

'Aerotropolis To Help Showcase State As Investment Destination'

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KOLKATA

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee said on Thursday that the ₹ 10,000-crore airport city project at Andal in West Bengal's Bardhaman district will change the industrial scenario of the state.

"This project will help us showcase West Bengal as one of the most important investment destinations in the country. Over ₹ 10,000 crore will be invested in developing the Aerotropolis project which will play a crucial role in changing the industrial scenario in districts like Bardhaman, Birbhum, Bankura and Purulia," the chief minister said. She visited the first greenfield airport project on Thursday to christen it Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport after the Bengali poet, musician and revolutionary.

The new project is being executed by the Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL) with the



West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC) having a minority stake. Singapore airport developer Changi has a 26% stake in the project which will have a city, a multi-specialty hospital and a business hub. Construction of the runway, passenger terminal and air traffic control have almost been completed,

but the equipment are yet to be installed. The new airport is likely to be operational from April 2014.

The chief minister had earlier urged the BAPL authorities to name the new airport after Kazi Nazrul Islam and the BAPL had agreed to her proposal. The chief minister also inaugurated a heli-

copter service during the function.

Interestingly, land acquisition for this airport city project had started in 2008, barely two months after the Tatas had withdrawn their Nano project at Singur following Mamata Banerjee's agitation. But there was no hue and cry over the land acquisition for this airport city project as the BAPL authorities had purchased plots directly from the owners. The previous Left Front government also played an important role to enable the BAPL to acquire land for their project. Now the project is coming up on over 1,800 acres which is almost double of 997 acres acquired by the previous government for the Tatas abandoned small car project at Singur.