

Andal airport to be ready by May

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: The greenfield airport that is in an advanced stage of construction at Andal near Durgapur has received a thumbs-up from director general of civil aviation Arun Mishra. After visiting the site, Mishra remarked: "Of the country's 15 greenfield airport projects that were approved, the Durgapur airport is the one that

"We have already applied for licence to the DGCA. Mishra's visit following our request marks the final lap of the airport's development," Paul said.

Though the formalities needed for a greenfield airport to be commercially operational are cumbersome and time-consuming, Mishra was quite impressed by the pace of work. "A lot of progress has been made in a short time de-

to spite several constraints," he said after the trip to Andal.

DGCA is expected to undertake an inspection of the airport sometime this yearend, followed by trial flights before the airport can receive the nod for full-fledged commercial operations. BAPL is already in talks with Jet



(Left to right) BAPL COO Pawan Choudhury, CEO Subrata Paul, DGCA Arun Mishra and BAPL senior GM Rajesh Jetwani on the Andal airport runway strip on Monday

has made the most significant progress."

The project — which is currently in the finishing stage with less than 15% work left on the runway, passenger terminal and air traffic control tower — is expected to be completed by May. Subrata Paul, the chief executive officer of Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL), said the airport would be ready for commercial operations by October 2013. Singapore airport operator Changi holds 26% equity in the project.

Airways, IndiGo and Air India for flights to the airport that has several industrial towns like Durgapur, Burnpur, Raniganj and Dhanbad in its catchment area.

Apart from the 650-acre airport, BAPL plans to develop residential townships, hospitals, IT hubs and industries in the remaining 1,200 acre. The Mamata Banerjee government, that was initially critical of the project, has made it clear that it will take a call on the rest of the project only after the airport is ready.