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Kochi; Airport shut till 26th

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CM Urges Centre To Approve Landing Aircraft At Naval Airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kochi: Heavy flooding in and around Cochin International Airport Ltd has forced the authorities to close the airport till August 26.

Chandrakumaran Nair A, airport director said the entire airport is flooded. "We are not sure when it would stop raining and once rains are over, we would launch cleaning operations. After that we would have check each equipment before the airport is up and running once again," he said

Cial had on Wednesday announced suspension of operations till August 18. On Thursday Cial informed Union ministry of civil aviation Department that they would not be able to resume operations before August 26 under the present circumstances.

Though Cial tried to pump out excess water and even broke a part of the peripheral wall to escape flooding, the measures were in vain.

A statement issued by the government of India on Wednesday said "scheduled domestic airlines have been advised to reschedule their flights to or from Kochi to Thiruvananthapuram and Kozhikode air-



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ports till the situation at Cochin airport returns to normal."

Karipur airport director K Srinivasa Rao said it can accept up to six aircraft per hour between 12pm and 8pm as the airport is not busy during the period.

"We can also accept additional flights in other slots subject to availability of parking bays. The airline operators who intent to operate additional flights to Calicut airport are most welcome to do so with necessary approval from DGCA," he said.

KSRTC will be operating a spe-

cial low-floor bus service to Ernakulam from Trivandrum Airport, as train and flight movement is disrupted between Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam.

According to the Thiruvananthapuram airport authority, flights from Cochin airport have been given time slots from 10 am to 4 pm and 6 pm to 10 pm.

"More than nine flights, operated from Cochin, were rescheduled to be operated from Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. Since, there is congestion during peak time from 3am

to 7am, no additional flights are given the time slot," said airport director George G Tharakan.

Chief minister also requested Centre to approve landing aircrafts at the Naval Airport in Willingdon Island.

Aviation experts said only a small percentage of flights operating at Kochi are narrow body aircrafts and that most of them would have to divert operations to Thiruvananthapuram.

Emergency control room numbers for Cial: 0484-305 3500, 261 0094