'Noida airport can reshape economic map of north India'

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(From left) NIAL nodal officer Shailendra Bhatia, Jewar MLA Dhirendra Singh and Noida airport vice president Jan Wicki at 'The Times of India's UP Transformation Dialogues – Noida Edition' on Friday

Noida: Noida International Airport is opening up new opportunities for the region, policymakers and industrialists and bureaucrats said on Friday, highlighting its economic potential to attract investment and create jobs.

Speaking at 'The Times of India's UP Transformation Dialogues – Noida Edition', Shailendra Bhatia, nodal officer of Noida International Airport Ltd and additional CEO of UPEIDA, said the airport provides an opportunity to reshape the economic map of north India, accelerate industrial transformation of UP, strengthen India's global supply chains and create a new centre of employment, innovation and enterprise.

When Jan Wicki, vice-president of Noida International Airport, said international flights are likely to begin in 2027 but the first overseas destination is yet to be decided, Jewar's BJP MLA Dhirendra Singh suggested Zurich in Switzerland or Dubai as possible first destinations.

Currently, IndiGo and Akasa Air operate 35 daily flights connecting Noida airport to 16 cities, such as Bengaluru, Kolkata, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Pune, Amritsar, Jammu, Srinagar, Jaipur, Dehradun and Bhopal.

Nasscom regional head (North) Amit Verma described the city as one of the country's fastest-emerging technology destinations, with major technology companies, large service providers and global capability centres setting up projects in Noida or keen on doing so. "The city's growth story was still evolving. Noida should focus on developing its own identity rather than measuring itself against established technology hubs such as Bengaluru and Hyderabad," he said.

Noida MLA Pankaj Singh attributed much of the change to improved law and order under the current regime. Taking a swipe at the previous Samajwadi Party govt, he said it believed in "one district, one mafia", while the current govt had replaced it with "one district, one product".

Commending the city's economic progress, he said Noida now accounts for 55% of India's mobile phone manufacturing. Former DGP Vikram Singh credited govt for dismantling criminal networks. During a panel discussion — 'Beyond Noida: Can the Noida boom power western UP's growth engine?' — he said around Rs 14,000 crore worth of land had been recovered from mafia. "Flats have been developed on some of this land and allotted to economically weaker sections," he said.

Panelists, however, voiced concern over the city's air quality. Dikshu C Kukreja, managing principal of CP Kukreja Architects and honorary consul general of Albania, said, "It is great to see development, but we cannot lose sight of environmental concerns."