

CONSUMER UNITY AND TRUST SOCIETY SUBMISSION

IN THE MATTER OF DETERMINATION OF AERONAUTICAL TARIFF FOR SRI GURU RAM DASS JEE INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, AMRITSAR (ATQ) FOR THE SECOND CONTROL PERIOD (01.04.2024 - 31.03.2029)

1. **Stakeholders meeting** : We respectfully urge AERA to issue an advisory to all airports, recommending the adoption of a hybrid format for stakeholders' meetings, which would include the option for virtual participation. This approach would ensure that experts from diverse fields, who may not be able to attend in person due to geographical or other constraints, can still actively engage and contribute to the discussions. By offering a virtual participation option, we can foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment, allowing for a broader range of perspectives and expertise to be brought to the table, ultimately enhancing the quality and effectiveness of the consultation process.
2. **Airport issues** : In an article published in *The Tribune* on August 14, 2024, consumers at Sri Guru Ram Das Jee International Airport in Amritsar expressed dissatisfaction with the airport's facilities despite a rise in international flights. Key concerns revolved around poor sanitation, including unhygienic and poorly maintained washrooms, broken toilets, waterlogging, and leaking roofs, particularly in guest areas.

Thus, continuous real-time feedback systems can serve as a valuable tool for improving airport services, ensuring that concerns are addressed before they escalate and fostering a more positive travel experience for consumers.

3. **Inclusive Pricing** ; To make sure passengers have a good experience while the airport stays financially healthy, the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) should take a closer look at the non-aeronautical income at Amritsar International Airport (AIA), especially the rental costs for food and drink outlets. According to AERA's

Consultation Paper No. 06/2024-25, the airport's non-aeronautical income is expected to be much higher in the Second Control Period compared to the First Control Period (Chapter 10). This suggests that higher rental fees for food outlets may be driving this increase. Since these high rental costs are often passed on to passengers in the form of higher prices for food and drinks, AERA could consider setting limits on rental rates or offering incentives to food vendors to keep prices reasonable.

The AERA's **Hybrid-Till mechanism**, which uses only 30% of non-aeronautical revenue to cross-subsidize aeronautical charges, suggests a focus on increasing non-aeronautical revenues, but a more balanced approach could help ensure that passengers are not unduly burdened by high food and beverage prices. This strategy would allow the airport to remain profitable while safeguarding consumer interests and enhancing the overall passenger experience.

Additionally, the recent inauguration of the **Udan Yatri Cafe** at Kolkata Airport, which offers affordable food options starting from just Rs 10, marks a significant step towards making air travel more inclusive and accessible. A similar approach could be explored at **Amritsar International Airport**, where implementing a similar café concept could not only cater to the needs of all travelers, regardless of their budget, but also enhance the overall passenger experience. By offering reasonably priced food options, **Amritsar Airport could set a positive example of balancing financial sustainability with customer satisfaction, ensuring that air travel remains accessible to everyone.**