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Explore the Golden



**By Group Captain Devinder C. Mehta,
Advisor (MR), AAI**

The City

Amritsar city is one of the major cities of the Punjab state in India. This city was founded by Sri Guru Ram Dass jee in 1574 and, as a tribute to this great saint and fourth Guru of the Sikhs, the airport has been named Sri Guru Ram Dass Jee International Airport, Amritsar.

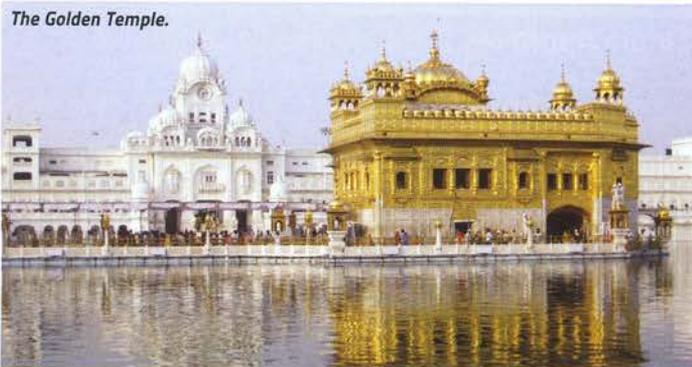
The city is home to the highest temporal seat of the Sikhs, i.e. "Sri. Harimandir Sahib", popularly known as the 'Golden Temple' across the world. The central old city is also known as the 'Walled City'. The Walled City has narrow zigzag streets and is a peculiar example of an introvert planning system with a unique feature called Katras. The Katras are self-styled residential units that provided unique defense umbrella coverage during attacks on the city. The other famous and major attractions of the city are Jallian Wala Bagh, a memorial of national importance where

General Dyer of the British army had ordered firing on peaceful, innocent Indians who were holding a public meeting, thus indulging in the massacre of more than 1,500 innocent people, as well as Wagah Border, the border between India and Pakistan which is famous for its 'Beating Retreat Ceremony' held every evening at sunset.

The Airport

Initially in 1944, i.e. during the Second World War, a landing ground was developed at the location of the present airport. With the passage of time and meeting the need of the changing times, this landing ground has since been developed into a fully operational runway with most modern state-of-the-art instrumentation, equipments and avionics installed for safe operations.

The Golden Temple.



Inside the Terminal

Destination through Amritsar Airport



Simultaneously, commensurate to the demands of changing times and steady progress in the aviation scenario, the Terminal Building was also modernised, most recently being upgraded in the second phase of modernisation, wherein the Terminal Building has been completely refurbished and is now made of glass and steel structures. This was inaugurated on February 25, 2009.

The structure is primarily a combination of glass and steel and is a remarkable structure in itself. Recently, Institute for Steel Development & Growth (INSDAG), (jointly promoted by "Ministry of Steel" and "Steel Producers") has conferred 3rd Position across India to the steel structured Passenger Terminal Building of this airport.

Features of the Airport

Terminal Building

The New Terminal Building offers 40,170 m² of space to passengers and user agencies as compared to 12,770 m² earlier, an increase of approximately 33,000 m². The New Integrated Terminal Building is an example of world class architecture having modern facilities for international and domestic passengers. The terminal is presently handling both domestic and international passengers and is hence referred to as an Integrated Terminal Building. The building has a total of six lifts, of which two are glass capsule lifts, three escalators, four automatic revolving doors, etc. With all such modern infrastructure, the peak hour capacity of the terminal has now increased to 1,200 passengers (600 arrival and 600 departure). The New Terminal Building also proposes to offer business facilities in terms of Business Lounges with hi-tech facilities like video conferencing, etc. and a large commercial



Modern architecture with a hint of local flavour.

complex inside the international SHA which spreads from the ground floor to the first floor.

Check-in, Customs and Immigration Counters

- The New Terminal Building has a capacity of 30 CUTE check-in counters. All are connected to a SITA network.
- There are 24 Immigration counters, with 12 each in Arrival and Departure Halls.
- There are 12 Customs counters, with six each in Arrival and Departure to cover the large Security Hold Area on the ground and first floors.



The new Terminal has 30 CUTE check-in counters.

