

'Flights from Belgaum airport will resume soon'

Civil Aviation Minister Praful Patel Saturday said flights will resume operations from the Samba airport here in three months.

At present, no airline is operating from the airport, some 500 km from the Bengaluru greenfield airport, because of low load factor.

'I got complaints that the flights used to operate from here have all stopped services. But within three months, we will see Belgaum is again connected to air services,' the minister said at the launch of an aerospace precision engineering special economic zone.

Kingfisher Airlines, the only carrier that was operating from the Samba airport, stopped its services June 17 this year citing low load factor.

This was despite the fact that the Airports Authority of India (AAI) is currently upgrading the Belgaum airport.

It is one of the 35 non-metro airports being modernised by AAI at an investment of Rs.12,434 crore.

Airport officials here said land acquisition for developing airport infrastructure has been completed.

However, farmers in the region complain that their fertile land was acquired for the modernisation project.

'Hasn't the Airports Authority looked into the feasibility before developing the airport here?' asked Jagdish Shetty, a resident of Belgaum.

He asked why the authorities acquired land for an airport where no flight operation is taking place.

Besides Belgaum, four new greenfield airports are also coming up in the state -- Gulbarga, Bijapur, Hassan and Shimoga.

Sanjay Singh (© IANS / India eNews)