

India's first aerotropolis boosts regional air connectivity in WB

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COMMERCIAL operations were recently started at Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport in Durgapur, the country's first private greenfield operational airport. The landmark airport development project has been commissioned by Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Limited (BAPL) along with its international partner Changi Airports International (CAI) Singapore. Air India is operating six days a week flights from Kolkata to Durgapur and back. "Pinnacle Air has an agreement with the state government to enrich the regional air connectivity between Kolkata - Durgapur - Bagdogra - Cochin Bihar and to reconstitute the convenience of passengers on this route. On the other hand BAPL has an agreement with the government of West Bengal to provide support through airport infrastructure and technical support," said the management of BAPL, in an email interaction.

The airport is a part of the aerotropolis (or Skycity) at Durgapur being developed by BAPL. "The aerotropolis, Sujalaam - The Skycity, is the sixth such infra development in the world and the first of its kind in India. The 600-acre airport, is the centrepiece of this aerotropolis. For the first time in India, there will be a marked shift from the traditional city airport to airport city," said the company.

Planned investment for the Aerotropolis in Durgapur will

be over 110,000 crore, which will include investment for the airport and development of the Airport City. "Our next step would be to complete the rest of the Skycity, which besides the airport will comprise of an industrial skyzone, a logistics skyhub, an information technology skypark and a residential township

besides the airport will comprise of an industrial skyzone, a logistics skyhub, an information technology skypark and a residential township," said BAPL management. The company is also working closely with the state government of Punjab for another proposed aerotropolis in Ludhiana.

Asansol is the 42nd fastest growing city in the world and India's 10th fastest. Being among India's richest in mineral deposits, the Asansol - Raniganj belt is one of India's largest commodity trade centres. "The people from the region had to travel all the way to Kolkata or Ranchi airports, some 200 km away to catch their preferred flights to Delhi and Mumbai. Having realised the necessity of introducing the new facility for people of the region it was the vision of BAPL which helped build India's first private greenfield airport at Durgapur," said the company management adding that with

night landing facility at the Durgapur Airport, BAPL is also looking at permissions to receive flights from Kolkata airport due to inclement weather and any other exigencies. With just 10 minutes away from the Kolkata Airport, Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport will be a right choice for flights as an alternative solution.

BAPL has attempted to participate in the socio-economic development of the Ansil region. "Our aim has been to ensure improvement in the living standards of the population adjacent to the project. Our initiatives are mainly focused on healthcare, developing employable skill among youths, developing educational and social infrastructure and also meeting the sanitation needs of the surrounding villages. As a part of the Rehabilitation and Resettlement package one family member from each land giver is given an opportunity to enhance his/her skill through vocational training in 30 different trade disciplines. We have also assisted in the facilit of IIT Durgapur to augment the institute's skill development initiatives," stated BAPL management.