

IAF shows aerial prowess on Ganga expressway airstrip

Bid To Boost Operational Preparedness

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: The Indian Air Force on Friday conducted a "land and go" exercise along a 3.5-km section of the Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, marking a significant milestone in the country's defence preparedness.

This expressway segment stands out as the nation's first airstrip capable of accommodating fighter aircraft landings during both daylight and darkness. Previous emergency landing exercises on the Lucknow-Agra and Purvanchal expressways were restricted to daytime operations.

The exercise attracted numerous locals who gathered to observe the demonstrations.

The trials featured aircraft like Rafale, SU-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar, C-130J Super Hercules, AN-32 and the MI-17 V5 helicopter.

The comprehensive exercise assessed low-altitude passes, landings and take-offs in both day and night conditions.

State officials noted that the successful drill demon-



'LAND AND GO': IAF conducting take-off and landing exercises on Ganga Expressway on Friday

strates the expressway's capability as an alternative runway during emergencies, enhancing the IAF's operational capabilities.

The expressway had been equipped with over 250 CCTV cameras to ensure foolproof security and surveillance. Top defence and state officials were also present to oversee the proceedings.

The Ganga Expressway will be Uttar Pradesh's fourth expressway with an emergency airstrip after the Agra-Lucknow Expressway (Unnao), Purvanchal Expressway (Sultanpur), and Bundelkhand Expressway (near Etawah), distinguished by its night landing capabilities.

Shahjahanpur SP Rajesh Dwivedi said: "The airstrip, located near Piru village in



the Jalalabad region, witnessed IAF drill. Around 40 km of the surrounding area was sanitised with the help of personnel from the Panchayati Raj and Animal Husbandry departments, along with local police teams. They were stationed along the expressway to prevent animals from straying onto the road or restricted zones."

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had inspected the airstrip the previous Sunday. Night operations were held

between 7pm and 10pm, necessitating closure of the Bareilly-Etawah route between Jalalabad and Madanpur, with alternative routes suggested for travelers.

In Sep 2021, the Uttar Pradesh Cabinet approved the 594-km Ganga Expressway project between Meerut and Prayagraj. The initial civil and construction cost estimate was Rs 36,230 crore. The public-private partnership project is currently experiencing delays.