

AAI gets nod to operate under Air India Express brand

- A Monitor Desk Report

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New Delhi: Air Asia India has received approval from the civil aviation regulator DGCA to operate its flights under the Air India Express brand.

The airline in a statement on July 27 said AIX Connect, operating as AirAsia India, and a subsidiary of Air India, has received regulatory approvals to operate its flights under the 'Air India Express' branding, thereby expediting the merger process between the different airlines of the Tata Group.

The approval will allow both Air India Express and AIX Connect flights to be marketed, distributed and operated under a common brand name 'Air India Express', prior to the subsequent scheduled legal merger of the two entities.

This approval comes as the Tata Group is in the process of creating two airlines by merging four entities - a low-cost airline by merging AirAsia India and Air India Express and a full-service carrier by merging Air India and Vistara. After Air India took over the remaining 16.33% held in AirAsia India by Malaysia's AirAsia Group in November last year, AirAsia India was renamed AIX Connect.

Over the past few months, Air India Express and AirAsia India have taken significant steps towards integration. In March, the airlines introduced a unified website, airindiaexpress.com. Both airlines will be synergising a host of other ancillary add-on services and common sub-brands. AIXL currently operates flights

from 20 Indian cities to 14 regional international destinations, while AIXC serves 19 domestic destinations.

Air India Group is expecting to complete its merger process in the first half of CY2024. While the integration to create a low-cost carrier is going smoothly, the merger of Vistara and Air India faced a setback last month after the Competition Commission of India sought more information for the airline to give its nod.

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