OMAN AIR BUYS COVETED MORNING SLOT AT HEATHROW FOR RECORD $75MN

News / Airlines, Airports / Routes, Airlines



Oman Air has set a record by paying US$75mn for a pair of slots (take-off and landing) at Heathrow Airport.

The deal could very well mean double daily flights to London, something which the airline had been planning for some time now.

The national carrier is understood to have bought the pair (including a highly prized early morning arrival) from Air France-KLM, reported *The Sunday Times* , UK. The price beats the US$60mn (approx £41mn) paid by American Airlines for a slot to Scandinavian carrier SAS in February 2015.

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“The Oman acquisition - which will be used for a 5.30am arrival from Muscat - underlines the appeal of the congested airport to international airlines. Slots at Heathrow have been changing hands for increasingly hefty sums in recent years as American carriers fight for lucrative trans-Atlantic trade and fast-growing Gulf airlines look at funneling passengers through their Middle Eastern hubs,” reported the UK paper.

According to Airport Coordination Limited (ACL), the slot coordinator for Heathrow, supply and demand drives the price range, where a standard price sees a 30 per cent drop by mid-day and a further 50 per cent drop by late afternoon/evening.

Oman Air currently flies from Muscat at 2pm and reaches Heathrow at 6.20pm. It flies from London at 8.15pm, reaching Muscat at 7.35am. Officials at Oman Air, for the last couple of years, have been hinting at a double daily flight to London. With this slot acquisition, the airline might use it for doubling its capacity to Heathrow, one of the busiest airports in the world.

Paul Gregorowitsch, CEO, Oman Air was quoted by the media in early 2015 as saying, “We are also looking at flying double daily to London by winter.”

It was reported that Air France also sold a slot for a lower price to Emirates, giving the airline six daily flights to Dubai from Heathrow.

Oman Air officials were not available for a comment on its new landing rights deal.

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