



Exploring Uttar Pradesh's Domestic And International Airports

Uttar Pradesh (UP), one of India's largest states, is not only known for its rich cultural heritage and historical significance but also for its growing network of airports. With several domestic and international airports, UP plays a crucial role in enhancing connectivity, boosting tourism, and supporting economic growth. The state's airports serve as vital gateways for millions of travellers, providing essential links between urban and rural areas, and facilitating trade and commerce. This article explores the key airports in Uttar Pradesh, their significance, and how they contribute to the state's development.

Overview Of Domestic And International Airports In Uttar Pradesh

Uttar Pradesh is home to several airports, each serving different purposes and regions. The state has a mix of international airports, which handle flights to and from other countries, and domestic airports that cater to air travel within India. As of now, there are six international airports in the state, including Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport in Lucknow and Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi. Additionally, several domestic airports serve vital regional routes. Here's a brief overview of all the major airports in Uttar Pradesh:

Agra Airport (AGC)

Agra Airport, officially known as Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Airport, plays a vital role in enhancing connectivity to one of India's most iconic cities, known for the Taj Mahal. Situated just 12 kilometres from the city centre, the airport serves both domestic and limited international flights, facilitating travel for tourists and locals alike. Its strategic location makes it a convenient entry point for visitors looking to explore Agra's rich cultural heritage and historical landmarks. The airport has seen significant upgrades in infrastructure, including modernized terminals and improved passenger amenities, making travel more comfortable and efficient.

With the growing influx of tourists and increasing demand for air travel, Agra Airport is poised for further development. Plans are underway to expand its capacity and improve its facilities to accommodate more flights and enhance passenger experience. The airport's growth is expected to not only support Agra's tourism sector but also stimulate the local economy by providing better access to regional and national markets. As part of the broader initiative to boost infrastructure in tier-2 cities, Agra Airport is set to play a crucial role in promoting both tourism and business opportunities in the region.

Agra is renowned for its Mughal architecture and heritage, and the airport's presence ensures that visitors can access the city quickly and conveniently. For tourists and history enthusiasts, Agra Airport significantly reduces travel time, allowing them to spend more time exploring the city's iconic sites like the Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri. The airport helps boost the local tourism industry by providing a smooth travel experience, making Agra accessible to both domestic and international visitors flying in from other Indian airports.

Kanpur Airport (KNU)

Image Source: Wikipedia

Kanpur Airport is a key aviation hub in Uttar Pradesh, catering primarily to domestic flights. Located approximately 15 kilometres from the city centre, the airport serves as a vital gateway for both business travellers and tourists visiting Kanpur, known for its industrial significance and rich cultural heritage. With a single terminal handling both arrivals and departures, the airport has been undergoing modernisation

efforts to improve passenger experience, featuring enhanced facilities and better connectivity to the city.

Recent developments have focused on expanding Kanpur Airport's operational capacity and introducing new flight routes to major cities across India. As the city continues to grow economically, with a particular emphasis on industries like leather and textiles, the airport is poised to play a crucial role in supporting local businesses and facilitating trade. Moreover, the ongoing improvements aim to accommodate the increasing passenger traffic, making Kanpur Airport an essential component of the region's infrastructure, enhancing both tourism and economic growth in the area.

Beyond business travel, the airport also supports regional mobility, making it easier for residents to access other parts of India. Its role in providing domestic connectivity strengthens the city's economy by linking Kanpur to important financial and commercial hubs across the country, ensuring continued economic growth and development.

Kushinagar Airport (KHU)

Image Source: Wikipedia

Kushinagar Airport, officially known as Kushinagar International Airport, is a significant addition to India's aviation landscape, particularly for promoting tourism in the Buddhist circuit. Located approximately six kilometres from the town of Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh, the airport serves as a gateway for international and domestic travellers visiting this historically rich site, where Lord Buddha is believed to have attained Mahaparinirvana. The airport was inaugurated in October 2021 and has been developed to enhance accessibility to important Buddhist pilgrimage sites, including Lumbini in Nepal and Bodh Gaya in Bihar.

Equipped with modern facilities, Kushinagar Airport features a single terminal designed to handle both domestic and international flights, making it a vital infrastructure project aimed at boosting tourism in the region. The airport's strategic location not only facilitates easier access for pilgrims but also opens up economic opportunities for local businesses. With ongoing efforts to promote Kushinagar as a prominent destination on the Buddhist tourism map, the airport is expected to play a pivotal role in driving economic growth, cultural exchange, and religious tourism, while also contributing to the overall development of Uttar Pradesh's infrastructure.

Kushinagar's role as a pilgrimage site means that the airport not only supports religious tourism but also plays a part in promoting the region's heritage. By offering flights to major Indian cities, Kushinagar Airport helps streamline travel for pilgrims, tourists, and scholars alike, making the spiritual journey to this historical site more accessible than ever before.

