

Mamata announces Cooch Behar-Kolkata air services

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West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee today announced a slew of projects for development of North Bengal including air services between Cooch Behar and Kolkata via Durgapur, where a new airport is coming up in collaboration with Changi of Singapore.

"We have signed an agreement in Singapore on starting a new air service between Cooch Behar and Kolkata via Durgapur," Banerjee said at a public function here while inaugurating the service 23 new buses bought under the

JNNURM scheme.

Banerjee, who recently went to Singapore for inviting investment to West Bengal, said the non-operational Cooch Behar Airport in Cooch Behar district was being revamped and the service was likely to be started by November. "The four-day a week service will be given nearly 50

per cent subsidy initially in order to make it viable," Banerjee said.

She said an agreement in this regard has been signed with the Bengal Aerotropolis Private Limited (BAPL), in which Changi Airport holds a substantial stake.

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The Chief Minister also said a sum of ₹602 crore has been sanctioned for the Bengal-part of the ambitious Asian Highway project connecting different countries in the region. "This project, when completed, will boost industrialisation and trade in North Bengal," she said. Banerjee, while announcing the issuing of 1,000 new permits for taxis in Siliguri, said "the state is investing a lot in the transport sector to revamp the whole system, several new buses will be operational soon."

She said a new passport office would be opened here to facilitate the people of North Bengal, who now have to travel to Kolkata for such services. "Pensioners will also be relieved of harassment of travelling to Kolkata as we are soon going to start an office for that here," she added.