

Petition for Upgrading Airports and Air connectivity in Odisha.

To: "Dr. Manmohan Singh" <pmosb@pmo.nic. in>,
The Prime Minister, Republic of India

Sub: Upgradation of Airports and Air connectivity in Odisha.

Dear Sir:

While each of India's parts should progress for India to go ahead, some are really falling behind, increasing the GAP in development. Such is the case with Odisha. In recent past various central projects have not been located in the other areas of Odisha, in a distributed manner, under the plea that areas are not Air connected. We have seen this argument again and again and again.

The recent Central University of Orissa (CUO), of Koraput, is a case in point. It's VC, under the deceptive cover of poor connectivity of Koraput, has started a parallel campus in BBSR, while operating from Kolkata. This must be stopped and will be stopped.

But what stands out is lack of Regional Airports in Odisha and it's lack of overall Air connectivity. We are thus presenting an overall proposal of Air connectivity in Odisha, with a request you thus Sir, to kindly consider & implement the following at the minimum:

1. Upgrade the 60 decade old regional **Airport at BBSR to an International Airport.**
2. Expedite and complete the construction of ongoing western regional **Jharsugda Airport in Jharsugda district**, in western Odisha, within next two years.
3. Reinvigorate and evaluate for a possible domestic airport for the unused South regional **Jeypore Airport, Koraput** in to action in next 2 years.

This will enable the remote areas of Odisha to be connected to the places of national importance and will prevent lack of air connectivity as a alibi, for not locating Institutes of National importance in the backward areas.

In addition to the above , Airports at Rourkela , Berhampur and Rayagada can be developed further in future which were once upon a time used for emergency landing. These airports can serve as feeder to the above full fledged Airport.

Justification & rationale for all of them are as below

Yours truly,
Citizens & Well wishers of Odisha

A: Justification of BBSR International Airport:

1. The average number of flights operating from Bhubaneswar [2] is 50, which is more than with respect to airports in Calicut - 50, Nagpur - 48, Coimbatore - 42, Mangalore - 30, Patna - 27, Srinagar - 27, Amritsar - 27, Trichy - 21, Varanasi - 16, Port Blair - 15, Tirupati - 9, Gaya - 1 all of which have been designated as international or customs airports. In addition, there have been recent reports [3] that Visakhapatnam with an average of 33 flights will soon be an international airport.
2. Bhubaneswar airport as an established 50 year old Airport with large number of daily flights compared to other less busy international airports. It can have Air India (Express) flights directly connecting Bhubaneswar to international destinations, starting with one or more south East Asian destinations such as Bangkok and Singapore.
3. The Bhubaneswar airport caters to the capital area of Orissa and its nearby areas. While the larger metropolitan area of Bhubaneswar [Map1] has a population of 19 lakhs [1], a 200kms radius of around Bhubaneswar consists of 14 of the 21 parliamentary constituencies of Orissa (Berhampur, Aska, Puri, Bhubaneswar, Cuttack, Dhenkanal, Jajpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapada, Jagatsinghpur, Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Phulbani) with a population of about 3 crores.
4. This area includes several large population centers as well as existing and emerging industrial hubs. These centers and hubs are Berhampur to the south, Puri and Paradeep to the east, Angul-Talcher to the west, Kalinganagar, Dhamara and Balasore to the North.
5. The area also includes top tourist destinations such as Puri, Bhubaneswar, Chilika, as well as the Buddhist monuments of Orissa which are of special interest to East Asia. As you may know Buddhism spread to East Asia and

beyond when Emperor Ashoka became Dharmshoka on the bank of the Daya river on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar.

6. The area is also ripe for a logistic corridor with existing excellent Rail, Road, and Ports connectivity and with a national waterway under works. Thus an international airport would also make it a multi-modal logistic hub.
7. The Bhubaneswar airport has a runway of 9000 feet and it is being extended to 10,500 feet.
8. Currently, four airlines have regular flights linking Bhubaneswar, three of which have international operations. They are Kingfisher, Jetlite (of Jet) and Air India. The 4th airline connecting Bhubaneswar is Indigo which commenced operations in India on 4th August 2006 and would be eligible for international flights in 2011.

[1] <http://www.orissalinks.com/orissagrowth/archives/1846>

[2] <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=55629>

[3] <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Visakhapatnam/article478992.ece>

[4] <http://pib.nic.in/release/release.asp?relid=55628>

B: Expediting the construction work for Jharsuguda Airport:

1. Airports Authority of India (AAI) has already agreed to develop the Jharsuguda airport to a full-fledged one, for which it has also asked for allotment of 815 acre of land free of cost. – Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Orissa Assembly.
2. Jharsuguda are under the control of management of the AAI. Authority considering the proposal of the State Government of developing the Jharsuguda airport to a full-fledged airport, has asked for additional land of 815 acres free of cost. However, a maximum of 734 acre of land is available near the Airport which includes 418 of Private land. So, the Authority has been requested to scale down their requirement of land through a reasonable estimate.
3. AAI have also been asked to intimate a firm commitment to complete the expansion project of the Airport within a period of two years from the date of receipt of the additional land.
4. AAI seems to have illegally collaborated with a private sponge iron plant of Jain Steel & allowed a high Chimney on it's flight path to an unacceptable height – Dharitri, report dated 4th August, 2010:

5. Jharsuguda is in the heart of Western Orissa's fast developing industrial heart land, with huge industries all around – e.g. Public sector giant RSP, Brajaraj Nagar Paper Mill, Ib Thermal Power plant and Vedanta's Aluminum plant

C: Justification of Jeypore Domestic Airport - A request for evaluation

1. Jaypur Airport was established in 1962 by the then Chief Minister of Odisha Late Shri Biju Patnaik. After the establishment of HAL Engine factory at Sunabeda, this airport was established. During 1980 the service commenced from Jeypore to Vishakapatnam and Bhubaneswar, but failed commercially. But now days the said Airport gets activated during the VIP visits only. Rapid industrialization of KBK districts will result if this airport is reactivated. It will need elongating the current runway from 400 meters to 914m, with an estimated cost of 4 crores. - Dharitri
2. Distance by road to nearby cities in Km are below in parenthesis.
Visakhapatnam (Road-224, Rail-258), Vijaynagram(Road-180) Raipur(Road-378), Jharsuguda(Road-350), Bhubaneswar (Road-520)
3. Jeypore is connected by Rail but very poorly.
4. Districts of Koraput, Malkangiri, Nabrangpur and Rayagada will benefit as also some areas of Chhatisgarh & Andhra Pradesh.
5. Many industries are already located nearby and will become both be encouraged and facilitated by such air connection. The current Industries are, Nabaratna PSU, NALCO (Damanjodi), HAL, Sunabeda, Sewa Paper Mills, Coffee Board office, numerous Rice & Cashew processing plants, J.K.Paper Mill & IFFCo, Thiruvelli are in it's hinterland.
6. The Central University of Orissa(CUO), Koraput has recently been located in nearby Koraput (22 KM), it's potential will be greatly enhanced. Some of the major Hydroelectric plants of Balimela Dam project and Kolab Dam Project as well as Indrabati Project will be benefitted.
7. The tourist potential of Koraput is huge but connectivity is poor. This will be enhanced if Air connection is restored in next 5 years after extending the length of the Runway.