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Noida International Airport — India's Largest Greenfield Airport Takes Off

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Noida International Airport — India's Largest Greenfield Airport Takes Off

> *Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport (NIA) at Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh on March 28, 2026 — making it the* **second international airport** *for the Delhi-NCR region and one of India's most ambitious* *greenfield* *aviation projects.*

The Noida International Airport (IATA: **DXN**, ICAO: **VIND**), commonly known as the Jewar Airport, has been developed by **Yamuna International Airport Private Limited (YIAPL)**, a wholly owned subsidiary of **Zurich Airport International AG (Flughafen Zurich AG)**, under a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP)** model with the Government of Uttar Pradesh. The Phase 1 has been built at a cost of approximately **Rs 11,200 crore** and represents a landmark milestone in India's aviation infrastructure expansion story.

THE PPP MODEL AND CONCESSION FRAMEWORK

Concession Agreement Structure

The Uttar Pradesh government signed a **40-year concession agreement** with Zurich Airport International AG on **October 7, 2021**, granting YIAPL the right to design, build, finance, operate, and maintain the airport. Zurich AG — the operator of Zurich Airport in Switzerland — won the competitive bid against rivals including the Adani Group, Anchorage Infrastructure Investments, and Delhi International Airport Ltd (DIAL).

Why Zurich AG?

Zurich Airport International AG brings global expertise in operating mid-to-large airports and has active concession operations in airports across **Latin America** (Bogota, Curacao) and **Asia**. The UP government selected Zurich AG based on its per-passenger revenue share offer, which was the highest among bidders.

PARAMETER	DETAIL
Developer	Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL)
Parent Company	Zurich Airport International AG (Flughafen Zurich AG)
Concession Period	40 years (from October 1, 2021)
PPP Model	Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT)
Regulator	Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)
Nodal Authority	Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)

PHASE 1 SPECIFICATIONS

Infrastructure at Launch

Phase 1 of the Noida International Airport includes a single **3,900-metre runway** capable of handling wide-body aircraft (including the Airbus A380 and Boeing 777), a modern terminal building (T1), and advanced navigation systems including **Instrument Landing System (ILS)** and Cat-III compliant airfield lighting for all-weather, round-the-clock operations.

PHASE 1 PARAMETER	VALUE
Annual Passenger Capacity	12 million passengers per annum (MPPA)
Runway Length	3,900 metres
Terminal	T1 (single terminal)
Phase 1 Cost	Rs 11,200 crore (approx.)
Total Land Acquired	1,334 hectares (~3,300 acres)
IATA Code	DXN
ICAO Code	VIND

Airlines at Launch

IndiGo has signed as the launch carrier for NIA. **Akasa Air** and **Air India Express** have also announced plans to operate from the airport. Commercial flights are expected to begin in phases, with domestic routes launching first and international operations following shortly after.

FOUR-PHASE MASTER PLAN

Long-Term Expansion Vision

The airport master plan envisions four phases of development, ultimately transforming NIA into one of Asia's largest aviation hubs by **2050**.

PHASE	TERMINAL	CAPACITY (MPPA)	RUNWAYS (CUMULATIVE)	ESTIMATED COST (RS CR)	TIMELINE
Phase 1	T1	12	1	4,588	FY23–FY27
Phase 2	T2	30	2	5,983	FY31–FY32
Phase 3	T3	50	4	8,415	FY36–FY37
Phase 4	T4	70	5–6	10,575	FY40–FY50
Total	4 Terminals	**70+ MPPA**	**5–6 Runways**	**~Rs 29,561 crore**	By 2050

When fully developed across all phases, the airport and its surrounding development area are expected to span nearly **11,750 acres**, making it among the largest airport complexes in the world.

IGI AIRPORT CONGESTION — THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

Why NCR Needed a Second Airport

Indira Gandhi International Airport (DEL), operated by Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), is India's busiest airport. In FY 2024–25, IGI handled over **79.2 million passengers** — the highest in its history — against a rated capacity of **105 million passengers per annum**. Terminal 3's Pier C redevelopment aims to boost international capacity by nearly 50%, but the long-term trajectory of air passenger growth in India makes a second major airport indispensable.

India's domestic air passenger traffic has grown at a **CAGR of ~14%** over the past decade. By 2030, the Delhi-NCR region alone is projected to generate demand exceeding **120–130 million passengers annually**. IGI Airport, even after expansion to 110–112 MPPA, cannot absorb this growth alone.

How NIA Addresses the Gap

The Noida International Airport is strategically located **72 km south-east of IGI Airport** along the Yamuna Expressway. It will serve passengers from **western Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Rajasthan**, directly reducing the load on IGI. NIA is expected to absorb a significant share of domestic traffic from Day 1, with international flights following.

INDIA'S FIRST NET-ZERO EMISSIONS AIRPORT

Sustainability Design Features

NIA has been designed as India's **first net-zero emissions airport**, setting a benchmark for green aviation infrastructure.

