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*International Civil Aviation Organization*

The Eighth Meeting of the Asia/Pacific  
Aerodrome Assistance Working Group (AP-AA/WG/8)

*(Bangkok, Thailand, 21 to 24 April 2026)*

### **Agenda Item 3: Aerodrome Certification and Safety Management System**

#### **SAFETY OVERSIGHT FUNCTIONS AT JOINT USER DEFENCE AIRPORTS IN INDIA**

(Presented by DGCA/AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA, INDIA)

##### **SUMMARY**

This paper presents that under the Aegis of DGCA India, The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plays a vital role in the management and operation of Joint User Defence Airports in India, where civil and military aviation share the same infrastructure. Airport operator is primarily responsible for developing and maintaining civil aviation facilities such as passenger terminals, aprons, and link taxiways, while coordinating closely with defence authorities like the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, which retains overall control of the airfield.

AAI also provides Air Navigation Services for civilian aircraft and ensures compliance with safety and regulatory standards set by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation. Security responsibilities are shared, with civil enclave security managed by agencies such as the Central Industrial Security Force and State police etc. in accordance to norms set by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Despite challenges such as limited operational flexibility, infrastructure constraints, and the need for continuous coordination with defence authorities, Joint User Defence Airports are strategically important. They enhance regional connectivity, optimize the use of existing defence infrastructure, and reduce the need for developing new airports.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 In India licensing of Aerodrome is governed by The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam 2024 section 10 (2) (e) and Aircraft Rule 1937 Part XI section 78-92 {notified vide notification SO 346(E)}.

1.2 DGCA India has issued a Civil aviation requirement for civil operators at defence Airfield.

1.3 Airport operator only manages civil enclaves at defence airfields, known as Joint User Airfields (JUA). These airports allow both military and civilian aviation operations, ensuring optimal use of existing infrastructure while enhancing regional connectivity.

## **2. DISCUSSION**

Concept of Joint User Defence Airports

2.1 Joint User Defence Airports refer to military airbases where civil aviation operations are permitted alongside defence operations. These arrangements are typically established through coordination between the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Defence. Under this system:

- The airfield and runway remain under defence control.
- Airport operator develops and manages civil terminals, city side passenger facilities and airside facilities for civil aircrafts including apron for parking and link taxiways etc.
- Civil flights operate under strict security and operational standards.

India has progressively expanded the joint-user system, enabling civilian aircraft to operate from dozens of military airfields, improving access to remote and strategic regions.

#### Need for Joint User Defence Airports

Joint use of defence airfields is important for several strategic and economic reasons:

2.2 **Efficient Infrastructure Utilization:** Constructing new airports is costly and time-consuming. Joint user airports allow civilian operations using existing military airfield infrastructure.

2.3 **Regional Connectivity:** Many defence airbases are located in remote or border regions where civilian airports are limited. Allowing civilian flights enhances connectivity and economic development.

2.4 **Strategic National Interest:** Civilian access to these airports supports government initiatives such as the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN) aimed at improving air travel access for smaller cities.

2.5 **Emergency and Strategic Use:** In times of national emergencies or security situations, the government retains the authority to prioritize defence operations and control airspace usage.

#### Functions of the Airport Operator at Joint User Defence Airports

Airport operator performs several critical functions to facilitate civilian aviation operations at defence airfields.

2.6 **Development of Civil Enclaves:** Airport operator develops and maintains civil terminal infrastructure and infrastructure for civil aircraft movement, including:

- Passenger terminal buildings.
- Check-in counters and baggage systems.
- Passenger waiting areas and amenities such as lounges.
- City side development including parking facilities and passenger pick and drop spots.
- Cargo handling facilities.
- **Communication & Navigation:** Airports Authority of India often installs and maintains Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS) equipment specifically to support civil instrument landing requirements, if not already provided.
- **Visual Aids:** Installation and maintenance of specific aeronautical lighting and signage required for civil operations within the enclave.

These civil enclaves are separate from the military portion of the airfield.

