

Unveiling the future: Noida International Airports cargo ascent



CHRISTOPH SCHNELLMANN
a stalwart in the aviation industry
and the CEO of Noida
International Airport

*In the vibrant tapestry of India's burgeoning infrastructure, a new chapter is being written on the outskirts of Delhi. Noida International Airport, a colossal project poised to redefine the country's aviation landscape, stands as a testament to visionary leadership and unwavering determination. At the helm of this monumental endeavor is **Christoph Schnellmann**, a stalwart in the aviation industry and the **CEO of Noida International Airport**. In an exclusive interview with Logistics Insider, Mr. Schnellmann delves into the intricacies of the airport's development and unveils the ambitious plans that are set to revolutionize cargo operations in the region.*

Could you provide insights into the current status of the airport's development? How has the airport managed to progress despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?

The development work at the airport construction site is going on in full swing. It's been more than a year since the EPC construction contract was awarded to TATA Projects. The passenger terminal is currently undergoing work on the structural steel required to support its roof. The ATC tower is now standing at a height of over 30 meters. Additionally, subgrade work is in progress along the entire length of the runway. There are around 7000 workers who are fully mobilized at the site. In the next few months, more than 20 buildings will come up at the site, including the passenger terminal, air traffic control tower, office blocks, sewage and water treatment plants, and electric substations.

With this, we believe that we have been able to make remarkable progress so far despite facing the most unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 during the very initial phases of the airport construction. With our dedicated partners and continued support from the government, we have made requisite development so far and we aim to deliver the airport with one runway and one terminal by the end of 2024.

Noida International Airport is expected to offer efficient facilities for airlines, cargo, and commercial partners. Can you elaborate on the features and advantages that will make it a world-class airport and how will they contribute to its success?

NIA will be a world-class airport with facilities for airlines, hotels, cargo, and commercial partners. We will offer short turnaround times and low operating costs for airlines, allowing airlines to optimize fleet utilization. NIA will be a digital airport, with state-of-the-art technology to provide a seamless and mostly contactless flow for passengers through the airport.

We are in conversation with all domestic airlines as well as international airlines, and the interest in Noida International Airport has been very strong. Our approach to airport operations focuses on providing shorter turnaround times and low operating costs to airlines and cargo/logistics providers alike, making it convenient for all stakeholders. We have awarded contracts to Roseate Hotels and Resorts to build a 220-room property and to Air India SATS (AISATS) to develop a multi-modal cargo hub (MMCH) at the airport. We are currently identifying other strong and experienced partners to operate key services such as retail, food and beverage, and other non-aeronautical services. We have just partnered with TajSATS which will construct and operate the in-flight kitchen facility using a Design, Finance, Build, Operate, and Transfer (DBFOT) model for a period of 37 years. NIA is well-positioned to become a major hub for air travel in India. We are confident that the airport will be an asset to the region and to the country.

The airport is planning to establish a multi-modal cargo hub (MMCH). Could you provide more details on this initiative and how it will cater to the needs of industrial clusters in NCR and Uttar Pradesh?

Noida International Airport has partnered with Air India SATS for the development of a multi-modal cargo hub (MMCH). The state-of-the-art infrastructure will cater to the catchment area of Noida International Airport and will facilitate trade in northern India. Spanning over 80 acres of land, this upcoming cargo hub will provide quick, convenient, and intermodal connectivity to and from the country.

The MMCH will comprise an Integrated Cargo Terminal (ICT) combined with an Integrated Warehousing and Logistics Zone (IWLZ) and will feature various modern and efficient facilities including:

- a. Airside with dedicated freighter apron and transshipment centre
- b. Warehouse Zone for freight forwarders, integrators, supporting built-up units (BUPs) with airside access
- c. Logistics hub to support road-to-road, road-to-air, and air-to-road movement
- d. A trucking centre, in each case, is supported with an overlapping layer of technology and process excellence to provide best-in-class facilities, infrastructure, and processes.

The cargo and logistics infrastructure and ecosystem will cater to a differentiated catchment and several upcoming industrial clusters in NCR and Uttar Pradesh, creating a cargo gateway for Northern India.