

Revive abandoned airstrips



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The regional airports/airstrips can play a vital role in enhancing air connectivity and in turn boost up the economy. A quite few number of airstrips from the British days are lying unused in different parts of Assam, particularly in the upper Assam districts and the possibility of using the same for improving connectivity is being explored. However, for that, the Ministry of Civil Aviation will have to play a major role, while, private entrepreneurs would also have to come forward in this regard says Raju [Ranjan](#) Gogoi- An Aviation entrepreneur from [North East India](#).

Thanks to

civil aviation



[ministry](#) for

implementing

that nation's

first civil

aviation

[policy](#) which

emphasis on

regional

connectivity

with stressed

on [North East](#)

region. The

idea of making use of the abandoned airstrips cropped up during a

meeting between Assam Industries and Commerce Minister Chandra

Mohan Patowary and Civil Aviation Minister Ashok Gajapati Raju . The

civil Aviation minister has assured every possible assistance to [state](#)

govt to develop the airstrips and enhance connectivity with South Asean

countries in line with [Act](#) East [policy](#). However, the concept is in the

preliminary stage only.

As per Raju [Ranjan](#) Gogoi a number of abandoned airstrips could be utilised in the days to come to improve connectivity not only in Assam but also in other parts of the region. He said that though the exact number of such abandoned airstrips is not immediately available, it is a fact that a number of airstrips constructed by the British during the World War II are lying abandoned and in fact, the Government organized the [Dihing](#)-Patkai festival on one such abandoned airstrip near Margherita. He pointed out that several other airstrips including the Rupshi airport in Dhubri district , are lying unused for years and the possibility of making use of those could be explored.

Raju [Ranjan](#) Gogoi being an aviation enthusiast personally visited and explored few number of airstrips/helipads available in private tea gardens of Assam , this airstrips are utilized by the tea owners/officials for their personal use. According to records available with the Government, at least 18 airstrips are in possession of the tea gardens and companies including Williamson Magor and around [10](#) of those are in usable condition. He said that of the tea companies having airstrips, only Wialliam Magor is using those for visits of senior officials. Behora Airstrip (Golaghat district) is completely in use at present Revival of Margherita Airstrip can be major boost to the region, remember the coal field of borgolai, ledoo , digboi oil refinery ([IOC](#)) and the tea gardens are the major source of revenues for the authorities if at all airstrip revived.

Revival of Rupsi airport can be a major boost for the people of Kokrajhar and Dhubri [as](#) presently they need to travel to Guwahati to board their flight onwards.

If the dialogues can be established between Magor tea company and the [state](#) govt, the Behora airstrip can e utilized for tourism purpose [as](#) its just 20 ms away from kaziranga national park. The major source of revenue for the authorities will come from tourist, numaligarh refinery

etc.

There need a joint collaboration between State Government and Centre to making use of this abandoned airstrips for improving connectivity and the Ministry of Civil Aviation would have to [deal](#) with the matter with support from the private entrepreneurs would also have to come forward for operating small aircrafts by using the abandoned airstrips.

Raju [Ranjan](#) Gogoi in his [start](#) up entity Radiant NE Aviation & [Travel](#) support working closely with the small aircraft operators based in Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai , making them aware of these airstrips potentials. He is also meeting officials, authorities of the region and stressed on [marketing](#) the potential of these airstrips, upgrade the infrastructure and to form a aviation management body under the [state](#) govt. Most of the [state](#) govts have their directorate of civil aviation under civil aviation [ministry](#), those who [don](#)'t have separate civil aviation [ministry](#) works under tourism [ministry](#). Assam should have a separate body/directorate of civil aviation who can dedicatedly look after the aviation projects.

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