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# East-West gateway

The importance of civil aviation to the Kingdom of Bahrain cannot be underestimated. Historically the country has been a gateway between East and West, a natural stopping-off place for early trade routes and latterly a strategic hub for the Northern Gulf.

Since the discovery of oil in Bahrain in the 1930s air services, which began at almost the same time, have played a very important role in shaping the development of the country's infrastructure and economy.

The kingdom continues to build on its legacy which will enable Bahrain's diverse economy to prosper and grow thereby further enhance its leading role in the forefront of development in the Middle East.

The approach to the development of air transport services for the Kingdom has been to adopt an "Open Skies" policy, enabling Bahrain to establish itself as a leading financial and tourism centre in the Middle East as well as providing the opportunity for Gulf Air and other carriers to operate on an unrestricted basis, serving Bahrain and other destinations either directly or on a code share basis. There are 39 international airlines operating through Bahrain International Airport with more new carriers scheduled in the near future.

The Air Navigation Services Directorate han-



● Iraqi Airways resumes flights to Bahrain for the first time in nearly 20 years, Captain Al Gaoud, left, is seen with Iraq Transportation Under-Secretary Adnan Al Abeidi at the launch

dles 315,000 aircraft movements annually within the Bahrain FIR, with over 87,000 movements per year at Bahrain International Airport.

It also plans and implements new airways to improve air traffic flow and reduce costs to airline users, as well as operating and maintaining all communication services, particularly with neighbouring states.

Civil Aviation Affairs (CAA) is responsible for all regulatory matters concerning air transport activities within Bahrain (covering operating permits, permissions for overflight and landing, schedule clearance, carriage of dangerous goods, airworthiness and flight operations).

It also responsible for ensuring compliance with international air safety and security standards, regulations and recommendations issued by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) and by the International Air Transport Association (IATA).

CAA is also responsible for licensing airlines, travel and cargo agents to permit the marketing and sale of air transport products and services.

Bahrain Meteorological Services also comes under the responsibility of CAA, providing a comprehensive national meteorological service on a 24-hour basis.

Weather reports are also prepared for presentation on radio and TV and in the Press. Observations are reported from Bahrain International Airport and local weather stations. Terminal and area forecasts are prepared at regular intervals.

The country is an active member of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), whose regional office is in Bahrain. Air transport is a dynamic and challenging industry experiencing rapid growth and CAA is confident it will continue to successfully meet such

challenges, whilst maintaining the high standards of safety and security the travelling public demand.

This year, CAA gave the green light to Iraqi Airways, which resumed flights to Bahrain for the first time in nearly 20 years, after its fleet was grounded by United Nations (UN) sanctions in 1991, following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Iraq Transportation Under-Secretary Adnan Al Abeidi was among a delegation of top officials who travelled to Manama to launch the flight

The ceremony at Bahrain International Airport's VIP Lounge was also attended by Civil Aviation Affairs Under-Secretary Captain Abdulrahman Mohammed Al Gaoud.

The resumption of flights is part of an air transportation agreement between Bahrain and Iraq to boost trade and tourism links with the Gulf.

Iraqi Airways, founded in 1945, is one of the oldest airlines in the

Middle East. It re-launched international operations in 2004 with a flight between Baghdad and Amman, Jordan and has operated commercial domestic flights since 2006. In the second half of this year, Bahrain also became the fourth destination for Wataniya Airways, Kuwait's first premium, full-service airline. The first flight was welcomed at Bahrain International Airport by Civil Aviation Affairs (CAA) Assistant Under-Secretary for Aviation Services Ahmed Nemat Ali, other senior aviation officials and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Shaikh Azam Mubarak Al Sabah. This was made possible because of the Open Sky agreement between both countries, signed in 2004 under the initiative of Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa. Shaikh Ali received this year Lloyds International External Auditing regional director for the Middle East Basim Obaid, who presented the ISO 9001:2000 awarded to Civil Aviation Affairs Directorate. The honour followed the decision of His Royal Highness Prime Minister Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa to modernise all government departments.

It aims to enhance standards of services and promote competitiveness between government departments. This is also in line with requirements and standards set by the International Civil Aviation Organisation. External auditing covered the departments of human and financial resources, meteorology, strategic planning, quality control and safety, engineering and maintenance, airport directorate, marketing and promotion and air navigation.



Congratulations and best wishes to

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa

His Royal Highness Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa

The Prime Minister

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Deputy Supreme Commander

and to the people of the Kingdom of Bahrain

on the occasion of

## National Day

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● Bahrain became the fourth destination for Wataniya Airways, Kuwait's first premium, full-service airline. Mr Ali, third from right, is seen with other senior aviation officials and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Bahrain Shaikh Azam Mubarak Al Saba, centre