

Ethiopia begins construction of Africa's biggest airport

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Dhaka: Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Saturday, January 7, announced construction of “the largest aviation infrastructure project in Africa’s history” had begun.

“This multi-airport strategy aims to future-proof Ethiopia’s role as Africa’s leading air transport gateway,” he said in a post on X.

He added that the project will strengthen Ethiopian Airlines’ global competitiveness, enhance African connectivity, expand trade and tourism corridors, and position Ethiopia as a major intercontinental hub. The project includes a multi-lane motorway to link the new facility to the capital and a 38-kilometer high-speed railway, which Abiy said would reach speeds of up to 200 kph.

The African Development Bank has earmarked \$500 million for the

project, and Ethiopian authorities are in talks to raise additional tranches with the Asian Development Bank, the European Investment Bank, and the US Development Finance Corporation. Ethiopia hopes to attract foreign tourists despite the ongoing armed conflict in its two most populous regions—Amhara and Oromia—with Bishoftu located in the latter.

The future airport, which will sit on a 35-square-km site, has already displaced 2,500 farmers, who were re-housed last year at a cost of \$350 million, Ethiopian Airlines CEO Mesfin Tasew Bekele said in November. Ethiopia, Africa's second-most populous country with some 130 million inhabitants, has launched major infrastructure projects in recent years.

It officially inaugurated the continent's largest dam last year, and extensive urban renewal projects are underway in Addis Ababa and other major cities.

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