

LOW-COST CARRIER JUSTIN WASTNAGE / LONDON

Goodjet to double route network and add A320s

Swedish start-up eyes Finland following Buzz's withdrawal from Helsinki in March

Swedish low-fare start-up Goodjet is preparing to almost double its route network in the next few months and expand its Airbus A320 fleet to six aircraft.

The "virtual" airline, which uses the air operator's certificate of charter lessor Transair Sweden, launched operations in April with services from Stockholm to Nice and Paris. Initial services were flown from Stockholm's Arlanda and Skavsta airports, but all Stockholm services will move to Arlanda by the end of October as it prepares to launch domestic routes. Flights are also operated from Gothenburg and Malmö.

Goodjet serves eight international routes with three 180-seat A320s and is scheduled to introduce its fourth this week, an ex-Virgin Sun aircraft leased from Virgin Atlantic. Transair, which itself was set up earlier this year, operates the A320s under an aircraft, crew maintenance and insurance (ACMI) basis. It is close to completing a deal for an additional

two A320s which it will operate on behalf of Goodjet.

Goodjet will introduce services from its three Swedish bases to Alicante, Spain, in October, and will operate 14 routes by the fourth quarter. The carrier plans to use the new A320s to launch a network of domestic services by early next year, including between Gothenburg, Malmö and Stockholm as well as to other

Swedish destinations. It is also considering starting services in neighbouring countries. The privately owned company is seeking investors to fund its rapid growth.

Finland is the likely first move after Sweden, according to Goodjet managing director Reidar Svedahl, as the departure of Buzz's service from Helsinki in March has left the country with no low-cost service.



The "virtual" airline thinks thinks more Airbus A320s would be good

EXPANSION

SkyEurope Airlines stretches wings

Central Europe's first low-cost operator, SkyEurope Airlines, says that after six months of operations, it has become the largest scheduled airline in Slovakia.

The airline, a joint Slovak/Belgian/Spanish venture, launched on 13 February operating two Embraer EMB-120 Brasilias

between Bratislava and Kosice. Six months on, the airline has five more regular routes to Prague, Split, Venice, Zadar and Zurich. Next month SkyEurope will add four weekly flights to Milan, Munich and Berlin and aims to acquire two more Brasilias between November and next March. For the

longer term, the airline says it still aims to move into jet operations with Boeing 737s.

The airline says 25% of the 26,000 passengers carried so far have booked their tickets on-line. The airline's load factor rose to 65% in August, with about half the routes exceeding 75%.

■ A special committee has been formed to oversee the construction of the \$1 billion New Doha International Airport in Qatar, which will be completed in time for the Asian Games in December 2006. The new committee, headed by the Abdulaziz Muhammed al-Nuaimi, chairman of the Gulf state's Civil Aviation Authority, has its own budget attached to the general state budget. The development of the new facility, at the existing airport's site, is being managed by the country's national carrier Qatar Airways. ■ The first of a three-phase, R110 million (\$10 million) upgrade programme to treble the international departure facilities at Cape Town International Airport has begun with the opening of the new expanded departures holding area. The second phase of establishing additional check-in and security and passport control facilities will be completed in December. The third phase, the installation of the first two air bridges, will start early next year.

■ Yemen's Civil Aviation & Meteorology Authority has invited contractors to prequalify for the main construction project for a new airport for the capital of Sana'a. The estimated \$160 million scheme will include a new terminal building, parking for 600 cars and a 3km (1.8 miles) access road. Runways and control towers will be tendered separately. ■ Milan Linate Airport has been closed during August for €10 million (\$9.8 million) in repair and upgrade work. Repairs have been made to the runway and taxiways, while the terminal has been modified to unite domestic and international passengers travelling to countries that have signed the Schengen agreement. Flights were diverted to Milan Malpensa and Bergamo.

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LAUNCH

Kyrgyz gets airborne beginning with Bishkek-Kuala Lumpur route

Start-up carrier Kyrgyz International Airlines has launched services with flights between Bishkek and Kuala Lumpur.

Services were launched on 8 August by the carrier, which is a

joint venture between investors from Malaysia and Kyrgyzstan. Flights run between Bishkek and Jakarta via Kuala Lumpur thrice-weekly and to Jeddah twice-weekly, says the chairman of Malaysia's

Safuan Group, Matshah Safuan.

Safuan, a Malaysian conglomerate, owns hotels, controls the airline and hopes to add more Asian destinations plus European services next year. The carrier's fleet

consists of two Airbus A300-600s.

Current services are intended to offer Muslim pilgrims an affordable way to make Umrah pilgrimages to the holy cities of Mecca and Medina in Saudi Arabia.