

Asiana defers 777-200/300 deliveries

PAUL LEWIS/SINGAPORE

ASIANA AIRLINES is to defer delivery of its first Boeing 777 on order because of South Korea's worsening economic difficulties, and will instead acquire additional 767-300ERs and 747-400 freighters.

The airline is planning to push back deliveries of its first 777-200/300s by up to two years, say local sources. Asiana has already traded one 777-200 and a -300 delivery position for a 767 and 747-

400F respectively. It is now discussing taking four more smaller -300ERs instead of 777s.

Asiana officials acknowledge that fleet plans are under review, but will only confirm that the first 777-200 on order, originally intended for delivery at the end of 1998 to mark the carrier's tenth anniversary, has been substituted for a 767. Delivery of another 747-400F has also been delayed, but in this case because of production hold-ups at Boeing.

The airline only recently

received final approval to order an initial three 777-200IGWs and two -300s, along with two 767-300s, a single 747-400F and six Airbus Industrie A330-200/300s (*Flight International*, 3-9 September). Plans called for a second tranche of ten 777s, two 747-400Fs and 12 A330s to be delivered between 2001-05.

Airbus deliveries remain on schedule, with the first A330-200 and -300 due for delivery in 1999. Asiana had earlier asked the European consortium to swap an

A330 delivery position for two additional A321s, but with no success. It is also due to receive the first of 18 recently ordered A321s early next year.

The airline says that it will also proceed with delivery of two leased 777-200s in October 1999 and May 2000. It reached agreement with International Lease Finance earlier in the year to take the two aircraft on a nine-year lease, and says that these are separate from the 15 777-200/300s it originally intended to order. □

NEWS IN BRIEF

■ UK NOISE CURB ATTEMPT

The UK Government has launched another attempt to reduce the noise limits at London's Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted airports to below international standards. The new proposals would lower the current limits of 97dBA (day) and 89dBA (night) to 94dBA and 87dBA, although "Stage 2" aircraft approved for gradual phasing out by the European Commission would still be exempt, as would the BAC/Aerospatiale Concorde. A court injunction prevented the previous proposals being imposed in December 1996.

■ EASYJET LOOK AT HUDS

EasyJet is considering fitting the 12 Boeing 737-300s it has on order with head-up displays (HUDs), which would allow them to be operated in Category IIIa conditions from runways equipped only for Category I. The aircraft will be equipped with enhanced ground-proximity warning systems and will probably have Airborne Communications-Addressing and Reporting Systems, says Reed Aerospace's on-line service, *Air Transport Intelligence*. The airline would be the first in the UK to operate with a HUD system in regular service.

Braathens settles into KLM alliance

IAN SHEPPARD/OSLO

BRAATHENS SAFE has entered into a co-operation agreement with Northwest Airlines, strengthening its alliance with KLM and allowing it to link its Scandinavian routes to the US carrier's Detroit and Minneapolis hubs through Amsterdam's Schiphol and London Gatwick.

Anders Fougli, Braathens director of planning, says that the airline will probably operate some of KLM's existing routes to Scandinavia, with the Oslo and Amsterdam frequencies likely to increase from four to "six or seven" flights a day.

He adds that prospects with other KLM-partner airlines, such as Air UK and Kenya Airways, are "exciting". Northwest Airlines is also looking at direct flights to Oslo's new Gardermoen Airport when it opens in October 1998.

Meanwhile, Braathens, which has 51% of the Norwegian domes-



Braathens' all-737 fleet will soon be carrying Northwest passengers

tic market, faces new threats following the SAS acquisition of a 29% stake in local rival Widerøe from Fred Olsen. It has an option to purchase his remaining 34.2% share. The SAS move was sparked by concern that Braathens, which has an 18% stake in Widerøe, would move to acquire a controlling share in the carrier.

■ The Norwegian Government is considering a new environmental

tax on airline seats into the country from 1 April, 1998. The proposal would cost Nkr142 (\$20) for every seat operated into Norway, even if empty, and Nkr71 for domestic seats. Gardermoen's traffic-development manager, Knut Stabaek, says that starting on a new route with the typical 30-35% load factor would prove "dramatically expensive...forcing airlines to use smaller aircraft". □

Airtours International closes on order for A330-200

AIRTOURS International is believed to have selected the Airbus A330-200 for its long-haul fleet needs, and is in negotiations on an order for up to three aircraft.

The UK charter airline, based in Manchester, has been evaluating the Airbus long-haul twinjet, along with the Boeing 777-200IGW (increased gross weight), to operate services now flown by the airline's fleet of three Boeing

767-300ERs (*Flight International*, 15-21 October). Airtours is unavailable for comment.

Airtours also operates ten Airbus A320s and seven Boeing 757-200s. Flightdeck commonality between the A320 and A330 will enable crews to be requalified on to the new aircraft, and also to be rated to fly both simultaneously. Talks are under way with Airbus and International Lease Finance about the

introduction of two to three A330-200s by early 1999.

Meanwhile, the airline also wants additional widebody capacity from late 1998, and is seeking McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30s on five-year leases. It is not clear whether the DC-10s are being sought for operation by Airtours itself, or if they will be transferred to Danish sister company, Premiair, which already flies five DC-10s. □