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NOIDA & GHAZIABAD

Zurich signs key pact for Jewar airport

The agreement has paved the way for the work to start at the site of ₹30,000-crore project; construction will begin by middle of next year, officials said Wednesday

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GREATER NOIDA: Zurich Airport International AG, the Swiss company selected for developing the international airport at Jewar, and the special purpose vehicle (SPV) Yamuna International Airport Private Limited on Wednesday signed a concession agreement, paving the way for work to start at the site of the about ₹30,000-crore project.

Officials said that the airport is likely to become operational by its original deadline of 2023, unaffected by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The agreement was signed between Christoph Schnellmann, chief executive officer of the Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL), and Arun Vir Singh, CEO of Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL), in the presence of SP Goyal, additional chief secretary at UP's civil aviation department. Greater Noida authority CEO Narendra Bhooshan, Noida authority CEO Ritu Maheshwari, and UP civil aviation department director Surendra Singh were also present at the event that took place at the NIAL's office in Greater Noida's Sector Omega 1. Other top officials of Zurich International joined the event online.

"The Noida International Greenfield Airport at Jewar will become operational as per schedule by 2023 as we have already been working on all required procedures, such as geographical survey, topographical survey and soil testing, among other things. We will start work at the project site by middle of 2021 after finalis-

ing the required agencies," said Schnellmann, CEO of YIAPL, the SPV formed to develop and operate the ambitious project.

"Once the engineering and designing work gets completed, we will issue tender on our website, and then qualifying agencies in the bidding process will start construction and development work at the site," said Schnellmann.

On May 19 this year, the Swiss firm had got requisite security clearance from the ministry of home affairs, paving way for the signing of the concession agreement.

The agreement was supposed to be signed by July 2. However, on June 10, the UP government postponed the agreement signing date to August 17 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. On August 14, Zurich had been given time till October 15 for signing of the agreement in view of restrictions on international air travel. Finally, Schnellmann from Zurich International, along with one more staff member, travelled for the agreement signing process.

According to the officials, the signing of the concession agreement holds importance as Zurich could not start work at the airport site without it.

"The airport project at Jewar will not only prove to be a catalyst for economic growth and opportunities to Noida region, but also for the entire state. The project will help in economic recovery and attract investment in the state. Besides, it will create jobs," said Goyal.

According to Schnellmann, the Phase 1 of the airport will start in 2023-27 with one runway initially and will cater to 12 million passengers per annum. "We will soon set up our office along the Yamuna Expressway once the Covid-19 pandemic is over. If all goes as per the plan, the project will be completed by 2023," said Schnellmann.

The UP government has acquired 1,334 hectares of land from farmers via direct land purchase for the first phase of this project. In total, the UP government will acquire 5,000 hec-

NCR's second airport project on fast track

Once completed, the international airport at Jewar is expected to take the load off Delhi's IGI Airport



The agreement was signed between Christoph Schnellmann (centre), CEO of YIAPL and NIAL chief executive Arun Vir Singh (right), in Greater Noida on Wednesday. SOURCED

SOME CRUCIAL FACTS

₹25,000-₹30,000 cr
 estimated budget for the Jewar airport project

- ₹4,500 crore Zurich International will invest in first phase
- 40 years Swiss firm gets to fully develop this project
- Zurich will invest about ₹30,000 crore in the project till completing Phase 4
- 2023 deadline for the first phase of the project which will be developed in four phases
- The project is being developed on public-private partnership
- Under PPP model, Zurich will

- design, build, finance, operate and transfer the project to government
- Initially, the airport will start operations with one runway by 2023
- It will have six runways on completion to full capacity
- Total 1334 hectares of land acquired under phase-I
- In total UP government to acquire 5000 hectares of land
- UP government has given land as equity for the project

PROJECTED PASSENGER TRAFFIC AT AIRPORT



tares of the land for the project. "We will soon take possession of the land from the Noida International Airport Limited so that the project sees further progress," said Schnellmann, adding that they are happy and

excited to take up this project and looking forward for the government of UP.

After signing the agreement, NIAL chief Arun Vir Singh said, "This is a historic day as we

have signed an agreement with Zurich. As the agreement is signed today, we are looking forward to work together to make sure the project is completed as per the scheduled deadline."



TIMELINE

- **2001:** Then UP chief minister Rajnath Singh proposes Greenfield Taj International Airport and Aviation Hub in Jewar
- **2010:** Then CM Mayawati supports the aviation project at Jewar
- **2012:** Then UPA government at the Centre states that an airport cannot be set up within 150km of the IGI Airport in Delhi
- **2015:** Then CM Akhilesh Yadav expresses interest in the project
- **March 2017:** BJP forms government in the state, pledges to revive project
- **June 2017:** Union civil aviation ministry gives its approval to Jewar airport
- **Nov 2019:** Zurich Airport International AG wins bid to develop the Jewar airport
- **May 2020:** Swiss firm receives security clearance from the central government
- **October 7, 2020:** Zurich signs concession agreement with YIAPL

In big infra push, UP plans airport in each division

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GREATER NOIDA: To boost air connectivity and fuel growth, the Uttar Pradesh government has set a target to build the maximum number of airports in the state, director of the UP civil aviation department Surendra Singh said on Wednesday, adding at least one airport will come in each division in the state.

"The aviation sector, one of the major catalysts for growth and development, is not limited only to the Noida airport but UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath's vision is to develop this sector across Uttar Pradesh. To make sure that happens, the government has planned to make at least one airport in each division. There are 18 divisions in the state and we have a vision to ready 20 airports in the next two to three years to boost air connectivity," Singh said.

Singh visited the Noida International airport Limited office in Greater Noida's sector Omega-I, where the concessionaire agreement for the Noida International Greenfield airport proposed at Jewar was signed with Zurich International.

In Western UP alone, the government has decided to build an airport each in Saharanpur, Meerut, Aligarh, Noida and Muradabad.

"We are likely to acquire land for the Meerut airport project and work will begin soon. In Western UP, work will begin soon for the Saharanpur, Meerut, Aligarh, Noida and Muradabad airports. Hindon has already started operations. Besides we have planned air-



The aviation sector, one of the major catalysts for growth and development, is not limited only to Noida airport. Chief minister Yogi Adityanath's vision is to develop this sector across UP.

SURENDRA SINGH, director of UP civil aviation department

ports in Eastern UP cities such as Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Sonbhadra, Shravasti and Ayodhya," Singh said.

"We acquired 78 acres land for an airport in Bundelkhand's Lalitpur division and land is to be acquired for an airport in Jhansi division. Nobody ever thought of providing air connectivity to these cities," he added.

In the temple town Ayodhya, the UP government already has 200 acres of land and another 400 acres are being acquired to set up an international airport there, Singh said. The Kushinagar airport is likely to start its first flight by the end of October.

"We plan to start work in Azamgarh, Shravasti, Muradabad and Aligarh by March 2021. In 2016, UP had only 37 flights daily and now in 2020, there are 63 daily flights. We are focusing on air connectivity to boost growth and bring development," said the director of UP civil aviation department.



Read: Zurich to sign concession agreement in October