

**INDIAN TRAINING**

Deccan Aviation is planning to open India's first private helicopter flying school in Bangalore in March with three Bell LongRanger and JetRanger helicopters which will cater for students from India and neighbouring South Asian countries.

**KING AIR UPGRADE**

Florida-based Kilo Alpha 290 has received certification for re-engining the Raytheon King Air C90 and E90 with Honeywell TPE331-10 turboprops.

Replacing the Pratt & Whitney Canada PT6s provides a 290kt (535km/h) cruise speed, 15% more range and a 7,000h overhaul interval.

**SIGNATURE SIGNS**

Signature Aircraft Engineering has signed a maintenance agreement to support the Netjets Europe Raytheon Hawker and Cessna Citation fleets. Through an agreement with Dassault, Signature already supports Netjets Europe's fleet of Falcon aircraft.

**FALCON TAKES OFF**

Honeywell has delivered the first Dassault Falcon 50 re-engined with TFE731-40s to Anheuser-Busch. Replacing the business jet's TFE731-3 engines with -40s increases climb rate, cruise speed, fuel economy and maintenance intervals.

**CONTINENTAL FLIES**

The third Bombardier Continental super mid-size business jet completed its first flight last month, taking off from Bombardier's Learjet facility in Wichita, Kansas. The aircraft completed a 1h 53min flight reaching an altitude of 16,500ft (5,000m) at a speed of 280kt (520km/h).

**PRICE GUARANTEE**

Raytheon Aircraft has teamed with Jet Support Services to offer resale customers airframe, avionics and engine maintenance at a guaranteed price. King Airs, Beechjets and Hawkers in Raytheon's used aircraft inventory will be enrolled in the programme.

**AIRCRAFT DELIVERY JUSTIN WASTNAGE / LONDON**

# Boeing BBJ2 derivative lands first European sale

Charter company Multiflight buys corporate aircraft in estimated \$60 million cash deal

Multiflight has become the first European customer for Boeing's 737-800 corporate jet derivative, the Boeing Business Jet 2 (BBJ2). The aircraft was delivered from the Boeing-General Electric joint venture's headquarters in Seattle, late last month and is being equipped with a "very, very important person" 19-seat layout at Lufthansa Technik's XXL large jet conversion centre in Hamburg, Germany.

Multiflight, the flight department created by digital television company Pace Micro Technology's founder David Hood, has bought the jet in a cash deal estimated at

\$60 million, including completion. Multiflight, which currently has a Dassault Falcon 900B and several helicopters in its fleet, will charter out the aircraft when not being used by Hood.

The aircraft will be operated by Executive Jet Charter. Steve Borrowdale, managing director of Multiflight, says that the company has already received "substantial interest" from heads of state and foreign governments for the aircraft, which has a range of 10,000km (5,750nm). Interest has been strong for routes from its Leeds-Bradford, UK, base to

Singapore and Australia, says Borrowdale.

Boeing Business Jets delivered its first BBJ2 in March, but has hit delays in getting European Joint Aviation Authorities approval for the installation of auxiliary fuel tanks and head-up display system software.

The BBJ2, which is 5.85m (19.2ft) longer than the original 737-700/800 hybrid BBJ, recently received European certification.

Borrowdale says Multiflight evaluated other long-range aircraft, including the Bombardier Global Express, Gulfstream V and the Airbus A319 Corporate Jetliner, in response to customer demand. "In terms of value for money, taking into account time between overhauls and reliability, the [\$49 million BBJ2] seemed like a good buy," says Borrowdale.

Multiflight says that charter interest has "tapered off a little" following 11 September, but it does not expect the downturn to be permanent.



Charter interest "has tapered off a little" but is expected to recover

**SAFETY PAUL PHELAN / CAIRNS**

## Piper crash linked to engine failures

The fatal crash of a Piper Chieftain in Spencer Gulf near Whyalla, South Australia, in May 2000 is being linked by Australia's airworthiness body to a series of engine bearing failures. Seven passengers and the pilot died when the Whyalla Airlines aircraft ditched in the sea at night following a double engine failure.

Australian Transportation Safety Board (ATSB) accident investigation executive director Kym Bills says: "Based on careful analysis of the engine failures and data, it is likely that the left engine failed first as a result of a fatigue crack in the crankshaft."

The ATSB estimates that the process began about 50 flights

before the accident, due to the breakdown of a connecting-rod bearing insert.

The board says that an "anti-galling" lubricating compound used during engine assembly by the manufacturer contributed to lowered bearing insert retention forces which, when combined with the effects of high combustion gas pressures developed as a result of deposit-induced pre-ignition, led to this breakdown.

Bills says: "It is likely that because of the increased power demanded of the right engine after the left engine failed, abnormal combustion, or detonation, occurred and rapidly raised the temperature of the pistons and

cylinder heads." As a result, he points out, a hole melted in the number six piston causing loss of engine power and erratic engine operation.

A detailed independent analysis confirms that the damage to the left engine is the same delamination that has characterised failures of Textron Lycoming TIO-540-AE2A engines also used on the Piper Malibu Mirage and Cessna 206. California's highway patrol has grounded its fleet of new Cessna T206Gs as a result. The accident has also triggered a class action by Malibu Mirage owners against Textron Lycoming and New Piper, new owner of the Chieftain design rights.