

An Interview with Eng. Mahmood Al Balooshi, CEO of GAA



Eng. Mahmood Al Balooshi, CEO of GAA

Gulf Aviation Academy (GAA), positioned as the future of commercial aviation training centre, is based in the Kingdom of Bahrain to serve the needs of the aviation industry in the MENA region. The academy, a fully-owned subsidiary of Mumtalakat, the investment arm of the Kingdom of Bahrain, offers a comprehensive range of high quality aviation training solutions to all aviation personnel including pilots, engineers and cabin crew. GAA's training facilities located at Bahrain International Airport, operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and provides state-of-the-art latest simulator equipment with internationally qualified personnel.

Eng. Mahmood Al Balooshi – Chief Executive Officer

Mr. Al Balooshi a holder of an MSc in Business Administration from the University of Hull, and of the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) Part 66 Aircraft Engineers License. His previous postings included being Manager of Manpower Development with Gulf Air where he handled courses and budget planning for engineering and pilot training. In 2003, he went on to broaden his career by joining Bahrain Airport Services where he established the first European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) 147 approved Aircraft Engineering Training Centre in the Middle East and Asia, currently approved to conduct Basic Aircraft Engineering training and type training on A330/A340/A319/A320/A321 and B727.

In 2009, he joined Gulf Aviation Academy as Chief Technical Training Officer and was responsible for assessing and implementing long term strategic training plans; developing, planning, organising and evaluating department structure and staffing.

At present, Mr. Al Balooshi holds the position of Chief Executive Officer with over 30 years of experience in the Aviation industry in various professional, training management, and senior management roles.

Effective Management, Leadership.

Within a very short time, GAA has established itself as a premium, internationally accredited provider of aviation training and now has a total of 24 airlines and corporate operator clients within the region and continues to grow rapidly. This growth is unprecedented in the aviation training industry for a new company.

This was accomplished through our Shareholder's guidance and support as well as professional staff with exceptional teamwork and dedication from GAA in striving to accomplish our set mission and vision. Recently joining GAA is Captain Dhaffer Al Abbasi, positioned as GAA's COO. With his extensive background and experience, he will be able to further establish GAA as a centre of aviation training excellence in the region.



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INTERVIEW

Future Plans.

The international Air Transport Association (IATA), International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), Boeing and Airbus have all forecasted significant growth in GAA's main target market – the Middle East. GAA's strategy focuses on capturing as much of that training market share as possible.

Consistent with our commitment to the MENA region and state-of-the-art quality training, GAA has recently built a three-bay extension facility and has acquired a new A330 simulator which will be approved for training by end of August 2012.

This extension comes in line with the overall future plan that GAA is planning to accomplish over the coming years. Other key business strategy elements for GAA include introducing full wet training capability and increasing our Cabin Crew Training offering and market penetration.

Other elements include introducing a Flight Training Organisation (FTO) over the coming years which will enable GAA to conduct all ab-initio pilot training and capture more of the pilot

training value chain. Subsequently, hosting Air Traffic Controller Training in the region will allow us to offer more service to the aviation industry in the country and the region as a whole.

To enable GAA to continue to build its presence and brand in the market, we need to continue to invest in modern state-of-the-art training devices and equipment for maximum competitive advantage and serve our company vision of being the aviation training academy of choice for our growing customer base.





CATHAY PACIFIC

New Country Manager, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia



Mr Brian Tsoi has been appointed as Cathay Pacific's Country Manager for Bahrain and Saudi Arabia

Cathay Pacific Airways today announced that Mr Brian Tsoi has been appointed as the airline's Country Manager Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Mr Tsoi will be responsible for leading and managing the overall business and operational developments of Cathay Pacific in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia.

Mr Tsoi brings with him a wealth of experience from the aviation industry. Prior to his current position, he has held a number of managerial positions in Cathay Pacific, including online and passenger sales, product development and inflight services. Mr Tsoi also managed the airline's offices in Surabaya and Denpasar in Indonesia.

