

CAAN unveils Rs 43.6b budget for FY2017/18

The board of directors of Civil Aviation Authority of Nepal (CAAN) has approved annual budget of Rs 43.66 billion for the aviation sector regulator, four years after the new fiscal year kicked off.

CAAN, which managed to spend only around 13 percent of the allocated Rs 30.82 billion in the last fiscal year -- FY2016/17, has seven months to spend Rs 43.66 billion -- a rise of 41 percent compared to budget of last fiscal year.

The board of director approved the budget on Friday.

The aviation regulator has estimated to earn Rs 5.49 billion from revenue, and collect Rs 1.95 billion from airport development fee, and Rs 19.49 billion from loan, share investment and grants.

CAAN has Rs 15.96 billion in its funds from last year's unspent budget. Similarly, it has receivables worth Rs 684 million from the Government of Nepal and Rs 72 million from the state-owned Nepal Airlines Corporation (NAC).

The aviation regulator has allocated Rs 32.65 billion for capital expenditure and Rs 3.53 billion for recurring expenditure.

Officials of CAAN argue that they had submitted budget proposal to the Board of Director on August 3. They say it could not be endorsed in time as the board had reservation over budget allocations.

Differences between CAAN Director General Sanjeev Gautam and Minister for Culture, Tourism and Civil Aviation Jitendra Narayan Dev surfaced in the media after the latter tried to sack Gautam.

CAAN Spokesperson Birendra Prasad Shrestha told mediapersons that CAAN plans to replace the existing helipad at the Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA) and build parking bay for domestic aircraft this year. Extending the existing runway by 300 meters, expanding the international terminal building and completing work works like taxiway, expansion of international apron, building two new parking bays for international airlines, and other utility works are some of the programs for the current fiscal year.

Likewise, acquiring land for the Gautam Buddha International Airport Project, construction of Cargo Terminal Buildings, and completing land acquisition for Pokhara Regional Airport are the other priority projects of CAAN.

The aviation regulator also plans to bring mobile air traffic control (ATC) towers. Shrestha also informed that the recently installed MSSR Radar at Bhattedanda of Lalitpur will come into operation from February 1, 2018.

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Responding to a query on CAAN's plan to remove Nepal from the European Commission's blacklist, Director General Gautam said that they have already sent all the details to the European Commission. "They are examining our report now. They may seek further clarifications on aviation safety in Nepal. We will respond to them promptly," he said.

Source: My Republica, 28th November, 2017