CHINA EASTERN AND CHINA AIRLINES DO A FIRST FOR ASIA

News / Airlines



China Eastern Airlines -- one of the Chinese mainland's "Big Three" air carriers -- has teamed up with Taiwan's China Airlines to invest in SkyTeam's first lounge in Asia at Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA).

The Shanghai-based airline -- a member of SkyTeam, a global alliance of some 20 airline partners -- vowed to upgrade its services in the SAR with an eye on expanding its foothold in the Asia-Pacific market.

The 1,000-square meter lounge, which opened on Tuesday and is located at HKIA's Terminal 1, is the alliance's first such facility in Asia and the fourth in the world after three others in London, Istanbul and Sydney.

The facility, designed to serve up to 230 passengers at one time, features a yoga room, a noodles bar, cooked-to-order cuisine, a VIP room and a business center among other regular services. It will be open from 5:30 a.m. -- three hours before the first flight operated by member airlines -- to 1:00 a.m. the next day after the last departing flight.

"We co-invested with China Airlines in the new lounge to provide diversified and customized services for guests of the SkyTeam alliance, who travel to or transit at Hong Kong," Ma Xulun, vice-

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chairman and president of China Eastern Airlines Co Ltd, said at the launching ceremony.

China Eastern, which operates 550 aircraft to reach 29 countries worldwide, is listed in Shanghai, Hong Kong and New York.

"Hong Kong is a critical market for us. We operate 228 passenger and cargo flights to the city every week. Going forward, we will continue to explore the market potential in Hong Kong, leverage the services and facilities of the new lounge to ensure a world-class experience for our customers," Ma said.

He described the move as a "milestone" in cooperation between China Eastern and China Airlines - Taiwan's largest air carrier with a fleet of 103 aircraft and operating 150 flights to Hong Kong weekly.

"It marks a further step in our expansion in the Asia-Pacific market," Ma said.

China Airlines Chairman Sun Huang-hsiang called the new lounge a "major breakthrough", pledging that the two airlines will work even more closely together in future concerning flights and operations both in the air and on the ground.

He vowed to support SkyTeam's plan for more similar lounges at airports in Frankfurt, Vancouver and Kuala Lumpur.

Currently, a total of 12 SkyTeam member airlines serve HKIA, including Aeroflot, Air France, China Southern Airlines and Delta Air Lines, offering more than 183,000 seats each week from the SAR.

China Eastern Airlines Corp Ltd's Hong Kong-traded shares increased 1.41 percent to close at HK$5.02 apiece on Tuesday. The benchmark Hang Seng Index added 0.11 percent.

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