

Ethiopian Airlines considers fifth-freedom flights to Canada

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Dhaka: Ethiopian Airlines is considering to operate fifth-freedom flights from Accra, Ghana to Canada. The flights would complement the airline's current fifth-freedom service to Toronto via Dublin, Ireland, which is operated five times a week.

The airline expects the routes to meet demand as Canada is reportedly a popular destination for travellers from Ghana. Currently, there are no direct flights between West Africa and Canada.

According to reports, Ethiopian is interested in offering fifth-freedom flights to Toronto Pearson International Airport (YYZ) and Montréal-Trudeau International Airport (YUL) from Kotoka International Airport (ACC) in Accra. The flights to YYZ and YUL are reportedly pending approval from authorities in Ghana and Canada.

About the airline's interest, reports cited Lemma Yadecha Gudeta, Chief

Commercial Officer, Ethiopian Airlines, saying, "We are interested in a 5th Freedom Right [from Ghana to Canada]. Hopefully, we are going to get more slots to fly to Canada. So, for sure, we will connect the western part of Africa to Canada."

Fifth-freedom rights would permit the airline to carry passengers and cargo from Ethiopia to Ghana and then to Canada. To meet the high demand seen from East Africa, Ethiopian wants to increase capacity by operating flights via West Africa, where Ghana is located.

Additionally, the carrier is interested in expanding its frequencies from its hub at Addis Ababa Bole International Airport (ADD) to YYZ and potentially adding more to its five times weekly service to YUL.

"If you are going to have more frequency, what I suggested to the authorities over there was also to operate via West Africa," Gudeta explained, as per reports.

Ethiopian already has fifth-freedom rights to the US with flights to Washington Dulles International Airport (IAD), John F Kennedy International Airport (JFK) in New York, Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR), Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) and Chicago O'Hare International Airport (ORD).

Other long-haul fifth-freedom routes include daily flights to Buenos Aires, Argentina, via Sao Paul, Brazil. In Asia, the carrier operates service to Jakarta, Indonesia, and Hong Kong via Bangkok, Thailand. Flights to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, are offered via Singapore.

It may be mentioned here that Ethiopia and Hungary renewed their bilateral air service agreement in August, as per reports. With flights to Hungary, Ethiopian could reach third countries in Europe and beyond with fifth-freedom rights.

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