

# The Telegraph

CALCUTTA TUESDAY 22 JANUARY 2019

## New flight

■ **DURGAPUR:** Air India will operate a late-night flight between Andal near Durgapur and Hyderabad from February 16. A 144-seater Airbus A319 will fly between the two destinations thrice a week. The flight will take off from Hyderabad at 11.05pm and land in Andal at 1.15am. The return flight will take off from Andal at 2.10am and reach Hyderabad at 4.30am.

# AI to link Andal with Hyderabad

Subhro Niyogi  
@timesgroup.com

**Kolkata:** The Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport at Andal near Durgapur is set to get its second service. Air India, which currently operates three flights a week to Delhi, has decided to start another thrice-a-week operation beginning February 16-17, connecting Hyderabad to the industrial belt in Burdwan.

Unlike the Delhi flight, the one to Hyderabad will be a red-eye one, arriving past midnight and taking off in the early hours of the day. The flight, to be operated with an Airbus A319 aircraft with 144 seats, will leave Hyderabad at 11.05pm and touch down at Andal at 1.15am. The return flight will take off at 2.10pm and reach Hyderabad at 4.30am.

While the hours are odd, airline sources said the pricing would be extremely attractive to woo passengers. The flight from Andal will be on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

Sources said that with the flight to Delhi clocking over 90% load, officials of Bengal Aerotropolis Projects Ltd (BAPL), the greenfield airport promoters, had urged the carrier to introduce flights to south India, with Chennai being the first choi-



An Air India flight at Andal airport

ce, followed by Bengaluru and Hyderabad. It was the last one that worked out first.

BAPL was actually negotiating with SpiceJet for flights to Bengaluru and Hyderabad before the Air India proposal fructified. Sources said talks with SpiceJet suffered a setback with the state rejecting its proposal that in case of revenue shortfall from flights to Andal, the state allow it to offset through lower excise duty of fuel uploaded by the airline from Kolkata airport.

AI had resumed operations on the Durgapur-Delhi-Durgapur sector last April. Unlike the earlier stint, when AI operated flights with viability gap funding (the state or airport operator's commitment to fund a certain number of seats if these were not sold), it returned with a commercial flight that had no such constraint.