

GoAir services from Oct 2

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Come October 2 and the budget carrier, GoAir, will start passenger flight operations from Pune airport, linking it with Delhi, Bangalore, Ahmedabad and Kochi.

The Mumbai-based Wadia group owns Go Airlines Pvt Limited. It would be the first time that there would be direct air connectivity between Pune and Kochi. So far, Kochi-bound passengers had to catch con-

necting flight from Bangalore or Chennai.

The chief executive officer of GoAir, Kaushik Khona, told *DNA* there would be two flights daily between Pune and Delhi.

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There would be one morning flight from Ahmedabad that would touch Pune and Bangalore before reaching Kochi. Similarly, one flight from Kochi would take off in the evening for Ahmedabad and touch Bangalore and Pune.

"The schedule of the arrival and departure of GoAir flights would be announced some time next month, after the schedule committee of the directorate general of civil aviation (DGCA) prepares the winter schedule for flights across the country," said a Pune airport official.

"We shall provide economy and business class seats to passengers and the tariff would be market driven," added Khona.

GoAir recently announced the expansion of its network strength with its 9th new Airbus A320. The company has plans to add another aircraft by October this year.

GoAir is increasing the overall frequency of its commercial operations from 730 to 890 flights per week.

"Pune is an IT hub. Moreover, there is a large Malayalee community in Pune that travels to Kochi. GoAir's decision to link Pune with these destinations is a prudent one," said one airport official.

At present, every day 10 flights operate between Pune and Delhi, seven between Pune and Bangalore and one between Ahmedabad and Pune. "It is a good sign that flights from Pune are increasing. The airport is getting busier, but congested. We have undertaken expansion of the airport, so there would not be a problem," said Deepak Shastri, director of Lohegaon airport.

"However, there would be a point when it would be impossible for the existing airport to accommodate any more carriers. Hence, a new airport is a must for Pune," he added.