

1st flight likely only in May after security nod, tariff decision

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Noida: Noida International Airport will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday, but the earliest date for flight operations to begin is likely only by May.

The delay is not because of unfinished infrastructure. It is because of final regulatory steps that every airport must clear before airlines can open bookings and begin operations.

The most important of these is the Aerodrome Security Programme (ASP) certification by Bureau of Civil Aviation Security. ASP is the airport's core security fram-

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ework, laying down how checks will work from entry gates to boarding, and assigning responsibilities to all stakeholders, including the airport operator, airlines, Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) and ground handlers. It also sets out contingency plans to help authorities respond quickly to any security situation.

Shailendra Bhatia, nodal officer for Noida International Airport Ltd, UP govt's special purpose vehicle overseeing the airport project, said ASP clearance is expected shortly. "ASP is an important stage after the aerodrome licence, which was granted to Noida International Airport on March 6. Once that is approved, it will pave the way for commercial flight operations in the next 30 to 35 days. So, it

VIP terminal at Noida airport

Forget the cordoned-off VIP lounge, Noida International Airport has gone a step further with a dedicated VIP terminal. Built in the western precinct of the airport campus, close to the west airside gate, the terminal is designed exclusively for VIPs and dignitaries, with a lounge alongside security and immigration facilities to process both departures and arrivals, an NIA official said. Most Indian airports offer VIP lounges, including Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport, that allow dignitaries to drive directly to the lounge and take a dedicated elevator to the boarding level, bypassing the main terminal entirely. TNN

is likely May," he added.

Another key step pending is the airport's tariff, which is crucial for airlines. On March 23, Airports Economic Regulatory Authority held a consultation with stakeholders on the tariff and invited feedback till April 17. Only after the tariff is finalised can airlines formally publish routes and open ticket sales, a process that is expected to take about a month.

For now, IndiGo, Akasa Air and Air India Express have committed to operate domestic flights from the airport. The initial network is expected to link Noida with major cities such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Chennai, Lucknow and Dehradun, though the final route list will be confirmed after the security clearance comes through. The airport has also signed agreements with UP Roadways, Mahindra Mobility, Uber and Rapido to strengthen last-mile connectivity. All these partners will deploy fleets at the airport.

To be built in four phases, Noida International Airport will begin with one runway and one terminal, with a capacity to handle 1.2 crore passengers a year. A dedicated cargo terminal is also ready for inauguration.