GREEN FEATURE	DETAIL
IGBC Certification	First airport in India to receive IGBC Green Campus Platinum certification
Net-Zero Target	Achieved through renewable energy, LC3 Cement, and low-carbon materials
UV-Reflective Glass	Reduces air conditioning energy consumption by **~37%**
Recycled Materials	Extensive use of recycled steel and fly-ash bricks
Rainwater Harvesting	Full-campus rainwater collection and reuse system
EV Infrastructure	Electric vehicle charging stations across the airport campus
Solar Power	On-site solar generation to offset grid dependency
Natural Lighting	Terminal designed with vast glass expanses to minimise artificial lighting

Architectural Inspiration

The terminal has been designed by a consortium of **Nordic Office of Architecture, Grimshaw Architects, and Haptic Architects**, with engineering by STUP Consultants. The design draws inspiration from the **Ghats of Varanasi and Haridwar** — the stepped architecture of the ghats is reimagined through grand staircases and tiered seating areas. The core layout emphasises **short walking distances, intuitive wayfinding**, and transparency through open-span steel structures.

INDIA'S FIRST FULLY DIGITAL AIRPORT — DIGIYATRA INTEGRATION

Contactless, Paperless Travel

NIA will be India's **first fully digital airport**, implementing the **DigiYatra framework** end-to-end. Passengers will undergo automatic digital processing based on facial recognition at all checkpoints — from entry to boarding. Self-bag drop and self-check-in using facial recognition will eliminate the need for traditional manned counters.

This aligns with the **DigiYatra Policy** of the Ministry of Civil Aviation, which aims to create a seamless, paperless air travel experience across Indian airports using biometric-based identification.

MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY

Comprehensive Transport Network

NIA is being integrated into a multi-modal connectivity framework that includes road, rail, metro, and rapid transit systems.

MODE	PROJECT	DETAILS
Expressway	Yamuna Expressway	Direct access via the 165 km Noida–Agra Yamuna Expressway
New Greenfield Expressway	Delhi-Mumbai Expressway Link	31 km expressway connecting NIA to Delhi-Mumbai Expressway at Ballabhgarh
New Access Road	130-metre wide road	Rs 1,700 crore road from Greater Noida (Char Murti) to airport's east side
Metro	Greater Noida–NIA Metro Line	Phase 1: 35.6 km from Jewar Airport to Greater Noida; total 72 km to IGI
Rapid Rail (RRTS)	Ghaziabad–Jewar RRTS	71.1 km, 11 stations, Rs 16,000 crore; completion by 2031
Railway	Palwal–NIA–Khurja Railway (PNAKR)	61 km dedicated railway line connecting to Palwal

ECONOMIC IMPACT ON WESTERN UTTAR PRADESH

Employment Generation

The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) estimates that every **100 direct airport jobs generate 610 jobs** in the wider economy (employment multiplier of 6.10). Similarly, every **Rs 100 spent on air transport generates Rs 325** worth of economic benefits (output multiplier of 3.25).

IMPACT CATEGORY	ESTIMATE
Direct Jobs (first 5 years)	50,000+ (operations, security, retail, MRO, cargo, hospitality)
Indirect Jobs (medium-term)	5 lakh+ (agriculture, transport, MSMEs, tourism, supply chain)
Long-term Employment	40–50 lakh (including corporate hubs by Google, Microsoft, Samsung, Tata)
YEIDA Industrial Zone	5,000 hectares being acquired for logistics park, film city, data centre park

Transforming the Region

YEIDA is developing **5,000 hectares** of land around the airport for an integrated industrial ecosystem — including a **logistics park, film city, medical devices park, data centre park**, and **MRO (Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul) hub**. This is expected to transform Gautam Buddha Nagar and surrounding districts into a major economic corridor, comparable to the Gurugram–Manesar belt that developed around IGI Airport.

UDAN AND NABH NIRMAN — THE POLICY FRAMEWORK

UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik)

The Union Cabinet approved **UDAN 2.0** on March 25, 2026 — just three days before the NIA inauguration — with a budget of **Rs 28,840 crore** spread over 10 years. Under UDAN 2.0, the government will develop **100 new airports and 200 helipads**, with focus on hilly regions, the Northeast, island territories, and aspirational districts.

NABH Nirman (NextGen Airports for Bharat)

Announced in Union Budget 2018–19, **NABH Nirman** is a government initiative to expand India's airport capacity more than **five times** within 10–15 years to handle billions of trips. Under this initiative, operational airports have doubled from **74 in 2014 to 159 in 2024**, with a target of **350 airports by 2047**.

FDI Policy for Airports

India permits **100% FDI under the automatic route** for both greenfield and brownfield airport projects, making the sector one of the most liberalised infrastructure segments. Between FY20 and FY25, India's aviation infrastructure received over **Rs 96,000 crore (US$ 11.2 billion)** in capital expenditure through AAI and

PPP projects.

