

Aviation veteran Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways resigns

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Dhaka: Aviation veteran Akbar Al Baker, CEO of Qatar Airways, on October 23, announced his decision to resign from his role after a successful 27-year long tenure.

The Qatari government has decided to appoint Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, currently Chief Operating Officer of Hamad International Airport, as Baker's successor.

Baker would continue his role as the CEO till November 5, 2023, as per reports.

"After 27 years of service, I am writing to you to announce that I will step down from the Qatar Airways Group. In 1996, with a fleet of just five aircraft, unwavering dedication and a loyal and passionate team, together we embarked on a remarkable journey to aviation excellence," reports cited Baker saying in a letter to the Qatari flag carrier's employees.

The airline has, till date, expanded itself to a fleet of 248 modern and fuel-efficient aircraft, serving over 160 destinations worldwide, under the aviation veteran's management.

Baker was appointed as CEO of Qatar Airways in 1997. During his tenure, the airline posted a consistent growth, even as it faced a couple of setbacks in recent years including air blockade imposed by some of the Middle East neighbours and the Covid-19 pandemic that massively impacted the aviation industry globally.

He became a public voice for Qatar during the diplomatic boycott by neighbouring Arab states in 2017-2021 and pushed a strategy of keeping routes open during the Covid-19 pandemic to bolster the presence of the national brand on the global arena.

Prior to being appointed as CEO of Qatar Airways, Baker had served in key government roles, including a tenure as Chairman of Qatar Tourism Authority.

One of the industry's most outspoken and influential executives, Baker has been instrumental in transforming Qatar Airways into one of the world's top airlines.

During his 27-year tenure, he oversaw aggressive expansion and investment into Doha airport, which is now an established global hub.

It is not clear whether Baker is retiring from other posts, which include serving as Chief Executive of Hamad International Airport and Qatar Duty Free.

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