

AIR INDIA WELCOMES THE RELEASE OF GOVERNMENT'S HUB AND SPOKE SOP; PREPARES TO LAUNCH INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIVITY FROM VARANASI

GURUGRAM, 29 April 2026: Air India today welcomed the Government of India's push to operationalise the hub-and-spoke aviation model and announced that it is preparing to launch international connectivity from Varanasi under this model.

Campbell Wilson, Chief Executive Officer & Managing Director, Air India, said: "This is a transformative step for Indian aviation. We would like to thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his vision, to make India a global aviation hub and develop the entire aviation ecosystem. The hub-and-spoke model will not only strengthen connectivity but also ensure optimal use of airport infrastructure developed across the country. We thank the Minister of Civil aviation for championing the entire Hub and Spoke model which will create a strong multiplier effect and act as a catalyst for India's broader growth."

Mr. Wilson thanked the Civil Aviation Secretary for playing a key role by engaging closely with all stakeholders such as airlines, airports, government agencies to ensure that operational readiness, passenger convenience and security considerations were addressed holistically as the model moves towards implementation.

As part of its network expansion and in alignment with the hub and spoke model, Air India is preparing to launch international connectivity from Varanasi, strengthening the city's linkages with global destinations and enhancing access for passengers from surrounding regions.

P. Balaji, Group Head – Governance, Risk, Compliance and Corporate Affairs, Air India, said: "The introduction of international hub-and-spoke connectivity from Varanasi underscores our focus on expanding India's global aviation footprint beyond metros. It will provide tremendous boost to international travellers from India's Tier 2 and tier 3 cities by cutting down travel time, while making travel seamless and convenient."

The hub-and-spoke model marks a fundamental shift in India's aviation landscape - from a predominantly end destination market to a global transit ecosystem. It will help airlines optimise aircraft utilisation and contribute to decongestion at major airports by decentralising passenger processing, including customs and immigration, across spoke locations.

About Air India group

The Air India group – comprising full-service global airline, Air India, and value carrier, Air India Express – is spearheading a new era of Indian aviation. The Air India story began in 1932 when JRD Tata piloted the airline's inaugural flight and opened the skies for aviation in India. Today, Air India group employs more than 30,000 people, operates over 300 aircraft and carries travellers to 60 domestic and 51 international destinations across five continents.

Returning to Tata Sons in 2022 following 70 years under Government ownership, Air India group is in the midst of a five-year transformation program, Vihaan.AI. As part of the transformation, Air India has placed orders for 600 new aircraft. In addition to taking new aircraft deliveries, Air India progressively retrofitting all its legacy aircraft.

The Air India group operates South Asia's largest aviation training academy in Gurugram, India. The construction of a new flying school and a greenfield maintenance base is in progress.

With transformation underway across all facets of the business and India's rich legacy of hospitality, Air India is committed to being a world class global airline with an Indian heart.

For more news on Air India, visit <http://www.airindia.com/newsroom>

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