



# Welcome Aboard



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

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## Join the Flying Dutchman Programme

There's no doubt about it when you join the Flying Dutchman programme for frequent international travellers from KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, you get the best of both worlds: a world of exciting awards and a world of service benefits.

Free flights and upgrades to worldwide destinations, Balinese and Caribbean idylls, master classes, spectacular sports, preflight luxury...any of these awards and more could be yours.

When it comes to service benefits, the sky's the limit. As soon as your application is accepted, you'll enjoy some very special privileges and discounts.

The more frequently and the further you fly with KLM and its airline partners, the faster you'll fly up through our three service levels. When you reach the top you'll feel like royalty, with VIP treatment at every turn. Needless to say, all our programme partners give you attractive benefits and/or discounts.

Starting at the Flying Dutchman Blue Wing level, you can reach the other levels with surprising speed: for example, when you fly Business Class we don't just double the points you would have earned flying Tourist Class — we TRIPLE them!

You earn points towards your awards whenever you use

the services of a Flying Dutchman programme partner. And your points pile up throughout your trip: your flight, your hotel stay (with golden Tulip Hotels, ITT Sheraton, Inter Continental Hotels and Forum Hotels International, or Holiday Inn) and your Avis Car Rental; they all count.

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## 75 Years of Putting the Customer First

October 7, 1919: KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, the world's oldest airline still operating under the same name, was officially founded. A unique event, which started a long tradition of service to the flying public. A tradition of Bridging the World heralded in the historic words of founder Albert Plesman: "The air ocean unites all peoples."

This tradition is built on daily. For KLM realises that its reputation is only as good as its last flight. In fact, bringing a smile to the face of the customer is at the very heart of its endeavours. And this, together with on-going attention to the core corporate values-KLM aims to be reliable, punctual, careful, and

friendly- has ensured its present healthy financial position.

Following productivity programmes in the 1990s, the airline can now claim to be one of the worldwide carriers which make a profit under extremely difficult market circumstances.

The importance of the world market has always been very close to KLM's heart. Its worldwide network has been carefully built up over the years and today KLM flies to more than 150 destinations in more than 80 countries on all six continents. It is one of the longest route networks operated by any airline today—a network which truly bridges the world.

To meet the changing

needs of the industry, KLM has also been a pioneer in entering alliances with other major carriers: its partnership with Northwest Airlines in the US has resulted in a true global airline, flying to over 350 destinations.

In addition, KLM and Northwest were the first partnership to offer a joint product: its World Business Class has been specifically designed to meet the global needs of today's business traveller.

We are introducing 10 MD-11s, and next year the new Boeing 767 will be put into service. What's more, the fleet is one of the youngest in the air today: the average age of the aircraft in service is just seven years.

## Karel Bram F. Steller / Vice President, MESA Region, KLM Airline with Global Perspective

KLM is a European airline with a global perspective. This has been emphasised in the airline's operations all over the world including the Middle East according to Karel Bram F. Steller, Vice President and Area Manager, Middle East and South Asia. Steller took over his position at a delicate period of the region's history, specifically in 1991, during the liberation of Kuwait.

According to him, this itself was a strong indication of KLM's commitment to the region and Dubai in particular. Steller was the first Vice President of KLM to take over an overseas position. He is in charge of the Middle East and South Asia. As he rightly puts it, the jurisdiction starts in the island of Cyprus and ends in Bangladesh. Steller is a prime example of KLM's policy of hands-on management. He has spent only 10 per cent of his time at the head office and the rest working around the world. Steller is very familiar with the workings of this region having been posted in Africa, Nigeria (in the Nigerian Airways Management team), Egypt, Sudan, Stockholm, etc. He was also involved in implementing the initial groundwork for the KLM-Northwest alliance, which has turned into a very profitable and excellent business venture for both airlines.

### Strong commitment

KLM, which began its services to Asia and the Middle East region 70 years ago, still keeps a strong commitment towards these areas. Dubai, of course, plays a very important role in this scheme of things. KLM looks at Dubai not only as one of its prime destinations in the Middle East but also as an important transit point of the region. The airline is seriously considering providing a hub status to Dubai and discussions on this matter are already underway.

