

Qatar Airways cuts ticket prices in holiday offer

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Qatar Airways has come up with its campaign, Travel Festival, which will take travellers to some of the world's favourite holiday destinations.

Under the campaign that will start on August 29 and end on September 5 this year, the travellers will enjoy companion promotions offering two-for-one fares and discounts of up to 30 percent.

The offers are available for travel between September 15 this year and June 30, 2017, the carrier said in a statement yesterday.

The Festival also includes special deals for hotels and discounted holiday offers such as car rental, according to the statement.

The Privilege Club members of Qatar Airways can also earn triple Qmiles for bookings made during the Travel Festival.

"As well as benefiting from the Travel Festival's phenomenal prices, travellers also have the chance to win special prizes throughout the eight-day event," the airline said in the statement.

"More than 600 prizes will be given away throughout the Festival with highlights, including a pair of "around the world" air travel tickets in collaboration with Qatar Airways and oneworld."

Chances are there for the travellers also

to win a pair of tickets to attend Qatar Airways-sponsored FC Barcelona matches and signed football jerseys, the carrier said.

Free economy class flights for travel on the airline's global network will also be up for grabs, as well as five Qatar Airways Holiday packages, shopping vouchers to spend in Qatar Duty Free and much more, it said.

The Qatar Airways Travel Festival first launched in January this year gave our customers a unique platform to enjoy some of the very best deals available, said Hugh Dunleavy, chief commercial officer of Qatar Airways.

"This time throughout the Travel Festival, our passengers will be able to choose from some even more incredible packages and travel deals, empowering them to explore the world, and offering them the chance of winning some incredible prizes too."

"We want to inspire people to not only dream about travelling, but to make those dreams a reality."

Offers available throughout the Travel Festival will be applicable in economy and business classes, the airline said.

Return airfares will be for more than 150 destinations worldwide that Qatar Airways flies to, including Americas, Middle East, Europe, and Africa, it said.

Discussion on textile, apparel in Dhaka today

STAR BUSINESS REPORT

A discussion on textile and apparel -- TEXAPP Bangladesh 2016 -- will take place on the sidelines of the 17th Textech Bangladesh 2016 International Expo at the International Convention City Bashundhara in Dhaka today.

The aim of the discussion is to bring textile and apparel industry leaders and machinery importers of Bangladesh under one roof, said the organisers, CEMS USA and CEMS Bangladesh, in a statement.

Bangladesh has the potential to become the leading country in textile and apparel exports; for this to happen, proper reforms, strategies and coordinated efforts should be in place, the organisers said.

The discussion as well as the show will help set the stage for Bangladeshi textile and apparel industry leaders and machinery importers to focus, discuss, decide and set goals for future exports.

Analysts will discuss issues related to the formation of a common position of the Bangladeshi textile and apparel industry leaders in the global arena and talk on a topic "driving business with knowledge" at the forum.

Discussants include MA Kader Sarkar, secretary of the textiles ministry; Mashud Ahmed, vice-chancellor of Bangladesh University of Textiles; Faruque Hassan, senior vice-president of Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association; AH Aslam Sunny, first vice-president of Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association, and NN Mahapatra, national vice-chairman of Textile Association (India).



CITY BANK

Nasir U Mahmood, president of Uttara Club, and Rubel Aziz, chairman of City Bank, launch an ATM and mobile top-up facility, at Uttara Club on August 29.

Apple tax ruling could 'undermine' US-EU economic partnership: Treasury Dept

AFP, Washington

The US Treasury Department on Tuesday slammed an EU ruling ordering Apple to pay record back taxes, saying the decision threatened the bilateral "spirit of economic partnership".

"The Commission's actions could threaten to undermine foreign investment, the business climate in Europe, and the important spirit of economic partnership between the US and the EU," a

Treasury Department spokesperson said in a statement.

"We will continue to monitor these cases as they progress, and we will continue to work with the Commission toward our shared objective of preventing the erosion of our corporate tax bases."

