

Relief for Foxconn as its billionaire founder Terry Gou drops out of the race to be Taiwan's next president, P 22

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Noida airport set to take off with IndiGo next year

Talks On With More Indian & Foreign Airlines

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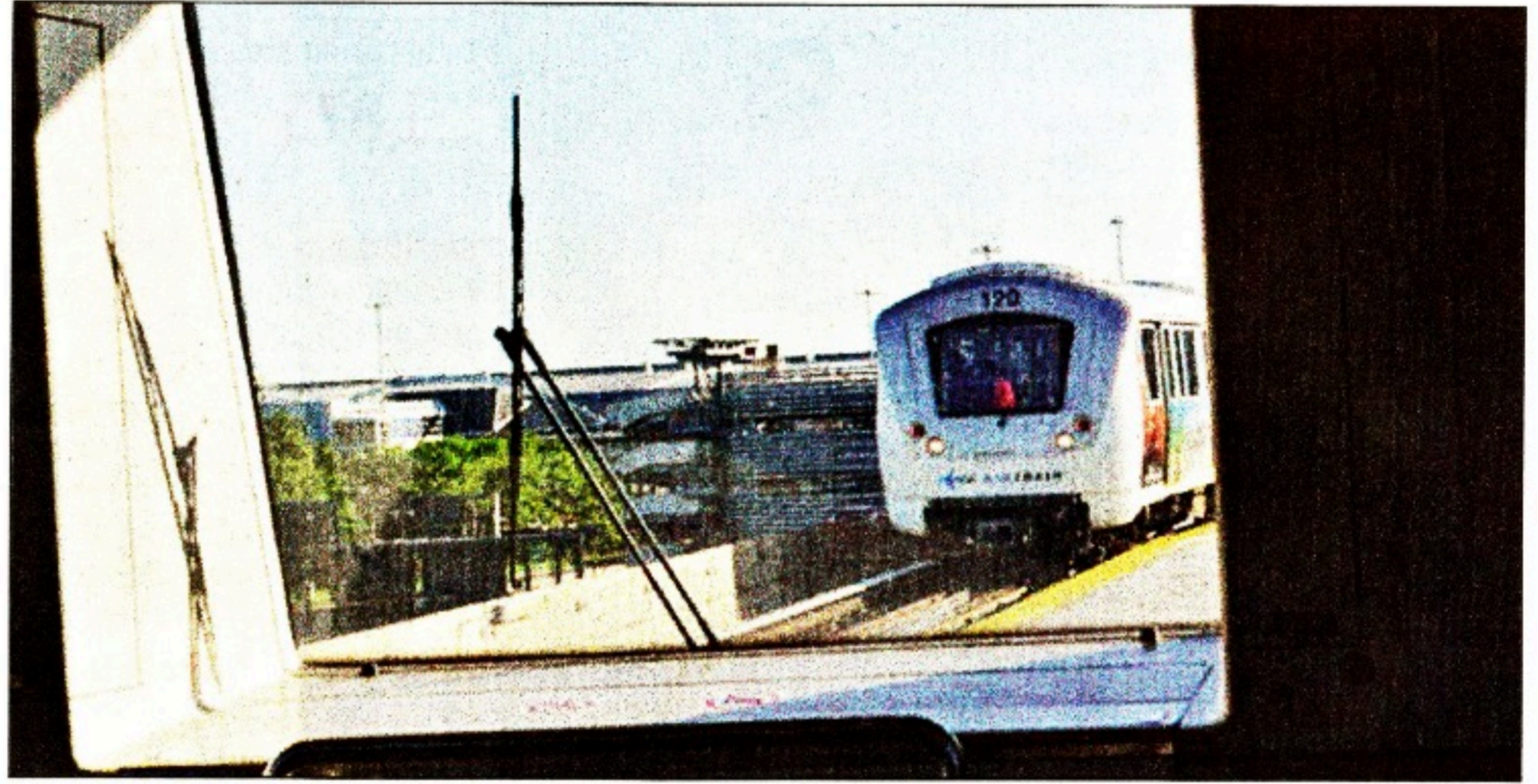
New Delhi: IndiGo will be the launch airline at Noida International Airport (NIA) that is scheduled to become operational by the end of next year. The two signed an MoU on Friday.

The authorities concerned are also in talks with some more airlines, both Indian and foreign, which will start their operations at the airport later.

NIA CEO Christoph Schnellmann said: "The partnership between NIA and IndiGo will not only help bolster air connectivity but also innovate, ensuring an exceptional customer experience for our customers alike. By leveraging IndiGo's extensive route network and expertise, we aim to provide our passengers with unparalleled connectivity and an exceptional travel experience."

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said: "We are thrilled to announce our MoU with NIA to become the launch carrier at the upcoming airport. Our operations at NIA will provide the people of UP with seamless connectivity across our unparalleled network. We look forward to the inauguration of the new airport in 2024 and will continue to work with NIA's management to explore innovative ways to deliver an affordable, on-time, and hassle-free travel experience."

The first phase of the airport will be operational by the end of 2024, with one runway, and one terminal having the capacity to handle 1.2 crore passengers annually. After the completion of the fourth phase, the airport will have the capacity to manage 7 crore passengers per year.



An air train at JFK, New York. Air trains globally are usually free to use to ensure seamless transit between terminals

Air train at IGIA: Routes & stops to be decided soon

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New Delhi: The government will soon decide the route and number of stops for the Delhi airport's hugely-delayed proposed air train. According to a senior official, the aviation ministry feels that the Delhi International Airport Ltd's (DIAL) proposal for having six stops on an eight-km-long track is "too long with higher connecting time between terminal 1 on one side and terminal 2/3 on the other." On the other hand, Airport Authority of India-endorsed suggestion for four stops on a 6-km-long track could mean users funding almost the entire cost of building the Rs 3,400-crore automated people mover.

"DIAL's model for having so many stops, including two at Aerocity, will not only mean higher travel time between T1 and T2/3 but also require fool-

proof security at the non-terminal stops. We are analysing all the options and will select an optimal one, which balances both the cost and other considerations," said a senior government official.

According to the government, the Delhi airport, which is India's busiest hub that will be handling over 7 crore passengers this fiscal and doubling its capacity to over 13 crore within the next 6-8 years, needs the air train. "It is estimated that 25% travellers at IGIA will be transit flyers by then. There is a need for ensuring seamless transfers between T1 and T3/2," added the official.

The clock is ticking as IGIA is on the fast track to expansion. The 1986-era T2 has a capacity of handling 1.5 crore passengers annually. T4, which may come up by 2030 or 2032 (depending on how traffic grows), will have a capacity of 4 crore passengers per annum

(CPA). IGIA's capacity will increase from 7.4 CPA as of now to 10.9 CPA next February and then to the ultimate 13.4 CPA by 2030 or 2032. There is no way these volumes can be handled without an air train between the terminals.

DIAL CEO Videh Kumar Jaipuria recently told **TOI** that the air train will be ready in about four years from when work begins. This means the air train can come up by 2028 only if the work starts now. Till that happens, passengers will continue transiting between T1 and T2/3 by road on DTC buses.

DIAL had sent its proposal for the air train to the aviation ministry. This, among other things, also sought bridging the viability gap funding through user development fees (UDF). The AAI-endorsed six-km-long line with four stations — T1, Aerocity, cargo terminal and T3, which will cost about Rs 3,400 crore, say sources.