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economic

situation

**EMIRATES GROUP** 

PASSENGERS CARRIED

**CARGO REVENUES** 

**EMPLOYEES** 

PASSENGER SEAT FACTOR

CARGO CARRIED (TONNES)

(AVERAGE FOR 2010-11)

REVENUE

AIRLINE

REVENUE

**NET PROFIT** 

**NET PROFIT** 

DHAKA, THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2012, E-MAIL: business@thedailystar.net

## Emirates eyes deeper links with Dhaka

KOWSHER JAHAN KHALED, back from Dubai

UXURY airline Emirates plans to increase its frequencies to Dhaka in the coming months with an eye on the increasing number of outbound tourists, business and corporate people and overseas jobseekers.

The carrier that launched operations in Bangladesh around 25 years ago now operates 17 flights a week on the Dhaka-Dubai route. It had only two flights a week when it was launched in 1986.

"Although we have 17 frequencies a week, we actually want three flights per day and that is what we are really looking forward to now," said Majid Al Mualla, senior vice president, commercial operations, West Asia & Indian Ocean, of the airline.

"We are moving step by step and what we have achieved so far from Bangladesh is satisfactory," Mualla said in an interview with a group of journalists at the Emirates Group Headquarters in Dubai recently.

He said Dhaka is an important point for Emirates' network as the airline's passenger seat factor or occupancy for the city is around 81 percent as of mid-February. The seat factor in Dhaka was 78 percent a year ago.

"Bangladesh is one of the few destinations that we started from the very beginning and we have seen tremendous growth year to year," Mualla said.

According to him, Bangladesh's economy is performing much better than expectation, especially during the time of global recession.

"In the current economic situation globally, if you are achieving 5-6 percent growth, this is more than satisfactory. So we are not talking about Dhaka only, we are also talking about other cities that link Dhaka."

"We are soon opening flights to Lisbon in July and if some passengers come from Lisbon to Dhaka that will give us more growth," Mualla

The official said Bangladesh has progressed a lot in the last decade. "I had been working there (in Dhaka) almost 10 years ago. At that time you had only two hotels -- Sheraton and Sonargaon -- but now you have five to six and many are coming."

Emirates also plans to introduce Airbus A380 in Bangladesh. A380 is a double-deck, wide-body, four-engine jet airliner. It is the world's largest passenger aircraft and due to its size,



Majid Al Mualla

many airports have had to expand their facilities to properly accommodate it.

The carrier is currently in talks with the Bangladesh government and airport authorities to introduce the aircraft in Dhaka.

"At this stage, the Bangladeshi airport is not ready for A 380 and we are working with the government and airport authorities to see when we will be able to operate A 380."

As the airline has more than two flights a day from Dhaka, Bangladesh has the potential for A 380 in future, he said. The aircraft will offer a wide array of features such as spa and WiFi, which will enable passengers to connect to the internet via a wireless network access point.

However, Mualla said they have no plan right now to operate flights from Chittagong.

Recently, the airline decided to withdraw the commission for travel agents in Bangladesh from this March.

The official said they have the zero commission system in many countries such as Pakistan, India and the UAE.

The move will not affect passengers in Bangladesh although travel agents provide more than 80 percent of its business, he added. "Our fare is much competitive and we do review everyday," he said.

As Europe has decided to introduce carbon emission tax for airlines, fares may go up further. Through a directive, the EU has included all flights operating in its skies in the Emission Trading System for payment of carbon tax for CO2 emission. The directive has been made effective from January.

"A lot of airlines implemented this, while there are a lot who still didn't. Still there is a lot of confusion in the market."

Emirates is yet to implement the directive and is in talks with different organisations and authorities, he said.

The Emirates Group is a public international travel and tourism conglomerate holding company headquartered in Garhoud, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The Group comprises Dubai National Air Transport Association (DNATA), an aviation services company providing ground handling services, and Emirates airline, the largest carrier in the Middle East.

As of January, Emirates has 169 aircraft in its

fleet and 236 aircraft on order worth \$84 billion. It now serves 121 destinations in 72 countries. More than 40 cabin crew and 650 other staff from Bangladesh are currently working with the airline, which employs people from more than 160 countries.

