

PM Modi to inaugurate UP's Kushinagar International Airport on Wednesday



Kushinagar is an International Buddhist Pilgrimage Centre, where Lord Gautam Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana

3 min read . Updated: 18 Oct 2021, 06:08 PM IST

Livemint

▪ The inaugural flight will land at the airport from Colombo, Sri Lanka carrying 125 dignitaries and Buddhist Monks

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Kushinagar International Airport on 20 October in the presence of Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, chief minister Yogi Adityanath, and Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia.

The International Airport will get operational this week to ease cumbersome travel of earlier times and facilitate the air travel requirements of International Buddhist pilgrims in India.

The inaugural flight will land at the airport from Colombo, Sri Lanka carrying 125 dignitaries and Buddhist Monks, highlighting the convenience to Buddhists across the world to visit the Mahaparinirvana Sthal of Lord Buddha.

The Airports Authority of India has developed the Kushinagar Airport with new terminal building spread across 3600 sqm at an estimated cost of ₹260 crore in association with Government of Uttar Pradesh. The new terminal is equipped to handle 300 passengers during peak hours.

Kushinagar is an International Buddhist Pilgrimage Centre, where Lord Gautam Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana. It is also the centre point of the Buddhist circuit, which consists of pilgrimage sites at Lumbini, Sarnath and Gaya.

The airport will help in attracting more followers of Buddhism from home and abroad to Kushinagar and will enhance the development of Buddhist theme based circuit, said the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Now, journey of Lumbini, Bodhgaya, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Shravasti, Rajgir, Sankisa and Vaishali of Buddhist circuit will be covered in lesser time.

Inauguration of the Kushinagar Airport will facilitate the pilgrims from across different parts of the world by providing seamless connectivity to various Buddhist sites in the region. Direct aviation connectivity with South Asian countries will make it easier for tourists arriving from Sri Lanka, Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore etc to reach Kushinagar and experience the rich heritage of the region. Tourism inflow is expected to rise by upto 20% with inauguration of the flight.

“The Kushinagar International Airport will not only put the pilgrimage site on International Aviation Map but also give boost to economic development of the region. It will have a multiplier effect on the hospitality industry by promoting hotel business, tourism agencies, restaurants etc. It will create employment for local people by opening the immense amount of opportunities in feeder transport services, local guide jobs etc. Local industry and products will get global recognition. It will promote cultural awareness and will also help to preserve local culture and traditions,” the ministry said.

The ministry added that the development of the airport at Kushinagar will help in developing Kushinagar as one of the four principal places of Buddhist Pilgrimage. It will help to impart Kushinagar the pre-eminence it deserves as part of Buddhist Circuit. Further, it will lead to development of India as the original Buddhist center and spread of principles of Buddhism across the world.

The airport will serve a population of more than two crore, since the airport has a hinterland of around 10-15 districts and will be a great support for large migrant population of Eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western / Northern Part of Bihar. This will also boost the opportunities for export of horticultural products like Banana, Strawberries and Mushroom, the ministry added.