

Now, chefs on AI flights

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PASSENGERS traveling by Air India will soon be able to enjoy the services of a chef on board their flights. The 'gourmet service' will be available to passengers, without any additional cost, in all categories.

The national carrier in tie-up with Taj SATS, the airline-catering arm of the Taj group, will provide the service initially on the Mumbai-London sector for a month beginning January 5.

Mr. V. Thulasidas, Chairman and Managing Director, Air India, said while the airline was recently adjudged the best West-bound airline by Galileo Express, there was need to constantly upgrade and innovate their product.

The airline has previously organized a number of food festivals on board the airline and the gourmet flights would further upgrade their in-flight product, he said.

The airline has replaced its old crockery with Bone China products in the upper classes and reintroduced stainless steel cutlery on board; further, the selection of wines and champagne has also been improved.

Queried about the timing of their proposed IPO, he said the process could be completed in the current year. However, the airline was awaiting a project report to be submitted by their advisors, DSP Merrill Lynch. The offering could include ESOPs for the airline employees, he said.

Plans to hedge a part of its fuel purchased at foreign airports were in place and the board had given its approval for the same. Earlier, the airline had said it would commence fuel hedging from January 1.