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Mamata Inaugurates Durgapur-Delhi Flight

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On Board With CM: The industrial town of Durgapur on Monday found its place in the aviation map of the country as chief minister Mamata Banerjee inaugurated direct flight connectivity between this industrial town and the national capital of New Delhi.

Chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday inaugurated direct flight connectivity between the industrial town of Durgapur and the national capital of Delhi. Air India, country's national carrier, will start direct flights between Durgapur's Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport (KNIA) and New Delhi from December 21. The commercial flight will depart Kolkata at 9:30 a.m. and arrive in Durgapur at 9 a.m. and reach Del-

hi at 11:45 a.m. The return flight from the capital will leave Delhi at 12:35 p.m. to reach Durgapur at 2:40 p.m.

The chief minister on Monday inaugurated the flight from Durgapur. She herself was among those few VIPs who used the flight to reach Delhi during the day. West Bengal chief secretary Sanjoy Mitra and transport secretary Alapan Bandopadhyaya were among those who attended the inauguration of the flight at Durgapur.

Inaugurating the flight, the chief minister said direct flight connectivity between Durgapur and Delhi will help industrialists, businessmen and government officials to reach the capital and return on a same day. The inaugural flight from Kolkata reached Durgapur at around 3 p.m. Interestingly, a water salute was given to the flight at Dur-

gapur's KNIA. Two high powered fire tenders sprayed water at the aircraft when it landed at the airport.

Satya narayan agarwalla, a local businessman who used to use Delhi flights from Kolkata frequently, told ET that introduction of the direct Air India flight from Durgapur will certainly help the local businesses community, officials of different public sector undertakings like the Durgapur Steel Plant (DSP) and others to avoid travelling to Kolkata to catch a flight for Delhi.

"People from Asansol Durgapur region have to go to either Kolkata or Ranchi, both around 200 kilometers from the region to catch flights for Delhi. But now, they would not have to travel either to Kolkata or Ranchi to take Delhi flights," said Agarwalla.

Partha Ghosh, managing director of the Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL) which constructed the airport at Durgapur, said: "Air India's new service will help the people of the region reach national capital either for work, study, treatment, pilgrimage or just leisure with much greater ease."

Asansol Durgapur belt has a population of 1.1 crore and is home to several power intensive industries and has the potential to feed million air passengers a year by FY 2019.

West Bengal government has a 1.02% stake through West Bengal Industrial Development Corporation (WBIDC). Singapore's Changi Airports International (CAI) had a 36.32% stake in BAPL. The airport has been built over 650 acres at a cost of more than ₹ 600 crores.