

Air India plans to take polar route for long-haul flights

Air India could soon be using the polar routes for long haul operations, a company spokesperson said Friday.

'We are planning to file an application with the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to fly the transpolar route,' the spokesperson told IANS.

In July last year, the state-owned carrier became the first Indian airline to fly over the North Pole while ferrying a new Boeing from the Boeing headquarters in Seattle to Delhi.

Air India plans to start operations from Delhi to the John F. Kennedy Airport in New York if it receives the regulatory approval.

However, officials from DGCA said air traffic control facilities in the polar region are very limited and can handle only few planes at a time.

At the same time, say aviation sector analysts, this route is the most desirable and feasible for long haul operations.

Kapil Kaul, chief executive for Indian subcontinent and Middle East at aviation consultancy Centre for Asia Pacific Aviation, told IANS: 'By using the transpolar route, an airline could save two to two-and-a-half hours of time. This is a critical time for any international flight. This is the most practical operational route between cities as far-flung as New York and Delhi.'

At the end of the day, this will also be fuel efficient saving some big bucks, he said.

At present, only few US carriers fly a handful of times a week between the Midwest and the Far East using the transpolar route.

(© IANS / India eNews)