

Silk Air smoothly running 20 years on



Silk Air Cambodia Manager Tan Han Soon speaks on Tuesday in the Silk Air office at the Hotel Intercontinental complex in Phnom Penh. Photograph: Stuart Alan Becker/Phnom Penh Post

By Stuart Alan Becker, 05 September 2012

This month Singapore-based regional carrier Silk Air is offering discounts on trips booked before the end of this month for travel until March 31 next year.

From Phnom Penh, fares include US\$768 for a return trip to Darwin, Australia, not including taxes and surcharges, and \$1,218 to and from Frankfurt, London or Paris, or service to Houston, Los Angeles or New York for \$1,358, as well as deals to India and elsewhere in Australia. The fares are available through the website at silkair.com or over the counter at Silk Air's office in the Hotel Intercontinental complex.

Silk Air is the regional younger brother of national carrier Singapore Airlines and operates two flights a day between Phnom Penh and Singapore, with that route being offered this month for \$158 excluding taxes. Eight flights a week leave from Siem Reap headed for Singapore, with two of the flights stopping in Da Nang, Vietnam, and two stopping in Phnom Penh. The remaining four flights are direct from Siem Reap to Singapore.

"We are a full service premium regional airline, which means we also offer quality products and services, with two cabin classes, economy and business," said Silk Air's Cambodia Manager Tan Han Soo.

Tan took time yesterday to explain the relationship between Singapore Airlines and Silk Air and comment on a career in various countries served by the regional carrier before he came

to Cambodia a year ago.

“Tiger Air is going to start flying from Singapore to Phnom Penh at the first of October, and that’s a sign of the market growing,” Tan said.

“We are 100 per cent owned by Singapore Airlines and we have different chief executives, but when it comes to marketing strategy, we work very closely with each other,” Tan said.

Together, the two airlines serve 90 cities.

“Singapore Airlines flies to all the big capital cities. We at Silk Air fly to all the regional cities that don’t demand the big aircraft. We serve as a regional carrier, to places like Lombok in Indonesia.”

Tan said that while Singapore Airlines is owned by the Singapore government, it operates commercially and autonomously.

“It is a government-owned company, but the government is not involved in the running of the business.”

During his career with Silk Air, which he has worked for since its inception, Tan has served in Phuket, Thailand; Shenzhen, China; Hyderabad and other cities in India; and Cebu in the Philippines. He said the airline had been constantly growing during his years of service. Today, Silk Air operates 500 flights weekly to 41 destinations across 12 countries.

“The growth engine for Silk Air is India and China,” Tan said.

Silk Air, which operates a fleet of 21 Airbus 320 family of aircraft, ordered 68 new airplanes from Boeing last month worth an estimated \$4.9 billion, with aircraft deliveries expected in 2014.

As part of the 20th anniversary celebrations, Silk Air’s new Chief Executive Leslie Thng will arrive in Phnom Penh for a celebration at Naga World Hotel October 1.

He said in general for Cambodia and the region, the high season runs from October to January, with March through May being the slower months.

Tan said passenger loading on Cambodia to Singapore routes had been strong this year because of the ASEAN meetings. Silk Air employs 12 people in Phnom Penh, five of whom work at the airport, and five people in Siem Reap.