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IATA expects to see increase in Business Class travel



In its latest Premium Traffic Monitor, for December, IATA has reported that passengers in business (or first class), was 3.7 per cent higher than in the same month the previous year. In November the increase was 1.7 per cent.

The number of passengers using economy class rose by a “significant” 7.4 per cent, comparing favourably with the 2.7 per cent growth seen a month earlier.

IATA commented that “Over the past 2 months”, November- December, “premium travel has expanded further than economy, improving the mix for airlines and ending the deterioration seen since early 2011. This is a positive development for airline yields, should it last into 2012”.

It added that premium markets grew 5.5 per cent during 2011, with demand in economy rising 5.1 per cent.

Although international trade indicators are showing flat growth at best, it said, “business confidence – which tends to lead premium travel by several months – has now turned up in the past two months and is pointing to increased business activity. As a result, we would expect some increase in business travel, lending some support to premium travel in the months ahead.

However, growth risks from the Eurozone banking crisis remain”.

Trent XWB completes successful first flight



The Rolls-Royce Trent XWB engine flew for the first time on Saturday when one example was mounted to Airbus’ A380 flying test bed, replacing one of its four Trent 900 engines.

According to an Airbus statement “The aircraft took off from Airbus facilities in Toulouse and performed a flight of more than five hours during which the engine covered a wide range of power settings at altitudes up to 43,000ft. The aircraft handling qualities were evaluated from low

speeds to Mach 0.9. The engine not only operated flawlessly, but also demonstrated its new-generation fuel efficiency and low noise. The Trent XWB development engine, specially fitted with test sensors to measure hundreds of parameters, was mounted on the A380's inner left engine pylon, replacing one of the aircraft's Trent 900 engines. The crew on board this first flight were: Airbus Experimental test pilots Terry Lutz and Frank Chapman; Experimental Test Flight Engineer Pascal Verneau; and Flight Test Engineers Emanuele Costanzo and Tuan Do".

Photo courtesy of Rolls-Royce

Volotea agrees B717 leasing deal



New start-up budget carrier Volotea has agreed a long term lease deal with Boeing to equip its all B717 fleet. Under the multi-year agreement, Boeing will commence additional deliveries, it has already handed over one example, next month. The exact number of aircraft being supplied has not been revealed. Volotea was established by Barcelona-based Alaeo S.L., a company created by former Vueling founders, Carlos Muñoz and Lázaro Ros. It intends to begin European point-to-point services in April, from Venice Marco Polo Airport, where it has established its first operating base.

Ethiopian and Horizon Air place Q400 orders



Following last week's announcement that Garuda Indonesia had placed an order worth a potential \$1.32 billion, Bombardier has now revealed that it has received orders from Ethiopian and Horizon Air for the supply of Q400 Next Gen aircraft, with a combined value of \$220 million at list prices. Ethiopian has placed a firm order for five of the type, while Seattle based Horizon Air has converted two options into a firm order.

Piece of Aviation History for February 20



1924 - Lieutenant-Colonel Tulasne, Captain Gama and Lieutenant Michel complete the first trip across the Sahara desert. The flight from Dakar and back is achieved using Breguet-14s.

Quote of the Day

One must have a good memory to be able to keep the promises one makes. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 - 1900)

A Bit of Light Relief

The first time I met my wife, she was an aerobics instructor at my health club and I was an out-of-shape new member. After one gruelling workout, I gasped, "This is really helping me get toned." She looked me up and down. Feeling self-conscious, I added, "Big men run in my family."

She raised an eyebrow. " Not enough apparently "