



Mamata takes inaugural Air India flight to meet PM

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CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee on Monday inaugurated the long awaited Kolkata-Durgapur-New Delhi flight, connecting the industrial city of Durgapur directly with the national capital.

Mamata, who boarded the flight after inaugurating it in Kolkata on her way to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said Air India would start operating on this sector thrice-a-week from December 21.

At present, Air India operates a small flight between Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International (NSCBI) Airport in

Kolkata and Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport (KNIA) at Andal in Durgapur. With this, New Delhi has been added to the route.

Initially, Air India will operate the 122-seater, Airbus-319 aircraft on this new sector every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This service would help in growth of industry, commerce and tourism in the region, Mamata said before boarding the inaugural flight.

This new route, in addition to the existing connectivity between Durgapur and Kolkata, will ensure hassle-free travel for the 1.1 crore population of the catchment area.

The scheduled commercial flight will depart from Kolkata at 8.30 am and arrive in Durgapur

at 9.00 am. It will take off at 9.30 am and reach New Delhi at 11.45 am. On the return leg, the flight will take off from New Delhi at 12.35 pm and reach Durgapur at 2.40 pm. It will depart Durgapur at 3.20 pm and reach Kolkata at 3.50 pm.

Mamata also complimented Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Limited (BAPL) for the world-class experience being offered to travellers at the country's first private greenfield airport in Durgapur.

"There had been a latent need for faster long-distance connectivity from Durgapur-Asansol region. Till now, people from this region had to travel to Kolkata or Ranchi airports, some 200 km away, to catch their

flights to New Delhi," BAPL Managing Director Partha Ghosh said. The new service will help executives of a number of private and public sector companies in the region use their time more productively, he added.

The Durgapur airport has been built over 650 acres at a cost of over Rs 600 crore. Its 2,800-metre runway is equipped with a CAT I Instrument Landing System (ILS) and can handle narrow-body aircraft like Airbus A320 and Boeing 737, BAPL sources said.

The 5,750-sq-mt passenger terminal building has a capacity of 1 million passengers per annum and can be expanded in the future to a capacity of 2.5 million passengers per annum.

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NEW KOLKATA-DURGAPUR-DELHI ROUTE



Water salute being given to an Air India flight after it arrived at the Durgapur airport on Monday. P11