

Travel Industry sees red as Jet Airways withdraws service

Aviation News

Seven months after the Jet Airways launched its daily service connecting Tiruchi with Mumbai and New Delhi, the airline has withdrawn it much to the disappointment of the travel industry and people of the region.

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Notwithstanding the good patronage for the service introduced in late March on the New Delhi – Mumbai – Tiruchi – Mumbai – New Delhi sector every day, the airline stopped it from October 28 due to “operational reasons”.

The launch of the new service with much fanfare connecting Tiruchi directly with the country’s financial and political capitals gladdened tourists and the business community who had been seeking such a service for long.

The airline operated Boeing 737-800 series aircraft with more passenger seating capacity keeping in mind the traffic potential in this sector.

Domestic traffic movements on expected lines soared post launch of the flight service in the Mumbai – Tiruchi – Mumbai sector in view of the good load factor and also because of operation of a bigger aircraft as compared to ATR aircraft with lesser seats being operated on the Chennai – Tiruchi – Chennai sector.

Airline sources said that the service on the Mumbai – Tiruchi sector had been withdrawn from October 28 due “operational reasons” even while acknowledging that the passenger load factor had indeed been good to the extent of 80 to 83 %.

“The withdrawal of the service would have an impact on the industry and business circles,” the Tiruchi Tourism Federation, secretary, Mohamed Abubacker said in a representation addressed to the Jet Airways.

Good patronage

The introduction of the New Delhi – Mumbai – Tiruchi – Mumbai – New Delhi sector was a “dream come true” both for business community and travelling public since March 25 this year.

Ever since its introduction, the service was operating with an average passenger load factor of 85% on both directions and had an excellent traffic mix, the representation further said adding that the route had been very beneficial route to the North Indian community and businessmen.

Further, Tiruchi was a gateway to numerous surrounding areas which were feeders to passenger traffic – both domestic and international connecting via Mumbai.

The withdrawal of the service would have a very high impact on the industry and business, Mr. Abubacker said while appealing to the airline to continue the service on the sector.

The chairman, Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) (Southern Region), Tiruchi A.S. Ananthakrishnan said withdrawal of the service was definitely a setback to regular flyers from this part of the region to Mumbai and New Delhi.

Being a direct service, it proved beneficial to passengers proceeding to Mumbai and Delhi without change over of flight, Mr. Ananthakrishnan said.

The CII would soon take up the issue and discuss with other airlines as well as Jet Airways to motivate them to operate on the Tiruchi – Mumbai and Tiruchi – Delhi sectors given the good patronage enjoyed by the flight service to Mumbai, Mr. Ananthakrishnan added.

The CII, Tiruchi has already written to the Chairman, Airport Advisory Committee, Tiruchi and AIADMK Tiruchi Lok Sabha MP P. Kumar seeking direct flight services on the Tiruchi – Mumbai and Tiruchi – Delhi sectors.

Tiruchi international airport was the only one in the country with little connectivity to domestic destinations, it further said.

Travel circles strongly feel that the withdrawal of the service would hugely impact overall domestic passenger movements at the Tiruchi airport which has domestic connectivity to Chennai, Bengaluru and Kochi with services being operated using ATR aircraft.

Tiruchi definitely required a direct connectivity with Mumbai also because there were reputed national level higher educational institutions here, Mr. Ananthakrishnan said.

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