Mr Tsoi said, "Cathay Pacific has served the Middle East region for more than 35 years and we remain committed to this very important market. Our vast international network, together with our sister airline, Dragonair's extensive reach to China and Asia will enable us to bring the world closer to the community in the Middle East."

"Cathay Pacific will also continue to deliver industry-beating products and services to our passengers here, including our award-winning "World Best Business Class" product and the all new "Premium Economy Class" by the end of 2012," he added.

New Hyderabad Service

Cathay Pacific Airways today announced that it will further extend its presence in India with a new four-times-weekly service between Hong Kong and Hyderabad, India's fourth most populous city and an important hub for the technology and pharmaceutical industries. The new service complements the airline's existing passenger services to Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai and will further boost both leisure and business travel between Hong Kong and India.

The new Hyderabad service commences on 1 December 2012 and will be operated by Airbus A330-300 aircraft, departing from Hong Kong every Wednesday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday evening. The latest destination launch will offer passengers travelling from India greater choice and more convenience when connecting to Cathay Pacific's international network through its Hong Kong hub.

The new service will offer travellers from India easy connections to China, Australia and North America via Hong Kong. In May this year, Cathay Pacific launched a freighter connecting Hyderabad to key markets in East and North Asia.

Cathay Pacific's new Hyderabad (HYD) service, effective 1 December 2012 (all local times):

Flight No	Routing	Departure	Arrival	Day of the week
CX649	HKG-HYD	2235	0205+1	Wed, Fri, Sat, Sun
CX646	HYD-HKG	0335	1055	Mon
		0335	1100	Thu, Sat, Sun





Asks DOT to Expand Detroit-Beijing to Daily Flights

Delta filed a request with the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) this week to expand its nonstop service between its hub in Detroit and Beijing to daily flights. The route is currently operated 5 days per week.

If approved, the new flights will start on 28 October 2012, and be operated using 269-seat Boeing 777-200ER aircraft, which features 45 of Delta's full flat-bed seats in BusinessElite. The two additional flights will allow Delta "to offer its customers a full daily service pattern" between the two cities, according to the DOT filing.

Delta launched the Detroit-Beijing service in July 2011. There are currently 37 U.S.-China frequencies currently available, according to the DOT filing.

China has been a major focus of Delta's Asia network in recent years, and the airline currently offers flights to Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. Delta also offers a wide network within China thanks to SkyTeam partners China Eastern and China Southern.



LaGuardia Gate Upgrades, WSJ Reports



Delta's investment in New York's LaGuardia Airport is paying off for passengers who are enjoying the stylish gate areas with free iPads for entertainment and information while they wait, the Wall Street Journal reported.

Delta has updated the gate space experience and fliers are pleased with the changes. Where typical gate areas are full of frustrations, "real improvement is afoot at LaGuardia," the WSJ said.

The upgrades are part of Delta's \$160 million investment in LaGuardia as it completes its expansion there after acquiring the slot portfolio of U.S. Airways. Delta has added 100 daily flights to the schedule to reinforce LaGuardia's appeal as the favourite New York airport for business travellers.

The iPads at LaGuardia allow concession companies to penetrate into gate seating areas and sell after people have passed by restaurants and stores. Sales are up double digit percentages in the gate spaces as part of the change.

IndiGo

Hatrack at SKYTRAX World Airline Awards

Having already bagged Skytrax World Airline Award for being the best low cost airline of India and Central Asia at the World Airline Awards in 2011- IndiGo, India's largest carrier celebrates yet again for being recognised as the Best Low-Cost Airline in Central Asia/India, for the third time in a row.

Marking a double milestone 6E also bagged its second prominent award for Best Staff Service in Central Asia/India at the SKYTRAX World Airline Awards 2012 held at the Farnborough International Airshow in London.

