

Pre-commissioning activities begin at new airport

Special Correspondent

ANDAL (WEST BENGAL): Pre-commissioning activities have begun at the new airport in West Bengal with the Airports Authority of India running test flights and conducting calibration of the navigational aids installed at the airport which has been named Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, after the renowned poet and compos-

er. The previous government had conceived the project.

Regional Executive Director of the Airports Authority of India S. Bhaduri said at a media interaction here the airport was "effectively taking the last step towards getting its licence though its calibration test flights. Examinations are being conducted in the run-up to the DGCA permit."

A non-scheduled flier Pinnacle Airlines has already got the work order for commencing the four days a week flight connecting Coochbehar, Bagdogra, Durgapur and Kolkata to mark the commencement. State Transport Secretary

Alapan Bandyopadhyay said that the airport will improve regional air connectivity.

Partha Ghosh managing director, Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd, the joint venture company that has been promoted with a 36 per cent equity participation by Changi Airports India Pte Ltd., said that the company was hopeful of getting its formal licence to fly by April 15. BAPL was formed in 2007

He said that at least one regional carrier Air Costa, was keen to commence services from the new airport to cater to the vast number of families who undertake a three-day train travel to car-

ry their sick to the south for medical treatment.

Around Rs 1,000 crores has been spent so far on the airport project, which is part of a larger airport-city project for which nearly 2,000 acres were acquired during the Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee-rule.

However, the project ran into multiple hurdles which included the regulatory authority's objection to an electricity transmission line close to the airport and to land owners' objection to acquisition of land needed for laying the road to connect the airport with national highway.