

Heathrow urges runway build by 2029

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 27 February, 2025



London: London Heathrow Airport has backed the UK government's goal to begin construction on a third runway before the 2029 election, calling the timeline set by Chancellor Rachel Reeves "achievable."

Reeves approved the airport's expansion plan last month, stating her aim to see "spades in the ground" within the current parliamentary term.

Making that deadline — the next election is due in 2029 — will require the London hub to work with the government to speed the approval process, Heathrow chief executive officer Thomas Woldbye said on Wednesday (February 26).

"What the chancellor has said is, spades in the ground by end of this parliament, I think is doable," Woldbye said in an interview on Wednesday after the airport reported 2024 results. "That is what we hope will happen, that is what also needs to happen if we are to meet those deadlines."

The concept of a third Heathrow runway has been around for decades. It's gained momentum in recent months as the Labour government puts London-area airport expansion at the centre of its economic growth agenda, even as the plans raise concerns over noise and the prospect of higher carbon-dioxide emissions from aircraft exhaust.

Speaking at a dinner on Tuesday night, UK Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander said the government must promote growth while also protecting the environment.

"I say we must do both," Alexander said. "I am not some sort of flight-shaming eco-warrior."

The Heathrow effort got a boost on Wednesday with the release of new recommendations by the UK's climate watchdog that will help ease the path for the airport expansion.

A decision approving an added runway at London Gatwick airport, south of the capital, is expected this week.

Heathrow said on Wednesday it will submit proposals to the government this summer, and work with ministers to agree on policy changes around the regulatory model and airspace modernisation.

-B