Speaking on the achievement from Farnborough, IndiGo President Aditya Ghosh said, "To be recognised at the world stage for the two most prestigious accolades is indeed exhilarating yet humbling experience. It's really big for us and this recognition is proof enough to let everybody know that customer service is not just a department but an attitude. Fine customer service is clearly reflected when it's done from the heart and that's what we at IndiGo take pride in. What's even more thrilling is that we are the only airline from India to have received an award at the World Airline Awards this year. This makes the occasion even more special and momentous."



Expansions and Innovations

PAL has placed a firm order with Airbus covering more than 50 aircraft consisting of single aisle A321s and widebody A330-300s, the latest HGW (High Gross Weight) models. The first batch of aircraft is being ordered under a major fleet modernisation programme at the airline with deliveries starting in 2013.

The single aisle A321 aircraft are being purchased to enhance the airline's product offerings on domestic and regional routes, as well as support alliances with partner airlines. The A330s will be operated on higher demand regional routes and longer range services to the Middle East and Australia. PAL will announce engine selections for all the aircraft at a later date.

PAL Chairman Lucio Tan and PAL President Ramon S. Ang said that the orders placed with Airbus will play a key role in revitalising PAL and growing trade and tourism in the country. They added that these aircraft will be able to offer more passengers the best the industry has to offer across the Asia-Pacific network. At the same time, everyone will benefit from the low operating costs associated with new generation aircraft and the reduced impact on the environment.

By November 30 of this year, PAL will fly nonstop to Toronto. Eventually, the new destinations will also include Paris and New York City. At present, PAL has a total of 46 destinations – 26 international and 20 domestic destinations (within the Philippines).

Very soon, PAL passengers flying to/from any of PAL's four North American destinations will get to enjoy one of the world's most sought after mobile device, the 3rd generation Apple iPad that will be loaded with various inflight entertainment options – from the latest full-length movies, TV shows, music, games, to even the latest newspapers and magazines – all in one handy gadget. PAL has set up "Book and Buy" ticketing kiosks at selected Petron gas stations allowing passengers on-the-go to book a PAL or even AirPhil Express flight to any domestic destination.

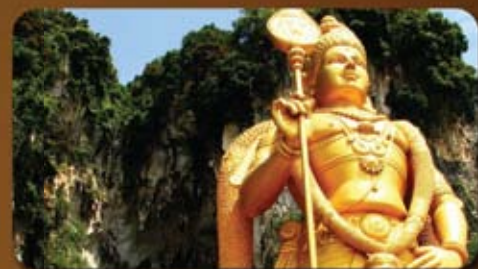
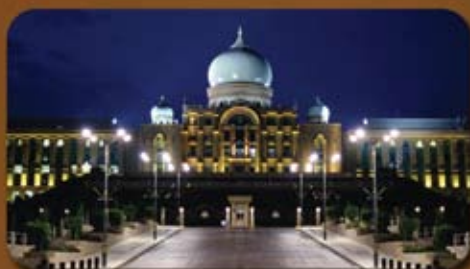
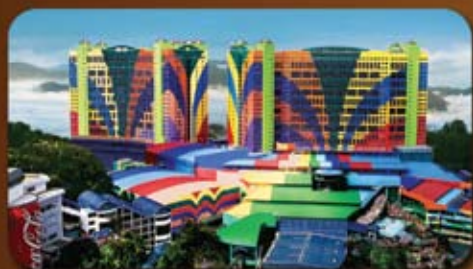
In addition, a brand new inflight menu aims to enhance PAL's existing one. This time, guest chefs have whipped up dishes which will serve as the template for the new international dishes to come.





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Emirates

Adelaide Receives a Preview



Mr Salem Obaidalla, Emirates' Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations Far East and Australasia, hosted the event

Adelaide was treated to its first taste of Emirates when one of its Boeing 777-300ER aircraft made a flying visit to Adelaide Airport, ahead of the 1st November start of services between the South Australia capital and Dubai.

More than 250 guests including the Deputy Premier of South Australia, the Honourable John Rau MP, the Governor of South Australia, His Excellency Rear Admiral Kevin Scarce AC CSC RANR and travel industry partners were hosted by Salem Obaidalla, Emirates' Senior Vice President, Commercial Operations Far East and Australasia, as they witnessed the aircraft's arrival and the traditional water cannon salute.

