

Air India, Express to operate five daily flights on BD-India routes soon

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Dhaka : Legacy airline Air India and its low-cost subsidiary Air India Express will be operating five daily flights from Dhaka to several destinations in India soon.

Md Dedarul Alam, Executive Director of MAAS Travel and Tours Ltd (Global Sales Agent of Air India and Air India Express in Bangladesh), said this while talking to The Bangladesh Monitor at his office in the capital recently.

Air India currently flies twice daily from Dhaka to Delhi. Soon, the airline will be introducing a third frequency on the route, informed Dedar.

At the same time, the airline's low-cost subsidiary Air India Express will

be launching daily flights from Dhaka to Chennai and Kolkata each, added Dedar.

The promising traffic numbers on the route has convinced Air India to pursue such a huge expansion, as air India is currently witnessing almost full load factor on its flights from Dhaka to Delhi, claimed Dedar.

It may be mentioned here that the airline is operating Airbus A320 aircraft on the route with a capacity of 180 passengers in Business and Economy Class.

Also, the fact that Air India carries plenty of onward traffic, and not just point to point passengers, helps the airline retain its traffic numbers throughout the entire year, expressed Dedar.

With one of the largest global networks, Air India connects Dhaka to almost all the destinations in the world-the US, Canada, the UK, Europe, Australia, Fareast and Middle East, among others, said Dedar.

He further described, 50 per cent of the airline's load factor from Dhaka travels onward to Middle East, 10-15 per cent to the US or Canada and the remaining to Delhi or other domestic destinations in India. Of the latter, lion share are business and medical travellers flying to Delhi or Chennai.

As part of the airline's further plans, Air India is eyeing to launch flights from Dhaka to Mumbai as well, informed Dedar.

On the other hand, the subsidiary of Air India--Air India Express--which will be launching flights to and from Dhaka soon, will be another game changer in the market, claimed Dedar.

Despite being a low-cost carrier, Air India Express is also a full-service carrier, according to Dedar.

What sets it apart from the other low-cost airlines is the fact that Air India Express offers meals onboard, unlike other budget counterparts.

Air India Express will also operate Airbus A320 or A319, shared Dedar, adding, it is planning to offer Business Class on the routes as well.

Eventually, according to the plan Dedar shared, Air India will be operating on long-haul routes while Air India Express will fly to short-

haul destinations.

Air India Express aims to fly Bangladeshi passengers from Dhaka onward to Middle East or Fareast through Chennai and other Indian domestic destinations through Kolkata.

Despite providing passengers with more features than a regular a low-cost carrier, the fares of Air India Express will be competitive and at par with the other counterparts.

The way the Tata Group is aggressively pursuing expansion, in the next 10 years, the airline group will take over the entire market in this subcontinent, expressed Dedar.