Ayodhya Airport

Image Source: Wikipedia

Ayodhya Airport, officially known as Maryada Purushottam Shriram International Airport, is a newly established aviation facility aimed at boosting connectivity to one of India's most revered pilgrimage sites. Located approximately eight kilometres from Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, the airport is designed to cater primarily to religious tourism, specifically for visitors flocking to the birthplace of Lord Rama. Inaugurated in 2022, Ayodhya Airport aims to facilitate easier access for pilgrims and tourists, enhancing the region's profile as a key destination in the religious tourism circuit.

The airport features modern amenities and infrastructure to support both domestic and international flights, reflecting the Indian government's commitment to developing air travel in tier-2 cities. With a focus on promoting Ayodhya as a major pilgrimage hub, the airport is expected to spur economic growth and create opportunities for local businesses, hospitality, and related sectors. As it continues to expand its operational capacity, Ayodhya Airport is set to play a crucial role in increasing footfall to this culturally significant city, further establishing it as a vital link in India's religious and tourism landscape.

Aligarh Airport

Image Source: Wikipedia

Aligarh Airport, also known as Aligarh Airport (AIG), is a regional aviation facility located approximately 12 kilometres from the city of Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh. Primarily serving domestic flights, the airport is an essential asset for enhancing connectivity in the region, which is known for its educational institutions and historical significance. Aligarh Airport is particularly beneficial for students, professionals, and tourists

travelling to and from the city, as it facilitates quicker and more convenient access to major metropolitan areas.

Recently, there have been efforts to upgrade and modernize Aligarh Airport to accommodate an increasing number of passengers and improve overall facilities. The government has focused on expanding the airport's operational capabilities, which includes the potential introduction of new flight routes. As Aligarh continues to grow economically and socially, the airport is poised to play a critical role in supporting local businesses and promoting tourism, ultimately contributing to the overall development of the region's infrastructure and connectivity.

Known for its prestigious educational institutions, including Aligarh Muslim University, the city benefits from the airport's presence as it provides easier access to students, faculty, and visitors travelling from different parts of the country.

Gorakhpur Airport

Image Source: Wikipedia

Gorakhpur Airport, officially known as Gorakhpur International Airport, serves as a vital aviation hub in the northeastern region of Uttar Pradesh. Located approximately eight kilometres from the city centre, the airport facilitates both domestic and international flights, making it an essential gateway for travellers visiting Gorakhpur and surrounding areas. It is the third busiest airport in Uttar Pradesh after Lucknow and Varanasi airports. Historically significant for its proximity to various cultural and religious sites, including the famous Gorakhnath Temple, the airport aims to enhance connectivity and promote tourism in the region.

In recent years, Gorakhpur Airport has undergone significant upgrades to its infrastructure and facilities, aimed at accommodating increasing passenger traffic and improving the overall travel experience. The introduction of international flights has further positioned the airport as a critical player in regional development, facilitating easier access for business and tourism. As Gorakhpur continues to grow as a centre for education and commerce, the airport is expected to play a pivotal role in driving economic growth and enhancing connectivity, ultimately benefiting the local community and attracting more visitors to this historically rich area.

Prayagraj Airport

Image Source: Wikipedia

Prayagraj Airport, officially known as Bamrauli Airport, is a key aviation facility located approximately 12 kilometres from the city of Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. This airport serves as a significant gateway for both domestic and international travellers, facilitating easy access to one of India's holiest cities, known for the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati rivers. With its strategic location, Prayagraj Airport plays a crucial role in promoting religious tourism, especially during the Kumbh Mela, which attracts millions of pilgrims and tourists to the region.

In recent years, Prayagraj Airport has seen substantial upgrades and expansion efforts, including the modernisation of its terminals and enhanced passenger amenities. The airport is well-equipped to handle an increasing volume of air traffic and is focused on improving connectivity to major cities across India. Additionally, the expansion of flight routes and services has bolstered its importance in regional development, facilitating business and tourism. As Prayagraj continues to grow as an educational and cultural centre, the airport is poised to further enhance its role in supporting economic growth and improving accessibility for residents and visitors alike.

Prayagraj Airport, located in the historic city of Prayagraj (formerly known as Allahabad), connects this important cultural and religious hub to major Indian cities. Famous for hosting the Kumbh Mela, one of the largest religious gatherings in the world, Prayagraj attracts millions of visitors each year. The airport makes it easier for pilgrims and tourists to access the city for religious events, festivals, and sightseeing.

In addition to religious tourism, the airport supports general travel and commerce in the region. By providing domestic flights to and from key Indian cities, Prayagraj Airport helps to keep the city connected, making it a crucial part of the region's infrastructure and boosting its cultural and economic development.