Runway

Amritsar International Airport has a single runway 16/34 which is 12,000 ft. (3,658 m) long and 45 m wide (PCN-64/F/B/W/T) with 7.5 m flexible shoulders and three taxiways, designated as Twy – E/F/G (PCN-64/R/B/W/T). As on date, Runway 34 is equipped with CAT-I ILS and the work of its upgradation to CAT II is in the advanced stage, slated to get operationalised before the onset of the fog season this year.

Apron

The new Terminal Building offers four aircraft in-contact parking bays and two aerobridges at bays no. 3 and 5. Provision for two more aerobridges has been made and would be installed soon. The four in-contact parking bays can accommodate aircraft of size up to B-747. The apron capacity is $(375 \times 235) + (290 \times 135) = 127,275 \text{ m}^2$. The complete apron area is illuminated with 15 to 25 m high masts (18 nos.) lights, offers 14 parking bays including five remote bays with power-in, push-out apron configuration. With PCN value of 64/R/B/W/T, eight bays (stand no. 2-5 and 11-14) are suitable for E-category (B747-400) and three bays (6,7,8) for C-Type (B737-900) aircrafts, exclusively for passenger use. Besides hard stands for GSE/ramp equipment area, it has one cargo bay for B-747 and one isolation bay.

Parking Facilities on City Side

The parking area on city side has been designed to accommodate 810 cars/taxis and 15 buses/coaches. The entire car parking area is illuminated with 12 nos. 12-meter-high light masts.



The new Terminal has ample seating.



The baggage claim area with all modern amenities.



Ample duty-free shopping facilities are available.

Cargo Facilities

Cargo Terminal and Available Facilities

Amritsar is surrounded by the industrial cities, which have the great potential of import/export cargo particularly in the context of woolen, hosiery, RMG, sports goods, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, leather products, tobacco products and agricultural products of perishable nature, which are produced in different parts of Punjab and neighboring states.

The Air Cargo Complex at SGRDJ International Airport, Amritsar has the following facilities:

- Customs EDI system is well equipped with EDI 1.5 version for computerised processing of all type of shipping bills under ICES.
- Export and import wings each have a capacity of 250 tonnes with two X-ray machines installed for scanning of cargo.
- Four weighing scales plus two precious items weighing scales are provided for weighing of cargo.
- One strong room for keeping the valuable goods is existing at each side (Import and Export).
- Examination/bonded and palletisation are separately earmarked on each side.
- The Cargo Terminal has a separate storage area for dangerous goods. Trained manpower is available for handling the dangerous goods.
- The Air Cargo Complex has adequate equipments for handling the cargo.
- An adequate truck dock area is available on both sides.
- A separate cargo bay is available for parking the cargo aircraft.
- The whole cargo complex from city to airside is covered by a CCTV system.
- The complex has a separate chamber for perishable cargo which is operated by M/s. Council for Value Added Horticulture (CVAH) in Punjab. The infrastructure for perishable cargo includes two pre-cooler chambers, two X-ray machines for scanning of perishable cargo and four cold rooms (20 tonnes capacity in each). The total capacity of the perishable centre is 80 tonnes.

Connectivity and Airline Operators

The Amritsar International Airport is connected to the following destinations:

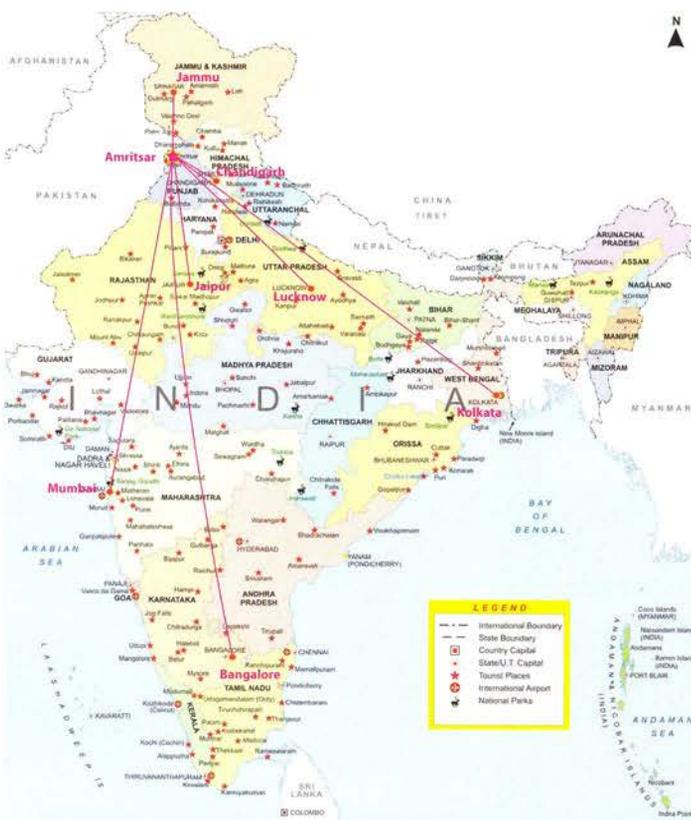
International Destinations:

