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Focus
on India

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India's booming economy benefits
airlines around the world

page 20

INSIDE

40

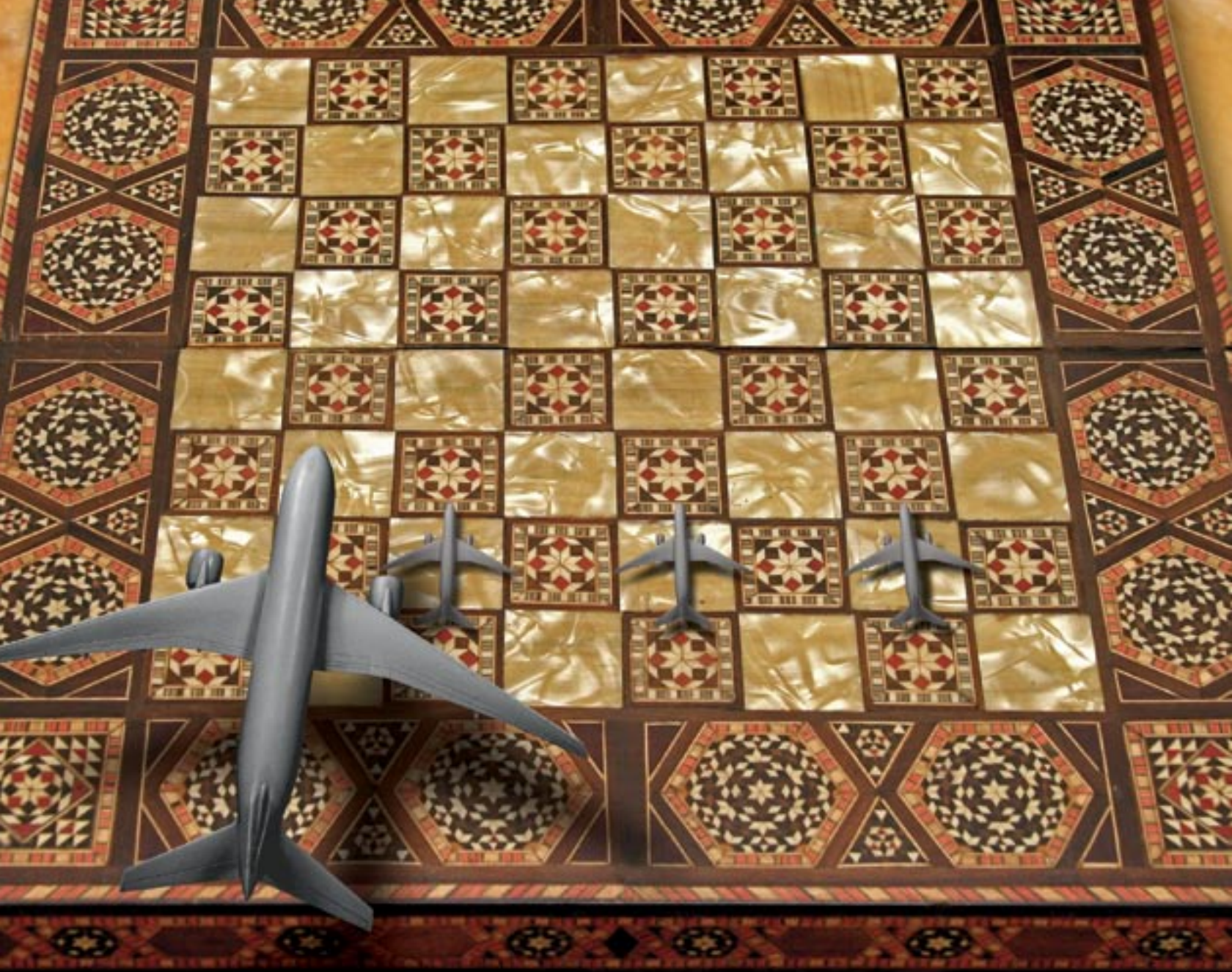
India's government revamps
airport infrastructure

42

IndiGo to begin service
as India's newest start up

46

India's flag carriers adjust to
relaxed government regulations



A GAME-WINNING

Strategy

Addis Ababa-based Ethiopian Airlines, which has continued to build its network, expand its fleet and explore additional methods of earning revenue, is at the top of its game in Africa's air travel market.

