

bmi to launch direct services from Heathrow to Jeddah

- Mumbai to increase to daily operation
- Doha also to be served by bmi from Heathrow

bmi is to commence a three times weekly service to Jeddah from Heathrow commencing 23 April 2006. The airline will increase to daily its service from Heathrow to Mumbai on 22 April.

The introduction of a direct link from Heathrow to Jeddah follows the successful launch in September of a three times weekly service to the Saudi Arabia capital Riyadh. The addition of Jeddah means that bmi will be the only UK airline providing key direct links from Britain to both of the country's administrative and commercial centres. The new destination will offer customers bmi's full in-flight service including an onboard chef for business class passengers

Mumbai services from Heathrow will increase to a daily service after a positive start to the route since its introduction in May of this year. The opportunity to increase services to India has been possible following further deregulation in the UK to India aviation market.

Nigel Turner, chief executive of bmi, said: "We have been extremely encouraged by the start that we have had on the Heathrow to Riyadh route. The opportunity exists for us to again re-establish direct air links with one of the Middle East's key destinations. Jeddah is a major centre of trade and industry and has a vibrant market for both business and cultural passengers. I am confident that, as with Riyadh, we will again benefit from the support and encouragement of both the UK and Saudi governments in making our new service to Jeddah another success story.

"The positive start that we have experienced on Mumbai and the opportunity for further access into India from the UK means we can now increase our operation to a daily service. This will further establish our presence in the Indian market. As deregulation continues to deliver much needed competition, our strategy remains to initially focus on the development of Mumbai ahead of any additional destinations we may consider launching in the future.

"By adding new destinations and increasing frequencies to our services at Heathrow we are creating a long haul network and profile that will further build and enhance our reputation in this market."

bmi will also commence a daily service to Doha from Heathrow in the Summer of 2006. The service will commence on 26 March and, subject to government approval, will be operated under a wet lease agreement with Qatar Airways. At the same time bmi's existing codeshare agreement with Qatar Airways will be expanded to allow bmi to sell Qatar Airways flights from Heathrow to Doha under bmi's flight code. This will further consolidate the presence of bmi at both Heathrow and in the Gulf region and mark another major step in the global reach of the airline.

Services from London Heathrow to Jeddah will operate on a Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday. Return services will depart Jeddah on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

In the AEA 2005 Q2 intra-European punctuality statistics, bmi was reported as Heathrow's most punctual British airline *

bmi also operate flights from Manchester to Las Vegas, Barbados, Antigua, St Lucia and Chicago.

STOP PRESS

AND FINALLY

After the Summer edition photograph of the Four WISE men, the RGBB Cameraman was set a challenge to repeat the exercise for the ladies. So here we are:

Representing the Welsh contingent is Sue Ferguson, (3rd from left) the Irish presence is of course Carmel Priestley (far right). A very Scottish Geraldine Howarth (2nd from left) and the Chairman's own English rose, Helen Bowen.

More stunning evidence I hope you'll agree, that RGBB events are attended by more than just Rough old Geezers with Beer Bellies!

