



## Mamata inaugurates AI's Kolkata-Durgapur-Delhi flight

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**KOLKATA:** West Bengal 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.

Banerjee, who boarded the flight after inaugurating it here on her way to Delhi to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said that 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 123-seater, Air-



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee attends a press meet before flagging off the inaugural flight from Kolkata to New Delhi via Durgapur at the NSCBI Airport in Kolkata on Monday. P. CHANDRAN

bus-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, the Chief Minister said before boarding the inaugural flight.

She 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.

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 [Flight No. AI 733] 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, Flight No. AI 734 will take off from New Delhi at 12.35 PM and reach Durgapur at 2.40 PM. It will depart Durgapur's KNIA at 3.20 PM and reach NSCBI in Kolkata, at 3.50 pm.

"There had been a latent need for faster long-distance connectivity from Durgapur-Assam's 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," he said. Bengal Aerotropolis already implemented many of the provisions of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) envisaged in the Draft National Civil Aviation Policy 2015, 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.

Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport has been built over 650 acres at a cost of more than 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 airport is equipped with category VII firefighting and rescue capability and the apron has four parking bays and a helipad, they said.