



## Wah ! Delhi's new T3

**D**elhi's brand new airport terminal T3 was inaugurated on 3 July 2010 by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi, barely three years after its foundation stone was laid. Ushering in a new era for air travelers it is described as "India's biggest and fanciest airport terminal as also the eighth largest in the world".

Boasting a floor space of 6.4 million square feet, 92 automatic walkways and 78 aerobridges, the terminal's size and scale are "awe-inspiring". It can cater up to 34 million passengers annually and has 95 immigration counters. T3 also promises to redefine air travel in India and boasts of in-line baggage handling system with capacity to handle 12,800 bags per hour. T3 has been built by the Delhi International Airport (DIAL), a joint venture of India's GMR Infrastructure, German airport operator Fraport and the state-run Airports Authority of India.

Highly impressed by its stature, the Prime Minister said this "would signal the arrival of a new India, committed to join the ranks of modern, industrialised nations of the world...the commissioning

of this terminal will be a significant step forward in developing Delhi as a vital hub. It will encourage feeder traffic from the non-metro airports being developed by the Airports Authority of India."

Others who attended the function included Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit, Andhra Pradesh CM P Rosaiah and officials of the Delhi and Central

governments. Praising the scale of work undertaken for construction of the terminal, the PM said it had been a success of the public-private partnership model for large infrastructural projects. "It also proves our capacity to coordinate across agencies and governments and work as a united team. I am told that over 58 departments of government



*Pilot's view as airliner approaches T3 aerobridge.*

were involved in the construction of this terminal, apart from other stakeholders, such as ground-handling agencies and airlines,” said Dr Manmohan Singh.

The PM added that there was strong need for a regulatory and policy framework to be aligned with requirements of the civil aviation industry to encourage investment of as much as \$120 billion in the sector by 2020. “In a span of a few years, India has become the ninth largest aviation market in the world...India also occupies an important geographical place in the air route structure of the world. Many key international air traffic services cross our airspace for which India is responsible in providing air traffic services. The hub traffic out of Delhi and Mumbai will increase, particularly in the coming years,” he said.

Sonia Gandhi felt that the new airport was a model to be followed to achieve good quality and efficiency in other projects too, especially in view of the Commonwealth Games. “Quality is not something to be reserved for prestigious projects but it should become part and parcel of our design process for all our public projects, including housing and other services,” she said. “Providing rural and urban infrastructure efficiently and at the same time achieving high standards must remain our goal,” she added.

GM Rao, founder chairman of the GMR Group, the leading group behind

T3’s construction elaborated, “The main terminal in front is 0.3 kilometres...it’s a nine storey building! So the front is like three football grounds. There is a 100-room hotel in the middle of this and there are 78 aerobridges – that’s almost more than all aerobridges in India right now...we have built the aerobridges in 5.2 million square feet. We had to build it in 40 months...nowhere in the world has anybody done it. We’ve given the best infrastructure, best operational efficiency, best customer service and best IT system, best security. We have also brought in Indian culture to it. If you enter that space, you can feel India.”

Walking into the brand new terminal, one is overwhelmed by the sheer vastness of the building. Still, it is possible to walk through without getting exhausted: travelators come to the rescue! For the first time in India, both domestic and international passengers will walk in one stream till the check-in. Only then will their paths diverge with international passengers heading for immigration and domestic passengers heading for the security check.

The terminal has walkways lined with greenery, walls adorned with art based on the theme of ‘Flavours of India’ and brightly-lit corridors. Moreover, a multi-level parking lot, equipped with elevators and corridors that connect to the main terminal building, taking

passengers directly to their various entry gates and 168 check-in counters and an in-line baggage check system, will render the check-in process “a breeze.”

T3 offers world class facilities to make sure that flight operations are conducted smoothly and in a timely manner. The new baggage check system does away with separate x-raying of baggage, with passengers not likely to take more than five to 10 minutes to clear the process, claim Delhi International Airport (P) Ltd (DIAL). After security check, passengers travelling in both the international and domestic sectors would have a wide variety of shopping outlets and food courts to choose from.

In one stroke T3 has put Delhi high on the global aviation map as it will more than double the airport’s current capacity and handle nearly 35 million passengers a year, vying with Hong Kong, Singapore and Dubai as a regional transport hub. Apart from the aerobridges - designed to handle 600 passengers an hour-Terminal 3 will also have 63 elevators and 35 escalators, besides a common check-in concourse with five level in-line baggage system for faster processing .

What will make flying out of Delhi even more exciting is that the terminal is ‘Airbus A-380 aircraft ready’. Indeed India’s first world-class airport is here!

*Monica Arora*



*Travelators in T3, the first in India.*