

# Aviation Group News



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## Local News

Have you noticed that over the past year the Aviation Sector Newsletter has tended to concentrate on international issues and trade, this is most interesting and admirable, however there is continuous activity within the Kingdom which is of interest to many, in this issue we will devote part of the newsletter to some of the activities presently ongoing in the Kingdom and Gulf states.

The PCA (Civil Aviation Authority) have recently received approval to build a further 7 new airports at various locations in the Kingdom, for civil and military use, giving access to more cities and improving travel within the Kingdom. When completed the new additions will increase the present 23 Airports to 30, thus providing further local access throughout the Kingdom

A new airport is being constructed at Dawadmi, this will be complete by 2003. The PCA have been given approval to upgrade Bishah, Jizan and Yanbu, much needed repairs to facilities are now in progress. Work is on going to upgrade the military facilities at both these airports.

In Riyadh work has started to construct a new royal terminal on the military base in the City. Contracts have been awarded this year to upgrade several maintenance and storage facilities at the same airport.

In Jeddah, new International and Domestic terminals are being designed by NACO, the Dutch airport design consultants, with the view to providing 21 new air bridges, giving direct access to the Aircraft. Travelers using Jeddah will no doubt find this a welcome improvement.

Work is going on to upgrade many of the military airports, in particular work is underway at Dhahran, Al Kharj and Kamis. The U.S. Government is also requesting bids to providing new workshops at Al Kharj.

Considerable investment is being made in the upgrade of Air-cargo facilities at both KKIA Riyadh and KAAIA Jeddah, both Saudia and the private handling agents are preparing to upgrade baggage handling. This has largely been forced on the PCA and Saudia due to the age of the existing equipment, some of which is now 18 years old, obsolete and frequently failing, spares being unavailable. It is also anticipated that the numbers of pilgrims will increase considerably over the next ten years.

All this activity will require more equipment and services, European sales of GSE (ground service equipment) have been slowing down since the large purchase of a few years ago during the Saudia fleet upgrade, this trend looks about to change.

ARAMCO, in preparation for the gas exploration projects are considering the construction of as many as 15 airstrips across Rub Al Khali, this part of the Kingdom may not be as empty as before.

Privatization of part of the National Airline (Saudia) continues to be a subject of discussion, and speculation, the intention is to privatize the services in the near future.

**Saudi Arabian Airlines not expanding fleet.** Saudia says it has no plans to acquire extra aircraft from the European consortium Airbus Industrie in the near future, "The existing new fleet will meet our operational needs for the next 10 years". With a projected doubling of passenger travel over the next ten years, this looks good for International travellers with many more landing slots for foreign airlines.

**Gulf States. Yeman Airways** signed an agreement with Airbus Industrie in April for acquisition of a new A310-300 aircraft which will be delivered in June. Yemenia intend to purchase more Airbus and sell off 5 Boeings.

**Qatar Airways** continue to purchase and lease Airbus Industrie aircraft, formal negotiations will soon start with Airbus and Boeing with plans to acquire 6 wide bodied aircraft. Meanwhile a 5<sup>th</sup> A300-600R and a further A320 will be leased from Ansett, pending delivery of 11 new A320 ordered in 1998.

**Bahrain**, the rulers of the State have instructed the Bahrain Development Authority to finalize an agreement with Gulf Stream, local agent SOGEREP, to provide a maintenance facility. This moves slowly forward with lease agreements being negotiated.

**Dubai.** HH Sheik Ahmad bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Chair of Dnata, was recently presented with a certificate of Dnata Airport Services' compliance with ISO9001 standards.

Emirates SkyCargo has opened a new, dedicated cargo center at its Dubai home base, with capacity for 400,000 tonne per year and a design that has stepped away from the traditional to meet the challenges of Emirates' cargo operations.

## AIR RAGE

Acts of disruptive behavior by passengers in flight appear to be on the increase. While many legal aspects of such misconduct are still under review, experts agree that specific action is needed to deal adequately with the problem.

The reason for the growing incidence of "Air Rage" is a matter of conjecture and airlines so far are focused on managing the occasional incident rather than on prevention.

The International Civil Aviation Authority formed a study group in 2000, to carry out a survey of contracting states and received 60 replies. These revealed that while many states have yet to establish a reporting system, approximately 60 percent indicated a recent increase in incidents involving unruly passengers. IATA indicated that there were 1,132 reported cases in 1994, rising to 5,416 cases in 1997. Allowing for the fact that more cases are actually being reported, the trend is still alarming.

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