Also, KLM has an excellent arrangement with Dubai's top class airline Emirates. According to Steller, Emirates has shown that strong commitment and high quality can create wonders. The airline has changed the world's concept of the Arab region and Dubai, in particular.

### Main role

In fact, Steller took charge of the region at a very difficult stage of the KLM's operations. The airline had purchased 747-400s and had to close down six of its 12 stations in the region because of lack of the need to maintain transit hubs. Steller's main role was to check the viability of the region and to see whether it merited a direct flight. His four-year tenure in the region has proved without doubt the potential of the region. Earlier, most stations in the region had just one single flight a week. Specifically Bahrain and Amman. Both were loss-making stations. Today, things have turned around and every station is given the option of operating ultimately daily flights or at least three flights a week. Hence, today, KLM is the only European-carrier that operates daily flights out of Amman.

Steller feels he gained this expertise from Northwest Airlines style of functioning by sticking to the economics of scale and increasing productivity. KLM is the only European carrier which has continuously shown more than 10 per cent expansion for four consecutive years. Thus, while most airlines have had decreases, KLM and Northwest have both moved towards expansion.



The KLM-Northwest alliance is truly a global alliance which touches each other on both ends of the world. Northwest is the strongest airline across the Pacific while KLM is the oldest on the Pacific Rim. The airline still retains its office in Calcutta which was then the seat of power. KLM has always been an airline that works for the benefit of its passengers by giving the best, says Steller. This means leaving the sale of tickets to the agents, and concentrating on the other aspects of running a hassle free flight. KLM is primarily an airline most suited for businessmen says Steller. With daily non-stop flights on the 747 wide-bodied aircraft and a strong network in Europe with tight connections from Schiphol (it is the best choice.) KLM flies to more destinations in the UK than even British Airways by going into every provincial airport and providing passengers with faster connections on a wide network. Besides according to Steller, Schiphol is the best hub in Europe since it is run as a commercial entity.

### Strong connections

Also, businessmen from this region find it essential to travel to the US very often. The KLM-Northwest alliance provides passengers with the option of 250 destinations in North America transiting through Boston, Detroit and Minneapolis. From Amsterdam, KLM connects to 20 cities in the Middle East and 12 in the Far East with very strong connections. Thus, KLM provides passengers with almost the same product as a direct flight with its strong global alliance with Northwest.

KLM also is interested in promoting tourism in the region either just to Bangladesh or in combination with Nepal.

As a European airline, KLM is able to market this product all over Europe. The tourism package can also extend to India. Speaking about KLM's future plans in this region, Steller says that there are many cities which merit further expansion. But amongst all of them, Dhaka qualifies right on the top with its enormous expected growth and expectations of the export-oriented economy.

Though KLM is the airline of a tiny country called Netherlands, today it is a European airline which has retained its global perspective even amongst its staff spread all around the world.

KLM believes in a multi-ethnic environment where each individual is judged according to his ability, performance and enthusiasm rather than his nationality and the colour of skin seventy-five years after the first flight and being the only airline in the world to still operate under its own name, KLM has not let complacency take hold. Today, the C stands for Competition, Chances and Cooperation which would mean many more years of quality service to the

region and passengers worldwide.

Within Europe there are these yet sameday connections to reach the same evening — London, Paris, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Brussels, Aberdeen, Leeds / Bradford, Humberside and Norwich, besides Copenhagen, Stockholm, Zurich, Geneva, Rome, Wamflag, Bremen Milano, Berlin etc.

Service will be truly comfortable and hospitable to the Bangladeshis KLM's own Bengali-speaking staff will be available both in the flights and on the ground to give at anytime KLM's friendly service. Special Bangladeshi meals are catered to give a choice next to international cuisine.

### Sophisticated Computerisation

KLM is the first European airline to make a firm, own choice to start strongly with own operations into Dhaka. KLM has opened in cooperation with its Bangladeshi General Sales Agent "Travel Time" through Mr. Aminur Rahman and Mrs. Shaheen Khan with very sophisticated and fully computerised offices in Dhaka, Chittagong and Sylhet. In Dhaka, a hypermodern PC-base computer and communications network connects all KLM and GSA staff as in the most modern European environment.

