

New carrier Greater Bay Airlines gets nod to fly

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Dhaka: New carrier Greater Bay Airlines has been granted a license to operate 104 scheduled commercial flights to and from Hong Kong International Airport for the next five years by Hong Kong's Air Transport Licensing Authority.

The airline's CEO Algernon Yau it would take at least two months of preparations before service could commence. So far, 180 staff have been recruited and three leased Boeing 737-800 aircraft will arrive in 2022.

While initial plans were to launch services around Asia, such as Japan and South Korea, Yau said a reassessment was needed given the impact of the pandemic on Hong Kong as well as ongoing quarantine restrictions and pace of reopening of various destinations.

Yau clarified that Greater Bay Airlines is not a low-cost carrier. Chartered services will be provided eventually, alongside scheduled passenger and cargo services.

Initially, Greater Bay Airlines will build up a network with travel agents but Yau hoped to secure more online sales down the road.

The airline, founded by Shenzhen tycoon Bill Wong Cho-bau, started off with cargo charters in November 2021.

While awaiting regulatory approvals for passenger services, the airline inked an agreement with Amadeus to make its schedules and fares available to travel agencies worldwide via the Amadeus Travel Platform in 1Q2022.

Greater Bay Airlines plans to serve routes in Mainland China and the broader Asian region, and will have a fleet of seven Boeing 737-800 aircraft in service by 2022 and more than 30 by 2026.

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