2010-11

\$1.5 BILLION

**80 PERCENT** 

\$2.4 BILLION

1.8 MILLION

56,768 (GROUP);

17,971 (DNATA)

38,797 (EMIRATES);

2009-10

\$964 MILLION

27.5 MILLION

78.1 PERCENT

\$1.9 BILLION

1.6 MILLION

\$15.6 BILLION \$12.4 BILLION

\$1.6 BILLION \$1.1 BILLION

\$14.8 BILLION \$11.8 BILLION

Of the 169 aircraft, 20 are superjumbos and 70 more of this kind will join the fleet in the coming years.

In 2011, it added five new destinations, while

within July this year, the airline plans to operate flights in 10 more cities.

Mualla said Emirates has no plan right now to open a dedicated lounge at Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka. But in future, they will consider it upon receiving adequate space from the airport authorities, he said.

Mualla also said they will try to show more Bangladeshi movies onboard.

The airline has no plan now to go for an initial public offering. However, Mualla said Emirates has a healthy balance sheet and people will generally be interested in the airline.

Public relations firm Triune recently arranged a media trip for a group of Bangladeshi journalists to the Emirates Headquarters at the invitation of the airline. Triune Chief Executive Kazi Wahidul Alam led the team.

khaled@thedailystar.net

## For dining onboard



STAR

Meals are being ready at Emirates Flight Catering centre for serving onboard.

STAR BUSINESS DESK

MIRATES airline boasts the largest catering facility in terms of volume in the world, which has a capacity to produce 130,000 meal trays a day.

The flight catering unit, which was set up at a cost of \$120 million, supplies around 38 million meals a year to Emirates flights and eight million to other airlines from two catering facilities.

Based in Dubai International Airport, Emirates Flight Catering (EFC) employs more than 6,600 staff and provides catering and ancillary services to airlines

operating in this busy regional hub.

Because of the diverse nationalities working with EFC, there is no difficulty in providing a wide selection of meal choices. A total of 450 chefs freshly pre-

pare 1,524 menus a year and 100,000 meals a day.

It prepares 24 types of special meals a day, including baby meals, vegetarian Hindu meals, diabetic meals, Muslim meals, kosher meals and all regional dishes.

The facility is also famous for its safety and hygiene standards.

Garbage is collected throughout the facility with a series of 600 metres vacuum waste pipes, which takes the waste to a central collection point.

The EFC has a dedicated environmental team that recovers recyclable materials from the inbound waste stream. More than 3.3 million kilograms of aluminum cans, waste paper/cardboard, glass bottles, aluminum foils and plastic were collected in the last one year.

The EFC also won a number of certificates and awards.

## Learning to serve

STAR BUSINESS DESK

HE Department of Civil Aviation in Dubai established Emirates Aviation College (EAC) in 1991 to provide aviation related training to private students and corporate clients.

The college has since expanded and diversified and now offers an extensive range of educational opportunities designed to provide students with the best aviation related specialisations that service both the technical and management sides of the aviation industry. In September 2001, the college was merged with Emirates to form the 'academic wing' of the Emirates Group.

The college offers postgraduate, undergraduate and vocational programmes, topup degrees and training courses. The academic year consists of two semesters, with each semester spanning four and a half months.

The postgraduate and under-graduate programmes are accredited by the UAE Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. The college has a wide range of experienced faculty members in both academic education and the industry.

The Centre of Excellence and Research at the college recognises the importance of providing a sound vocational education structure based on the needs of the industry in the UAE, the region and beyond.

Students taking this route after completing high school or secondary education can follow a unique path of "learning by doing", acquiring both knowledge and skills handin-hand that allow them to form a greater understanding of the needs and practices of the work place environment.

This might be in preparation for a career as an aircraft engineer, an IT specialist, a hotel manager or a business entrepreneur. In this regard, the centre provides a range of international flexible diplomas and awards in vocationally relevant disciplines, such as tourism management, aerospace engineering, electronics and computer engineering,



STA

Members of Bangladeshi cabin crew are talking to journalists at the "majlis room" of Emirates Aviation College in Dubai recently. The majlis room gives the learners an impression of Arabian culture.

business management and air transport

management.

The centre also provides an opportunity for many students whose first language is not English, to equip themselves with the necessary language tools. This could help

them progress to further education or to be

able to function more effectively in the workplace or their daily lives.

The college also established a unique centre for industrial research. Examples of such research focuses are: traffic congestion, health issues, pollution, risk analysis and optimisation.