

# Soon, Uttar Pradesh to become only state with five international airports

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LUCKNOW: When Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone of Noida International Airport (NIA) in Jewar on November 25 (Thursday), UP will spread its wings to have five international airports — the highest in the country.

This comes days after the PM inaugurated the Kushinagar international airport to put east UP on a global tourist map.

The Yogi Adityanath government also seeks to fast track the Ayodhya international airport even as the state gears up for the assembly elections in the next few months.

Earlier, only Lucknow and Varanasi were categorized as international airports in UP.

Chief Minister Yogi, who is scheduled to visit the inauguration ceremony site in Ruhi village on Tuesday, will hold a meeting to oversee preparations. Touted as one of the flagship projects in the National Capital Region, the Jewar airport is projected to come up as a big civil aviation hub with four helipads and five runways. Constructed over an area of more than 3,000 acres, the airport will be built and operated by the Switzerland-based Zurich Airport International AG.

In the first phase, which is scheduled to be completed by 2024, the airport will have the capacity to handle 12 million passengers per annum. The airport is also projected to ease out air traffic congestion at the IGI international airport in Delhi.

Projected as India's largest airport after its completion, the NIA is located about 72 km from the existing IGI airport in New Delhi, 40 km from Noida and about 40 km from the multi-modal logistics hub at Dadri.

It will have multi-modal connectivity as it is close to the existing Yamuna Expressway (Greater Noida to Agra), close to Eastern Peripheral Expressway and it will have link with Delhi-Mumbai Expressway at Ballabgarh, Khurja-Jewar NH 91, link to dedicated freight corridor, Metro Extension from Noida to NIA and link with the proposed High Speed Rail (Delhi-Varanasi) at airport terminal.

A state government spokesperson said that the state has managed to put in place a "world-class connectivity" and infrastructure in a short period of less than five years.

"The state had only two international airports since 2012 when Varanasi got the distinction after Lucknow," he said.

At present, UP has eight operational airports, while 13 airports and 7 airstrips are being developed. The operational airports handling commercial flights in UP are Lucknow, Varanasi, Kushinagar, Gorakhpur, Agra, Kanpur, Prayagraj and Hindon (Ghaziabad).

"This is also in sync government's commitment to ensure uninterrupted multi-modal connectivity on land, railways, water and air," he said, asserting that the ambitious Prime Minister's GatiShakti National Master Plan has infused a sense of urgency into the plans for infrastructure development in the state.