

Air services from Durgapur to southern cities likely soon

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KOLKATA: Vijaywada based Air Costa is keen to start operations from West Bengal's upcoming airport near Durgapur and has already begun talks in this regard. The move aims to help people going for medical treatment to the South.

Vivek Choudhary, Chief Executive Officer of Air Costa told *The Hindu* that exploratory level talks have begun on launching flights linking the new airport with Hyderabad and Bengaluru. The low cost carrier has also asked for certain concessions including underwriting of seats. Mr. Choudhary said that the flier runs 67-seater and 112-seater planes.

There is a sizeable volume of people travelling between these two cities and West Bengal, mostly for medical treatment. Facing considerable hardships owing to lack of convenient train connections from Durgapur to their destinations, they have to reroute their journey via Kolkata. Students too face the same travail. It is this traffic that Air Costa is targeting, a senior official of Bengal Aerotropolis Private Ltd (BAPL) said.

They said that talks were also on with carriers for launching flights to New Delhi and other destinations. Pre-commissioning activities were held recently with the Airports Authority of India running test



The newly-built Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport near Durgapur in West Bengal. Several carriers, including a regional one from the South, are in talks to commence services from here once the facility is fully commissioned. PHOTO: SUSHANTA PATRONOBISH

flights and conducting calibration of the navigational aids at the airport which has been named Kazi Nazrul

Islam Airport, by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after the renowned poet and composer. The

previous government had conceived the project, which involves building a city around an airport.