

# Durgapur airport to be operational next month

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India's first private green-field airport at Durgapur, promoted by Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL), is likely to be operational by April 14.

"The final calibration of navigational aids at the airport by Airport Authority is done. Now, we expect to get the final DGCA licence in a month," State Transport Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay said here on Monday.

In all probability, the airport, christened Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport, will be operational from April 14, the first day of Bengali calendar, BAPL officials said.

The West Bengal Government has 1.2 per cent stake in BAPL, and Singapore's Changi Airport is the single largest shareholder in the airport.

Bandyopadhyay said Pinnacle Air, a non-scheduled airline, will begin its oper-

ations from here four days a week connecting Bagdogra, Coochbehar, Durgapur and Kolkata soon after getting the required licenses from DGCA.

BAPL Managing Director Partha Ghosh said the company is in negotiations with IndiGo and GoAir for scheduled flights for connecting Delhi-Durgapur including Air India and non-schedule airline Air Coasta for connecting southern cities such as Hyderabad and Bangalore. Air Costa may connect these two south Indian cities for four days a week.

However, the final agreement will depend on concessions the Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport offers.

The major concessions demanded by the scheduled airlines are waiver of landing and takeoff fees, underwriting minimum of seats and 30 per cent surcharge waiver for ATF for a greater timeframe.