

**Embassy of India
Vientiane**

Press Release

Prime Minister of India inaugurates Kushinagar International Airport (KIA) in India

KIA is a tribute to the devotion of Buddhist society around the world. There is a special focus on the development of the places associated with Lord Buddha through better connectivity, and the creation of facilities for the devotees.

Prime Minister His Excellency Mr. Narendra Modi inaugurated Kushinagar International Airport on 20 October 2021.

Addressing the gathering, he said that India is the centre of the faith of Buddhist society around the world. He termed the facility of KIA as a tribute to their devotion. This region, he said, is witness to the entire journey from the enlightenment of Lord Buddha to Mahaparinirvana. This important region is getting directly connected to the world, he said.

He highlighted the special focus on the development of the places associated with Lord Buddha through better connectivity and the creation of facilities for the devotees. He welcomed the Sri Lankan flight and delegation that landed at Kushinagar. Paying tribute to Maharshi Valmiki on his Jayanti, he said that the country is marching on the path of Sabka Vikas (Development of all) with the help of Sabka Satha (With involvement of all) and Sabka Prayas (With efforts of all). Development of Kushinagar is one of the key priorities of the Government of State of Uttar Pradesh and Government of India, he said.

He said that tourism in all its forms, whether for faith or for leisure, needs modern infrastructure complete with rail, road, airways, waterways, hotels, hospitals, internet connectivity, hygiene, sewage treatment and renewable energy ensuring a clean environment. All these are interconnected and it is important to work on all these simultaneously. Today's 21st century India is moving ahead with this approach only, he said.

He announced that under the UDAN scheme, more than 900 new routes have been approved in the last few years, out of which air service has already started on more than 350 routes. More than 50 new airports or those which were not in service earlier, have been made operational.

He highlighted the development regarding the aviation sector in Uttar Pradesh as air connectivity is constantly improving in the state. In State of Uttar Pradesh, 8 airports are already functional before Kushinagar airport. Work is in progress on Jewar International Airport after Lucknow, Varanasi and Kushinagar. Apart from that, airport projects are going on in Ayodhya, Aligarh, Azamgarh, Chitrakoot, Moradabad and Shravasti.

Referring to the recent decision on Air India, he remarked that the step will help in running the country's aviation sector professionally and prioritizing convenience and safety. This step will give new energy to the aviation sector of India. One such major reform is related to the opening of defence airspace for civil use, he added. This step will reduce the distance on various air routes. He also conveyed that the recently launched drone policy is going to bring life-changing transformation in the fields ranging from agriculture to health, to disaster management to defence.

He said recently launched PM Gatishakti - National Master Plan will not only improve governance but also ensure that all modes of transport such as road, rail, air etc should support each other and increase each other's capacity.

A revered pilgrimage site for Buddhists the world over, Kushinagar is believed to be the place where Lord Buddha attained Mahaparinirvana after his death. Now with the inauguration of KIA, pilgrims from across the globe will have ease of access to this sacred place. The inauguration of KIA will also offer more direct connectivity for Lao devotees to visit Buddhist circuit in India.