2.7 Coordination with Defence Authorities: Effective functioning of joint-user airports requires close coordination between Airport operator and defence agencies. This includes coordination regarding:

- Runway usage schedules and slot allocation for various airlines.
- Airspace management for airspace reservation if required and air routes.
- Installation and maintenance of specific aeronautical lighting and signage required for civil operations.
- Publication of Aeronautical Information and Aerodrome Charts.
- Further, close coordination is also required for issue of NOTAM and coordination with airlines and passengers in case of suspension of civil aircraft movement due to a military exigency.
- Coordination for Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting Services and these are provided by the defence agency at civil enclaves.
- Conducting Airfield Environment Management Committee in coordination with district authorities, defence agency and airlines.

DGCA/Airport operator regularly conducts coordination meetings with defence officials to synchronize airport development and operational planning.

2.8 Infrastructure Development and Expansion: Airport operator undertakes infrastructure development projects at joint-user airports, such as:

- Expansion of passenger terminals
- Link taxiway development and upgrades
- Installation of modern navigation systems
- Apron and parking bay development

In several cases, the Ministry of Defence has transferred land to AAI to support airport expansion and regional connectivity initiatives.

2.9 Ground Handling and Passenger Services: AAI is responsible for managing civil aviation operations and passenger services at these airports, including:

- Ground handling
- Passenger facilitation
- Information systems
- Security coordination with relevant agencies (State Police or CISF)
- Establishment of Surface Movement Control
- Establishment of Apron Management including parking stand allocation, apron discipline and vehicular movement discipline.
- FOD management at the apron and link taxiway.
- Coordination with Oil companies.
- City side management.
- Facilitation of VIPs at the Airport.

#### Challenges in Joint User Defence Airports

Despite their advantages, joint-user airports face several operational challenges:

2.10 Security Restrictions: Military installations require strict security protocols, limiting civil aviation activities and movement.

2.11 Operational Constraints: Civil flight operations may be restricted during military exercises or defence priorities.

2.12 Limited Infrastructure: Since the airfields are primarily designed for defence purposes, civil infrastructure expansion can be constrained by availability of land and security considerations.

2.13 Coordination Complexity: Effective management requires continuous coordination between civil aviation authorities, airlines, and defence agencies.

Importance for National Development

2.14 Joint user defence airports contribute significantly to:

- Regional connectivity
- Tourism development
- Economic growth in remote regions
- Strategic civil-military cooperation
- Efficient utilization of national aviation infrastructure

By enabling civil aviation operations from military airfields, AAI helps bridge infrastructure gaps without duplicating costly airport facilities.

Conclusion

2.15 The Airports Authority of India plays a pivotal role in managing civil aviation operations at joint user defence airports. Through infrastructure development, air navigation services, and close coordination with defence authorities, AAI ensures the efficient functioning of these strategically important facilities.

**3. ACTION BY THE MEETING**

3.1 The meeting is invited to:

- a) note the operational case wherein Joint user airports represent a successful model of civil-military cooperation, balancing national security requirements with the growing demand for air connectivity across India.

—END—



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# Information Paper

**Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India**



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## Information Paper



### Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India

#### SUMMARY

Under the Aegis of DGCA India, The Airports Authority of India (AAI) plays a vital role in the management and operation of Joint User Defence Airports in India, where civil and military aviation share the same infrastructure. Airport operator is primarily responsible for developing and maintaining civil aviation facilities such as passenger terminals, aprons, and link Taxiways, while coordinating closely with defence authorities like the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy, which retains overall control of the airfield.

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## Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India



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Security responsibilities are shared, with civil enclave security managed by agencies such as the Central Industrial Security Force and State police etc. in accordance to norms set by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Despite challenges such as limited operational flexibility, infrastructure constraints, and the need for continuous coordination with defence authorities, Joint User Defence Airports are strategically important. They enhance regional connectivity, optimize the use of existing defence infrastructure, and reduce the need for developing new airports.



