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Jewar airport gets green nod, only MHA clearance remains

Wildlife Rehab Plan Key Because of The Site's Biodiversity

Shalabh@timesgroup.com

Greater Noida: The Jewar international airport project has received the first of the two central statutory clearances needed for construction work to start.

The approval from the Union environment ministry means the project now only needs security clearance from the Union home ministry (MHA) for the selected concessionaire, Zurich AG, to begin work at the site. Land acquisition for the first phase of the airport, which will have two runways, is complete.

Officials said the environment ministry gave its approval after reviewing the response of the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA), the agency piloting the airport project, to concerns about its environment management and wildlife restoration plans. The project's proponent — the director of UP's civil aviation department Surendra Singh — had

APPROVALS NEEDED FOR GREENFIELD AIRPORTS



Environment management plan

Drainage, waste management, water management, air pollution, noise pollution

Wildlife restoration plan

Ecology, animals, birds, trees and plants

Forest conservation plan

Number of trees notified under forest to be uprooted (not applicable in Jewar project)

Coastal regulation plan

Not applicable for project

Road ahead for Jewar

- Ministry of home affairs will examine credentials of stakeholders involved in project, including directors/promoters
- MHA will also look into purpose and implication of security equipment required for construction

on January 28 given a presentation before the ministry's expert appraisal committee in New Delhi.

The presentation was based on specific plans pertaining to the rehabilitation of wildlife at the biodiversity-rich precincts of the Jewar airport site that are home to Sarus cranes and blackbucks. The ministry wanted to examine the steps the UP government was taking to

conserve the flora and fauna there. Dhanauri, one of the wetlands that is expected to get Ramsar status soon, is also in the vicinity of the airport site.

Concerns were also raised about the number of mature trees that will have to be uprooted. YEIDA tabled excerpts from the report prepared by the Dehradun-based Wildlife Institute of India and highlighted the conser-

vation plan. YEIDA was also asked to increase the number of babul and arjun trees during afforestation activity in Jewar. Consequently, a suggestion to plant more trees around the airport site was given. YEIDA has also made provisions to earmark 133.4 hectares as 'green belt' within the airport site.

The environment management plan that was evaluated by the ministry also comprised maintaining the drainage system of the project to avoid flooding, management of construction waste and debris, water management, and air and noise pollution mitigation.

YEIDA CEO Arun Vir Singh said, "It is positive news for the entire Gautam Budh Nagar and only security clearance is pending now."

With the latest development, the ball is now in the court of the home ministry. The ministry will assess the airport project on security and intelligence parameters before giving approval, officials said.