

## Malaysia Airlines aims to expand in India; eyes codeshare pact with carrier

- A Monitor Desk Report

Date: 24 January, 2024



**New Delhi: Malaysia Airlines is poised to establish a codeshare partnership with an Indian carrier while looking to expand its reach to northern and southern destinations within the country, said Captain Izham Ismail, the Group Managing Director of Malaysia Aviation Group.**

Currently, the airline operates 69 weekly flights to nine Indian cities, including Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, Amritsar, Ahmedabad, and Thiruvananthapuram. Eager to surpass its pre-pandemic operational levels in India, Malaysia Airlines recently increased its frequency on the Amritsar-Kuala Lumpur route from two to four weekly flights.

In addition to its existing interline partnership with Vistara, Malaysia Airlines is in the final stages of negotiations for a deep codeshare

collaboration with an undisclosed Indian airline. the airline official told Press Trust of India. Code-sharing enables seamless travel by allowing an airline to book its passengers on partner carriers. While specific details were not disclosed, Ismail emphasized the importance of enhancing services using wide-bodied aircraft once new Boeing 737-8s and Airbus 330 neos are added to the fleet.

Discussing future plans, Ismail outlined the airline's intention to explore the northeast region, including Guwahati and Kolkata, along with potential routes to southern destinations like Trichy, Vizag, and Goa. The carrier used to fly to Kolkata but stopped the services in 2015.

In September last year,. Malaysia Airlines had announced expansion of its India connectivity with the start of three new services between Kuala Lumpur to Amritsar), Thiruvananthapuram and Ahmedabad. The new routes are e operated by the Boeing 737-800NG aircraft, equipped with 160 seats, comprising 16 seats in Business Class and 144 seats in Economy Class.

Acknowledging the rapid growth of India's aviation market, Ismail recognized the airline's strategic focus on partnerships rather than direct competition with major carriers like IndiGo and Air India. Malaysia Airlines has existing partnerships with Japan Airlines, Cathay Pacific, and Qatar Airways.

Earlier this month, Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia said that the number of domestic passengers in India is expected to double by 2030 from 153 million in 2023, noting that domestic air passenger traffic witnessed 15 per cent growth CAGR while that of international 6.1 per cent in the last decade.

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