

SalamAir aims to increase frequency to/from Bangladesh : Country Manager

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Dhaka : Muscat-based low-cost airline SalamAir is planning to expand services to/from Bangladesh with additional flight frequency soon, said the airline's Country Manager in Bangladesh Muhammad Ariful Islam Rajan.

Talking to The Bangladesh Monitor recently, Rajan informed, the airline currently operates seven weekly flights each from Dhaka and Chattogram to Muscat, with A320neo and A321neo aircraft with 212 and 230 capacities respectively.

Acknowledging Bangladesh's potential to become a significant source market in the coming days, SalamAir intends to establish double daily flights from Dhaka following growing demand, mentioned the Country Manager. Afterwards, the carrier plans to increase frequency from Chattogram as well, according to Rajan.

However, the airline has received permission from the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh for three additional weekly flights so far, expressed the Country Manager.

Yet, the airline has not expanded services on Dhaka/Chattogram-Muscat route till now for a range of reasons-Umrah and Oman visa suspension for Bangladeshis.

It has been over a year Oman is not issuing new visas for Bangladeshis-which is leading to zero new traffic for SalamAir. Only travelers with residencies in Oman or old visas (not yet expired) are getting to travel between Bangladesh and Oman at the moment.

On the other hand, Saudi Arabia is currently not issuing Umrah visas for Bangladeshi pilgrims, and umrah passengers are another huge segment of SalamAir's usual load factor.

Visa restrictions are also in place by the United Arab Emirates for Bangladeshis. This is also impacting SalamAir's traffic, as a lion's share of their passengers travel onward to GCC countries.

With the resumption of these visas in the coming days, SalamAir expects to have an increased number of passengers in its network that includes Jeddah, Dammam, Riyadh, Medina, Doha, Kuwait City, as well as a number of new destinations outside GCC countries such as Sabiha, Nairobi, Bosnia, Sarajevo, Baku, Almaty, and Trabzon, among others.

The airline has also several types of customizable fares for customers to choose from such as Lite, Saver, Value, and Flexi. Customers can enjoy the opportunity to customize meal and baggage options, and the fare will reflect accordingly.

Expressing a sigh of relief, Rajan lauded the government's move to reduce jet fuel price which was earlier highest in the region. Now, the Country Manager urges concerned authorities to reduce other exorbitant charges at the airport, compared to other countries in the region, such as fees for ground-handling, landing, and parking, as well as taxes, and increase market competitiveness that will encourage other international airlines to expand services to/from Bangladesh.