

BEIJING TO OPEN WORLD'S BIGGEST AIRPORT IN 2017



The end of October saw the launch of a mega plan of a new airport coming up in Beijing. The airport, that will be the biggest in the world, is to become operational by 2017.

Highlighting the strident efforts of NACO, a Dutch Airport Consultancy firm, in reaching its goal, the gargantuan airport shall be located just outside the city of Beijing and is touted to handle passenger load of over 130 million a year - 23 million more than the load handled by both Heathrow and JFK put together.

The currently used Capital International Airport of Beijing is one of the busiest airports in the world handling 75 million passengers but it is reaching its peak capacity . This has made it imperative for Beijing to develop another hub owing much to the expanding commercial avenues of the country and the in- bound trade opportunities.

The Beijing Daxing International Airport, as the new airport has been named, will be spread over an area of 21 square miles and shall have eight runways. Thanks to its absolute size and proportions it is necessary that the airport has an integrated transportation hub that will aid the transfer of passengers from any part of the city to the airport in 30 minutes, using a syncretic high-speed train service. While this shuttle service will use high speed trains, the slower underground train service will also be integrated into it.

Special attention has been paid to the runways, taxiways and the apron, keeping the distances in the preliminary movement at the minimum which will bring a certain sensibility to fuel costs and CO2 emissions.

NACO futuristic plans will create another classic example of technology coming together with planning to create a facility unequalled and unparalled. This can be appreciated more objectively with a look at the passenger load handled by Atlanta airport which is around 89 million passengers per annum, Heathrow at 65 million and the currently used airport in Beijing handles about 73 million. **NACO has indeed set the bar higher with this first of its kind 'mega airport' handling a capacity of 130 million passengers.**

NACO's impressive portfolio which includes 550 airports of varying sizes spanning 100 countries makes it one of the stalwarts in the field of airport consultancy and engineering. Its recent collaboration with Viracopos Campinas International Airport in Brazil has shown a two-fold increase in its passenger handling capacity rising from 7.5 million to almost 15 million in a short span of a year.

Another feather in its cap is the Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. Appearing time and again in the list of the 'finest airport in the world', it was also designed and executed to perfection by NACO. The sustained efforts of the firm in this project since 1960 has turned it into a 'showcase' airport whose present capacity of 18 million passengers is being upgraded to 48 million through NACO's expertise.

The Beijing masterplan shall pave the way for further sustainable plans for other airports the world over that are in need of serious restructuring for fuel economy, environment concerns and passenger comfort.

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