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Doha (Qatar) | Qatar Airways |
| 2. Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) | Turkmenistan Airlines |
| 3. Tashkent (Uzbekistan) | Uzbekistan Airlines |
| 4. Sharjah (UAE) | Air India Express |
| 5. London (Great Britain) | British Midland Int'l (BMI) Airways
(Subsidiary of Lufthansa)
<i>(BMI starting operations from 13th Oct 2011)</i> |



Domestic Destinations

On the domestic scene, Amritsar is presently connected to New Delhi, which in turn offers appropriate connections to almost all the major domestic airports through all major flight operators. Efforts are on with different domestic airline operators to enhance Amritsar's connectivity with multiple destinations on the domestic circuit which include Mumbai, Jammu, Chandigarh, Jaipur, Lucknow, Kolkata, Bangalore, etc.



City-side of the new Terminal.

Unique Selling Point

The main Unique Selling Point (USP) of this airport is its location, which makes it profitable for airlines operating on Trans-Atlantic routes. The airlines save a good amount on fuel costs if they land at Amritsar instead of New Delhi, which requires about 40 minutes more flying time, i.e. covering a distance of 223 nautical miles. Moreover the airspace at Amritsar is free of congestion and offers good facilities at comparatively lesser cost. Other attractions are:

- Cheapest ATF in India – VAT reduced by Govt. of Punjab to 4% from 22%.
- Airlines can now look at ATQ as a Tankering Sector.
- Airlines may think of upgrading from ATRs to Airbus.
- CAT II ILS shall be operational before onset of fog this year.
- Thick NRI population belt and religious tourism spot on the world tourist map.
- Ideal for westbound international routes. ATQ – A340-600 ready.
- Less RNFC charges due to GCD 26 NM vis-à-vis 234 NM from Delhi.
- Ample slots are available; no congestion problem (fuel saving).
- Active Cargo Facility for both perishable and non perishable.

Opportunities for New Airline Operators

On the international front the International Airport of Amritsar offers a golden opportunity for the airlines. Punjab boasts the maximum number of NRI's living in different countries across the globe and the good thing is that they are maintaining deep rooted connections back home. Accordingly, especially on the international route there is enormous scope with respect to catering for enhanced number of passengers for Trans Atlantic as well as on Trans Pacific routes as all the NRI's are habitual of travelling frequently and have the financial resources / capacity to spend on leisure trips also.

Efforts are on to start flights to Singapore, Malaysia, Australia on Trans Pacific route while on Trans Atlantic route we have succeeded to rope in BMI Airways (Subsidiary of Lufthansa) to start a flight from Amritsar to London via Almaty. They will be starting their operations from 13th Oct 2011.

With the recently upgraded infrastructure, AAI is now in the process of inviting more and more airlines to start operations from this airport and to connect more and more sectors, both domestic and international, so as to provide better air connectivity to the people of Punjab and neighboring states, including Himachal Pradesh, J&K and Chandigarh, for whom this is the nearest international airport.

Mr. Suneel Dutt

Airport Director

Mr. Suneel Dutt, Airport Director is a 1990 batch engineering graduate (Electronics) from SGSITS Indore. In his 20 years of career in AAI he has handled various posts and projects from time to time. As Airport Director he has worked at Chandigarh and now at Amritsar.

