

Air India Express undergoing expansion, postpones Kolkata-Dhaka flights

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Kolkata : Air India Express, the low-cost subsidiary of Air India, is enhancing its fleet and network as part of expansion efforts. However, the airline has postponed its plans to launch direct flights between Kolkata and Dhaka because of the ongoing political situation between Bangladesh and India.

According to reports, Alope Singh, Managing Director, Air India Express, said, "We have announced our operational plan for Dhaka as it is a major market for us. However, we have deferred those plans because of current ongoing conditions."

As per the initial plan, the airline was to launch six weekly flights on Kolkata-Dhaka route in September 2024. Singh gave assurance that plans will be resumed once things get back to normal, added reports.

Nevertheless, Air India Express remains dedicated to its commitment to widen its footprint in Eastern India, further cited reports. As part of its summer schedule, the airline is all set to launch international flights connecting Kolkata to Kathmandu from the start of March 2025.

The airline also plans to expand its services in Kolkata and will be increasing the daily flight services from 24 to 34. The night halt capacity will also be increased from seven to nine aircraft.

The focus will also be on increasing its presence in the northeastern region. Plans are there to introduce more flights to connect Dimapur to Kolkata. Moreover, more routes from Kolkata to destinations like Agartala, Port Blair and Indore are on the chart. Flights from Bagdogra to Hyderabad and Chennai are underway.

The inclusion of more international destinations like Singapore, Bangkok, Vietnam, and Colombo is also on the expansion plan. Flights to Vietnam could begin as early as the next financial year and will also explore more routes from the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) countries.

Singh also underlined the airline's plan to boost its presence in the Gulf and Middle East regions which also serves as a key market for Air India Express, as per reports.

As part of its long-term plans, Air India Express's goal is to widen its fleet from the current 90 aircraft to over 100 by March 2025. Further plans include adding 75 more in the upcoming three years.

The airline fleet currently comprises Boeing 737s and Airbus A320s. The existing network of Air India Express connects 15 international and 36 domestic destinations through 400 daily flights.

The airline has a strong regional hold with its current market share rising from 12 per cent to 24 per cent, combining its parent company Air India, concluded reports.