

Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) has received in-flight and maritime connectivity (IFMC) license from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT). BSNL along with partner Inmarsat is expected to initiate services later this year as the ground infrastructure is laid and other approvals are sought.

BSNL will be offering Inmarsat's Global Xpress (Ka-band) and SwiftBroadband and FleetBroadband (L-band) services. These services will be offered to Indian airlines operating within and outside the country, foreign ones transiting through Indian airspace, and shipping companies in Indian waters.

Inmarsat owns and operates the GX Aviation service, which enables passengers to browse the internet with connectivity comparable to mobile broadband services on the ground. Airlines such as Qatar Airways, Singapore Airlines, Lufthansa and Air New Zealand are already using GX Aviation.

According to Anupam Shrivastava, chairman and managing director, BSNL, "BSNL and Inmarsat have worked together closely for decades and this announcement further strengthens our relationship, expanding our partnership from GSPS to GX services. This is an exciting step, particularly for India's fast-growing aviation sector. Soon airlines and their passengers will be able to reap the benefits of world-leading, seamless, high-speed connectivity."

Commenting on the occasion Gautam Sharma, managing director, Inmarsat India said, "This issuing of this license is a key milestone in bringing reliable, high-speed connectivity services to India's maritime and aviation industries and customers. India is one of the fastest-growing markets in the world for air travel, with annual passenger numbers consistently increasing. The provision of Inmarsat's next-generation GX Aviation services will be a game-changer for both Indian and foreign airlines operating in the region."

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