

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

Iata forecasts bigger loss for airline industry

IATA announced that it is expecting a bigger loss for the airline industry than that forecast in December.

IATA director general and CEO, Giovanni Bisignani, said passenger traffic was expected to fall by 5.7% and airline revenues to decline by 12% or US\$63bn. The industry is shrinking in response to this slump in demand, with a 6% cut in capacity forecast. Even though the lower fuel prices should cut this year's fuel bill by US\$5.2bn, net losses in 2009 are expected to reach US\$4.7bn (previously forecast at US\$2.5bn).

The severe deterioration in the economy and air transport demand, as well as fuel hedging contracts taken out earlier this year were some of the major reasons for the bigger losses.

"Fuel is the only good news. But the relief of lower fuel prices is overshadowed by falling demand and plummeting revenues. The industry is in intensive care. Airlines face two immediate fundamental challenges: conserving cash and carefully matching capacity to demand," said Bisignani.

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EgyptAir reduces fuel surcharge

EFFECTIVE April 5, EgyptAir's current fuel surcharges will drop to, on average, US\$10-30 below the current levels.

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EY completes T3 move

ETIHAD Airways has completed its move into Terminal 3 at Abu Dhabi airport, with the transfer of the final four long-haul services from Terminal 1.

The final moves saw the airline's Beijing, New Delhi, Johannesburg and Mumbai services move from Terminal 1 to Terminal 3.

"The new Terminal will offer passengers travelling from Johannesburg a pleasant and convenient transit experience. With our schedule changing on March 28, we will offer same-terminal transfers to all our European destinations," said Craig Thomas, Etihad, country manager for South Africa

The transfer of flights is supported by significant investment by Etihad in passenger facilities, which include new premium lounges as well as improved check-in areas and a designated check-in zone for premium customers.

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More protests in Madagascar

SUPPORTERS of the former president gathered in Antananarivo on March 23 to protest the recent change of government. The demonstrators plan to continue protests and marches for the rest of the week. Visitors to the city should avoid large gatherings and areas where demonstrations are taking place. The situation remains uncertain and travellers are still advised against non-essential travel to Madagascar.

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Run with the bulls

CRYSTAL Cruises, represented by Cruises International, is offering guests the opportunity to participate in the annual Fiesta of San Fermin in Pamplona (the Running of the Bulls).

Crystal Cruises offers the activity as part of a four-day programme to Madrid and Barcelona. The optional land package precedes Crystal Serenity's July 16 voyage from Barcelona to Monte Carlo, Portofino, Florence, Rome, Sorrento, Dubrovnik and Venice.

The festival runs annually from July 7 to 14 and Crystal Cruises' guests will be able to view the runners from a reserved balcony directly above the action.

In addition to five-star accommodation, programme highlights include a flamenco show in Madrid and walking tours of Barcelona, showcasing the works of Gaudí and the Gothic Quarter. The Running of the Bulls pre-cruise package is available from US\$4 959pp, double occupancy.

Cruise fares are available from \$6 055pp, double occupancy, and feature an 'All-Inclusive As You Wish' \$1 000-per-person shipboard spending credit. The 'Save Now, Save Later' programme allows guests booking 2009 vacations by March 31 to save 20% on most 2010 cruises.