

Andal airport awaits DGCA approval for maiden flight

NEW BEGINNING April 14, Bengali New Year day, is the likely date

HT Correspondent

• letters@hindustantimes.com

ANDAL: With Airports Authority of India (AAI) aircraft completing calibration process at Andal airport on Monday, authorities of Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Limited (BAPL) are hopeful that flight operations would soon begin from the aerodrome from April 14.

According to the managing director of BAPL, Partha Ghosh, the company will now apply to DGCA for approval. "We will apply to DGCA now since the calibration is almost over. Generally it takes three to four weeks to get the licence," he said. "We hope to start flight operations soon after getting DGCA approval," Ghosh said on Monday during a function organised on the occasion of completion of calibration.

State transport secretary Alapan Bandopadhyay said the airport is effectively taking last step towards commissioning and licensing of the airport, the step which is manifested and represented by calibration and test flights.

The transport secretary said BAPL and state government will jointly start flight operations immediately with at least one flight on the Kolkata, Andal, Bagdogra and Cooch Behar route four days a week.

"Efforts are also on to operate two of the return flights in the evening from Bagdogra airport to utilise the night landing facility there because chief minister Mamata Banerjee had put in a lot of effort to get the night-landing



■ The aircraft that carried out calibration run at Andal airport. PHOTO: BAPL

FACTS IN FIGURES

- Runway length: 2,800 meters
- Runway width: 45 meters
- Taxiway: 252.2meters
- Apron Area: 21,500
- Passenger terminal building: 5,750meters square

facility at Bagdogra airport," Bandopadhyay said.

These flights will be operated by Pinnacle Air has already got the work order through tender process. The airline will operate flights on the Kolkata, Andal, Bagdogra and Cooch Behar route. We hope that other airlines will also show interest and come here," said Bandopadhyay. "We hope this airport will become operational in one month from now," he said.

The regional executive director, eastern region of AAI, S Bhaduri, said, "Ground calibration, Doppler VHF omni-directional Radio range (DVOR) has

been completed and air calibration is being done." He said Andal airport has night landing facility.

The MD of BAPL, Partha Ghosh, also said talks are in advance stages with two airlines: IndiGo and GoAir, and they want concessions. The three types of concessions they are looking for are waiver of landing and parking charges, subsidy on a specific number of seats, and total waiver of surcharge on ATF which amounts to 30%.

He also informed that another airline called Air Costa has shown interest to operate flights to Hyderabad and Bangalore from Andal airport (Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport). "They are also interested in operating four flights a week," said Ghosh.

He said BAPL is targeting 5 lakh passenger movement a year from Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport. "This is the second best airport in the state and is equipped with night-landing facility," he said.