The EU ruling ordered the US tech giant to repay Ireland a record 13 billion euros (\$14.3 billion) in back taxes, finding that Apple had benefited from a series of Irish sweetheart tax deals that were illegal.



AG AUTOMOBILES

Hossain Khaled, managing director of AG Automobiles Ltd, the sole distributor of Ford Motor Company in Bangladesh, launches Ford EcoSport Black Edition, a limited edition SUV, at the Gulshan-Tejgaon link road show-room of AG Automobiles in Dhaka on August 28.

Etihad Airways launches global sales campaign

STAR BUSINESS DESK

Etihad Airways has launched its global sales campaign, targeted at business and economy class guests, with fares available on a wide range of destinations served across the world and fares available for travel until June 2017.

Guests travelling on the airline's daily flights from Dhaka can make the most of this offer over seven days, by booking on etihad.com or via their local travel agent, between now and September 4 this year.

The sale will offer up to 50 percent off on fares to 73 of the world's most popular destinations from across Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa and the

Americas, the airline said in a statement yesterday. "In addition, members of the airline's loyalty programme, Etihad Guest, will continue to earn miles on all fares in the sale."

"We have continued to expand our global network this year and add further aircraft to the fleet, ensuring we have a high quality product throughout our aircraft and available to the millions of guests who choose to fly with us each year," said Daniel Barranger, senior vice president of global sales at Etihad Airways.

"By including our partner airlines in our new offer, we are providing access to a larger list of destinations and a combined fleet of over 700 aircraft,

ensuring we can meet every guest's personal requirements."

The sale will cover a wide range of cities including those served by the Etihad Airways Partners, according to the statement.

With a combined network of over 400 destinations across six continents, the partners provide even greater access across the combined destinations of Etihad Airways, airberlin, Alitalia, Air Serbia, Air Seychelles, Etihad Regional, Jet Airways and NIKI.

The carrier has opened new lounges over the last 12 months in New York, Los Angeles and Melbourne while a flagship First Class Lounge and Spa opened its doors in Abu Dhabi in May.

Open up MFS to telcos: Tarana

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To overcome the challenges, Tarana said the two regulators -- Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission and Bangladesh Bank -- should work closely, and if possible, sign a memorandum of understanding to regulate the sector jointly.

Emphasising partnerships for an MFS ecosystem, she said there is no monopoly created by the government. Rather, bKash, an MFS provider, has established a monopoly on the industry by dint of its own quality and services, she added.

To foster competitiveness, partnership should be strengthened, she said.

Of the total mobile money, bKash controls more than 90 percent, by their outstanding efforts in bringing people under the banking network.

By the end of June, the total number of registered MFS clients in Bangladesh stood at 3.62 crore and total transactions reached Tk 23,151.24 crore with average transaction at Tk 771.71 crore a day, according to BB.

Das Gupta Ashim Kumar, an adviser of bKash, said the company is working to offer more pro-people services. This is a properly regulated institution, and there is a move to destroy its success, he added.

Zulfiqar Ali, BTRC director (system and

service), said, "Partnerships in the sector should be opened and the market would decide who will run the business. The issue of monopoly won't come."

Everybody should forget whether the service is bank-led or mobile-led and rather, the regulator should think about a business-led policy and go for financial inclusion, he said. Current regulations are not increasing inclusion, he added.

Shah Alam, deputy inspector general of the Criminal Investigation Department of Bangladesh Police, highlighted the nature of the crimes in the sector and emphasised building more awareness.

Financial crimes are increasing every day and less than one percent of those crimes are reported, he added.

The situation went out of control for a lack of regulation in this segment, he said.

Progya Paramita Saha, deputy director of BB, said they are working on a new policy for the sector.

TIM Nurul Kabir, secretary general of Association of Mobile Telecom Operators of Bangladesh, said boosting digital financial inclusion is a must, and to head to that goal, digital regulation is needed.