■ By Christian Gossel | Ascend Contributor

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Since its first flight to Cairo, Egypt, in April 1946, Ethiopian Airlines has steadily expanded its network. The carrier began operations with five Douglas-McDonald DC-3s serving four routes in Egypt, Djibouti, Yemen and Ethiopia. Today, it serves 44 international destinations in Africa, Europe, the Middle East, Asia and the United States with a fleet of 23 aircraft. And, with 26 destinations in Africa, its African network is unrivaled.

"For the past 60 years, we have been connecting the world to more of Africa than any other airline," said Ethiopian Airlines Chief Executive Officer Girma Wake. "At the same time, we are opening up our continent to business and tourism with our worldwide network. We are proud to fly the flag as Africa's 'World Class Airline.'"

To support its expansion, Ethiopian Airlines acquired six Boeing 767-300ER and five Boeing 737-700s, which were delivered last July. The second phase of the fleet modernization program began with the order of 10 Boeing 787 Dreamliner aircraft, with delivery of the first one slated for 2008, boosting its fleet to 33.

"We continue to expand to meet the demands of a burgeoning African economy with an aggressive fleet acquisition program of 21 new aircraft: six Boeing 767-300ERs, five Boeing 737-700s and 10 Boeing 787 state-of-the-art future craft," Wake said.

Recently, the airline took yet another significant step forward by modernizing its visual image with a new logo and aircraft livery.

"The fresh, new look keeps faith with the past while, at the same time, announces the dawn of the era," Wake said.

A key feature of the fleet expansion and enhancement of Ethiopian Airlines is its emphasis on the skill and expertise of its nearly 4,600 employees. The massive investment in training (two-thirds of its employees undergo some form of training every year) and technology (a state-of-the-art flight simulator and an acclaimed, internationally certified maintenance and engineering center) ensures the airline's fundamental philosophy.

Ethiopian Airlines has established one of the finest pilot and aviation maintenance training centers in Africa. While it provides an unsurpassed facility for its own pilots and technicians, it also offers training to airline personnel from other companies in Africa, the Middle East and Europe, creating ancillary revenue.

Not relying only on revenue from carrying passengers, Ethiopian Airlines is a significant player in providing maintenance and training services to other airlines in the region, such as Chanchangi Airlines, Air Burundi, ADC Airlines and Congo Presidential Aviation. The airline's maintenance center is also employed by Middle East carriers Phoenix Aviation and Dolphin Air; Russia's Transaero and Boeing from the United States. Ethiopian

Airlines' M&E division, a U.S. Federal Aviation Administration-approved facility, has contributed significantly to the airline's bottom line, and to support its continued growth, the carrier will build a 7,200-square-meter state-of-the-art maintenance hangar that will accommodate two Boeing 767 aircraft concurrently.

Cargo presents another important source of revenue for the carrier. Almost 12 percent of its revenue comes from freight services, and its cargo business continues to expand. To meet the growing demand for

ty will hold 104,000 tons per annum and will be equipped with a modern 1,500-square-meter cold room designed to support a turnover of 130 tons of palletized cargo per day.

A combination of its continually expanding network, increasing passenger traffic, secondary revenue streams, forward-looking technology (such as Sabre® PC AirFlite™ flight scheduling system and Sabre® FliteTrac® system) and exceptional staff, Ethiopian Airlines has the right formula to maintain its status as Africa's World Class Airline.



Photo courtesy of Ethiopian Airlines

As part of its continued growth and success, last year, Ethiopian Airlines took ownership of six Boeing 767-300ER and five Boeing 737-700s.

the export of flowers, fruits and vegetables, Ethiopian Airlines will need to increase its freight operations frequency, which will, in turn, boost inbound cargo capacity. Ethiopian Airlines, in conjunction with its European cargo general sales agents, is aggressively marketing the added capacity. And the airline continues exploring ways to convert older passenger aircraft into freight planes to accommodate the rise in cargo traffic.

"If passengers are the lifeblood of our airline, cargo is the muscle," said Ayene Alemneh, director of cargo marketing for Ethiopian Airlines. "Our dedicated cargo fleet works tirelessly to supply world markets with the products of Ethiopia and our African neighbors."

To facilitate the increase in freight traffic, construction of a new, modern cargo terminal was completed last November. The new facili-

"What does it take to become Africa's 'World Class Airline'?" Wake asked. "It takes people dedicated to safety and service — safety and reliability are traits every airline should share. It takes modern technology investment and planning with vision; it takes outstanding corporate citizenship that enables us to play a vital role in the socio-economic development of this great continent of ours, which we affectionately refer to as our 'first world.'" **F**

Christian Gossel is a Europe, the Middle East and Africa-based account director for the Sabre Airline Solutions® business. He can be contacted at christian.gossel@sabre.com.

