Personal will stay private at Noida airport security check

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New Delhi: Over 80% of passengers flying out of the upcoming Noida International Airport (NIA) will not have to take personal electronic devices and water bottles out of their cabin bags during security checks when NCR's second hub becomes operational later this year. NIA CEO Christoph Schnellmann told **TOI** on Wednesday that six 3D computed tomography X-ray (CTX) scanners have been ordered. Unlike 2D scanners currently used that require laptops and liquids to be taken out of cabin bags at pre-boarding security checkpoints for separate checks, CTX scanners can scan these items while inside the bag. Additionally, the airport's first runway is receiving its "final layer of asphalt", and the instrument landing system is being delivered this week. Once installed, calibration flights (not commercial or with passengers) will take place.

"We are on track to have the airport ready for operations in Oct-Dec 2024 quarter. NIA will have both CTX and 2D scanners. During peak rush hours, we will use both, and 80% of our passengers' handbags will be screened by CTX for a seamless experience. We are awaiting certain clarifications on the technical aspects of the body scanner (for pre-boarding passenger checks) and will then place an order for them too," Schnellmann, a Zurich Airport veteran who played a key role in Bengaluru's new airport when it was completed in 2008, said. A CTX machine costs 10 times more than a 2D scan-

NIA CEO Christoph Schnellmann (inset) said six 3D CTX scanners had been ordered for the under-construction project

ner. More machines will be ordered as the airport grows.

The air traffic control (ATC) tower will soon be handed over to Airports Authority of India (AAI) for installing the required instruments and systems. The runway at NIA will be parallel to the (main) 28/10 runway of Delhi Airport and bear the same number. "All aspects of the airport are getting ready on time, like having the fuel hydrant system in place and signing up with different service providers for lounges and retail areas, including food and beverages. We will have a 'Braj ki Galiyan'—a vegetarian restaurant serving the famed cuisine of Braj Bhoomi (Mathura-Vrindavan area)," the CEO said. The area, synonymous with Lord Krishna, is famed for delicacies like Mathura peda, kachori and bedvi-aloo. The Varanasi ghat-inspired forecourt just outside the terminal will also have eateries where anyone, not just passengers, can go.

The airport will take off with Terminal 1 phase-I and a runway. T1 will initially have a capacity of handling 1.2 crore passengers annually (CPA). Actual traffic reaching 80% of that, or 96 lakh, will trigger the implementation of phase-II, where T1 capacity will be augmented by another 1.8 CPA. Similarly, the next phase will be triggered when traffic reaches 80% of deployed capacity. As of now, NIA is supposed to have two terminals and as many runways to handle 7 CPA. UP govt has ambitious plans for this airport, and its size could grow exponentially in the years to come.

"The way traffic is booming in India, I see phase-II of T1 getting triggered and being ready by or before 2030. We have signed up with airlines like Akasa and IndiGo and are in talks with other airlines, both Indian and foreign. The response has been very positive. Airlines want to base their planes at NIA and have both domestic and international flights from here. We estimate about 80% of the flights will be domestic from here," Schnellmann said.