

## **Air India to develop Bengaluru Airport its third hub**

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 09 April, 2024



**New Delhi: Tata-owned Air India is planning to develop Bengaluru's Kempegowda International Airport as its premier south Indian hub, with an aim to boost air travel connectivity to and from India over the next few years.**

The plan includes making Bengaluru the origin point of what is likely to be a 'hub-and-spoke' model, where long-distance travellers from other South Indian cities are taken to Bengaluru airport for their onward long-distance global flights.

Air India has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Karnataka to establish comprehensive maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) facilities at Bengaluru airport.

This deal is expected to create 1,200 new jobs and stimulate the MRO ecosystem in the country, which the government has been trying to

stimulate through budget incentives in the last couple of years.

“Airline-airport synergy is key to elevated customer experience and efficient operations,” said Air India MD & CEO Campbell Wilson. “We are therefore delighted to be strengthening our relationship with Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) with a view to developing a greater presence at the airport, expanding air connectivity as well as building a major MRO centre.

This partnership agreement is a significant milestone in the ongoing transformation of Air India.”

The deal involves not just Air India, but Tata group airlines like Vistara and Air India Express, and involves launching more services to and from the airport situated in the southern metropolis suburb of Devanahalli.

A dedicated lounge will also be set up at Bengaluru’s Terminal 2 for premium passengers of Tata Group’s Air India and Vistara.

Hari Marar, Managing Director and CEO, BIAL, said, “As the busiest airport in South India, BLR Airport is dedicated to strengthening its position as the primary international gateway to Southern and Central India.

This collaboration aligns perfectly with the Ministry of Civil Aviation's vision of developing Indian airports as hubs, reflecting our commitment to enhancing the passenger experience. Given that over half of the international outbound travellers from Bengaluru and our catchment, head to Europe, North America, Australia, and the Far East, our alliance with Air India represents a substantial leap towards this goal. We aim to capture a significant share of long-haul routes from BLR Airport over the next five years.”

-B