The guests were welcomed on board and experienced their first taste of Emirates' renowned on-board product, including Private Suites in the only First Class international service offering for South Australian travellers, lie-flat massage beds in Business Class, and spacious seating in Economy Class.

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Records Positive Business Performance



Gulf Air, the national carrier of the Kingdom of Bahrain, posted significant improvements in its 2012 half yearly performance against the same period last year across its business operations indicating positive results.

Announcing the highlights of the January to June 2012 business performance of the company, Gulf Air CEO Mr Samer Majali said that the airline has recorded 6% increase in revenue and 13% increase in passenger numbers compared to the same period last year. Seat load factor has reached 77% for the same period registering a 5% growth.

The airline's Falcon Gold premium class alone has seen a healthy 35% growth while economy class has seen 12% growth over the same period last year indicating the passengers increasing preference to fly with Gulf Air due to several new features and facilities introduced recently. Gulf Air currently operates one of the youngest fleets in the region with an average fleet age of just 4.7 years. The airline's on-time punctuality has grown to 79% as against 78% in 2011 and 74% in 2010 while its technical dispatch reliability has reached 99.4%.

Correspondingly, customer complaints have reduced by 11%. The introduction of the Staff Appreciation Scheme last year has received much appreciation from customers with over 2000 frequent flyers complimenting the airline's customer service.



Expands Meet & Seat

Following the launch of the innovative Meet & Seat service on three pilot routes, today sees the introduction of ten new destinations: Rio de Janeiro, Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Atlanta, Houston, Los Angeles, Toronto, Johannesburg, Cape Town and Nairobi.

KLM launched Meet & Seat on 3 February, making it the first airline to integrate social networking in its regular flight process. Passengers with a reservation can easily see who else will be on board via their Facebook or LinkedIn accounts. KLM's Managing Director Erik Varwijk said, "The new service was developed in cooperation with our customers. Following its success during the first month, we're seeing a demand for the service on new routes. Meet & Seat is primarily used by business travellers for networking. The ten new destinations lend themselves perfectly for this."

Passengers can only see other Meet & Seat participants after linking their Facebook or LinkedIn profiles to their flight. What's more, they can decide what personal

information from their Facebook or LinkedIn accounts they wish to share with other passengers.

Passengers can choose their seat via Manage My Booking from 90 days until 48 hours before departure, and therefore easily make contact with fellow travellers.

Meet & Seat is already available on flights to and from San Francisco, New York and São Paulo. KLM will soon introduce even more intercontinental routes.



Finest Culinary Delights

Qatar Airways today officially introduced an incredible line-up of globally renowned chefs to their unrivalled 5-star service, with the award-winning Chef Ramzi Choueiri, Chef Vineet Bhatia, Chef Tom Aikens and Chef Nobu Matsuhisa inspiring an entirely new inflight dining experience.



Qatar Airways Chief Executive Officer Akbar Al Baker said that the airline's collaboration with such global icons and gastronomic pioneers further proves Qatar Airways' commitment to redefining the passenger experience by offering a truly 5-star service.

The chefs were unveiled at an international press conference in Doha, Qatar Airways' hub city, where they delighted the gathered media with a live cooking demonstration of some of their favourite dishes.

Having been selected to create a unique and diverse menu for all international flights, the renowned chefs spent several months adapting and testing their specialities for Qatar Airways' passengers. Their menus have begun to be rolled out on flights to and from Doha International Airport.

The chefs took into account not only the flavours, textures, arrangements, aromas and tastes required for a memorable dining experience, but also how the taste buds are altered at 35,000 feet, and what types of food are most suited to long-haul flights.

