

Qatar Airways purchases 25pc stake in Airlink

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Doha: Qatar Airways Group announced Tuesday (August 21) that it acquired a 25 per cent stake in Airlink, an independent regional carrier based in Southern Africa.

The announcement from Qatar's flag carrier affirms the airline's ambition to develop its operations across the African continent, a statement from the group said.

The statement explained that the investment in Airlink - which flies to more than 45 destinations in 15 African countries - will enhance a code-sharing partnership between the two airlines.

Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, CEO of Qatar Airways Group, said, "Our investment in Airlink further demonstrates how integral we see Africa being to our business' future."

He added, "This partnership not only demonstrates our confidence in

Airlink, as a company that is resilient, agile, financially robust and governed on sound principles, but also in Africa as a whole, showing the huge potential that I am delighted we can help start realising."

Qatar Airways currently flies to 29 destinations in Africa, and there's been strong growth in the market with new destinations added to the Qatar Airways network on the continent.

The partnership between Qatar Airways and Airlink also seeks to align both carriers' loyalty programs - Qatar Airways Privilege Club and Airlink Skybucks. Moreover, Abidjan, Abuja, Accra, Harare, Kano, Luanda, Lusaka, and Port Harcourt are among the African cities newly added to the airline's network, while Cairo and Alexandria were resumed.

Qatar Airways flies to 29 destinations in Africa, and there's been strong growth in the market with new destinations added to the Qatar Airways network on the continent since December 2020, the airline said.

Rodger Foster, CEO of Airlink, said, "Having Qatar Airways as an equity partner is a powerful endorsement of Airlink and echoes our faith in the markets we currently serve and plan to add to our network."

He added, "This transaction will unlock growth by providing efficiencies of scale, increasing our capacity and expanding our marketing reach. By bolstering Airlink and its business, this investment will strengthen all of the existing airline partnerships Airlink has nurtured over the years."

Airlink was established in 1992 and is Southern Africa's top privately-owned regional airline. With its fleet of over 65 jetliners, Airlink serves these cities and other destinations throughout Southern Africa as well as Madagascar and St Helena Island.

Our investment in Airlink further demonstrates how integral we see Africa being to our business' future, said Al Meer.

On Monday, the airline also announced plans to increase flight frequencies to popular tourism destinations, including London, the UK; Male, the Maldives; Miami, the US; and Tokyo, Japan.

Moreover, starting October 27, Qatar Airways said it would add an eighth daily flight to London due to increased passenger demand, bringing the number of weekly flights to 56.

The airline will also serve Male with up to 28 weekly flights, Miami with up to 12 weekly flights, and Tokyo with 11 weekly flights during the peak 2024-2025 winter season, it said in a statement.

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