

## Quikjet Cargo Airlines to launch freighter services

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**P.R. Sanjai**



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**Mumbai:** After a delay of eight years, Bengaluru-based cargo airline Quikjet Cargo Airlines Pvt. Ltd is set to launch its operation with a narrow-body freighter Boeing B737-400SF on Tuesday night.

The aircraft has a capacity of 21.2 tonnes.

The service will initially offer four daily flights, operating overnight to link Delhi with

Chennai, Bengaluru and Hyderabad. It will connect Mumbai and Kolkata in the second phase, thereby covering all major metro hubs.

The carrier's original plan was to launch its operations in April 2008 with narrow body planes. But it couldn't take off due to the economic slowdown.

"In a sense, this is full-swing operations for Quickjet Airlines," Preetham Phillip, Quickjet Airlines chief executive, said in a phone interview. "We have decided to take up this opportunity as we have already sold our aircraft space to Mumbai-based Sovika Aviation. We will take one more Boeing plane by April, taking the total fleet size to two."

Quikjet was granted its scheduled services air operator's permit by the Director General of Civil Aviation in early February.

The airline is a joint venture with ASL Aviation Group, a Dublin, Ireland-based global aviation services provider with seven airlines, more than 100 aircraft and airline operations in six continents. A little over 70% stake is owned by ASL Aviation and the remaining is with individual investors, including Cyrus Guzder, former promoter of AFL Pvt Ltd.

India has seen huge growth in the number of passenger aircraft but the freighter segment in India has not grown—there are now just seven freighter aircraft serving the 7th largest economy in the world.

Cargo airline operations have never been easy for Indian entrepreneurs. Deccan Cargo and Express Logistics Pvt. Ltd, founded by G R Gopinath, met with failure.

Deccan 360, operated by Deccan Cargo and Express, was a cargo airline that Gopinath set up in 2009 after selling Air Deccan to Kingfisher Airlines Ltd.

A year later, Reliance Industries Ltd bought a 45% stake in the company. The company has since stopped operations.

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