

Paramount woos BA & SA



Streaking the sky

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- The airline plans to introduce 4,000 new flights to connect all the prominent cities in western India this year
- It would add six more planes in the 2009 to its existing fleet of six aircraft

Madurai-based carrier eyeing interline pacts to provide seamless travel experience into India

Praveena Sharma, Bangalore

All-business class airline Paramount Airways has initiated talks with foreign carriers to ink interline agreements to provide seamless travel to overseas travellers into India. "We are currently talking to some of the leading foreign airlines and will sign interline agreements with them very soon," said M Thiagarajan, managing director of Paramount Airways.

The Madurai-based airline is in discussion with the British Airways (BA) and the Singapore Airlines (SA) for tie-ups.

The regional airline has also drawn up extensive plans to become a national player by early 2010 by adding flights to destinations in western, northern and northeastern regions of the country.

At present, it is a dominant player in the full-service segment in south India with over 2000 flights per month and has a very small share of the western market with close to 300 flights.

western India what we did in South India. In 2008, we saturated the market potential in south and so, we have moved to the west. By 2010, we would have completely covered northeastern India," said Thiagarajan.

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■ M Thiagarajan

Thiagarajan said that since his group was sufficiently funded, he was not in the market to raise money for expansion.

"Unlike my peers, I'm not in the market for money because we are backed by a financially strong group. Also, we keep a very keen eye on our cash flow. That is the reason we have grown at a slow but a consistent pace even when others were furiously adding capacity," said Thiagarajan.

He said Paramount has been profitable at the cash level since the last two years.

In terms of capacity addition, Thiagarajan said his airline would be adding six more planes in the 2009 to its existing fleet of six aircraft. "We will be taking delivery of 20 planes till early 2011. We have not deferred or cancelled any orders. For now, we will also not be making any fresh orders," he said.