

FOUNDATION STONE LAID FOR SAUDI FLIGHT SCHOOL



Thumama Airport played host to royalty, diplomats and members of the aviation-loving public when the Governor of Riyadh, Prince Salman came to lay the corner stone of a new flight academy that is to be built at this rejuvenated airfield 60kms from the centre of the Saudi capital.

Accompanying him was Prince Sultan bin Salman - the Secretary General of the Supreme Commission for Tourism, who had initiated the idea of the flight school.

The afternoon's celebrations included demonstrations of sky diving, motor gliding and micro light flying, and these were rounded off with a spectacular display by the Red Bulls aeronautical display team.

The whole event was staged by the fledgling Saudi Aviation Club which was established four years ago as an independent not-for-profit entity to promote aeronautical science within the Kingdom and to encourage the practice of personal, recreational and sports aviation activities to the highest possible standards.



The Club oversees activities such as paragliding, paramotoring and radio controlled models, as well as licensing local private companies to train interested members of the public in skydiving and paramotoring activities.

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The general aviation flight school will provide pilot training to any person interested in becoming a professional pilot, or would like to learn flying as a hobby. It will issue private, commercial Airline Transport Pilot licenses with instrument and multi-engine rating, and will also be authorised to offer refresher courses for holders of private pilot licenses (PPLs) from other countries desiring to fly in Saudi Arabia.

SAC also plans to launch a skydiving school for the public sometime in the near future, as well as launch other pilot training schools in the western and eastern Saudi provinces within the next five years.

Thumama Airfield's 400-metre long runway was recently completely resurfaced, and club buildings are in the process of being built or renovated. It is envisaged that those who already hold a PPL should be able to fly from Thumama by July or August, whilst anyone who wants to learn to fly will not have to wait until the air school is actually built, as classes will start off in existing buildings and move to the new school on its completion.

Anyone interested in joining the Saudi Aviation Club should go to their website: www.sac.com

