

Travel time to new Hyderabad airport worries passengers

How long will it take to reach the new international airport in Hyderabad? Air passengers here do not know even as the countdown for the launch of the new facility has begun.

They are worried that it may take longer to get to the airport from the city than the flight time to reach a destination!

The new greenfield airport with world class facilities has come up at Shamshabad, about 35 km south of the existing airport at Begumpet and between the Hyderabad-Bangalore national highway and the Hyderabad-Srisailam state highway.

As the new facility is to be formally inaugurated March 14, the developers and the municipal authorities are working at a frantic pace to address the connectivity issues and remove apprehensions from the minds of passengers.

Greater [Hyderabad](#) Municipal Corporation (GHMC) personnel are racing against time to ensure that all the major roads leading to the new airport are widened.

The GHMC workers with dozens of bulldozers are working round-the-clock to remove the bottlenecks for smooth and speedy travel of the passengers through the busy roads.

The new airport, built in public-private partnership at a cost of Rs.25 billion, is scheduled to be inaugurated by Congress president Sonia Gandhi while commercial operations are scheduled to commence two days later.

Since the existing airport is located at Begumpet in the heart of the city, the shifting of the facility has led to apprehensions in some quarters that the passengers might have to face a tough time to reach the new airport.

In fact, some people believe that the time taken to travel to the new airport from many parts of the city would be longer than the flying time to the majority of destinations in India.

The passengers might have to start for the airport a couple of hours before the reporting time while the actual flying time to many destinations in India is one hour.

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL), the developers of the new airport, however, claim that it would not take more than an hour for passengers to reach Shamshabad. But people continue to be sceptical given the traffic chaos at various points along the route.

Despite the claim by developers that a majority of connectivity issues have been addressed, the bottlenecks remain, especially within the city limits.

The 11.6-km P.V. Narasimha Rao Elevated Expressway, claimed to be the longest flyover in India, which is coming up along part of the Inner Ring Road would connect the busy Mehdiapatnam to the Hyderabad-Bangalore national highway.

It is not likely to be completed before the year-end and so also the first phase (24.38 km) of the

160-km long eight-lane Outer Ring Road, which will ensure better connectivity from Hitec City, the IT district. The developers hope that the two mega projects upon their completion would further reduce travel time.

Pending the completion of the Expressway, the GHMC is widening the Inner Ring Road from four-lane to six-lane. The demolition work has also been taken up at a few points to clear the bottlenecks. A couple of new bypass roads are also being laid to improve connectivity.

However, the authorities face an uphill task in removing the bottlenecks in Banjara Hills, Masab Tank, Mehdiapatnam and other points within the city limits that face traffic chaos.

The defence authorities are yet to open up a bypass road through defence land at Mehdiapatnam crossroads. The state government has requested that the defence authorities allow the traffic to pass through the road at least till the completion of the Expressway.

The heavy vehicular traffic between the [Bangalore](#) and [Mumbai](#) national highways is also yet to be diverted. The vehicles currently pass through the Inner Ring Road, which is the main connecting road to the new airport.

However, some people feel that such teething problems would always be there and hope that things will eventually fall into place.

'Such minor problems will be there when you take up a mega project. The connectivity is definitely going to improve with time,' Atluri Subba Rao, an industrialist and chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Chamber of Commerce and Industry (APCCI), told IANS.

In an attempt to allay apprehensions that travel to the new airport would be expensive, GHIAL announced that shuttle services would be operated for passengers.

Thirty air-conditioned buses would be operated from four locations with a frequency of 30 minutes and the fare will be Rs.95 for each passenger. Around 700 AC, GPS-enabled cars will be operated with a fare of Rs.15 per km.

Also state-owned Road Transport Corporation (RTC) buses, pre-paid taxis and auto-rickshaws will be available.

GHIAL has also submitted a proposal for a dedicated Metro Rail line connecting various key points in the city to the new airport.

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