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B747-8I to begin pre-delivery testing with Lufthansa today



Boeing's 747-8 Intercontinental is due to arrive at Frankfurt today and begin pre-delivery testing with launch customer Lufthansa. For the nine hour flight from Seattle, three Lufthansa pilots will join two from Boeing on the flight crew.

A number of tests will be conducted "to help ensure a smooth integration of the newest member of the 747 family into Lufthansa operations" said Boeing. "Lufthansa maintenance and engineering personnel will rehearse ground-handling processes for the 747-8 Intercontinental within the airline's facilities and on its ramps at the airport. In addition, the crews will check how their ground-support equipment accommodates the airplane. These checks will help Lufthansa ensure a smooth entry into service for crews and passengers in early 2012".

The aircraft being used, RC021, is one of three that have served in the -8I's flight test fleet and was used specifically to test interior systems such as heating and air conditioning.

Image courtesy of Lufthansa

Malev may have to hand back state aid



According to Hungary's Development Minister, Tamas Fellegi, Malev could be forced to pay back HUF100 billion, approximately €334 million, when the European Commission concludes its findings into whether the airline received illegal state aid next year.

In December 2010 the Commission said that it would investigate "a number of support measures, including several capital injections and shareholder loans, that the Hungarian authorities granted to Malév-Hungarian Airlines in the context of its privatisation and renationalisation". It was particularly concerned that the flag carrier, given its financial state, would have been able to

obtain financing from the market place on similar terms granted by the Hungarian authorities. Fellegi said that talks with possible investors from Europe are taking place after negotiations with Chinese airline Hainan failed. He added that the latest attempt to sell-off state-owned Malev would not take place until after the EC investigation is concluded.

Transaero firms up A320neo order



Transaero has signed a firm order for eight A320neo's and has therefore become the first operator of the type in Russia and the CIS.

The order was originally announced as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in August. Engine selection will be determined at a later date, said the airline.

The Domodedovo based carrier recently announced MoU's for four A380s and four B747-8I's, thereby becoming the launch customer for both types in the region.

AF steps up efforts to take market back from budget carriers



Air France is to open new bases at Toulouse, Nice and Bordeaux next year as it attempts to regain the market from budget carriers. The move follows the opening of Air France's first regional base at Marseille in October.

Beginning early April, Air France will be flying to 16 new destinations in Europe and the Mediterranean from Toulouse, and six new destinations from Nice. Flights from Bordeaux will commence later in the year.

Alexandre de Juniac, Chairman and CEO of Air France commented "Air France's challenges on its medium-haul network are considerable: the airline needs to strengthen its competitiveness and continue to develop its operations. Air France has strong potential for success with this project: skilled and motivated staff, a young fleet and a constantly developing network".

Piece of Aviation History for December 6



1958 - The United States launches the Pioneer 3 satellite from Cape Canaveral.

It was intended to head towards the Moon, but because of a slight error in the satellite's velocity and angle after burnout of the Juno II rocket, it did not reach the Moon; instead it achieved a peak altitude of 102,320 kilometres (63,580 miles). The satellite did, however, discover a second radiation belt around Earth during its flight. Pioneer 3 re-entered Earth's atmosphere over equatorial Africa a day after launch.

Thanks to NASA for their help with this article and the photograph.

Quote of the Day

Look to your health; and if you have it, praise God and value it next to conscience; for health is the second blessing that we mortals are capable of, a blessing money can't buy.

Izaak Walton (1593 - 1683)

A Bit of Light Relief

A wife received flowers from her husband on their wedding anniversary.

She quickly opened the card. All it said was "No." What did that mean?

So she called her husband at the office, who said, "I didn't attach any message. The florist asked if I had a message and I said, No."

