



Air Mantra takes off in India

Shekhar Niyogi, Chennai, India International Travel Mart, July 24, 2012

AIR Mantra, a new scheduled regional airline funded by India's Religare Group, commenced its maiden services between Chandigarh and Amritsar on July 23. Currently operating with two 17-seater Beechcraft 1900D aircraft, the airline intends to carve out a niche in the heartlands of India, where there are few airlines serving smaller cities. Jammu and Dharamshala are reportedly being targeted for expansion.

"Air Mantra aims to put untapped cities on the map, and boost air travel and connectivity by inter-connecting cities off the radar of most other airlines," the carrier said in a statement.

V. V. Giri, director, Flyer Tours & Travels Tirupur, said: "Airlines (such as Air Mantra) contribute to the growth of tourism and should be encouraged. Their lower operating costs will keep fares low and connect many smaller cities that contribute a large segment of travellers."

Vengadesan D., executive, Cox & Kings Chennai, said: "Smaller airlines that can connect small cities with a network of regular flights are the answer to many tour operators' prayers. We are currently losing inbound business because of the lack of connectivity by larger carriers, who are concentrating on metro cities with their available aircraft."