

Mumbai getting second airport as part of massive infrastructure overhaul

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Dhaka: India's financial capital is about to get a second airport about 22 miles southeast of the current Mumbai airport. Managed by the Adani Group, the USD 2.1 billion project in the satellite city of Navi Mumbai reflects a massive infrastructure overhaul to put India on the global aviation map.

The airport, with a lotus-shaped design portraying India's national flower, should commence operations in March 2025 with a capacity to handle 20 million passengers a year. Reports cited Arun Bansal, CEO of Adani Airport Holdings Ltd saying, the airport's passenger handling capacity will be increased to 90 million by 2032, subject to enough demand.

It may be mentioned here, Adani Airport Holdings Ltd is India's largest private sector airport operator which also runs the existing Mumbai

airport.

Navi Mumbai airport will be a “perfect” candidate to become an international transit hub on par with some of the world’s busiest aerodromes like Dubai, London, Frankfurt and Singapore, said Bansal, according to reports.

Geographically, India is in a very advantageous situation, informed Bansal, adding, there is hardly any country where one cannot fly within 12 hours.

Preparations to meet the coming strong travel demand are underway by the aviation industry of the country. A wave of plane orders and airport buildouts reflect the coming aviation boom in India. Airlines like Air India, IndiGo and Akasa have ordered over 1,100 aircraft in total. The country is also injecting USD 12 billion into building over 72 new airports by 2025.

Navi Mumbai airport is one of the landmark infrastructure projects in the city by Adani, the mining-to-media conglomerate. As per reports, the Adani group is in efforts to get a larger slice of the global logistics market—the group began a first-of-its-kind transshipment port in October, 2023 at India’s southernmost tip to beckon world’s biggest container ships. The Navi Mumbai airport is attempting the same in air passenger traffic.

Emirates, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines, which all have strong presence in India, will likely request slots at Navi Mumbai airport, reports said citing industry insiders.

Adani Airport is in discussions with the “majority” of international airlines on how to expedite passenger flow, expressed Bansal, adding that he expects 30 per cent of the facility’s traffic to come from international flights and 70 per cent from domestic.

However, it is not confirmed yet if any airline has committed to flying from the new facility. Nevertheless, even though, IndiGo has not signed any agreement with Navi Mumbai airport yet, the airline will be expanding its network presence at both airports, reports said citing IndiGo’s Senior Vice President—Network, Planning and Revenue Management Abijit DasGupta.

They are also seeing rise in transit passengers opting to fly via an Indian city onward to other foreign destinations, on routes like Dubai-Bangkok, Bahrain-Phuket and Kuwait-Phuket, also informed DasGupta.

The airport is being designed to reduce the transit time to catch connecting flights, ideally within 75 minutes in line with international norms, said Bansal.

A February 13 report from Jefferies estimated that over half of Adani Airport's forecast USD 1.7 billion revenue in 2026 will come from the two Mumbai facilities.

Navi Mumbai airport will have two parallel runways and four terminals, double the existing facility.

With a population of 21 million and growing rapidly, Mumbai has as much as USD 30 billion of new infrastructure being planned over the next few years. Local authorities, as well as the Adani Group, have plans for an "aero city" around the new airport to boost non-aviation sources of revenue, added reports.

The conglomerate plans to create these "aero cities" around its airports in India via a mix of hotels, convention centres, retail, entertainment and health care options, logistics and commercial offices.

The civil bodies overseeing the greater Mumbai metropolitan region are also building new bridges and roads between the island city and the mainland to provide critical connectivity to the new airport. A dedicated metro line between the two airports is also being planned.

The aim is to reduce the commute to less than 45 minutes, according to reports. A six-lane bridge connecting Thane, another satellite city to the north of Mumbai, with Navi Mumbai may open by September, while two coastal roads will be done in the next few years, reports also mentioned.

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