The airports not only facilitate passenger travel but also support cargo services, enabling the transport of goods and boosting the local economy. With ongoing investments and new projects like the upcoming Jewar International Airport, the aviation sector in UP is poised for significant growth, further enhancing connectivity for both residents and visitors.

Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (Lucknow)

Image Source: Wikipedia

Chaudhary Charan Singh International Airport (CCSIA), located in the heart of Lucknow, serves as the principal airport for Uttar Pradesh and stands as a vital gateway for travellers heading to and from the state capital. Named after one of India's prominent leaders, the airport reflects the rich heritage of the region while embracing modernity in air travel. As the largest airport in Uttar Pradesh, CCSIA plays a significant role in enhancing connectivity not just within India, but also to international destinations. With its strategic location and increasing passenger traffic, the airport is not only a key hub for business and tourism but also a testament to the state's ongoing development and commitment to improving transportation infrastructure. Through its state-of-the-art facilities and comprehensive range of services, CCSIA ensures a seamless travel experience, making it an essential asset for the state's growth and connectivity.

Infrastructure Development And Facilities

CCSIA boasts a modern terminal that is designed to provide passengers with a comfortable and efficient travel experience. Key facilities at the airport include:

Duty-Free Shops: Passengers can enjoy shopping for a range of products without additional tax charges, making it convenient to purchase gifts or personal items.

Lounges: Comfortable lounges offer a relaxing environment for travellers, complete with amenities such as Wi-Fi, refreshments, and comfortable seating areas.

Restaurants: The airport features a diverse array of dining options, allowing passengers to enjoy local and international cuisine before their flights.

Over the years, CCSIA has seen significant infrastructure improvements. These enhancements include:

Expansion Projects: The airport has undergone various expansions to increase its capacity, allowing it to accommodate a growing number of flights and passengers.

New Parking Bays: The addition of parking bays has improved the airport's ability to handle more aircraft, enhancing operational efficiency.

Upgraded Baggage Handling Systems: Modern systems ensure quicker and more efficient handling of passenger luggage, reducing wait times and improving overall service quality.

Passenger Traffic And Destinations

CCSIA caters to a mix of domestic and international flights. Key details include:

Domestic Connectivity: The airport connects Lucknow to major Indian cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, and Bengaluru, making it easier for business and leisure travellers to reach their destinations.

International Flights: CCSIA also offers flights to various international destinations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia, facilitating travel for both tourists and business professionals.

Growing Passenger Traffic: The airport has experienced a steady increase in passenger numbers, highlighting its importance as a travel hub. For instance, in recent years, passenger traffic has surged due to new airlines and routes being introduced.

The enhanced connectivity provided by CCSIA not only improves access for residents of Lucknow and surrounding areas but also promotes tourism in the region. Visitors are drawn to explore Lucknow's rich history, vibrant culture, and delicious cuisine, making the airport an essential asset for the state's growth and connectivity.

Recent Updates

International Flight Operations: As of June 2024, international flights have started operating from the newly inaugurated Terminal 3 (T3) at CCSIA. This terminal is dedicated to enhancing international travel efficiency and capacity, thereby improving overall passenger experience?

Enhanced Services: With the launch of T3, the airport has introduced new features aimed at improving passenger amenities. This includes modern lounges, updated duty-free shopping options, and various dining facilities, catering to both international and domestic travellers.

Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (Varanasi)

Image Source: Wikipedia

Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport (LBSIA) is a key aviation hub located in Varanasi, one of the oldest inhabited cities in the world and a prominent centre for spirituality in India. Named after the nation's second Prime Minister, this airport serves as a crucial link for millions of devotees, tourists, and pilgrims who journey to Varanasi to explore its ancient temples, vibrant ghats, and rich cultural heritage. As a gateway to this spiritual city, LBSIA plays a significant role in promoting religious tourism and facilitating the seamless movement of visitors from across the globe. With its expanding network of direct flights and enhanced

facilities, the airport is essential in enhancing the accessibility and appeal of Varanasi as a leading destination for spiritual exploration and cultural experiences.

Significance For Religious Tourism

LBSIA is crucial for facilitating travel to Varanasi, which is considered one of the holiest cities in India. The airport's importance in religious tourism includes:

Gateway for Pilgrims: The airport serves as a primary access point for devotees visiting sacred sites such as the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and the numerous ghats along the Ganges River.

Economic Impact: The influx of visitors to Varanasi contributes significantly to the local economy. Many residents rely on tourism-related services, including hospitality, dining, and local handicrafts, which are essential for their livelihoods.

Cultural Exchange: As a hub for spiritual tourism, LBSIA facilitates cultural exchange, allowing visitors to immerse themselves in local traditions, rituals, and practices.

