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## Chennai airport to become SE Asia hub

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**Chennai:** The Airports Authority of India (AAI) proposes to make the city airport the hub for Southeast Asia with more terminals and facilities lined up.

While noting that metro airports — Delhi, Mumbai and Kolkata — are vying for the status, AAI chairman V.P. Agrawal said on Wednesday a study by a leading research agency, Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation, has revealed that Chennai has the potential.

Ahead of the inauguration of the new domestic and international terminals, he told mediapersons that Chennai airport could handle 40 million passengers per year in future.

AAI will encourage domestic and international airlines to use Chennai as their hub, while also being keen to develop the proposed greenfield airport at Sriperumbudur.

## Chennai Airport to be hub for foreign airlines

**Chennai:** Apart from making the city airport the hub for Southeast Asia, with more terminals and facilities, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) proposes to encourage domestic and international airlines to use the city as their hub. Emirates Airline has already evinced interest to AAI to use city airport as its hub for passengers and cargo facilities.

AAI chairman V.P. Agrawal told mediapersons on Wednesday ahead of the inauguration of the new domestic and international terminals, that Chennai airport could handle 40 million passengers per year in the future. While the two new terminals alone could handle 14 million passengers per year, the whole premises along with the upgraded old buildings would have the total capacity to handle 23 million passengers per year.

When asked about the space for further expansion, Agrawal told DC that AAI would utilise the land currently being used for residential purposes of its employees.

“It is not easy to build a brand new airport. So, we want to use the present premises to the maximum capacity,” he added.

“We are open to airlines using the city airport as their hub. But, first, we need to provide facilities on the side like developing maintenance, repair and overhaul blocks, more parking space and hangars,” said S. Raheja, Member (planning), AAI.

V.P. Agarwal noted that expansion works of the present airport would be started after three years.

He added that the AAI was also looking to straighten a taxi track and make it parallel to the main runway to facilitate quicker movement of aircraft from the tarmac to the parking yard.

While noting that the expansion works in the present airport would be started after three years, Agrawal said AAI would also be keen to develop the proposed greenfield airport at Sriperumbudur. “There is always a need for infrastructure development and, so, we should plan ahead and construct a brand new airport to cater to future growth,” he added.

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