

'Ayodhya int'l airport equipped to handle 4mn flyers annually'

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NEW DELHI: The Maryada Purushottam Shri Ram International Airport in Ayodhya, which is set to be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on December 30, is equipped to handle 500 domestic passengers during peak hours and over four million flyers annually, officials familiar with the details said on Tuesday.

The officials also said that the airport, which has been built by government-owned Airports Authority of India (AAI) at a cost of ₹350 crore, currently has a runway suitable for the operation of Airbus A321 and Boeing 737 type of aircraft. The runway may be expanded in subsequent phases to allow wider aircraft to operate, the officials said.

The Prime Minister's visit to the temple town comes weeks ahead of the much-awaited consecration ceremony at the Ram Temple on January 22. During his visit, he will also inaugurate the redeveloped railway station in Ayodhya.

On Thursday, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation issued the aerodrome license, for the airport, in the public use category for all weather conditions.

A government official said the

airport comprises nine check-in counters, three conveyor belts, 75 slots for car parking and two slots for buses. "The airport is equipped to handle 500 passengers during peak hours and over four million passengers annually. It is suitable for the operation of A321 and B737 type of aircraft. Initially, it will have A321 and or B737 aircraft operating at the airport," the official said, seeking anonymity.

"The airport is designed in a way that it is convenient for passengers and ensures reduced mobility," the official added.

Peak rush hours at airports are usually witnessed at around 5pm-9am and 4pm-8pm.

Several domestic airlines have already announced non-stop flights to major cities from the temple town. While Air India Express announced an inaugural return journey between Ayodhya and Delhi on December 30 itself, the airline said it will begin full commercial operations on a daily basis from January 16.

Likewise, IndiGo said its inaugural flight from Delhi will take off for Ayodhya on December 30 but commercial operations between the two cities will begin on a daily basis from January 6. The low-cost carrier also announced flights to other cities from January.