EMIRATES NEEDS AS MANY AS 500 NEW PILOTS THIS YEAR

News / Airlines

Emirates, the world's largest international airline, will need to hire as many as 500 new pilots this fiscal year in order to keep up with its expansion plans, a senior company executive said on Tuesday.

The recruitment plan comes as Emirates takes delivery of 36 new wide-body aircraft in the 12 months to March 31, 2017. It also plans to launch new routes to Asia and the world's longest non-stop flight to Panama during the same period.

"I think it's going to be more like 400 or 500 … pilots that we're after [this year]," Gary Chapman, president of group services and dnata at Emirates Group, told *Gulf News* in an interview at the Careers UAE fair in Dubai.

Emirates Group, one of the largest employers in the UAE, employed 4100 pilots as of November.

In total, Emirates Group, which also includes airport and travel services company dnata, plans to hire around 10,000 new employees this year, including 800 Emiratis, Chapman said. The Group's workforce was 95,332, including "just under" 3,000 Emiratis, as of March 31 this year.

Emirates, who reported a record Dh7.1 billion full-year airline profit this month, expanded its passenger and freighter network to 153 destinations with a fleet of 251 aircraft in the 12 months to

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March 31.

The airline will add this fiscal 20 new Airbus A380s and 16 Boeing 777-300ERs (extended range) to what is already the world's largest wide-body fleet. It also plans to start flights to Yangon in Myanmar and Hanoi in Vietnam in August while services to Panama are to start in late 2016 or early 2017, according to Emirates.

Meanwhile, since January the airline has added direct services to Auckland in New Zealand and flights to Cebu and Clark in the Philippines and to Yinchuan and Zhengzhou in China.

Middle East airlines will need 6,000 new pilots every year over the next two decades in order to meet ambitious fleet and network expansion plans, according to Boeing's 2015 Pilot and Technician Outlook.

The Middle East is home to some of the world's fastest growing airlines, namely Emirates Etihad Airways and Qatar Airways.

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