

sustainable japan

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produced by The Japan Times Cube

Country manager Satish Sethi discusses sustainability, path to Japan Emirates works to fly better, cleaner and smarter

Name: Satish Sethi
Title: Japan country manager
URL: <https://www.emirates.com/jp/english/>
Hometown: New Delhi
Years in Japan: 3

Leaders & Readers

WARREN MEEHAN
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Growing up in New Delhi, Satish Sethi woke up early every morning so he could read about the latest events happening around the world. "I used to love following the latest international developments," he said. "In those days there was no internet, so I used to read the newspaper every day to follow world affairs. I'd have withdrawal symptoms if the newspaper didn't arrive on time, and I used to try to grab it every morning before my father did, so I could be the first to read about what was happening in the world."

Now, having been recently appointed country manager Japan for Emirates, one of the world's preeminent airlines, after a string of similarly successful assignments spanning India, Southeast Asia and the Middle East, Sethi now finds himself in the novel position of heading up an international company that is as much known for making the news as the international developments he used to follow. He took time out of his busy schedule to sit down with Leaders and Readers to discuss Emirates' sustainability strategies, recent developments in the airline industry and what brought him to Japan.

Long-haul flight of fancy

Sethi's journey has been as circuitous as the international trunk lines he now manages. "I was born in India in an era where there was a lot of academic pressure," he began, "and the options always were, you could either become a doctor or become an engineer. I already had a lot of doctors in my family, so I thought, I can let them do consulting."

After completing a degree in commerce and business, he briefly took up a position in the family real estate business. Then he saw an advertisement for a job with a local airline. Telling his father he would like to apply but with the intention of working for only a few months for the experience, he promised to return to the family real estate business. "Well, that was 27 years ago," he joked. "From there, I soon found a job with what was then a small airline called Emirates, where I started off in the Middle East, and I kept on hopping around countries, from the Philippines to Indonesia — wherever the job took me — to eventually landing in Japan."

A sustainable future

With Emirates recently announcing plans to spend over \$200 million on research on reducing its carbon footprint, Sethi believes Emirates will set the standard for other airlines to follow. "It's very important for Emirates to be there in terms of its environmental responsibility," he said. "While there are multiple global initiatives in place for airlines, Emirates in itself is working together with IATA (the International Air Transport Association) on a number of our own environmental initiatives. We are working on two core concepts: reducing emissions, and consuming responsibly."

Emirates is investing in technologies that allow pilots to reduce emissions and fuel use by using onboard data during flights, often in collaboration with other airlines, to help the operations teams make more informed decisions in choosing flight paths, fuel uplift, flap settings during landing and reduction of fuel use when taxiing. Emirates is also targeting onboard recycling, including the use of recycled plastic in trays, the toys handed out to kids and the economy-class blankets — which are now being produced by using over 28 recycled PET bottles for each one. "Annually, it's all saving about 88 million bottles from landfill," Sethi explained. "So with all that, there's a lot of collective effort happening. It's an entire supply chain that has to support this, and most importantly, we operate one of the youngest and most modern aircraft fleets, which is more fuel-efficient and hence more environmentally friendly."

Sustainable aviation fuel

"Emirates has a strategic priority to provide greener and more environmentally friendly options while still maintaining quality and safety," Sethi said. "There's a lot of focus on sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). While right now the supply is limited, and as yet only a 50% blend is allowed, so Emirates has recently signed an agreement with Shell to procure 300,000 gallons of SAF over the next year, and as the world provides more supply, Emirates will continue to play its part as an environmentally responsible carrier and aim to stay ahead of the game."

Emirates is now flying some of its most modern and fuel-efficient aircraft on its direct Narita-to-Dubai and Osaka-to-Dubai flights, using newly fitted-out Airbus A380s,



EMIRATES

and Haneda-to-Dubai flights using a newly fitted-out Boeing 777, with "premium economy" now offered on all three flights. "We've had very positive feedback on the premium economy service," Sethi said. "It is an option for those who want more comfort than economy but are not yet ready to spend on business class, thereby providing them enhanced space, privacy, meal and baggage allowance."

Drawing inspiration

"I've always drawn inspiration from seeing how those around me work. By nature, I have always been a very observant person," Sethi said in explaining what keeps him

motivated in his work. "I always see people working very hard, and I see people working very smart, and then I see people working the right mix, who know how to strategize, prioritize, in a way that your job becomes less hard, and you enjoy at least the journey of a job smartly done."