Rashed Mehedi, president of TRNB, presided over the discussion, while Secretary Shamim Ahamed made a presentation.

Uber suspends services in Abu Dhabi

AFP, Dubai

Uber said Monday it has suspended its on-demand car-riding services in Abu Dhabi for "unforeseen circumstances" that media reports suggested were over a pricing dispute with the taxi regulator.

The company's rival in the United Arab Emirates, Careem, also said it had suspended ride-sharing services in the UAE capital, in a post on its Twitter account.

"Uber decided to temporarily suspend its services due to unforeseen circumstances. This is (a) precautionary measure and we hope to resume operations as soon as possible," Uber said in a response to a question from AFP.

The company said its operations in nearby Dubai continued as normal.

The National newspaper said the suspension came after the arrest of some 50 drivers.

Three projects funded by India get nod

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Under the project, 600 different types of buses will be procured by 2018: 300 double-decker buses, 100 single-decker air-conditioned buses, 100 single-decker AC inter-city buses and 100 single-decker non-AC buses.

The third project approved was worth Tk 217 crore to purchase 500 trucks for BTRC; the Indian loans will account for Tk 158 crore.

Under the project, 350 trucks having a 15-tonne capacity and 150 trucks having a 10-tonne capacity will be purchased by 2018.

At present, the BTRC trucks carry goods of different ministries, including the directorate of food, BG Press, Bangladesh Railway, Karnaphuli Paper Mills, Biman Bangladesh Airlines and PDB, the planning ministry said in its proposal.

US taking fresh GSP petitions

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The USTR will receive applications until October 4, according to a notice of the trade representative.

Under the GSP programme, about 5,000 products from 122 developing countries and territories, including 43 least-developed countries, get duty-free access to the US market.

Major American retailers and trade bodies recently urged the US government to increase the number of GSP-eligible countries supplying travel

goods such as bags and luggage to the American market, as the current duty beneficiaries are unable to meet the demand.

Save for Cambodia, none of the current GSP beneficiaries have the capacity to make most of the travel products required on a commercial scale -- another development that bodes well for Bangladesh as it works to win back its GSP status.

Bangladesh is a major producer of travel goods. Before the suspension of

embankment at the seaside of Mirsarai Economic Zone in Chittagong at a cost of Tk 1,163 crore.

The area under the economic zone is 2,678 hectares, with 1,486 hectares of government land reclaimed from the Bay of Bengal, according to the ministry proposal.

The project that will be completed by 2019 has been taken to prevent erosion of the coastal embankment by cyclones and tidal surges.

The other project under the government's own funds is worth Tk 127 crore to strengthen the Police Bureau of Investigation.

Modern equipment will be procured for the police agency to conduct investigations. With the fund, 10 crime-scene vans, 64 double-cabin pickups and 110 motorcycles, 7 micro-buses and 9 Jeeps will also be procured.

Mobile internet sets new record

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Of the total connections, fixed internet connections stood at 37.7 lakh and WiMAX at 1.08 lakh, which is continuously declining, BTRC said in a report.

Active mobile SIMs declined 1.9 percent to 12.89 crore in July, compared to the

previous month.

The industry started feeling the impact of biometric re-registration, two months after the operators deactivated the unregistered SIMs, sector leaders said. Any SIM unused in the last 90 days is counted as an inactive connection.



EBL

Ali Reza Iftekhar, managing director of Eastern Bank, and Moshir Rahman, managing director of Paragon Group, exchange the signed papers of a deal at a programme in Dhaka. The bank will ensure smooth payment service for Paragon through EBL ChequePro, an automated and unique cheque writing solution under cash management services.



MEGHNA BANK

Meghna Bank Chairman HN Ashequr Rahman opens the 31st branch of the bank at Pollobi in Mirpur yesterday. Managing Director Mohammed Nurul Amin was also present.