FDI POLICY	DETAIL
Greenfield Airports	100% FDI under automatic route
Brownfield Airports	100% FDI under automatic route
Scheduled Air Transport	49% FDI under automatic route; 100% for NRI/OCIs
MRO	100% FDI under automatic route
Ground Handling	100% FDI under automatic route

UPSC RELEVANCE

Noida International Airport (DXN), Zurich Airport International AG, IATA/ICAO codes, IGBC certification, UDAN 2.0, NABH Nirman, DigiYatra, FDI in airports, YEIDA, PPP model.

MAINS GS-2:

Role of PPP in infrastructure; cooperative federalism (Centre-State coordination for airport development).

MAINS GS-3:

Infrastructure development; aviation sector growth; FDI policy; employment generation; green infrastructure and net-zero commitments.

ESSAY:

"Can India's greenfield airports bridge the urban-rural development divide?"

📌 **FACTS CORNER — KNOWLEDGEPEDIA**

NOIDA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT (NIA) — CORE DATA:

IATA Code: DXN; ICAO Code: VIND

Location: Jewar, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh

Developer: Yamuna International Airport Pvt Ltd (YIAPL)

Operator: Zurich Airport International AG (Flughafen Zurich AG)

Concession period: 40 years (from October 1, 2021)

PPP model: Design-Build-Finance-Operate-Transfer (DBFOT)

Nodal authority: Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)

Inaugurated by: PM Narendra Modi on March 28, 2026

PHASE 1 SPECIFICATIONS:

Passenger capacity: 12 MPPA (million passengers per annum)

Runway: 1 runway, 3,900 metres (wide-body capable)

Terminal: T1 (single terminal)

Investment: Rs 11,200 crore (approx.)

Total land acquired: 1,334 hectares (~3,300 acres)

Launch carriers: IndiGo, Akasa Air, Air India Express

MASTER PLAN (4 PHASES, BY 2050):

Phase 2: 30 MPPA, 2 runways (by FY32)

Phase 3: 50 MPPA, 4 runways (by FY37)

Phase 4: 70 MPPA, 5–6 runways (by FY50)

Total investment: Rs 29,561 crore across all phases

Full development area: ~11,750 acres

IGI AIRPORT (DELHI) CONTEXT:

FY 2024–25 traffic: 79.2 million passengers (highest ever)

Rated capacity: 105 MPPA; expandable to 110–112 MPPA

Distance from NIA: 72 km (via Yamuna Expressway)

SUSTAINABILITY FIRSTS:

India's first net-zero emissions airport

First airport with IGBC Green Campus Platinum certification

India's first fully DigiYatra-integrated (digital) airport

UV-reflective glass reduces AC costs by ~37%

Design by Nordic, Grimshaw, and Haptic Architects; inspired by Ghats of Varanasi

MULTI-MODAL CONNECTIVITY:

Greater Noida–NIA Metro: 35.6 km (Phase 1); total 72 km to IGI

Ghaziabad–Jewar RRTS: 71.1 km, 11 stations, Rs 16,000 crore (by 2031)

Palwal–NIA–Khurja Railway: 61 km dedicated line

Delhi-Mumbai Expressway link: 31 km greenfield expressway

ECONOMIC IMPACT:

Direct jobs (5 years): 50,000+

Indirect jobs (medium-term): 5 lakh+; long-term: 40–50 lakh

ICAO aviation employment multiplier: 6.10; output multiplier: 3.25

YEIDA industrial zone: 5,000 hectares (logistics park, film city, data centre park, MRO hub)

GOVERNMENT AVIATION POLICIES:

UDAN 2.0: Rs 28,840 crore over 10 years; 100 new airports + 200 helipads (approved March 25, 2026)

NABH Nirman: Target 350 airports by 2047 (from 74 in 2014 to 159 in 2024)

FDI in airports: 100% under automatic route (greenfield and brownfield)

Aviation capex FY20–FY25: Rs 96,000 crore (US$ 11.2 billion)

Operational airports: 74 (2014) → 159 (2024); target 350 by 2047

OTHER RELEVANT FACTS:

India's domestic air passenger CAGR (past decade): ~14%

NCR projected demand by 2030: 120–130 million passengers annually

LC3 Cement: Limestone Calcined Clay Cement — a low-carbon alternative used in NIA construction

UDAN stands for: Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik (launched 2016)

NABH Nirman: NextGen Airports for Bharat (announced in Union Budget 2018–19)

> DigiYatra: Biometric-based digital processing framework by Ministry of Civil Aviation
>
> Greenfield airports approved in India: 21 (in-principle approval); 12 operational as of 2026

Sources: Business Standard ,   Business Today ,   The Tribune ,   PIB ,   Invest India ,   IBEF ,   Wikipedia — Noida International Airport

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