

Eastern Region holds great potential to be key driver in India's journey to become global aviation powerhouse: Shri Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu

Eastern Region Ministers' Conference on Civil Aviation in Bhubaneswar: A major push towards regional connectivity and aviation-led growth

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The **Eastern Region Ministers' Conference on Civil Aviation 2025**, was organised by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation, Government of India**, in collaboration with the **Govt of Odisha** at **Bhubaneswar** on **25th August**. The conference was graced by the presence of **Shri Mohan Charan Majhi**, **Chief Minister of Odisha** as Chief Guest; **Shri Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu**, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, **Shri Murlidhar Mohol**, Hon'ble Minister of State for Civil Aviation and **Shri Bibhuti Bhushan Jena**, Minister of Commerce and Transport, Government of Odisha and **Shri Om Prakash Choudhary**, Minister of Finance, Commercial Tax (Except Excise), Housing & Environment, Planning, and Economics & Statistics, Government of Chhattisgarh remained present and delivered valuable insights.

Shri Mohan Charan Majhi, **Chief Minister of Odisha** underlined Odisha's commitment in advancing the civil aviation sector. He emphasized the importance of air connectivity for balanced regional growth, cargo logistics, and industrial expansion across Odisha and the Eastern Region. He reiterated the vision of the State Govt of Odisha for accelerating the growth and development of the aviation sector through active collaboration with the Aviation industry and leveraging full potential of the support from Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Shri Rammohan Naidu Kinjarapu, **Minister for Civil Aviation** emphasized the need for deepening Centre-State-Industry collaboration for the accelerated growth of the Civil Aviation sector in the Eastern Region. With its industrial might, strong tourism base, coastal access, and aspirational Tier-II cities, Eastern Region has a variety of connectivity needs and holds great potential to be a key driver in India's journey to become a **global aviation powerhouse**. He assured continued support from the Central Government and emphasized that **aviation is no longer a luxury—but a critical enabler of Viksit Bharat @2047**.

The Minister added, "Empowered by the transformatory UDAN scheme, the brainchild of our Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi Ji, aviation today is more available, accessible and affordable than ever before."

Highlighting India's transformation into the third-largest domestic aviation market, he pointed to initiatives like expansion of airports, growth of regional carriers, focus on Aviation skilling and efforts to incentivise MRO sector as key pillars of progress.

Sh. Rammohan Naidu Ji highlighted the strategic importance of strengthening India's aviation ecosystem. Addressing key stakeholders, the Minister underscored the vital role of Flight Training Organizations (FTOs) in building a robust pipeline of skilled professionals to meet the growing demand of the aviation sector. He emphasized that enhancing aviation-related skill sets is crucial not only for operational excellence but also for supporting the expansion of India's aviation manufacturing industry.

The Minister further drew attention to the vast potential of sea planes in boosting regional connectivity and opening up new opportunities for tourism, commerce, and last-mile connectivity. He reiterated the

Government's commitment to creating an enabling environment for innovation, investment, and skill development, ensuring that India remains at the forefront of global aviation growth.

Shri Murlidhar Mohol, Minister of State Civil Aviation, Ministry of Civil Aviation, outlined the vision behind the regional conferences and emphasized the Ministry's commitment to building a future-ready, inclusive aviation ecosystem

He highlighted the growth of aviation infrastructure in the last 11 years from 74 to 162 airports. He mentioned some of the important projects in the eastern region like the inauguration of the new terminal building at Patna airport, the foundation of the new civil enclave at Bihta, the soon-to-be-operational Purnia airport and the in-principle approval for a greenfield airport at Puri.

Shri Murlidhar Mohol also shared that under the UDAN scheme, as many as 12 RCS-UDAN airports have been operationalized and 115 UDAN routes made functional in the eastern region alone.

Shri Bibhuti Bhushan Jena, Minister of Commerce and Transport, Government of Odisha highlighted the importance of strengthening regional connectivity for unlocking the economic potential of Eastern India. He assured full support of the State Government towards initiatives that bring greater accessibility and opportunities for the people.