### Connections

KLM Royal Dutch Airlines has drafted a unique schedule for its Dhaka operations: After a comfortable departure at 9.30 a.m. from Dhaka the flight reaches Amsterdam late-afternoon. There are, then, immediate connections to both New York and Washington both for

## A tradition of firsts

A strong position has been reached thanks to an on going determination to put the customer first. And this philosophy has resulted in a list of major firsts which have positively affected the face of the industry.

- 1919 World's FIRST commercial airline founded
- 1924 FIRST commercial animal transport, Nico the Bull flies from Rotterdam to Paris
- 1927 FIRST airline to open Amsterdam-Djakarta service
- 1934 FIRST European airline to introduce the all-metal Douglas DC-2
- 1935 FIRST airline to train flight attendants
- 1936 KLM is Europe's FIRST airline to order the Douglas DC-3, the most widely used two engined transport aircraft
- 1936 FIRST airline with the shortest connection Amsterdam - Djakarta
- 1946 FIRST airline after World War II to operate scheduled service from Europe to North America
- 1966 KLM is the FIRST airline in Europe to operate the Douglas DC-9
- 1967 KLM is the FIRST airline of the world to operate the Douglas DC-8-63
- 1971 KLM is the FIRST airline of the world to operate the Boeing 747B (heavier and with larger range than the 747)
- 1972 KLM is the FIRST airline of the world to operate the Douglas DC-10-30 (long range version of the DC-10)
- 1975 KLM is the FIRST airline of the world to operate the Boeing 747M
- 1978 FIRST airline to introduce extra facilities for full fare passengers: THE FFF system
- 1983 FIRST airline to rebuild 10 B747-200's to the Boeing 747-300 stretched upper deck version.
- 1989 FIRST airline in Europe to operate the Boeing 747-400.
- 1990 FIRST real global airline, through its pioneering partnership with Northwest Airlines in the USA
- 1993 FIRST airline to recognise the special needs of business travellers with a dedicated World Business Class
- 1994 FIRST KLM FLIGHT TO DHAKA

businessmen and to reach these important Bangladeshi ethnic communities. Steller became really committed to ensure KLM would fly to Dhaka as soon as possible. Firstly, the Chairman of KLM, Dhaka GSA "Travel Time" Mr. Aminur Rahman travelled to Dubai and succeeded to convince him only to take decisions after a personal visit to Bangladesh.

Secondly, the former Netherlands Ambassador to Bangladesh H.E.H. Gajentaan pleaded warmly and convincingly for KLM's entrepreneurship not to wait for others to discover the new developments in the country and an expanding export-oriented economy.

Thirdly, a market-research was commissioned and confirmed the above even stronger. KLM's startup was

overdue. Meanwhile, a very cordial relationship was built with the Bangladeshi Governmental authorities and in particular with the "Biman" colleagues. A very close harmony and friendship with Biman Commercial Director Mr. Salahuddin and his commercial team was developed over the last two years. Steller expresses great admiration for the business acumen of an airline-veteran like Mr. Salahuddin a pure marketeer with a strong sense for service and market demands. May be no fear, but sincere respect for competitor, and colleague Biman can be heard in the voice of Bram Steller. He looks forward to strengthen the ties with Biman much further in the near future.

— Leena Mathew

Aminur Rahman / Managing Director, KLM GSA Traveltime

## Hoping for a Bright Future

THE Managing Director of KLM GSA Traveltime, who associated himself in airline business since 1970, a little before the Liberation War, bears a pleasantly convincing personality in his own way. If only one person can be given credit to make the world's oldest airline authorities believe that Bangladesh can be a very good market for them, it is Mr. Aminur Rahman.

Mr. Rahman's attachment to KLM Royal Dutch Airlines goes as back as 1978. The then Country Manager of KLM, realising Mr. Rahman's talent, offered him to take charge of the GSA with a short notice. Thus he performed the assigned responsibility quite successfully upto 1981. Then after an interlude, he was again given the GSA's task in January 1991.

"I was looking for an opportunity to bring KLM in Bangladesh. I went to attend a seminar in June 1991 at KLM headquarters in Dubai and I became very disheartened to see my country's name in KLM's advance planning upto 1996," says the Traveltime Managing Director. They had no idea about Bangladesh's market-friendly environment. Rather, they always received reports against Bangladesh that it was never ready to come under the KLM's network. This Mr. Rahman came to know from KLM's Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Vice-President Mr. Bram Steller.

