake in the airport from Siemens.

The 71,000m², four-storey integrated terminal can handle 12 million passengers annually. It has 54 CUTE (common-use terminal equipment) check-in counters, 20 CUSS (common-use self-service) counters, 20 gates of which eight have passenger boarding bridges including one double-armed, and 19 remote aircraft stands. A car park for 2,000 cars is situated in front of the terminal building. The airport's 4,000m runway can handle all aircraft currently in service. Access to the airport is via a four-lane road. A 321-room business hotel, opened opposite the main terminal building in 2010, is owned and operated jointly by L&T and East India Hotels Ltd under the Trident brand.

The airport is a work-in-progress for the next 10-15 years, with gradual and continuous expansion phases. Work valued at INR 1,070 crore (USD 196.4 million) and to be completed in phases, started in September 2010 and will extend the terminal by 50,000m² to handle increased numbers of passengers, up from 10 million to 17 million annual capacity, and expand the number of aircraft parking stands from 42 to 68. The first stage of Phase II was scheduled to be completed in December 2012. Terminal 2, which, together with a second runway and associated taxiways, will be built under a third phase, will more than double passenger capacity to 36 million. BIAL has announced that work on the second runway will begin when traffic reaches 18 million passengers, a figure expected by 2014, with a third runway to be constructed after the completion of runway two.

The 22km stretch of the national Highway 7 between Hebbal flyover and the airport is being widened to a six-lane expressway to include a service lane and a 34km High Speed Rail Link

(HSRL) is planned from the heart of the city to the rail terminal at the airport. Work on the widening is being held up by lack of funds and problems with acquiring land, and may not meet its May 2013 deadline for completion. Any delay would also affect the proposed schedule for the INR 6,900 crore (USD 1.27 billion) rail link, which will be initiated by Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Ltd and was expected to be completed by 2014. The rail link will connect the airport with the city in 25 minutes

BIAL is also proposing Aerotropolis, an airport city project with office parks, retail and entertainment facilities. Land has also been set aside for the rail link to the city centre. Discussions with developers are being held.

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