

Taj International Airport project gains pace

Suitable site to be finalised by end of March 2013

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For much required fillip to tourism in Uttar Pradesh, Taj international airport project at Agra would be implemented in right earnest. **State government has accorded top priority to this project** as Tajmahal is one of the most visited tourist spots in south Asia. It is a centre of attraction for not only domestic but international tourists as well. **Consortium of Rites Ltd and KPMG Advisory Services Pvt Ltd**, the **selected consultants for this project**, today made a **detailed presentation to Infrastructure & Industrial Development Commissioner (IIDC), Anil Kumar Gupta on the future course of action. Consultants were asked to identify the best suited site by the end of current financial year.**

The project site would be selected in a way, so as to enable prompt clearances and approvals for the implementation without any hindrances.

To be developed through **Public Private partnership (PPP)**, in order to ensure time-bound execution of the project, government has assured full cooperation at all levels of administration.

IIDC, Anil K Gupta said, *"No doubt, development of an international airport in the vicinity of Tajmahal will enhance the tourist inflow; the new airport would also cater to needs of frequent fliers, entrepreneurs and exporters from the region."*

"Moreover, as it is proposed to be constructed close to upcoming Agra-Lucknow access-control expressway, industrial products from the region including Aligarh, Firozabad, Kanpur, Agra, Etawah, etc. will find easily accessible exit point as export cargo. The proposed airport will also ease the access to various proposed tourist projects and other world heritage sites in the area along with Agra Fort, Buland Darwaja, Fatehpur Sikri, etc." he added.

Stressing on the importance of an international airport in Agra, Director General Tourism, Manoj Kumar said that target was to increase the Tajmahal bound tourist volume of 40 lakhs to one core during the next five years. **He informed** that 40 % of foreign tourists come here to see Tajmahal.

Consultants have been tasked to carry out necessary surveys for evaluating various site options and selecting the best site possible as well as to prepare a techno-economic feasibility report, master plan, the bid documents and concession agreements for selection of developer.

It was informed that feasibility studies and surveys will involve site selection, traffic forecast, financial and revenue models, meteorological and topography data compilation, bearing on other airports, etc.

If everything goes as per plan, Agra will have an international airport within 4 to 5 years.