Air Arabia announced its financial results for the 3 months ending 30 June 2012, demonstrating the continued strength of the airline's business model. For the 3 months ending 30 June 2012, Air Arabia reported a net profit of AED 66 million, an increase of 31 per cent compared to AED 51 million in the corresponding period in 2011. The carrier's turnover for the second quarter of 2012 stood at AED 729 million, an increase of 23 percent compared to AED 592 million, reported in the same period of 2011. The Airline welcomes onboard 1.3 million passengers in the second quarter of 2012, an increase of 15 per cent compared to the same period last year.



Emirates has launched a new daily route to Barcelona last month. Coupled with the airline's Madrid flight – which went double daily on the 1st July – the carrier now offers three flights a day to Spain, making it one of Emirate's most served European countries. Just six days later on 9 July Emirates launched its daily non-stop service to Lisbon – becoming the only carrier in the Middle East operating into Portugal with a daily non-stop service.



Etihad Airways confirmed that its equity stake in Virgin Australia Holdings has now reached 10 per cent. This represents 221 million shares which have been bought on the open market over recent months. Six weeks ago Etihad Airways received foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB) approval to increase its holding from 5 per cent to 10 per cent.



Gulf Air adds seven more flights between Dubai and Bahrain. Encouraged by the strong passenger growth witnessed across the network during the summer '12 season, Bahrain's national carrier Gulf Air announced seven additional flights between Dubai and Bahrain in its winter timetable that has been brought forward effective 10 September 2012. The Airline will also resume its services to Iran and Iraq from 20 September 2012 following the Bahrain Government's approval. Flights to Baghdad, Erbil, Najaf and Basra in Iraq and Tehran, Mashhad, Shiraz and Isfahan in Iran will begin progressively between 20 September and 28 October 2012 subject to final approvals by the civil aviation authorities of the respective countries.



Indian low-cost carrier **IndiGo** has announced the introduction of new flights connecting Dubai to destinations in Southern India. IndiGo President Aditya Ghosh said that the airline would launch its new daily and non-stop flights between Kochi and Dubai and Chennai and Dubai on 25 August. Recently IndiGo launched its second daily and direct flight between Dubai and Delhi and between Delhi and Bangkok. Hyderabad has also been connected with Dubai recently. The airlines will launch of a new daily Mumbai-Sharjah service and resume its flights from Kochi to Kuwait and Bahrain.



Oman Air launched a new service between Muscat and Tehran on 1 September. The new route will be served utilising Oman Air's latest Embraer E175 regional jets, which offer outstanding levels of space, comfort and amenity.



QUICK TRAVEL

INDUSTRY NEWS

The highly-anticipated **New Doha International Airport** is expected to open in the second half of 2013, according to the The Moodie Report. Previously anticipated to open on 12 December 2012, the development has incurred a number of setbacks including the recent termination of Lindner Depa's \$245m fit-out contract a few weeks ago. During an interview with the Moodie Report, Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker commented that while the airport wouldn't be open to the general public until the second half of 2013, a number of other facilities including the cargo, VIP terminal and Qatar Airways maintenance base would be operational as originally planned before the end of this year.



The total number of passengers at **Muscat International Airport** has increased by 20% to 3,749,000 passengers during the first 6 months of 2012 from 3,114,452 passengers for the same period last year.



Australia's struggling **Qantas Airways** has agreed to a ten-year alliance with Dubai's Emirates, a key step in the carrier's efforts to shore up its loss-making international business. Qantas will replace Singapore with Dubai as its hub for European flights from March 2012 and coordinate pricing, sales and schedules with Emirates under the partnership. The Australian airline will end its existing relationship with British Airways at the same time as a result of the new alliance.



Qatar Airways is the first carrier to express an interest in operating a subsidiary in Saudi Arabia's domestic market, according to a statement. The carrier said that its CEO Akbar Al Baker held talks with the new Chairman of Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA), Prince Fahad bin Abdullah Al Saud to discuss the kingdom's new aviation policy. GACA has announced plans to open up domestic flights in the country to foreign carriers, with licenses due to be issued from September this year. The market is currently a duopoly consisting of state-run Saudi Arabian Airlines and low-cost carrier Nas Air. The airline has also announced an expansion of its USA route network with the introduction of daily passenger flights to Chicago from 10 April 2013. The non-stop service from Doha will be the carrier's fourth USA gateway, following already successful daily operations to New York, Washington and Houston.