Shri Om Prakash Choudhary, Minister of Finance, Commercial Tax (Except Excise), Housing & Environment, Planning, and Economics & Statistics, Government of Chhattisgarh underlined the critical role of aviation in accelerating inclusive growth and enabling economic transformation of the nation to a developed economy. He spoke about Chhattisgarh's policy-driven efforts to enhance ease of doing business and improve regional air connectivity. He reaffirmed the State's resolve to work closely with the Centre to transform aviation ecosystem in the State. He welcomed the Ministry's initiative to deepen the engagement with the State Governments through structured Regional Conferences.

During the event, MoUs and Letters of Intent were exchanged including:

1. Establishment of an Anchor MRO Facility at Bhubaneswar Airport by M/s Air Works India (Engineering) Pvt. Ltd., one of the country's leading third-party MRO service providers, in collaboration with the Commerce and Transport Department, Government of Odisha. The facility will cater to both domestic and international aircraft operators and is expected to generate significant skilled employment opportunities in Odisha and the wider Eastern Region.
2. Letter of Intent with Air India for collaboration with the Government of Odisha to launch a Cadet Pilot Program (CPP), with a special focus on empowering Odia tribal girls to pursue careers in aviation.
3. Skill Development Training for Odia Youth, aligned with the establishment of the MRO facility. Under the Nua Odisha scheme, M/s Air Works will conduct a six-month specialized training program in aircraft surface preparation, masking, sanding, and painting for up to 20 domicile candidates of Odisha.

There were one on one interactions by the Ministry with the participating States and UT where State/UT delegations engaged directly with the Union Minister and Ministry officials to discuss specific connectivity challenges, infrastructure proposals, and support requirements. Parallel sessions facilitated **interactions between State Governments and key industry players**, with a focus on investment facilitation and identifying implementation bottlenecks.

The event had participation of senior officials from Odisha, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, West Bengal and the UT Administration of Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Also senior officials from Ministry including **Shri Samir Kumar Sinha**, Secretary, Civil Aviation, **Shri Rajesh Nirwan**, DG BCAS, **Shri Faiz Ahmed Kidwai**, DG DGCA, and **Shri Vipin Kumar**, Chairman, Airports Authority of India attended the Conference. Over **100 industry stakeholders**, including airline operators, OEMs, FTOs, MROs, cargo players, and drone companies, participated actively—highlighting the importance of public-private collaboration in driving regional aviation development. FICCI provided the vital industry interface for organising the Regional Conference.

The conference included presentations by the Ministry of Civil Aviation on **Airport and Helipad**

Development Models, UDAN, Skilling in Aviation, Drone Ecosystem and Helicopter Emergency Medical Services (HEMS) providing states with sectoral insights and implementation pathways. DGCA, presented on the **Role of State Governments in promoting safety in Aviation activities.**

Adding further momentum to the Ministry's forward-looking initiatives, attention was drawn to the upcoming flagship event — **Wings India 2026**, jointly organised by the **Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airports Authority of India** and the **Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI)**, Wings India 2026 is scheduled to take place from **28th to 31st January 2026**. The event will serve as a premier platform to showcase the growth and opportunities in the Indian civil aviation sector, bringing together key players from across the globe to foster partnerships, innovation, and policy dialogues.

The **Eastern Region Ministers' Conference on Civil Aviation** thus marks an important milestone—ushering in a new era of **regional collaboration, innovation, and growth** with a **focus on decentralised planning, investment mobilisation, and inclusive access** to air travel.

Union Minister Sh. Rammohan Naidu and Minister of State Sh. Murlidhar Mohol also inaugurated the Udan Yatri Cafe at the Bhubaneswar Airport, the 5th such cafe in the country. Udan Yatri Cafes offer pocket-friendly refreshments to the travellers making airport experience more inclusive and dignified. To further promote ease of flying, a children's play arena was also inaugurated at the Bhubaneswar airport, ensuring a joyful travel experience for the children.

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