

Beijing Daxing airport eyes global transfer hub status



Airport employees hold a simulation drill in the departure lounge of the Beijing Daxing International Airport. [Photo by Chen Zebing/China Daily]

China's new US\$13 billion Beijing Daxing International Airport is expected to improve the capital city's standing as a world-level aviation hub, industry experts said.

Beijing Daxing International Airport, located to the city's south, will start commercial flights around September 30.

With its centralized design and vertically stacked domestic and international departure halls, Daxing will offer passengers more convenient and faster services for check-ins, transfers, security checks and baggage reclaim, said the French-based ADP Ingenierie, the architectural designer of the airport.

Beijing has long been seen as a major transfer point for flights to the Americas and Europe. Of the existing passenger flows at Beijing Capital international airport, nearly 20% is for departures and transfers from Beijing, indicating the huge potential.

On average about 10,000 passengers transfer through Beijing Airport daily, according to data from Carnoc, a leading civil aviation website. The new airport, located 60km (37 miles) south of the city center, is expected to become China's largest integrated transport hub and draw more international transfer passengers.

Lin Zhijie, an aviation industry analyst, told China Daily: "Daxing is more designed as a transfer airport. With a convenient layout, passengers need to walk only short distances for flight transfers, and could save more than an hour of transit time compared with the existing Capital Airport."

China Eastern Airlines and China Southern Airlines, which currently have respective market shares of 12% and 13% in Beijing, are looking to improve those to 14% and 19% after getting more slots at Daxing. But the share of Air China will fall from a dominant 43% to 42%, Boeing said.

Beijing Capital, currently the second busiest airport globally after Atlanta Hartsfield-Jackson, has been plagued by slot constraints. More than 50 domestic and foreign carriers have already shown interest in operating flights from Daxing Airport, China Daily reported.

The Shanghai-based China Eastern said the opening of Daxing will be a historical growth opportunity for the carrier, and it will get more international flights rights in Beijing. By 2025, it is expected to account for 40% of the market share at Daxing.

Huang Pu, General Manager of China Eastern's planning and co-ordination division in Beijing, said the carrier would launch more flights that connect China with the Americas, Europe, Oceania, South East Asia, South Korea and Japan.