Safi Airways added a new flight between Kabul and Bahrain bringing its number of Middle East destination to three. The Afghanistan-based airline launched the new route on 24 June, as part of a codeshare agreement with Gulf Air who will operate an additional three flights per week. Safi Airways will place its flight number on the three flights operated by Gulf Air from Bahrain to Kabul, offering customers a choice of six flights a week to and from the Kingdom. The service will operate every Monday, Tuesday and Sunday from Kabul using the A320 with 12 seats in Business class and 132 seats in economy.



**Sources: 1. Arabian Travel News
2. Arabian Supply Chain
3. Middle East Aviation Newsletter*

Ramadan Ghabga Gathering

Unitag Group held its Ramadan Ghabga Gathering at the Elite Spa. The occasion was marked with Raffle Draw and exciting prizes for the lucky winners.



Mr Isa Janahi, Deputy General Manager Operations and Sales receiving his prize from Ms Haifa Oun, Group Manager Administration, Communications and Human Resources



Ms Fatima Rajab receiving her prize from Mr Hisham El Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of World Travel Service



Mr Mohamed Saleem, Transport receiving his prize from Mr Hisham El Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of World Travel Service



World Travel Service staff group photo with Mr Hisham El Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of World Travel Service



Ms Norita D'Souza, Accounts Department receiving her prize from Mr Hisham El Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of World Travel Service

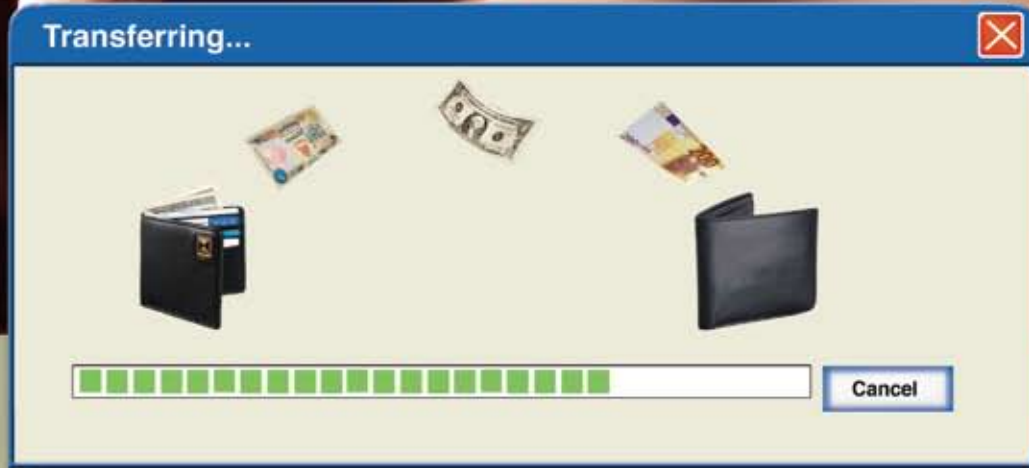


Mr Saji Kumar, Accounts Uniskills receiving his prize from Mr Hisham El Saadi, Chief Executive Officer of World Travel Service

Cathay Pacific Airways Reception

World Travel Service Chairman Jamil A Wafa hosted a lunch at Bahrain Capital Club to bid farewell to retiring Cathay Pacific General Manager India, Middle East and Pakistan Tom Wright, and outgoing Country Manager - Bahrain and Saudi Arabia Daniel Cheung. Mr Wafa also welcomed the incoming Country Manager for Bahrain and Saudi Arabia Brian Tsoi. Civil Aviation Affairs Undersecretary Capt. Abdulrahman Al Gaoud, Chinese Ambassador Mr Li Chen, Gulf Air Chief Executive Mr Samer Majali and other dignitaries as well as media representatives attended the lunch.





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