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## Airports Authority of India's functioning in Joint User Defense Airports



### 1. Introduction

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- b. DGCA India has issued a Civil aviation requirement for civil operators at defence Airfield.
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## Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India



### 2. Concept of Joint User Defence Airports

**Joint User Defence Airports refer to military airbases where civil aviation operations are permitted alongside defence operations. These arrangements are typically established through coordination between the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Ministry of Defence.**

**Under this system:**

- **The airfield and runway remain under defence control.**
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## Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India



### 3. Need for Joint User Defence Airports

Joint use of defence airfields is important for several strategic and economic reasons:

#### 3.1 Efficient Infrastructure Utilization

Constructing new airports is costly and time-consuming. Joint user airports allow civilian operations using existing military airfield infrastructure.

#### 3.2 Regional Connectivity

Many defence airbases are located in remote or border regions where civilian airports are limited. Allowing civilian flights enhances connectivity and economic development.

#### 3.3 Strategic National Interest

Civilian access to these airports supports government initiatives such as the Regional Connectivity Scheme (UDAN) aimed at improving air travel access for smaller cities.

#### 3.4 Emergency and Strategic Use

In times of national emergencies or security situations, the government retains the authority to prioritize defence operations and control airspace usage.



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## Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India



### 4. Functions of the Airport operator at Joint User Defence Airports

Airport operator performs several critical functions to facilitate civilian aviation operations at defence airfields.

#### 4.1 Development of Civil Enclaves

Airport operator develops and maintains civil terminal infrastructure and infrastructure for civil aircraft movement, including:

- Passenger terminal buildings
- Check-in counters and baggage systems
- Passenger waiting areas and amenities such as lounges.
- City side development including parking facilities and passenger pick and drop spots.
- Cargo handling facilities.
- Communication & Navigation: Airports Authority of India often installs and maintains Communication, Navigation, and Surveillance (CNS) equipment specifically to support civil instrument landing requirements if not already provided.
- Visual Aids: Installation and maintenance of specific aeronautical lighting and signage required for civil operations within the enclave.

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### 4.2 Coordination with Defence Authorities

Effective functioning of joint-user airports requires close coordination between Airport operator and defence agencies. This includes coordination regarding:

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- Airspace management for airspace reservation if required and air routes.
- Installation and maintenance of specific aeronautical lighting and signage required for civil operations.
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### 4.3 Infrastructure Development and Expansion

Airport operator undertakes infrastructure development projects at joint-user airports, such as:

- Expansion of passenger terminals
- Link taxiway development and upgrades
- Installation of modern navigation systems
- Apron and parking bay development

In several cases, the Ministry of Defence has transferred land to AAI to support airport expansion and regional connectivity initiatives.

### 4.4 Ground Handling and Passenger Services

AAI is responsible for managing civil aviation operations and passenger services at these airports, including:

- Ground handling
- Passenger facilitation
- Information systems
- Security coordination with relevant agencies (State Police or CISF)
- Establishment of Surface Movement Control
- Establishment of Apron Management including parking stand allocation, apron discipline and vehicular movement discipline.
- FOD management at the apron and link taxiway.
- Coordination with Oil companies.
- City side management.
- Facilitation of VIPs at the Airport.



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### 5. Challenges in Joint User Defence Airports

Despite their advantages, joint-user airports face several operational challenges:

#### 5.1 Security Restrictions

Military installations require strict security protocols, limiting civil aviation activities and movement.

#### 5.2 Operational Constraints

Civil flight operations may be restricted during military exercises or defence priorities.

#### 5.3 Limited Infrastructure

Since the airfields are primarily designed for defence purposes, civil infrastructure expansion can be constrained by availability of land and security considerations.

#### 5.4 Coordination Complexity

Effective management requires continuous coordination between civil aviation authorities, airlines, and defence agencies.



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## Safety Oversight functions at Joint User Defence Airports in India



### 6. Importance for National Development

Joint user defence airports contribute significantly to:

- Regional connectivity
- Tourism development
- Economic growth in remote regions
- Strategic civil-military cooperation
- Efficient utilization of national aviation infrastructure

By enabling civil aviation operations from military airfields, AAI helps bridge infrastructure gaps without duplicating costly airport facilities.

### 7. Conclusion

The Airports Authority of India plays a pivotal role in managing civil aviation operations at joint user defence airports. Through infrastructure development, air navigation services, and close coordination with defence authorities, AAI ensures the efficient functioning of these strategically important facilities.



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