

Govt keen on Khed SEZ as site for airport

Final decision likely after state officials' meeting with PM on November 13

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THE proposed international airport for Pune may finally see the light of day with officials of the state government set to meet Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on November 13 to discuss and finalise the project. After assessing six locations, the Maharashtra Airport Development Company (MADC) has now zeroed in on Khed Special Economic Zone (SEZ), finding it suitable for the airport.

Khed SEZ is a joint venture (74:26) of the Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC) and Bharat Forge. "We will require 1,268 hectares and the parallel runaways will measure 4,000 metres each. The total area should be 6.2 km in length and around 3 km in breadth. We will acquire 750 hectares from SEZ and the remaining 500 hectares should be acquired from the surrounding area," said an MADC official. The Khed SEZ is spread over 4,500 hectares.

The JV has acquired 1,000 hectares and notified 700 hectares under Phase 1 of the SEZ. It has so far paid out Rs 289 crore to land owners at the rate of Rs 17 lakh per hectare. "With part of the land already acquired, it would be easy for the government to decide on SEZ land. The meet will help finalise the location," added the official.

Baba Kalyani, chairman and managing director of Bharat Forge, said he would be back from the US in three weeks and only then would be in a position to comment on the matter. "Till date, no one has spoken to me about the site being viable for the airport," he said.

Earlier, Pune Divisional Commissioner Prabhakar Deshmukh had showed the MADC some land towards the eastern side, but that site was not given a go-ahead. Officials from the state government



The SEZ site is the seventh to be assessed by MADC for the airport project

OFFICIALS VISIT PROPOSED SITE

ON FRIDAY, MADC Managing Director T Satre, along with Pune Divisional Commissioner Prabhakar Deshmukh and District Collector Vikas Deshmukh, visited the proposed site and had a three-hour meeting to discuss the project. "Hopefully, the November 13 meeting will clear the project," said Prabhakar Deshmukh. He said while a major portion of the required land would come from the SEZ, the remaining would have to be acquired from private individuals in the same area. "This was a fruitful visit and will take the project forward," he said.

said the international airport projects for Navi Mumbai and Pune were among the various pending projects that would be discussed at the meeting. "The PM will give us a hearing and the chief minister is keen to take forward the proposal. A decision will be taken after the meeting on November 13," said an official.

In September too, a high-level meeting to address the airport issue was convened where it was discussed to speed up the land acquisition process for Pune, Navi Mumbai and Juhu airports.