WORLD AIR TRANSPORT SUMMIT 2025 - REPORTS

NEWS: Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the **International Air Transport Association's 81st Annual General Meeting** and the **World Air Transport Summit (WATS) in New Delhi,** highlighting India's aviation leadership.

WHAT'S IN THE NEWS?

Hosting of IATA AGM in India

- India hosted the **International Air Transport Association (IATA) Annual General Meeting (AGM)** after a gap of 42 years, underscoring the country's rising influence in the global aviation ecosystem.

- The return of this prestigious event to India reflects global recognition of India's aviation growth and policy leadership.

India's Strategic Role in Global Aviation

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasized India's vision to become a global hub integrating **space and aviation technologies**, powered by innovation, self-reliance, and regulatory reforms.

- India's commitment to global aviation standards was reiterated, aligning itself with IATA's objectives and practices.

About IATA (International Air Transport Association)

- **Established**: In 1945 in Havana, Cuba.

- **Headquarters**: Montreal, Canada.

- **Membership**: Represents about 320 airlines, accounting for 83% of global air traffic.

- **Key Objectives**:

    - Promote safe, reliable, and efficient international air transport.

    - Coordinate among airlines to improve service quality and operational efficiency.

    - Standardize rules and ensure secure air travel by enforcing international regulations.

India's Vision for Aviation Development

- India is working toward building a **$4 billion Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO) hub by 2030** to serve the growing regional and global demand.

- Focus on promoting **"Make in India"** and **"Design in India"** in aerospace manufacturing and technology innovation.

- Policies are geared toward **attracting global investment** across the aviation value chain, from manufacturing to leasing and services.

UDAN Scheme – A Major Success Story

- The **UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik)** scheme has enabled affordable air travel for over 15 million passengers, many of whom were first-time flyers.

- It is described as a "**golden chapter**" in India's aviation history.

- The scheme has notably enhanced **connectivity in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities**, contributing to economic inclusion and regional development.

Growth of India's Domestic Aviation Market

- India has emerged as the **third-largest domestic aviation market**, behind only the U.S. and China.

- Passenger traffic rose to **240 million annually**, projected to **double to 500 million by 2030**.

- Air cargo volume is expected to grow from **3.5 million metric tons to 10 million metric tons** by 2030.

Infrastructure Expansion and Fleet Growth

- The number of **operational airports increased from 74 in 2014 to 162 in 2025**, reflecting rapid infrastructure development.

- Passenger handling capacity now stands at **500 million annually**.

- Indian airlines have placed **orders for over 2,000 aircraft**, reflecting market confidence and future growth potential.

PPP Model and Policy Incentives

- Airports are being developed and upgraded using the **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model** with supportive policies and tax incentives.

- Streamlined regulations and simplified tax regimes have made India attractive for airport investors and developers.

Boost to Maintenance and Leasing Sectors

- The number of **MRO facilities increased from 96 to 154**, with improved ease of doing business.

- **Lowered GST and rationalised taxes** have made MRO services more viable.

- **Full FDI** is now allowed in MRO services, enabling international partnerships.

- The **Protection of Interest in Aircraft Objects Bill** aligns India's legal framework with the **Cape Town Convention**, improving leasing environment.

- **GIFT City** has been promoted as a hub for aircraft leasing through policy and tax benefits, attracting global lessors.

Sustainability and Green Aviation Initiatives

- Focus on **Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF)** and measures to **reduce carbon emissions** across operations.

- Development of **green airport infrastructure**, like **Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport**, Delhi, which is fully powered by **renewable energy**, making it **India's first carbon-neutral airport**.

Digital Innovation in Air Travel

- India introduced **Digi Yatra**, a **facial-recognition-based, paperless travel app**, ensuring secure and seamless airport processing.

- Digi Yatra has been **recognized as a model for the Global South**, promoting digital innovation in aviation.

Gender Inclusion and Workforce Diversity

- India has a high share of **women pilots (15%)**, which is **three times the global average**.

- Women also make up **86% of cabin crew** and have growing representation in **engineering and MRO roles**.

Drone Technology for Societal Development

- Drones are increasingly used by **Self-Help Groups (SHGs) led by women** for agriculture, healthcare delivery, and logistics, supporting grassroots empowerment and last-mile service delivery.

India's Global Commitments in Aviation

- India has adopted **ICAO norms** and adheres to the **Chicago Convention**, reinforcing its commitment to global aviation rules.

- Through the **Delhi Declaration** at the **Asia-Pacific Ministerial Conference**, India reaffirmed its leadership and collaborative role in shaping the region's aviation future.

Source: https://m.economictimes.com/news/india/pm-narendra-modi-addresses-plenary-session-of-world-air-transport-summit-at-bharat-mandapam/videoshow/121571934.cms