

MARKETPLACE

++ Ansett Worldwide Aviation Services (AWAS) has taken delivery of the first of five Next Generation 737-700s it has on order, which has been placed with an undisclosed customer in Asia. AWAS is understood recently to have cancelled at least three of its Next Generation 737 orders. **++ TWA** is arranging to sell and lease back four Boeing 767-200s. **++ Virgin Express** is taking two Boeing 737-400s on five-year lease from Braathens. **++ Piedmont Airlines**, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways, has concluded a deal for nine de Havilland Dash 8-Q200s, which will boost its fleet to 93 aircraft. **++ Dragonair** is to introduce its first two Airbus Industrie A321s in May and June. The two International Aero Engines V2500-powered aircraft will be leased from International Lease Finance (ILFC), for operation alongside its A320s and A330s. **++ Air Malta** is leasing two Boeing 737-400s from Malaysia Airlines for the 1999 summer season. **++ Asiana** has cancelled orders for 12 General Electric-powered Boeing aircraft, including two 747-400Fs, four 777-200s and six 777-300s. The South Korean airline's orderbook now stands at 30 aircraft, including six 747-400s, four 767-300ERs, four 777-200ERs, and 16 Airbuses - 10 A321s and six A330s. **++ Air Djibouti** has returned its ex-Kuwait Airways, Pratt & Whitney JT9D-powered Airbus A310-200 to Airbus Asset Management. **++ Aircraft Leasing & Management** has sold two ex-Qatar Airways, GE CF6-powered Boeing 747SRs to AAR Aircraft and Engine Group. **++ Balkan Bulgarian Airlines** is introducing two Pratt & Whitney JT9D-powered, ex-Swissair A310-300s on lease from ILFC, to replace two Boeing 767-200ERs which are being returned to Air France. **++ Aero Continente of Peru** is leasing two Lockheed L-1011 TriStars, a-1 and a-100, from Jet Aircraft Leasing for services to Miami, Florida.

Malaysia Airlines plans to sell aircraft in consolidation plan

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MALAYSIA Airlines (MAS) plans to sell three Boeing 747 Combi, one 737-300F freighter and five 737-500s under its fleet consolidation programme.

According to MAS vice-president of asset management Razali Harun, the company wants to base passenger operations on 737-400s, 777-200s and Pratt & Whitney PW4000-powered Boeing 747-400s, alongside its Airbus A330-300s and Fokker 50 turboprops. The A330 fleet may also be reduced over the next few years, says Razali, but he denies reports that MAS is preparing to sell all 10 of its A330s.

Razali says two General Electric CF6-powered 747-400 Combi are to be sold, and one P&W-powered 747-300. The sales will take place as new Boeing 747-400s that are on order enter service. The airline flies 15 Boeing 747-400s and has a six on order. It also operates two 747-200F freighters.

Razali says MAS still owns five Boeing 737-500s - one of which has been leased out to another operator - which it wants to phase out of service. Two of these are being leased by MAS, under a sale and leaseback arrangement.

"By next year we will have three [737-500s] left, and after that we



GE-powered 747-400s will go as MAS standardises on the P&W version

will sell these," he says. Buyers have been found for the two that are to be sold this year, but no contract has been signed and Razali declines to name the buyers.

The airline operates 33 737-400s, of which four are leased, and owns a further six, which have been leased out. "There may be an increase in the 737-400 fleet if short-term demand climbs," says the MAS vice president.

Stressing that the A330 will remain in the MAS fleet flying regional routes for the long term, Razali says that one or two of the current fleet could be sold in the

next few years. "If the [regional economic] downturn is prolonged, we may have to shrink the A330 fleet and operate 737s on those routes," he says.

The airline lost 436 million ringgit (\$115 million) in the six months ending 30 September, and its debt increased to 11.8 billion ringgit. The airline is preparing a restructuring plan, but "will not disclose [it] at this stage", says Razali.

MAS was hit by a management upheaval earlier this year, with the resignation of two board members and the airline's managing director within one week. □

Yugoslav conflict forces airspace rethink

THE CONFLICT in Yugoslavia has forced Eurocontrol to conduct a major re-organisation of airspace in the region, with large areas of Balkan airspace closed to civil air traffic.

On 24 March, Eurocontrol's Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU), which monitors traffic flows and airspace use in Europe, closed the airspace of Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina and Yugoslavia to all civil air traffic. The CFMU has created alternative routes around the conflict area. Air

traffic in the region is "greatly affected", says Eurocontrol. While some countries have been able to accommodate the diverted traffic, delays of 30-60min are being experienced in some areas, it adds.

Recent action by the CFMU includes the reduction of the buffer zone between Yugoslav airspace and that of Bulgaria and Romania. The buffer zone, from 75km (40nm) to 18km, has been in place since the beginning of the conflict, to accommodate additional traffic. The buffer zone between the air-

space of Yugoslavia and Hungary has been removed. The north-western part of Croatia has been opened up to flight level 150 and Zagreb Airport has re-opened, while civil air traffic can access Skopje Airport in Macedonia via designated air corridors.

In addition, the altitude of restriction placed on Hungarian airspace has been lifted from FL100 to FL150. Airspace over the Adriatic Sea remains closed, while airspace over the Ionian Sea remains closed up to FL100. □