

# Power lines to go underground to make way for airport

**Rs. 10,000-crore project has capacity of one million passengers of which 28 per cent is expected to be business traffic**

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**KOLKATA:** Several kilometres of power transmission lines will have to be realigned and laid underground to make way for a greenfield airport project that is being implemented near Durgapur in West Bengal.

The extra high voltage (EHV) transmission line was a major hurdle in the progress of the project, which was announced in 2009.

The realignment of the EHV line, belonging to the West Bengal State Electricity Transmission Ltd, became

necessary due to stipulations by the airport regulatory authorities.

For Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL), which is implementing the airport city project, the realignment became a necessity as no tall structures are allowed within a specified perimeter of a runway. "The realignment will now be over 25 km of which some will be underground, which is a rarity for a power line," officials associated with the project said. The job has been assigned to L&T and the cables are being requisitioned from South Korea.

• **Of 1,818 acres, airport is coming up in 600 acres and an industrial city in the rest**

• **Air traffic control tower, runway, and terminal buildings are in a state of readiness**

The project spread over 1,818 acres is located in Andal ahead of Durgapur in Bardhaman district and is close to Raniganj coalfields. However, it is this hinterland that gave the project its birth pangs and Coal India Ltd put up a stiff resistance when the project was first conceived in 2009, saying that prime coal reserves would be locked up if

an airport came up in this area. The project had to be reworked and its area was curtailed from the original 2,300 acres.

The government of the day did the land acquisition, handing it over to West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation which then leased it to BAPL.

Although after coming to

power, the Mamata Banerjee government had reservations about the project seeing it as a case of land grab in the garb of an airport, the Chief Minister later came around and named the airport Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport after the poet. The entire project entails an investment of Rs. 10,000 crore.

The project, in which 26 per cent equity is held by Changi International Airports of Singapore, entails setting up an airport over 600 acres and an industrial city over the rest of the land. The airport has a capacity of one million passengers of which

80 per cent is expected to be business traffic.

The project is slated to ease journey time for the people in the industrial belt of Jharkhand, particularly those from Dhanbad and Ranchi, who have to travel to Kolkata to emplane for Delhi. It will also help the people in the Durgapur steel belt. The air traffic control tower, the runway, and the terminal buildings have been kept in a state of readiness. BAPL also has a MoU with the Punjab government for implementing a similar airport city near Ludhiana, the company said.