Direct Flights And Connectivity

LBSIA has significantly improved its connectivity in recent years, making it easier for tourists and pilgrims to reach Varanasi. Key details include:

Direct Flights: The airport offers direct flights to several major cities across India, such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata. In addition, it has begun to expand its international connections, providing flights to destinations in the Middle East and Southeast Asia.

Enhanced Facilities: To accommodate the increasing number of passengers, LBSIA has upgraded its facilities. Improvements include:

Modern Terminal: The airport features a modern terminal equipped with amenities to enhance the passenger experience, such as waiting lounges, duty-free shops, and dining options.

Efficient Services: Upgrades to passenger services, including faster check-in and baggage handling processes, have made travel smoother for all visitors.

The combination of convenient connectivity and improved facilities makes Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport an essential part of Varanasi's appeal as a spiritual destination, attracting visitors from across the globe. By enhancing access to this historical city, LBSIA continues to promote religious tourism and contribute to the region's economic growth.

Recent Updates

The Union Cabinet has recently approved a major development plan for Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in Varanasi. Here's a simplified breakdown of the key points:

New Terminal: A new terminal building will be constructed, covering 75,000 square metres. It will have the capacity to handle six million passengers each year and accommodate up to 5,000 passengers during busy hours. The design of the terminal will showcase the cultural heritage of Varanasi.

Runway Extension: The airport's runway will be extended to a length of 4,075 meters and a width of 45 metres, allowing for larger and more flights.

Apron Extension: A new apron will be built, providing parking space for 20 aircraft.

Environmental Sustainability: The airport will focus on being environmentally friendly. Plans include energy optimization, recycling waste, and using solar energy.

Cost and Capacity Increase: The total cost of the development is around Rs. 2,870 crore, which will raise the airport's passenger handling capacity from 3.9 million to 9.9 million passengers per year.

Upcoming Jewar International Airport

Image Source: NIA

Jewar International Airport, poised to be a transformative addition to Uttar Pradesh's aviation landscape, is strategically located near Greater Noida and is set to become one of the largest airports in India upon its completion. Designed to meet the soaring demand for air travel in the National Capital Region (NCR) and its surrounding areas, this ambitious project promises to significantly enhance connectivity and accessibility for both domestic and international travellers. With plans for multiple runways and a state-of-the-art passenger terminal, Jewar Airport is not only anticipated to streamline air travel but also to play a pivotal role in fostering economic growth and development in the region. As a catalyst for job creation and a magnet for tourism and investment, Jewar International Airport is poised to redefine the aviation sector in Uttar Pradesh and solidify its position as a key player in India's transport infrastructure.

Project Overview And Timeline

Location: Jewar International Airport is situated near Greater Noida, approximately 70 kilometres from central Delhi.

Capacity: The airport is designed to handle millions of passengers annually, featuring multiple runways and a spacious passenger terminal.

Timeline: Construction is almost over and the airport's validation flights are to begin by December 2024 with commercial operations by April 17, 2025.

Anticipated Benefits For The Region

Job Creation:

The construction and operational phases of Jewar Airport are expected to create thousands of jobs. This includes direct employment opportunities in the airport and indirect jobs in related sectors such as hospitality, transport, and retail.

Enhanced Connectivity:

The airport will serve as a crucial link between Delhi and other regions of Uttar Pradesh, significantly reducing travel time for passengers. Improved air connectivity will also facilitate better trade and investment opportunities.

Boost to Tourism:

With easier access to various destinations in Uttar Pradesh and neighbouring states, Jewar Airport is likely to attract more tourists. This influx will stimulate the local tourism sector, providing economic benefits to local communities and businesses.

Economic Development:

The airport is expected to act as a catalyst for economic growth in the region. By improving transportation infrastructure, it will make Uttar Pradesh more attractive for businesses and investors, fostering overall development.

Recent Updates

Construction Milestone: As of mid-September 2024, Jewar International Airport's construction is reported to be approximately 90 per cent complete, with expectations for the first phase to be operational by the April 2025?.

Infrastructure Development: The airport will feature two runways, which are now finished, and initial operations are projected to facilitate around 50 flights per day.

Financial Progress: The budget for the airport's first phase was set at Rs.10,000 crore, with Rs.7,371 crore already expended?.

Conclusion

The airports in Uttar Pradesh play a vital role in enhancing connectivity and promoting economic growth in the region. With significant investments in infrastructure and the development of new projects like Jewar International Airport, the state's aviation sector is poised for remarkable growth. These airports not only facilitate domestic and international travel but also support trade, tourism, and regional development. As Uttar Pradesh continues to improve its aviation infrastructure, it is set to emerge as a key player in India's transportation landscape, making it easier for residents and visitors to explore the diverse offerings of this vibrant state.