

THE HINDU Business Line

Airlines spread wings again; may hire 5,000 staff this year

PTI



New Delhi, Jun 23:

Air carriers have embarked on an aggressive hiring strategy with plans to add over 5,000 jobs this year, as they get ready for the entry of a new player and look to operate larger number of flights in coming months.

Having put in place its top leadership team, AirAsia India is conducting interviews and roadshows in different parts of the country to get the ground staff and cabin crew ahead of its proposed launch later this year.

In the meantime, existing players like Jet Airways and IndiGo have stepped up their own hiring activities, while another domestic player SpiceJet is continuing with its regular recruitment drives, industry officials said.

The improving passenger traffic trends and the proposed entry of AirAsia are the main triggers for the stepped-up hiring activities among private carriers, the human resource head of a leading airline said.

These carriers may together see a net addition of over 5,000 employees in the remaining months of 2013, he added.

Currently, there are an estimated 60,000 employees with various domestic air carriers, about half of which are with various private airlines and state-run Air India has close to 27,000 staff members.

The hiring activities at Air India are limited to recruitment of some pilots for its Air India Express unit, while there is a kind of hiring-freeze for other positions.

Another senior industry executive said that AirAsia is mostly targeting staff members of the existing airlines, and not of those having worked with now-grounded Kingfisher Airlines. As a result, vacancies are getting created at many of the existing airlines, he added.

SpiceJet and IndiGo are conducting regular recruitment drives on a weekly basis in some major cities. Besides, Jet and IndiGo have published job advertisements for cabin crew members through walk-in interview to be held next week.

According to recruitment agencies, liberalisation in aviation policies is also leading to greater job opportunities with the private players.

“2012 was a bad year for aviation, which saw net addition of around 1,700 people, but 2013 will be a boom year and we will see net addition of more than 3,500 people. Over the next three years, the growth in hiring will be between 100 per cent and 150 per cent,” MyHiringClub.com CEO Rajesh Kumar said.

Echoing a similar view Sat-n-Merc Manpower Consultant’s Director Prachi Kumari said, “High disposable incomes and growth of low-cost airlines in India will lead to a rise in more job openings in domestic airlines.”

“Increasing liberalisation in aviation policies is leading to greater private sector participation and this is leading towards more job opportunities in India. Since last month, recruitment activity in aviation industry is on upward trend. Also salary hike might be in double digit,” she added.

The air passenger traffic rose by nearly five per cent in May this year, after a decline in the previous month, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation said last week, while observing that the demand has shown an increasing trend.

The country’s all domestic airlines together carried 57 lakh passengers in May 2013, as against 54 lakh in the year-ago period. Prior to this, the passenger traffic had fallen in April, while March had seen a year-on-year growth after a gap of ten months.

IndiGo currently commands the largest market share, followed by Jet, SpiceJet, Air India and GoAir. While Religare group-promoted regional airline Air Mantra has been shut for two consecutive months.

AirAsia India, the proposed Indian airline venture of Malaysian budget carrier AirAsia in partnership with Tatas and Telestra Tradeplace, is looking to join the club later this year.

The company plans to begin hiring of flight attendants in Goa next week, while it has already conducted interviews for cabin crew members in April and for pilots in Bangalore.

The increased hiring activities by various airlines this year has come as a major change for the sector which saw thousands of employees being rendered jobless or without salaries due to crisis at Kingfisher last year.

An estimated 2,000 employees are still said to be with Kingfisher, mostly because they have not been able to get new jobs.

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