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Auckland Airport announces sistership with Mumbai Airport

Auckland Airport has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Mumbai Airport that will see the two airports form a ‘sister airport’ relationship.

The airport sistership has been established with objectives that include increasing international air links and tourism between and beyond both airports’ respective countries.

Glenn Wedlock, Auckland Airport’s general manager aeronautical commercial, says that the sistership is important as India is a key market for New Zealand and is a key focus for Tourism New Zealand over the next three years.

“With over 31,250 Indian visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the last 12 months, and over 80 per cent of these visitors entering through Auckland Airport, we consider India to be a very important market for us,” says Mr Wedlock.

“The Indian travel market also represents a huge growth opportunity for New Zealand tourism,” says Mr. Wedlock. “Our Ambition 2020 strategy targets 69,000 Indian arrivals by 2020 which is equivalent to 14 per cent growth per annum over the next six years.”

“Recently we have seen some impressive growth from the Indian market,” continues Mr. Wedlock. “January 2014 saw Indian visitors to Auckland increase by 16 per cent when compared to the same period last year.”

“Within India, Mumbai is a key market for New Zealand and we believe this sister airport relationship with Mumbai International Airport will facilitate further traffic growth between the two key hubs through joint ventures,” says Mr Wedlock. “We will also be working closely together to stimulate more Indian visitor arrivals to New Zealand in the peak Indian travel times of May and December, thus increasing growth in New Zealand’s shoulder tourism season.”

Mr Naveen Chawla, Vice President Aero Marketing from GVK Mumbai International Airport says, “In the dynamic aviation scenario, airports worldwide are seeing the benefits of closer ties through ‘sister’ agreements. Mumbai and Auckland are both leading gateways and the agreement would promote co-operation between the two airports in developing the traffic flow between the two countries. The sister airport partnership between these two major gateways will also bring in best practices to improve services offered to passengers, airlines and all other stakeholders.”

“This association between both our airports is very timely. The new integrated Terminal 2 at Mumbai with enhanced airport infrastructure is capable of handling the expected growth in the passenger traffic and can also accommodate all types of aircraft with adequate parking bays. The whole airport experience is enhanced with customised retail, food and beverage, branded duty free and overall passenger experience,” continues Mr Chawla.

“Mumbai is the Financial and Commercial capital of India. The city is strategically located and connects to 29 Indian cities within two and a half hours of flying time. It is also considered as the city of dreams and is home to India’s biggest entertainment industry, “Bollywood”. Mumbai is also strongly positioned as a major aviation market in the Asia Pacific region.”

“We are confident that this partnership would enhance the famous “Spirit of Mumbai”, and will also enable visitors from New Zealand to appreciate the city’s unique culture, values, cuisine and traditions,” finishes Mr Chawla.

Mr Wedlock adds that between Auckland and Mumbai Airports there are rich connections through South East Asian hubs that are popular choices by Indian travellers.

“We have recently seen a number of announcements by airlines regarding capacity increases from South East Asian hubs to Auckland, which will help to accommodate growth from the Indian market,” says Mr Wedlock.

“As well as this, the Cricket World Cup is to be hosted in New Zealand next year. This will certainly provide a great opportunity to showcase New Zealand to Indian visitors as they come to support the Indian team defend their world title.”

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