The MESA Vice-President was aware of by him about other airline activities which were operating in Bangladesh. Mr. Rahman successfully drew the attention of Mr. Steller and convinced him to physically



come to Dhaka to see what really Bangladesh market is like. Other KLM regional offices became surprised to see Mr. Steller taking interest in this country and going to stay here for three days.

"And in November 1991, the Vice-President visited Bangladesh. During his stay, I didn't accompany him, he moved around evaluated the market on his own," says Mr. Rahman. Since then, till the final decision, KLM officials came here to survey the market at least 15 times. Every time they came, went back with satisfactory results which ultimately help them take the decision to set up a full fledged station here. Today, Mr. Rahman doesn't feel hesitated to take pride over the fact that he, on personal initiative, succeeded to bring world's one of the renowned Airline in Bangladesh.

The airline veteran Managing Director is very confident of KLM's successful operation of the sales system here in Bangladesh. He looks forward to set some trends

those have been absent in Bangladeshi airline-related activities. Mr. Rahman enthusiastically showed the training room that has been arranged within the highly impressive KLM office. In the past years, there were no provision for Bangladeshi travel agents and people related to this business to grow up professionally. Now, it will pave the way to institutionalise the entire airline industry in Bangladesh with ever increasing service by more competent professional hands.

Mr. Rahman, who always comes up with new ideas one after another, didn't forget to plan the process of employing as many as Bangladeshi people in KLM's operations. He even considered the university boys and girls in offering them some experience before they start their professional lives. He thanks Mr. Steller for KLM's strategy to run a sizeable portion of its management by the local people. "And, yes," he says, "many of the Bangladeshi professionals are doing very well even outside the country."

Mr. Rahman is a believer in competition, and at this time of fast economic growth of Bangladesh economy, he holds high hopes for KLM to successfully operate here which, he believes, will lessen the monopoly of other airlines. Amidst these professional competitions, ultimately, the passengers who will be benefitted — which is present-day marketplace, concluded the Managing Director of GSA Traveltime Limited.

— M. Kabir

Cees Ursem / General Manager, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, Bangladesh

## Quite Simple, But Confident

IT has been two months since Mr. Cees Ursem came here as the General Manager to lead the Bangladesh office of KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, he already feels comfortable and confident. Mr. Ursem is very optimistic of KLM's future operations here as he says: "Most of the European countries do not know about Bangladesh. No good news ever reaches there about this country, but there are plenty of



people who always travel from here to many destinations all over the world."

Coming to know that Bangladesh is one of the fast economically growing markets, KLM got interested in it. Two years ago, Mr. Aminur Rahman convinced KLM's Middle East and South Asia Vice-President Mr. Bram Steller that the country was worth doing a market survey. After a couple of market surveys, KLM was convinced. After settling a bilateral agreement between the government of Bangladesh and the Netherlands, KLM decided to come to Dhaka from Oct 31 th. The prime reason in choosing Dhaka as KLM's new destination, Mr. Ursem explained, is to provide air transport facilities. If a mere one per cent of Bangladeshis

other Airlines doesn't arise here. KLM will follow the ways exactly the others are doing. It will only keep improving the services which are usually offered to the passengers.

KLM aims to offer flight facilities to the 'traveller agents' because they create some 95 per cent of its business. Mr. Ursem feels free to say: "The 'traveller agents' made KLM what we are now." KLM decided very fast to send some Bangladeshi cabin crews for training in Amsterdam who will be returning with the first flight on October 31st. Just two weeks ago, the decision was made to introduce coach services for Chittagong passengers. The business-class travellers both from Sylhet and Chittagong will get stop-over facilities in Sheraton. The Airline has stop-over facilities in Dubai and Amsterdam as well. So, altogether KLM creates very good opportunities for the passengers.

The Bangladesh General Manager of the world's oldest Airline, which operates 400 destinations all over the world, Mr. Ursem concluded with a feeling of pride and acknowledged the cooperation of Northwest Airlines in which KLM has 25 per cent Share.

— M. Kabir