He said he hasn't just been inspired by some of his superiors over the years who have made quick decisions, but also remembers a baggage handler who showed great initiative when, despite his job being to simply load customers' bags into a container, he noticed that the bag had been damaged, and informed the ground staff to avoid dealing with a complaint later. "So those simple little

From New Delhi to Tokyo

Satish Sethi was born in New Delhi and completed a degree in commerce and business studies at Delhi University, later joining his family's real estate business. After gaining some business experience, he followed his interest and began working with a local Indian airline. He soon took up a position with KLM Royal Dutch Airlines, and in 1997 began working in Kuwait and Delhi, holding positions in reservations, airport services, revenue management and marketing.

He joined Emirates in 2001, where he began working in sales and marketing positions in Kuwait, and then later worked in Yemen, where he was eventually posted as country manager in 2007 before taking up a similar role in Bangladesh from 2010.

He was posted to Indonesia, where he served as country manager from 2010, before being transferred to the Philippines in 2016. He was eventually appointed to Tokyo in 2021, where he serves as Emirates' country manager for Japan.

efficient ways of working are all inspirational episodes that have inspired me across my career."

Keeping a steady altitude

For now, Sethi believes he will be kept busy with Emirates' expansion in Japan, including the opening of two more retail offices, something he believes is important for maintaining Emirates' commitment to face-to-face customer service. Aside from maintaining his golf game, he tries to spend as much time with his family as possible to enjoy their time in Japan together. And of course he always tries to maintain a positive work-life balance and stay calm, and encourages his entire team to do the same. "My personal relations, my friendships — they are what stay with me for life. As for my work, it's important to remember, success is not permanent and failure is not fatal, so don't hold them for too long. Learn from them, and move on."

Enowa

Gastronomy from the fields of Yufuin



TAEKO TERAO
CONTRIBUTING WRITER



just-picked vegetables grown in our own field play the starring roles aligned with what I aspired to do myself," said Gyamtso.

Gyamtso and the restaurant's staff members participate in the farm work under the guidance of agricultural adviser Teruhisa Ishiwari of Ishiwari Farm in Kyoto, who has earned the support of famous chefs. Dinner at Enowa's main dining room, Jimgu, begins



Address
Enowa
544 Kawakami-Maruo, Yufuin-cho, Yufu-shi, Oita Pref.
<https://enowa-yufuin.jp>

in the greenhouse, where a fresh vegetable appetizer is served amid the aromas of the herbs grown inside. The dishes that follow also feature an abundance of vegetables, combined with fish and meat from Oita. All of them are vividly flavorful. The style of cuisine may be different, but Gyamtso's philosophy of staying close to the land perfectly matches that of his predecessors in Yufuin.

KIICHIRO SATO
OITA GOVERNOR



As the governor of Oita Prefecture, I would like to express my heartfelt congratulations on the selection of Enowa as a Destination Restaurant.

Enowa aims to deliver directly from the farm to the table, and the ingredients used are supplied through home cultivation and collaboration with the local community, so you can fully enjoy the blessings of life spun out by the rich nature of Oita Prefecture. I hope that many people will have a wonderful experience in Oita Prefecture, where you can enjoy fine cuisine and hot springs.

TAKASHIGE SOMA
YUFU MAYOR



I would like to offer our heartfelt congratulations to chef Tashi Gyamtso on receiving this prestigious award. This is the result of the efforts of everyone involved with Enowa.

Yufuin town in Yufu city is a place of natural beauty that spreads out at the foot of Mount Yufudake, which is affectionately known as "Bungo Fuji." We appreciate Gyamtso's efforts to further revitalize the local community of Yufuin, growing vegetables in the midst of this magnificent natural environment and providing freshly harvested vegetables.

Destination Restaurants 2024 AUTHENTIC JAPAN SELECTION



the japan times

Sustainable Japan Day

Reception 18:00-20:00
2024/10/25 (FRI) 13:00-18:00

Location: Kudan-kaikan Terrace Language: Japanese

Sustainable Japan Day will be a one-day event including panel sessions conducted by winners of the Sustainable Japan Award and other companies that lead efforts toward sustainability in Japan.

To join use the QR code or visit:
<https://bit.ly/47wFtKJ>

PARTNERS

Contact: jtc-csinfo@japantimes.co.jp